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**WORLD AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**

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**Prof. P. KANNAN**



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## International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science

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## VICE CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE



**Prof. B. K. Tulasimala**

Vice Chancellor's

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura

It is my pleasure to write this message for the Department of English on the occasion of their International seminar organised in collaboration with Chair of British Studies, University of Muenster, Germany and K. S. A. W. University's College Teachers' Association on "World and Comparative Literature: History – Theory – Practice on 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2024.

It is indeed very heartening to learn that the Department of English has been organising various academic activities since 2012-13 successfully to attract the attention of serious researchers across India. The department has also organised various webinars during Covid -19 periods on several pertinent literary areas to encourage academic exchange for all.

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field that studies literature across national borders, time periods, languages, and genres, boundaries between literature and the other arts and across disciplines. It is defined most broadly; it is also called "literature without borders". What scholars in comparative literature share is a desire to study literature beyond national boundaries and an interest in languages so that they can read foreign texts in their original form. Many comparatists also share the desire to integrate literary experience with other cultural phenomena such as historical change, philosophical concepts, and social movements. Thus, the scope of comparative literature and theory is extremely diverse as well as vast. Understanding our own times is of utmost importance as we move parallel to it, and it gives us the insight to look into our present times in a better way.

It is a matter of great privilege that the Department of English of our university publishes the research articles received for presentation in the international seminar on "World and Comparative Literature: History – Theory – Practice on 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2024. I look forward to see many more collaborative activities of these kinds in the department to attract academicians, researchers and students for healthy literary environment.

I wholeheartedly congratulate the Department of English and wish you all the grand success.



## **CHIEF EDITOR'S NOTE**

The Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in English, Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapur is pleased to publish as many as eighty five research articles received from the research scholars and academics in various colleges and universities in India for presentation at the two-day International Seminar on “World and Comparative Literature” on 19 and 20, December 2024 in International Pre-Reviewed Journal. The papers reflect a scholarly study of a wide range of genres, themes and perspectives of literatures in English. It is strongly believed that these articles shall be useful for the students, research scholars and teachers of English Literary Studies across the world. The service of the Associate Editors and Editors in bringing out this issue is earnestly acknowledged.

**Dr. P. KANNAN**

*Senior Professor & Chairman, Department of English  
Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University  
Vijayapura, Karnataka*



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**Aim & Objectives**

Academic Excellence in research is continued promoting in research support for young Scholars. Humanities, Arts and Science of research is motivating all aspects of encounters across disciplines and research fields in an multidisciplinary views, by assembling research groups and consequently projects, supporting publications with this inclination and organizing programmes. Internationalization of research work is the unit seeks to develop its scholarly profile in research through quality of publications. And visibility of research is creating sustainable platforms for research and publication, such as series of Books; motivating dissemination of research results for people and society.

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## INDIAN LITERATURE SEVEN STEPS AROUND THE FIRE BY MAHESH DATTANI

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### Abstract

*Mahesh Dattani is a dramatist who deals deal with the exploitation of the human body in society. Dattani depicts the neglected issues prevalent in the social milieu. He tries to present the society as if it is in the reality. Even in his subject matter he says that he writes about what he sees around and what concerns for common people. Dattani takes up the issues of homosexuality, discrimination of eunuchs, and exploitation of women in society. Seven Steps Round the Fire, the most popular radio play, focusses on the theme of eunuchs, their identity, their constitution and their connotation. Social realism has gone beyond from depicting the sufferings of working class men to discussing the sufferings of women and finally has now steered due attention towards the genderless. They are regarded as the invisibilized ones and are relegated to the periphery of the society. His realistic portarayal of human nature evokes both sympathy and empathy in the minds of readers. This paper attempts to give the realistic picture of the predicament of eunuchs and talks about their rights as human beings while analyzing the death of Kamala, a hijra through the protagonist Uma Rao, a research scholar. Mahesh Dattani's play. Seven Steps Around the Fire, has been deliberately named in the title of this paper for obvious reasons. First, the ritual act of the wedding-couple rotating round the fire- god is believed to be reverentially symbolic of the solemn sanctity of the bond of marriage<sup>1</sup>. Second, Dattani chose the same for his title as an ironic referent to undercut and subvert the long- esteemed solemnity of Indian Hindu institutional marriage as a hetero-sexual bond of mutual love and trust. Third, and most apparent, the present paper aims to look, may be briefly and somewhat selectively, at the issues and questions in some of Mahesh Dattani's plays relating to this patriarchally over-valued institution of marriage. Seven Steps Around the Fire, originally a BBC radio play broadcast in January 1999, offers a grim insight into the problem of the sexually marginalized and victimized eunuchs' relational and social positioning and the incapacity of institutional marriage to accommodate them into an either-or but definite sexuality. Appearing like a detective thriller and subverting the familiar genre, the main plot of Seven Steps Around the Fire consists of the investigation of the murder of Kamla, a hijra (eunuch), whose decomposed body was found in a pond. Kamla loved Subbu Sharma and they got secretly married, but Kamla was eventually murdered at the instruction of Subbu's father, Mr. Sharma, an influential politician and minister. The play is not so essentially about the murder investigation of a hijra as it is about the social positioning of the trans-sexual community in modern India and about the social setup where a hijra cannot crave his/her feelings. and emotions beyond the patterns and boundaries recommended by the society.*

### Summary

Mahesh Dattani, a Sahitya Academy award winner, is known for covering extra miles for his stories. He shares a great bond with the Indian society. His stories, characters, settings and the dialogues are liked and appreciated worldwide. He touches the bottom of the hearts of his audience by handling the burning issues that are mostly preferred to be kept hidden. With a strong sense of human responsibility, Dattani always attempts to project reality on stage.

Mahesh Dattani is a contemporary modern Indian English writer whose works delineate the

tyranny of the society. The society rules the minds of the people. The fear of the society does not let the different schools of thoughts meet and mingle with each other. In fact, Dattani's plays are choked with emotions. The problems dealt by him trigger public anger and strictly criticize the oppressor. His plays are epitome of perfection. His appeal in the plays depicts the social ills vividly. The oppressors in his plays project male chauvinism, gender discrimination, injustice, etc. His works widely attack the social injustice in the contemporary India.

Seven Steps around the Fire is one of the masterpieces of Mahesh Dattani. He is a social realistic writer whose pious intention lies in bringing. About a positive change in the society. Every society is unique in itself but some people are still treading on the beaten path. Dattani's plays act as the eye-openers for the masses. He has to share a lot of experiences that he does through his works and characters. He himself states in the Preface to the Collected Plays, "I also know that I have to say and probably not saying it well enough. But my characters have a lot to say too, they seem to be doing rather well at having their say".

Seven steps around the fire is a prejudiced play. It is the recorded journey of 'eunuchs' in the fire of hatred, animosity, and superiority. The story depicts the injustice done to the deprived community of 'eunuchs'.

The play has very dramatic and meaningful beginning. In our society the wedding mantras celebrate the union of the two people, where as in the play the wedding of Kamala and Subbu results in destruction and their deaths. The play deals with Kamala's murder and its investigation. Kamala is a beautiful 'hijra'. All hell breaks loose when Subbu, the son of a minister, falls in love with her. His father does not approve of it. But he marries her secretly which leads to the further consequences.

Uma Rao, daughter of Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University and wife of Chief-Superintendent, plans to work on her research paper titled as 'Class-and Gender-Related Violence. It's she who insists on unfolding the mystery of Kamala's murder. The characters of the play are introduced through the inquiry of Kamala's murder. Her interaction with Anarkali, Champa, Mr. Sharma, a minister, Salim, and Munswamy throws light on the social injustice generally done to the 'hijra' community.

Suresh Rao, chief superintendent of police, appoints Munswamy, a constable, as her body guard. She talks to Anarkali, a eunuch arrested for Kamala's murder. Anarkali asks her to meet Champa, the head of the local eunuch community, and give her some money for her bail. Uma does the same. She borrows

money from her father and gives it to Champa. Salim, a disciple of Mr. Sharma was at Champa's house where she meets him and notices that he is upto something that is very important for him. She tries to find out what it is, but in vain. She goes to the minister's house to meet Salim and his wife so that the confusion can come to an end. There she meets the minister, Mr. Sharma who is busy with the preparations of his son's marriage. His son is Subbu. He is a very important part of the play. It's he who acts as a rival and tries to do what he finds right for him:

In the play, Kamala is shown as a beautiful eunuch who is loved by Subbu. He marries her secretly. But when his father comes to know about wedding, he burns Kamala to death and gets Anarkali arrested for the murder. The reason is given that Anarkali hates Kamala's beauty and rising fame. The photograph of the marriage remains the concern of the minister. He asks Salim to get the photo from the eunuchs that he fails to bring. Anarkali and Champa know about the murderer of Kamala but are afraid to reveal it to Uma and others.

On the day of Subbu's wedding, all the characters of the play gather there to witness the occasion. It's the time when Kamala's murder mystery gets resolved finally but with a great shock. The minister gets the photograph but only after Subbu has committed suicide. The case gets closed stating it as an accident and nothing happens to the criminals and the oppressors. The ending suggests Uma's helplessness to get the culprit punished by law.

They knew. Anarkali, Champa and all the 'hijra' people knew who was behind the killing of Kamala. They have no voice. The case was hushed up and was not even reported in the newspapers. Champa was right. The police made no arrests. Subbu's suicide was written off as an accident. The photograph was destroyed. So were the lives of two young people.

The play is a mourning saga of the eunuchs. They are only welcomed on two occasions wedding and child birth. There is a myth if they don't dance or sing on the auspicious day, they curse the family

They are the most neglected and hated section of the society. In Lakshmi's story in a magazine, she, a 'hijra', herself states, "Like the underdog, we are respected by nobody". No doubt, the eunuchs are not given any status in the society. Rather they are taken as taboo. The play throws light on the rule of the power and the exploitation of the weaker and the lower section of the society. If someone stands for them like Subbu, he has to face the consequences.

Mahesh Dattani highlights the atrocities and brutalities done to these people in this free India. They are not given equal rights and stature. They are still tied in iron shackles that are difficult to be broken and impossible to get unlocked.

When Uma wants to talk to Anarkali and she addresses her as 'she', Munswamy chuckles and says, "She! Of course it will talk to you. We will beat it up if it doesn't". This statement proves the filthy attitude of the society towards the innocents.

The play witnesses the man's world. The male characters of the play represent power, determination, strength, and superiority. Be it Munswamy, a constable or Salim, a mere disciple. The males symbolise authority till the end. They are projected as the successful regimes. Mr. Sharma burns Kamala to death and never regrets the deadly murder. He takes it to be his birth right to eradicate the problem from its root. Mr. Sharma arranges Subbu's marriage with the girl whom he wants to see as his daughter-in-law. He tries his best to hide the brutality from the people. As luck would have it, the hidden ending chapter of Kamala's death gets cleared from the dust. It is revealed that Subbu's true love for Kamala killed her and now it's his turn to go for salvation.

The wedding observes the end of the ill-fated lover. People discover the reality. All keep quiet and behave like rational beings. Nobody complains against the killer due to social restraints and political apprehension. The death of the two is the disapproval of the prevailing social injustice in the society.

Females enjoy equal rights and opportunities but it's all in the outer world. She is subjected to follow her husband, father, son within the four walls of the house. The gender segregation itself keeps a check

on the woman power. She is portrayed as a semi-automatic machine that always depends on the instructions. Uma is an educated lady, working on her thesis but has been opposed by his husband.

That is the sort of crap that finds its way into your academic papers. Jeremy Mortimer firmly believes, "Mahesh Dattani's plays often project characters who are questioning their identity, and who feel isolated in some way. Uma certainly feels isolated in her marriage, and this sense of isolation makes her empathize with Anarkali, the hijra she befriends".

Uma realizes Anarkali has been trapped just to save the wealthy minister. She is unable to do anything for Anarkali except being a calm and passive listener. She is not satisfied in her personal life. She does not have a baby. She goes for check-ups to have one. She gets to know that everything is fine with her. The doctor asks her husband to be there for the examination. He refuses and strictly replies, "I don't have to go..." . Males never doubt their masculinity. Its only females who are pointed at.

No doubt, honesty and sincere efforts are needed to transform the country, but a few raise their hands to bring a revolutionary change. It's difficult to swim against the current. In Mahesh Dattani's plays, the female characters mostly leave themselves to their fate. Though they are the main characters yet they maintain a very low profile. The whole story revolves around Uma's efforts to unveil the truth of Kamala's murder. Her intense curiosity of knowing the reason behind the murder crumbles to dust when the real world proves its mettle. Uma can never be a surprise for the readers. She does what is expected out of her. In any society, the females remain quiet and neutral.

Kaustav Chanda states, "if 'Femininity' is associated with passivity, we come across a number of characters who are passive, and therefore, feminine". (165, *New Academia International Journal*) The other characters except males don't urge for justice. They know justice is not their cup of tea but meant for the rich and wealthy class. The irony in the play is that males being involved in all illegal

activities yet don't feel remorse. But the females suffer from psychic conflict within themselves. As usual, Mahesh Dattani has typically portrayed the characters of his play, males as hard, rough, self-centered, on the other hand, females as soft, sensitive, and remorseful.

The play begins and ends on a symbolically poignant note. The murder, arrest, torture of the different eunuchs eternalizes the agony of a transgender. Though we all know that no one becomes a transgender deliberately, yet being one is a curse. This fact emerges from the incidents of the play. The transgenders are only welcomed in the two

celebrations but these are not meant for them. The roots of social injustice are so deep in the minds of the people that they cannot get rid of it. Dattani has always dealt with unconventional themes in his works in order to relieve the society from the rigid rules and regulations. How far his efforts would spell success, only time can tell.

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# GENDERED NARRATIVES: THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY THROUGH STORYTELLING - A STUDY ON BAPSI SIDHWA'S NOVEL *ICE CANDY MAN*

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## Abstract

*This paper aims to analyze the gendered narratives in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel Ice-Candy-Man (also known as Cracking India), focusing on the construction of identity through storytelling. Set against the backdrop of the Partition of India in 1947, the novel offers a vivid portrayal of the cultural and political upheaval experienced by individuals, particularly through the lens of gender. The narrative, told through the eyes of a young girl named Lenny, highlights the role of women in shaping and being shaped by the events around them. The study examines how gender influences the characters' identities, especially concerning power dynamics, societal expectations, and personal choices. By analyzing the various female and male characters in the novel, the research investigates how storytelling acts as both a means of resistance and a tool for reinforcing patriarchal structures. The study aims to illuminate the intersection of gender, identity, and history in Sidhwa's work, revealing the complexity of personal and collective experiences during a turbulent period.*

**Keywords:** *gendered narratives, identity construction, bapsi sidhwa, ice-candy-man, partition of india, storytelling, gender and power, patriarchy, cultural and political upheaval.*

Ice Candy Man is a poignant historical novel by Bapsi Sidhwa, set against the backdrop of the Partition of India in 1947. Written from the perspective of Lenny, a young Parsi girl, the novel captures the chaos, violence, and heartbreak of this turbulent time as British India was divided into India and Pakistan. Through Lenny's innocent but observant eyes, the story explores the intersecting lives of diverse characters—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Parsis—whose relationships are torn apart by communal tensions and political upheaval. At its heart, the novel is both a coming-of-age tale and a powerful commentary on the human cost of political and religious divisions, blending personal stories with the broader tragedy of Partition. The title reflects the central role of the Ice Candy Man, a charismatic but morally ambiguous figure whose actions symbolize the betrayal and fragmentation of a society once united.

Literary storytelling often functions as a potent vehicle for examining and articulating gender identity, offering insights into the many experiences and cultural frameworks that influence it. Authors use narrative strategies to articulate characters who either defy, adhere to, or alter conventional gender roles, illustrating the complex interaction between individual identity and societal conventions. Literature facilitates the exploration of gender as a dynamic and complex construct, often emphasizing themes of power, inequality, and resistance. Narrative techniques not only provide representation for underrepresented gender identities but also cultivate empathy and comprehension by enabling readers to experience views distinct from their own. Through the integration of identity concerns into narratives, character development, and conversations, literature serves as a platform for challenging stereotypes, honoring diversity, and imagining more inclusive societies.

This research aims to explore how *Ice Candy Man* addresses gendered experiences by portraying the distinct challenges faced by women during the Partition of India, such as sexual violence, societal marginalization, and the struggle for agency within patriarchal structures. The novel sheds light on the intersection of gender and power, revealing how women's bodies and lives became battlegrounds for communal and political conflicts. Additionally, it examines the role of narrative in constructing identity, focusing on how Lenny's perspective, as a child narrator, captures the complexity of personal and collective identities in a fractured society. By intertwining individual stories with the larger historical context, the novel highlights the fluid and constructed nature of identity, emphasizing the transformative power of storytelling in giving voice to marginalized experiences and redefining cultural and gender norms.

The methodology for this research employs a qualitative approach, primarily utilizing textual analysis to examine *Ice Candy Man* in detail. This method involves a close reading of the text to uncover its narrative strategies, character development, and thematic representations of gender and identity. The novel is chosen as the focus text due to its unique perspective on the Partition of India, offering a nuanced portrayal of gendered experiences and the intersection of personal and political identities through the eyes of a child narrator. The analysis is framed through theoretical lenses such as intersectionality, to explore how overlapping systems of oppression affect women's experiences, and gender performativity, to understand how gender roles are constructed and contested within the text. Additionally, trauma studies provide insights into how the novel represents collective and individual suffering, particularly about gendered violence. These frameworks comprehensively explore the novel's engagement with identity, power, and resistance.

Lenny's perspective as a narrator in *Ice Candy Man* is central to the novel's exploration of innocence, identity, and the impact of Partition. As a child, Lenny offers a lens that is both naïve and wise,

allowing her to observe and recount the complexities of adult relationships, gender dynamics, and communal tensions without the filters of bias or cynicism. Her partial understanding of events mirrors the chaos and confusion of the time, making her narrative both poignant and relatable. Lenny's disability adds another layer to her perspective, emphasizing themes of vulnerability and marginalization while positioning her as an empathetic witness to the suffering around her. Through her narrative, the novel juxtaposes personal growth and loss with the larger historical tragedy, showcasing how individual and collective identity is fractured and reconstructed in the face of trauma. Lenny's voice thus becomes a powerful tool for highlighting the human cost of political and social upheaval.

The representation of gendered experiences during the Partition of India highlights the disproportionate burden borne by women amidst the communal and political upheaval. The novel vividly portrays the violence inflicted on women's bodies, including abduction, rape, and forced marriages, reflecting how they became symbols of honor and revenge for their communities. "Memories are the only things that survive the annihilation of the present. But even they change, become new stories that tell what we want to believe" (78). It also delves into the psychological trauma and loss of agency experienced by women, as well as their resilience and acts of defiance in the face of patriarchal oppression. Female characters like Ayah embody both the vulnerability and strength of women during this time, illustrating their struggles to navigate a society where their identities are dictated by cultural, religious, and gendered expectations. Through these narratives, the novel critiques the intersection of gender and power, shedding light on how women's experiences during Partition were not only shaped by the violence but also by their enduring fight for dignity and survival.

The intersection of gender, class, and religion plays a pivotal role in constructing and negotiating identity during the Partition of India. The novel illustrates how these factors collectively shape the

experiences and perceptions of its characters. Gender determines the vulnerability and agency of women like Ayah, who suffers due to her gendered and sexualized identity, while class positions her as a servant, adding layers of exploitation and marginalization. Religion further complicates identity, as communal divisions pit characters against each other, forcing them to reconcile or redefine their affiliations. For instance, Lenny's Parsi heritage positions her as an outsider to the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh conflict, allowing her to observe but remain relatively insulated from its violence. The interplay of these factors demonstrates how identity is not fixed but fluid, shaped by power structures and social hierarchies. The novel underscores how individuals navigate these intersections, often facing compounded oppression or finding solidarity across boundaries. "The partition was not just a division of land, it was the ripping apart of human souls, and the tearing of friendships, families, and identities" (Sidhwa 58).

In *Ice Candy Man*, storytelling emerges as a vital tool for characters to assert, negotiate, or resist their identities amidst the turmoil of Partition. Characters like Ice Candy Man use narratives to craft and assert their shifting roles, adapting to circumstances to maintain agency or power. Similarly, Lenny's narration acts as a means of making sense of her fragmented world, allowing her to construct her own identity while grappling with the contradictions of her observations and experiences. The cultural and historical context of Partition heavily influences this identity formation, as communal violence, displacement, and societal upheaval force characters to reexamine their affiliations and beliefs. Stories of survival, trauma, and resilience become a medium through which individuals attempt to reclaim agency or redefine themselves against the backdrop of historical rupture. By intertwining personal and collective narratives, the novel highlights storytelling's transformative power in shaping, preserving, or contesting identity in times of crisis. "We were all complicit in the violence that followed. We all became agents of a new, fractured identity" (Sidhwa 36).

The postcolonial reading of *Ice Candy Man* reveals the complex roles and voices of women in a society shaped by patriarchal norms and colonial legacies. Women in the novel, such as Ayah, are depicted as both powerful and vulnerable, navigating a landscape where their bodies and lives are politicized and commodified in the struggle for communal and national identity. Through their experiences, the novel critiques how power dynamics in male-female relationships reinforce gendered hierarchies and contribute to the marginalization of women, positioning them as symbols of honor and territory in conflicts beyond their control. Postcolonial critique further deepens this analysis by examining how colonialism's influence on national identity exacerbates personal and collective struggles. The quest for independence from British rule intersects with the fragmentation of communal identity, impacting how individuals, especially women, navigate loyalty, survival, and autonomy. This dual critique underscores the intersection of gender and postcolonial politics, illustrating how national and personal identities are entwined and influenced by historical and cultural forces.

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# THE TRIPLE BIND: EXPLORING RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER IN BLACK FEMINIST LITERATURE

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In Black feminist literature, the intersections of race, class, and gender are not merely abstract theoretical concepts; they are lived experiences that shape the identities and struggles of Black women. The Triple Bind, a term that refers to the compounded oppression Black women face due to their race, gender, and socio-economic status, offers a critical framework for understanding these texts. Black feminist authors such as Toni Morrison, Audre Lorde, and Ntozake Shange have used their works to depict the multifaceted experiences of Black women navigating these intersecting forces of oppression. Through novels, essays, and plays, these writers explore how societal structures of racism, sexism, and classism converge, producing unique challenges for Black women. The concept of the "Triple Bind," which refers to the compounded oppression faced by Black women due to their race, gender, and socio-economic status, is central to understanding the complex experiences of Black women in literature. By examining key works of Black feminist authors, this paper will investigate how they portray the struggles and resilience of Black women in the face of systemic oppression. They highlight how these women must confront both external forces societal rejection and marginalization- and internal struggles-reclaiming and redefining their identities in the face of oppression. This paper will analyse their works, focusing on how they represent the Triple Bind and how Black women resist and survive within these constraints.

The historical context for the analysis of Black feminist literature is rooted in the long history of

racial and gendered oppression that Black women have faced, both in the United States and globally. From slavery to modern-day systemic racism, Black women have been doubly marginalized by both white supremacy and patriarchal structures. However, Black feminist scholars have consistently argued that these systems of oppression cannot be understood in isolation; instead, they must be analysed together to understand the compounded forms of injustice Black women experience.

Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* is foundational to this analysis. Collins argues that Black women's experiences of oppression are complex, interconnected, and unique. Unlike mainstream feminist theories, which often focus the experiences of white, middle-class women, Black feminism recognizes the need to address the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. Collins' concept of the "matrix of domination" helps frame the Triple Bind, illustrating how Black women's oppression is both structural and personal, operating through systems of power and individual lived realities. Collins asserts that Black women experience a particular form of oppression that cannot be reduced solely to issues of race or gender but must also account for class. This framework is essential for understanding how Black feminist literature addresses the ways in which race, class, and gender intersect to shape Black women's identities.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a profound exploration of the impact of slavery on Black women, particularly Sethe, the protagonist who struggles with the trauma of her enslavement.

Morrison's novel illustrates the way in which the Triple Bind manifests in Sethe's life: as a Black woman, she is socially devalued, economically exploited, and sexually violated. These aspects of her identity overlap and interact in ways that make Sethe's survival difficult, yet she remains determined to protect her children from the horrors of slavery. Sethe's desire to protect her children from the horrors of slavery represents the intersectional nature of her oppression, where survival is entangled with both personal and collective histories of suffering. Morrison's narrative weaves the past and present to show how slavery continues to affect Black women even after emancipation.

The violence of slavery, both physical and psychological, is central to Sethe's story. In her escape from the plantation, Sethe kills her own child rather than allowing her to be re-enslaved. This act of motherhood highlights the intersection of race and gender in a context where Black women are often denied autonomy over their bodies and families. Morrison's portrayal of Sethe's struggles reveals how the Triple Bind manifests not only through societal violence but also in personal choices and relationships. Morrison captures the residual pain of the Black woman's experience as a mother, daughter, and survivor, illustrating how each of these roles is complicated by the intersection of race, gender, and class.

Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* is a critical collection of essays that delves into the complexities of Black womanhood, intersectionality, and the necessity for collective liberation. Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* offers a critical examination of the ways race, class, and gender shape the lived experiences of Black women. Lorde's essay collection challenges both Black and white feminists to address the exclusion of Black women from mainstream feminist discourse. Her emphasis on the importance of acknowledging difference and creating spaces for marginalized voices resonates with the Triple Bind, as Lorde argues that Black women cannot be fully understood or liberated without recognizing the intersections of their identities. Lorde critiques both white feminism and Black male-

dominated civil rights movements for failing to adequately address the specific oppressions that Black women face. In particular, she argues that Black women's experiences cannot be understood through the same lens as either white women's or Black men's struggles; they must be analysed as intersections of race, class, and gender.

Lorde's essay *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* is a powerful rejection of exclusionary feminist practices that fail to recognize the needs and voices of Black women. She writes, "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," meaning that the traditional frameworks of both white feminism and male-dominated civil rights movements fail to achieve true liberation for Black women. In her work, Lorde calls for a feminism that is inclusive and intersectional, recognizing that issues of race, class, and gender are inseparable from the larger struggle for justice. Lorde's insistence on confronting oppression in all its forms, including the marginalization of Black women within feminist discourse, reflects the necessity of an intersectional approach to Black feminist thought.

Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* offers a different form of storytelling, blending poetry, theatre and dance to convey the internal lives of Black women in the face of intersecting oppressions. Shange's choreopoem focus the voices of seven women, each representing a different aspect of Black womanhood. Through their stories, Shange explores themes of sexual violence, emotional trauma, and the struggle for self-empowerment within a society that devalues Black women. Through the voices of seven women, Shange illustrates the pain and resilience of Black women in a world that marginalizes their identity. The work highlights the emotional and psychological toll of systemic oppression and serves as an act of reclamation, where the characters assert their self-worth and their right to exist. The choreopoem is a powerful example of Black feminist literature that emphasizes the importance of collective healing in the face of intersecting forms of discrimination.

The characters in *for coloured girls* face abuse, racism, poverty, and isolation, yet they also demonstrate resilience, reclaiming their agency through their shared experiences. The intersecting identities of race, class, and gender create both a common bond and a shared source of pain for these women. Shange's portrayal of their stories is not only a depiction of victimhood but also a celebration of the strength and survival of Black women. The choreopoem emphasizes the importance of community and solidarity as these women move from pain to healing, symbolizing the need for collective action in the face of the Triple Bind.

The resistance to the Triple Bind is not passive or simple in Black feminist literature; it is multifaceted and requires both personal and collective action. In *Beloved*, Sethe's defiance against the institution of slavery is an act of resistance against racial, gendered, and economic oppression. Similarly, Lorde's critique of both racism and sexism in mainstream feminism is an assertion of resistance to the exclusionary practices that marginalize Black women. Finally, in *for Colored girls*, Shange creates a space for Black women to reclaim their stories, transforming their pain into power through collective expression.

These authors present the Triple Bind as an unrelenting force that shapes their characters' experiences, but they also illustrate how Black women resist, fight back, and ultimately find ways to reclaim their agency. By focusing on both the struggles and the resilience of Black women, these works offer important insights into the complexities of Black womanhood and the ongoing struggle for liberation.

Triple Bind provides a valuable framework for understanding the intersectional oppression faced by Black women, particularly in Black feminist literature. Through the works of Toni Morrison, Audre Lorde, and Ntozake Shange, we see the ways in which race, class, and gender are inextricably linked and how Black women resist these forces of oppression. These authors highlight the profound impact of systemic violence and marginalization while also demonstrating the resilience, strength, and resistance of Black women. As Black feminist literature continues to evolve, it remains essential for both academic and social movements to recognize the intersectionality of race, class, and gender in shaping the lives of Black women. By analysing Black feminist literature through the lens of the Triple Bind, we gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Black women and the ways in which they have historically fought for autonomy, justice, and liberation. By analysing their literature through the lens of the Triple Bind, this paper highlights the ways in which Black women's voices are not only shaped by these forces but also act as sites of resistance and transformation.

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## VOW OF COMMITMENT IN BETROTHAL IN *PROTHALAMION*

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### Abstract

*Prothalamion* was written by the English poet Edmund Spenser in 1596 in celebration of the engagements of Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset, the daughters of the Earl of Somerset. The poem was innovative and unusual for its time. In fact, Spenser coined the word "prothalamion" specifically for it, modeling the title on the word "epithalamion," or "wedding song." Unlike an "epithalamion," which celebrates a wedding, a "prothalamion" celebrates a betrothal or engagement. The betrothals of the poem were more than matters of the heart, and were politically important events in England at the time. The poem thus meditates on the relationship between marriage, nature, and politics; it celebrates the beauty of the brides, the perfection of their marriages, and the natural world as a respite from the political complications of life at court. At the same time, however, the poem also suggests that the beauty and perfection that it describes is fleeting. The Elizabethan literature was dominated by the spirit of Renaissance. In the words of Trevelyan, it displays a charm, a lightness of heart and a free aspiring of mind and spirit which were characteristic of the times. First and most immediate in its influence on art and literature and thought, was the rediscovery of ancient literatures, and particularly that of ancient Greece brought by scholars who fled from Constantinople and sought asylum in Rome. The 'new learning' restored the study of the writers of the golden & silver Ages of Latin literature. Cicero in particular provided material for the new study of rhetoric. Spenser, the author of the first great English epic "*Faerie Queene*", is the representative poet of the English Renaissance. His plan for the '*F.Q.*' was borrowed from all the great ethical systems. Temperance or self-control was typically a Greek virtue; Holiness was Christian; courtesy belonged to Medieval Chivalry. His many sidedness was accorded with intrepid, enquiring, adventurous genius of the Elizabethan Age. "*Prothalamion*" was written by the English poet Edmund Spenser in 1596 in celebration of the engagements of Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset, the daughters of the Earl of Somerset. The poem was innovative and unusual for its time. In fact, Spenser coined the word "prothalamion" specifically for it, modeling the title on the word "epithalamion," or "wedding song." Unlike an "epithalamion," which celebrates a wedding, a "prothalamion" celebrates a betrothal or engagement. The betrothals of the poem were more than matters of the heart, and were politically important events in England at the time. The poem thus meditates on the relationship between marriage, nature, and politics; it celebrates the beauty of the brides, the perfection of their marriages, and the natural world as a respite from the political complications of life at court. At the same time, however, the poem also suggests that the beauty and perfection that it describes is fleeting.

**Keywords:** marriage, garden, nature

### The River Thames and the Wedding Party

It was a calm day with a light breeze in the air, which cooled things down and lessened the heat of the brightly shining sun. I was frustrated with the time

I'd wasted at court: my political ambitions had failed, and my hopes turned out to be empty illusions. To make myself feel better, I went for a walk along the banks of the river Thames. The shore

and the meadows surrounding the river were covered with flowers -flowers so beautiful that they could be hung up in young women's room, or made into crowns for their fiancés in advance of their wedding day, which is not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem.

In a meadow by the river, I saw a group of nymphs-the mythological daughters of the river. Their hair was green and hanging down loosely, and they looked like brides. Each of them was carrying a wicker basket woven from twigs and full of flowers that they'd gathered from the meadow. The nymphs quickly and skillfully plucked all kinds of flowers-including blue violets, daisies (which close at night), lilies (which are so white they seem virginal) primroses, and vermeil roses-which they would use to decorate their bridegrooms on their wedding day, which was not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem.

I saw two beautiful swans swimming down the river Lee. I had never seen such beautiful birds. The snow on top of the famous Pindus mountain range has never been whiter than those swans. Not even the god Zeus, when he transformed himself into a swan in order to seduce the princess Leda, was as white as those swans. And though people say that Leda was as pale as Zeus was, neither Leda nor Zeus came close to being as white as the swans before me in the river. In fact, the swans were so white that even the calm river upon which they swam seemed to make them dirty; as such, the river told his waves not to touch the birds' silky feathers, in order to prevent the waves from dirtying the lovely birds and diminishing their beauty, which was as bright as the sun will be on their wedding day, which was not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem.

The nymphs, who had by this point collected enough flowers, ran to see those silver swans as they floated down the river. And when they saw them, the nymphs stood in stunned amazement, filling their eyes with the wonderful sight. The nymphs thought that they had never seen such lovely birds, and they assumed that they were angelic, or that they were the mythological swans who drew the goddess Venus's chariot through the sky. The swans were so beautiful

it seemed impossible that they were born from any mortal creature; instead, the nymphs thought they were angels or the children of angels. Yet, the truth is that the swans were bred from the heat of the sun in the spring, when the earth was covered in fresh flowers and plants. They seemed as new and fresh as their wedding day, which was not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem.

Then the nymphs took out of their baskets all the sweet-smelling flowers they'd picked and threw them onto the swans and onto the waves of the river, so that river seemed like the river Peneus in Greece, which flows through the Tempe Valley in Thessaly. Indeed, the river was so covered in lilies that it seemed like the floor of a bridal chamber. Two of the nymphs wove flower crowns from the freshest flowers they could find in the meadow; they presented these to the swans, who wore them on their foreheads. Meanwhile, another nymph sang the following song, which was prepared for the swans' wedding day, which was not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem.

"You swans, who are the world's beautiful decoration and the glory of the skies: you are being led to your lovers, and I wish you joy and happiness in your marriage. I further pray that Venus, the queen of love, and her son, Cupid, will smile on you, and with their smiles, remove all fights and and conflicts from your marriages. I pray that your hearts will be full of peace, your kitchens full of food, and your bedrooms proper and fruitful, so that your children defeat your enemies, and that your joy will overflow on your wedding day, which is not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem."

That was the end of the nymph's song, and everyone repeated her, announcing that the swans' wedding day wasn't far off-and the ground echoed with this line, which then echoed throughout the meadow. Thus the joyful swans went down the river Lee. Its waters murmured as they passed, almost as though the river would speak to them if he were able to talk. But he did make his affection clear by slowing down his current. And all the birds that lived on the river began to flock around the two swans, who were far more beautiful than those other birds-

just as the moon is far more beautiful than the stars around it. In this way, they arranged themselves around the swans and waited on them, and lent them their best service for their wedding day, which was not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem.

### Analysis

Pro', means "prior to", the term Prothalamion is noted Spenserian neologism, invented to signify a preliminary nuptial song which is published in 1596.

The prothalamion poem is a spousal verse written by Spenser on the occasion of the wedding of Elizabeth and Catherine Somerset (daughters of Edward Somerset) The Earl of Worcester.

The wedding was Formalized at the Strand in London, in Essex house. This poem is vastly different from Spenser's own nuptial song, for ex; where 'Epithalamion' is exuberantly sensual and consistent throughout its length and its themes, the 'Prothalamion' is shorter, more pensive, and almost sedate in its pace. The poem is written in a conventional form of a marriage song.

The theme is a song in the honor of the marriage of lady Elizabeth and Catherine Somerset. Its center theme is the celebration around the river Thames, which is also a key symbol and setting. Images and ideas of beauty surrounds the Thames such as nymphs gathering flowers for the crown to sisters

and natural world and the fragility of perfection is also used as one of the themes in the poem.

### Conclusion

After a while, they all came to London, which was where I was born and raised, though I am named after a different place, and come from an old, well-known family. They came to a place where there were brick towers on the banks of the Thames, which serve now as housing for law students, though in the past they were the headquarters of the Knights Templar, until that order crumbled due to pride. Next to the brick towers there is a place where I often received favors from the important man who lives there- whose protection I sorely miss now, though it is inappropriate to meditate on such grievances here, and I should limit myself to talking about the joys of the wedding day, which is not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem.

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# LOVE AND WAR IN THE NOVEL *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*

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## Abstract

*One of the topmost an autobiographical, romantic novels A Farewell to Arms. This novel was written by an American novelist and Nobel laureate Ernest Miller Hemingway. The genre of novel is realism. The novel was set against the backdrop of the first world war. Hemingway's novel is the first person account of a wartime love-story. The novel begins in the war-torn landscapes of Italy and later shifts to Switzerland. The novel depicts the tragic love-story of Catherine Barkley and Lieutenant Frederic Henry. He is the protagonist of the novel, an ambulance driver and she is an English nurse. He loves her genuinely. Henry's interest in the war is superficial and his interest in Catherine shallow. For Henry, Catherine has lent a meaning and a significance to live. He has moved towards the priest definition of love as Sacrifice and Service. An interesting thing of this novel is their love-story begins in hospital and ends in hospital. This tragic ending makes a shattering impact on our minds.*

**Keywords:** war, love, sacrifice

The love between Henry and Catherine blossoms in the war. Love and war are the major themes of this novel. World war I(1914-18) was fought between Germany and Austria on one side and Great Britain, France, Russia and the United States on the other. The historical events described in this novel. In the year 1916, Lieutenant Frederic Henry is an American who has volunteered for the Italian ambulance corps. During an encounter with the enemy Henry is wounded in the knee. For treatment he is sent to an American hospital in Milan, there he is thrilled to see Catherine Barkley working as a nurse.

The novel present a comparative exposure of love and war. The novel shows how Henry falls in love despite his skepticism. War and love influenced both the characters. He begins to feel that war is not important thing. Both Henry and Catherine find more meaning in their relationship. She has merged herself in him. I'm you. Don't make up a separate me. He heals gradually. The two separate with mutual devotion and hope to see each other soon.

Henry travels to the front, where Italian forces are turning chaotic. Henry leads his team of ambulance drivers into the great column of evacuating troops. When the war is in critical situation, Henry manages to escape from the war place and able to board the train to Stresa. He dreams to return to Catherine. He says, "I had the paper but

I did not read it because I did not want to read about the war. I was going to forget the war. I had made a separate peace." Henry reunites with Catherine and wanted to lead a peaceful, happy life. Both are very happy and excitement for life. Love is described in the novel as a source of happiness. The development of the two themes love and war runs exactly parallel.

Later they faced unexpected and complicated situation in hospital. She delivers a stillborn baby boy. Henry cries and pray "God please make her not die. Please, please, dear God, don't let her die". Soon Catherine passes away. It is raining when Catherine dies. Henry feels emptiness. He did not preserve his love. How the harsh realities of life disturbs the distracting fantasies of life. His life is empty without Catherine. This shows how much he loves to beautiful Catherine. "Great love just like other things in the world, however good or bad they may be, do not last forever". The story is about quest for meaning of life.

## Conclusion

A Farewell to Arms seemed a farewell to life, a farewell to everything. The novel is realistic and romantic in American literature. It is a pathetic love-story of Henry and Catherine. Their beautiful story blossoms in hospital and wither in hospital. Love and war are really an unlikely pair. Their love was written in the stars. They don't hold their hands together forever.

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# THEMES, SYMBOLISM AND *TATRI V/S MRS.MALLARD*, IN ANTHARJANAM'S "A GODDESS OF REVENGE" "AND KATE CHOPIN'S" A STORY OF AN HOUR

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## Abstract

*This paper deals with thematic approaches and symbolism in Lalithambika Antharjanam's short story, "Tatri, A Goddess of Revenge" and Kate Chopin's short story, "A Story of An Hour". Kate Chopin's short story "The Story of an Hour" explores themes of "women's independence and the importance of having a voice in society". The story is set in the 19th century, when women were expected to fulfill domestic roles and were considered property. The story's themes and symbolism include, "The importance of women's independence", "The desire for freedom", "The open window", "The natural environment", "Louise's husband, Brently", "The change of name". The story "The Goddess of Revenge" by Lalithambika Antharjanam explores themes of "revenge, gender roles, and the subversion of authority". The story is based on the true story of Kuriyedathu Tatri, who experienced the "Smarta Vichara" preliminary route in 1905. Antharjanam leaves the interpretation of the story to the reader. The character Tathrikutty symbolizes "the subversion of authority and the questioning of society's moral policing".*

**Keywords:** brahmin woman, feminism, namboothiri community, rules and regulations, gender, freedom, symbolism, patriarchy

## Thematic approaches in "Goddess of Revenge" and "A Story of an Hour"

The works "Tatri: A Goddess of Revenge" by Antharjanam and "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin explore deep themes related to gender, freedom, patriarchy, and personal identity. Both stories center on women grappling with oppressive societal structures and how these structures affect their sense of self and freedom.

## Gender and Patriarchy

In "Tatri", gender roles are central to the story, and the oppression of women within a patriarchal society is clearly depicted. The protagonist, Tatri, is a woman from a traditional society in Kerala, India, where her gender and social position limit her power. Her journey from a powerless woman to a figure of vengeance can be seen as a response to the patriarchal system that both limits her and defines her worth. Some critics see Tatri's transformation into a goddess of revenge as a symbolic rejection of the patriarchal structures that deny women agency. The notion of a woman turning into a goddess

reflects the desperation that women feel when oppressed by male-dominated social systems. It also symbolizes the ways in which women's anger, when unaddressed, can lead to destructive outcomes. Scholars of feminist literary criticism view the goddess transformation as a powerful metaphor for women's empowerment in a society where they are often marginalized. The transformation of the protagonist from a regular woman to a divine figure embodies a break from societal expectations.

In Chopin's work, gender and patriarchy play a pivotal role in the protagonist Louise Mallard's emotional journey. Her marriage, although loving, is presented as a source of societal constraint, one that forces her to subdue her individuality for the sake of the marriage institution. The opening of the story, where Louise hears the news of her husband's death, reveals the entrapment women face in marriage due to traditional gender expectations. Louise's reaction to her husband's supposed death is not one of grief but rather of relief and liberation, indicating how her identity was stifled by the roles imposed by society. Feminist critics view this as a profound critique of



the institution of marriage, suggesting that for many women, even loving marriages represent a kind of imprisonment. Some critics emphasize that Chopin illustrates the repression of women in the 19th century, arguing that Louise's brief moment of freedom is a comment on the societal expectations that confine women to domestic roles. Scholars argue that Chopin uses the story to subtly critique the way women's autonomy was undermined by marriage laws, which expected women to relinquish their individual rights in favor of family and husband.

### **Freedom and Autonomy**

The theme of freedom is explored in *Tatri* through the protagonist's act of vengeance. *Tatri* is denied agency in her personal life due to the societal norms governing women. Her revenge, in many ways, is a bid for freedom—freedom from the rigid roles assigned to her as a woman, but also freedom from the religious and cultural structures that confine her. However, some critics argue that her revenge does not bring her true liberation but rather subjects her to further entrapment in a cycle of violence and ritual. Critics note that the revenge motif is both a metaphorical and literal quest for freedom, yet it also shows the complex nature of liberation in patriarchal societies. *Tatri* may briefly gain power, but it comes at the cost of her humanity, showing how the pursuit of revenge often does not lead to true freedom. Some argue that *Tatri*'s "freedom" is an illusion, as it is based on anger rather than self-realization. As noted by critics of postcolonial feminist literature, the idea of freedom in *Tatri* reflects the struggles of women in traditional societies who find themselves in situations where they can neither conform nor truly break free from oppressive systems.

In Chopin's story, the theme of freedom is starkly portrayed. Louise's brief moment of freedom after learning of her husband's death is a significant commentary on how deeply gender roles and societal expectations can shape an individual's experience of life. Her joy at her husband's death is not rooted in malice but in the recognition that she is now free to live for herself, without the constraints of marriage. Critics argue that Louise's moment of freedom is an

epiphany about how oppressive marriage can be for women, especially in the context of 19th-century gender norms. However, this fleeting moment of freedom is tragically short-lived, as Louise dies upon discovering that her husband is alive, illustrating how women's autonomy in marriage is often a fragile, temporary state. Some critics see this as a tragic commentary on the impossibility of lasting freedom for women within the traditional social structure of the time. The theme of freedom is explored in feminist readings, where the critics highlight how Louise's brief liberation symbolizes a larger societal issue: that many women, regardless of their individual desires, were often trapped in a system that did not allow them autonomy.

### **Identity and Self-Realization**

In *Tatri*, identity is explored through the protagonist's transformation from a victim to a vengeful figure. This shift reflects the character's journey toward self-realization, although this realization is marked by anger and violence. Critics view her revenge as a reclaiming of her lost identity, yet the violence involved in her transformation questions whether true self-realization is possible within a system that does not value women as autonomous individuals. Some feminist critics interpret *Tatri*'s transformation into a goddess as a powerful act of reclaiming power. However, others point out that her act of vengeance is self-destructive, showing that when women are denied their humanity, they may be driven to extremes in their search for self-worth. The story suggests that the struggle for identity is often complicated in oppressive societal structures.

In Chopin's work, identity is tied to the sense of self Louise gains upon learning of her husband's death. Louise realizes that she is now free to live her life for herself—her identity as an individual, separate from the role of wife, can be rediscovered. Critics argue that Louise's self-realization in this brief moment of freedom is a reflection of how marriage, in its traditional form, suppresses women's identities, forcing them to exist in relation to their husbands rather than as independent beings. Scholars point out that Louise's epiphany represents a

realization of her own desires and identity beyond the role of wife. Her reaction suggests that many women in 19th-century America were forced to conform to societal roles that limited their sense of self. Critics often argue that Chopin presents this realization with a subtle irony, showing that while women can discover their identities, society's rigid structures often prevent them from fully realizing or enjoying that freedom. Feminist interpretations focus on how Louise's realization highlights the conflict between personal desire and societal expectations. It critiques a system that demands women's subordination to their husbands, ultimately questioning how such a system stifles the full development of a woman's individual identity.

### **Symbolism in "Tatri: A Goddess of Revenge" and "The Story of an Hour"**

Both Antharjanam's "Tatri: A Goddess of Revenge" and Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" use symbolism to deepen their exploration of gender roles, oppression, and the quest for freedom. In both stories, symbolic elements are used to represent deeper societal issues, especially the limitations placed on women by patriarchal systems.

#### **1. Symbolism in "Tatri: A Goddess of Revenge"**

##### **a) The Goddess Transformation**

One of the most powerful symbols in Tatri is the protagonist's transformation into a goddess of revenge. Tatri, initially a victim of patriarchal oppression, becomes a vengeful figure, embodying the destructive force of women's repressed anger. This transformation can be seen as a symbol of resistance and empowerment, but also of how violence and retribution become distorted when they stem from centuries of systemic oppression. Critics view the goddess transformation as both a positive and negative symbol. On one hand, it represents a woman's reclamation of power, a break from the passive, oppressed roles imposed by society. On the other hand, it suggests the dangers of vengeance. Critics note that the goddess figure is not just a symbol of empowerment, but also of the uncontrollable anger and self-destruction that comes

from prolonged subjugation. The goddess is a double-edged sword—her power is not wholly liberating, as it also traps Tatri in a cycle of retribution. As feminist scholars of postcolonial literature have pointed out, the goddess in Tatri symbolizes the tension between sacred femininity and revenge, where a woman's anger, when ignored or repressed, can transform into something monstrous. This symbolism highlights how women, when denied agency, can be driven to extreme measures to assert their identity.

##### **b) The Setting and Rituals**

The setting of Tatri—rooted in a traditional, religious society—also plays a symbolic role. The rituals and cultural practices that Tatri is forced to participate in symbolize the oppressive religious and social systems that keep women confined to their roles. The oppressive societal norms in the community represent the cage that limits women's autonomy and identity, making her transformation into a goddess an act of defiance against these rituals. Some critics argue that the setting, which intertwines religious rites with social power structures, symbolizes how deeply ingrained patriarchal values are in cultural practices. These rituals represent a socialized form of gender oppression, where even sacred practices are used to reinforce a woman's place in society.

##### **c) Vengeance as a Symbol of Power**

Tatri's pursuit of revenge is itself a potent symbol. It represents the unacknowledged fury of women who have been oppressed by both familial and societal structures. Tatri's vengeance, however, does not bring her the peace or resolution she seeks. Critics highlight that this symbolizes how women's anger, when left unchecked or ignored, can turn destructive not only for the individual but also for the larger community. The motif of vengeance is examined in postcolonial feminist readings, which argue that revenge in the story symbolizes how a repressed voice—when finally given an outlet—becomes dangerous, mirroring the societal fears surrounding women's anger and autonomy.

## 2. Symbolism in "The Story of an Hour"

### a) The Open Window

The open window in *The Story of an Hour* is one of the most iconic symbols in the story. When Louise Mallard hears of her husband's death, she sits before an open window and looks out at the world beyond. The open window symbolizes the freedom and new possibilities that Louise feels are now within her reach. It represents the breath of fresh air that comes with the liberation from the constraints of marriage. Critics widely interpret the open window as a symbol of possibility and hope. Louise's view of the outside world, filled with the colors of nature and the renewal of life, is symbolic of her newfound independence and individuality. Feminist critics, in particular, suggest that the window represents a path to self-realization, showing that women, like Louise, have the capacity to see beyond their prescribed roles and imagine a life of autonomy. As feminist scholars of the 19th century note, the open window is a symbol of escape from the confines of marriage, which in Louise's case represents the prison of her gendered role as a wife. The window offers a glimpse into a world of freedom that is denied to her within the house.

### b) Louise's Heart Trouble

The heart trouble that Louise suffers from is another significant symbol. Critics often interpret her heart condition as a metaphor for the emotional and physical strain caused by the restrictions of her marriage. Louise's heart disease symbolizes the suppressed desires and suffocation that many women experienced in the restrictive social environment of the late 19th century. Critics argue that Louise's heart trouble is a symbolic representation of the internal conflict that women face when they are forced to live according to societal expectations. The disease is not just a physical ailment but a representation of the emotional toll of being in a marriage that does not allow for personal growth or fulfillment. Scholars have noted that Louise's heart condition can be read as a metaphor for the heartache women experience when their personal desires are suppressed by the

demands of marriage and motherhood, a sentiment echoed in much of feminist literary criticism.

### c) The Irony of Freedom

The irony of Louise's death at the end of the story, upon discovering that her husband is alive, is rich with symbolic meaning. Her brief moment of freedom symbolizes how the structures that confine women are often so deeply ingrained that they cannot be escaped, even in moments of apparent liberation. Critics highlight the tragic irony of the ending, interpreting Louise's sudden death as a symbol of how women's liberation is often temporary or unattainable within the confines of patriarchal society. Some feminist critics read this as a commentary on how women's independence is often thwarted by societal and familial expectations. The final irony—the sudden return of her husband—represents the fragility of the freedom that women can experience in marriage. Critics suggest this ending highlights that for many women in the 19th century, true freedom was elusive and fleeting, often crushed by the realities of their societal roles.

**Feminist Criticism of "Tatri":** Critics in the feminist tradition argue that *Tatri* uses the goddess symbolism to reveal the complexity of female empowerment within a patriarchal society. The goddess symbolizes both strength and destruction, echoing the duality of women's struggles against oppression—where resistance can both empower and consume. As scholars such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty have discussed, the concept of "empowerment" in postcolonial literature often carries complex implications, particularly when the means of empowerment are rooted in violence or revenge, as they are in *Tatri*.

**Feminist Criticism of "The Story of an Hour":** Critics widely interpret the open window and the ironic ending of the story as symbolic of the internal and external restrictions placed on women in 19th-century society. The moment of freedom that Louise experiences is seen as a poignant critique of the limitations on women's autonomy within the institution of marriage. Scholars like Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in their work on feminist readings

of 19th-century literature, emphasize that the window symbolizes the possibilities for women to escape traditional roles, yet the ending reveals the tragic irony of how those possibilities are often out of reach for women within the confines of marriage.

### **Tatri Vs. Mrs. Mallard: A Comparative Analysis of Protagonists**

Both Tatri in Antharjanam's "Tatri: A Goddess of Revenge" and Mrs. Louise Mallard in Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" serve as protagonists who grapple with the constraints placed on them by patriarchal structures. These two characters, despite their cultural and temporal differences, share a common theme: their responses to oppressive gender roles. While Tatri seeks revenge and transformation into a goddess, Mrs. Mallard experiences a brief, fleeting moment of liberation upon hearing of her husband's death. The comparison between these two characters allows us to explore how different narratives portray women's struggles with freedom, identity, and empowerment within patriarchal societies.

#### **Response to Patriarchy**

**Tatri's Struggle with Patriarchy:** Tatri is deeply entrenched in a patriarchal and religious society that limits her autonomy. Her response to oppression is rebellion—specifically, a vengeful transformation into a goddess. This symbolic metamorphosis reflects her rejection of the oppressive structures that attempt to define her as a submissive woman. Her choice to exact revenge on those who wronged her suggests that empowerment for her comes in the form of assertion and violence. Critics argue that Tatri's transformation into a goddess is both a liberatory and destructive act. While it signifies resistance to patriarchy, it also symbolizes the potential for women's empowerment to become consumed by anger and vengeance. Some postcolonial feminist critics view Tatri as a tragic figure, whose rebellion against patriarchal constraints leads her to embody both strength and a loss of humanity. Feminist critics like Chandra Talpade Mohanty explore how women from marginalized communities, like Tatri, often

resort to radical acts of defiance, reflecting the deep-seated anger that arises from systemic oppression.

**Mrs. Mallard's Struggle with Patriarchy:** Mrs. Mallard's response to the news of her husband's death is more internal and psychological than physical. She reacts with a feeling of freedom rather than sorrow, recognizing that her marriage, though not unloving, has confined her. Her response is an emotional liberation, symbolized by her physical collapse and her gaze through the open window, which represents the possibilities of an autonomous life. Unlike Tatri, whose response is aggressive and external, Mrs. Mallard's liberation is subtle and internal, embodying the emotional constraints that women often face within marriage. Scholars have noted the irony of Mrs. Mallard's reaction, pointing out that while her brief taste of freedom is powerful, it is ultimately fragile and short-lived. Feminist critics interpret her sudden death as a metaphor for the impossibility of genuine freedom for women in a patriarchal society. Louise's brief moment of empowerment is fleeting and tragically ended by the return of her husband, symbolizing how quickly a woman's autonomy can be threatened. According to feminist scholars like Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Chopin's portrayal of Louise's fleeting moment of freedom speaks to the deep emotional cost of women's subordination, showing how patriarchal structures deny women even the possibility of lasting liberation.

#### **Agency and Empowerment**

Tatri's empowerment comes in the form of active rebellion. She chooses to reject the identity that society has imposed on her as a passive victim. Her goddess transformation symbolizes her reclaiming of power, though it is fueled by revenge and anger. In her eyes, empowerment is inseparable from resistance. She resists not only patriarchy but also the societal and religious systems that dictate her life. However, critics argue that her empowerment is not liberating in a truly constructive sense, but instead destructive and emotionally corrosive. While some critics admire Tatri's act of defiance, they also point out the negative consequences of her transformation.

In a postcolonial feminist reading, revenge as empowerment is seen as self-destructive—a woman's rage, when not allowed an appropriate outlet, turns into something that harms both herself and others. Her desire for vengeance does not lead to freedom in the traditional sense but to self-inflicted entrapment in the cycle of violence and anger. Scholars like Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha argue that women's resistance in postcolonial societies often takes forms that are complex, marked by both strength and potential for self-destruction, much like Tatri's vengeance-driven empowerment.

Mrs. Mallard's moment of empowerment is internal and emotional, marked by her realization that she is no longer bound by the institution of marriage. However, this newfound agency is short-lived. Mrs. Mallard's empowerment is based on the realization that she can now make decisions for herself, without the limitations of her role as a wife. This realization symbolizes a brief but profound recognition of personal autonomy, which is contrasted with the sudden return of her husband and her death, signaling the impossibility of long-term agency for women in her societal context. Critics often view Mrs. Mallard's emotional awakening as a critique of the suffocating norms of marriage and gender roles. While her death may seem tragic, feminist scholars argue that it highlights the impossibility of liberation for women within the patriarchal systems of the time. In this view, her death is symbolic of how women's autonomy is often denied or destroyed by those very systems. According to feminist critics such as Elaine Showalter, Louise's brief emotional liberation in the story underscores the limitations of marriage as an institution, showing how women's independence is fleeting in a world that does not recognize them as fully autonomous individuals.

#### **Thematic Differences: Revenge Vs. Liberation**

**Tatri, Revenge and Destruction:** The central theme of Tatri is revenge, which is symbolic of resistance to patriarchal authority. However, the violence inherent in Tatri's revenge indicates a broader critique of the cost of rebellion. Her power comes not from a

peaceful assertion of autonomy but through an explosive rejection of societal norms. Critics note that Tatri's vengeance provides her with a sense of control but also perpetuates a cycle of violence, indicating that true liberation for women may require more than just reactive power.

**Mrs. Mallard, Liberation and Irony:** The central theme of *The Story of an Hour* is freedom—specifically, the fleeting nature of female autonomy within the confines of marriage. Mrs. Mallard's brief moment of freedom is experienced internally, and the irony of her death highlights the fragility of female independence within a patriarchal society. Critics argue that Louise's experience is symbolic of the emotional imprisonment that women often feel in their roles as wives, mothers, and daughters.

#### **Conclusion: Empowerment, Tragedy, and Social Critique**

Both Tatri and Mrs. Mallard represent women who are struggling against patriarchal constraints, but their paths diverge sharply. Tatri's empowerment is marked by violent rebellion and a transformation into a goddess, whereas Mrs. Mallard experiences a brief, internal liberation followed by tragic irony. Both characters illuminate the complexities of female identity and autonomy in patriarchal societies, but their responses to oppression differ significantly: one is reactive and violent, the other quiet and introspective. Critics have long debated these characters' responses to oppression, with some highlighting the tragic consequences of reactive empowerment (Tatri) and others noting the irony of fleeting liberation (Mrs. Mallard). Both characters ultimately underscore the difficulty of achieving true freedom for women in rigid, patriarchal societies. Feminist critics, including Judith Butler and Simone de Beauvoir, have used such stories to discuss how women's rebellion—whether passive, like Mrs. Mallard's emotional awakening, or active, like Tatri's vengeful act—is often constrained or thwarted by societal norms, making true liberation almost impossible to achieve.

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# TRANSLATED LITERATURE IN ENGLISH FROM MARATHI LITERATURES: TRANSLATED WORK OF VIJAY TENDULKAR FROM MARATHI TO ENGLISH LITERATURE: *SILENCE THE COURT IS IN SESSION*

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## Abstract

*Vijay Tendulkar is an Indian playwright, movie and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist, and social commentator primarily in Marathi. He has written 27 full-length plays and 25 one-act plays. Several of his plays have proven to be Marathi theatre classics. By providing insight into major social events and political upheavals during his adult life, Tendulkar became one of the strongest radical political voices in Maharashtra in recent times. He has courageously exposed political hegemony of the powerful and the hypocrisies in the Indian social mindset. His plays have been translated and performed in many Indian languages. One of his famous plays is Silence the Court is in Session has been translated in 16 languages. The play explores themes of patriarchy and the failure of the justice system in India. Tendulkar has represented the dilemma of a young woman who is betrayed by the male-dominated society. It focuses the failure of Justice System. The play is about a mock trial. Right from the start, the judicial system is being mercilessly satirized.*

## Introduction

Vijay Tendulkar is a prominent playwright in Indian Literature and a naturalistic and a socio-political playwright. He was one of the most influential theatre playwright, essayist and movie and television writers in Marathi literature. His plays highlight the inspiration from real-life incidents or social upheavals. His plays are women centric which magnifies the injustice and revolt against traditional moral of orthodox society. Tendulkar's plays are the sources where he has exposed political hegemony of the powerful and the hypocrisies in the Indian social mindset. By providing insight into major social events and political upheavals and harsh realities of contemporary society during his adult life, Tendulkar became one of the strongest radical political voices in Maharashtra.

Tendulkar's plays uncover the real situations in contemporary society. He exposes real life incidents and realities of Contemporary society. The plays portray different aspects of human characters. All of them expose the complexity of human relationships.

Most of his plays deal with the individual pitted against the society and explore the tensions between the two. Women are the protagonist of many of his plays. Most of Tendulkar's dramas follow the naturalistic model of dramaturgy. Although there is similarity; the plays are clearly distinct from each other.

His play *Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe (Silence! The Court Is in Session)* was written in 1963 for Ramayana, a theatre group, though it was performed much later in 1967. It could not win any prize but Ramayana continued doing it. However, it won awards for acting and direction the following year when Satyadev Dubey did it in Hindi. It was adjudged the play of the year and Tendulkar won the Kamladevi Chattopadhyay Award in 1970 and Sangeet Academy Award in 1971. It is translated into 16 languages in India and abroad. The play is translated into English as *Silence! The Court is in Session* by Priya Adarkar. The play proved mile stone not only in Tendulkar career but in the history of Marathi drama also. It is 'a play within a play' in

which Tendulkar has raised several questions about love, sex and moral values prevalent in the Society. To expose the hollowness of the middle class morality and double standards of Society, he makes ample use of irony, satire, pathos and mock element. The success of the play lies in its universality. The questions raised by Miss. Benare the central character of the play, exist in all ages and societies. Benare is projected as a rebel against the established values of the basically traditional society. So in a sense, she may be seen as Tendulkar's projection of a 'New woman' in the Indian Context.

This play has a play within itself that presents a mock-trial. In it, we find group of teachers who were planning a stage in a village. A rehearsal was arranged and a mock trial was staged to make them understand the court procedure. Their spiteful attitude to Miss. Leela Benare, the central character of the play, reflects their malicious and spiteful attitude towards their fellow beings. A well-targeted conspiracy is hatched out against her, and in the name of a mock-trial, they expose and dissect her personal life blight her psyche. Their attitude towards her reveals the basic hypocrisy and double standards of society. The play exposes the vulnerability of women in Indian society. A mock charge of infanticide was leveled against Miss Benare who is a simple and straightforward school teacher. She is cross-examined in the court with full mockery. She is charged with infanticide and having illicit relations with a married person Prof. Damle and in this way her private life is exposed. All the other characters like witnesses Mr. Ponkshe, Rodke, Mr. Karnik, Samant, counsel for the defense and counsel for the crown Mr. Sukhatme and Judge, Mr. Kashikar and his wife Mrs. Kashikar, all behave in a way of mockery. Interestingly Sukhatme plays the role of a counsel on both sides that shows the height of fun.

#### **'Justice' in *Silence the Court Is in Session***

The play reveals the themes like Patriarchy, roles of women, hypocrisy and justice system. The plot revolves around judgments of community towards unmarried mother within a patriarchal society. The play takes place in a mock court, which was set for

the rehearsal of next day's performance. Through mock trial, Tendulkar shows how Law is used as an instrument in silencing the voice of women. Tendulkar is a realistic playwright who portraits the society in its way. Each character in his play reveals various human psyche present in the so-called 'culture and society'.

The word 'Justice' is the idea that people should be treated fairly and impartially by the law. This includes holding people accountable for their actions and ensuring that no one is harmed. As a Legal term it has a pure purpose which determines who should receive benefits or burdens when the law is applied. This includes establishing rights and ensuring that remedial action is taken when harm is alleged. But, the play *Silence! The court is in Session* shows how the legal system fails and has not value in male dominating society. The females are forced to follow the decisions of jury without committing crime but being the accused.

The word "Silence" is used as a tool of subjugation and discrimination in a male dominated society which has been structured in such a way that, a breakthrough the norms of the culture are considered to be a crime. When a man is also behind the reason of a cultural offence, he is not accused at any point, then why a woman alone has to suffer in silence? Even it portraits that there is no strict law for the defense of woman even in this Independent India and modern era, no one cares about the injustice.

Miss. Leela Benare the protagonist of the play is modern schoolteacher who is a bold, bright, confident woman and also manipulative at times. [Benare....] "Who are those people to say what I can or can't do? My life is my own – I haven't sold it to anyone for a job! My will is my own. My wishes are my own no one can kill those no one! I'll do what I like with myself and my life! I'll decide..." (Adarkar) She is confident modern female who represents the emerging working class woman against patriarchy. She pays no attention to the society and its discriminative norms for women; she lives her life the way she desires. She dedicatedly works for the improvement of the students so she is popular among the students and earns the jealousy of the



management and her colleagues. She is cheated twice in love first by her maternal uncle and later by Prof. Damle, her loving –companion. However, in the first event, the guilt passes unnoticed and hence, unpunished. But, in the other one, she is caught in a trap, through the cruel game cunningly arranged by her companions, for her love affair has been already resulted by her pregnancy. Each time Benare is disillusioned by her male-companions, for they love just her body and not her mind.

All the characters in the play other than Miss. Benare, Sukhatme, Rokde, Ponshe, Karnik, Mr. Kashikar, and Mrs. Kashikar represent the patriarchal forces of the society that cut the wax wings of Miss. Benare and pathetically subjugates her. Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar were childless, Ponshe could not become a Scientist, Sukhatme is an unsuccessful Lawyer, Karnik has failed as an actor and considers himself as an expert on 'Intimate Theatre'. Balu Rokade remains economically, psychologically and emotionally dependant on Kashikars. Each of them try their best to have sadistic pleasure in Miss. Benare's discomfiture. They force her to abort the child as she has spoiled the purity of the motherhood. The play reveals the inner evils of all characters which attack Miss. Benare for no fault of her own but being the victim of partial justice.

Each time, Miss. Benare's counterparts successfully contrive to victimize her, since she has no backing and support. She is forced to live a lonely, solitary life. So, it is easy for them to treat her as though she is a use and through object. The tragedy of her life does not end with this only. Miss Benare becomes an object of mock among her companions who pose that they are upholders of moral values of society. Benare is, therefore made a scapegoat. She is ill treated by her colleagues. She suffers at their hands for the offence she has not committed. This is why she does not accept the punishment meted out to her: "infanticide"

The male characters of the play that represent the male chauvinists of the society prosecute a conspired mock trial on Benare, who is found guilty of infanticide, being a spinster, without a wedlock

she has conceived a baby. Her private life was stripped out and publicly dissected. They started questioning about her illicit love affair with Prof. Damle a married man, even though she didn't take it up seriously in the beginning she was brutally attacked and harassed psychologically by the handicapped male chauvinist who has not achieved anything in life so far. Tendulkar highlights on discrimination that prevails in the modern Independent society that excuses men and accuses women for the same offence. Here the equal partner in crime Prof. Damle does not appear on the stage during the mock trial. When the victim herself tried defending, she was legally forced to be silent in the face of court. Here Miss. Benare who is a lively self-assertive woman is silenced by the social norms and also legally silencing the weaker one's plea for justice they love just her body and not her mind.

Sukhatame's accusation against Benare shows how she is proved as accused and hence punishable. : "her conduct has blackened all social and moral values. The accused is public enemy number one. If such socially destructive tendency is encouraged to flourish, this country and its culture will be totally destroyed."(Adarkar) In the end of the mock trial, they unanimously agreed that women must follow the traditional morals of the so called "civilized society" and giving independence to women leads "sinful canker on the body of society"

The words *Silence! The Court is in Session* indicating the absolute authority of the judge in the court room to decide upon the manners of others. The judge has also the final authority to pronounce contempt of court in case of breach of discipline. In a civilized society the court system is in vogue for the sake of justice. The judiciary is considered to be one of the four main pillars of democracy In the present play Vijay Tendulkar chooses a term of judicial register as the title of his play to make a powerful comment on a society with a heavy patriarchal bias that makes justice impossible and that converts the august judicial system into an instrument of oppression of women and the vulnerable. Ideally justice can be provided only if the judge and the judicial system are objectively detached. But, the

same objective detachment can become the face of a very repressive and dehumanized system if the persons involved in the process of justice are themselves devoid of human value and compassion

### Conclusion

Vijay Tendulkar highlighted critical problems like the squalor of Indian Judiciary system, male dominance in the society and the ostentatious institutional social organizations. The play is derision on the middle class probity, where people have all the rights to pass the judgments and silence is the only alternative left for the victim. The words of Candy Elizabeth quoted in 'The Introduction of Feminism in our Times' can be the best to sum up. According, to Candy: "Thus far women have been mere echoes of men. Our laws and constitutions, our creeds and codes and customs of social life are full of masculine origin. The true woman is yet a dream for future....." (Candy) Tendulkar implies the same attitude on society too where men are roaming 'faultless' and are permitted to seek extra marital sexual pleasure, while that of woman is limited within marriage. Miss Benare is not only accused and hurt for having illicit relations with Prof. Damle but she is dismissed from her job also with the blame that what moral she will present before the students though everyone is aware of her dedication to her profession. She knows that people are jealous of her freedom. But the mock trial hurts her so severely that finally she breaks down.

Benare ends up with a monologue: "These are the mortal remains of some cultured men of Twentieth Century. See their face- how ferocious they look! Their lips are full of lovely worn-out phrases! And their bellies are full of unsatisfied desires". (Adarkar, 74) The play criticizes the power dynamics within a legal system which highlight the way of patriarchal society which silences and judges women using court as a tool to reinforce social norms rather than delivering true justice.

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# NAGA- MANDALA: A STORY OF MARRIAGE AND LOVE

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## Abstract

*This paper entitled Naga-Mandala a Story of Marriage and love pursuits and analysis the powerful portrait of the agony and anguish faced by both men and women in their development into adult roles and social adjustment in a society where the individual is given little space for self-development awareness and independence as a being. Girish Karnad's plays reflect upon contemporary Indian cultural and social life through the use of folk tales, myths and historical legends. He weaves together timeless truths about human life and emotions contained in ancient Indian stories with the changing social mores and morals of modern life. His plays are particularly concerned with the psychological problems, dilemmas and conflicts experienced by Modern Indian men and women in their different social situations.*

**Keywords:** patriarchy, narcissism, psychological problems, dilemmas

## Introduction

Girish Raghunath Karnad born on 19th May 1938, in Mather, Maharashtra has become one of Indian's brightest shining stars, earning International praise as a playwright, poet, actor, director, critic, and translator. His rise as a playwright in 1960s, marked the coming of age of Modern Indian playwriting in kannada. For four decades karnad has been composing plays, often using history and mythology to tackle contemporary issues. He was conferred Padma Shree (1972) and Padma Bhushan (1974) by the Government of India and won four Filmfare Award. He is among seven recipients of Jnanpith Award for Kannada, the highest literary honor conferred in India. Nagamandala ia s folktale transformed into the metaphor of the married woman. It is a Chinese box story with two folktales transformed into one superstition, fact and fantasy, instinct and reason, the particular and the general blebd to produce a drama with universal evocations.

The source material of the Naga-mandala comes, as Karnad informs the reader in his introduction to the "Three Plays", from a folk tale that he had haerd from A.K Ramanujan, eho had collected many folk tales and their variants as they existed in different parts of India. The folk tale of a Prince whose extreme mistrust of women prevent him from loving any woman, and whose encounter with a woman's desire for love, has, as Ramanujan writes about this

tale, as many as forty variants. The central theme of all these tales is, as Ramanujan remarks, "the narcissism" of the "self-involved hero", who undergoes a test put to him by the wife in order to survive. The psychological inadequacy that the young man is caught in prevents his self transcendence, causing acute lack of understanding and communicating between him and a women.

Naga-mandala is not only about the male difficulty to trust and love women, and transcend his narcissism. It seems to be about the socialization process of both men and women, particularly in the Indian society where marriage is, more often than not, the first experience of sex and love for most of the people. Nagamandala probes into the female and male growth into selfhood, and their mature adjustment with the social roles appointed for them by the traditional society. Myths and folk tales in a patriarchal society represents primarily the male unconscious fears and wishes and are patriarchal constructs and "man-oriented". In these stories the woman's experiences and inner feelings often do not find adequate expression. They do not give much information about the women's fears, anxieties and psychological problems.

## Summary

Nagamandala is the story of a young girl, Rani, newly married to Appanna, and their gradual

understanding of the role, function and responsibilities of the institution of marriage. This story is presented in the play by a woman narrator, a “flame” which has come to tell a story. The play begins in the temple on the outskirts of a village, where a passer-by stops at night for a shelter. He then finds many tiny “flames” have come from different households in the village. Each flame is a female, a story-teller, sharing with the others her observations and new experiences.

The stranger, a writer himself, enters into their conversation, and listens to a ‘new’ tale that has just escaped from an old woman’s head.

The flame begins her story of Rani and Appanna. The dramatization of the tale now begins. Both Rani and Appanna do not know how much they can relate to each other. The young girl misses her parents, feels home-sick and lonely, while Appanna comes home only in the day, asks for food, stays for some time and then goes away. Every night he visits the concubine, which reflects his awareness of the biological aspect of sex. The initial stage is painful for Rani, who is still very attached to her parents. Appanna’s behavior reflects his divided emotional and physical selves. In fact the emotional aspect of his personality seems to be underdeveloped, as he treats both Rani and the prostitute in an unfair manner. Neither of the relationships is complete and satisfactory. Appanna treats her with contempt, aggression and mistrust. He locks her in the room, and scolds the old lady Kurudava and her son Kappanna when they attempt to become friendly with Rani.

In her isolation Rani begins to build a world of stories around herself. She imagines herself to be a princess locked up by a demon. “So the demon locks her up in the castle. Then it rains for seven days. Then a big whale comes to Rani and says, “Come, Rani, let us go.” (35). Her story grows and perhaps it is in her fantasy that she takes a lover. Her story expresses her psychoerotic needs which she does not fully understand. Women’s close-knit relationships with the other members of family and their lack of freedom to explore the world on their own is one of the reasons why identity for them is usually a matter

of relationships. Sudhir Kakar points out that the “dominant psycho-social realities of a woman’s life can be condensed into three stages. First, she is daughter to her parents; second she is wife to her husband (and daughter-in-law to his parents); and third, she is a mother to her sons (and daughters).” It is through these three important relationships that a woman realizes herself and social significance.

The important stage for facing the situation and their roles in it comes as Rani becomes pregnant. It is a moment of acknowledgement of the private and act. Appanna is aghast at this development and takes his wife to a public trial. Rani finds herself alone in the crisis, for the lover as well as the husband fail to provide moral or emotional support. Rani is asked by the man at night, whom she takes to be her husband, to “speak the truth... what you think is not of a consequence. It must be the truth.” (54) The truth for Rani is that she has been faithful to her husband. This conviction comes into the public. The nervous, frightened, young girl finds within herself a new courage and confidence and gain social respectability. She emerges triumphant from the public trial, as the snake does not bite her. The cold, aggressive and indifferent husband is subdued, mildly tamed and accept the judgement even if he is not fully convinced.

This stage of Rani’s social integration brings her a new sense of respect and her own worth. This is another significant aspect of the Indian social and cultural life in its treatment of women. In Sudhir Kakar’s words, “an Indian woman knows the motherhood confers upon her a purpose and identity that nothing else in her culture can.” (56). As a mother, Rani is seen, in the last part to the story, to be in command of the household, with some authority and decision making power.

Appanna even agrees to her rather strange demand that their son should perform an annual “pinda-daan” in the memory of dead snake.

Nagamandala depicts the man and woman pass through several stages of doubt, uncertainty and even failure before they become mature and learn to live harmoniously as husband and wife, within the family-fold. Appanna becomes a caring husband,

accepting Rani's decisions which may at times baffle him. This change in Rani's status comes through her motherhood, and the public trial, where her bold acceptance of the truth gains her public respectability. This transformation of both Appanna and Rani presents the significance of the institution of marriage. It is through adjustment that they gain the status within the life of community. As individuals, they gain the full selfhood only after going through these roles. Both man and woman accepts the social pressure in putting aside personal feelings about selfhood, fantasies and dreams about love and freedom and learns to surrender to the other for the sake of family and community. Rani's dream of lover who had awakened her and loved her as a woman, and Appanna's self-centered and physical relationship with the prostitute, are given up, and they work together in the interest of the family and the community. The public and private selves become connected through the acceptance of socially responsible roles. But does that completely dry up the hidden, suppressed desire for greater love and personal fulfillment? The double ending of the play presents this duality through the structural device.

### Conclusion

In End One of the story about Rani and Appanna, the Naga enters Rani's bedroom again and dies for the sake of Rani and her family. Though Rani grieves for her lover, the Naga's sacrifice paves the way for Rani's happy married life. In End Two of the story,

the snake does not die. He is allowed by Rani to live in her tresses, her "dark, long and cool tresses, like snake-princess" (57). The lover is always present, he lives with her, within the family. The dutiful and loyal wife may observe the social, moral code entirely, yet within her live the memories of the perfect lover who had given her a first emotional and erotic experience. These desires may haunt her or lie dormant within. What matters most to Rani during the period of her relationship with the snake-lover is the awakening of desire and introducing her to love rather than to sex. The woman's story expresses the female point of view about her needs, problems and experiences within the patriarchal institutions. It provides an understanding into the complex nature of human relations while also showing women's way of adjusting into their difficult social roles. The snake-lover's story has become a "vrat-katha", a story told as a festival of cobra worship, where women pray to the cobra for granting safety, and progeny to their family.

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## ENRICHMENT OF 'VOCABULARY' THROUGH LITERATURE

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### Introduction

“Literature just adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become” **C.S.Lewis** (British Scholar and Novelist, 1898-1963).

Effective and efficient communication skills are indispensable for the success of an individual in the globalising era which demands the individuals of interacting with others. To reach a wider audience and fulfil the requirements of communication, one has to master speaking in English language. As a global language, English very particularly has become the most commonly used language of communication for people. Therefore, English language learning has become mandatory for students in a country like India to face the global challenges and meet the growing demands of employment. Learning a foreign language like English is not an easy task, but requires great skills, enthusiasm and motivation to master and have complete command over it.

One has to go back to the rudimentary elements of basic communication namely Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. These skills cannot be mastered overnight by burning the midnight lamp, but learning English as a second language is a herculean task as it involves one's ability to listen carefully to grasp the content and meaning and consequently respond with appropriate use of 'vocabulary' and 'clarity of pronunciation'. There are different methods, sources and approaches through which word power or vocabulary can be developed. But there is nothing like the study of 'literature' and 'literary texts' which allows individuals to improve their language skills especially enrich vocabulary.

Since English has become an international important language, more and more people are using and studying it.

“The study of literature allows people to develop new ideas and ethical standpoints, and can help individuals to present themselves as educated members of society. Studying literature can be enriching, eye-opening experience” (Joshua Cruz, eHow contributor, www.eHow.com).

Traditionally, the role of Literature was not taken into consideration in English Language Teaching classrooms due to the importance given only to functional language. Today, Literature in second language classes has a very important role to play and the linguistic input for students it provides is a valuable source for learners' motivation. Usually, students who study only English Language emphasising on reading and writing skills, sometimes fail to see the point of studying English literature, especially if they have no plans to study English or Translation at University. *But English Literature can introduce students to a range of aspects, not only of the English Language but also of the English culture.*

*There are instances of many texts which provide not just the pleasure-principle but instruct and drive home the message to the learners. Great writers like Shakespeare, Hemingway, Walt Whitman, Toni Morrison, Rabindranath Tagore and philosophers like Aristotle, Socrates and others to name a few, supply many new words through their texts and enrich the readers mind with a great fund of knowledge and vocabulary.*

There are parts of the English culture that are “encapsulated” by English Literature. Of course this is quite evident when studying the works of

Shakespeare or other writers, poets and playwrights of last centuries. Teachers are the *basic pillars* to reach students through literature trying to attract them to this field that can be interesting to everyone. Teachers should think about everything that they are going to do without falling in boredom and keep their students interested in the topic. Also we, as teachers, consider that we are the ones who must make students get closer to Literature so that they can realise that it is not as abstract as they think, trying to avoid their frustration. Also it is useful to have literary texts and their analysis easier made for students.

Some points are helpful to teachers in the hard labour of keeping students interested in Literature.

Useful questions that teachers should be aware of

1. What has been your experience, as a teacher, when using Literature?
2. Do you prefer using originally literary texts or short versions for your students?
3. What kind of supplementary material, if any, would you use to raise students' motivation?
4. How can you include the four skills when using Literature in class?

Some tips to include Literature in an EIT context Students can learn about allusions and references to different aspects of English culture.

They can also learn the context and meaning of famous quotes and phrases.

When studying Literature, students can improve not only language such as vocabulary, but also the language that can be used for specific purposes.

The study of Literature can provide students with a fresh and creative angle with which they can approach their studies in particular and their lives in general.

English Literature makes students learn about their creativity and imagination, interacting with the text themselves, and playing different literary roles.

Literature must be presented as an authentic task, so the students can get through the texts discovering their different learning styles.

Students can live literature not only read it. Plays can be represented so that students can be

immersed in a different time and into a different person.

By following the histories presented throughout English Literature, it is possible to understand how contemporary Western culture has developed into what it is today.

Reading new words and new phrases can increase any one's lexicon.

The study of literature offers many ways to improve literacy: it gives access to language, reading, writing, a shared culture and one's own self. " (J.Trounstone, "Literature in Prison?" ).

Through the reading of literary texts, students can develop their autonomy and independence, making hypothesis and guessing unfamiliar words.

The use of authentic literary texts give learners the opportunity to connect to real world issues at the time they can learn true values for their lives.

Literature is the art of discovering something extraordinary about ordinary people, and saying with ordinary words something extraordinary- Boris Pasternak. The word communication was derived from the Latin language 'communicare'. Communication is an activity of transferring information from one person to other as well as one place to another. It is possible to send any language message in two ways. 1. Non-verbal 2.Verbal. In today's Global World we need to communicate with outer world effectively and efficiently.

Literature is a written document of the writer of the same people and culture of the society. Whether the types of Fiction or Non-Fiction, genres of Novel, Drama, Short Story, Essay, Poetry or any other form of writing, Literature reflects and influences of the races of the countries and continents. It's aim is not only provide dates and years of the incidents. It goes to the roots of the issues and shows the solutions for the problems. It is the heart and soul of the Language, Culture and Society.

Modern English Language learner not only focuses on Grammar, comprehension, written language skills he need to emphasis on oral fluency with accuracy of the English Language. The Global job market whether it is e-commerce, software industry, call centers, professional teachers Spoken

English language skills are must. The best method to enhance once communication is to expose to the outer world with proper vision.

### **Mother Tongue Influence**

English is a Foreign Language for us. It was introduced during the reign of British Government. We have our own Languages. Telugu People speak and write Telugu as well as other State people have their own languages, actually our Country was divided based upon Linguistic Differences. Our Mother Language is for our daily conversation purpose. We share our feelings, ideas, and expressions through our own language only. So the Mother tongue influence dominates us to communicate English fluently and effectively. There is a gap between our own Native language and the second or third language like English.

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Vol.3.Issue.1.2015 195 D.Venkateswar Rao & Dr. G.Mohana Charyulu Language acquisition comes automatically by its own culture. We fail to speak English like English man because we are not born to that country or its culture. Instead of wasting energy and time to imitate English Nation and English accent, try to express and communicate flawless English for mutual understanding and communicate to the outer world.

### **Role of English Grammar to Enhance Communication**

Grammar is an essential ingredient to learn English effectively. Grammar plays a vital role in Written Communication. To write flawless English one should know the rules and regulations of grammar. Professional Graduate Students need to write effective English for their career perspective. The World has changed drastically so English grammar is also need to change its structure. Indian students feel difficult to follow various rules and regulations of Language. English Lexicon and its Structure were originated from The Classical Languages of Greek and Latin. The rules of the British English Language

haven't changed yet. So the Global Student searches for other options. The new inventions like Internet, e-mail, show him a new path to get proficiency in English. A new trend spread the entire world that is American English. It's Lexicon; Structure is easy, clear and logically arranged Grammar. Technology, Science, book Publishing Houses, and all other areas update their English by American English. Still English Teacher and English Text book remain with Age old English Spelling Rules, Word order, Punctuation and conventional Grammatical Rules. Teaching Traditional English Grammar for Engineering, Management, Science Students are very difficult for English Teacher. The Students who belong to Technology are search for reality and ready to grasp information easily. Because of their IQ levels are high. So it is time to Revise English Grammar according to Latest Technology otherwise Grammar remains only in English Text Books and English Teacher's Sur names. Our Ancient Civilization has given a wonderful gift. It is Sanskrit Language.

Due to its Conventional Grammatical Rules it has submerged in the Global World. There is a big threat to British English Language not with People but with Latest Communication Technology. The three Classical Languages of the world, Sanskrit, Greek and Latin has vanished because of its Conventional Lexicon, Grammar. In this HI-TECH World there is no place for Traditional Rules, King's English, Queen's English, Traditional English but only one English, it is Logic based Technical English. Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people- William Butler Yeats.

### **Need of English Language**

English was introduced by Macaulay in our Educational system during the British rule. From that day onwards English has been part and parcel in our Country. For Business, Commerce, Education and Job marked it is the essential commodity. Even British Empire has fallen in India; the English Empire has been blooming. At the time of Independence, leaders and people raised slogans against English as, it should be banned. But still it



remains strongly not because of its Structure but its Flexibility.

We cannot divide these two words, they come jointly. The new World has originated with Globalization. The two main parts to connect the entire world is Computer Technology and English Language. These are effective technical and communicative tools. Now the Students are Global Students, Their Careers are Global Careers. These days if any educated person is not known to English and Computer, that person is called as an Illiterate man.

### Types of English Language Skills

1. Listening Skills
2. Speaking Skills
3. Reading Skill
4. Written communication
5. Writing Skills

Listening Skills: "Listen more, and speak less". Listening is the most important skill. Unfortunately, it is the most neglected one. In our day-to-day life, we show interest to hear to people than listen to them. There is a huge difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is a physical activity and listening is related to mind activity.

When we listen to others, we show interest in other person's body language and his opinions and ideas. When we listen to someone we should Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL) A Peer Reviewed (Refereed) International Journal <http://www.rjelal.com> Vol.3.Issue.1.2015.

### Grammar through Prose Lessons

Prose is the best tool to acquire English Language skills. Grammar is inbuilt with prose. So by teaching Prose Topics to the Students easily. Prose is composed of Words, Punctuation, Nouns, Verbs, Phrases and Sentences. Instead of teaching Grammar separately, it should be taught with

The use of literature in the ELT classroom enjoys a revival for a number of reasons. Having formed part of traditional language teaching approaches, literature became less popular when language teaching and learning started to focus on

the functional use of language. However, the role of literature in the ELT classroom has been re-assessed and many now view literary texts as providing rich linguistic input, effective stimuli for students to express themselves in other languages and a potential source of learner motivation.

One of the major functions of literature is to provide vocabulary skills. What we mean by providing vocabulary skills is that literature certainly helps in enhancing the word power of learners of any language but very specially english language. Literature is the rich storehouse of vocabulary and generates ample learning and strengthening of new words.so it is necessary that literary texts be used in the language learning/teaching classrooms.The literature used in ELT classrooms should no longer restricted to canonical texts from certain countries e.g. UK, USA, but includes the work of writers from a diverse range of countries and cultures using different forms of English.

Literary texts can be studied in their original forms or in simplified or abridged versions. An increasing number of stories in English are written specifically for learners of other languages. The types of literary texts that can be studied inside and outside the ELT classroom include:

1. Short Stories
2. Poems
3. Novels
4. Plays
5. Song Lyrics

Literary texts provide opportunities for multi-sensorial classroom experiences and can appeal to learners with different learning styles. Texts can be supplemented by audio-texts, music CDs, film clips, podcasts, all of which enhance even further the richness of the sensory input that students receive. Literary texts offer a rich source of linguistic input and can help learners to practise the four skills - speaking, listening, reading and writing - in addition to exemplifying grammatical structures and presenting new vocabulary.

Literature can help learners to develop their understanding of other cultures, awareness of 'difference' and to develop tolerance and

understanding. At the same time literary texts can deal with universal themes such as love, war and loss that are not always covered in the sanitised world of course books.

Literary texts are representational rather than referential (McRae, 1994). Referential language communicates at only one level and tends to be informational. The representational language of literary texts involves the learners and engages their emotions, as well as their cognitive faculties. Literary works help learners to use their imagination, enhance their empathy for others and lead them to develop their own creativity. They also give students the chance to learn about literary devices that occur in other genres e.g. advertising.

Literature lessons can lead to public displays of student output through posters of student creations e.g. poems, stories or through performances of plays. So for a variety of linguistic, cultural and personal growth reasons, literary texts can be more motivating than the referential ones often used in classrooms.

Teachers can exploit literary texts in a large number of ways in the classroom. Classroom work with literary works may involve pre-reading tasks, interactive work on the text and follow up activities. Pulverness (2003) provides some useful advice: Maximise pre-reading support. Teachers can introduce the topic or theme of the text, pre-teach essential vocabulary items and use prediction tasks to arouse the interest and curiosity of students.

- Minimise the extent to which the teacher disturbs students' reading.
- Draw attention to stylistic peculiarity.
- Help students to appreciate the ways that writers use language to achieve particular effects.
- Provide frameworks for creative response.
- Invite learners to step into the shoes of the writer or invite them to modify, extend or add to a text.

### **Some of the challenges to be faced when using literature in the classroom?**

Literary texts can present teachers and learners with a number of difficulties including:

- text selection - texts need to be chosen that have relevance and interest to learners.

linguistic difficulty - texts need to be appropriate to the level of the students' comprehension.

- length - shorter texts may be easier to use within the class time available, but longer texts provide more contextual details, and development of character and plot.
- cultural difficulty - texts should not be so culturally dense that outsiders feel excluded from understanding essential meaning.
- cultural appropriacy - learners should not be offended by textual content.

### **Conclusion**

Literature has been proven as a great tool to approach English language and English culture. Even though there are students and teachers that consider it as too abstract or bored, we, as teachers now and students in the past have experienced the situation and we can say that it works. It gets you closer to the language, culture as well as customs and it is always a way of learning how to write and spell correctly. Teachers should make literature interesting for students. That is the reason why this quotation resumes in one sentence what we truly think: "Literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge" **Povey (1972:18)**. A primary goal for many who read literature is to expand their vocabulary. After all, the point where a child's vocabulary is overshadowed by her ability to read occurs fairly early, so from an educational standpoint new words will be encountered early on by developing readers. The same is even more true for second language learners. So, how does an instructor help to increase an individual's vocabulary? On one hand, students can be assigned long word lists. While targeted vocabulary study is useful, it can be tiresome and discourage learners. Instead, literature offers the opportunity to passively acquire a much larger body of vocabulary. Active acquisition can be targeted for words of note, and in any event the words will be used in context. This helps to create a picture in the learner's mind of the definition of the word as well as letting them see the importance of the word to the language at hand.

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# THE OPPRESSION OF WOMAN IN *THE BLUEST EYE* BY TONI MORRISON

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## Abstract

*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison is a powerful and poignant novel that explores themes of race, beauty, identity, and societal expectations. The novel has a non traditional structure and shifts. Set in 1940s America, it follows Pecola Breedlove, a young African American girl who grows up in a racially segregated community. Pecola, who faces constant abuse and neglect, believes that having blue eyes would make her beautiful and worthy of love, reflecting the deeply ingrained colorism and racism of the society she lives in. The novel is told through a series of perspectives, primarily that of Claudia MacTeer, a young girl who reflects on Pecola's tragic story. Through flashbacks and multiple narrations, Morrison delves into the psychological and emotional impacts of racism and the destructive quest for an unattainable standard of beauty, represented by whiteness. The novel explores the devastating effects of societal rejection, self-hatred, and the ways in which these issues shape individual lives, particularly within African American communities. *The Bluest Eye* confronts uncomfortable truths about race, beauty standards, and the damaging effects of internalized oppression, while also illustrating the bonds of community and the ways in which individuals seek love and acceptance in a world that marginalizes them. *The Bluest eye* critiques the culture and social stratification that destroys pecola and other black girl shows how racism and white beauty standards stunt the growth and mentally impair blackgirl

## Introduction

*The Bluest Eye* is a novel by American author Toni Morrison, first published in 1970. It tells the story of Pecola Breedlove, a young African American girl growing up in 1940s Ohio, who longs for blue eyes and blonde hair, believing that these features will bring her the beauty and social acceptance she desperately desires. The novel explores themes of racial identity, beauty standards, and the psychological impact of racism and societal rejection. Morrison uses a combination of narration, flashbacks, and multiple perspectives to delve into the complexities of race, class, and self-worth in America. *The Bluest Eye* was controversial at its release for its unflinching portrayal of racism, abuse, and social marginalization. It remains a powerful and thought-provoking work in American literature.

## Summary

The *Bluest eye* is split into an untitled prelude and four large units, each named after a season. The four larger units begin with Autumn and end in Summer, with each unit being split into smaller sections. The first section of each season is narrated by Claudia

MacTeer, a woman whose memories frame the events of the novel. At the time that the main events of the plot take place, Claudia is a nine-year-old girl. This device allows Morrison to employ a reflective adult narrator without losing the innocent perspective of a child. Claudia MacTeer lives with her parents and her sister in the humble MacTeer family house in Lorrain, Ohio. The year is 1939.

The novel's focus, however, is on a girl named Pecola Breedlove. Pecola, we are told in the prelude, will be raped by her father by novel's end. The prelude frames the story so that the reader knows from the beginning that Pecola's story ends tragically. The Breedloves are poor, unhappy, and troubled. Their story seems in many ways to be deterministic, as they are often the victims of forces over which they have no control. Their situation is a powerful contrast to the MacTeers, who are of slender means but have a strong family unit. The MacTeers also seem to have much stronger agency, and are never really passive victims in the way that the Breedloves are.

When Claudia is not narrating, a third-person narrator takes her place. The narrative style, even in third person, is one of great psychological intimacy. The third-person narrator of *The Bluest Eye* is no dispassionate observer, but one who gives insights into the thoughts of characters and occasionally interprets events in a very explicit manner. The sections narrated in the third person are all focused on some aspect of Pecola's life the sections explore either a family member or a specific significant event. These sections have headings, taken from a reading primer's Dick and Jane story. The use of the primer is a biting comment on the distance between Pecola's life and the pink-skinned bourgeois world in the Dick and Jane story. Each heading is a clean, straightforward match up: the section about Pecola's house is headed by a Dick-and-Jane sentence about their house, the section about Pauline is prefaced by a Dick-and-Jane sentence about their mother, etc. The basic plot is very simple: when Cholly Breedlove, Pecola's father, attempts to burn their house down, Pecola is sent by social workers to stay temporarily with the MacTeers. Claudia and Frieda befriend the girl, who is lonely, abused, and neglected. While staying with the MacTeers, she menstruates for the first time. Her first period, as the reader must consider it, becomes an upsetting event makes it possible for her to be impregnated later by her own father. Pecola Breedlove goes back to live with her family, and we see aspects of her life depicted one section at a time. The Breedlove home is a converted storefront, cold and in disrepair. Pauline and Cholly Breedlove fight incessantly and with terrifying ferocity their battles always end up being physical and her brother Sammy runs away from home constantly. The Breedloves' name is suggestive and ironic: love is exactly what the family lacks, and certainly they are unable to generate more of it, as suggested by the word breed. Instead, breed becomes an ominous reference to what Cholly ends up doing with his own daughter.

Pauline is an unhappy woman who takes refuge in the wrathful and unforgiving aspects of Christianity. She lavishes her love on the white family for whom she works, while her own family

lives in squalor. Cholly is an angry and irresponsible man, violent, cruel, and uncontrollable. All of the Breedloves are considered ugly, although part of the novel's work is to question and deconstruct what that ugliness really means. To get away from her parents and to pass the hours, Pecola spends a great deal of time with the whores who live upstairs. China, Poland, and Marie tolerate her presence without providing any deep love for the girl.

Pecola is obsessed, we learn, with blue eyes. She prays for them constantly, and is convinced that by making her beautiful the blue eyes would change her life. From Pecola's wish and from many other events in the novel, it becomes clear that most of the people in Lorrain's black community consider whiteness beautiful and blackness ugly. The novel has many characters who long to look white, and also has several characters of mixed ancestry who emulate whites and try to suppress all things in themselves that might be African. Soaphead Church's Anglophile family and Geraldine are examples of this kind of black person.

The MacTeer family goes through their own small dramas, as Frieda and Claudia deal with stuck-up schoolmates and a lecherous boarder. Consistently, the MacTeer family is able to insulate the girls from harm. When their boarder a man named Mr. Henry makes an indecent pass at eleven-year-old Frieda, Mr. and Mrs. MacTeer react with force, protecting their daughter violently and without any doubt of her innocence. In contrast, in the Breedlove family the sexual threat comes not from outside the family unit but from within. One Saturday in spring, Cholly rapes Pecola. He rapes her a second time soon afterward. Pecola then becomes pregnant with her father's child.

Miserable and desperate, Pecola believes more than ever that blue eyes would change her life. She goes to a pedophilic fortune-teller named Soaphead Church to ask for blue eyes. Soaphead Church decides that he can use her for a small task, and so he uses an unwitting Pecola to kill a dog that he hates. She completes the task, which she believes will be like a transformative spell. The dog dies in a gruesome manner, and Pecola runs away in terror.

The next time we see Pecola, she's lost her mind. She spends all of her time talking to a new "friend"; he/she is an imaginary friend who is now the only person with whom Pecola speaks. The topic of conversation is most frequently the blueness of Pecola's eyes. Pecola spends the rest of her life as a madwoman.

The title of the novel provides some interesting insights about standards of beauty. Morrison is interested in showing the illusory nature of the social construction of beauty, which is created in part by the imaginary world of advertising billboards and movie stars. The title uses the superlative of blue because at the end of the novel, when Pecola has gone mad, she is obsessed with having the bluest eyes of anyone living. But the title also has "eye" in the singular disembodied the eye, Morrison subverts the idea of beauty or standards of beauty, tearing the idealized part away from the whole, creating a beauty icon that is not even human. Reinforcing this non-human aspect of the ideal eye, Pecola's new blue eyes at the novel's end are not described with colors in the human range her eyes are blue like streaks of cobalt, or more blue than the sky itself.

At key points in the novel, important plot information is revealed through gossip. Morrison writes long stretches of beautiful and uninterrupted dialogue, with great sensitivity to oral language. Pauline Breedlove gets a chance to speak in the first person near the middle of the novel; in a section divided between third-person narrator and Pauline, she gets to address the reader directly and in dialect. Morrison's interest in carving a place for oral language in literary art is readily apparent in this novel.

Morrison occasionally switches tense, moving fluidly to present tense when it serves her. The move has different effects: for some scenes, it provides a sense of great immediacy. In one sequence narrated by Claudia, it creates the feel that Claudia is reliving the experience. In other scenes, it creates the feel of a pattern. When Pecola tries to buy Candy at a local grocer's, we read about the moment in present tense. In this case, Morrison's use of the present tense

suggests that the unpleasant interaction between Pecola and the shopkeeper forms a template for all of her interactions with other human beings.

Morrison, by employing multiple narrators, is trying to make sure that no single voice becomes authoritative. The gossiping women become narrators in their own right, relaying critical information and advancing the story at key points. Claudia's perspective is balanced by the third person narrator, and Pauline Breedlove narrates for parts of one of the middle sections of the novel. This method of multiplying narrative perspectives also demands more active participation on the part of the reader, who must reassemble the parts in order to see the whole. Morrison is still working somewhat clumsily with this type of narrative in *The Bluest Eye*. In later novels, she has a chance to experiment and refine her forms further.

### Analysis

At the heart of *The Bluest Eye* is a critique of the pervasive and deeply ingrained racism that shapes both society and individual consciousness. Set in 1940s America, the novel explores the way that racism affects not only the African American community but also how it is internalized by individuals. Pecola Breedlove, the novel's protagonist, is a product of this environment. From a young age, she is taught to believe that her Blackness, her darker skin, and her features make her undesirable and inferior. She longs for blue eyes, which she associates with beauty, love, and acceptance, symbolizing her desperate attempt to escape the oppressive forces that define her worth.

The social climate that forces Pecola to reject her identity is one where white beauty standards dominate, especially in the media. Through advertisements, movies, and social interactions, the blonde-haired, blue-eyed ideal becomes the standard of beauty and worth. Morrison's depiction of Pecola's yearning for blue eyes serves as a powerful symbol of the psychological effects of internalized racism. Pecola believes that if she could look like the idealized image of white femininity, she would be

loved and accepted, but her tragic desire reflects the impossibility of this ideal and the harm it causes.

Morrison also intricately weaves the intersections of race and gender throughout *The Bluest Eye*, highlighting the unique oppression faced by Black women. Women in the novel experience not only racial discrimination but also the restrictive roles imposed on them by a patriarchal society. Pecola's mother, Pauline, is a prime example of a woman who is caught between these oppressive forces. As a Black woman who works as a maid for a white family, Pauline internalizes both racist and gendered notions of her place in society. She becomes obsessed with the ideal of whiteness, seeing herself as inferior to her white employers and valuing their way of life over her own.

In addition, Pauline's treatment of Pecola and her lack of emotional support for her daughter reflects the broader societal tendency to dehumanize and marginalize Black women. Pauline's acceptance of her subjugated role in the household and her neglect of her own family highlight the damaging effects of internalized racism and gendered oppression. Morrison suggests that, in a society that constantly devalues Black women, they are often unable to support and uplift each other, perpetuating cycles of trauma and emotional neglect.

### Conclusion

“ When men are oppressed, it's a tragedy, when women are oppressed it's a traditional”. The oppression of women, particularly African American women, through the characters' experiences of racial and gender-based discrimination. The novel reveals

how women, especially those like Pecola Breedlove, are subjected to multiple layers of oppression—rooted in both their race and gender. The societal standards of beauty, which privilege whiteness and femininity associated with white women, further marginalize Black women, leading to feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred. Pecola's tragic desire for blue eyes symbolizes the destructive effects of these unattainable beauty ideals.

Women in the novel, such as Pecola's mother, Pauline, and others, are also trapped in cycles of oppression due to economic, social, and cultural forces that limit their agency and reinforce their subjugation. The internalized racism and patriarchal structures that shape their lives prevent them from achieving true self-love or fulfillment. Morrison underscores how the intersection of racism and sexism uniquely impacts Black women, revealing the deep psychological and emotional scars left by such systemic oppression.

Ultimately, *The Bluest Eye* serves as a powerful critique of how society devalues and objectifies women, particularly those who exist at the intersections of race and gender. It calls for a more inclusive, compassionate recognition of Black women's humanity, urging readers to confront and dismantle the structures that perpetuate their oppression.

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# NEGOTIATING CASTE, GENDER, AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PERUMAL MURUGAN'S *PYRE*

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## Abstract

*The harsh realities of caste, gender, and social marginalization in rural India are shown with startling reality in Perumal Murugan's Pyre. The novel illustrates the devastating effects of defying ingrained social standards by following the story of Kumaresan and Saroja, an intercaste couple attempting to create a life together. The paper attempts to examine the connection between caste and gender, focusing on the ways social injustice manifests itself in the lives of both people and communities. The narrative emphasizes social monitoring, social monitoring, and the societal obsession with honor, which breeds violence. The paper delves into Murugan nuanced critique of casteism, illustrating how it perpetuates violence and marginalization while questioning the possibilities of personal agency within such a rigid system.*

**Keywords:** *intercaste, social monitoring, devastating, marginalization, violence*

In India, caste and gender remain to be two of the most oppressive power structures, significantly influencing people's daily lives. These oppressive systems work together to produce more severe kinds of violence and social exclusion. Through the prism of an intercaste marriage in rural Tamil Nadu, Perumal Murugan's book *Pyre* (original Tamil title: *Pookkuzhi*) depicts these terrible realities. The novel provides a sharp critique of caste-based violence, the control of female sexuality, and the hardships faced by underprivileged groups. *Pyre* is a noteworthy literary work that examines the intersections of caste and gender in the Indian sociocultural environment through its moving narrative and multi-layered weaving.

The article analyzes *Pyre* realistically as a work of literature that explores social exclusion, gender relations, and caste injustice. It aims to reveal how Murugan depicts the interaction of institutional violence, patriarchal control, and the fortitude of individuals in the face of systemic discrimination by placing the book within the larger frameworks of Dalit feminism and caste investigation.

Caste is one of the oldest and most entrenched forms of social stratification in India. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, caste continues to dictate access to resources, opportunities, and social mobility. In *Pyre*, Murugan vividly depicts the rigid boundaries enforced by caste hierarchies in rural Tamil Nadu. The story revolves around Kumaresan, a man from an intermediate caste, and Saroja, a woman from a lower caste, who elope and marry against the wishes of their families.

The couple's decision to defy caste norms sets the stage for the novel's exploration of social exclusion. Their marriage is viewed as a transgression not only against family honor but also against the deeply ingrained caste order. Murugan portrays how caste acts as a collective social force, where community members work in unison to preserve the purity of caste boundaries. The hostility faced by the couple is not limited to their immediate families; it extends to the entire village, highlighting the communal nature of caste-based exclusion.

The title *Pyre* symbolizes the violence inherent in caste dynamics. The metaphorical and literal association of fire with destruction is central to the



narrative, culminating in the horrific act of caste violence. Murugan uses this imagery to underscore the annihilative potential of caste ideology, which seeks to obliterate any challenge to its hegemony.

Pyre criticizes the patriarchal structures that control women's bodies and choices in addition to caste. In a society where women are expected to submit to caste and family rules, Saroja's elopement with Kumaresan is a daring declaration of agency. Her claim, however, has drawn harsh criticism, demonstrating how patriarchal standards are used to restrict the sexuality and autonomy of women.

Murugan skillfully uses Saroja's experiences to illustrate the gendered aspects of caste oppression. Saroja is the target of gendered assault, whereas Kumaresan faces animosity based on caste. She is subjected to physical and psychological torture because she is a woman from a lower caste. The book examines how caste and gender overlap, with Saroja's marginalization being exacerbated by her dual status as a woman and a member of a subordinate caste.

It is particularly intriguing how the village women depict Saroja's exclusion. These women, who have experienced patriarchal oppression themselves, uphold caste standards and support the very structures that oppress them. The internalization of patriarchal and caste ideas, which teach people to value communal loyalty over solidarity with other underprivileged people, is reflected in this contradiction

Kimberle Crenshaw's introduction of the idea of intersectionality is essential to comprehending the multiple forms of oppression that people like Saroja must contend with. The concept of intersectionality highlights how social factors like caste, gender, and class interact to produce distinct kinds of marginalization rather than existing independently. Murugan illustrates in Pyre how gender and caste combine to create a particular form of social exclusion that specifically targets intercaste marriages.

In addition to violating caste limits, Saroja and Kumaresan's marriage upends the patriarchal control over women's decisions, which is another way in which it undermines the caste system. Male relatives,

who consider themselves to be the guardians of caste honor, view Saroja's choice to wed Kumaresan against the wishes of her family as an insult. Through this lens, the violence against the couple is both casteist and patriarchal, aimed at reasserting control over women's bodies and preserving caste purity.

Murugan's nuanced portrayal of this intersectionality invites readers to critically examine the ways in which systems of oppression reinforce each other. By focusing on the everyday lives of his characters, he brings into sharp relief the lived realities of those who inhabit the margins of society. The crucial role of the community in upholding social norms is one of Pyre's main issues. Individual acts are absorbed under the greater necessity of upholding caste systems, and the village in the novel operates as a collective entity. A recurrent theme in the community is its fixation on honor, which reflects the moral economics of caste systems in which group objectives take precedence over individual aspirations. The violence committed against Saroja and Kumaresan is an attempt by the community to reestablish the disturbed social order rather than just an act of personal retaliation. Even those who do not actively engage in the violence are complicit through their silence or passive support, as Murugan illustrates the subtle ways in which violence is institutionalized within caste cultures.

The novel's portrayal of honor is closely intertwined with women's sexuality. Punitive action is required to rid the community of Saroja's elopement, which is seen as a stain on her family's honor. Feminist scholarship, which challenges the patriarchal and casteist foundations of honor-based violence, frequently addresses this link between honor and violence. There are numerous instances of resistance and resiliency in Pyre despite its somber depiction of caste and gender tyranny. The choice of Saroja and Kumaresan to wed in spite of the dangers is a rejection of the caste system. Their love offers them the chance to escape the repressive systems that control their life.

Murugan does not, however, romanticize their opposition. The couple faces many obstacles in their fight for existence, and their eventual outcome

highlights the widespread influence of patriarchal and caste ideals. Murugan asks readers to consider the difficulties of resistance in a highly divided society through this realistic depiction. Resilience is well embodied by Saroja's character. She defies the expectations of her gender and caste despite of the hatred she encounters. She is a powerful person who embodies the quiet strength of those who oppose structural oppression because of her strength and determination.

Pyre can be interpreted as a critique of the combined oppressions of patriarchy and caste from a Dalit feminist standpoint. As a subset of feminist philosophy, Dalit feminism focuses on the unique experiences of Dalit women, who are marginalized on two levels: caste-wise and gender-wise. According to academics like Gopal Guru and Sharmila Rege, mainstream feminism frequently ignores the particular difficulties faced by Dalit women, calling for a different framework to comprehend their reality.

The way Saroja is portrayed by Murugan is consistent with Dalit feminism's concerns. The multidimensional character of Saroja's oppression and the limitations of resistance in a rigidly hierarchical culture are both highlighted by her experiences. The novel also critiques the complicity of women from dominant castes in perpetuating caste-based violence, challenging the assumption that women's solidarity can transcend caste boundaries.

In *Pyre*, nature and space are important because they may be both a haven and a place of violence. The novel's rural setting, which reflects the twin realities of life in a caste-ridden society, is distinguished by its beauty and harshness. The pair hopes to find a safe place to start a life together, which is why they traveled to Kumaresan's hamlet. But they are persecuted in the village because of its oppressive social customs.

A major theme in the novel is fire, which has great metaphorical meaning. Fire embodies the many facets of caste violence by standing for destruction, purification, and transformation. Both literally and figuratively, the title pyre symbolizes the destruction of everyone who dares to cross caste boundaries. Murugan's use of space and nature deepens the story by emphasizing how people's lives are influenced by their social and physical surroundings.

The intersections of caste, gender, and social marginalization in modern-day India are powerfully explored in *Pyre*. Through its subtle depiction of the conflict between an intercaste marriage, the novel exposes the systemic brutality and deeply rooted hierarchies that control Tamil Nadu's rural areas. In addition to providing a moving commentary on the potential and constraints of resistance, Murugan's story forces readers to face the terrible reality of gender and caste discrimination.

Beyond its local setting, the novel is relevant because it serves as a reminder of how vital it is to confront the systemic injustices that still exist in Indian culture. This article has attempted to shed light on the various facets of exclusion and resiliency depicted in the book by placing *Pyre* within the larger contexts of Dalit feminism and caste investigation. Through this, it reveals the timeless ability of literature to elicit critical thought and motivate societal change.

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# THE CLASH BETWEEN EUROPEAN CULTURE AND THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE DURING THE COLONIAL RULE

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## Abstract

*In Things Fall Apart, the author repeatedly highlights the erosion of social conventions and values, attributing this phenomenon to internal societal advancements. Ogbuefi Ezeudu, the most elderly individual in Okonkwo's village, expresses dissatisfaction regarding the perceived leniency of the penalties imposed for transgressions against the Peace of Ani within their clan. Similarly, during Okonkwo's period of exile, Uchendu, another elderly member of the community, voices his concerns regarding the abandonment of certain traditional practices by Okonkwo's generation.*

**Keywords:** erosion, conventions, values, advancement, dissatisfaction, transgressions, community, traditional

Things Fall Apart depicts the confrontation between the colonial administration of Nigeria and the indigenous Igbo culture. The novel challenges the conventional European depictions of indigenous Africans. The author makes a great effort to present Igbo culture's intricate and sophisticated social institutions and artistic traditions before encountering European influences. However, the author is equally cautious in avoiding generalisations about Europeans. He presents diverse portrayals of white individuals, like the largely kind-hearted Mr. Brown, the fervent Revenue Smith, and the brutally strategic District Commissioner.

Achebe's proficiency in the English language and his familiarity with European norms have facilitated his ability to comprehensively depict the viewpoints of both Europeans and Africans regarding the phenomena of colonial expansion, religion, race, and culture. The author's choice to compose Things Fall Apart in English holds significant significance. Achebe's intention with this novel was to provide a counter-narrative to previous colonial depictions of Africa, imbuing his linguistic choices with political relevance. Achebe aspired to accomplish cultural regeneration both within and via the medium of English. However, the author successfully captures

the linguistic rhythm of the Igbo language and seamlessly incorporates Igbo vocabulary into the tale. Examining Okonkwo's existence through the lens of the narrative involving the avian creature known as nza allows for exploring inquiries about his eminence. The topic of the debate revolves around the act of questioning one's deity, commonly referred to as Chic, and if it may be categorised as an act of valour, mischief, or impudence. The avian creature in question resembles the archetypal trickster figures found in the myths of numerous cultures, who similarly engaged in acts of defiance against deities. The individuals encompassed within this group consist of the Sumerian protagonist Gilgamesh and notable figures from Greek mythology, namely Prometheus, Sisyphus, and Tantalus.

Things Fall Apart is widely regarded by readers as a narrative that explores the erosion of an African society due to the influence of European intrusion. This perspective neglects to acknowledge Okonkwo's civilisation's inherent tensions and complex dynamics. Despite the shared cultural background of the individuals in Okonkwo's community, there was not always consensus regarding its diverse facets. An instance can be observed when an esteemed individual offers counsel to Okonkwo, discouraging

his involvement in executing Ikemefuna. The situation is very peculiar, given that the older community members are traditionally responsible for preserving the cultural heritage and accumulated knowledge of the society. It is worth noting that the oracle of the Hills and the caves sanctioned the decision to execute Ikemefuna.<sup>1</sup>

Obierika, an elderly individual, emerged as a discerning observer of Umuofia's cultural practices. After completing the goddess's decree, he would retire to his obi, contemplating the misfortune that had befallen his companion and expressing his grief. What are the justifications for subjecting an individual to significant suffering due to an offence they have unintentionally committed? However, he could not solve extensive contemplation. He was gradually introduced to more intricate and intricate situations. He recollected his spouse's twin offspring, whom he had discarded. What criminal offence had been committed? Did they commit? The Earth had deemed their presence a transgression onto its territory, necessitating their eradication. If the clan failed to administer retribution for offences committed against the esteemed deity, the consequences of her anger would extend beyond the individual wrongdoer and afflict the entire territory. According to the wisdom passed down by the elders, the act of one finger bringing oil would contaminate the other fingers.

Throughout the narrative of *Things Fall Apart*, the author repeatedly highlights the erosion of social conventions and values, attributing this phenomenon to internal societal advancements. Ogbuefi Ezeudu, the most elderly individual in Okonkwo's village, expresses dissatisfaction regarding the perceived leniency of the penalties imposed for transgressions against the Peace of Ani within their clan. Similarly, during Okonkwo's period of exile, Uchendu, another elderly member of the community, voices his concerns regarding the abandonment of certain traditional practices by Okonkwo's generation.

There exists a prevalent belief among numerous individuals that pre-colonial African cultures were characterised by a state of immobility when adherence to tradition was universal and

unchallenged. The perspective presented is inaccurate. The novel *Things Fall Apart* portrays societies characterised by internal conflicts and dynamism, resulting in their continual evolution and growth.

The title of Achebe's novel is derived from the poem "The Second Coming," authored by the renowned Irish poet William Butler Yeats. Both the poem by Yeats and the book by Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, explore the theme of the disintegration of the established societal structure and its subsequent replacement by a novel order. Achebe's objective analysis of the factors contributing to the deterioration of the traditional social system in *Things Fall Apart* is accomplished through his narrative focus on a central character, Okonkwo, and his interactions within his community and family. Throughout the narrative, Achebe critically examines the rigidity inherent in the social structure of the Igbo community, which ultimately culminated in a catastrophic outcome. Achebe impartially portrays the gradual disintegration of the Igbo community before the arrival of the white colonisers. However, Achebe highlights that it is impossible to exonerate European civilisation from the culpability of eradicating the indigenous culture of the Igbo. He desires to assert that the Igbo culture has a significant degree of adaptability and likely would have autonomously addressed its internal inconsistencies without the interference of European influences. Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* explores two interconnected tragedies. The first tragedy unfolds in the life of the protagonist, Okonkwo, while the second tragedy occurs on a larger scale within the society in which Okonkwo resides.

Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* narrative structure has a symmetrical and harmonious equilibrium. The subject matter is categorised into three primary components. The plot is intricately woven within the robust core structure. The narrative of the story is presented through the author's perspective. Achebe employs the narrative technique of the 'omniscient point of view', which allows him unrestricted access to the thoughts and attitudes of both his core and supporting characters as necessary.

This enables him to elucidate the intricate ramifications that arise from specific scenarios and circumstances to the reader. Therefore, Achebe assumes the position of an "intrusive narrator."

Achebe foreshadows the tragic fate that awaits Ikemefuna from the outset of the narrative. In the first chapter, the author characterises Ikemefuna as "the doomed lad" who was offered as a sacrifice to the village of Umuofia by their neighbouring community to prevent the outbreak of conflict and violence. The author concluded the chapter by restating the abovementioned information, noting that the unfortunate young boy was named Ikemefuna. In this section, the author foreshadows the tragic fate of Ikemefuna, likening the author's warning to that of a Greek chorus.

Regarding Idemefuna, he found himself in a state of confusion. The protagonist's residence had progressively transformed into a significantly dim and remote entity. He continued to experience longing for his mother and sister and anticipated their reunion with great joy. However, he possessed an intuition that he would not have the opportunity to encounter them. This recollection reminded him of a past instance when individuals engaged in hushed conversations with his father. Presently, it appeared that history was repeating itself.

Subsequently, Nwoye proceeded to his mother's dwelling and apprised her about the impending departure of Ikemefuna. In an instant, she promptly released her pestle, which she had been using to pulverise pepper, and crossed her arms over her chest while emitting a deep sigh, expressing her sympathy for the unfortunate individual.

The encounter between Okonkwo and Ogbuefi Ezeudu entails Ezenbdu's rejection of customary hospitality, indicating the presence of a grave matter. Following a three-year duration, the village has collectively resolved to execute Ikemefuna, prompted by an oracle's pronouncement. Furthermore, Okonkwo has been explicitly instructed to refrain from intervening in this matter. As mentioned above, the action holds significant centrality within Okonkwo's tragic narrative.

Digression is regarded as one of the foremost literary devices employed by Achebe. The individual in question consistently seizes every opportunity to recount a previous event that only correlates to the main narrative. These digressions enable the author to further develop and elaborate upon his depiction of tribal existence. Through his various distractions, the author provides comprehensive and intricate portrayals of Igbo traditions, practices, and beliefs. The concept of memory holds significant importance within this context, encompassing a wide range of documentary-style depictions of Igbo life. Upon concluding the novel, the reader attains the realisation that the narrative they have recently perused encapsulates the chronicle of a culture undergoing an irreversible metamorphosis. Achebe's literary endeavour also aims to present a nuanced and empathetic depiction of Igbo culture, historically marginalised and stigmatised by white researchers who saw African tribal societies as uncivilised and malevolent.

Achebe's exploration of the ritualistic practices and celebratory customs of the Igbo community resembles the underlying themes and events shown in the significant narrative of the novel. Furthermore, the links between ritual and considerable action in Achebe's portrayal of Igbo society are highly pronounced. The female members of the family mainly orchestrate the ceremonial reception of the newly wedded bride. The husband's sister is responsible for subjecting the new bride to a thorough examination. In contrast, the eldest sister takes a protective role in safeguarding her brother's interests. Coincidentally, Uchendu's talk focuses on the significant role of mothers and maternal bloodlines. Okonkwo, a character characterised by his strong pride in his manhood and an intense preoccupation with masculinity, is confronted with the prospect of receiving solace from a maternal figure. Uchendu also requests that he provide assurance and compassion to his wives, which Okonkwo has habitually regarded as indicative of vulnerability. Uchendu emphasises to his nephew that strength should not be equated with using force and violence. He additionally cautions him that

power is predominantly associated with the male gender. In contrast to the narrative depicting Chielo's abduction of Ezinma, the history surrounding the egwugwu ceremony exhibits a notable irony. The narrator used several remarks to convey the peasants' awareness of the non-existence of the egwngwu.

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# MYTHOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS IN GIRISH KARNAD'S PLAY & V S KHANDEKAR'S NOVEL, *YAYATI* – A CONTEMPORARY COMPARATIVE STUDY IN LITERARY EVOLUTION

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## Abstract

*Myths in India are an integral part of cultural and living traditions. Epics like The Mahabharata as well as Ramayana have been regarded as the guiding lights of human life and evolution throughout generations which are constantly under the lens of critical thought and intellectual outlook. The current paper is an attempt to examine how the mythical character of Yayati is presented to the reader/spectator as well as its reception among the intellectual circle through the works of Khandekar and Karnad. Khandekar's Yayati, with a non-conventional outlook, won him the prestigious 'Jnanapith' – The highest literary honour of the country (India). Whereas, Karnad's literary genius of dramatic creation rendered the same mythical character yet another perspective to be looked upon independent of any pre-conceived notion by the reader/spectator of the play. The interplay of personal judgement and generalized stereotypes provides for a comprehensive breakdown of complex human relations and differed psychological insights into the ever-changing cosmos of human existence. Individual experiences are garnered to bring out a more sensible opinion among the literary and intellectual paradigm. This is proven through the narratives presented on the same mythical characters, but in varying dimensions and perspectives. Effective use of any literary form elevates the intensity of expressions, both emotional as well as intellectual.*

## Mythological Backdrop

King Yayati is a descendent of the lunar lineage, who is born much before the incidence of the epic *Mahabharata*. He remains a victim of unfulfilled desires and worldly pleasures of the youth. Though the original story is much attributed to divine intervention, filial responsibility and patriarchal obedience, both Khandekar and Karnad attempt to interpret the myth to match seemingly more relatable grounds of the modern society. Myths are popularized with a notion of accepted reality and to influence and reform the existing ways of life and living, but nevertheless remaining out of intellectual thought and critical outlook.

## Karnad & Khandekar's Reflections

Karnad as a champion of Indian Drama produced few of the finest plays in the contemporary literary world who stands among a few seasoned critics of contemporary times bringing back to the forefront, the myths, retelling them with receptive qualities of critical value and elevated thought, *Yayati* is no

exception in similar regards. Khandekar, recipient of the prestigious 'Jnanapith' award – the highest literary honour of the country for the novel, *Yayati* – which speaks for the literary genius of Khandekar.

The character of Yayati has undergone speculation as much as any other character in the *Mahabharata*. Yayati was portrayed as a dutiful king originally in the myth but became a victim of his own momentary lapse. The mind of Yayati seems to be excessively intriguing with loads of anxiety, power hunger and chaos. Khandekar tries to put forth the philosophical as well as psychological dimension devoid of the conventional attributes attached to the character. Karnad adds a touch of dramatic action which intensifies the expression of innate fear and anxiety, parallel to pity and fear as proposed by Aristotle in his notable work, *Poetics* as central to a tragedy. The extremities of human life as presented in both novel and play constitute rather blurred boundaries encompassing all in place. Yayati, a character much eluded from the larger canvas, elder brother of Yayati who renounced the worldly life and

became an ascetic. In stark contrast, Yayati remains a slave to worldly pleasure, same is true in case of Devayani and Sharmishta, where Devayani is driven by power hunger and excessive insecurity whereas Sharmishta ultimately accompanies Yayati in his final days. The idealized notion of class differences reflect well over the retelling of the myths and personal gratification comes not from proud dominance but selfless acceptance of individual discrepancies. Yayati nevertheless realizes his personal flaws but only does so nearing the end of his life trying to introspect his existence.

“Except that he is not lusting for you, you poor darling, he lusts for immortality. Your father’s art of ‘sanjeevani’.” (Karnad 11) Sharmishta warns Devayani of King Yayati’s lust, not merely pleased by a woman but the longing for immortality, which would let him indulge in the worldly pleasures forever. She further states her father’s plight which is equally indifferent – “...I have seen my father drugged on that ambition, panting for that supreme privilege. And now I see him in Yayati, who has the world in his palm. And your father, the great Shukracharya, has the means to keep it there. For eternity. That is what he lusts for.” (Karnad 12) The ‘supreme privilege’ of the worldly pleasures blinds the eyes of both Yayati and Shukracharya and the urge to acquire it, either of them wielding unrelenting power and dominant status in the society/politics.

The curse on Yayati of premature old age by Shukracharya with an act of transgression towards Devayani. Puru, his youngest son comes in aid, sacrificing his youth to his father which symbolically remains a metaphor for selflessness of the assumed familial responsibilities. The human tendency to attain ultimate satisfaction with every successive experience only translates to an illusionary incidence.

Khandekar attempts to present individual perspectives in different dimensions in the form of first-person narratives from Yayati, Devayani as well as Sharmishta, all the three to enable the reader/onlooker to analytically point out the minuteness of the diverse integrity of the text and the importance of personal interpretations accounting to tumultuous

changes in the evolving phases of human life and society. Karnad, on the other hand presents the characters to the readers/spectators with external expression of their innate anxiety through performative means on the stage making them more dynamic and real to perception of the spectators.

Self-introspection remains a major factor reinforcing the readers not only to judge the mythological characters but to reflect their self-identities trying to trace out the possible remedies in similar instances. Khandekar projects the chaos in the mind of the protagonist, Yayati, though a king – one who is said to possess control over his senses, never succeeds in doing so, instead remains a slave to his own mind. Emotions and Reason equally remain the agents of human advancement. Individual desires and their expression have become evident more than ever in today’s world which are under the lens of societal expectations. Karnad’s reinterpretation of the mythological narrative as a more social and political one makes it adaptive to contemporary ways of life. Trying to explore diverse avenues of the modern society Karnad proposes desire as a fundamental construct affecting individual as well as collective identities. Unlike Khandekar’s multifaceted approach to numerous perspectives, Karnad attempts coloring the emotions and expressions through visual representation on the stage with the means of vivid performance bringing out the desired reflection of possible discrepancies of human mind.

Introducing a new character which was never a part of the original mythology, Chitrlekha – speaks for Karnad’s genius of experimenting with mythological renditions to a non-existing character as if it were there all the while during the dramatic action of the transfer of youth between Yayati and his younger son Puru, if at all, Puru had been married to a woman, quite possibly Chitrlekha, would have remained witness to all evident conspiracies in place in the palace of Hastinapur, yet remaining a silent spectator to all this and another victim of male dominance. (Malas)

Puru remains afflicted of his forefathers’ valour and bravery who is nevertheless disinterested in war



and violence. This equally leaves him unfit for the throne but at the end of Yayati's rule Puru alone earns the virtue of throne from his father, King Yayati and rightfully rules over his subjects.

"There is only one abiding happiness in life ... eternal happiness. Worldly pleasures end in unhappiness ... be it the pleasure of touch or sight. The body is man's greatest enemy. It is the prime duty of man to strive persistently for mastery over the body. Look at the fruit I eat." (Khandekar 40) The first encounter with his own long-lost brother who renounced the worldly life and material pleasure and about whom Yayati was untold, astonished him and threw at him a sharp contrast to what he had conceived the life and world to be. This leaves him deeply scarred and the first step of losing his individual perception of life. Yati, the rightful heir to the throne of Hastinapur as the eldest son of Nahusha remained aloof of any political/power hunger. This let Yayati to deeply introspect himself.

The dramatic tension aroused through the characters in Karnad's play remain a testimonial to the internal conflict and an undercurrent to the existing complexities that glorified the mythological references associated with it. The philosophical inquiry into the human conception of familial relations is attributed to the study of the past texts and myths internalized through customs and traditions which govern the ways of life.

The subversion of patriarchy by Sharmishtha, as she rightfully gains the status of a queen by being married to King Yayati, who was earlier sworn as a slave to Devayani who married Yayati earlier and became the queen, acts as testimony to claiming her elevated status in the society if men are justified with the gendered superiority by fading the class differences. (Gupta)

"...man has risen above the animal kingdom and is mounting the steep ascent of civilised culture. He will one day reach the peak, and he will be free from his curse. Never forget that bodily pleasure is not the principal aim of life. Its principal aim is the satisfaction of the soul." (Khandekar 47) Kacha informs Yayati thus and it's Yayati's turn yet again to

be critical about his own understanding of the existence and the human life in the second instance after his encounter with Yati. The inner conflict persists and hinders personal advancement form within.

The existential anxiety deep-rooted in Yayati's outlook towards the world around only makes him vulnerable for imminent distrust and disappointment making it inevitable for him to escape from his own unattended desires in action. Yayati remains answerable for his actions in an estranged state of affairs he's been through.

Freud's views on satisfying the basic drives/needs of sleep, hunger and sex – all together seem to be well-embodied in Yayati's personal evolution. Pleasure-seeking is instinctual human tendency which is aimed at personal gratification. Yayati moves towards self-destruction rather than self-actualization at every possible instance, ever-failing to realize the ideal virtues of human life seated at a dominant position of power and authority in the society. Puru in stark contrast is a self-actualized soul who is born in the same line of blood but remains vigilant about his presence in and around the similar world.

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# TREATMENT OF PARTITION IN KUSHWANT SINGH'S *TRAIN TO PAKISTAN* AND CHAMAN NAHAL'S *AZADI: A COMPARATIVE STUDY*

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## Introduction

Partition literature has played a significant role in chronicling the trauma and upheaval of the 1947 Partition of India. Two prominent works that delve into this disastrous event are Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975). Both novels focus on the human cost of Partition, but their approaches to the themes of communal violence, displacement, and personal relationships differ in significant ways. This paper explores these differences and similarities, emphasizing the authors' unique perspectives on one of the most turbulent periods in South Asian history.

The partition of India in 1947 was a traumatic and transformative event that left deep scars on the subcontinent's social and cultural fabric. Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* vividly captures the communal violence, mass displacement, and human suffering that defined this period.

Chaman Nahal's novel *Azadi* provides a poignant fictional depiction of the partition of India in 1947, focusing on its traumatic impact on individuals and communities, particularly Hindus and Sikhs in areas that became Pakistan. Nahal's *Azadi* offers a humanized and emotional perspective on partition's violence and its effect on minorities, which helps contextualize the long-term struggles of Hindus in Pakistan. The novel underscores how partition was not just a political division but also a rupture in the cultural and emotional fabric of communities, themes that continue to echo in the lives of Hindus in Pakistan today.

## Themes of Communal Violence

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* portrays Partition through the microcosm of the fictional

village of Mano Majra, emphasizing how communal harmony crumbles under external political pressures. The arrival of trains carrying massacred bodies from across the border symbolizes the intrusion of violence into the village's otherwise peaceful existence. The novel depicts how ordinary individuals, like Juggut Singh, are forced to confront and respond to this violence.

In contrast, Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* offers a broader canvas, capturing the chaos and atrocities of Partition in the city of Sialkot. Nahal delves into large-scale massacres, rapes, and the displacement of millions, painting a vivid picture of the devastation. While Singh's narrative is localized, Nahal's is panoramic, reflecting the widespread impact of Partition on an entire community.

## Depictions of Displacement

*Train to Pakistan* focuses less on physical displacement and more on emotional and psychological displacement. The village of Mano Majra becomes a microcosm of the disintegration of trust and community. The climactic train journey symbolizes the forced migration of communities uprooted from their ancestral homes. Singh's minimalistic approach highlights the inner struggles of his characters as they grapple with moral dilemmas.

*Azadi*, on the other hand, centers on the physical and emotional journeys of its characters. The protagonist, Arun, witnesses his family and neighbors being uprooted from their homes and forced to migrate to India. Nahal's vivid descriptions of refugee camps, hunger, and disease bring the horrors of displacement to life. The novel explores

the lingering sense of loss and identity crisis that accompanied Partition.

### Portrayals of Relationships

Both novels explore the impact of Partition on human relationships, albeit in different ways. In *Train to Pakistan*, the romantic subplot between Juggut Singh and Nooran, a Muslim girl, serves as a metaphor for the fragile coexistence of communities. Their love story is overshadowed by the rising communal tensions, symbolizing the destruction of interfaith bonds.

In *Azadi*, Arun's love for Nur, a Muslim girl, is central to the narrative. Their relationship is torn apart by the realities of Partition, reflecting the tragedy of divided loyalties and the impossibility of love in the face of communal hatred. Nahal's depiction of their love story is more detailed and emotionally charged than Singh's, emphasizing the personal toll of historical events.

### Writing Style and Narrative Techniques

Khushwant Singh employs a concise and straightforward narrative style in *Train to Pakistan*. His use of irony and understatement intensifies the emotional impact of the story. The novel's focus on a small, rural setting allows Singh to delve deeply into the lives of his characters, making the tragedy of Partition deeply personal.

Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* is more expansive and descriptive. His detailed portrayal of Sialkot and its residents immerses readers in the historical and cultural context of the time. Nahal's prose is rich and evocative, often blending historical commentary with the personal experiences of his characters.

### Fears and Uncertainty after Partition

The partition of India led to one of the largest mass migrations in human history, with millions of Hindus and Sikhs fleeing newly created Pakistan for India, and Muslims moving in the opposite direction. In regions like Punjab (central to *Azadi*), Hindus faced violence, displacement, and loss of property during communal riots. The novel mirrors these experiences through its characters.

Following partition, many Muslims in India faced a precarious existence. They were often viewed with suspicion by their Hindu and Sikh neighbors, who questioned their loyalty to the newly-formed Indian state.

In *Train to Pakistan*, this fear is mirrored in the experiences of Muslim families in Mano Majra, a fictional village. As communal tensions rise, they begin to feel alienated and unsafe in their homes.

The partition triggered one of the largest migrations in human history, with millions of Muslims migrating to Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs moving to India. This displacement disrupted communities and led to the loss of homes, livelihoods, and cultural heritage.

In the novel, the arrival of a ghost train carrying dead bodies from Pakistan exacerbates the tension, symbolizing the large-scale violence and displacement Muslims and others endured. Before partition, Hindus were a significant community in the regions that became Pakistan. For instance, Hindus constituted 20-22% of Pakistan's population in 1947. Today, this has reduced to about 1.85%.

Many Hindus in areas like Punjab, Balochistan (including regions like Chaman), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa either migrated or were displaced due to fears of persecution and lack of safety.

The period was marked by horrific communal riots, with Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs becoming both victims and perpetrators. Muslims who chose to stay in India often became targets of violence.

*Train to Pakistan* depicts this violence graphically, particularly in scenes where mobs plan attacks on Muslims trying to flee to Pakistan.

Much like the violence depicted in *Azadi*, Hindus in Pakistan, particularly in Punjab and border regions, faced atrocities including killings, forced conversions, and sexual violence during partition. This created a lingering sense of insecurity among those who remained.

The partition fractured centuries-old bonds between communities. Muslims, once integral to the cultural fabric of their villages, were suddenly seen as outsiders.

In *Mano Majra*, characters like Imam Baksh and his family experience this betrayal, as the community's harmony disintegrates under the weight of suspicion and hatred. Hindus who chose to stay in Pakistan often faced marginalization. They were underrepresented politically and faced barriers to economic and social mobility. Many lost their properties and livelihoods during partition, and those who stayed often struggled to reclaim or rebuild their lives. Muslims who remained in India faced the challenge of proving their loyalty to the country. They often encountered systemic discrimination and struggled to retain their cultural identity.

Although *Train to Pakistan* focuses on a specific village, it reflects the broader struggles of Muslims to find security and acceptance amidst the chaos. Hindus who chose to stay in Pakistan often faced marginalization. They were underrepresented politically and faced barriers to economic and social mobility.

Many lost their properties and livelihoods during partition, and those who stayed often struggled to reclaim or rebuild their lives.

The novel does not portray Muslims as a monolithic group but emphasizes their humanity and the complexity of their plight during partition. Through characters like Jugga and Iqbal, Singh highlights themes of communal harmony, betrayal, and redemption, illustrating that ordinary people, regardless of religion, bore the brunt of political decisions.

Khushwant Singh's narrative is a poignant reminder of the shared suffering of a communities during partition empathy and understanding in the face of division. *Azadi* captures the personal and communal trauma of partition, reflecting themes like loss, identity crisis, and the longing for homeland that resonates with the Hindu experience in Pakistan. The protagonist, Lala Kanshi Ram, represents the plight of those uprooted from their ancestral lands, much like the Hindus who left regions like Punjab and Balochistan during partition.

## Conclusion

Both *Train to Pakistan* and *Azadi* are powerful explorations of Partition, yet they differ significantly in scope, style, and focus. Singh's novel offers a poignant, localized glimpse into the human cost of communal violence, while Nahal provides a sweeping narrative of displacement and survival. Together, these works capture the multifaceted tragedy of Partition, ensuring its memory remains alive in literature.

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# NEGOTIATING SPACES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *A MATTER OF TIME* AND ELISABETH VONARBURG'S *THE SILENT CITY*

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“Everywhere there is connexion, everywhere there is illustration: no single event, no single literature, is adequately comprehended except in its relation to other events, to other literatures” - ----- Matthew Arnold (in a conference, titled “On the Modern Element in Literature,” 14 November 1857 printed in Macmillan’s Magazine, February 1869).

The above statement of Arnold highlights the fact that a better understanding of literature is possible through comparison. This act of comparing is not restricted only to Literature. The Structuralism's approach emphasis on Binary Opposition shows how human mind categorizes and compares two ideas interact or words function in relation to each other. This idea is further extended in the field of Linguistics, Sociology, anthropology and so forth. Interestingly Observation and comparison are some of the skills which have aided humans to adapt and survive his or her surroundings. Comparative Literature originated as an academic enterprise during the 19th century in England, but the urge to compare has always been a basic nature of the human mind. This paper attempts to compare two different forms of Literature namely, the Conventional fiction and Science-fiction.

“I desire, this evening , to consider Fiction as one of the Fine Arts” , stated Henry James in his essay *The Art of Fiction* which was published in the end of nineteenth century. The essay by Henry James is a plea to give Novel an equal status and importance enjoyed by other forms of Art like Painting, Music, Sculpture and Poetry. If we consider Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* published in the beginning of seventeenth century as the first modern novel, and James’ essay as the first serious work

defending the Novel form as one of the finer forms of art, the comparison highlights the fact that it took almost three centuries for the Novel to get its due credit as a serious form of Art. This also meant that the novelists should be regarded as a creative and intelligent artist who share a worthwhile experience through their novels. Henry James cites the incident of Thackeray who lost in an election because people undervalued his intelligence. James opines that it was because Thackeray was viewed only as a story teller whose aptitude was not enough to govern a city. It is against this generalization towards novelists and their work as an art form that Henry James raises his voice. Similar to Aristotle's *Poetics*, he tries to decode the rules of Novel, cleverly pointing out that one needs to be a creative genius to write a Novel. James, enlightens the fact that the novelists don't receive, ' A peerage; neither from the King, Queen, nor Prince in any country...they are not a class at all worthy of special honor...'. However, it did survive a silence of three centuries among the intellectual circle. The reasons could be found in the shift of political atmosphere in England and other parts of Europe. The economical progress of people belonging to the middle class and the availability of paper caused due to the invention of movable-type printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in 15th century helped the readers to access it from any corner of world. Hence Novel and the novelists survived without the help of a patron. The first modern novel *Don Quixote* is a direct successor of Chivalric romance, a popular literary genre with prose and verse narrative of 12th century. The Chivalric Romance tried to revive and capture imaginatively the degenerating society of heroic adventure.

However by 16th century, man's quest for truth revealed and questioned certain beliefs and faith. Nicolas Copernicus' discovery of the heliocentric model of the solar system, made people question the supremacy of Earth, thereby questioning the existence of God and dominance of King's rule. The hierarchy being shaken thus led man to introspect his existence. Cervantes novel is an offshoot of the same quest, a realization leading to the mockery of chivalry. Chivalric Romance and the burlesque of this genre *Don Quixote* are two sides of the same coin; aiding in man's quest from illusion to reality. This in turn marked the fall from ideal world to real. The episodic structure disliked by Aristotle resurfaced through Picaresque Novel. Picaro, an amoral rascal using his wits without any restraint of morality or social codes provided a site for observation of people belonging to humble background. It was an ironical study of the corruptions and deceit of its society. During 18th century, Industrial Revolution once again paved way towards scrutinizing idealistic way of life the rise in working class created an atmosphere for depiction in ordinary events containing unidealized subjects. Romanticism in art was rejected along with this change in contemporary situation. Along with this, invention of a structured plot, change in narrative strategies and the emergence of round characters paved way for realism in Novel sidelining the Picaresque fiction.

Harriet Turner in his essay, *The Realist Novel* has opined, "When we think of realism in fiction, we think first of mimesis—the imitation of life—a concept that at once implies the existence of something outside the writer's own mind which he or she is trying to imitate". True to his opinion, the basis of any fiction imitating the real world should objectively represent the real world without portraying the marvelous or the fantastic. Interestingly, Science-fiction bases its world on scientific facts, instead of imitating the real world it speculates and imagines the other world based on those facts.

"Maitreyi,' said Yajnavalkya, 'verily I am about to get forth from this state (of householder)"

*Brhad-aranyaka Upanishad.*

Shashi Deshpande's novel, *A Matter of Time* (1996) foregrounds the above verse in the beginning to enlighten the present situation in the novel. The novel is divided into three parts. Each part is introduced with a verse from *Brhad-aranyaka Upanishad*. The *Upanishads* are likely to have been written during 7th-6th century BCE. It is juxtaposed and used as a binary opposition to understand the 20th century modern world. Paralleling Yajnavalkya's decision to renounce *Grihasthashrama*, the family or domestic fold and responsibility. In *A Matter of Time*, Gopal decides to renounce his marriage with Sumi. However, Yajnavalkya had successfully completed all his responsibility and his decision paves way for serious discussion between him and Maitreyi about Atman, Brahman and its unity. Gopal's past experiences compel him to abandon his family. His existential dilemma is complex and can't be explained just by a single event. It is a journey from illusion to reality. He is pushed to reality at a tender age of eight. In the absence of his parents, he creates an image of his father and tries to experience filial affection and warmth. It is gratified through dreams. This illusory world is destroyed when he realizes that probably he was born out of an illicit relationship between his father and the young widow of his brother. He travels to Shivapura in search of meaning of his parents relationship, thereby trying to understand the meaning of his existence. The quest doesn't provide him with any answer. His past haunts him, he is unable to understand the relationship of his parents and to correlate his father with Lakshmana and his mother with Sita. His cultural upbringing fails to provide meaning to their relationship. He comes across a different version of the same relationship in Macbeth. The truth however, is occupied in an in-between space. Virtually ripped from his past, Gopal is pushed to emptiness and loneliness in life at a very young age. He is exiled from his past. Milan Kundera in *The Art of Novel*, observes that the novel, "probes time: the elusive past ..., the elusive present...the myths from remote past that control our actions". This is one of the primary motif of Shashi

Deshpande in *A Matter of Time*. She tries to examine the nature of past in its myriad forms. Similar to Gopal, Sudha and Premi are exiled from their respective past. However, each of them react in a different way. Sudha discards all the materials including their photos. Unlike Gopal who wants to understand the meaning of his origin through his parents, Sudha, desires to forget them completely. She tries to escape her past, by constructing a facade of happiness or by the end of her life when she becomes a widow, she tries to divert her pain, emptiness in her existence by diverting others attention towards her illness. The fact however is, that Gopal realizes that she failed to escape the longing for the past. She dies suffering from loneliness.

Kalyani had lost her son in railway station which had led to the breakdown of her marriage with Shripathi. It was a marriage of convenience in order to safeguard the property. It is the immense faith and pride that she had towards her past that helps her to move forward in her life. Unlike Gopal, Kalyani doesn't seek for meaning from her past. Kalyani's past includes the glorious history of her forefathers. For Kalyani, past is preordained. It was an act of destiny when her forefathers travelled all the way from Maharashtra and settled in Karnataka. She had a document dated from 19th century, which stated that the migration of Vishwasrao, took place after the defeat in the Panipat war. Probably a scholar in Peshwa Madhavarao's army, had travelled from his coastal homeland towards South. During one such expedition, a stone idol of Ganapati was found which resulted in Peshwa's victory. Vishwasrao installed the idol and settled near the temple after receiving incentive and the nearby lands were granted as a reward. Vishwasrao had lost one his sons in the battle of Chinakurli. During the era of political turmoil, the "Family stayed loyal to the things that they considered mattered"(97) . They stayed loyal to language, caste and made sure that brides would come from their homeland. Kalyani believed every single word of the document. It was the ultimate truth for her existence. Along with the family history, it's Kalyani's and Goda's narration of their parents

marital life showcases how past becomes a place for comfort and confirmity. It sounds like the myth sung by bards comparing their parents to deities. It is sung like an everlasting love story in, "Manorama a woman from humble background was destined to marry Vithalrao" (118), "an educated intelligent son of a well-to-do man from Bangalore?", "He was a prince who married a damsel in distress". Truth and facts are never discussed by both Kalyani and Goda. They have carefully crafted a story where all the insecurities of Manorama are hidden. The reality is buried in the silences and pauses. It is Manoram's poor background that triggers her insecurity of financial instability. Her inability to beget a male child leads to anxiety when a second marriage is proposed to Vithalrao. He denies it immediately, however the consequence of that anxiety culminates in Kalyani's marriage with her maternal uncle. Manorama who did not want to face the financial instability, forces Shripati to marry Kalyani, thereby pushing them to a loveless marriage collaterally destroying Kalyani's education. However, unlike Gopal, Kalyani never seeks truth from her past which has shaped her present. she accepts everything as destiny.

There is a temporary reprise in Gopal's quest for truth when he meets Sumi. Captivated by her beauty, his physical being yearns for her warmth. He chooses to marry her and for a time being immersed in the bliss of marital life taking the responsibility of a *Grihastha* invests all his energy in the upbringing of his daughter. However, initially he gets a glimpse of the truth that he is never a part of the whole family created by Sumi and their daughters. He feels helpless whenever his daughters cry out of hunger, no matter how well he took care of them, it was Sumi who could successfully pacify her daughters. They could survive without his presence. In *Grihasthashrama* "A Man is always an outsider"(68) the truth exists only till he believes that his presence is important. Once he stops believing , it fades away within no time. Gopal realizes that motherhood confirms a truth in woman's life, unlike man, she need not go in search of meaning for once existence. However, it takes a while for Gopal to realize the

meaninglessness of his existence. His present becomes elusive. The truth that he had dearly held on to, becomes insignificant. He fails to find any significance in his life as a *Grihastha*. His failure to find meaning in his existence is fuelled when his past resurfaces during an encounter with his students. Truth takes a different meaning when by chance he comes across a collection of erotic poems written by a well known devotional poet. He tries to convey his findings in an article but misunderstanding leads to an encounter with his students. He is derided as “Bastard of a Brahmin” and is beaten severely. This incident pushes him from illusion to reality. Even though he had renounced his claim as a Brahmin, a claim taken away much earlier from his father for marrying his brother's widow. The veil of illusion constructed by his role as a responsible husband, father and a teacher is removed. His identity is questioned making him to renounce all his worldly connections. Sumi, silently approves Gopal's desertion and bears the brunt of his decision.

Elisabeth Vonarburg's *The Silent City* is set in a well protected technologically evolved city, inhabited by humans belonging to elite class. These people have constructed a refuge to escape war ridden reality prevalent in the surface of earth. All the knowledge of human race is safe guarded in this city. The people dwelling in earth's surface do not have access either to the knowledge or the life style enjoyed by these elite people. The city dwellers have learnt to live longer by inventing rejuvenating treatments and prolong their life by few years by attaching their weak bodies with machines known as Ommachs. The city and its dwellers had survived for two centuries without revealing their identity to the surface dwellers. The author refers to concepts from Christian mythology like birth, death, angel, devil, tree of knowledge, fairy tales, Arthur's legend etc. The novel begins in *medias res*, Elisa a lab generated, mutated human being is born when the city is almost at the verge of death. The mutated gene enables her to regenerate her somatic cells and she also had the capacity to metamorphose. Since she is created in lab by Paul, she doesn't have a past of her own. She never questions about the meaning of her

existence. Initially, her entire conscious energy is focused on Paul and the success of his plan. The novel is divided into four parts. At the end of each part Elisa retrospect's her actions. *A Matter of Time* raises some interesting insights which can be used as a foil to understand Vonarburg's novel. Gopal analyzes a Dutch painting and avers, “I was fascinated...the way the painter had captivated a slice of time... I was his captive... Only the creator can be free because he is out of it all”. This statement can be examined in the context of Paul and Elisa. What would happen if a man assumes the role of creator? Can he really be free from his creation? Paul wanted to create a community of genetically engineered humans who would be able to survive without any aid of rejuvenation treatments. He succeeds in his experiment, Elisa's birth marks this success. However, can Paul really be a creator and objectively observe his creation? In Paul's case, this does not happen. He involves with her emotionally and at the end of second part of the novel, he is murdered by his own creation. The same idea is further extended in Elisa's case. The city's past is not elusive to Elisa because through Desprats she gets access to city's history, everything is visually recorded. The human element involved in the narration of past is completely eliminated. Elisa being certain about the information, realizes that Paul had cruelly killed many innocents to create the mutated gene. In the second part of the novel, she sets to destroy all the cities which were trying to intervene with the social fabric of the surface dwellers. She plays the role of God's messenger. Elisa metamorphoses into her male version, Hanse, Closes many cities and finally guides the surface dwellers to the Vietelli community ruled by Manilo to wage a war against the Malvarde community who were getting weapon supplies from the last existing city, probably from Paul because he was the only person alive in the city by the end of the second part. Hanse had infused the importance of involvement of women in the ongoing war before making love to Judith. Judith is carried away by Hanse/Elisa's proclamation and out of free will makes love to him/her. At that point of time she is confronted. When Hanse/Elisa is in this vulnerable



state, Paul disguised as Manilo barges in and requests her to come back. Elisa assumes that Paul had murdered Manilo, kills Paul. The third part of the novel explains how Elisa takes the role of a creator and objectively continues his experiment, creates a community of genetically modified children born and bought up far from both city and surface. At the end of the novel, Elisa/Hanse realizes that she could never become a creator, in fact she seems to have more affinity with Lucifer. Just like Lucifer, she could shed her skin. Instead of saving the surface community from war, she initiates the battle. A human is always vulnerable no matter how technologically he or she may be advanced and nothing can be certain. Elisa realizes no matter how well the past might have been captured, she would never be able to understand the true intention of Paul, Desprats or Sybil. Past is always elusive.

Initial motive of Elisa was to close all the cities. She realizes the futility of her decision. She wanted to balance the sex ratio on the surface world. However, she instigates Judith to wage war against men of the surface world. She/he tries to become a creator and ends up as a destroyer. Trying to be a God, she ends up as a devil. At the end Elisa/Hanse realizes that she is neither a God nor a Devil but only a vulnerable human who succeeds and fails at times. She recognizes that she could neither predict nor control any situation. She chooses to shut down the city at the end but provides access to the future generation. She descends from illusion to reality. In sum, it is apparent from the above discussion that both the novel grapples with the issue of illusion and reality from different perspectives. One can see in *A Matter of Time* that Gopal descends from the illusion of being a *Grihastha* and faces reality. He is no

longer able to endure the pain and loneliness after Sumi's death. With the permission from his daughters, Gopal goes in search of truth. On the other hand Elisa in *The Silent City* has the opportunity to examine herself as a female and male and realize how the patriarchal forces make her behave like a male in spite of being a female, when she dons the role of being a male by choice for a brief period. Elisa realizes that one has to overcome being a male or a female to understand what is real or truth in life. Hence she initiates the war perhaps to overcome the world of illusions. Though *A Matter of Time* and *The Silent City* are set in different time frame and diverse cultures, they examine humans search for meaning through the binary opposites showcasing the vulnerability as well as the capacity of human beings to fight and survive.

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# DIASPORIC TRAUMA AND MEMORY IN LAILA LALAMI'S NOVELS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *HOPE AND OTHER PURSUITS* AND *THE OTHER AMERICANS*

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## Abstract

*This article explores the intersection of diasporic trauma and memory in Laila Lalami's novels, "Hope and Other Pursuits" and "The Other Americans". Through a comparative analysis, this study examines how Lalami's works represent the experiences of Moroccan diasporic communities in the United States and Europe. The article argues that Lalami's novels demonstrate how diasporic trauma and memory are intertwined, shaping the identities and experiences of diasporic individuals. By examining the complex and nuanced experiences of Moroccan diasporic communities, this article highlights the importance of considering the intersections of trauma, memory, and identity in literary studies. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the Moroccan diasporic experience and its representation in contemporary literature.*

## Introduction

The term diaspora comes from the word *Dia* meaning away and *Speirein* meaning "Scatter" or "Saw" which connotatively mean far away and scattered. Diaspora signifies a homogeneous entity of geographically displaced people such as indentured laborers of slaves basically under the under the empire and often exiled. The ancient Diaspora indicates the dispersal of terms from Isreal back in sixth, seventh century B C and later in the second century A.D from Jerusalem. In other words diaspora refers to dispersal of people from their original home land to different parts of the world, usually leading to creation of communities that maintain cultural, social and economic connection with their native land. Diaspora originates from various causes, including economic migration, exile, displacement, colonization or escape from persecution or conflict. Diaspora has different aspects such as identity crisis, exiles, refugees, expatriates, etc.

Arab American literature is a a dynamic and expanding field that mirrors the experiences and intricacies of Arab American life. It encompasses

various genres, including poetry, personal accounts, fiction, essays, created by authors of Arab heritage residing in the United State. This literary pieces often grapples with the themes such as dislocation, identity, belonging, and navigating cultural tradition in a new setting. Laila Lalami is also an Arab American author, who reflects on these themes in works.

Trauma studies is the study of trauma and its behavioral treatment, similar to Sigmund Freud's classic trauma theory, literary trauma theory emerged in the late 20th century with the groundbreaking writings of Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, and Kai Erikson. In order to express the trauma or its effects to the reader, literary trauma theory examines literary devices and narrative methods such fragmented narrative voice, ghost and haunting motifs, repetition, and allusions. Although there are continuous debates regarding the definition, effects, and reader accuracy of trauma across a variety of disciplines, it is now acknowledged that written texts are incredibly valuable in reviving the voices of marginalized or silenced nations, especially

in the non Western-World. The psychological and emotional effects that people or communities who have been uprooted from their native country—often as a result of conflict, persecution, or economical circumstances—are referred to as diasporic trauma. It includes both individual and social traumas brought on by forced migration, voluntary emigration, and the ensuing separation from one's traditional cultural surroundings and attachments. Diasporic trauma can be a complex topic. Fundamentally, it refers to a variety of psychological reactions that people or groups experience when they are removed from their natural environment. It includes the feelings of displacement, loss of cultural roots, identity crisis, and longing for the homeland.

### Introduction to the Author

Laila Lalami is a highly acclaimed Arab American author known for her captivating storytelling, realistic characters, her works reflect on experiences of migration and complexities of identity. Laila Lalami was born in Rabat, Morocco, in 1968, and in 1992 she relocated to the USA and completed her Ph.D. in linguistic from the University of Southern California. Her works presents stories that explore the lives of individual within Arab and Muslim diaspora. Lalami is widely known is for her fiction works: *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, *Secret Son*, *The Moor's Account* , and *The Other Americans*. She was honored with American Book Award, Arab American Book and Hurston Wright Legacy Award for her novel *The Moor's Account*. Additionally, it was finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, long-listed for the Man Booker Prize.

### Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits

The novel follows the lives of four characters from Morocco. Aziz, Halima, Faten and Murad, who are driven by desperation and the desire for a better life, reflecting the impact of globalization on their identities and aspiration. Each character represents different social background and experiences, highlighting the pervasive instability and shifting identities faced by many in contemporary Moroccan society. The novel also explores the themes of illegal

migration. All the four characters take the perilous journey to Spain, however two characters are deported back to Morocco and Aziz and Faten make it to Spain successfully. Therefore the present study highlights their diasporic experiences.

Aziz, in Laila Lalami's "Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits," epitomizes the theory of diasporic trauma through displacement in his migratory journey, he is a well educated man with a degree in automation, despite his qualification , as he is unable to find secure employment in his Morocco, that leads him to feel stagnant and invisibility within society. His sense of displacement is not only geographical but also emotional and societal, as Aziz he combats with the concept of Moroccan masculinity and his inability to fulfill those gendered norms, such as providing a home for his wife, which magnifies his sense of failure and pushes him toward the desperate act of illegal migration.

His decision to emigrate is a poignant example of liminal displacement, as it is rooted in the hope of reclaiming his lost sense of dignity and masculinity, which he feels he cannot achieve within the constraints of Moroccan society (Abunasser). Aziz's story is a powerful lens through which Lalami explores the human aspect of displacement, going beyond stereotypical narratives and illustrating the complex interplay of identity, societal expectations, and the forces that drive individuals toward the perilous path of diaspora.

In "Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits," displacement plays a significant role in the development of Aziz's character. Aziz, like the other characters in the novel, experiences personal and societal pressures that lead to his sense of displacement. Despite having a degree in automation, he remains unemployed and unable to fulfill the roles and responsibilities expected of him as a Moroccan man (Abunasser, 2016). This inability to secure gainful employment and live independently with his wife leads to a tense relationship with his in-laws and contributes to his feelings of emasculation and invisibility.

Aziz's sense of displacement is not merely financial status but also associated to his gender

identity and societal expectations. Unable to meet these expectations in Morocco, he is propelled to seek opportunities abroad, thus fueling his decision to emigrate. His displacement, therefore, becomes both a physical journey and an emotional quest to reclaim his sense of masculinity and self-worth. The displacement experienced by Aziz highlights the broader themes of the novel, which address issues of identity, the impact of socio-economic factors on personal choices, and the complex realities of migration. Lalami's portrayal of Aziz's character underscores the multifaceted nature of displacement and its profound effects on individual lives (Abunasser, 2016).

Faten's journey through diasporic trauma is a deep contemplation on identity, loss, and resilience, as she navigates the nuances of belonging in a world that often feels alien. With her experiences, Faten faces the struggle with cultural dislocation to reclaim her narrative in the echoes of her past. This both underscores the struggles of many people in similar situations, but also exemplifies the value of embracing your roots and creating connections in places you may not have ever imagined. This process enables Faten to reconstruct an understanding of herself, and culminates in her realization about belonging—both in her homeland and in her adopted one. As she knots the strands of her past and the quilt of her present.

Faten is first introduced in the novel through the story called, 'Fanatic' by the Larbi, her friend's father describing her appearance "a gray, pilled sweater and an ankle-length denim skirt, and her hair was covered in a headscarf" (p. 23). She is a nineteen year rebellious and assertive college student, who is also a religious revivalist. Faten has to leave the country after making a derogatory remark on king, "the misfortune of making a derogatory comment about King Hassan within earshot of snitch," her imam advised her "to leave the country. She had done as she was told" (p. 129). As the illegal migration was her only option, Faten decides to go to Spain and on reaching the country she enters into the profession of prostitution to earn her livelihood. Through this drastic transformation Lalami weaves

the the conditions of the migrants in European world. Faten encounter with her client Martin, who lures her by promising to help in legalization of her documents. But his stereotypical image of oriental women makes her realize to embrace true identity as a Moroccan woman.

Faten learns that a true sense of belonging is much more than just a location, but rather an emotional connection with people who understand one's path. She, through this new found realization, starts fostering relationships beyond the cultural border, adding colors to her life through varied experiences and making her have a deeper feeling of community. This self-discovery journey empowers Faten to embrace and celebrate the identity in its richness and variety. She was inspired to celebrate the cultures that defined her, to celebrate those unique things that defined her. In this dance of complex identities, Faten found strength in stories and customs from her ancestral roots but also found strength in adopting culture and found out that in all those identities, she grew as a person, and these strengths created a ripple of understanding and acceptance in their community.

### **The Other Americans**

"The Other Americans" by Laila Lalami stands as a profound exploration of the diasporic experience, elegantly interweaving the lives of characters tethered between their inherited cultural identities and the societal backdrop of contemporary America. As a diasporic novel, it delves into the complex tapestry of immigration, assimilation, and enduring ripples of geopolitical events. Through its multifaceted narrative, Lalami not only examines the individual journeys of her characters but also holds a mirror to the larger Arab-American community grappling with the shadows of 9/11. This literary piece transcends typical narratives, illustrating not only the challenges faced by immigrants and their descendants but also the nuanced ways in which they navigate, and are implicated in, the wider socio-political landscape of their adopted homeland. Lalami in her novel, *The Other American*, depicts the story of immigrant family from Morocco to America.

The plot revolves around the Nora Guerraoui, a music composer. She is helping the police investigating the case of her father, Driss Guerrouai's accident, which is suspected to be a hit and run case. Nora learns through a sheriff, that her father has met with an accident and she driving home panicking, as the passage shows her plight,

"My father was killed on a spring night four years ago, while I sat in the corner booth of a new bistro in Oakland. Whenever I think about that moment, these two contradictory images come to me: my father struggling for breath on the cracked asphalt, and me drinking champagne with my roommate, Margo. [...] But I do remember driving home on the freeway, in the foggy darkness that cloaked almond groves and orange orchards, all the while dreaming up alternate explanations: perhaps the sheriff's department had misidentified the body, or the hospital had swapped my father's records with someone else's. These possibilities were far-fetched, I knew, and yet I clung to them as I drove." (The Other American p.1)

The subject of racial tensions and the vulnerabilities faced by immigrants is elevated by Driss's tragic death in a hit-and-run accident that is thought to have been motivated by race. As his passing highlights the intricacies of his life, his connections, and the blending of cultural and personal identities, his relocation is further examined posthumously.

As the novel begins, Lalami boldly portrays her exposition of the issue of othering from the opening the novel. The title of the novel show us to a narrative on Americans who are living on the margin; Americans whose being seems not to be imperative as opposed to that of 'real' first class citizens. In the same vein, to emphasize this choice, the author opts for a deliberate decapitalization of the initial letters of the title to stress on the lower and weak position in which some other Americans are relegated into. Hence, delving into the story fabric, this relegation emerges due to a centralized white identity which forces other peripheral identities to live on the margin. Driss, who was trained to be a professor in Philosophy in Morocco but becomes a

baker in America. The blooming business of an immigrant turns into the matter of contention between the rivals like Anderson, who in a fit of jealousy kills Driss in the novel. Obviously, the writer presents the characters, Anderson and Anderson Junior as the leaders of the process of othering since they believe to be the 'legitimate' owners of the space (America); and the rest are subordinates or unwanted.

Nora finds it extremely challenging to navigate through the diasporic sphere to seek justice for her dead father. She has to struggle and face the atrocities to get through the legal system given her immigrant status as an Arab American. Her agony of being a immigrant and considered other from the main stream is evident from the following passage,

"But if the roles had been reversed and...Mohammed Driss Guerraoui had killed a man he'd been fighting with for many years, would he have been charged only with a count of hit-and-run...Growing up in this town, I had long ago learned that the savagery of a man named Mohammed was rarely questioned, but his humanity always had to be proven." (The Other Americans p. 164-65).

### Conclusion

In both novels, Lalami intricately weaves the themes of displacement and identity, exploring how characters navigate their past traumas while seeking a sense of belonging in a fragmented world. Through her nuanced storytelling, Lalami highlights the struggles of her characters as they grapple with cultural dislocation and the haunting memories that shape their present lives. The interplay between personal and collective memory emerges as a central motif, revealing how the characters' histories inform their relationships and perceptions of home in an ever-changing landscape. This exploration of memory not only underscores the characters' individual journeys but also reflects broader societal issues, illustrating how trauma can transcend personal experience to affect communities and generations. As the narrative unfolds, Lalami invites readers to witness the profound impact of these

shared histories on identity formation, ultimately suggesting that healing can emerge from understanding and confronting the past together.

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# THE UNMASKING OF ATROCITIES AND MORAL WILL AGAINST HEGEMONY IN THE NOVEL *THE RICE MOTHER* BY RANI MANICKA : DOUBLY DIASPORIC STUDY

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## Abstract

*This paper mainly deals with the narration of the main protagonist Lakshmi and her granddaughter Dimple revealing about their shrouded atrocities in their daily marital life in home, especially after invasion of Japanese army(Axis Group) in Malaya land and their implication vis a vis in current timeline throughout the society. As per Hindu tradition girl child is compared to goddess, where she brings all fortune to the family and worshiped during festival, while writing this novel author kept this thought as fundamental principle. Here Lakshmi is a Hindu Tamil origin girl, born and brought up in Ceylon in her young age and later part of her miserable marital life was in another commonwealth nation(Malaysia) with her shrewd husband who istwo-decade elder than her. This paper also reveals various war crimes, racial discrimination, sadomasochism, mother's love, feministic perspective, vengeance, oppression, inflation, unemployment, etc. This paper also reveals the strong will power of protagonist, her perseverance fight against all odd societal taboos and making her family unite in all situationsand passing those skills to next generation, and later it leaves a legacy and legend story to the future generation of her family.*

**Keywords:** atrocities, shroud, sadomasochism, taboos and war-crimes

## Introduction

Rani Manicka was born and educated in Malaysia. An economic graduate, she now divides her time between Malaysia and the United kingdom and currently lives in London with her family. Her first novel, *The Rice Mother*(2002)won the **Commonwealth Writers' Prize** in the category ofthe best first bookin 2003, in the southeast Asia and south Pacific region. The novel has been translated into twenty-two languages and has gained international acclaim. Later she published three more novels they are *Touching Earth*(2005), *The Japanese Lover*(2009)and*Black Jack*(2013). War is not a new thing to human beings, it was, its going and will happen in future for various reasons and deeds. Some wise men say war is necessary for peace and stability

in the nation or the region of domicile.The paper deals with the multiple narrations from various generations of Lakshmi and herself most of the time, The story is modified as per their understanding and cultural scenario and keeps on interpreting it till fourth generation.

In the beginning let me describe what is meant by Narratology as per literary theory, Narratology is the study of narrative and narrative structure and the way they affect the perception of the readers, which enables them to understand, analyse and evaluate the narratives through the temporal ordering of human speech and action. (Peter Barry;2002,221).

As Aristotle says, "a second story relevant to narratology is the story of the narratology itself". To

Aristotle, a character and an action are essential elements in a narrative or story.

A character must be revealed through action and the three aspects of a plot-‘Hamartia’, ‘Anagnorisis’ and ‘Peripeteia’. Hamartian essence means the protagonist’s tragic fault or defect, whether physical or moral, thus resulting in miserable occurrence that he or she must undergo. Anagnorisis means the protagonist’s recognition and the realisation of the truthfulness and veracity of the situation or event in which he is in. Peripeteia means the turn around stage whereby the protagonist experiences the consequence, often negative, of the defect that he or she has (Peter Barry; 2002, 224). Narratology had been further developed by Vladimir Propp (Peter Barry; 2002, 226-231) who identified that particular underlying narrative structures remain same throughout, despite the diversity of story forms and content. He discovered that all narratives consist of seven realms of action and 31 types of functions that serve as the basic building blocks to the creation of the fabula or syuzhet of a narrative or story. These 7 dimensions are seen as roles rather than characters.

The study mainly deals with commonwealth literature as the novel’s narration occurred in Ceylon and Malaya land, as it is loosely based on author’s grandmother story, now Commonwealth Literature is a term coined by **Oliver Cromwell** in 1969, it is the collective literature of all the colonial and postcolonial countries. It basically refers to literature composed by the writers belonging to the nations which were colonised by the Britishers. In general, Commonwealth Literature refers to the literary work done by writers belonging to the region of Africa, Asia, The Carib beans and North America. All these nations had been colonised by the Britishers. Thus, the work of the writers belonging to the countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Malaysia and Singapore is regarded as Commonwealth Literature. The concept of Commonwealth cannot be easily defined due to the historical, geographical, political and linguistic dimensions that simultaneously hold it as a distinct body of literature. Ironically the literature of the Britishers is not considered as Commonwealth, even though its

imperial past and language forms the basis of the concept of Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is thus related to some factors including the common experience of British colonialism shared by the residents of these colonies, the adoption of English language in everyday lifestyle, and the introduction of the British literary movement. Commonwealth Literature is thus, a complex amalgamation of different ideologies drawn from the Marxist literature, African literature, Symbolic literature, and the current literary movement which distinguish writers from different socio-cultural backgrounds.

World War II (1939-1945) occurred between two main groups

1. Axis Group :- Germany, Italy and Japan.
2. Allied Group :- United Kingdom, erstwhile U.S.S.R and United States of America.

#### Quotation Related to war Crimes

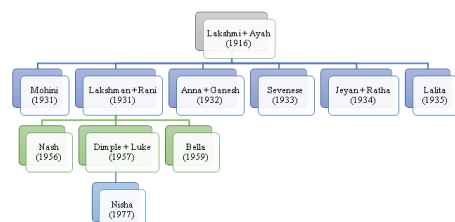
*“Where there is righteousness (Dharma) in the heart, there is beauty in the character. When there is beauty in character, there is harmony in the home. When there is harmony in the home, there is order in the nation. When there is order in the nation, there is peace in the world”.*

**A.P.J ABDUL KALAM.**

*“What is a war criminal? Was not war itself a crime against god and humanity, and therefore, were not all those who sanctioned, engineered, and conducted wars, war criminals? War criminals are not confined to the Axis powers alone. Roosevelt and Churchill are not less war criminals than Hitler and Mussolini. England, America, and Russia have all of them got their hands dyed more or less red – Not merely Germany and Japan”.*

**M.K GANDHI**

#### Family Tree of Lakshmi’s Four Generation





## Plot

Rani Manicka's *The Rice Mother* explains the saga of a working-class Ceylonese family across four generations in Malaya. It portrays the struggle that they faced during the Japanese invasion in Malaya and the difficulties they faced during post-colonial period in Malaysia. It is the matriarch of the family, Lakshmi, who keeps the family united during their penury. Lakshmi is married to a widower at the age of fourteen and shifted from Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to Kuantan in Malaya. Although she is the main protagonist, the story is also told from the points of view of her family members: her husband (Ayah), her sons (Lakshman, Jeyan and Sevenese), her daughters (Mohini, Anna and Lalita), her daughters-in-law (Rani and Ratha), her grand daughters (Dimple and Bella), and Nisha, her great granddaughter. With the Japanese invasion as a backdrop, *The Rice Mother* reflects on the hardship of raising six children against political hegemony in crucial timeline. The saga also reveals how the family falls apart and the resulting in broken relationships and ruined marriages. Although their lives are surrounded by tragedy, the novel finishes on a positive note, choosing to focus on the value that knowing one's roots adds to one's identity and self-worth.

Here Lakshmi's generational narrative saga has been etched into two sections:-

### Lakshmi's Saga-I

Literature is an obligatory distinct of civilisation which helped man to share his feelings and to provoke emotions and thoughts for ages. Literature can shift shrouded ideas easily like we giggle for a comedy, and we ultimately cry for a tragedy (loss). In directories of literary theories, cultural theory is the one which is so close to the human mind and heart as it is confined with human tradition, creed, and nature and moral value. The most noticeable concepts of cultural theory are Cultural Construction and Hegemony. Hegemony can be defined as the dominance of a group or a culture over the other groups and vice versa. Hegemony is all about how a predominant cultural influences over the other groups, specifically in the construction of identity

and societal norms. In this paper it is tried to show how hegemony; pride from a torturer is neutralised or subdued and how the protagonist in the novel struggles to maintain the balance in the lives of a family by negotiating the dominance of a group or a society and prevail. The whole novel is narrated by the characters themselves; Lakshmi narrates her own story, and similarly her daughter Anna narrates her timeline story, and the grandchildren of Lakshmi narrates the leftover story. When Lakshmi was married to Ayah, she was told that her spouse is one of the richest men in Malaya and has many maids in his house. The wealth and the decorum of Ayah's family was the only relief Lakshmi had, but on the journey to Malaysia the newly married bride find out that Ayah's family has no fame at all. Adding salt on the wound, she later came to know that her husband has two sons from his first wife. Lakshmi gets jolted and mild attack in her tender heart, and she cursed her mother and her own destiny of wedding to Ayah. During the journey she thought many times of suicide by jumping into the sea, as time passed, she calmed herself and later changed her mind and waited for the right moment to come. Lakshmi had been deceived by Pali and Ayah, she is no longer a princess, she is not going to live a luxurious life in Malaya and the worst scenario is that she had become a second wife to Ayah. In Malaya Ayah was already in debt, though she had been cheated, Lakshmi called one of her uncles, who is the mango merchant and gave him her ornaments as security and asked for Ringgit (Malaysian-Currency) to pay for Ayah's debts. Lakshmi could have lived a poor life amidst the debts and suffering which is not new to her, as she has seen since birth in her motherland (Ceylon), but her heart did not endure it, and she did the best to help her family. Despite backstabbing, Lakshmi was still able to show love and affection to her husband and tried to save his fame in society. Lakshmi's first friend in Malaya was Mui Tsai, a mandarin girl of her age and resides next to her door. Mui Tsai was a concubine (mistress) to a rich Chinese old man (Soong). Mui Tsai came to the Chinese man's house as a helper as the Chinese man had three wives already, but no heir, as their wives

were barren (infertile). Mui and Lakshmi both conceived at the same time, and later part Mui bore five children, and she was unlucky to live with them, whenever Mui gives birth to a new born, the child is taken away to the wives of the Chinese man, and she was left alone. Mui shared her suffering and tragedy with Lakshmi. After some years Mui Tsai's children came to see old Chinese man for as he was on his death bed. She was so eager to see her kids and wished to live with her children, but she couldn't. So, she silently went near them with watery eyes, the kids were afraid of her, and they started to throw pebbles at her. The pebble hit her head, and she was bleeding. Seeing this Lakshmi ran and brought Mui Tsai back safe, and Lakshmi convinced Mui to stay alive and see her kids in future.

### Lakshmi's Saga-II

During the Japanese occupation they took complete administrative control all over Malaysia, and all citizens were forced to learn Japanese language. Japanese soldiers racially discriminated Chinese people, so they plundered and robbed their houses and abducted young mandarin girls, tortured them, later raped and killed them. Though Lakshmi associated to a tamil(Indian) family she was still feared of Japanese soldiers. To protect her first elder daughter Mohini, she hid her in the dungeon (cellular underground room) in the house, and she also cuts the hair of her younger daughter Anna so that she could look like a boy while going to school along with her son Sevenese. Lakshmi wishes her kids to be safe and not to fall on the evil hands of Japanese soldiers and also wanted them to be educated at the same phase. So, she took a daring decision to send her daughter to school and this shows how she negotiated the evil hegemony of fate in the name of war crimes with her belief and perseverance. Lakshmi's elder son Lakshman was good in academics, but after Japanese invasion he was attracted towards narcotics (drugs) and also became gambler later. To change his fortune Lakshmi spent her savings through Mr. Velupillai(agent)and hired him a teaching job for Lakshman in Singapore, after receiving first month

incentives, he changed his mind and involved in gambling again. Sevenese, the middle son of Lakshmi, makes friendship with snake charmer's son Rajah. He is one of the adamant boys of his age group and he was not liked by society in Penang for his cruel nature. Sevenese was very keen and liked Rajah for his uncivilised behavior and lifestyle. Rajah taught him to catch snakes and stealing others money and using it for drugs. Lakshmi started to fear and worry about Sevenese behavior and suspect in his psyche. The Japanese invasion made many of the Malaysians unemployed including Ayah. Mohini's kidnapping, raping and killing by Japanese soldiers was turning point in novel. All members were in dilemma and started to crumble and they couldn't believe it, as the tragedy happened in front of their naked eyes, Lakshmi was worried about Mohini's beauty as it was curse for Malaysian women during invasion, and finally came true after Mohini's abduction. Dimple was victim of sadomasochism, Luke treated her like a sexual object and raped her forcefully whenever he desired without her consent, irrespective of the situation. The saga ends in a positive note which was recalled periodically till Nisha.

### Conclusion

Literature has always been a powerful tool to mirror the atrocities of the war and to give a voice to the victims who suffer in silence, here author used in her novel *The Rice Mother* to expose the injustices which the Malaysians witnessed during the Japanese invasion (1941-1945). War leaves not only dead bodies but also dead souls with unbearable reminiscence which keep haunting them till their existence. The exhausted identities in victims, which are clearly shown through the selected characters and were analysed in this paper, their mental and physical torture is further transferred to the next descendent and also confirms the large effect of the war not just on the person who is primarily subjected to it, but even to those who grow up in a formerly colonised country. Especially Females are doubly exploited as colonised citizens. It is known that the Japanese used comfort women to satisfy their soldiers, and this was

not different in the cases mentioned by author. The sexual exploitation compared to other war atrocities goes into another dimension, as it haunts them regularly and breaks will power of females and their families as well and sometimes lead them to suicide. *The Rice Mother* is Lakshmi herself, as she was seed bearing to the future generation and the novel title is justified.

### Glossary of words

1. Shroud – Concealed or hidden.
2. Atrocities – Extremely cruel or violent.
3. Taboo – Rare Superstitious activity or for bidden act.
4. Sadomasochism – Sexual or non-sexual practices or activities involving Bondage, Discipline, Sadism, Masochism(BDSM) or acts of domination and submission.

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# FROM HOLMES TO SPADE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH DETECTIVE FICTION

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## Abstract

*This study explores the distinctive features, themes, and cultural underpinnings of American and British detective fiction, tracing their evolution and influence on the broader genre. Through a comparative analysis of seminal works, it examines the archetypal detective figures, narrative structures, and societal reflections in each tradition. British detective fiction, epitomized by authors like Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie, emphasizes intellectual deduction, order, and the restoration of societal norms. In contrast, American detective fiction, as seen in the works of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, often embraces a hard-boiled, morally ambiguous style, reflecting the gritty realities of urban life. The study also highlights the genres' shared roots in 19th-century literature and their divergence due to differing social, cultural, and historical contexts. By contrasting these traditions, the paper sheds light on how detective fiction serves as a lens for exploring justice, morality, and human nature across cultures.*

**Keywords:** *crime, genre evolution, hard-boiled, justice and morality, mystery*

Detective Fiction is a subgenre of crime fiction and mystery. It involves a crime (usually a murder), a few suspects and a detective to solve the crime. The main motive of the detective is to find out the true murderer through observation, interrogation and deductive reasoning. At the end, the murderer is identified, justice is served and peace is restored. The objective of the detective fiction not only lies in revealing the least suspected killer, but in also tracing the detective's methodology-how everything happened right before their eyes, yet only the detective could manage to bring out the facts and conspiracies behind the murder.

The first detective story was written by Edgar Allan Poe entitled as *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, which was published in April 1841. It is said to believe that Poe was influenced by François-Eugène Vidocq's *The Memories* (1828-29) who founded the world's first detective bureau in 1817, Paris, which Poe eventually created his fictional French detective C. Auguste Dupin. He appeared in two other stories, *The Mystery of Marie Roget* (1845)

and *The Purloined Letter* (1845). The stories of the detective soon expanded to novel length.

After the enormous fame of Poe's detective fiction in America, it had its impact on Britain too. Charles Dickens happened to be the first writer who introduced mystery and investigative elements in works like *Bleak House* (1853), which featured Inspector Bucket, who is still regarded as one of the British Literature's first professional detectives. His serialized storytelling and social commentary strongly influenced the detective genre's focus on urban crime and class disparity. Besides Dickens' contribution to the detective genre, Wilkie Collins' served a major deal in this genre. His work *The Moonstone* (1868) earned him the title as the father of the British detective novel as it still considered as the landmark of the genre. It featured a stolen diamond, a complex narrative, and Sergeant Cuff, an early detective figure inspired by real-life investigators. He emphasized psychological depth, unreliable narrators and intricate plotting, elements that became staples of detective fiction in the upcoming years.

The genre of detective fiction peaked in the Victorian Era, due to its fascination with rationality and scientific methods. During this period, detectives often worked independently of official police forces, showcasing superior intelligence and intuition. Many stories addressed fears of societal breakdown by demonstrating how detectives could restore order through logic and perseverance.

In British Literature, the Victorian Era is regarded as the Golden Age of Detective Fiction. Due to the rise of Industries and Scientific innovations, it created a perfect setting for the plot, since the crime rates went high and the tradition of locking doors at night took place. Hence, in this era, this particular genre evolved and ruled the literature. One of the major turning point in this era, is also the debut of Sherlock Holmes, which gained worldwide fame. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle debuted Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) who eventually became the archetypal detective. Holmes, with his scientific methods, deductive reasoning, and eccentric personality, set the standard for literary sleuths. Doyle's stories like, *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, blended puzzles with atmospheric detail and suspense. Doyle's serialized stories in *The Strand Magazine* made detective fiction widely accessible and popular among readers. Holmes' popularity was unparalleled, and his enduring legacy continues to influence detective fiction globally.

Besides Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie served a great deal in this genre, which made her to earn the title of 'the Queen of Crime'. Her works such as *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) and *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934) defined the whodunit. Her detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple became iconic. Her plots often featured ingenious twists, psychological insights, and a focus on closed-circle mysteries. Another famous writer in this era was Dorothy L. Sayers who introduced Lord Peter Wimsey, a gentleman detective known for his wit and charm. Her works blended intellectual; puzzles with social and literary sophistication. In 1930, the Detection club was founded which included Christie and Sayers, who formalized rules

for fair-play detective fiction, emphasizing logical deduction over sensationalism.

British Detective fiction emerged from the interplay of historical, social and literary forces, establishing a rich tradition that continues to captivate readers. From Wilkie Collins' pioneering works to the timeless appeal of Sherlock Holmes and beyond, British authors have been instrumental in defining and refining the detective genre.

Though the genre detective fiction was introduced by American writer Edgar Allen Poe, it was rapidly grown in Britain. It started to reflect in America by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on portraying the country's own urban and industrial landscapes. One of the most famous writers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was Anna Katherine Green, who is known as the 'Mother of the Detective Novel'. Green's *The Leavenworth Case* (1878) predates Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Homes. Her works emphasized legal procedures and logical deduction, influencing later writers. It was cheaply printed and contains sensational tales of crime and detection catered to mass audiences, creating early pulp fiction.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a shift from the genteel drawing-room mysteries of Poe and Green to grittier and more realistic stories. One of the main reasons why the grittier stories getting attention was, the publications like *Black Mask* magazine popularized a rougher style of detective fiction, tailored to urban audiences. Dashiell Hammett introduced the hardboiled genre, which is a tough, unsentimental style of American crime writing that brought a new tone of earthy realism to the field of detective fiction. It uses graphic sex and violence, vivid and often sordid urban backgrounds, and fast-paced, slangy dialogue.

Hammett is a former Pinkerton detective and contributor to pulp magazines. His first truly hard-boiled story *Fly Paper* appeared in *Black Mask* magazine in 1929. Combining his own experiences with the realistic influence of writers such as Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos, he created a uniquely American type of detective fiction that was separate and distinct from the traditional English mystery story, stereotypically set in a country house

populated by cooks, butlers, and relatives. *The Maltese Falcon* is generally believed to be his masterpiece, which was published as a serial in 1929 and adapted as a film in 1941, it featured Sam Spade, Hammett's most famous sleuth.

Another successor in this genre was Raymond Chandler. Chandler refined the hardboiled tradition with Philip Marlowe, a more introspective and philosophical detective. His work includes, *Double Indemnity* (1939), *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940), and *the Little Sister* (1949). Chandler's novels deal with corruption and racketeering in Southern California. Chester Himes applied hard-boiled techniques to his detective novels set in Harlem and featuring Black detectives; these include *A Rage in Harlem* (1957) and *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1965). Other notable first-generation writers of the hard-boiled school are George Harmon Coxe, author of such thrillers as *Murder with Pictures* (1935) and *Eye Witness* (1950), and W.R. Burnett, who wrote *Little Caesa* (1929) and *The Asphalt Jungle* (1949).

Some writers of hard-boiled fiction pushed its boundaries and produced what critics complained was overwrought sensationalism and sadism—as *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* put it, the “guts-gore-and-gals-school.” Mickey Spillane, who wrote massive best-sellers such as *I, the Jury* (1947) featuring detective Mike Hammer, is considered one member of that school. The works of the hard-boiled school have been extensively translated into films, often through successive versions tailored to different generations of moviegoers. The hard-boiled tradition has been adapted and reinterpreted by writers in the United States such as Walter Mosley, Sara Paretsky, and Sue Grafton, among many others. It has also been exported overseas by Jo Nesbø, Stieg Larsson, Ricardo Piglia, and others.

Detective fiction in British and American literature reflects the distinct cultural, social, and historical contexts of their origins. These differences manifest in themes, setting, character archetypes and narrative style. Some of the comparisons are listed below,

**Tone and Atmosphere:** British detective fiction is frequently characterized by a sense of order,

decorum, and reason. It often has a sophisticated and intellectual tone, emphasizing the puzzle-solving side of crime. Its settings frequently feature country estates, small villages, or other 'closed circle' contexts with few suspects, as seen in Agatha Christie's novels. Violence and criminal activities are typically described indirectly or off-page, with a degree of restraint and nuance. American detective fiction is often gritty and pessimistic, reflecting the intricacies of urban life and societal corruption. The environments are urban, grungy, and enormous. Such as the mean streets of places like Los Angeles or New York, as depicted in Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett's novels. Violence and criminal activities are often depicted graphically, emphasizing the harsh realities of crime.

**Themes and Social Commentary:** British Detective Fiction focuses on restoring social order and upholding justice. The resolution of the crime typically reaffirms societal norms. Class distinctions play a significant role, with many stories examining the tensions and behaviors of the upper classes. It often uses humor, wit, and eccentricity to balance dark subject matter. Whereas American Detective Fiction explores themes of corruption, power, and moral ambiguity. Justice is not always achieved, and the line between right and wrong is often blurred. It reflects a distrust of authority, institutions, and societal structures, influenced by the economic and political challenges of early 20th-century America. Often portrays the individual struggling against systemic injustice, emphasizing existential and moral dilemmas.

**Detective Archetype:** British Detective Fiction often uses an amateur or intellectual sleuth, such as Sherlock Holmes (Arthur Conan Doyle) or Hercule Poirot (Agatha Christie), who solves crimes using deductive reasoning and wit. These characters are typically eccentric, well-educated, and operate outside formal police structures. They are portrayed as morally upright and removed from the messiness of crime. Police officers in British stories often play a secondary or comic role, emphasizing the detective's superiority. In American Detective Fiction the 'hardboiled' detective, as Sam Spade (Dashiell

Hammett) or Philip Marlowe (Raymond Chandler), is a professional private investigator or lawman. They are tough, street-smart, and often morally ambiguous, navigating a corrupt and dangerous world. These detectives are often emotionally detached, using cynicism as a shield against the brutality of their environment.

**Narrative Style:** British detective fiction relies on sophisticated, fair-play puzzles and mysteries in which readers follow clues to help the investigator solve the case. The narrative frequently employs various perspectives or a sidekick narrator (for example, Dr. Watson in Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories) to create an understandable lens through which the genius detective's deductions are viewed. Whereas American Detective Fiction focuses on a fast-paced, action-packed story with brutal realism. It is frequently written in the first person, especially in hardboiled fiction, providing a personal and subjective description of events. This writing approach helps the reader identify with the protagonist more deeply. The speech is crisp and full of slang or colloquial jargon, which adds to the rough, streetwise vibe.

**Setting:** British Detective Fiction is often set in confined, insular locations, such as country houses (*The Mousetrap*), quaint villages (*Miss Marple*), or isolated islands (*And Then There Were None*). These settings create a sense of claustrophobia and allow the plot to focus on character interactions and relationships. In American Detective Fiction Urban settings dominate, with dark alleys, smoky bars, and bustling cities that reflect the chaos and anonymity of modern life. The setting often acts as a character in itself, influencing the plot and shaping the mood.

**Approach to Crime and Justice:** In British Detective fiction crime is treated as an intellectual puzzle to be solves, with the ultimate goal of restoring harmony and order. The Justice system, while sometimes flawed, is generally depicted as reliable, and the detective's role complements it. Whereas in American detective fiction, crime is depicted as a symptom of broader societal issues, such as greed, corruption, and inequality. Justice is not guaranteed, and the detective often operates on

the fringes of the law, seeking personal rather than institutional resolution.

**Influence of Culture and History:** British detective fiction reflects Victorian and Edwardian values, such as rationality, decorum, and the importance of social structures. The Golden Age of detective fiction (1920s-1930s) coincided with a Post- World War I longing for order and escapism. In American detective fiction, mostly the works are influenced by the Great Depression, Prohibition, and post-World War II disillusionment, American detective stories often emphasize survival in a corrupt and chaotic world. The rise of pulp magazines and Hollywood further shaped the genre, blending it with film noir and other cinematic traditions.

**Key Authors and Works:** The major authors of British detective fiction are Sir. Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes series), Agatha Christie (Hercule Poirot, Miss. Marple, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*), Dorothy L. Sayers (Lord Peter Wimsey) and Wilkie Collins (*The Moonstone*). The major authors of American detective fiction are Edgar Allen Poe (*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*) – a precursor to British and American traditions, Dashiell Hammett (*The Maltese Falcon*), Raymond Chandler (*The Big Sleep*) and Ross Macdonald (Lew Archer series).

The distinctions between British and American detective fiction reflect their respective cultural values and historical backgrounds. British stories favor intellectual, puzzle-oriented mysteries with a focus on restoring order, whereas American stories are gritty, morally complicated, and profoundly anchored in urban realism. Together, they provide a rich and varied legacy for the detective genre.

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# A PESSIMISTIC STUDY OF *THE WASTE LAND* AND *WAITING FOR GODOT*

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## Abstract

The 20th century was marked by a profound sense of disillusionment and existential despair, as modernity, with its wars, social upheavals, and scientific progress, seemed to undermine humanity's traditional sense of meaning and purpose. Two seminal works that reflect this pessimistic view of existence are TS Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953). Both texts explore themes of alienation, hopelessness, and the collapse of civilization, but they do so through different literary forms, techniques, and philosophical outlooks. While Eliot's *The Waste Land* presents a fragmented, symbolic portrayal of a modern world in decline, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* offers a minimalist and absurdist depiction of human existence in an almost complete vacuum of meaning. A comparative study of both works reveals shared concerns about the futility of human effort and the absence of any definitive answers to the existential questions of life.

**Keywords:** existence, modernity, minimalist, absurdist

## T S ELIOT

TS Eliot (1888–1965), an American-born British poet, is one of the defining figures of modernist literature. His life was marked by personal struggles, including a difficult marriage and a spiritual crisis, which deeply influenced his writing. *The Waste Land* (1922), arguably his most famous work, reflects his disillusionment with the post-World War I world, characterized by fragmentation, alienation, and spiritual desolation. Written during a period of personal turmoil, including a nervous breakdown and a growing sense of cultural collapse, the poem explores themes of despair and the collapse of traditional values. Eliot's intellectual background in philosophy, as well as his exposure to European modernism, shaped the complex structure and dense allusions of *The Waste Land*, making it a profound meditation on the fractured nature of modern existence.

## Samuel Beckett

Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) was an Irish playwright, novelist, and poet, best known for his groundbreaking play *Waiting for Godot* (1953), which became a cornerstone of the Theatre of the Absurd. Beckett's works are deeply influenced by his

own experiences, including his time living in Paris during World War II, where he became involved with the French Resistance. His writing reflects themes of existential despair, the absurdity of human existence, and the search for meaning in an indifferent universe. Beckett's sparse, minimalist style in works like *Waiting for Godot* mirrors the postwar disillusionment, capturing the emptiness and futility of modern life. His personal sense of isolation and existential questioning permeate his literary output, making his works some of the most influential in 20th-century literature.

*The Waste Land* is considered one of the decisive texts of Modernism. It speaks so many social and historical conditions that are characterized by the era in European literary history. T S Eliot published this modern epic poem shortly after 'The Great War', later known as 'The First World War'. The devastating war left terrific marks on European society. In several ways, the war marked the final collapse of traditional social structures and lifestyles that had started to erode around the turn of the century. A large number of young men lost their lives, and those who survived often returned severely injured. Many were also diagnosed with a condition known as 'Shell Shock' a term used at the time,

which we now understand as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

At the same time, civilian life in both Britain and the United States was experiencing significant shifts. The early 20th century saw a large migration from rural areas to urban centers, along with a surge in wealth and consumer culture, famously known as the Roaring 20s. Society was changing rapidly, and traditional social values were quickly fading. Meanwhile, doctors were increasingly diagnosing people with a condition called neurasthenia, which is now recognized as anxiety and depression, characterized by symptoms like headaches, irritability, fatigue, sadness, and general dissatisfaction, all reflecting the stresses of the time.

This historical backdrop is evident in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Many of the characters in the poem seem to be suffering from shell shock or neurasthenia, and the poem's setting is defined by destruction and chaos. Eliot's work also functions as a kind of diagnosis of the fractured modern world, while simultaneously offering a prescription for its healing and restoration.

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, first performed in 1953, was heavily influenced by the historical and cultural climate of the post-World War II era. The play emerged in a time when Europe and the world were reeling from the catastrophic effects of the war. The widespread devastation, loss of life, and the horrors of events like the Holocaust led to a deep sense of disillusionment. Many people began questioning the values that had once defined civilization, such as progress, morality, and purpose. The play reflects this sense of despair, as its characters, Vladimir and Estragon, exist in a perpetual state of waiting for something—or someone—that may never arrive, symbolizing the futility and lack of meaning that people were feeling after the war.

*Waiting for Godot* also aligns with existential philosophy, particularly the ideas of thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, who focused on themes like absurdity, isolation, and the quest for meaning in an indifferent universe. Beckett's portrayal of a world devoid of clear meaning or

resolution goes even further, depicting characters who are not just uncertain about their purpose but are also paralyzed by the inability to act, emphasizing the absurdity of human existence. The play's sparse setting, repetitive actions, and lack of conventional plot reflect the overwhelming sense of emptiness and waiting that defined much of the post-war mindset.

The play premiered in 1953, a time when the Cold War was beginning, and global tensions between the Soviet Union and the West were rising. This political uncertainty and fear of impending conflict are echoed in the play's depiction of a world in limbo, where characters remain in a state of indecision, unable to move forward or understand their reality.

In essence, *Waiting for Godot* captures the existential angst and disillusionment of the post-World War II era. Beckett's exploration of a world that seems devoid of meaning, coupled with the characters' existential struggles, reflects the broader psychological and cultural crisis of a world recovering from immense trauma. The play highlights the uncertainty and questioning that marked the mid-20th century, probing the deeper philosophical concerns about existence in a world that no longer seemed to offer any clear answers.

### **The Contexts: Modernism and Absurdism**

Before diving into the texts themselves, it is essential to place both works within their respective literary contexts. *The Waste Land*, written in the aftermath of World War I, is often seen as the quintessential Modernist work. Modernism emerged as a reaction to the disillusionment brought about by the war and the collapse of established cultural norms. In literature, Modernism sought to break with traditional narrative forms and explore the fragmented nature of reality and consciousness. Modernist works often feature alienation, a sense of lost purpose, and a questioning of old religious and cultural values.

*Waiting for Godot*, on the other hand, was written in the post-World War II era, during a period marked by the anxiety of the atomic age, totalitarian regimes, and continued human suffering. Beckett's

work is deeply embedded in the existentialist tradition, particularly the philosophy of figures like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, who argued that life has no inherent meaning or purpose, and that individuals must confront this meaninglessness. While Modernism and Absurdism share a pessimistic outlook, Absurdism takes this to an even more radical extreme, emphasizing the utter pointlessness of human existence and the absurdity of human endeavor.

### Fragmentation and the Collapse of Meaning

Both *The Waste Land* and *Waiting for Godot* present worlds in which meaning is elusive, and the human quest for understanding seems futile. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot portrays a fragmented world in which traditional structures of meaning—religious, cultural, and psychological—have collapsed. The poem is famous for its disjointed narrative and multitude of voices, drawing on a wide range of references from mythology, religion, and literature to depict a modern world in crisis.

### Eliot's fragmented structure is exemplified in the opening lines of *The Waste Land*

*"April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain. Winter kept us  
warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers."*

The juxtaposition of 'April' (symbolizing renewal and life) with 'cruellest' creates a paradox that sets the tone for the entire poem. The renewal of life is not a cause for celebration, but a cruel reminder of what has been lost. The 'dead land' is a metaphor for a world that has lost its spiritual center. The mixing of 'memory and desire' and the 'stirring' of 'dull roots' suggest a world where the past and the future are in disarray, and the present is marked by uncertainty and decay.

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* similarly portrays a world devoid of meaning. The play is set in a barren landscape with only a tree and two characters,

Vladimir and Estragon, waiting for someone named Godot. The absence of Godot becomes a central theme in the play, with the characters unsure whether Godot will ever arrive or if he even exists. The lack of any definitive narrative structure or resolution reinforces the futility of human endeavor and the sense that life itself is a waiting game with no real purpose.

### In the first act, Estragon says

*"Nothing to be done."*

And Vladimir responds:

*"I'm beginning to come round to that view."*

This exchange captures the play's central theme of existential paralysis. The characters are trapped in a never-ending cycle of waiting, which mirrors the human condition in the face of an indifferent universe. Like Eliot's fragmented world, Beckett's setting reflects the absence of meaning, as the characters are left in a limbo-like state without any clear goal or direction.

### Alienation and the Loss of Identity

In both *The Waste Land* and *Waiting for Godot*, the characters experience profound alienation, not only from society but also from themselves. Eliot's poem reflects a deep disconnection between individuals and their cultural and spiritual heritage. The speaker in "The Fire Sermon," one of the key sections of *The Waste Land*, describes a world where people are disconnected from any higher purpose or sense of community. The following lines from "The Fire Sermon" illustrate this sense of alienation:

*"The river's tent is broken: the last fingers of  
leaf  
Clutch and sink into the wet bank.  
The poet's voice, reading aloud, dies  
In the loneliness of the wilderness."*

The imagery of the 'broken tent' and the 'wet bank' evokes decay and abandonment, while the 'loneliness of the wilderness' suggests a lack of human connection. The modern world in *The Waste Land* is one where human beings have lost their spiritual bearings and live in isolation, disconnected from their past and from each other.

In *Waiting for Godot*, the alienation is both psychological and existential. Vladimir and Estragon spend much of the play discussing their pasts, but their memories are fragmented and unreliable. For example, Estragon repeatedly forgets whether he has been beaten the previous day, and Vladimir has a vague recollection of events that seem to have no real significance. This lack of coherent identity reinforces the sense that their existence is devoid of meaning. The following exchange underscores this existential confusion:

Estragon: *I don't know if I can go on.*

Vladimir: *That's what you think.*

Estragon: *I can't go on, I'll go on.*

This circular dialogue, with its paradoxical resolution, illustrates the futility of the characters' struggle. Despite their deep despair, they are condemned to continue in the same fruitless existence. Their alienation is not just from society, but also from their own sense of self, as they are unable to make sense of their memories, actions, or purpose.

### **The Absence of God and the Search for Salvation**

Another central theme in both *The Waste Land* and *Waiting for Godot* is the absence of a divine or redemptive force. In Eliot's *The Waste Land*, this absence is portrayed through the recurring imagery of broken religious rituals and the absence of a spiritual center. The poem references various religious traditions, from the Buddha to Christianity, but each seems to offer little comfort or hope. The "Thunder" in "The Fire Sermon," for instance, references the ancient myth of Tiresias and the Hindu god Shiva, yet the promise of divine intervention remains elusive:

*"Shantih shantih shantih"*

This repeated Sanskrit phrase, traditionally associated with peace, concludes the poem, yet its invocation offers no resolution or peace for the modern world. Instead, the repetition highlights the emptiness of religious or spiritual rituals in the face of modern suffering.

In *Waiting for Godot*, Godot (who may or may not exist) represents a kind of vague, unattainable

salvation. The characters' wait for Godot is a metaphor for humanity's search for meaning or redemption, yet it is entirely unclear whether such salvation will ever come. At one point, Vladimir says:

*"We are all waiting for Godot to come. He didn't come, and we are still waiting."*

The absence of Godot becomes a key theme in the play, as it underscores the futility of waiting for something or someone to provide meaning or salvation. Unlike the traditional Christian idea of an omnipotent God, Godot remains a mysterious and unreachable figure, further reinforcing the sense of spiritual barrenness that pervades the work.

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* are two of the most powerful works of the 20th century that reflect the pessimistic view of human existence. Both texts portray worlds that are fragmented, alienated, and devoid of meaning, where characters struggle with their own sense of identity and the absence of any redemptive force. While Eliot's *The Waste Land* offers a more complex, multi-layered exploration of a decaying world, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* strips away much of the extraneous detail to present a minimalist, existential portrayal of human hopelessness.

Despite their differences in form and style, both works share a profound pessimism about the human condition. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot captures the collapse of traditional values and the spiritual barrenness of the modern world, while Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* dramatizes the absurdity of human existence and the futile nature of waiting for meaning or salvation. Both works ask difficult questions about the nature of life, but provide no answers, leaving the audience to grapple with the void that defines the modern condition, through their exploration of existential themes.

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# EXPLORING URBAN MARGINALITY: SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN ARVIND ADIGA'S *THE WHITE TIGER* AND ROHINTON MISTRY'S *A FINE BALANCE*

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## Abstract

*Emphasizing the social stratification that defines urban India, this article will discuss the issue of urban marginality as portrayed in Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*. Both books give a profound insight into the lives of the underprivileged in urban environments, making visible the social, cultural, and economic barriers that support inequality. Adiga and Mistry depict the brutal reality of urban life, where the impoverished and disadvantaged fight to survive against structural forces that oppress and exploit them through the experiences of their heroes, Balram Halwai in *The White Tiger* and the ensemble cast in *A Fine Balance*. The duality of urban settings in these books will be discussed in this article. On the one hand, the city is a place of great social strife, inequality, and alienation; on the other hand, it is a symbol of potential and development. *The White Tiger* by Arvind Adiga exposes the interlocking latticework of social mobility and corruption, whereas Adiga depicts a stinging indictment on Indian economic growth, which puts across a gaping chasm of how Indians are starkly divided along the lines of the well-to-do and the poor. Mistry presents the delicate lives of four people, who have to navigate through the unpredictabilities of urban poverty in his *A Fine Balance*. Through their common experiences, Mistry reveals the systemic factors that keep the impoverished stuck: caste, governmental regulations, and unstable economies. This comparative study will use the method to investigate how Adiga and Mistry utilize urban environments in the works to underscore the themes of economic inequality, social stratification, and invisibility of the urban poor. It will also consider how the authors use the narratives to arouse empathy and challenge the reader to take a position about the moral and ethical implications of urban poverty. This article will examine how these authors depict social mobility, personal agency, and the impact of structural oppression to argue that both books are not only potent pieces of fiction but also forceful social critiques of contemporary India.*

**Keywords:** *marginality, underprivileged, inequality, economy*

## Introduction

Urban marginality and social stratification are two powerful motifs in Indian literature, as cities often offer opportunities and represent oppression as well. Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* keenly look at these aspects, bringing out a vivid portrayal of the marginalized sections of Indian society. While Adiga focuses on the neoliberal India of early 2000s and its "miracle" economy, Mistry presents the struggles during the Emergency period of the 1970s. Although both novels are of different thematic contexts, they still end with the universal issue of economic inequality

and social injustice, showing how the marginalized survive an indifferent urban world.

The article discusses class divisions in urban India as depicted by Adiga and Mistry, focusing on their portrayals of poverty, social mobility, and moral dilemmas in each character. Using an urban backdrop, both authors critique not only the stark difference between wealth and poverty but also systemic forces perpetuating these inequalities.

## Urban Marginality and Economic Disparity

One of the most important themes that are addressed in *The White Tiger* and *A Fine Balance* is the general

economic inequality prevalent in urban India. Both the novels portray the city as a place where dreams and aspirations can either thrive or be crushed. In *The White Tiger*, Adiga introduces us to Balram Halwai, a poor villager who moves to the city with aspirations of breaking free from the "Rooster Coop" of servitude and poverty. Adiga's portrayal of Balram's journey from servant to entrepreneur exposes the dark side of India's economic growth, where opportunities for the poor are limited, and upward mobility often comes at a high ethical cost.

Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, however, gives a more collective picture of urban marginality through the lives of four characters-Dina, Ishvar, Om, and Maneck-who all grapple with the harshest realities of the city. The time setting of the novel during the Emergency period adds a political dimension of tension because the policies of the government are biased against the poor and vulnerable. Mistry instead highlights the illusion of promises of urban life offered to those deficient either in social or economic privilege while demonstrating how poverty lingers even as an inescapable reality for many.

The two writers employ characters' lives and experiences to critique the Indian meritocracy myth of urban Indian. Cities are romanticized, as places of opportunity, but what *The White Tiger* and *A Fine Balance* show is that millions lead lives and realities devoid of resources and networks. It is particularly Balram's story that highlights the extremes that need to be gone through to get to the top when the world is working against you, which implies that wealth in contemporary India is usually acquired by unfair means. In Mistry's rendering of Ishvar and Om, both lower-caste, systemic barriers are so entrenched that they can't be overcome, no matter how hard you work.

### **The Duality of Urban Spaces: Opportunity Vs. Oppression**

The two novels depict the city as a place of extreme disparity: wealth and poverty cohabit neighboring blocks but are worlds apart. In *The White Tiger*, Adiga's depiction of cities such as Delhi and Bangalore show the two sides of urban life.

Prosperity is shown through the high-rise buildings and luxury cars which are sustained by the slums and workers' quarters. Balram's travels through these strikingly different spaces expose the hypocrisy of the city, which survives on the backs of the poor. Hence the so-called "Indian miracle" is built on their misery.

Mistry's Mumbai, similarly, is a duality. On the one hand, Mumbai promises employment and survival to Dina, Ishvar, Om, and Maneck. On the other hand, it makes them go through the brutalities of life in slums, caste harassment, and police intimidation. The novel catches their very precarious existence wherein every misstep-losing a job or meeting a corrupt official-can change life permanently. The city thus is no haven from hardship for the characters of Mistry but augments the social inequalities along with the structural injustices they face.

In both novels, the city constructs a space of hope as well as despair. It is this duality that captures the urban life in India, an urbanity where the facade of modernity and economic acceleration is overshadowed by the brute force of survival. Both writers don't merely treat the city as a backdrop; they show the way it acts out on the lives, identities and moral choices of their characters.

### **Social Mobility and Moral Ambiguity**

Social mobility is another prominent theme in both novels, although it manifests differently for each character. In *The White Tiger*, Balram's ascent from village boy to entrepreneur is marked by moral ambiguity. His journey is a critique of the capitalist ethos that values wealth above integrity. Adiga writes Balram's transformation in a complexly moral sense; though he achieves financial success, it is at the cost of betrayal and violence. Balram's story questions ethics in social mobility in societies where the poor have to take extreme measures to come out of their miserable situation.

On the other hand, *A Fine Balance* presents a more tragic view on social mobility. For Ishvar and Om of the lower-caste chammaar community, the city promises the possibility of an escape from

oppression at the hands of caste in the village but is hardly kinder and proves brutal in the shape of exploitation and police atrocities culminating in sterilization during the Emergency. This journey is intended to illustrate very slim possibilities for systematically disenfranchised people to better their position within society. Using Ishvar and Om's lives, Mistry underscores the point that even for the worst-off sections of society, the impediments to climbing up are often insurmountable, regardless of effort or willpower.

Thus, both authors raise moral and ethical issues concerning social mobility. Adiga's Balram breaks free from his impoverished background, but his ascent questions the notion of innocence. Success in modern India seems to require moral compromise. Mistry's characters, however, find themselves trapped within an oppressive social structure that offers no path to advancement. Together, these perspectives present a sobering view of the challenges faced by those seeking to transcend their socio-economic status in an urbanized, economically polarized India.

### **Systemic Oppression and Individual Agency**

Adiga and Mistry's novels reveal that while individuals may strive for agency, they are often constrained by systemic forces beyond their control. In *The White Tiger*, Adiga introduces the concept of the "Rooster Coop," a metaphor for the societal structure that keeps the poor subservient and docile. Balram's story embodies an attempt to break through this system, but one reads between the lines that only a few such breaks are successful and often come with grave moral costs.

In *A Fine Balance*, Mistry portrays a wider scale of systemic oppression: caste, political corruption, and economic exploitation. The individual's effort to create a better life is confronted by the state or society forces with hindrances. The three interrelated stories of Dina, Ishvar, Om, and Maneck form an excellent tool by which Mistry describes an overarching image of suppressed individual agency. Both novels suggest that there is a kind of individual agency but it is often limited by systemic

oppression, leading to a kind of moral resignation. For Balram, breaking out of the "Rooster Coop" requires acts that society would deem immoral; for Mistry's characters, any efforts to improve their situation are thwarted by an unforgiving system.

### **Conclusion**

In *The White Tiger* and *A Fine Balance*, Adiga and Mistry have given us strong denunciations of urban India that portray how social stratification and systemic oppression seep into the lives of marginalized peoples. Through these explorations of urban life, the authors show complex interlinks of class, caste, and economic inequality in their worlds, underlining that such deep challenges face individuals at the margins of their societies. These novels take the city on as something of opportunity and oppression where, in both cases, there are moral and ethical questions to be asked between individual pursuits of social mobility in society. Both Adiga and Mistry ultimately argue that true success for India depends on more critical analysis of the kinds of structures that perpetuate inequality, challenging readers to think upon the moral costs of the process of economic development itself. Therefore, this paper concludes that *The White Tiger* and *A Fine Balance* are not just fictional stories but rather commentaries of strong social insights that unfold the realisms of urban marginality in India during the contemporary times. Their narrative skills compel the reader to understand the inequalities existing in their society and are perpetuated in millions' lives today.

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## AN OBSESSION OF A FATHER ABOUT CRICKET IN *SELECTION DAY: A STUDY*

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### Abstract

*Cricket, of course, is an excellent medium for writing about broken aspirations, both personal and national in scope. As a result, it is not required to be familiar with the game to appreciate this beautifully written, frequently touching, and insightful book. Cricket in this country embodies all that is adored in India, but the changes inside the country are also tainting it. The following is an observation made by Tommy Sir, a cricket coach who hopes to unearth the next Bradman or Sobers: "How did this thing, our shield and chivalry, our Roncesvalles and Excalibur, go over to the other side and become part of the great nastiness?" (Adiga140)*

**Keywords:** *cricket, aspiration, adored, tommy sir, bradman, excalibur, sobers*

Selection Day is a remarkable new book about two brothers nurtured in a Mumbai slum by their obsessive father to be cricket stars. Their coming-of-age threatens their relationship, future, and sense of self. Aravind Adiga, whose debut book *The White Tiger* won the 2008 Man Booker Prize, has long been frustrated by the chasm between India Shining's vitality and shine and the violence, inequity, and social melancholy that undermine the nation's effort to rebrand itself. *Selection Day* chronicles the ups and downs of 14-year-old Manju Kumar and his more attractive, though not necessarily more skilled, older brother Radha. Both would be social outcasts if it were not for their cricketing prowess. They were given schooling from an early age by their father, Mohan, a humble chutney vendor who took them to Mumbai and now lives in a single-room shed on the city's outskirts.

"Their father grooms them to be the world's number one and number two batsmen" (Adiga32).

It appears to indicate early on the nature of the narrative. Adiga writes while ignoring all the brothers who have achieved tremendous individual and occasionally public success playing cricket for

their national sides—the Waugh and Crowes and Mohammad's.

Sachin Tendulkar and Vinod Kambli, formerly the princes of Mumbai school cricket, are often mentioned. They were not siblings but childhood friends and teammates whose fortunes appeared to align when, at the ages of 16 and 17, they had a record-breaking 664-run partnership in school cricket, which garnered widespread media attention. However, whereas Tendulkar became the world's most admired batter, Kambli's Test career ended at 24 years old. Adiga is setting us up for a scenario in which one brother rises and the other falls—but knowing this does not detract from the pleasure of the story. His two brothers are Radha, the older, and Manju, the younger; their father has determined that the oldest will be the greater of the two, and for a while, the boys agree that their sports competition is a minor concern in comparison to their mutual fear of their authoritarian father.

Everything is predicated on Manju's ability to beat scholastic batting records, avoid the pernicious influence of his competitor, Javed, and get into the big leagues. This underpins their father's ambitions of escaping poverty and the reputation of Tommy Sir,

reputedly the country's top talent representative. Anand Mehta was born into a family of stockbrokers, is also holding his breath. "Driven! Anglophone, numerate, and unfettered by postcolonial entitlement from almost all forms of liberal guilt or introspection" (Adiga 55).

Mehta also has access to a sponsorship scheme that offers him incalculable millions in future returns for a tiny investment in the adolescent Manju.

Thus, Indian cricket is defined. It is about training and commercialization, with high school coaches acting as "fat pipes in the filtering system" (Adiga73) that channels and exploits the under commons' emergence. Mehta, the pessimist, believes it is a sort of societal control, a state-sponsored programme. "to pacify hundreds of millions of desperately horny young Indians of the lower social classes", a tool to contest "rogue Hindu testosterone" (Adiga45).

Mehta is perpetually chatty and amusing. At one point, he makes the following statement about his fellow Indians:

"We want to see ourselves depicted as soulful, sensitive, profound, valorous, wounded, tolerant and funny beings. All that Jhumpa Lahiri's stuff". He, so cynical and alive, is as much at the heart of the novel as Manju, whose sexuality-conflicted growing pains might have been more poignantly animated. Nevertheless, Adiga has written another snarling, witty state-of-the-nation address about a country in thrall to values that 19th-century moralists would have damned as "not cricket" (Adiga 140).

Even though Mehta was that rare cricket fan who was not also an Anglophile-kept safe from madness by his knowledge of what the British had done to India in the twentieth century (Partition, the Bengal famine, the Gandhi-Nehru family) and the greater horror they had deposited here in the nineteenth century, the Indian Penal Code, which was still in force (like the mad grandfather everyone knows should be locked up in the attic, but who sits in the living With one hand, James Grant Duff is writing the history of the Marathas, and with the other, he is firing his flintlocks at the Marathas, which is a dangerous combination. That takes many

guts. The French refer to it as sangfroid. Furthermore, there is the tradition of balls from the seventeenth century. The game of Test cricket, which is more formally known as sangfroid in India, is the last remaining component of our national heritage.

The reason for this was that Tommy Sir smiled at the young RadhaKrishna Kumar, the Junk living manifestation of sangfroid, as he stood at the head of an outpatient bed at St George Hospital in Mumbai, even as Anand Mehta entered the hospital ward and inquired, 'Where is this Holocaust situation, please?'

In Mumbai, ten-year-old Aravind Adiga takes us on a tense rollercoaster ride through the modern cricket factory known as the city of dreams. Cricket is only a metaphor for life in this context. Adiga's writing takes the audience on tour through the 150-year-old Mumbai Gharana of cricket. He brings to life Kanga Leaguers and individuals who received their education at the Gymkhanas. He also recalls the lives of legendary greats such as AjitWadekar, Farokh Engineer, Vinoo Mankad, Eknath Solkar, Vijay Merchant, and Vijay Manjrekar, the two Dilips, Sardesai and Vengsarkar, and Sunny and Sachin - all local boys who learned to play at the Oval and Azad Maidan. He also recalls the lives of legendary greats such as AjitWadekar, Farokh Engineer

And then, he takes us right up to the action with the narrative of the slumboys Radha Krishna Kumar and his younger brother Manju, who are also promising cricketers. Furthermore, their tyrannical Tiger Father, Chutney King Mohan Kumar, would stop at nothing to ensure that his kids were selected for the Mumbai Team.

Whereas Radha has just one goal in mind: to make it through Selection Day, Radha's younger brother Manju hopes to live a more regular life one day. In addition, while he has always accompanied his brother to practise since he was little, his long-term ambition is to work as a criminal scientist when he grows up. Also, consider joining the CSI team. Radha and Manju, on the other hand, have a firm understanding of the family structure. They carry out their father's instructions.

"Selection Day is about cages built for us and the ones we build ourselves. Manju's fear enslaves

him, but the bars to his cage come readymade. Nevertheless, Adiga's story is not about the path to glory in cricket as much as it is about its closed paths. When the true Selection Day arrives for Manju, he must decide between what others want for him and what he wants for himself. His other selves- in college studying science, a forensic scientist like his heroes on CSI Las Vegas, riding a motorcycle across India with a beautiful Muslim boy with a hooked nose- must submit to his father, his coach, his cricket sponsor (to whom he is deeply in debt) and to the labyrinthine financial and psychological entrapments of both youth-league cricket and society at large" (Annalisa). Along the way, we meet the head coach of Ali Weinberg School, Pramod Sawant, "...a fat pipe in the [cricket] categorization system that sucks in strong wrists, quick reflexes and flexible limbs and pours them into an open field where two or maybe three new players will be picked for the Mumbai Ranji Team" (Adiga 32).

He is the one who "discovers" the brothers and brings them to the attention of Tommy Sir, the seasoned talent scout who has been on the lookout for a star batsman for the better part of four decades in Mumbai cricket.

Tommy Sir says that

"if you have learned to give this absurd game everything, you will have learned how to do the same in business, medicine, or anything else, and you will be a king in that life" (Adiga 142).

Additionally, it is at this point that we are confronted with the heinous underbelly of the cricket following community, represented by the crooked Anand Mehta, a rogue wheeler-dealer who thinks that "nothing is illegal in India, technically, since everything is illegal in India" (Adiga 96).

As a result, the Kumar brothers became fodder for the mill for Mehta's most recent commercial endeavour, cricket. And then there is Sofia, the social terror with the spotted neck who flirts with both brothers in a perplexing manner.

We discover an unusual hero in the form of Javed Ansari, a cricketer who seems to be indifferent to the situation. He is the one who exposes Manju to the concept of a life outside of the sport of cricket. "J.A." is the one who demonstrates to him that it is possible to do your own thing. He opens portals to mysterious realms. He is the one who helps Manju realise that his existence is not constrained by the limitations of his father's perception.

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## A THEMATIC STUDY OF NADINE GORDIMER'S “SIX FEET OF THE COUNTRY”

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### Abstract

*This article aims to conduct a thematic analysis of Nadine Gordimer's short story Six Feet of the Country to explore its prominent themes and their significance within the context of Apartheid-era in South Africa. This analysis will employ a close reading approach or textual analysis focusing on key themes along with motifs, symbols, and character interactions to expose the deeper meanings hidden within the text. By examining the story through a thematic perspective, this study seeks to shed light on the complex social and political issues raised and depicted in by Nadine Gordimer's short story, Six Feet of the Country.*

**Keywords:** short story, apartheid, textual, social, cultural, colonial power

Nadine Gordimer, a renowned South African writer, began her literary journey with semi-auto biographical novels like *The Lying Days* and *A World of Strangers*. These early works reflected the growing social consciousness of a young white woman living in a racially divided South Africa. As her career progressed, Gordimer's focus shifted towards the harsh realities of apartheid.

Nadine Gordimer's novels such as *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People* delved into the complexities of interracial relationships and the struggles of Black South Africans under oppressive regimes. Her characters as described in her fiction, caught in the midst of racial injustice, faced moral dilemmas that challenged readers to confront the harsh truths of apartheid. Through her powerful storytelling, and using creative literary techniques, Nadine Gordimer exposed the deep-seated prejudices and inequalities that characterized South African society.

Nadine Gordimer used and experimented her powerful words to expose the injustices of apartheid and explore universal themes of human experience. Her short stories, such as those in *The Six Feet of the Country and Other Stories* delved into racial issues and personal struggles. Novels like *The Conservationist* and *Burger's Daughter* explored

complex themes of love, loss, and the impact of colonialism and apartheid.

Nadine Gordimer's creative writings often used irony and satire to highlight the absurdity of Apartheid and the moral failings of its supporters. *J.M. Coetzee* says, "Gordimer's genius lies in her ability to make the personal political, and the political deeply unsettling. *Six Feet of the Country* is a masterpiece of short fiction, a haunting exploration of power, belonging, and the ghosts of the past."

Nadine Gordimer's dedication to social justice earned her numerous awards, including the *Nobel Prize in Literature in 1991*. Her work continues to inspire and challenge readers, reminding us of the power of storytelling to illuminate the human condition and fight for justice. In the words of *Chinua Achebe*, "Gordimer's unflinching gaze towards the heart of colonialism is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the complexities of race and power in the modern world."

The present short story, *Six Feet of the Country* has setting of the apartheid era in South Africa and its critical, antiracial policies are explored through this short story especially through the characterisation of black people. The black characters are Petrus, Albert, his nephew or brother who dies later, which is central issue of the work, Franz, Dora and Old father.

A white couple moves to a South African farm- which itself is a symbolic representation of *colonial power*. The white couple came to settle for seeking peace and tranquillity through buying farm as depicted in the beginning of the short story, "My wife and I are not real farmers - not even Lerice, really. We bought our place, ten miles out of Johannesburg on one of the main roads, to change something in ourselves..." However, their idyllic life is disrupted when they allow a Black worker to bury his nephew on their land.

The local Black community believes the land is cursed, and strange occurrences begin to haunt the white couple. They experience eerie noises, unsettling dreams, and witness a ritual performed at the grave. To appease the spirits, the couple is forced to give up six feet of their land.

This short story *Six Feet of the Country* explores the complex themes of *colonialism* and *racial tension* in South Africa between native Blacks and non-native Whites. It highlights the power dynamics between the white settlers and the Black community, and the deep-rooted beliefs and traditions of the indigenous people. The white couple's initial ignorance and disregard for local customs eventually lead to their confrontation with the consequences of their actions.

Through this narrative, Nadine Gordimer exposes the *fragility of human control over land* and the enduring power of the past. The *six feet* of surrendered land symbolizes the white couple's recognition of the land's true ownership and the limitations of their imposed authority. The story ultimately invites readers to reflect on the importance of understanding and respecting different cultures and the lasting impact of historical injustices. The following themes are explored through the textual-connotative reading of the short story.

The story emphasizes the concept of *land dispossession*, symbolized by the "six feet" required for burial. This represents the broader issue of land stolen from Black communities during colonial times. The struggle to bury Isaac highlights the dehumanizing effects of this dispossession, as even in death, dignity and ownership of land are denied.

The farm, seemingly a peaceful retreat, is built on stolen land, reminding us of the ongoing consequences of colonial land grabs and their impact on society.

The story explores themes of *identity and belonging*. Petrus's struggle to give his nephew a proper burial symbolizes the broader search for belonging by Black individuals in a colonial society. Isaac, a migrant worker, is constantly on the move, never truly belonging to any place. His death highlights the challenges faced by Black people under colonial rule, where their identity and sense of belonging are often denied. Even on the farm, where Black workers labor, they are denied ownership and true belonging, reflecting the broader societal exclusion faced by marginalized communities.

The story highlights the *power dynamics of apartheid*. Petrus's struggle to give his nephew a proper burial is hindered by white officials, who have the power to control the lives of Black people. The bureaucracy is used to maintain racial hierarchies, with white people having the authority to make decisions that affect Black communities. The six feet of land symbolize this power imbalance, as Black lives are subject to the whims of the white power structure.

The story also touches on the universal themes of *loss and grief*. Isaac's death serves as a reminder of the fragility of human life, especially for those who are marginalized and oppressed. Petrus, who is deeply affected by the loss of his nephew, experiences a range of emotions, from shock to acceptance. His journey reflects the universal human experience of grief and loss. By exploring these themes, the story transcends the specific context of apartheid and connects with readers on a deeper, emotional level.

The story also highlights the *clash between modern Western beliefs and traditional African beliefs*. The white couple's skepticism about the rituals and superstitions surrounding Moses's burial reflects the Western perspective, which often dismisses such beliefs as irrational. However, Petrus and his community view these traditions as essential to maintaining a connection with their ancestors and

the natural world. This clash between different cultural perspectives further underscores the power dynamics at play and the importance of acknowledging and respecting diverse cultural beliefs.

The farm owner initially sympathizes with Petrus and Isaac's situation. However, as the burial controversy unfolds, the owner becomes detached and unwilling to engage with the *injustices*. This highlights the dangers of ignoring *oppression*. The story encourages readers to reflect on their own moral responsibility and consider the consequences of turning a blind eye to the suffering of others.

The man's encounter with the ritualistic practices surrounding Moses's grave serves as a *confrontation with the dark legacy of colonialism*. The eerie atmosphere, the chanting, and the flickering lights symbolize the unhealed wounds of the past, particularly the racial violence and dispossession that continue to haunt the present. The six feet of land surrendered to appease the ancestors represents the enduring presence of the past and the need for acknowledging and addressing historical injustices. This act of surrender highlights the complex power dynamics and the lasting impact of colonial legacies on the land and its people.

Initially, the farm is seen as a *peaceful escape* from the city. However, as the story unfolds, the idyllic landscape becomes a reflection of the broader societal tensions. The farm can no longer offer a true escape from the injustices and complexities of the world. The beauty of the landscape cannot mask the underlying power imbalances and the ongoing struggle for dignity and belonging within a divided society.

These are just some of the major themes explored in *Six Feet of the Country*. The story's enduring power lies in its ability to weave these themes together into a compelling narrative that challenges readers to engage with uncomfortable truths about colonialism, racism, and the human cost of injustice.

*Six Feet of the Country* concludes with a chilling silence, leaving the reader to grapple with the unsettling implications of the story's events. The surrendered six feet of land stand as a stark symbol of the protagonist's dispossession, not just of physical space but of moral clarity and self-assurance. As he stares at the ceded land, he realizes that his ownership of the farm was an illusion, built upon the legacy of colonial theft and the disregard for ancestral traditions.

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# AN ANTAGONISTIC OF DALITS PROSPERITY: AN EXPLORATION OF GOGU SHYAMALA'S SHORT STORIES 'TATAKI WINS AGAIN' AND 'BRAVE HEART BEDAYYA'

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## Abstract

Indian English literature had plenty of scope in Indian regional languages. Gogu Shyamala is a Dalit female writer in Telugu language and activist from Telangana. She has been exploring several marginalized issues and challenges through her works. This paper discusses the challenges of Dalits to have better prosperity and improvement in their life. Shyamala has explored an antagonistic of Dalit's prosperity in the stories 'Tataki Wins Again' and 'Brave Heart Bedayya'. Since ancient times Dalits opposed amalgamation with prosperous existence and improvement in cultural, social, educational, political, and financial conditions; they always tread as subordinate. This paper explores the theme of resistance through the characters Bamma and Bedayya. Bamma as Tataki in the story, became a symbol of strength to overcome Dalit's difficulties, who seemed to be against landlord Karnam. This paper will also focus on landless Dalits' conditions, especially Dalit women, and their hurdles to survive in this caste-dominated society. The portrayal of the Bedayya character as a symbol of prosperity, the mark of liberty to possess skilful art, and inculcated by birth to making leather slippers. This paper invites readers to reflect on Dalit sensibilities in their consciousness to realize awareness of universal appeal. This paper illuminates, how the upper class tries to curb marginalized community's prosperity. Dalits have suffered a lot from social suppression, oppression, snubbing, abuse, and insult which can't improve their lives.

**Keywords:** antagonistic, opposition, prosperity, improvement, survive, consciousness, and oppression

## Introduction

Gogu Shymala is a Dalit writer and activist in Telangana. She is known for her short stories in Telugu literature. She explored several social issues of Dalits in her works like caste, gender, and problems of yogini. The concept of Dalit was started in the ancient period. Dalit's also called untouchables or marginalized people. Shyamala has been a strong voice advocating for social justice and equality in Telangana. Her works often delve into the experiences of the oppressed, and suppressed, shedding light on the complexities of caste discrimination in Indian society. I have found that an antagonistic of Dalit's prosperity in her works. The stories Takaki Wins Again and Brave Heart Bedayya are the best examples of an antagonistic of Dalit's prosperity. Shyamala's narratives resonate with readers and audiences offering a unique perspective and interpretation on the challenges faced by marginalized communities in India.

In the short story "Tataki Wins Again" Bamma is a Dalit young girl, who is not yet twelve but becomes an inspiration to many Dalits, especially Dalit women. Dalit women are oppressed in India. They are marginalized as women and double marginalization in society, for being born in a Dalit community. One of the worst kinds of marginalization by their people. At the beginning of the story, we would find that the bonded slave, who is apparently from her own Madiga community rebuked her for coming too early to the fields to water the plant.

He says "When did you come in the dark like a ghost? Watered all your plots, eh? Water the last two later, I'm diverting the water to my field."

The bonded labourer belongs to her own Madiga community, he urged her to leave the water to the Karnam's field to escape from the punishment from the Karnam, who was the landlord in the Bamma's village. When he addresses Bamma, it clearly shows how Dalit women undergo triple



marginalization in society. Whenever he says that he wants to divert the water it implies the prioritization of the people. Upper-caste people always seem to be dominated in Indian society and marginalized are always oppressed.

Then she says that she has only two plots left after she will leave water for them. Then the labourer says “

Don't dare come near till then. You can divert the flow after I'm done”

The above words carry an air of urgency and hint at a task requiring undisturbed focus. The phrase "Don't dare come near till then" suggests a critical moment or activity demanding the isolation of Dalit women in the story. The subsequent instruction, "You can divert the flow after I'm done," adds a layer of mystery, and domination leaving readers to speculate on the nature of the task and its significance. It creates a suspenseful atmosphere, prompting one to wonder about the impending incidents or events and their potential consequences. The comment leaves a lingering sense of anticipation, antagonistic compelling readers to imagine the circumstances that warrant such a strict directive.

“This girl will not let the person move a hand or foot. How will she look after her husband and family? Tomboy, that is what she is!”

This statement seems to carry a stereotypical view and suggests that a girl's strong nature might hinder her ability to care for her husband and family. It illustrates an outdated notion that associates femininity with certain traditional roles. However, it's important to recognize that personal attributes like strong nature do not determine one's capability to fulfil familial responsibilities. People are diverse, and strengths come in various forms. Dismissing someone based on the concept of stereotypes might overlook their unique qualities and abilities. Embracing the individuality of every person and understanding that competence transcends gender norms is crucial for a more inclusive and respectful perspective. Then the Karnam comes and asks why are the fields not watered yet. Karnam doubted the labourer whether to come before dawn or not. Then

the labourer explained the incidents that had happened before.

Then Karna angrily says.

“So! His daughter is the one who filled those plots with water, isn't it? Yes, that Tataki! Wait, I'll straighten her out,” muttered the landlord.

The landlord Karnam is muttering unveils a mix of surprise and frustration, linking the act of watering the plots by Tataki. The tone suggested a perceived transgression, leading the landlord to contemplate a corrective response. The comment sparks intrigue about Tataki's motives and the implications of her actions. It opens a narrative window into potential family dynamics, domination, and the landlord's sense of authority. This snippet hints at an unfolding story, prompting readers to speculate on the impending confrontation of caste and the reasons behind Tataki's decision.

“Can a bonded worker ever do agriculture on his own? Or will he just grow grass? He has no bullocks to plow and no tools to work with even if he had all these, he would never have the guts to till the land.”

This represents a concerning perspective on the limitations, restrictions, and perceived helplessness of bonded workers in agriculture. The assumption that they lack the capacity, strength, resources, and courage to cultivate their land perpetuates a negative stereotype. In reality, given equal opportunities, support, and liberation from bonded labour, individuals can demonstrate remarkable capabilities.

“The karnam were of a higher caste. They would never touch a madiga. Why was he pulling her?”

It raises concerns about caste and gender-based discrimination and the perpetuation of social hierarchies. The act of pulling someone from a lower caste, like a Madiga, indicates a clear manifestation of injustice, inequality, and prejudice. The question raised here reflects the inherent injustice of such discriminatory practices. It reminds us to question the deep-rooted biases that fuel such behaviour, and attitude and highlights the need for societal change. Individuals should not be subjected to mistreatment based on their caste, or gender, and efforts should be directed towards fostering inclusivity, understanding,

and dismantling the dangerous stereotypes ingrained in social structures.

“Tataki! You bloody witch! ..... You mala and madiga don’t even know that girls have to be kept at home!... he thrust his hand into her blouse. But her small hands couldn’t throw off the landlord’s fat paws. His body felt like an iron post. Ballamma trembled all over”

The depicted scene is deeply disturbing; it discloses a blatant display of gender-based violence and caste discrimination in the upper caste-dominated society. The derogatory language used and the act of violating personal boundaries and misbehaving not only perpetuate misogyny but also underscore the entrenched caste biases. This narrative lights a grim reality where power and domination dynamics are exploited to subject vulnerable individuals to abuse. Such examples demand societal condemnation and a critical examination of ingrained prejudices. The narrative story should serve as a call to action against gender-based violence and caste-based discrimination, emphasizing the urgency of fostering empathy, education, and legal measures to protect the rights and dignity of marginalized people.

“She aimed and kicked him as hard as she could on the groin with both her legs. “ oh! I am dead! He said and fell back “

The described scene depicts an act of self-defence against an apparent threat. While the response is understandable in the context of protecting oneself from danger, the fact that such a drastic measure is necessary raises concerns about the prevailing situation. It climaxes a grim reality where individuals, especially women, feel compelled to resort to physical force to ensure their safety. This story underscores the need for a society that prioritizes safety, respect, and equality, where everyone can coexist without the fear of violence. It prompts reflection on the broader issues of gender-based threats and the imperative for societal change.

It is the second story in the Tataki wins again and Brave Heart Badayya. Badayya is a young Dalit boy. He is active among his family members. He was

strange and surprised by his mother’s way of respect to Ramreddy Dora. She removed her slippers and saluted him then she lost her slippers and was wounded by the thorny bushes that poked at her feet. This incident makes him prepare new slippers for his mother. His parents praised him because he learned to make slippers by watching at a young age. This is the central theme of the story.

### Conclusion

However, Dalits’ prosperity is not assimilated into society. Gogu Shyamala’s stories reveal how Dalits are suppressed and oppressed. Dalit prosperity is not tolerated, the dominant class always wanted to oppress Dalits' activity. In the story ‘Tataki Wins Again’, Bamma is an example of strength and courage in the story and becomes a model to all marginalized communities to fight against their oppression and get rid of their hurdles in society. Similarly, in the story ‘Brave Heart Bedayya’ Bedayya is an example of a skilled artist and labourer who had inculcated to make leather slippers without any kind of training. These stories reveal to us that the most profound victories are those won through exploration of the self, with prosperity being a byproduct of bravery, wisdom, and inner strength.

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# UNDERSTANDING “WABI-SABI”: A JAPANESE AESTHETIC THROUGH HAIKU, ITS CONTRAST WITH WESTERN MATERIALISM, AND EXPLORING THE WESTERN INFLUENCE ON JAPANESE CONSUMERISM

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Whenever people talk about consumerism, they talk about economics, capitalism, social class, marketing, advertising, and so on. Still, they often sideline “aesthetics” and its crucial role in propelling mindless excessive consumption. People buy things not because they “need” them, but because they chase aesthetic appeal; consumerism is a pursuit of beauty. People buy thousands of cosmetic products because they think their natural face is not beautiful enough; they keep on buying new clothes because old clothes are so not easy on the eyes; they buy different editions of the same book because they don't care about functionality, but the superficial beauty of artistic covers. The sense of what is beautiful and what is not arises from a set of aesthetic principles ingrained in people's minds.

Most of the world is influenced by Western beauty standards, because of the West's dominance over the East in the 20th century. The West is dominated by the aesthetic of the Ancient Greeks, which is all about ratio, proportion, symmetry, balance, and harmony. The problem with this view is that it goes against nature, nature is chaotic, erratic, and discordant. The aesthetic of the Greeks runs behind the ideal forms that don't exist in the natural world. When people follow this aesthetic principle, they will never be content with the natural state of things, they will find nature to be imperfect, and thus they will be forced to consume man-made, synthesized products that claim to be perfect. This “perfect” will be overthrown by another “perfect”, people will always chase this will-o'-the-wisp called “the ideal” and be discontent forever and consume things non-stop; they can never be happy as they

cannot accept nature as it is. This will lead to nature's destruction and the earth's destruction.

As a total contrast to Western aesthetics, there comes the Japanese aesthetic principle of “Wabi-sabi”, which stands for embracing nature by seeing beauty in imperfection, wear and tear, asymmetry, weathering, and aging. It emphasizes simplicity, the focus should be on functionality rather than outward appearance, anything beyond simple is not natural, it is pretense. When functionality is prioritized, only essential needs are catered to, and consumerist “wants” are curbed, giving way to a healthy, natural lifestyle away from the material world. This paper aims to show how Wabi-sabi stands against Western aesthetics and how the influence of Western Materialism in Japan is counteracted by Wabi-sabi, making the Japanese market and consumers well distinguished from the others.

Wabi-sabi has its origin in Zen Buddhism and Japanese Tea Ceremony. Initially, “Wabi” and “Sabi” were two distinct concepts, wabi expressed the reclusive life of finding refuge in nature, away from the artificiality of civilization; “Sabi” expressed the effects time had on everything and the appreciation for grace that comes with age and use. Over time, they blended and evolved into an aesthetic that favors nature, austerity, humility, simplicity, and rustic beauty, and honors impermanence, imperfection, unpredictability, and mutability that are intrinsic to life. Wabi-sabi is almost omnipresent in various aspects of Japanese culture.

One of the art forms through which it can be explored and experienced very well is Haiku, a poetry tradition that is unique to Japanese literature.

The simple and economical structure of haiku captures the essence of Wabi-sabi. The common haiku themes are nature, seasonal changes, solitude, fleeting moments, and everyday occurrences, which very well embody the spirit of Wabi-sabi. This paper will use a selection of notable haikus as a lens to explore and understand Wabi-sabi and how it contrasts Western aesthetics and materialism.

One of the best-known haikus by the well-renowned haiku poet Matsuo Bashō is, “Cicadas”. It goes, “There is no sign of cicadas’ cry/that they are just about to die.” (Matsuo 89) and expresses the transient nature of life. The cicadas are recurrently used in haikus as a symbol of the ephemerality of life. Cicadas live as nymphs for about 17 years underground and once a year they come out, molt into winged insects, mate and after the laying of eggs, they only live for about 3 or 4 weeks and die. In the Bashō’s haiku the cicadas are crying, the cry is so full of vigor and vitality of life that there is no hint of the fast-approaching death. They are soon going to face their demise, but unaware of it, they are very zealous about life. This can be applied to humans as well; humans fail to realize the fleeting nature of their lives, and as if they are going to live forever, they hoard material wealth not out of need but out of greed; they ignore the temporality of life and hoard things.

One of the factors that trigger this greed is Western aesthetics, it leaves people unsatisfied and wanting more, so they end up chasing money to buy and accumulate things for their superficial value rather than their utility. They forget to live a wholesome, meaningful life, they fail to find happiness in deeper and essential aspects of life as they cannot see beyond material wealth. That is where Wabi-sabi comes into play, in this “Cicadas” haiku, Wabi-sabi makes people realize the impermanence of life, once people realize that, they will focus on living life more mindfully, focusing on inner happiness, love, family, spirituality, etc. rather than wasting their time and energy in consuming goods that don’t last, and lack value beyond the material world.

“In my hut, this New Year time, there’s nothing,/Which means that in it there is everything.” (Yokoyama 179) is a haiku written by Yokoyama Sodō that talks about the insignificance of material possessions. It enlightens the readers that happiness doesn’t come out of worldly effects and assets; it strongly negates the consumerist thinking that the more you have, the happier you are, The consumerist mindset iterates that whatever one has is never enough, one can always have more, and this makes people never happy enough; this haiku makes us understand that real happiness comes from within and not from tying our contentment with material things.

There is Bashō’s haiku, “Ah! I take my breakfast,/Viewing morning glories” (Matsuo 108) which stands against an over-indulgent lifestyle and celebrates a simple living. This haiku was written as a reaction to his pupil Kikaku’s haiku which talks about him enjoying a life of excess like a firefly eating knotgrass in a thatched hut. Bashō’s rebuttal haiku elevates the austere beauty of having a simple meal while enjoying nature; criticizes his pupil’s sumptuous and intemperate life; and becomes one of the quintessential haiku of Wabi-sabi.

Western Aesthetics are heavily influenced by the beauty standards of ancient Greeks which are centered on the quest for ideals and they celebrate youth as the epitome of perfect physical form and vitality and look down upon old age as a degradation. Anything young and new with perfect mathematical ratio, proportion, and symmetry is hailed, while aging and weathering, that rob this perfection are scorned. This idealistic beauty standard sometimes becomes toxic. It makes people hate their natural, physical appearance and forces people to always strive towards unattainable perfection. It pushes them to splurge their money on a plethora of cosmetic products, risky cosmetic surgeries, harmful anti-aging procedures, unhealthy diets, and treatments for fitness. This can have adverse effects on people’s mental and physical health like Body Dysmorphia, eating disorders like Anorexia, and Bulimia, incessant insecurity, and anxiety regarding one’s looks.

Disregarding the natural process of aging and weathering not just affects individuals, it is carried further to everything that is around. Western Aesthetics disdain weathered things and people keep buying new things without being conscious of the profuse waste they are generating. Discarding things as wastes, before they become unusable and producing new things in excess for mass mindless consumption, which in turn generates even more waste, does severe and irreversible harm to the environment. The difficulty in managing wastes created because of consumerism has now become a very huge threat to the environment. More things are produced, soon they are discarded and soon the resources of the planet are getting depleted, and sustainability is being compromised.

Here comes Wabi-sabi as an antidote to these problems. As a stark contrast to Western aesthetics, it celebrates aging and weathering as the natural process of life, it insists upon not just accepting this process as it is, but finding beauty in it. A new book is good, but an old book with yellowed pages, and torn and folded corners, is even more special because it has been well used, one or many has gained so much knowledge from reading that book. In Wabi-sabi, beauty doesn't come from the superficial, it comes from how well a thing has fulfilled its function and purpose. Same with people, a youth who is full of life and potential is fine, but an old man who has lived his life to the fullest, who has a well-experienced life and gained so much wisdom from it, is even more respected and worthy of appreciation.

Admiring only youth and newness is like swimming against the stream, it is rioting against the natural flow of time and it will lead only to conflict and discontentment. Accepting that youth fades and new ultimately becomes old, and finding joy in it, is what Wabi-sabi is about, and this is very well reflected in the haiku, "The oak tree stands in majesty,/Regardless of the cherry-bloom!" (Matsuo 138) by Bashō that talks about the elegance of old age as opposed to the diminishing youth. Here the old oak's beauty is elevated as majestic, juxtaposed with the image of such a long-standing, indomitable

oak, the cherry blossom becomes a symbol of fleeting beauty and fading youth. Even though the beauty of the cherry blossom is highly celebrated, it cannot escape falling, and fading away once spring leaves and the next season arrives. Same way, youth is just a phase in life that has to succumb to old age. Whereas the wisdom of old age is long-lasting and is deeply rooted like the oak tree, because even after demise, old people, as well as old things, leave back some kind of a legacy or a memory.

This haiku is called "When Visiting a Noble-Minded Recluse" and it has another layer of meaning to it, the noble-minded recluse who lives in nature away from the pleasures of civilization is appreciated as a majestic oak. The cherry blossom symbolizes worldly pleasures, so, despite such pleasures, the recluse stands tall and as one with nature, and he is appreciated for his austerity as "noble-minded". This haiku encapsulates the spirit of Wabi-sabi by promoting a life close to nature. Western aesthetics find no symmetry and harmony in untamed nature, so it sees beauty only in a perfectly measured world made by man. Man-made material things and comforts are sought after and humanity slowly grows distant from nature. More forests are destroyed for shopping malls, resorts, theme parks, etc., natural resources are exhausted for the selfish wants of man, oceans are poisoned, the air is polluted, nature is violated and the earth is tarnished because of human desire for endless consumption of artificial things, rather than being content with what nature already provided.

As Wabi-sabi prescribes, nature should have been left to its asymmetry, rusticity, rawness, and imperfections. But humans rather try to fit nature into specific geometrical patterns, to refine everything for their aesthetic appeal, and, in this process of sophistication they inadvertently, control, overpower, and destroy nature when they should be living as a part of it. The Wabi-sabi way of perceiving beauty is very liberating, it makes one accept and appreciate imperfections in oneself and other things.

One has a crooked set of teeth, and Wabi-sabi shows beauty in it. Everyone having perfectly lined

teeth is ideal, it is not natural, crooked teeth are normal and one can see it not as a flaw but as a unique beauty. There are scratches on a vehicle, Wabi-sabi helps you see that, not as blemishes but find beauty in it, because having scratches means the vehicle is well-used. It also makes humans be in tune with nature and not against it. Wabi-sabi is good for the environment because it discourages overconsumption of needless things that deplete and cause harm to nature and advocates living in nature with simplicity and humility. A slight shift from an aesthetic that prompts materialism and consumerism which is detrimental to nature and the nature of life, to an aesthetic that makes humans live a life of freedom not chained by ideals and makes them economical, can bring about huge changes.

Lastly, this paper attempts to bring to light how in modern Japan, the influence of Western materialism and aesthetics is curtailed by Japan's deep-rooted ancient philosophies, especially Wabi-sabi. As much as Japan embraces modernity, it still treasures its traditional and cultural values. After 220 years, Japan's isolationism ended in 1854 when it was forced open for trade by the USA. After this, many Western countries like the UK, France, Germany, and Russia signed many "unequal treaties" for trade with Japan only to their advantage, at the cost of Japan's sovereignty. The inability of the existing Shogunate to overpower Westerners and stand up for themselves created internal political conflicts which led to the fall of the Shogun and the restoration of the imperial rule of Japan under the emperor.

At the beginning of the "Meiji Restoration", Japan was militarily and technologically weak, so to get rid of the threat of Western powers colonizing them, Japan decided to use Western knowledge to become modernized and empower themselves against the West. This is how the first wave of Westernization hit Japan. Bunmei-kaika (civilization and enlightenment) referred to the rapid development of Japan under Western influence. Every aspect of Japan's lifestyle and culture, food, clothing, education, etc. was heavily influenced by the West.

Many Western goods were imported to Japan and consumer culture was ignited.

Many people in Japan didn't find Westernization as a welcoming change. They used the term Bunmei-byō (civilization disease) as a counter to criticize Japan imitating the Western culture. Miyake Setsurei was a Japanese philosopher who strongly believed that instead of changing itself to Western ways, Japan should retain its unique cultural identity. He and his like-minded peers asserted that the West brought adverse effects like decadence, materialism, and the commercialization of values and corrupted Japan.

"In the 1870s and early 1880s, the momentum was on the side of those who thought Japan should vigorously adopt Western cultural forms. By the mid-1880s, this trend had begun to reverse itself, and by the late 1880s, there was a substantial movement away from imitation of Western cultural forms, and even to some extent a rejection of them." (Smiths)

After the Meiji Restoration, there arose the concept of Wakon Yosai which meant "Japanese spirit, Western learning", it is about learning things that are advantageous to Japan's modernization and development from the West while still keeping the intrinsic spirit of Japan intact, and not completely adapt and succumb to western ideals. This concept is the balance between West-influenced modernism and Japan's traditional values and philosophies, and this balance is maintained in Japan even today.

This balance is reflected in Japan's consumer behavior, any foreign brand that needs to flourish in Japan has to alter itself and assimilate into Japan's culture, the foreign brands should adapt themselves to cater to a very niche Japanese market that distinguishes itself with its cultural and traditional roots. "However, it's essential to note that while Western brands and culture have impacted Japanese consumerism, they haven't overshadowed it. Instead, they've been woven into the existing culture, adding newness without altering the core." (Chawal) Starbucks for example, didn't apply its Western model in the Japanese market but lent itself to the country's distinctiveness by using traditional tatami mats in seating areas and coming up with unique Japanese flavors like "Sakura Latte".

Japan is a financially well-developed country with high income per capita, it is the third-largest consumer market in the world and exhibits a high level of consumerism, but what makes their consumer behavior stand out is the restraint that is provided by traditional Japanese values and this restraint makes them mindful and responsible consumers. This may consciously or unconsciously arise from the spirit of Wabi-sabi and other ancient philosophies intricately woven into the very fabric of Japan's cultural identity.

"The rise of sustainable Japanese fashion is driven by a deep-rooted cultural appreciation for nature and craftsmanship..."

They offer minimalist, high-quality pieces that are made to last, challenging the fast fashion trends and promoting slow, thoughtful consumption." (Sharma)

Eco-friendly, sustainable brands do exceptionally well in Japan and in this, we can see the essence of Wabi-sabi. The crux of sustainability is to make well-crafted, high-quality products. One should remember that the appreciation of rusticity and imperfections in Wabi-sabi doesn't mean that it endorses people to buy flawed or low-quality products, Wabi-sabi is not an excuse for poor craftsmanship, it's about utility and durability. So Japanese consumers' preference for simple, high-quality products with great functionality and which don't need frequent replacements, becomes ideal for sustainable brands to thrive.

"In Japan, the sustainable fashion landscape is shaped by a deep respect for nature, tradition, and craftsmanship..."

Japan's commitment to quality and durability also plays a significant role in its sustainable fashion approach, as the focus is on creating timeless, long-lasting pieces that reduce the need for constant replacements. The blend of traditional methods and innovative technologies reflects the country's unique take on sustainability." (Sharma)

One of the well-renowned sustainable brands in Japan is Muji. It's a retail brand that sells a variety of products like clothing, household care goods, and stationery. This brand operates on the principles of

Zen Philosophy (from which Wabi-sabi originates) and highly esteems simplicity, it produces eco-friendly products prioritizing efficiency over extravagance and also promotes recycling. They also have a "No Brand" policy which means that they don't advertise their products superficially to attract consumers and with aggressive marketing techniques and force the consumers to mindlessly buy their products, but rather focus on giving good quality products that the consumers themselves can decide to buy if they actually need them. UNIQLO is another Japanese brand that endorses simplicity, quality, and longevity, "Offering timeless essentials rather than fleeting fashion trends," (Chawal)

Wabi-sabi is all for repairing and reusing, one accepts the natural damages that come with use and tries to mend the damages and reuse. Japanese people buy a lot of second-hand products and mostly try to repair and reuse items. 2nd Street is a big chain of stores that sells a wide variety of second-hand items and it currently has over 700 shops in Japan. "The process of fixing items and giving them a second life is not new in Japan. In general, wasteful behavior is frowned upon and referred to as "mottainai", an expression of regret towards the act and the loss of resources." (Diep) Mottainai again is a concept that closely resonates with Wabi-sabi. Due to Western consumerist influence, Japan deviated from Mottainai for a while but later consciously made efforts to revive it.

"the re-emergence of repair shops specializing in repairing household appliances..."

...and more generally the efforts to stop the trend of throwing away everything that can no longer be used, i.e. the efforts of reviving "the spirit of mottainai" (Hitoshi)

The popularity of Sustainable, eco-friendly brands, second-hand shopping, repairing, and reusing old products, is gaining huge traction in Japan's consumer culture and making it less materialistic, mindless, irresponsible, and toxic, because of the respect that Japanese people have towards their cultural, traditional and philosophical roots, like Wabi-sabi. Instead of succumbing to Western influence, Japan made efforts to retain and practice

world views that show a better way of living and are unique to their identity.

Most of the world is enamored by the Western way of living, people have come a long way from an “Euro-centric” worldview but still, the West has a strong influence on the rest of the world. So people tend to esteem Western ideologies, and fail to find value in other worldviews that paint a whole different picture from the West’s; studying world literature, and understanding various cultures and their ideologies will give people various unique perspectives. Gaining multiple perspectives from different cultures will make everyone see the world with a multifaceted, deeply layered understanding of things.

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# GENDER AND DISABILITY IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LAKSHMI SUBRAMANI'S LIGHTS OUT AND MALINICHIB'S ONE LITTLE FINGER

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## Abstract

*Disability Studies is an interdisciplinary academic discipline which looks at disability as historical, social, cultural, and political phenomena. It emphasizes how societal attitudes, structures, and policies create hurdles for persons with disabilities and prevent them from leading normalized lives of acceptance. When the issues of their marginalization is studied from gender perspective, it is further noted that disabled men and women experience disability differently, with women's experiences being more varied and acute owing to the generic gender discrimination that is already implicit in society. It is in this backdrop that this paper is an attempt to understand the needs, difficulties, and experiences of individuals with disabilities, focusing on how the gender vector further complicates their lived realities. Autobiographies are the genuine voices that unravel interior mindscapes of the individuals, and hence a comparative study of the autobiographies of disabled men and women would provide deeper insights into the intersections of gender and disability. Hence this paper is a close reading of Lakshmi Subramani's Lights Out and Malini Chib's One Little Finger to decipher a gendered understanding of the perspectives and experiences of men and women with disabilities in India that would add to the discussion on inclusivity and normalcy.*

**Keywords:** *disability, normalcy, inclusivity, marginalization, gender, intersection*

## Introduction

Disabled life writing is essential for raising awareness, encouraging empathy, and changing how society perceives disabilities. It provides insight into the varied experiences of persons with disabilities throughout cultures and is a useful tool for disability studies and advocacy work in addition to being a means of self-expression and empowerment. The idea that disability is only a medical "problem" that exists within an individual is frequently contested by disabled life writing, which frequently focuses on how society and culture produce disability. Researchers look at how traditional customs, religious beliefs, and cultural ideas affect and how people view individuals with disabilities. The field focuses on how social identities like gender, caste, class, and religion intersect with disability and disabled women, for example, frequently encounter

particular difficulties that are different from those faced by disabled males. These difficulties are further complicated by cultural norms and limited access to jobs, healthcare, and education. Multiple layers of marginalization, where access to resources and social mobility are further limited, can also arise from the intersections of caste and disability.

Malini Chib is an author, and the founder and co-chairperson of the ADAPT (Able Disabled All People Together). She is a well-known spokesperson for the rights of individuals with disabilities, especially when it comes to establishing accessible and inclusive spaces. Chib's autobiography *One Little Finger* (2011), offers a very intimate look at her life. In addition to her academic achievements and her work as a spokesperson for inclusion, the book emphasizes on educational system, societal prejudices, quest for independence, value of

perseverance, knowledge, encouraging family and friends in conquering obstacles in her story.

L. Subramani, a journalist and writer with a disability, focuses on empowerment and dispelling prejudices about people with disabilities in both his writing and motivational talks. His autobiography, *Light Out*, chronicles his physical and emotional struggles as he adjusts to life without sight. It also honors his quest to regain his freedom and discover a new calling as a motivational speaker and as a journalist, encouraging other disabled people to overcome difficulties .

### 1) Malini Chib

One of India's disability rights writers and activist is Malini Chib. She has cerebral palsy, a neurological condition that severely impairs a person's ability. She needs a wheelchair for the rest of her life due to this medical condition. Despite this condition, she completed her two international master's degrees in Gender Studies and Library Science and Information Management from London. She is actively working for the welfare of other impaired persons like her and is the founder and co-chairperson of Able Disabled All People Together (ADAPT). In 2011, the Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment presented her with the National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in recognition of her contributions to the disability sector.

The moving memoir *One Little Finger* by Malini Chib offers a glimpse into her life and experiences as a woman with cerebral palsy, written from Malini's point of view, the book describes her journey of independence, determination, and courage in the face of physical and social adversity. Malini, who was born with cerebral palsy, and she was unable to communicate with others in her early life due to cerebral palsy and she felt difficult to move around and wider in her life. She illuminates the everyday reality of navigating in a society that frequently lacks accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and her tale highlights the value of self-advocacy, supporting friends, and family.

### 2) Lakshmi Subramani

Lakshmi Subramani is a reporter and senior subeditor. He has a network of patients with retinal diseases that he is connected to. In an attempt to offer information, guidance, and emotional support, this network assists in contacting families and caregivers. He also has affiliations with the World Blind Union (WBU, Montreal), Retina International (Zurich), the AMD (age-related macular degeneration) Foundation, the World Diabetes Foundation, and the Foundation to Fight Blindness (FFB).

Journalist Subramani describes how he dealt with the onset of blindness in his late twenties and had to adjust to a very different way of life in his book *Lights Out*. Subramani walks readers through the psychological, emotional, and physical difficulties of losing one's sight. He considers his struggle with identity and self-worth as he deals with the social stigma associated with blindness, as well as the first shock, denial, and despair.

### Desire for Normalcy in the Memoirs

In the autobiography *One Little Finger*, Malini Chib describes her internal and external battles to be accepted as "normal" in a culture that often marginalizes people with disabilities. She wants normalcy not just to fit in but also to assert her independence and self-worth. This motivation propels her to face and surmount a number of obstacles, standing up for herself in academic and professional environments and to obtain equal opportunities. Chib states that "when I am in an emotional state, I cannot figure why the tears keep rolling down; I cannot control them. Of course, I have normal desires that are hidden and left in a box with a lid never to be opened. But sometimes, the lid slips open and the tears are let loose. It is but natural that I ask myself will I be like everyone else. Will I be normal?" (Chib 148) This quote signifies, how she faces problems at work, where she finds it difficult to obtain fulfilling work in a culture that frequently neglects the ability of those with impairments. Chib, who is determined about not being constrained by these restrictions, promotes her own career

advancement and finally turns into a handicap-rights activist.

Students with disabilities may experience low self-esteem, frustration, and loneliness as a result of being cut off from their classmates. Their mental well-being may suffer as a result of feeling "different" or neglected. Subramani says "I was the only one left standing, alone, not chosen, with absolutely no one wanting me in their team" (Subramani, 06). It states that he was always eager to join the playing guys but he never had the courage to go on the ground because he was not normal student of the school.

### **Desire for Inclusion in the Memoirs**

A strong need for inclusion frequently shows up as a major motif, highlighting the fundamental human urge to feel included, respected, and accepted in society. Memoirs give readers a firsthand look at the daily experiences of persons with disabilities, enabling them to comprehend the obstacles they encounter as well as their hopes for a more accepting society. Here's an additional look at how these narratives communicate the yearning for inclusion and its wider implications. Malini says, "Today, many will invite the whole family for dinner or a party but not me! Do they feel I am infectious? Are they ashamed? I yearn for my friends, my social network. I yearn for the people who accept me. I long to breathe. I long for the openness of life." (Chib 196).

The issue of inclusion is a recurrent and intensely personal story for disabled men authors, who use their writing to examine their challenges, hopes, and desires in a society that frequently ignores them. Subramani says 'Don't walk alone at night!' 'Don't chase after your brother!' (07). Families may prohibit disabled children from participating in games, outside activities, or even basic tasks because they are afraid of hurting them or making their condition worse. Families may attempt to keep impaired children out of social settings where they might be rejected. For fear of emotional damage, they might prohibit them from making friendships or taking part in group activities.

### **Representation of Marginalization in the Memoirs**

A profound sense of emotional isolation can result from a disability, particularly when others are unable to see the individual's distinct personality and potential. People with disabilities are frequently excluded from mainstream involvement due to physical obstacles or societal biases. Malini tells "It made me question what I wanted from these social gatherings. Why did I go? Was it the food or the company that I went for? It taught me to be a bit distant from my friends, as I seemed to collapse emotionally if they did something which upset me" (Malini 67) It shows physical and mental limitations that prevent them from fully participating in the cultural, social, and professional realms which cause disabled people to feel extremely alone in society. They are marginalized and isolated as a result of society structures, attitudes, and conventions that do not fairly include them.

"I had Stammered, trying to join in their conversation" (Subramani, 29) When his classmates were talking about the games and winners of Olympic at school, they viewed his contribution as pointless because of his disability. Emotional disconnection is the root cause of marginalization, and when individuals focus on their impairment instead of acknowledging their personalities, accomplishments, or goals, conversations might come across as shallow or biased. These exchanges draw attention to social unease and ignorance, which exacerbates estrangement.

### **Gender Bias in the Memoirs**

Gender biases frequently appear as a double burden in autobiographies written by disabled women: being marginalized for both their gender and their condition. Traditionally, women have been expected to meet certain requirements for physical strength, beauty, and caregiving responsibilities. Women with disabilities are frequently viewed not as "feminine" and are excluded from traditional aspects of womanhood, autonomy, childbirth, and desirability. The representation of gender prejudices is further complicated by the interconnections of social class, race, and culture, as disabled autobiographies

demonstrate. Indian women frequently experience more discrimination. For example, disabled women frequently have less access to healthcare, education, and work possibilities than males do, particularly in patriarchal society.

Malini says “For the typical boys, it was not acceptable to be seen with a disabled girl-friend. They wanted a normal girlfriend on their arm (Chib59). It shows that women are often valued for their physical ability to care for their families, bear children, and maintain households. Disabilities in women are seen as a barrier to fulfilling these roles, making their acceptance into marital arrangements more challenging.

“My parents’ marriage broke up. How and why did this happen?” (Chib 26) Children with disabilities frequently need emotional support and encouragement. A youngster may feel alone, unwanted, or underappreciated when parents put their work above their needs. Depression, a sense of abandonment, and low self-esteem can result from this emotional neglect. Usually, parents are the main supporters of their child's therapy, education, and health care. The child's emotional, cognitive, and physical development may be delayed if these areas are neglected.

“She’s crying. Tears stream down her cheeks. She’s crying in the full view of strangers, I realize with shock, something I have never seen her do before. ‘God, Ma! What happened? What did he tell you?’ I ask, unable to control my horror” (Subramani, 12-13) It shows that in the Indian cultural framework, where family is the foundation of social, emotional, and financial security, parental support is especially important for male individuals with disabilities. This ingrained cultural, religious, and traditional beliefs that emphasize duty and nurturing are the source of this support. In an attempt to get divine intervention for their child's welfare, parents may resort to religious rites, prayers, or pilgrimages. The question of who will take care of their child after their death is one of the biggest worries for Indian parents. For their child's long-term support, this anxiety frequently prompts them to look into family arrangements, institutional care, or trust funds.

### **Intersection on the Memoirs**

In India, there are strong cultural, economic, and social roots to the desire for male offspring over female children, which are a reflection of long-standing customs and social standards, for instance in the autobiography of *Light Out* by Subramani where we come to know, how parents are investing their valuable time for Subramani and his health, because of the belief that men provide for their families with social and financial stability and support their parents in the old age, inherit property and contribute to the family income.

In India, prejudice against females is ingrained in cultural, economic, and societal standards and starts even before birth and persists although their lives. In the autobiography of *One Little Finger* by Malini Chib, parents have given much more concentration on their professional growth instead of disabled baby girl Malini, father and mother both are working and wanted to excel in their profession, it seems that the disabled child Malini is a hurdle for their professional growth and her grandparents have taken care of her, even her parents separated from each other due to Malini only. Thus India's long-standing preference for male offspring over female offspring is impacted by an amalgam of social, cultural, and economic elements. Traditional inclinations for male children still exists in many areas of the country

### **Conclusion**

In India, the relationship between gender and disability reveals a complicated web of societal prejudices, systemic injustices, and resilience. Both disability and gender are strong marginalization axes, and their combination poses particular difficulties that call for careful consideration and focused responses. The lived experiences of men and women with disabilities are shaped differently by societal institutions, cultural norms, and resource availability, as demonstrated by a comparative analysis. In order to conform to cultural expectations of masculinity, their stories frequently disclose an inner need to demonstrate their ability, especially in the social and professional spheres. Deeply ingrained gender

standards place a premium on attractiveness, marriage ability, and caring responsibilities with the expectation of normalcy on women. Women's autobiographies frequently emphasize the conflict between pursuing one's own goals and fitting in with society's expectations. One issue that both men and women face in Indian society is the glaring absence of inclusion. Public areas, workplaces, educational institutions, and even social events are frequently inaccessible, demonstrating a structural indifference to the requirements of people with disabilities. Significant obstacles are faced by disabled men and women alike, but gender bias further marginalizes women. Even if they encounter opposition, disabled men are frequently given greater opportunities to

express their independence and become part of society. In contrast, women are often subjected to more stringent social constraints, with expectations from their families and society dictating how they live.

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