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**WORLD AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**

*Editor-in-Chief*  
**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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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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# A TALE OF LOVE AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN JANE AUSTEN'S *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

**Miss. S. HARRIET PRINCILA**

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## Abstract

*"Pride and Prejudice" is the second novel by Jane Austen, published in 1813, is a celebrated novel of manners and romantic entanglements. Set in rural England, the story centers on Elizabeth Bennet, a sharp and independent young woman, and her complex relationship with the wealthy and aloof Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy. The story delves into themes of social class, marriage, and personal growth. Elizabeth's initial prejudice against Darcy and his apparent Pride evolve as misunderstandings and social expectations are unveiled. Through a mix of wit and irony, Austen critiques the societal norms that prioritize wealth and status over character and affection. The novel also follows the lives and relationships of Elizabeth's four sisters, illustrating various attitudes toward marriage and life in Regency-era England. Ultimately, Pride and Prejudice is a story of Personal transformation, where love and understanding overcome prejudice, leading to personal and romantic fulfillment. It continues to be a timeless of human nature and social dynamics.*

**Keywords:** jane austen, pride and prejudice, elizabeth bennet, mr.darcy, social class, marriage, romantic entanglements, personal growth, human nature

## Introduction

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is a timeless exploration of love, misunderstandings, and social expectations. Published in 1813, the novel is set in early 19th-century England and follows the complex relationship between Elizabeth Bennet, an intelligent and independent young woman, and the wealthy but seemingly proud Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy. The novel opens with one of the most famous lines in English literature:

*"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."*

The statement is seemingly what Mrs. Bennet thinks as she sets her sights on the newly arrived Bingley, who she is sure will make a suitable husband for one of her daughters. The title encapsulates the main obstacles in the protagonists' relationship: Darcy's pride and Elizabeth's prejudice. At its core, the novel examines the themes of personal growth, societal pressures, and the transformative power of love, all framed by a series of misunderstandings and misjudgments. This paper delves into how misunderstandings, fueled by

societal expectations and personal flaws, shape the characters' journeys toward self-awareness and love.

The title *Pride and Prejudice* reflects the core conflicts of the story. Darcy's pride in his social position and Elizabeth's prejudice against him, stemming from his early arrogance, generate tension between them. Both characters must face their own shortcomings and misunderstandings to break down the walls between them, ultimately fostering a profound mutual respect and love. Throughout the novel, Austen critiques the societal norms of her era, especially the expectation that marriage should prioritize wealth and status over love and compatibility.

## The Power of Misunderstanding

Misunderstandings and misjudgments play a crucial role in the development of their relationship. Elizabeth's initial negative impression of Mr. Darcy is largely based on the rumors and gossip circulating about him. She believes him to be a selfish and heartless man, unaware of the kindness and generosity that lie beneath his proud exterior.

Similarly, Mr. Darcy's pride leads him to make mistakes that alienate Elizabeth further. His

interference in the relationship between Elizabeth's sister Jane and Mr. Bingley, as well as his arrogant proposal to Elizabeth, only serve to deepen her resentment.

Darcy's first marriage proposal is another key moment of misunderstanding. While he confesses his love for Elizabeth, his proposal is marred by condescension as he highlights the social disparity between them and criticizes her family. Elizabeth, already prejudiced against him, reacts with anger and rejection. Her response shocks Darcy, who is forced to confront his own arrogance. The subsequent letter Darcy writes to Elizabeth becomes a turning point, offering clarity about his actions and Wickham's deceit. This moment of revelation prompts Elizabeth to reassess her biases, marking the beginning of her transformation. Similarly, Darcy's growing awareness of Elizabeth's perspective inspires his journey toward humility and self-reflection. A major source of misunderstanding in *Pride and Prejudice* is the strict social hierarchy that shapes the characters' relationships. Throughout the story, class distinctions affect their perceptions and choices, resulting in assumptions and misinterpretations.

As the novel unfolds, Elizabeth begins to grasp the true nature of Darcy's character and his motivations, prompting her to confront her own prejudices.

Despite the misunderstandings, both characters experience considerable personal growth. Elizabeth starts to recognize Darcy's true nature, particularly after discovering his compassionate efforts to help her sister Lydia. Meanwhile, Darcy comes to appreciate Elizabeth's intelligence and wit, acknowledging that his pride had distorted his perceptions. As time passes, their mutual respect grows, and they develop a genuine love for each other.

In this way, Austen uses misunderstandings to show the limitations of a rigid class-based view of relationships and to suggest that true understanding and love can only be achieved when individuals look beyond superficial appearances and social rank.

### **The Role of Letters and Communication in Resolving Misunderstandings**

One of the novel's most pivotal moments is the letter that Mr. Darcy writes to Elizabeth. Letters in *Pride and Prejudice* play a crucial role in bridging gaps in understanding and resolving misunderstandings between characters. Darcy's letter is not just a means of communication; it is a turning point in the narrative, as it provides a detailed explanation of his actions, thus allowing Elizabeth to see his perspective for the first time.

The letter acts as a catalyst for Elizabeth's self-reflection. Upon reading it, she is compelled to confront the extent of her past mistakes—both in misjudging Darcy and in relying on surface impressions, such as Wickham's charm. It represents a turning point, offering both characters the opportunity to express their truths and rectify their earlier misunderstandings.

Besides Darcy's letter, the novel features other moments where letters are crucial. For instance, Charlotte's letter to Elizabeth about her marriage to Mr. Collins highlights Charlotte's practical outlook on life and marriage, which sharply contrasts with Elizabeth's more idealistic perspective. Similarly, Lydia's letters (or the absence of them) during her elopement with Wickham further demonstrate how communication, or the lack thereof, can result in misunderstandings, often with serious repercussions.

In this context, writing letters is portrayed as a way to find resolution in a society where face-to-face communication is frequently limited by social etiquette. Through letters, characters can convey thoughts and emotions that might otherwise go unspoken, emphasizing the significance of open communication in clearing up misunderstandings.

### **Marriage and Misunderstanding as a Social Commentary**

At its heart, *Pride and Prejudice* offers a social critique of marriage, which, in Austen's era, was both a romantic and economic institution. For women, marriage was often seen as essential due to limited financial independence. Therefore, the novel's portrayal of marriage mirrors the social

structures of the time, where the choice of a spouse was driven not only by love but also by factors such as social standing, wealth, and security.

The eventual union of Elizabeth and Darcy stands out because it transcends these societal pressures. Their marriage is not rooted in wealth or social ties but in mutual respect, love, and understanding. By the novel's conclusion, both characters have overcome their initial misjudgments, with their marriage symbolizing an ideal partnership built on genuine affection. Yet, Austen also acknowledges the practical realities of marriage through the experiences of other characters, such as Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins, or Lydia and Wickham.

Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins, a union based more on practicality than love, underscores the economic challenges women faced during that era. Her choice to marry Collins is one of the novel's most pragmatic, showing how marriage was often a means of survival rather than emotional satisfaction. While Charlotte doesn't enjoy the same romantic passion as Elizabeth, she finds contentment in her practical decision. This contrast critiques a society where women were often compelled to prioritize security over love, leading to misconceptions about what defines a successful marriage.

Similarly, Lydia's elopement with Wickham reveals the repercussions of pursuing love without thought. Lydia's naïveté and impulsiveness show her lack of concern for social norms, while her marriage to Wickham, who lacks wealth or status, underscores the novel's critical view of love driven by spontaneity rather than careful judgment. Wickham's deceitful character and Lydia's rashness foster a misconception of true love, resulting in scandal and social disapproval. This relationship acts as a cautionary tale, illustrating the dangers of misinterpreting love and ignoring societal expectations.

### **The Transformation of Hearts**

As the story unfolds, both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy undergo significant character development. Elizabeth gradually learns to see beyond Mr. Darcy's

proud facade, recognizing his genuine kindness and compassion. She realizes that her initial judgment was flawed and that she had been too quick to condemn him.

Mr. Darcy, too, undergoes a transformation. He acknowledges his own pride and prejudice and begins to appreciate Elizabeth's intelligence and wit. He learns to be more humble and considerate, and he eventually realizes the depth of his love for her.

Through a series of events, including a series of letters and a chance encounter at Pemberley, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's relationship evolves from animosity to mutual respect and, ultimately, love. Their journey is a testament to the power of understanding, forgiveness, and the transformative nature of love.

### **Conclusion**

"Pride and Prejudice" concludes with a resolution of the initial misunderstandings and a celebration of love. Elizabeth and Darcy, having overcome their initial prejudices and pride, find true happiness together. Their union signifies a triumph of understanding and acceptance over superficial judgments. The novel ultimately affirms the power of love to conquer societal expectations and personal flaws, leading to a fulfilling and harmonious ending for the central characters. By the end of the novel, the characters confront their flaws and misunderstandings, leading to mutual respect, understanding, and genuine affection. Austen's work demonstrates that love, when based on personal integrity and mutual respect, can overcome societal constraints and misunderstandings. Austen's portrayal of love and misunderstanding in *Pride and Prejudice* suggests that true love is not born from idealized notions of romance or class superiority, but from the mutual respect that comes with understanding one another's flaws, virtues, and personal journeys. By overcoming their initial misunderstandings, Elizabeth and Darcy represent an ideal of love based on personal growth, self-awareness, and the ability to transcend societal expectations. This message remains relevant today,

highlighting that true love is an ongoing journey of learning and mutual understanding.

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# COMPARING ANIMALITY: INVESTIGATING THE REPRESENTATIONS OF ANIMALS THROUGH A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK IN THE WRITINGS OF AMITAV GHOSH AND BEN OKRI

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## Abstract

*This paper attempts to find productive similarities and mutually illuminating thematic concerns between Amitav Ghosh, one of India's most prolific novelists, and Ben Okri, a Nigerian-British novelist and poet. Fusing the methods of Comparative literature and the practices of the emergent field of Animal Studies, this paper compares diverse representations of animals in the works of two contemporary writers between two nations. Animals have always been an integral part of Indian and African literary imagination. Ghosh's novels *The Hungry Tide* and its sequel *Gun Island* and Okri's short stories explore history, myth, climate change and human-animal entanglement to portray a multispecies existence in cultures that have always shared complex relationships with nonhuman species. Non-humans like dolphins, doves, chickens, crocodiles, falcons, lizards, rats, snakes, spiders, tigers, and wolves are ever impinging on the lives of their human counterparts in their struggle to make sense of their lives in both regions. Since these writers are shaped by postcolonial sensibilities, the paper will also summarily examine what it means to be an animal in various social, ethical and political contexts through a postcolonial lens. This comparative study will contribute to the growing research in animal studies by pushing the boundaries of Comparative literature towards an interdisciplinary approach that so far included only humanistic concerns but now has to make room for human-animal discourse.*

**Keyword:** comparative literature, amitav ghosh, ben okri, animal studies, myth, yoruba culture, interdisciplinary

This paper delves into understanding why it is important to look beyond the human and towards nonhuman animals. It is important to engage with what literature can accomplish through its unique ability to represent the human-animal relationship. Literary narratives can subtly and subversively dismantle widely accepted anthropocentric beliefs and perspectives, highlight the entanglement and interdependence of humans and animals in a manner which makes these ideas accessible and relatable, and poeticise this relationship in an alternate realm which isn't reality but suggests the possibility of a different reality. Comparative literature allows us to explore literary depictions of these more-than-human worlds and concerns across cultures and see the overarching similarities in these concerns across cultures/borders. As George Steiner once noted that to read was to compare (Hutchinson 1), looking beyond our personal cultures to discover more is the central concern of Comparative literature. The

editors of "The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature" point out at the "freedom to cross national and disciplinary boundaries and today there is great interest in an emergent global perspective on literary studies" (Damrosch et al. ix). I intend to draw upon the diverse number of texts available from a comparative analysis between Indian and African writers who will be further read from the animal studies framework. Amitav Ghosh is routinely referred to in discourses that are concerned with literary texts exploring the human-animal conundrum. However, this study will be one of the very few attempts so far which have tried to locate Ben Okri's short stories in the literary Animal studies tradition. I proceed with a brief overview of the evolution of Animal studies narrative and will move on to take up each writer's select works to investigate the human-animal relations.

With the advent of posthumanist perspectives and the rise of Animal Rights movements in the

1970s, Animal studies has emerged as an important branch of Cultural studies. Animals in literature have occupied a significant place. Literary Animal Studies is primarily concerned with reading the animal and their representations. The animal is studied through various methodologies among which anthropocentrism forms the major concern. It arises out of the distinction between humans and animals and their complex interaction with each other. What Animal studies tries to do is to decentre the human and extend pluralism to nonhuman animals.

Some important texts have contributed to the emergence of the field. Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1975), *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983) by Tom Regan, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (And More to Follow)* (2008) and *The Beast and the Sovereign* (2009) by Jacques Derrida have all brought fresh ecological and ontological understanding to the field. It is not enough to reread and reinterpret the metaphor of species difference. Animal studies questions anthropocentrism and humanism. It is a truism that animals and our interactions with them have shaped the world. Animal studies centres on enquiries of agency and the social subjectivity of human beings towards animals. It also involves interdisciplinarity. It takes into account the ethical differences that attend our interactions with animals. Identification and sympathetic imagination, our emotional attachment to them, and the ontological questions in philosophy are all part of Animality studies. When animals are treated as creatures holding equal status, animals come to share the agency or capabilities with us. Hence Animality in literature is how we think of literary animals and "real animals".

I intend to study what the *Edinburgh Companion to Animal Studies* purports to do in its introduction to "cultivate new kinds of peripheral attention, improvised imagination, interdisciplinary diplomacy, and interspecies company" (Turner et al. 2). It is an attempt to see how animals have been understood and subsumed within diverse cultures. The similarities between Ghosh and Okri will result in a greater appreciation of multiple texts. Both are transnational in the scope of their works. The first

and the most obvious thing which both share is their diasporic writerly lives. Both were born elsewhere and live away from where they were born. But both primarily write about their own lands. The comparative analysis of their creative plots and narratives can be seen as a common ground where the cultures and idioms of Africa and the Indian subcontinent converge. I would like to divide this paper into three strands which find commonalities between Ghosh and Okri: reading against the dominant anthropocentric currents; a return to indigenous myths, and human-animal communication.

Ghosh problematizes the issues underlying anthropocentrism by bringing up matters of boundaries between West Bengal in India, Bangladesh, and Venice and the issues of the people and animals who navigate their day to day lives amidst these. His novels traverse geographies in terms of the loss of habitat for animals living in these areas affected by the flood and rising sea levels. Hence studying animality is an important exploration of his texts. He has been explicit in his novels about the posthumanist ideal. They are read as depicting the effect of the Anthropocene. While this approach leads to a posthumanist preoccupation with his works, the focus should not fall on the human and the posthumanist effect but rather on the animals themselves represented in the texts.

The novels *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and its sequel *Gun Island* (2019) on hand exploit major issues of Animal studies including anthropocentrism, habitat destruction, the Western brand of animal activism, and its impact on the social life of the people living in the subcontinent, literary ontology, and the role of myth and tradition in the continued exploitation and protection of animals. As the habitat of the dolphins is thoroughly affected by the Anthropocene, Piya, the cetologist, is puzzled by the unpredictable behaviour of the dolphins in *The Hungry Tide*. In the opening part of his non-fiction book *The Great Derangement*, Ghosh remarks

"Who can forget those moments when something that seems inanimate turns out to be vitally, even dangerously alive? As, for example, when an arabesque in the pattern of a carpet is

revealed to be a dog's tail, which, if stepped upon, could lead to a nipped ankle? Or when we reach for an innocent-looking vine and find it to be a worm or a snake?" (Ghosh 101).

In line with this notion, animals appear and disappear with sudden and unexpected urgency in his novel. Ghosh deals with anthropocentrism that is a practice and "effect of positioning humans at the centre of meaning, value, knowledge, and action" (Weitzenfeld 4). Anthropocentrism is a belief system. It is also a collection of "creation stories and sacrificial rites whereby humans are ordained to have dominion over other creatures in the service of the divine - these stories and rites were grounded and centred in something beyond humans (i.e., deities)" (Weitzenfeld 5). The legend of Bon Bibi is a case in point that may be read to locate many of the convictions that underlie the actions of characters in the same text. Amitav Ghosh's writing about animals is shaped by historical events in terms of the establishment of Lusibari occupation and changing attitudes towards the coloniser over time which are further complicated by the postcolonial project.

It is worthwhile to look at the folklore and myths of the population that ekes out a living between the Animal Protection projects and capitalistic agendas. In the legend, the deity Bon Bibi saves Dukhey (a kid) from Dokkin Rai embodied as the tiger. The speciesism can be clearly witnessed in the different treatment various animals are subjected to by the characters in the novel. There are multiple species including crocodiles, snakes, dolphins and snakes which coexist in the Sunderbans. The Western preoccupation with the endangered animal *Oracella brevirostris* and the Irrawaddy dolphin is shown through Piya's research. Bringing in the local mythical stories, the narrative illustrates the sociozoologic scale put forward by Arluke and Sanders who propose that cultural beliefs, social norms, and individual experiences that have an effect on our perception of the nonhuman in our novels. The legend is part of the lives in the Sunderbans and acts as a driving force for all human beings to dominate the animals in the region. Similarly, the gun merchant's need to connect with Mansa Devi,

the deity, rather than her desire to make him her devotee breaks the myth of the animal's need for the human. It also talks about the interaction between humans and the nonhuman. Myths allow the anthropocentric attitude to remain in currency.

Ghosh interpellates the development of a story to that of the lifecycle of an animal. So, for Ghosh, animals become the blank pages into which human beings write meanings. Hence literature becomes the field where human beings are and are constructed by animals. The narrator talks about a living thing entering his body something that had long lain dormant equating himself with the story of the Gun Merchant in *Gun Island*. Similarly, the dormancy of the story and its sudden revival may refer to the animal's life cycle. The other effects of the Anthropocene are exemplified by the ubiquitous presence of phones in both novels as their signals are a factor in the environment's harm and apparently contribute to the death of the calf in *The Hungry Tide* and the injury of another calf Rani in *Gun Island*.

Habitat and territory are important forays into looking at the animal question. Here, too, the entanglement of human and nonhuman animals is evident: both are affected by anthropogenic factors. If a civil war and bombings are the cause of the animals' sudden appearances in Okri's works, deforestation and urbanization lead to the destruction of their habitats in Ghosh's. The tiger, crocodile and the snake intrude upon human territories as theirs are intruded upon by humans. Expanding on the critical project undertaken by Saheed Aderinto in his monograph *Animality and Colonial Subjecthood in Africa: The Human and Nonhuman Creatures of Nigeria*, I claim that the humans are not the only ones displaced and forced to take cover by the ongoing civil war. Animals such as lizards are forced out of hiding. They are found on the chapel walls and "we got to the dormitory and found the lizards there. They were under the double-decked beds and on the cupboards, in such great numbers, in such relaxed occupation, that we couldn't bear to sleep there any more" (Okri 2). The lizard is portrayed as part of the household surroundings. The lizards in several short stories nod, regard, and stare at the humans. They



symbolize the existence of Agodi's shed in "Converging City" and as the lizard is gone, the shed is gone too. He tries to revive the lizard through holy water and when unable to do so, burns it. Later he is contrite of the action.

The other issue in Animal studies is human perspective and perceptions. This is witnessed in the complex interaction between Piya who is loath to anthropomorphize the dolphin but the name Rani given to it by Tipu has already done it. Piya decentres the human during the tiger attack. When she refuses to anthropomorphize him, she is actually resisting the idea of the animal represented in the legend of Bon Bibi. The animal then does not become cultural but remains natural. Two groups emerge - one is Piya and the other is Fokir and the villagers. Piya as a product of Western anthropocentric understanding of subjectivity protests against the killing of the tiger but the other group is bent on punishing the tiger for the havoc it has wreaked. The natives see Piya's intervention as an extension of capitalism in the form of Animal Rights and Conservation. It is actually a humanistic approach and capitalistic aspirations at heart that made Sir Hamilton populate the Lusibari area during its occupation. When animals are killed, this is done as part of an inherent form of speciesism that underlies human actions and invests them with impunity. Piya opposes this humanist preoccupation in not only her campaign and research related to dolphins but also her attempt to save the tiger.

I would like to now turn to Ben Okri's representations of non-humans in his short stories. I have deliberately refrained from discussing his Booker Prize winning novel *The Famished Road* since there is an unpublished dissertation which has analysed the agency of rats. I have rather concentrated my readings on his shorter fiction which to my knowledge has not been critically examined through an Animal studies approach so far. The aim is to alert the reader to the ubiquitous presence of animals in his short stories. Where one overlooked them as peripheral presences only complementary to humans, they are now looked at as equal participants in the drama unfolding. If Ghosh

takes the help of Indian mythology and the legend of Bon Bibi, then Okri resorts to African rituals and worship.

A case in point is the animal sacrifice which is a major occurrence in Ben Okri's short stories. The characters regularly use animal products such as peacock-feathers, antelope skin, and chicken blood. Most animals have a traditional place in Yoruba culture and religion. Familiarity with the Yoruba classification of animals in the folktales helps situate their place. "In the tales they (animals) therefore exemplify the struggle for (human) upward mobility and for power" (Lawuyi 80). Therefore, herbalists and traditional healers frequently use animal products such as chicken blood, sprinklings of antelope testicles, crocodile heart, a coiled snake, and snake skins (Adekson 37). The story "What the Tapster Saw" reads like a piece of magic realism and is much similar to the novel *Gun Island* in its evocation of a world both mysterious and magical. There is a strange interaction between the man and the animals prominently turtles and the snake. They are agents of the story. The human characters do not just look at them. But are looked at by them too. I have discussed this aspect of contemplation of each other further in the succeeding paragraphs.

In stories "Laughter Beneath the Bridge", "Stars of the New Curfew" and "The Dream-Vendor's August", the chicken is put to different uses - as food, for ritualistic sacrifice, and as an omen. In Chapter 4 of his book, Saheed Aderinto points out that "Followers of traditional African religion also sacrifice it (the chicken) to the gods and goddesses" (Aderinto 142). Despite the anonymous child narrator's remarks that the family had grown fond of the chicken, the chicken which appears both in "Laughter Beneath the Bridge" and "The Dream-Vendor's August" as a little "chicken with a red cloth tied to its foot" (Okri 10; 124), the chicken in the former becomes the meat to celebrate their return and in the latter story is seen as a sign "to be afraid of" (Okri 124). Other stories have chicken intestines cover the ground and streets. Supplementing this treatment in the other story "Stars of the New

Curfew”, Okri portrays the centrality of the chicken sacrifice in Yoruba culture.

The leader of the cultic dancers wore a terrifying golf-fringed lion headdress. They held live chickens and danced vigorously in front of the house, chanting and clashing their machetes, with sparks flying. When Odeh made a sign to them with his fan the cultic dancers jumped, chanted something, bit off the heads of the chickens, and spat them on the ground. They danced wildly and let the chicken blood pour on them. The headless chicken flapped and the dancers weaved (126).

One of the important attempts of human-animal studies is to bridge the gap that separates human/animal in terms of language. “Derrida makes an interesting point that in thinking about animal language we need not focus on the level of cognitive sophistication possessed by this or that animal. We might instead consider the ethical issue – whether we should be “addressed” by an animal” (Wood 134). David Wood in “Thinking with Cats”, teases out Derrida’s experience of being looked at by his cat when he is naked. This act becomes an address which is complete only when the human addressing the animal is addressed. Only then is the communication complete. “The point is that addressing and being addressed are modes of communication, of responsibility, that, while often interwoven with what we humans call a “natural language” (such as English or French), are separable from such a capacity” (135). Piya doesn’t speak Fokir’s language. However, they communicate with more ease with each other than Piya thinks she can through language. Piya in *The Hungry Tide* ruminates about the redundancy of language and speech.

“The two of them, Fokir and herself, they could have been boulders or trees for all they knew of each other: and wasn’t it better in a way, more honest, that they could not speak? For if you compared it to the ways in which dolphins’ echoes mirrored the world, speech was only a bag of tricks that fooled you into believing that

you could see through the eyes of another being.”

Most animals stare and are stared at by the humans in Okri’s stories. In “Incidents at the Shrine”, “as Anderson went past, he had a queer feeling that the goats were staring at him” (Okri 54). And Maria in “When the Lights Return” “out-stared a snake in the backyard” (Okri 164). Similarly, in “Worlds that Flourish”, the protagonist has a weird sensation that people were staring at him through the eyes of the animals.

Following up on the same theory that animals address us through their looks which is the communication we have with them, it can be formulated that staring at the animals also results in a transformation where the humans become animals. The ontological underpinnings of becoming-animal, a primitivism that does not involve imitation but can “celebrate the recovery of an unfettered ‘state of nature’” (Urpeth 101) by Deleuze and Guattari helps foreground the vision and perspective of the characters in several of Okri’s short stories. Human characters mistake humans for animals and animals for humans. Maria in “When the Lights Turn” is transformed into an owl, a cat, dog. “He saw her dark eyes in the eyes of chickens and goats. Dogs looked at him mournfully. He got the curious feeling that she was watching him from all the eyes of the animals, old men and children” (Okri 177). The *stoku*, which is a hybrid of a short story and a haiku, “Canopy” is a good example of humanimal figuration which is equivalent to the term *stoku*. The character suddenly sees a fox instead of a human and only after being pointed out otherwise does he realise his mistake. This story and “In the Shadow of War” have characters who first mistake humans for “the shapes of swollen dead animals” (Okri 7). This hybrid form highlights the artificiality of anthropological difference and reveals the fluidity of the supposedly impermeable boundary between human and nonhuman animals.

These stories were published in the 1980s and due to the limited scope of this paper, the novels and other recently published works of Ben Okri have not been considered. Nonetheless familiarity with the

earlier works of Ghosh and Okri focalizes the indigenous cultures and languages both writers draw heavily upon to create their multispecies worlds. In the works considered, traditional practices derived from myths and epistemes pass on from one generation to another to create a cross-cultural existence. While the characters traverse various countries and cultures, they remain rooted in their cultural origins creating a hybrid being that is symbolic of the interdependence on the non-human to preserve their lives.

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# EXPLORING ROOTS AND LEGACY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF 'VERUKAL' AND 'ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE'

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## Abstract

This article presents a comparative analysis of *Verukal* by Malayattoor Ramakrishnan and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez, exploring the themes of identity, family, cultural heritage, and the cyclical nature of history. Despite their distinct cultural and geographical contexts—Kerala, India, and Latin America—the two novels offer deep insights into the human experience through their depictions of familial bonds and the tension between tradition and modernity. *Verukal* portrays a Tamil-Brahmin family caught between ancestral duty and personal aspirations, while Márquez's work examines the mythical Buendía family's entanglement with the rise and fall of their town, Macondo. The study contrasts the realist narrative style of *Verukal* with the magical realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, highlighting how each technique shapes the reader's understanding of generational cycles. Ultimately, the article underscores the universality of the themes of belonging, displacement, and legacy, offering a fresh perspective on how these literary works transcend cultural boundaries to address shared human dilemmas.

**Keywords:** comparative literature, identity, cultural heritage, magical realism, generational cycles, tradition vs. modernity

## Introduction

Roots and legacy are central to the human experience, shaping individuals and societies alike. They provide a sense of identity, continuity, and belonging, anchoring people to their cultural, familial, and historical origins. Roots—whether familial or cultural—offer individuals a framework for understanding themselves and their place in the world, often instilling values, traditions, and a sense of purpose. Similarly, legacy operates on both personal and collective levels, symbolizing the transmission of knowledge, achievements, and cultural heritage to future generations. As Chinua Achebe observes, "*The past must always inform the present,*" emphasizing how heritage defines our present and guides our future. These connections to ancestry foster collective memory, linking individuals to a broader cultural and historical narrative.

On a societal level, legacy preserves traditions, instilling pride and purpose. Philosopher Edmund Burke famously noted, "*Society is a partnership... between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born,*" highlighting the intergenerational responsibility to honor and transmit

inherited values. Without an awareness of roots and legacy, individuals risk losing their sense of self, and societies may struggle with fragmentation. Whether through stories, traditions, or family bonds, roots and legacy not only sustain identity but also serve as a compass in navigating the complexities of modern life.

Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's *Verukal* and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are monumental works that examine family, roots, and cultural heritage, albeit from distinct cultural contexts. *Verukal* centers on the Tamil Brahmin diaspora in Kerala, capturing the protagonist Raghu's emotional struggle between ancestral obligations and modern aspirations. Conversely, Márquez's masterpiece unfolds in Macondo, a mythical town emblematic of Latin America, chronicling the rise and fall of the Buendía family across generations.

Both novels explore the pull of ancestry and the cyclical nature of history. In *Verukal*, Raghu reflects on the family's ancestral home as a "symbol of everything sacred and unchanging," underscoring his deep-seated connection to his roots. Similarly, Márquez imbues Macondo with mythic significance,

where events seem destined to repeat. As Úrsula Iguarán laments, “It’s as if time had turned around and we were back at the beginning.”

While both works highlight familial bonds, their approaches differ. *Verukal* presents a nuanced conflict between tradition and modernity, with Raghu torn between preserving his heritage and seeking personal freedom. In contrast, Márquez’s narrative portrays family as a microcosm of societal decay, with the Buendías succumbing to isolation and cyclical misfortune, culminating in the haunting revelation that “races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth.”

Through their richly layered narratives, these novels converge in their exploration of identity and belonging but diverge in their portrayal of time’s passage—one rooted in continuity, the other in inevitable dissolution.

### Family as the Nexus of Identity

In both *Verukal* by Malayattoor Ramakrishnan and Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, family serves as the narrative’s central axis, encapsulating themes of identity, legacy, and the passage of time. Despite their distinct cultural backdrops—Kerala’s Tamil Brahmin diaspora and Latin America’s mythical Macondo—both works delve deeply into the enduring influence of ancestry on individual and collective lives.

In *Verukal*, the protagonist Raghu’s life is defined by his conflict between modern aspirations and traditional roots. Living in urban Kerala, Raghu is torn between his professional ambitions and his obligations to his ancestral home, or *tharavad*, in Tamil Nadu. The *tharavad* represents both cultural heritage and personal identity, standing as a reminder of his familial responsibilities. Raghu’s struggle reflects a universal tension between tradition and modernity. As he laments, “*I wanted to run away from my roots, but they held me tighter than ever,*” Raghu’s journey becomes a poignant exploration of how deeply one’s ancestry shapes personal identity.

In contrast, Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* portrays the Buendía family as a microcosm

of cyclical history. Set in the mythical town of Macondo, the family’s repeated mistakes and isolation symbolize the inevitability of history’s repetition. Through magical realism, Márquez intertwines familial and societal narratives, creating a broader commentary on Latin American history. Úrsula Iguarán’s lament, “*It’s as if time had turned around, and we’re back at the beginning,*” encapsulates the novel’s central theme: the cyclical nature of time and its inescapable grip on identity and legacy.

Both novels converge in their emphasis on ancestry as a defining force. While *Verukal* portrays family as a grounding yet tension-filled force between tradition and modernity, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* uses family as a metaphor for societal cycles and the weight of historical inevitability. Together, they underscore the enduring impact of roots, as both burden and anchor, in shaping individual and collective destinies.

### Roots and the Concept of "Home"

Both *Verukal* by Malayattoor Ramakrishnan and Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* explore the symbolic and emotional significance of “home” as both a physical space and an existential anchor. Through their depictions of home, these novels examine themes of identity, belonging, and the bittersweet pull of roots.

In *Verukal*, the ancestral home, or *tharavad*, symbolizes cultural identity and heritage. For Raghu, the home is steeped in nostalgia but also burdened by familial and societal expectations. His connection to the *tharavad* reflects the tension between modernity and tradition, as he struggles to reconcile his urban life in Kerala with his roots in Tamil Nadu. The home serves as a reminder of his responsibilities to his family and his ancestry, even as he yearns for independence. Raghu’s reflection, “*Every wall, every pillar, holds memories of generations before me,*” highlights the emotional weight of the ancestral home as both a refuge and a chain, binding him to his heritage.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Macondo, founded by José Arcadio Buendía, represents Latin

America's complex history—its isolation, resilience, and eventual decline. Initially a symbol of promise and pride, Macondo deteriorates over generations, mirroring the disintegration of the Buendía family. As time progresses, the once-vibrant town becomes a place of despair and decay. Márquez's use of magical realism deepens the symbolic significance of Macondo, with characters like Úrsula lamenting its inevitable downfall: *"This town is full of ghosts."*

While Raghu yearns to balance his attachment to his ancestral home with his aspirations, the Buendías' bond with Macondo reflects their collective fate, marked by cyclical decline. Both novels underscore the transient nature of home, portraying it as a bittersweet anchor that shapes identity while embodying the impermanence of human experience.

#### **Narrative Techniques: Realism vs. Magical Realism**

The narrative styles of Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's *Verukal* and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* offer a striking contrast, reflecting their distinct cultural and thematic frameworks. While *Verukal* relies on realism to explore the emotional and cultural intricacies of a Tamil-Brahmin family, Márquez employs magical realism to transform ordinary experiences into extraordinary myths, blending history, imagination, and folklore.

In *Verukal*, Malayattoor adopts a straight forward, realistic narrative that captures the socio-cultural realities of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The life of the protagonist, Raghu, is portrayed with emotional depth and authenticity, as he grapples with familial conflicts and the tension between modern aspirations and traditional values. The grounded storytelling allows readers to connect deeply with the protagonist's internal struggles. As Raghu reflects, *"Life in the city gave me freedom, but it never gave me peace,"* the narrative captures the universal dilemmas of identity and belonging, firmly rooted in the tangible experiences of middle-class Indian life.

In contrast, Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* weaves a dreamlike narrative that transcends the boundaries of reality. His use of magical realism

transforms the mundane into the mythical, creating a surreal yet profound exploration of human experience. Fantastical events, such as Remedios the Beauty ascending to heaven while hanging laundry, challenge the reader's perception of reality, reflecting the fusion of history, myth, and imagination. Márquez's narrative style elevates the ordinary struggles of the Buendía family to a universal plane, symbolizing Latin America's collective identity. As he writes, *"The world was so recent that many things lacked names,"* the narrative evokes a mythical sense of time and place.

While *Verukal* uses realism to ground its narrative in the socio-cultural specifics of Indian life, Márquez's magical realism transforms the ordinary into the mythical. Both styles, however, enhance the exploration of memory and legacy, engaging readers through contrasting yet equally powerful lenses.

#### **Thematic Convergences: Cycles of Life and History**

A key thematic overlap between Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's *Verukal* and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* lies in their exploration of cyclical patterns in life and history. Both novels underscore the repetitive nature of human experience, though they approach it through distinct cultural and narrative lenses.

In *Verukal*, the cyclical return to the ancestral home symbolizes the enduring influence of family and roots. Raghu's emotional journey is a reflection of his ancestors' struggles, suggesting that tradition and heritage are forces that transcend generations. Despite his attempts to distance himself from his roots, Raghu finds himself drawn back, both physically and emotionally, to the *tharavad*. The ancestral home becomes a site of continuity, where the past and present coexist. Raghu's introspection, *"Perhaps I was running from myself all along,"* highlights his realization that his identity is inseparable from his heritage. This cycle of departure and return reinforces the enduring pull of familial bonds and cultural identity.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the Buendía family's story is marked by unbroken cycles of

repetition, with successive generations making the same mistakes. Márquez portrays this cyclical pattern as inevitable, culminating in the prophecy that foretells the family's demise. The narrative's closing lines—“*races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth*”—reflect a fatalistic view of history's inescapable grip. Through the magical realist lens, the cycles of time and history become both a personal and collective fate, symbolizing Latin America's historical struggles.

While *Verukal* offers a glimmer of reconciliation as Raghu seeks to balance his roots with his aspirations, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* presents a more deterministic vision, where the cyclical nature of history leads to destruction. Both novels, however, powerfully illustrate the unrelenting influence of the past on the present and future.

### Cultural Specificity and Universality

Despite their distinct cultural contexts, Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's *Verukal* and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* resonate with universal themes of belonging, identity, and loss. By grounding their narratives in specific cultural milieus, both novels simultaneously explore existential questions that transcend geographical and historical boundaries.

*Verukal* is deeply rooted in the Tamil-Brahmin ethos, reflecting the rituals, caste dynamics, and linguistic intricacies of this community. Through Raghu's emotional struggle, Malayattoor explores how identity is shaped by familial and cultural heritage. The ancestral *tharavad* becomes a powerful symbol of continuity, tying Raghu to generations past. His inner conflict—“I am neither here nor there, always a stranger to both worlds”—highlights the universal tension between belonging and individuality, tradition and modernity.

Similarly, Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is steeped in the socio-political realities of Latin America, blending folklore, colonial history, and magical realism to create a tapestry of cultural specificity. The mythical town of Macondo reflects Latin America's struggles with isolation, resilience,

and the lingering shadows of colonialism. Characters like Úrsula Iguarán and Aureliano Buendía grapple with questions of identity and purpose, mirroring the universal human desire for connection and meaning. As Márquez writes, “It's not that people stop loving you when you die—they just forget you,” capturing the profound sense of loss that permeates the novel.

Despite these distinct cultural settings, both works transcend their regional roots by addressing universal questions: What does it mean to belong? How does one reconcile tradition with change? Both novels suggest that while cultural identity grounds us, it also carries the weight of history, and navigating this tension is an intrinsic part of the human experience. By intertwining the particular and the universal, *Verukal* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* achieve a timeless resonance.

### Conclusion

Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's *Verukal* and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* provide fertile ground for comparative analysis, exploring universal themes through distinct cultural and stylistic lenses. Both novels delve into the complexities of family, identity, and the inescapable pull of roots, offering profound reflections on the shared human experience.

In *Verukal*, Malayattoor depicts the Tamil-Brahmin diaspora with realism, focusing on the familial and cultural tensions faced by Raghu. The ancestral *tharavad* becomes a powerful symbol of heritage and identity, embodying both nostalgia and obligation. Raghu's introspection—“The past doesn't let go; it clings to the soul like a shadow”—underscores the emotional weight of ancestral ties and the tension between tradition and modernity. Malayattoor's grounded portrayal resonates with anyone grappling with the dualities of cultural heritage and personal aspirations.

In contrast, Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* uses magical realism to explore the Buendía family's cyclical history in the mythical town of Macondo. Here, the familial and societal struggles reflect Latin America's historical and cultural realities. As Úrsula Iguarán observes, “*What hurts*



*the most is not being dead, but being forgotten,*” the novel captures the universal yearning for legacy and remembrance. Márquez elevates personal and collective memory, weaving history, myth, and fantasy into a tapestry of universal human experience.

Despite their differences, both novels affirm the enduring influence of family and roots on identity. By highlighting the shared struggles of belonging and continuity, *Verukal* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* transcend cultural divides, illustrating literature’s power to unite through universal truths.

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# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE *WHITE TEETH* BY ZADIE SMITH- A POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE

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## Abstract

*This article is examining the significance of the title of the novel white teeth written by contemporary postcolonial writer Zadie Smith through postcolonial lens. It addresses how in the novel smith reflects the complexities of cultural hybridity and assimilation, struggle of belonging and identity crisis faced by the immigrants. As we find many themes, theories, information, diverse characters, history, heritage, legacy many more things when we go through the novel but, the novel is mainly about racism, and its impact on society and different generations. Novel also explores the legacies of colonialism through its characters, their interactions with each other, their personal histories. Themes of the novel helps in broader understanding of postcolonial literature and its relevance. The analysis mainly highlights the juxtaposition of racial dynamics and beauty standards and thus revealing how teeth serve as metaphor for identity and belonging. The primary objective of this article is to explore the multifaceted meanings associated with White Teeth as a title through analytical method. It also explores smith's critique on contemporary white dominated British, multicultural and postcolonial society. The analysis explores significance of the title. The title White teeth symbolize not only physical beauty and societal standards but also the deeper implications of identity and belonging in a postcolonial context.*

**Keywords:** white teeth, colonialism, post colonialism, racism, ethnicity, immigrants, multiculturalism, identity crisis, beauty standards, hybridity, conventions, social norms, assimilation etc

## Introduction

Zadie Smith is a prominent contemporary British novelist, essayist, and short-story writer. She is well known for her sensitive exploration of themes such as race, identity, and cultural diversity. Smith born on October 27, 1975, in North London to an English father and a Jamaican mother. Born as 'Sadie' changed her name to 'Zadie' at the age of fourteen. Smith's diverse heritage significantly influenced her writing. During her graduation in English at the University of Cambridge, started drafting her debut novel, *White Teeth*. It was published in 2000 when she was just 25 years old. *White Teeth* gave her lots of name and fame. Received widespread critical acclaim, won numerous awards. Smith became leading voice in contemporary literature. She wrote many novels, essays and non- fictions. Currently, she is a tenured professor in the Creative Writing faculty at New York University.

Postcolonialism plays a significant role in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. Like most of her novels and other writings, *White Teeth* focuses on themes of

race, class, gender and the complexities of identity, multiculturalism in contemporary Britain. Highlighting on the struggles of immigrants and their children in adapting, assimilating with their multifaced identities in multicultural landscape, *White Teeth* serves as a microcosm of postcolonial Britain. Each character in the novel is from different ethnic background. Each one of them struggling with their own identities in a postcolonial society. Through these characters and their historical narratives smith shows how these past stories influence them now and then. The title itself summarizes the multifaceted relationship between personal and collective histories, and also the societal outlooks that shape individual identities. It asks questions about what it means to belong in a society shaped by its colonial past and ongoing struggles with race and identity. This article will first give a brief outline of postcolonial theory and its application to Smith's work. How through title *White Teeth* smith critiques concepts of identity and assimilation in a multicultural context. Smith

challenges readers to reexamine their understanding of identity in a world shaped by historical injustices. Smith herself being a child of mixed-race parents, she incorporates her ideas mainly through the character of Irie in the novel. Let us discuss of significance of the title within the framework of postcolonial critique, focusing on how it reflects themes of race, belonging, and the legacy of colonial power dynamics. Smith employs humour and irony as tools to deal with serious themes like to race, hybridity, colonialism, and identity etc. It highlights the absurdities inherent in the characters struggles.

### Plot

The novel *White teeth* by Zadie smith elaborately explores the lives of two families in London, one is Englishman Archie Jones and Bangladeshi Samad Iqbal. The narrative explores the themes such as family dynamics, friendship, race, multiculturalism, identity crisis, cultural conflict, history, heritage, complexities of modern life etc. The novel begins on New Year's Day in 1975 with suicidal attempt of Archie Jones, a middle-aged Englishman, in his car. Archie was recently divorced by his Italian wife. His life takes an unexpected turn when he is rescued by Mo Hussein-Ishmael, a local halal butcher. Considering it as a new beginning of his life he decides to start his life with new hopes. Archie attends a New Year's Eve party where he meets Clara Bowden, a young Jamaican woman. In spite of their age difference, they quickly fall in love with each other and marry just after six weeks. Daughter Irie is born to them. Archie and Clara settle and raise their daughter Irie in Willesden, North London. Then we are introduced to Samad Iqbal, a Bangladeshi immigrant and Archies best friend from World War 2. Samad also moves to the area called Willesden with his wife Alsana of same community and nationality. They have twin sons, Magid and Millat. In multicultural foreign land Samad faces many challenges in raising his sons and also struggles with his cultural identity. Millat, Magid, and Irie as they are born and brought up in London, starts following Eurocentric standards and European cultures who are unaware of their parental heritage. Samad in order to

retain his culture, heritage and religious values in them he sends one of his sons Magid back to Bangladesh. Millat remains in London. Millat becomes extremist and radicalized and joins an Islamic fundamental group in London called KEVIN. Irie struggles with her mixed heritage and grows feelings for Millat. Magid returns from Bangladesh as a Westernized intellectual. Twins moves in two different paths, Irie in her way to console them seduced by both the twins one after other.

Another family in the novel Marcus Chalfen and Joyce family. Their son Joshua Chalfen was a friend of Millat and Irie. Marcus, a geneticist working on future Mouse project involving genetically modified mice. Their interactions with the Iqbal's and Jones highlight class differences and cultural clashes in the novel. Irie becomes involved with Joshua Chalfen complicating her relationships with Millat and Magid. Irie starts to explore her Jamaican heritage, cultural roots and family history to establish her identity. Magid joins with Marcus in his genetic mouse project. On the day of introducing future Mouse project to the public, Millat attempts to shoot Marcus but it fails.

The climax of the novel centres around a series of events. after a shooting incident both Magid and Millat sentenced for community service. The story concludes with Irie's new life with Joshua. On 1999, New Year's Eve, Irie is seen celebrating in Jamaica with her daughter and Joshua. Archie and Samad in O'Connell's pub, which is now open to women also.

### Significance of the Title *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith: A Postcolonial Critique

Zadie Smith's debut novel, *White Teeth*, serves as a fundamental text in contemporary literature, particularly within postcolonial studies. The title itself is symbolic and multifaceted, summarizing themes of identity, hybridity, and the complexities of multiculturalism in modern Britain. This article explores the significance of the title through various lenses, including cultural representation, identity formation, and the historical context of postcolonialism. Before analysing the novel let, we

have a brief introduction about what is postcolonialism, its themes, concepts etc.

Postcolonialism is a critical study of the cultural, political, and economic impacts of colonialism and imperialism. It represents a period the aftermath of western colonialism. Except Antarctica almost all the countries in the world had been ruled by the British. In the 1960 scholars from formerly colonized countries began to address the lingering effects of colonial rule on their societies. This intellectual movement tries to find and fix the historical injustices and power dynamics established during colonial rule. The term can also be used to describe a wide range of academic inquiries that focuses on power dynamics, identity formation, and resistance in postcolonial societies. By deconstructing colonial narratives, it examines how colonial legacies continue to shape contemporary global relations. ultimately it tries to understand and fix the injustices rooted in colonial history.

Postcolonial Literature includes the literature produced by people of formerly colonized countries in response to the experiences of colonization and its aftermath. colonized peoples have challenged domination through various means, including literature, art, and political movements. It mainly focuses on themes such as issues of decolonization, identity, cultural hybridity, resistance, and the struggles for independence. It mainly magnifies and encourages the voices of historically silenced, marginalized(subaltern) groups. Postcolonialism is concerned with ongoing struggles against neocolonialism. This theme explores how former colonial powers maintain influence over postcolonial countries through economic and cultural means even after the end of colonialism.

Postcolonial studies examine how colonial histories have impacted on national identities and cultural expressions in formerly colonized nations. This field addresses issues of race, gender, and class, emphasizing resistance to colonial narratives. Postcolonialism advocates for a rethinking of history which acknowledges the contributions and perspectives of colonized peoples, challenging dominant Eurocentric narratives.

Postcolonialism encompasses a wide range of academic inquiries that analyse the aftermath of colonialism. postcolonialism challenges the lingering effects of colonial principles. It gives awareness about historical injustice and supports different perspectives. Its main goal is to encourage healthy discussion about the about the recognition of complicated issues of identity and power in postcolonial society.

Zadie Smiths debut novel *White Teeth* is a postcolonial text. Set against the background of postcolonial Britain, the novel reflects on how colonial histories shape contemporary identities. it explores themes of immigration, identity, and cultural dislocation mainly race, ethnicity, and assimilation illustrating how these factors influence her characters' lives. The novel revolves around the intertwined lives of two friends and their families in London, Archie Jones, a white Englishman, and Samad Iqbal, a Bengali immigrant. They are war veterans who fought in British army during World War II. Their friendship during World War II sets the stage for a multi-generational saga. This context is crucial as it highlights the lingering effects of colonialism on personal and collective identities through the character of Samad Iqbal. Experiences of Smith's characters reflects the complexities of belonging in a society shaped by its colonial past. They struggle with their cultural roots and the impact of colonialism and experience a sense of dislocation and alienation. Smith presenting a kaleidoscopic view of London and highlights the richness and challenges of multicultural existence.

The title can be read as a metaphor for the fragments of colonialism. while "white" signifies domination with idealized identity and "teeth" suggests the biting reality i.e. how they had been crushing the colonized with their principles, culture. It also focuses on themes of racial tension, discrimination, and integration by depicting characters from different ethnic backgrounds. Criticizing on traditional notions of Britishness Smith challenges readers to reconsider their perceptions of race and identity. It represents the characters' aspirations for acceptance within a society

that often marginalizes them. Smith's accounts on mixed marriages and generational differences highlights how multiculturalism impacts personal and communal identities in contemporary Britain

Identity crisis is one of the important themes of the novel. The narrative centres on the experiences of immigrant families, particularly the Iqbal's, Bowden's, who struggle for their identities in a postcolonial context. Smith portrays the 'identity crisis' faced by these characters who struggle with their cultural roots and the pressures of assimilation into British society. Characters' struggles to reconcile their diverse backgrounds in a society that often marginalizes them. Samad is the main victim character in this struggle. As a Bangladeshi immigrant in London, Samad faces the challenges of balancing his traditional values with the modern British culture. Samad is a veteran of World War II and the great-grandson of Mangal Pande, an idolized figure for his role in the Indian Rebellion of 1857. This ancestry shapes Samad's identity. His life in England starkly contrasts with this ideal. Even though he worked in British army, he didn't get any dignified job. he works as a waiter, which diminishes his sense of self-worth and authority. This shows how immigrants are always marginalized and treated as other. His character exemplifies the broader theme of identity crisis, highlighting issues of cultural displacement, generational conflict, and the search for belonging in a multicultural society. His struggles highlight the challenges of balancing once heritage with the pressures of assimilation, depicting the broader themes of cultural conflict and identity formation present in *White Teeth*. The immigrant parents often fear that their children will disconnect with their own heritage, cultural identities. Samad's struggle to raise his children with strict Islamic values result in rebellion and deviation from their heritage. The duality of belonging highlights the historical burden carried by these characters.

The term Hybridity is Coined by theorist Homi K. Bhabha. It describes the cultural blending that occurs when colonizers and colonized interact. He suggests that identity is not fixed but rather fluid. This concept highlights that cultures are not simply

imposed but are transferred and converted through these encounters.

In *White Teeth* Smith uses hybridity as a lens to examine identity in a postcolonial context. hybridity refers cultural blending that occurs through interaction among colonizers and colonized with different culture. By portraying characters with multiple cultural influences, smith illustrates the difficulties of belonging in a multicultural society. Sandwiched between past and present, heritage and assimilation, characters exhibit hybrid identities that are shaped by individual experiences and broader societal contexts. In the novel we find difference in struggle between the first and second generations in establishing their identity. The novel intricately portrays how these two generations experience and negotiate their identities, shaped by their unique circumstances and societal pressures.

The first-generation characters, like Samad Iqbal and Clara Jones, are deeply connected to their cultural roots. As immigrants they often struggle with their identities while trying to maintain their heritage. They also face challenges in assimilating into British society while retaining their cultural identity. They feel a sense of dislocation in their attempt of assimilation, as they have to balance between the expectations of their home culture and the realities of life in a new land. First-generation immigrants' identity is like a complex interplay between acceptance and resistance. They may adopt British culture at the same time holding elements from their own backgrounds. This leads to hybrid identity that is not always comfortable or fully accepted by either culture. Samad, for example, struggles to settle his Bangladeshi background in London, leading him to adopt a hybrid identity that reflects both his past and present. His desire to instil traditional values in his children illustrates impact his past and the weight of cultural expectations he carries from his homeland. Clara experiences significant identity turmoil as she attempts to distance herself from her Jamaican roots and adopting British culture. Her marriage to Archie Jones, a white Englishman, complicates her identity. Clara's desire to assimilate into British society to

present herself as an English lady leads to sense of loss regarding her Jamaican identity. The hybrid nature of Clara's identity is noticeable in the way she raises Irie. Clara allows Irie more freedom. At the same time fears that Irie will lose connection of Jamaican heritage. It exemplifies the situation of every mixed-race mother and an immigrant woman. Clara's journey illustrates the immigrant experience of negotiating identity in a multicultural land which is like a continuous interplay between acceptance and resistance.

In contrast to the first-generation characters, second generation characters often find many struggles in multicultural, white dominated society such as cultural disconnection, identity crisis, racism, sense of belonging etc. Their struggle is marked by marked by the legacies of colonialism and immigration. The second-generation characters such as Irie Jones, Millat and Magid Iqbal, being born and raised in London, they are more integrated into British society. Unlike their parents, who have a clear knowledge and link to their cultural heritage, these characters have no idea about ancestral cultures. They are influenced and shaped by the multicultural environment of London. They feel caught between two worlds. This "in-between" situation leads to an identity crisis. It became difficult for them to construct a solid identity. They face discrimination and societal pressures that confuses their sense of belonging. Characters like Irie explore their identity through various means such as seeking connections to their Jamaican roots or engaging with different cultural practices which is full of challenges. Irie's journey reflects the struggle of second-generation immigrants to establish an identity.

Identity crisis faced by second-generation characters is different from that of first generation. It is often caught between the expectations of their immigrant parents and the realities of living in a diverse society. This is evident in Samad's expectations and Millat's rebellion against his father's traditional values during his childhood and Irie's relationship with her mother, Clara, who is deeply connected to her Jamaican heritage and Irie's

attraction towards British culture. This tension leads to feelings of alienation and confusion about their identity. Second-generation characters often face racial discrimination and cultural prejudice, which complicates their sense of belonging. Even though they are born in Britain, they perceived as outsider due to their ethnic backgrounds. This societal view leads to feelings of 'otherness'. Irie is the main victim of this racial discrimination in the novel. societal prejudices hamper her to establish a solid identity, which often sees her through the lens of race rather than individuality.

Second-generation characters feel pressure to uphold their parents' cultural traditions while simultaneously wanting to assimilate into British culture. This conflict can lead to misunderstandings and tensions within families, as seen in Irie's relationship with her mother, Clara, who holds strong ties to her Jamaican roots. The desire for acceptance in both cultures creates a complex dynamic that complicates their identity formation.

White Teeth gives key differences in formation of identity between first and second generations through the lens of hybridity. The first-generation characters struggling leads to complex hybrid identities rooted in nostalgia and cultural conflict. In contrast, the second generation navigates an unclear space. They feel disconnected from their heritage and shaped by the multicultural contemporary Britain. This difference highlights the evolving nature of identity in a postcolonial context and highlights the ongoing compromise between heritage and modernity.

Racism is most significant theme In *White Teeth* as compared to other themes. the title *White Teeth* encapsulates the themes of racial identity, societal beauty standards, and the complexities of belonging in a multicultural landscape, making it a poignant reflection on racism in contemporary society. We can find sensibility of the writer Zadie Smith in the novel with this theme. The significance of the title also mainly related to this theme. The title explores societal beauty standards as teeth are commonly linked to the notion of attractiveness. The phrase "white" in the title signifies the absurdity of

racial stereotypes by comparing against colored characters in the novel. In the novel several characters with diverse ethnic background challenge beauty stereotypes, particularly through their struggles with identity and societal expectations like Clara, Millat and Irie Jones. But we find Irie as a main victim than other colored characters in the novel.

As a biracial character, a daughter of mixed-race, Jamaican mother and an English father, Irie faces many challenges in her adolescence. Especially with body image issues and societal beauty standards which prioritize thinness and whiteness. She faces mockery and bullying from self-assured and culturally grounded classmates, particularly regarding her appearance and cultural background. For instance, a message passed to her in class that mocking at her hair and body serves as a reminder of differences from her peers. It shows how she is treated by her fellow classmates. Her experiences at school highlight the impact of peers on her self-esteem. She often compares herself to her slimmer, white classmates, leading to feelings of incompleteness. It shows how notion of racism impacted and effected the minds of the children even at the schools. It supports the feeling of alienation, inadequacy and sense of rootlessness. Her journey reflects the tension between her Jamaican heritage and the desire to conform to English beauty ideals, ultimately pushing her toward self-acceptance of her mixed identity.

Sometimes once past, cultural background, heritage and ethnic roots helps in understanding once identity. Irie lacks a solid foundation of her heritage. This made Irie to feel disconnected from both her Jamaican and English identities. She often used to feel like an outsider mainly in white dominated British society. So, in her attempts to assimilate into the cultural norms and Eurocentric standards of beauty, she loses her self-worth. Irie tries and struggles to adapt according to societal beauty standards such as dyeing and straightening her hair in hopes of fitting in, but, these efforts do not give any desired acceptance. Cultural miseducation is the main

reason for perception of herself and her place in society.

Irie's physical appearance makes her to feel low about her self-esteem. Her body is described as large and curvy, sharply in contrast with her mother's more Eurocentric figure. This difference makes Irie's to lose her weight and changing her appearance to gain social acceptance. The societal pressures impact her mentally in such a way that she decides to change herself to be worthy of love and acceptance.

Irie's quest for understanding her roots is a fundamental aspect of her character development. After being disrespected by the persons she admires like Millat and Magid, and after she comes to know about her mother's false teeth, she begins to explore her family history as a means to construct her identity. This journey reveals the complexities of heritage and the importance of acknowledging one's past in forming sense of self. Her journey opens the window to legacies of colonialism. Like Jamaican, African, Indian and many more countries histories of colonialism. The realization of her multifaceted identity marks a turning point in her self-esteem. She begins to accept herself more fully. This turning point regarding her self-esteem can be seen by her pregnancy at the end as a conclusion of the novel. She decides to create a distinct identity for herself and her child that includes all aspects of her diverse heritage.

Irie's parents, Archie and Clara, from different race and culture are both struggling with their own identities and pasts. This makes Irie to feel unsupported in her quest for self-acceptance. Lack of guidance makes Irie to feel disconnected from both sides of heritage. This leads to identity crisis and self-worth. The chapter entitled "The Miseducation of Irie Jones" explores how her upbringing influences her understanding of identity and belonging.

In case of coloured woman, we find a kind of double exploitation. As a woman in male dominated society, as a coloured in white dominated society. Irie's social environment is shaped by societal norms regarding race and gender. The expectations placed on women, particularly women of colour, add

another layer of complexity to Irie's self-esteem issues. As a woman Irie struggles with the notion that she must perform femininity and she should be according to specific standards in case of appearance and personality. Specific standards that do not align with her natural appearance or personality. This pressure diminishes her self-worth.

Irie's character serves as a lens through which readers can examine issues of race, identity, and societal pressures in contemporary life. Through the character of Irie smith shows struggle of growing up with mixed race background in a society that often ask for single identity. Struggle of mixed-race immigrants, with multicultural background to establish their identity under countries societal pressures. The challenges that every coloured people, especially women face in the society with certain beauty standards.

Irie's journey reflects the struggles that many face in finding their place within a multicultural society. The story highlights the influence of family history on individual identities. Through its diverse cast, the novel critiques racial stereotypes and societal beauty standards, revealing their absurdity and the harm they cause to individuals' self-perception. The ending signifies hope for the future, particularly through Irie's pregnancy, which symbolizes new beginnings and the potential to create a unique identity for her child that embraces their diverse heritage. The novel concludes with characters engaging in community service and breaking down traditional barriers, such as opening O'Connell's pub to women. This reflects a broader theme of social change and inclusivity in contemporary society. Through the experiences of characters like Irie Jones, Zadie Smith explores the complexities of cultural identity in a multicultural society. The characters' attempts to navigate their mixed heritages highlight the challenges of belonging and self-acceptance. *White Teeth* serves as a reflection on the complexities of identity in a multicultural world, urging readers to consider how heritage, societal pressures, and personal choices shape our lives.

## Conclusion

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* stands as a significant contribution to postcolonial literature. *White Teeth* serves as a deep explanation on postcolonial identity and broader societal dynamics that define modern Britain. It gives insight about the complexities of identity formation in multicultural society. Through its portrayal of characters struggling with their hybrid identities, *White Teeth* critiques the notion of a singular British identity. The novel shows how historical legacies of colonialism continue to shape contemporary society and impact of race and ethnicity on personal and communal identities. Smith also focuses on struggles of first and second - generation characters in establishing identity in multicultural land like Britan. This difference highlights the evolving nature of identity in a postcolonial context and highlights the ongoing compromise between heritage and modernity. In the title "white" signifies the absurdity of racial stereotypes. Reflecting on the complexities of identity in a multicultural world, informs readers how heritage, societal pressures, and personal choices shape our lives. The novel *White Teeth* intricately weaves themes of identity, multiculturalism, assimilation, generational conflict and racism through its characters making it as a complete postcolonial text. As there are many themes and characters in the novel but smith being a child of mixed-race parents incorporates her views through the character of Irie Jones. Through this character smith shows struggle of growing up with mixed race background in a society that often ask for single identity. The challenges that every coloured people, especially women face in the society with certain beauty standards. It also highlights the influence of family history on individual identities. In the title "White" often represents the dominant, colonial culture, on biting reality of teeth, smith shows like how Teeth crush food particles, throughout the history White have always been crushing and marginalizing the colonized, colored people in multicultural, white dominated society. the title shows the tension between assimilation into the white-dominated culture and the struggle to retain



personal and cultural integrity. Thus, Through the title of the novel *White Teeth* smith sum up the themes of racial identity, societal beauty standards, and the complexities of belonging in a multicultural landscape, racism, hybridity, through her characters in general and through the character of Irie in Particular.

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# EXPLORING GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES IN BAMA'S KARUKKU

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## Abstract

*The concept of feminism in the modern generation is more complex and rigid. There were several waves of feminism from generation across the boundary. The dialectic between race and gender are controversial one around the country. In India the traditional narrative is questionable. The false pre conceived notion of patriarchal notion was spread and it follows as non questionable one. The voice against gender and social structure is more different in the field of society. The theme of gender inequality or gender consciousness is victimized in Autobiographical Novel Karukku. The societal insight of psychological trauma is faced by the women due to cross cultural conflict in the society. The female character especially in her novels portrays as Angel in the house. She uses the different theme and ideological principal which is interrelated or interconnected with the characterization of her novels. Patriarchal setup in traditional society, Searching for identity, infidelity and struggle for existence etc. which are the several in her novels. Her novels focus on power of women that overshadowed all the restriction and fought for the independent freedom in the world. Many theorist and writers who examined the concepts of Betty friedan, an American feminist and activist and writer who have contributed to feminist texts "The Female Mystique" which challenging the traditional role and promoting the women's equality and empowerment. In the works of Bama tension between traditional gender roles and modern aspirations echoing fredian's concepts. The theory that the researcher examines is more vivid in nature and it show the unique perception. The research study focuses on psychological trauma of women's and complexities.*

**Keywords:** *feminism, gender inequality, patriarchy, psychological trauma, identity, struggle, women's empowerment, traditional gender roles, modern aspirations, bama, karukku, betty friedan, feminist theory, and social structure*

The paper investigates how Bama's Autobiographical novels depict the repression of women, offering an in-depth analysis of the oppressive systems in the society. The narratives are deeply intertwined with the intricacies of patriarchal forces that marginalize and suppress women within conventional social structures. By analyzing Bama's narrative techniques, the research aims to expose how her novels bring to light for the struggles women endure in a male-dominated society, while simultaneously giving a voice to those who challenge these entrenched systems. Using feminist theoretical frameworks, this paper explores the different forms of resistance that women experienced in dark society. These acts of defiance range from subtle, everyday gestures of rebellion to radical confrontations of authority. The research seeks to demonstrate how, within these oppressive environments, women find ways to reclaim their agency, pushing back against

forces of domination. Bama's work thus becomes a powerful commentary on women's perseverance and resilience amidst social and cultural repression.

Writers like Sivakami, Mahasweta Devi, Meena Kandasamy, and numerous other female authors have actively challenged the conventional roles assigned to women, attempting to dismantle the stereotypes of silent suffering. Through their literary works, they endeavor to break free from the confines of traditional domesticity, striving to assert their individuality. Many social reformers played a significant role in encouraging women to transcend the boundaries of familial life and step into the broader arenas of political freedom struggles and social reform movements. Women were thus presented with an array of opportunities not only in contemporary society but even during the fight for independence.

Although Indian women have made substantial progress in the half-century since the country gained independence, the journey toward true female autonomy remains incomplete. The quest for self-determination continues to be an ongoing struggle. Dalit literature portrays the grief, slavery and poverty faced by the Dalit over thousands of years, thus the ideology of narration portraying individual women as a whole voice for other women in society, who seek to carve out their independent gender identities in the society. In her pursuit of individual agency, Bama's autobiographical work can be regarded as one of the most significant chroniclers of the modern Indian family, capturing the shifting dynamics of gender and identity within her works, and highlighting the complexities of the ongoing struggle for women's empowerment.

*Karukku* by Bama places significant focus on the theme of exploitation through the character of narration, who initially perceives the harsh torment journey. From this perspective, the novel stands as a poignant exploration of human desires and the quest for personal and social freedom. The title itself, *Karukku* means the saw like double edged stem of the palmyra leaf. Another Tamil word "Karu" denotes embryo or seed, which also indicates 'freshness or newness' Bama herself in the preface to the book fetches the connection between the saw edged palmyra leaf and her own Dalit life. Bama says: "Change can come only through education. Being born in to Paraya Jati they are deprived of honour, dignity and respect. Progress can be made only if they study and make progress" (18). Thus *Karukku* indicates both Dalit oppression and Dalit struggle to get out from such extent of the venomous repressive states.

All through the course of her life, Bama had been a witness to innumerable incident of caste discrimination and gender discrimination as double things of atrocities. She strongly strikes at the center of such mainstream prejudiced perceptions by throwing up on readers a series of unanswered question "Are Dalit not human being? Do they not have common sense? Do they not have such attributes as a sense of honour and elf respect? What

do we lack? They treat as in whatever way they choose, as if we are slaves who don't even possess human dignity" (25).

This longing for independence propels her to dismantle anything that obstructs her path, ultimately leading her to shape a new identity. Bama remembers the upper castes, "kept themselves to their part of the village and we stayed in ours. We only went to their side if we had worked to do there. But they never ever come to our parts" (6). As she delves into her own life through the pages of her book, Bama portrays the dreadful picture of female subaltern and marginalized. They toil their torment both inside the family and outside the society.

*Karukku* is recognized as a Dalit feminist narrative that serves as a complex and contested space. The impact of gender inequality and caste discrimination is portrayed as a double marginalization faced by the women in society, with societal blame placed solely on them, ignoring the male counterpart's role. As an individual she challenging journey through this intricate emotional landscape. Transitioning from her maternal home to her marital one proves difficult, as she navigates the stringent norms of a patriarchal household while grappling with her precarious financial situation in a family that is acutely aware of economic realities.

Bama's *Karukku* describes the two aspects namely caste and religious that caused an individual life. Bama's *Karukku* opens up new possibilities to resist hegemonic power structure through self evaluation and self emancipation. Bama gives vigorous voice for the Dalit women, who are oppressed, ruled and still being ruled by the patriarchal, upper caste system and dominant religious society. Bama thus marks:

We who asleep must open our eyes and look about us. We must not accept the injustice of our enslavement by telling ourselves it is our fate, as if we have no true feelings, we must dare to stand up for change. We must crush all these institutions that use caste to bully us in to submission and demonstrate that among human beings there are none who are high or low? Those who have found their happiness by

exploiting us are not going to let us go easily. It is we who have to place them where they belong and bring about a changed and just society were all equal. (25)

Bama in her works presents the theme of the oppression that is executed in Dalit women community. Caste is one of the major causes for inhumanity, violence which impoverished Dalit people in the society. *Karukku* challenges the hegemonic, social, economic and religious discourse. Throughout the novel Bama question and oppose the system of hierarchy. Trough out the Betty Friedan book *The Feminine Mystique* the concept 'The problem that has no name' as feeling of discontent and unhappiness which experienced many women during 19<sup>th</sup> century. By applying the core concept of theory in the autobiographical work of Bama's character who experiencing the fact of silence and voiceless in the social community. The protagonist voice is repeatedly silenced by her family community and church. Thus the feelings are invisible and powerless.

In the conclusion, *Karukku* offers a message of hope and resilience. Thus the Dalit Christian woman faces the impact of oppression, isolation in the society. The ideology of Bama's narration challenges the traditional notion and she traces the double marginalization, such as caste and gender discrimination in the society. The social custom of practice should affect the society. The paper concludes that false hegemonic aspect of discrimination is neglected only by Indian Constitution of several human rights commission.

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## A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON SELECTED WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN WOMEN POETS

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The Present Article attempts to examine the selected works of some contemporary Indian English women poets from feminist perspective.

Feminism is perhaps the most powerful movement that swept the literary world in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has been expressed differently across the globe. It is a socio - cultural movement, for the assertion of female Identity and it includes radical re- orientation of life, culture and literature. It is a concept that is focused on a woman and what women will do in the forward-moving society.

The concept of 'feminism' has been taken from the word 'Femina' in Latin language which stands for 'woman'. Because, to speak of feminism in the conjunctive term, or to restrict the idea of feminism as a movement to liberate a woman on the right to education, career, suffrage and the resultant discarding of male-statement series in today's scenario, would be a misconception. Now that we have come to the appearance of many feminisms, we have to refer to feminisms, plural, instead of feminism, singular. This is where a morally radical form of feminism can be located, in French feminism. This feminism of the 1990s birthed the motley 'newly--born woman', who eschews men and the institution of marriage altogether and treated her form no less than a vehicle of political power.

Kamala Das, Imtiaz Dharker, Charmayne D' Souza and Tara Patel, the modern Indian English women poets walk the middle path between the two versions mentioned above. They describe not only what the position of women in India looks like, but also the means through which patriarchy pursues its agenda of oppression that leads so many women to conform to the roles assigned them by a male dominated society thus relegating the female 'I' or

'self' to the periphery from where it gradually disappears. As Kamala Das has rightly observed in her poem "An Introduction":

*Dress in sarees, be girl  
Be wife, they said  
Be embroiderer be cook,  
Be a quarreller with servants, Fit in,  
Oh, belong, cried the categorizers  
(De Souza 2004: 10)*

These poets, like liberal feminists deny their age-long suppression and subjugation and claim the right to be true to themselves. These women poets assert their identity by giving frank and uninhibited expression to their feelings on subjects which were earlier regarded taboo. They discard the conventional notion of Indian womanhood. "They take the reader into the labyrinths of body/sexual experiences and depict feminine psyche.... (Mehta I)

Kamala Das turns out to be the most outstanding poet in modern feminist poetry. Her poetry is an instrument of catharsis and protest. She says, "All the pain and unexpressed and the sad tales left untold, made me write recklessly and in protest". (King 151)

Her life seems meaningless without love, "a barren wasteland", and she cries to the sea in her poem "The Suicide":

*O sea, I am fed up  
I want to be Simple  
I want to be loved  
And  
If love is not to be had,  
I want to be dead, just dead. (Das: 9)*

These lines underlines the sense of frustration and failure in finding true love.

In her Poem Composition, her disenchantment with married love or extra-marital love is effectively articulated in an honest vein:

*Love*

*I no longer need,*

*With tenderness I am most content*

*I have learnt that friendship*

*Cannot endure,*

*That blood ties do not satisfy. (Das: 5)*

Das also gives expression to how marriage and adulthood for women meant relative loss of self in her poem *Composition*:

*The tragedy if life*

*Is not death but growth?*

*The child growing into adult. (Das: 4)*

Dharker expresses the same thought in *Intiaz*, the poem *Another Woman* from her first collection, "Purdah" (1988). It becomes clear that the poem is an autobiographical account of Dharker herself, a woman yet again, so different from who she was when, enduring years of food shopping to market, counting her coins, cooking, dealing with her antagonistic mother-in-law, waiting around for and on her husband, being solitary. "What choice did she have?" Society, religion and culture had offered her none — "it was the only choice she had ever known". This leads to Choice which amply sums up:

*Mother, I find you staring back at me*

*When did my body agree*

*To wear your face? (Dharker: 42)*

These lines bring home how women try to escape the fate of their mothers but eventually, with age, the rebellious woman herself becomes a mother and recalls the way and attitudes of her own mother.

Dharker's Poetry has an element of protest against the Muslim treatment of women. For instance, her collection *Purdah* is a strong critique of patriarchy. The collection shows how patriarchy imposed purdah (veil) on women to inculcate in them a sense of shame about their body:

*One day they said*

*She was old enough to learn some shame*

*She found it came quite naturally.*

(De Souza: 50)

These feeling of shame, guilt, disease and seclusion become a part of girl's psyche only after the onset of puberty which mark an end to her childhood freedom and patriarchy tries to put her

behind a purdah. Dharker says, "The image of purdah for me was on the dangerous edge of being almost seductive: the hidden body, the highlighted eyes, and the suggestion of forbidden places".

Kamala Das, contrary to this view, advocates 'burkha' as a 'bullet proof' dress as it "protects a woman against the piercing eyes of men. You are so safe inside the burkha. I myself have tried it so many times". (Khan I)

Sarojini Naidu too subscribes to these views of Das on purdah. She, unlike Dharker romanticizes the veil in her poem "Purdah Nashin", where purdah protects her:

*From thieving light of eyes impure*

*From coveting sun or wind's caress,*

*Her days are guarded and secure*

*Behind her carven lattices;*

*Like jewels in a turbaned crest,*

*Like secrets in a lover's breast*

(Paranjape: 70)

But Dharker compares this kind of safety to the safety of the tomb:

*A kind of safety*

*The body finds a place to hide*

*The cloth fans out against the skin*

*Much like the earth that falls*

*On coffins after they put the dead men in*

(De Souza 50)

It is not only a purdah of body, but also a "purdah of the mind". It becomes a symbol of falseness between what women feel and what they are allowed to show.

The poem "A Woman's Place" brings out the complains about taboos "do's" and "don'ts", restrictions and prescriptions:

Mouths must be watched, especially

If you are a Woman

A smile should be stifled

With your sari-end

No one must see your serenity cracked

Even with delight. (Naik and Narayan: 189)

This shows how society makes women over-conscious of their each and every act.

In Charmayne D'Souza's first collection "A Spelling Guide to Woman" (1990) several poems

explore the plight of women. Charmayne's perspective on man-woman relationship, love and marriage is profoundly unromantic to the extent of bordering on cynical. In "When God First Made a Whore", for example, we hear a grim humour:

*One day,  
God will ask for this sweaty body of mine,  
But, like all the rest,  
He will have to stand in line.  
So said the whore. (De Souza: 85)*

Her unromantic views on marriage are reflected in the poem "Strange Bedfellows":

*Her mangalsutra  
will be a bullet  
to her breast,  
My garland  
a hempen rope  
around my neck (De Souza: 87)*

Another of the generation's fresh voices in feminist poetry, Tara Patel, traces the psychology of a single woman in the collection "Single Woman" (1991). A 'single woman's mind is full of contradictions, humiliations and defeats', she says.

Tara Patel expresses a yearning for love, man and companionship as "A woman can feed herself", "But love starts with a man". It is in that feeling that the speaker of the poem Request to desperately ask, rather beg for company:

*Sometimes for old times sake  
You should look me up.  
Have lunch with me. I'll pay the bill.  
(De Souza: 90)*

As we have a story of living alone and its frustration, we have a story of growing old as shown in Patel's poem "In a Working Women's Hostel":

*The colour of bones is in my hair now  
and I have come to a stands still.  
The passing days have a posthumous  
touch to them (De Souza: 94)*

The outcome of the analysis is that though marriage for women may mean a relative loss of self and of one's freedom, even a single woman's life with all her freedom has its own pains and anxieties. Her life seems incomplete without man, love and

companionship. She longs for all those normal and simple pleasures of life that are experienced by ordinary women.

Thus, feminism can also be considered as a part of post-colonial discourse. With the death of the empire, colonial imperialism may have ended, in terms of colonized countries, but the internal colonization prevalent in these countries remained unchanged where 'subalterns' which include dalits and women, remained marginalized. Patriarchy played the role of the colonizer and women were the colonized. In this context, the poetry by these modern women poets may be regarded as post-colonial in several ways: in its critique of patriarchy and attack on hypocritical male dominated society; in breaking the age-long silence on the part of women by giving bold, frank and uninhibited expression to their feelings and using English language to express Indian feminine sensibility. These women poets have efficiently "mapped out the terrain for post-colonial women in social and linguistic terms". (De Souza: 8)

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# MODERNISM VS. POSTMODERNISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF T.S ELIOT'S *THE WASTE LAND* AND THOMAS PYNCHON'S *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW*

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## Introduction

The article discusses modernism and postmodernism, highlighting their philosophical foundations and historical settings. Modernism, often seen as a response to the disruptions of the early 20th century, sought to find order amidst chaos through experimentation with form, mythic references, and fragmented narratives. Modernism emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a time marked by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and the devastating effects of World War I. The movement reflects a sense of disillusionment with traditional values, institutions, and artistic conventions. Postmodernism, emerging after World War II, reacts against modernist ideals, embracing fragmentation, playfulness, and scepticism toward grand narratives. Modernism and postmodernism represent distinct responses to the challenges of their times. Modernism's introspective quest for meaning contrasts with postmodernism's playful and critical stance on the very concept of meaning. Together, these movements provide profound insights into the evolving human experience, offering a rich tapestry of artistic and intellectual thought.

The transition from Modernism to Postmodernism in literature marks a profound shift in the way writers engage with fragmentation, chaos, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) exemplify these movements, each responding to societal and cultural upheavals in distinct yet interconnected ways.

Modernism, embodied in *The Waste Land*, arose in the aftermath of World War I, a time of

disillusionment and existential uncertainty. The Modernist ethos grapples with the collapse of traditional values and the alienation brought about by industrialization and war. Yet, Modernist writers like Eliot often sought to reconstruct meaning through the fragmentation they portrayed. *The Waste Land* exemplifies this paradox: its fragmented structure and multiplicity of voices reflect a fractured world, yet its allusions to myth, religion, and literature suggest a yearning for coherence and transcendence.

In contrast, Postmodernism, as seen in *Gravity's Rainbow*, emerged after World War II, during an era defined by technological advancements, Cold War paranoia, and a deep scepticism of grand narratives. Where Modernism strives for meaning amidst chaos, Postmodernism embraces chaos itself, questioning the very possibility of meaning. Pynchon's sprawling narrative defies traditional structure, subverts expectations, and revels in absurdity. Through its non-linear storytelling, hyper real characters, and intertextuality, *Gravity's Rainbow* critiques the dehumanizing effects of technology and the bureaucratic systems that define modern life.

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is a cornerstone of modernist literature, renowned for its fragmented structure, dense allusions, and exploration of spiritual and cultural disintegration. The poem, divided into five sections, portrays a world stripped of meaning and coherence, reflecting the modernist preoccupation with existential despair and the search for redemption amidst chaos.

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* epitomizes modernist literature through its structure, themes, and techniques. The poem mirrors the disillusionment and fragmentation of post-World War I Europe.



Eliot's use of mythic references, such as the Fisher King and the Holy Grail, reflects modernism's reliance on past traditions to provide coherence. The fragmented narrative, shifts in voice, and multilingual references create a mosaic of meaning, reflecting the fractured human experience. Eliot's focus on spiritual desolation and the search for redemption mirrors modernism's preoccupation with existential questions.

In the desolate landscape of modernity, '*The Waste Land*' navigates the fragmented and disillusioned world of the human experience. The poem's narrative is a modernist exploration of the search for meaning and connection in a chaotic world. The poem's use of imagery and symbolism creates a sense of disillusionment and spiritual decay, reflecting the modernist concern with the disintegration of traditional values and social structures. The image of the wasteland itself becomes a powerful symbol of the modern condition, reflecting the sense of dislocation and disorientation that characterized modern life in the aftermath of World War I.

The poem's experimentation with language and form also reflects the modernist emphasis on innovation and experimentation. Eliot's use of allusion, reference, and collage techniques creates a sense of cultural and historical dislocation, underscoring the modernist concern with the fragmentation of knowledge and experience.

The poem's exploration of the human condition also reflects the modernist concern with the individual's search for meaning and connection in a chaotic world. The poem's protagonist, a disillusioned and disconnected individual, embodies the modernist concern with the fragmentation of the self and the search for identity in a post-traditional world.

Ultimately, '*The Waste Land*' is a modernist masterpiece that reflects the movement's concerns with disillusionment, spiritual decay, and the search for meaning and connection in a chaotic world. The poem's use of imagery, symbolism, and experimentation with language and form creates a powerful and enduring work of modernist literature.

Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, on the other hand, is quintessentially postmodern. Written in the shadow of World War II and the nuclear age, the novel dismantles the idea of a unified narrative. Pynchon employs paranoia, absurdity, and pastiche, questioning the very possibility of coherence or meaning. The text resists closure, challenging the reader with its complexity and sprawling structure. Through its exploration of technology, war, and control, *Gravity's Rainbow* critiques modernist faith in human progress and reason. In the aftermath of World War II, the world is left in a state of chaos and disintegration. The novel's protagonist, Slothrop, is a symbol of this disintegration, a man who is fragmented and disconnected from the world around him.

As Slothrop navigates the ruins of Europe, he becomes embroiled in a complex web of paranoia and conspiracy. Through Slothrop's journey, Pynchon explores the interconnectedness of history and technology, revealing the ways in which the development of the rocket is linked to the rise of fascist and totalitarian regimes. The novel also explores the impact of technology on human experience, revealing the ways in which it can both liberate and oppress.

As the novel progresses, Slothrop's identity becomes increasingly fragmented, reflecting the postmodernist concern with the instability of truth and the fragmentation of knowledge. The novel's use of paranoia and conspiracy theories as a narrative device also reflects the postmodernist fascination with the instability of truth and the power of narrative to shape reality. Ultimately, '*Gravity's Rainbow*' is a postmodernist epic that defies traditional notions of plot, character, and meaning. It is a novel that is both a reflection of the chaos and disintegration of the post-war world, and a commentary on the ways in which technology and history shape human experience.

*The Waste Land* seeks order amidst chaos, employing myths as a unifying framework. Its fragmented form reflects modernism's attempt to mirror reality's disarray while maintaining artistic control. *Gravity's Rainbow*, by contrast, revels in

chaos, rejecting linearity and offering a decentered, multi-threaded narrative that exemplifies postmodernist aesthetics. Eliot's poem is preoccupied with spiritual alienation and the erosion of cultural traditions, presenting a somber view of modernity's impact on the human spirit. Pynchon's novel interrogates the forces of power, technology, and entropy, embracing a more playful yet cynical perspective on humanity's capacity for control. Modernism's search for meaning and transcendence in a fragmented world is central to *The Waste Land*. Eliot seeks to find patterns in chaos, reflecting a belief in the possibility of redemption. Postmodernism's scepticism toward meta-narratives and its embrace of multiplicity characterize *Gravity's Rainbow*. Pynchon's world is one where meaning is elusive, and control is an illusion. Eliot's dense, allusive language reflects modernism's intellectual rigor and engagement with high culture. Pynchon's intertextual play and use of pop culture references highlight postmodernism's blending of high and low cultural elements.

In comparison to T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, *Gravity's Rainbow* can be seen as a postmodernist response to the modernist concerns with disillusionment and spiritual decay. While *The Waste Land* reflects the modernist concern with the disintegration of traditional values and social structures, *Gravity's Rainbow* reflects the postmodernist concern with the instability of truth

and the fragmentation of knowledge. Both works share a concern with the fragmentation of the self and the search for meaning and connection in a chaotic world. However, while *The Waste Land* embodies a modernist sense of disillusionment and spiritual decay, *Gravity's Rainbow* embodies a postmodernist sense of paranoia and conspiracy, reflecting the postmodernist fascination with the instability of truth and the power of narrative to shape reality.

This article ends by elucidating the aspects of modernism and postmodernism found in the waste land and the rainbow of gravity. These pieces provide a distinctive explanation of modernism and postmodernism's characteristics. Together, these works highlight the shifting paradigms in literature and thought across the 20th century.

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# BRIDGING WORLDS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DALIT AND AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN P. SIVAKAMI AND GLORIA NAYLOR

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## Abstract

*This study examines the intersections of caste, race, and gender discrimination as experienced by Dalit women in India and African American women in the United States through P. Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* and Author's Note on *The Grip of Change*, and Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills*. It focuses on how caste and race, combined with gender discrimination, create unique challenges for women in these two different societies. Despite their differences, both groups face similar struggles like violence, economic hardships, and social exclusion, while their experiences are shaped by the distinct realities of caste in India and race in America. The study also looks at how the characters in these works overcome these challenges. Sivakami's characters fight back through defiance, unity, and asserting their rights within a caste-driven system. Naylor's characters, on the other hand, rely on personal resilience, community support, and subtle forms of resistance to survive and push back against racism and sexism. By comparing these stories, this research shows how both authors use literature to highlight women's strength and resilience in the face of oppression. The study uses simple analysis to connect these struggles, showing that even in different parts of the world, women can share similar experiences of injustice and find ways to resist and rebuild their lives.*

**Keywords:** caste, race, gender, women's struggles, patriarchy, intersectionality.

## Introduction

Caste, race, and gender together help us understand the layered oppression faced by marginalized women. Kimberlé Crenshaw's idea of intersectionality shows how different types of discrimination combine to create unique challenges, especially for Dalit women in India and African American women in the U.S. Feminist theory adds to this by highlighting women's strength and resistance against patriarchal systems that maintain these injustices.

P. Sivakami is an acclaimed Indian author, activist and former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer. She is known for her bold and honest portrayal of caste, gender, and social issues in her works. Through her writing, Sivakami emphasizes the importance of resistance, unity, and self-assertion in the fight against systemic inequality. Similarly,

Gloria Naylor, an African American novelist, wrote about race, gender, and community. Her stories often highlight the struggles and resilience of African American women in an unfair society.

*The Grip of Change* is a groundbreaking novel in Dalit literature. It offers a vivid and unapologetic portrayal of caste and gender oppression in rural India. The story follows Thangam, a Dalit widow, who suffers abuse at the hands of upper-caste men and seeks justice through Kathamuthu, a local political leader. In her *Author's Note on The Grip of Change*, P. Sivakami reflects on her personal experiences as a Dalit woman and how they shaped the novel. She discusses the challenges of addressing sensitive topics like caste and gender oppression, emphasizing her commitment to presenting an authentic narrative.

*The Women of Brewster Place* is Gloria Naylor's acclaimed debut novel. It tells the interconnected stories of seven African American women living in a decaying urban neighbourhood. The novel explores themes of resilience, friendship, and the impact of systemic oppression. Each woman's narrative reflects struggles with issues like poverty, racism, domestic violence, and unfulfilled dreams. *Linden Hills* is a profound exploration of ambition, identity, and societal expectations within the African American community. Set in a wealthy Black neighbourhood, the novel critiques the pursuit of material success at the expense of cultural and moral values. Drawing parallels to Dante's *Inferno*, Naylor structures the story around characters who descend deeper into the moral compromises of their lives.

#### **Caste and gender in *The Grip of Change* and *The Author's Note in The Grip of Change***

The exploration of caste and gender in *The Grip of Change* is a central theme in P. Sivakami's novel. It provides a stark portrayal of the struggles faced by Dalit women. Thangam, the protagonist, experiences severe oppression in the novel. She doubly oppressed both due to her caste and gender. Thangam's character embodies the compounded marginalization faced by Dalit women, as she suffers not only because of her caste but also because of her gender. Her experiences highlight how these two axes of identity intensify her struggles, placing her at the lowest rung of the socio-political hierarchy.

Thangam's initial hope for justice is placed in Kathamuthu, a local Dalit leader, who she believes will protect her from the abuse she faces. However, as the narrative unfolds, Thangam realizes that Kathamuthu, while publicly confronting upper-caste oppressors, is also motivated by self-interest. His patriarchal mindset is evident in his treatment of his wives. It critiques the patriarchal practices upheld even by those who seek to dismantle caste hierarchies. Kathamuthu's leadership exposes this contradiction. While he confronts upper-caste oppression, his treatment of his wives and manipulation of Thangam underscore how patriarchal systems persist within marginalized

communities. This duality serves as a critique of male leadership that fails to address gender inequality even within their activism. This contradiction highlights the broader issue of how leaders, even within marginalized communities, can be complicit in reinforcing systems of power that oppress women.

The character of Gowri, Kathamuthu's daughter, represents the possibility of change. Her growing awareness of the contradictions within her father's leadership signifies a potential shift in societal norms. Gowri's questioning of her father's actions offers hope for breaking free from entrenched systems of caste and gender oppression. The character of Gowri represents a new generation of awareness and resistance. Her critical stance toward her father's actions signals a potential shift in societal norms. It suggesting that systemic change is possible when patriarchal and caste-based systems are questioned from within.

In Thangam's case, her suffering becomes emblematic of the broader plight of Dalit women. Despite the emotional and physical abuse she faces, she refuses to remain silent. Her declaration of resistance, "I will not be silenced(Sivakami 14)" encapsulates her fight for justice and dignity, not only for herself but also for other Dalit women who endure similar oppression. Her refusal to accept subjugation reflects a key feminist principle: the assertion of agency in the face of systemic injustice. Thangam's determination to fight for her rights highlights the strength of marginalized women who challenge both caste and gender hierarchies.

*The Author's Note on The Grip of Change* further illuminates Sivakami's motivations for writing *The Grip of Change*. Sivakami explains that the novel serves as a platform for voicing the silent struggles of Dalit women, whose experiences are often ignored by mainstream society. She emphasizes that the suffering of Dalit women is not just a product of caste discrimination but also the result of their gendered oppression. Sivakami explicitly articulates the intersectional struggles faced by Dalit women, critiquing both caste and patriarchal systems. Her portrayal of Kathamuthu as a flawed leader reinforces the need for accountability within social

justice movements. Sivakami's call for dismantling caste and patriarchy aligns with intersectional feminist advocacy for structural change to create an equitable society.

Sivakami concludes the Author's Note by calling for the dismantling of caste and patriarchy. It continues to oppress Dalit women like Thangam. The novel, in this light, becomes a plea for justice. It urges the need for structural change to eradicate the deeply entrenched systems of oppression that limit the lives of marginalized women.

### **Race and gender in the *Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills***

Gloria Naylor's novels *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills* powerfully explore the intersection of race and gender, highlighting the unique struggles faced by African American women. Both novels portray how race and gender shape the lives of the characters, presenting them with systemic barriers that limit their opportunities, complicate their identities, and determine their experiences in an oppressive society.

In *The Women of Brewster Place*, Naylor follows the lives of several African American women living in a decaying urban neighbourhood. The novel explores the challenges they face as a result of both racial and gender inequalities. In *The Women of Brewster Place*, Naylor examines the systemic challenges faced by African American women living in a dilapidated urban neighbourhood. Mattie Michael, one of the central characters, represents the intersection of racial and gender-based oppression. As a single mother, Mattie struggles to provide for her son in a world that constantly undermines her agency due to her identity as a Black woman. Reflecting on her struggles, she laments, "I have given everything I've got, and still, the world keeps pushing me down" (Naylor 28). This quote encapsulates the relentless societal pressures faced by African American women. They are often judged harshly and offered limited opportunities due to their intersecting identities

Similarly, Kiswana Browne's character grapples with the sexism inherent even within her activism for racial justice. Despite her dedication to fighting systemic racism, she feels constrained by the patriarchal attitudes of her male peers. Her frustration becomes evident when she remarks, "I can fight for my people, but the men want to keep me

in my place" (Naylor 32). This statement underscores the double bind faced by African American women who must simultaneously combat external racial discrimination and internalized sexism within their communities. The novel illustrates how these dual oppressions create a "double burden" for the women of Brewster Place, silencing their voices and limiting their agency.

Despite these challenges, the women in *The Women of Brewster Place* find strength in their shared experiences and create a resilient community. The narrator's observation, "It's not just the world outside that oppresses us, but sometimes the men in our lives who reinforce the chains" (Naylor 51), underscores how systemic oppression is both external and internal. However, by supporting one another, these women demonstrate that solidarity can be a powerful tool in resisting oppression and asserting their identities. Through interconnected stories, Naylor portrays how race and gender intersect to shape lives but also highlights the resilience and empowerment that arise from shared struggles.

In *Linden Hills*, Naylor shifts her focus to an affluent Black community, exploring how race, class, and gender intersect within the pressures of upward mobility. Willie, a central character, exemplifies the struggles of Black individuals attempting to conform to societal ideals of success while maintaining their personal integrity. His wife, on the other hand, feels trapped by societal expectations that demand perfection as both a woman and an African American. The quote, "She knew she had to work twice as hard, be twice as perfect just to prove she belonged here" (Naylor 112), reveals the compounded challenges faced by African American women in achieving acceptance and recognition. This reflects the pervasive demand for excellence imposed on marginalized individuals to overcome both racial and gendered biases, often at great personal cost.

The female characters in *Linden Hills* also face the tension between societal conformity and personal fulfillment. Lester Tilson, reflects, "I am caught between the race that I cannot change and the womanhood I can never truly express" (Naylor 89). This statement poignantly captures the dual constraints of race and gender, as the character struggles to assert her identity within a system that

demands subservience to both white and patriarchal norms. Through such narratives, Naylor critiques the societal structures that dictate who succeeds and who is left behind, exposing how these structures are deeply rooted in both racial and gender-based discrimination.

While Naylor critiques these oppressive systems, she also highlights the strength and resilience of African American women. In both novels, the women navigate oppressive structures with agency and determination. Their resistance is not just individual but collective, as they form bonds of solidarity and support to challenge the systems that seek to suppress them. By weaving stories of resistance and empowerment, Naylor emphasizes that, despite the intersectional challenges of race and gender, African American women can redefine their circumstances and assert their identities.

Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills* are profound examinations of how race and gender intersect to shape the lives of African American women. Through the struggles and resilience of her characters, Naylor critiques the systemic oppression embedded in societal structures while celebrating the agency and solidarity of Black women. By grounding her narratives in the lived experiences of her characters, Naylor not only illuminates the challenges of intersectional oppression but also offers a vision of empowerment through collective resistance and personal strength

### Similarities

Both P. Sivakami and Gloria Naylor delve deeply into themes of oppression, resilience, and survival in their novels. They focusing on how marginalized women navigate intersectional forces of caste, race, and gender. In *The Grip of Change*, *Author's Note on The Grip of Change*, *The Women of Brewster Place*, and *Linden Hills*, the authors spotlight the struggles faced by women in oppressive systems while underscoring their strength and resistance against violence, economic hardships, and social exclusion.

Sivakami and Naylor explore how caste and race magnify gender-based oppression. In *The Grip of Change*, Thangam, a Dalit widow, is subjected to

physical violence and sexual exploitation, symbolizing the compounded oppression caused by caste and gender. Similarly, Naylor's characters Mattie and Ciel in *The Women of Brewster Place* face systemic racism and domestic violence. Naylor poignantly captures their pain, writing, "I am always running. Running from the pain" (Naylor 122). This line illustrates the cyclical nature of violence endured by Black women in a society shaped by racial inequality. Both authors expose how women's suffering is perpetuated by entrenched social hierarchies, where caste and race intersect with patriarchy to further marginalize them.

Economic struggles play a pivotal role in keeping marginalized women vulnerable in both Sivakami's and Naylor's works. Thangam is financially exploited by Kathamuthu, whose actions keep her tied to her caste-imposed disadvantages. In *Linden Hills*, the residents face the challenges of achieving material success while battling systemic racism. Naylor critiques this pursuit of economic respectability, stating, "The pursuit of respectability had cost them their souls" (Naylor 134). This highlights how, even in the Black middle class, racism restricts economic opportunities and compromises individual integrity. Both authors emphasize that economic hardships are not merely personal struggles but systemic tools of oppression, with caste and race determining access to resources and opportunities.

Social exclusion is another shared theme in the works of Sivakami and Naylor. In *The Grip of Change*, Thangam's relationships are thwarted by the rigid caste system, which isolates her from mainstream society. Similarly, in *The Women of Brewster Place*, the women live in a segregated community, physically and socially removed from opportunities and integration. This segregation reflects the racial and gender-based exclusion that limits their lives. Naylor writes, "They learned to protect each other" (Naylor 58), illustrating how women build communities of solidarity to cope with isolation and marginalization. Both authors show that caste and race not only determine social status but also reinforce systems of rejection and alienation.

Despite the systemic oppression they face, the women in both Sivakami's and Naylor's novels exhibit remarkable resilience and agency. In *The Grip of Change*, Thangam resists Kathamuthu's control, asserting her independence against caste-based exploitation. Similarly, the women in *The Women of Brewster Place* form strong bonds of solidarity to fight back against their shared struggles. Naylor emphasizes this collective strength, writing, "They learned to protect each other" (Naylor 58). These acts of resistance highlight how marginalized women navigate systems of oppression, not as passive victims but as agents of change who draw strength from their shared experiences and communities.

Both authors offer a powerful critique of the societal structures that perpetuate oppression. Sivakami exposes the violence and discrimination inherent in the caste system, showing how it not only marginalizes Dalit women like Thangam but also enables exploitation from within their communities. Naylor, on the other hand, critiques the racism and sexism entrenched in American society. In *Linden Hills*, she examines how systemic racism affects even the Black middle class, exposing the hollowness of material success under oppressive systems. Naylor and Sivakami both illustrate how internalized discrimination—whether within caste-based hierarchies or racial communities—perpetuates harm among marginalized groups.

### Differences

Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* and *Author's Note on The Grip of Change* center on the Indian caste system, particularly the compounded struggles faced by Dalit women. Through Thangam, a Dalit widow subjected to extreme exploitation and violence, Sivakami critiques the systemic inequalities fostered by caste. She asserts, "The caste system has divided society into groups that are not merely different but often cruelly unequal" (*Author's Note* 98). This highlights how caste not only stratifies Indian society but also imposes severe limitations on Dalit women due to their intersecting identities.

In contrast, Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills* depict African American women grappling with the legacy of slavery and systemic racism in the U.S. Naylor portrays how racial discrimination confines her characters to urban poverty and segregation. As she notes in *The Women of Brewster Place*, "They had come together here because no other place was willing to accept them" (Naylor 97). This statement reflects the forced isolation and marginalization experienced by African American women. In *Linden Hills*, Naylor further critiques internalized racism within the African American middle class, revealing the deep scars of racial oppression.

The intersection of gender with caste in Sivakami's works contrasts with the intersection of gender and race in Naylor's. In *The Grip of Change*, Dalit women face dual oppression, as caste-based discrimination exacerbates their gendered vulnerabilities. Thangam's exploitation exemplifies this compounded oppression. On the other hand, Naylor's African American women encounter racial and gender discrimination within a segregated society. While racism frames their struggles, the added burden of sexism deepens their marginalization.

Sivakami portrays caste as an institutionalized form of violence that defines every aspect of a Dalit woman's life. Conversely, Naylor focuses on the enduring effects of slavery and systemic racism on African American women's lives. This distinction reflects the authors' respective cultural contexts, wherein caste and race function as overarching forces shaping social hierarchies and individual experiences.

### Strategies to Overcome their Struggles

Sivakami and Naylor depict contrasting strategies for resisting oppression. In *The Grip of Change*, Thangam asserts her agency despite immense violence, standing up against the caste system. Her powerful declaration, "I have nothing left to lose but my life, and I will not let them take even that" (Sivakami 104), epitomizes individual resistance. Thangam's defiance underscores the determination

of Dalit women to reclaim their dignity and rights, even in the face of overwhelming societal and patriarchal constraints.

Naylor's characters, however, find strength in collective solidarity. In *The Women of Brewster Place*, the women form close-knit communities, providing emotional and physical support to one another. Naylor emphasizes the power of community when she writes, "They learned to protect each other" (Naylor 58). This collective resistance becomes a vital strategy for survival and resilience in a world defined by systemic racism and urban decay.

Both Sivakami and Naylor critique the societal structures that perpetuate inequality. Sivakami exposes the caste system's cruelty, not just as an external force but as an internalized mechanism of exploitation within marginalized communities. Naylor critiques the deeply embedded racism in American society while also shedding light on internalized biases that perpetuate harm within African American communities.

In *The Grip of Change*, Thangam epitomizes the compounded oppression faced by Dalit women in Indian society, where caste and gender intersect to enforce subjugation. Trapped in a relationship with Kathamuthu, who exploits her vulnerability for his gain, Thangam refuses to remain a passive victim. Her decision to challenge these injustices marks her journey toward self-empowerment. As Sivakami notes in her *Author's Note*, "The system of caste has made me a slave, but I will not remain one" (*Author's Note* 115). This declaration encapsulates Thangam's realization of her worth and her growing determination to dismantle the systems that oppress her.

Thangam's resistance is not just personal but emblematic of a broader critique of the caste system. Her struggle to assert her dignity serves as a rallying cry for justice, challenging the deep-seated norms that perpetuate inequality.

In Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*, the characters similarly face oppression rooted in systemic racism and gender inequality. Mattie Michael and Ciel, among others, endure economic hardships and social exclusion as African American

women in a racially segregated society. Yet, their resilience emerges through their collective strength. Mattie, a maternal figure within the community, provides emotional support to others, symbolizing the power of solidarity in the face of adversity.

The women of Brewster Place forge bonds that become their source of survival. Naylor underscores this when she writes, "They learned to protect each other" (*The Women of Brewster Place* 58), demonstrating how community solidarity enables them to resist the forces that seek to isolate and dehumanize them.

In *Linden Hills*, Naylor explores a different facet of systemic oppression: the pressures of internalized racism and class-based discrimination within the African American middle class. Characters like Willie Mason grapple with societal expectations that prioritize wealth and appearance over authenticity and heritage.

Willie's resistance to the oppressive values of Linden Hills is a journey of self-discovery and a rejection of conformity. As Naylor writes, "Linden Hills wasn't about family; it was about appearance, about fitting into a world that defined you by what you had, not who you were" (*Linden Hills* 53). This critique of materialism and its corrosive impact on identity highlights the nuanced ways in which oppression manifests even within outwardly successful communities.

Across these works, resilience emerges as a shared response to oppression. Thangam's defiance in *The Grip of Change* showcases individual resistance against caste and patriarchal violence. In the women in *The Women of Brewster Place* find strength in community solidarity. In *Linden Hills*, characters resist the internalized racism and societal expectations that threaten to strip them of their identity.

All three narratives illuminate the power of resistance, whether through personal courage, collective support, or self-discovery. Despite facing immense challenges, the characters carve out spaces of empowerment, proving that survival is not just possible but transformative when grounded in resilience and unity.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, both P. Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* and Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills* explore the intersection of gender, caste, and race, highlighting the systemic oppression faced by women in their respective societies. Sivakami's Dalit women and Naylor's African American women share similar experiences of violence, economic hardships, and social exclusion, but their responses to these challenges are shaped by the distinct cultural and social realities of caste in India and race in America. While Thangam in *The Grip of Change* challenges the oppressive caste system through defiance and assertion of her rights, the women in Naylor's works find strength in community solidarity, supporting each other in their fight against racism and sexism.

Despite these differences in context and response, both sets of characters demonstrate resilience and strength in the face of immense adversity. Sivakami's emphasis on individual resistance and Naylor's focus on collective strength show that, whether through personal acts of defiance or mutual support, women have the power to survive, resist, and rebuild their lives. These works underscore the universal themes of survival and resistance, proving that the struggle for justice and equality, though shaped by different forms of oppression, is a shared experience among women across the world.

Ultimately, the comparative analysis of these two authors illustrates that while the specific forms of oppression—caste in India and race in America—may differ, the gendered experiences of women facing systemic inequality are remarkably similar. Both Sivakami and Naylor use their works to shed light on the complex, layered realities of gender-based violence, social exclusion, and economic hardship, while also celebrating the strength and

resilience of women as they fight to reclaim their lives and dignity. Through these narratives, they offer a powerful message of hope, showing that even in the most oppressive circumstances, women continue to resist and strive for a better future.

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# POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVES IN CHITRA BANERJEE DEVAKARUNI'S *THE PALACE OF ILLUSIONS*

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## Abstract

*This article explores postmodern perspectives in The Palace of Illusions by Chitra Banerjee Devakaruni, a prolific writer of Indian writing in English. It discusses the relevance of the post modern society, especially in India. Writing in a postmodern world where women issues are still relevant though different from the medieval times. The Palace of Illusions is a contemporary retelling of Vyasa's The Mahabharata. It is considered a postmodern work that subverts the traditional model of the epic and recreates it into a modern genre. The novel is narrated by Draupadi, who becomes the chronicler of her own life. The story provides a more realistic and relatable interpretation.*

**Keywords:** *postmodern, subverts, recreates, chronicler, realistic*

## Introduction

The Palace of Illusions by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni can be viewed through a postmodern lens in a number of ways the novel Challenges the traditional portrayal of women in the epic Mahabharata by focusing on the inner lives of female characters such as Panchaali. The novel rewrites women's fate by emphasizing their eminence as combatants. This challenges the portrayal of women in mythologies which can educate generations to lock women in a cage in the name of culture and traditions. Draupadi's life shows in the epic how women need to accept the concept of tradition and culture without any questions. The views of Draupadi are totally different from these of ordinary women and the outcomes are as powerful as she is. Her determination and courage has been explained all through the novel. Divakaruni has shown Draupadi as a contemporary woman who wants to express her thoughts and ideas to the world. Divakaruni has tried to bring out the past into present in a different way by showing the story of love, betrayal, revenge, war, freedom and friendship.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning writer, activist, professor and speaker and the author of 21 books. Her way of writing reveals a strong awareness of the complexity of feelings, relationships, and societal processes, enabling her to create story lines that are deep and multifaceted.

The writings of Divakaruni provide a literary tapestry that deftly interweaves societal critiques, personal accounts, and cultural observations. Although her novels may not be explicitly concerned with political ideas, they frequently provide fascinating peeks into social issues, revealing characters who struggle with societal limits, power relationships, and the pursuit of both individual and community liberty.

The novel begins with Panchaali, princess of the kingdom of Panchaali, recalling the events leading to her birth through the mouth of her mother, who calls her the "Girl who wasn't Invited" [Divakaruni 1] as she fancies different names which could be attributed to her. Living in today's world, women feel equally unwanted as Panchaali did at the time of her birth when her father heard out his only son for her brother Dhristadyumna when she too came out of the holy fire beside her brother, destined to "Change the course of history". [Divakaruni-5]. Divakaruni wrote this portrayal of women's character in my opinion, she says "I was left unsatisfied by the portrayals of women's character... they remain shadowy figures, their lives portrayed only when they affected the lives of the male heroes, their rules ultimately subservient to those of their fathers or husbands, brothers or sons. If I ever wrote a book.. I would place the women in the forefront of the action."

I would uncover the lines of the men's exploits" (Divakaruni-14-15).

In the novel, Draupadi's Character is not as a woman who suffers with in herself and is not able to speak about her views. She brings out a strong trajectory of her own. Her first impact was on education which is not given to her as her brother was given priority over her tutor told her brother to inform her that " A Kshatriya woman's highest purpose in life is to support the warriors in her life" [Divakaruni 26]. Her father and tutor neglected her education. When she questioned her brother "who decided that woman's highest purpose was to support men?" [Divakaruni-26]. The brother replied that is what I'd like you do. This shows that nobody cared about the education of women and women were required to do what men wanted them to do. Here Divakaruni tries to brings out old practice of every women of those periods whether she was a queen or a normal woman. Education not given to women as for men because their duty is to take care of their husbands and to pray that they die with glory on the battle-field.

The fact that women can voice their on opinion is still unacceptable today especially when try to break out of bears of male suppression. She also rejected the notion of polygamy were customary though ironically, by saying "my husband won't take up another wife – I'll make him promise that before I marry him" [Divakaruni-30].

Sikhandi is one of the rebellious figure who chooses to undertake a life totally different from that which is expected of a stereotypical female. She decides to live her life on her own terns just as any other postmodern woman's should even in her previous birth she dares to question the set norms about the women by stating. "If someone gasps my hands against my will how does that make me his? I said, I'm the one who decide to whom I belongs "[Divakaruni-48].

Panchaali's reading of the scriptures amongst a group of girls who were engaged in so-called feminine activities portrays the kind of determination that we all require in order to make over selves leap the boundaries of patriarchy. "But I was determined

to learn what a king was supposed to know. (How else could I as pier to be different ... How else could I be power in myself)".[Divakaruni-54].

The next issue which perhaps is all the more pertinent In our lives is our completion. Draupadi placed all her optimism of being glad on her marital life. Draupadi expected a wedding life with complete and mutual acceptance of love. She loved Karna. However, when Krishna told her to avert him, this woman obeyed without interrogation. Later, she got married to Pandavas. Draupadi was aware of her position in the dilemma of living with five husbands. Draupadi not only remains in the epic as a passive being but also rises up to become a symbol for modern woman figure in recent times. Draupadi raises her voice in Duryodhana's court where she was gambled away by her husband. She questioned the elders in the court that once a person was sold as slave they had no right to wager others, but she was mistaken to discover that the laws of men would not save her. She stays as a strong woman and shows that she never lowers herself to them by begging for her dignity. She re-invents herself as a powerful woman that is not dependent on her husband in the hour of need. The period after her marriage is marked by significant events that shape the course of the legendary epic. Draupadi's presence in the Pandava's life acts as a catalyst for many pivotal decisions and actions, adding to her intricate persona. She judiciously uses her influence to steer her husbands and their kingdom, positioning herself as a formidable player in the game of political power. Overall, Draupadi's marriage to the five Pandavas is not merely a union of individuals but a turning point that weaves her destiny with that of an entire dynastic lineage, embroiling her in the larger cosmic play of power, loyalty, and retribution. Her role extends beyond that of a conventional wife, showcasing her as a multi-dimensional character who significantly impacts the course of the epic, both as an individual and as a queen instrumental in sustaining the unity and integrity of her family. The court scene that follows is one of the most harrowing and iconic moments of the Mahabharata. Draupadi, who has always maintained her dignity and strength,

finds herself subjected to public humiliation. Duryodhana commands that she be disrobed, and as she stands in the court, vulnerable and defiant, she delivers a powerful and heart-wrenching plea for justice. Her questions and her courage in the face of such degradation reverberate through the court, shaking the foundations of the morality that the Kauravas stand upon.

Draupadi's time in the forest is marked by a series of encounters that contribute to her growth and transformation. She crosses paths with sages, warriors, and ordinary folk, each interaction further honing her understanding of human nature, fate, and justice. Among these encounters, her interactions with the wise and compassionate sage Vyasa stand out, offering her solace and profound philosophical insights into her tumultuous life. These moments of enlightenment allow Draupadi to reflect on her past experiences and the prophecies surrounding her destiny, ultimately preparing her for the trials ahead. Her relationship with each of the Pandavas deepens, built on mutual respect and shared adversity, solidifying the bonds that will be essential in the battles to come. Throughout these years, Draupadi's personal growth is remarkable. She evolves from a woman consumed by the immediate desire for justice and retribution to one who understands the broader implications of dharma (righteousness) and destiny. Her resilience transforms into a quiet strength, and her sense of justice matures into a balanced perspective that considers the greater good.

Draupadi also considers her role in the grand politics of Indraprastha and the great war of Kurukshetra. The palace of illusions, with all its splendor, had once seemed an embodiment of power and prosperity. But she knows too well how deceptive appearances can be. Despite the influence she wielded, the events of her life revealed the transient nature of power. However, she also acknowledges her strength, wisdom, and the unwavering fight for her dignity and justice.

### Conclusion

In the novel *The Palace of Illusions* Divakaruni likewise takes the postmodern smooth out by making

a feeling of doubt about the legendary customs and rituals and through Draupadi she stands up to the legendary thoughts with more legitimate thinking. As in one occurrence Draupadi says "I was sceptical about the entire endeavour. Even if there were lokas, what proof was there that the dead could be promoted from one to the next based on what we did here on earth?" (157). In her final days, Draupadi embraces a broader philosophical view. She sees her life as a testament to the struggles of countless women who navigate through a patriarchal world. Her story, though ancient, carries modern implications—the quest for respect, equality, and the sheer resilience of the human spirit. Draupadi understands that her legacy is not confined to her immediate actions but is extended through the timeless narrative of the Mahabharata, inspiring generations to reflect on the deeper questions of destiny, justice, and the roles we play in the tapestry of life. Draupadi's life journey symbolically ends where it began, with the fire. The fire represents not just the beginning, but also the purging and transformative essence of her entire existence. As she leaves the mortal world, Draupadi's legacy endures eternally, leaving an indelible mark on history and the hearts of those who learn of her trials, tribulations, and triumphs.

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# CONTEMPORARY MILIEU AND REGIONAL NATIVITY THAT SHAPED THE WRITINGS OF JIM CORBETT: A TRUE CHRONICLER OF THE AGE

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## Abstract

*The aim of this paper is to dive into the environment where Jim lived, to find how it affected the stories he wrote, which are read worldwide. Wherever Jim went he lived among the locals, ate with them and describes the society and the fear of predators at those times. Such relevant information makes Him more of a chronicler, who writes on the people wherever he travelled. It is interesting to know that the "War Fever", which Jim describes during the 1918, was actually Spanish Flu which was spreading those times, just like Covid now. In Jim's My India, we can see many characters of downtrodden classes or lower castes. The characters Lalaji, Chamari, Bhudu and Ramsaran represent poverty and caste issues which were also observed by an outsider like Jim. The paper will throw light upon the socio-cultural relations Jim had with the regional society, which makes his stories a reflection of the contemporary milieu of the hill folk, which is the thread that binds Jim's works.*

## Introduction

The first ever tiger conservationist and a celebrated tiger hunter, a paradox indeed, Jim Corbett is not just a writer who gained immense popularity with his pen and moxie, but an outsider who saw India for a very long time. His prolonged stay in the land and his involvement with the society have made him an excellent story teller about the milieu of India at that period. The writings of Jim allows the readers to peep into the tradition, practices, myths and mysteries of India and the events which act as a rear-view mirror for us to see Indian society and its people during the British Raj. The writings of Jim which depict the regional culture, tradition and nativity make him more of a Chronicler along with a story writer. His most important work *My India* (1953), throws ample light on the society and its mechanism at that period. Other works glorify him as a hunter but in this text itself, where he proudly says my India, is emotional in nature and tells his interaction with Indian society over decades and how well it is knitted in Jim's writings..

## Caste system

The majority of the characters are named after their caste. The caste system that was practiced throughout

the subcontinent was seen clearly through the lens of Jim. Characters like Mothi, Narwa, Haria, Chamari, Kunwar Singh, and many others show how caste played a pivotal role in Indian society. In "Chamari" Jim shows how a lower caste man was able to work at par with the other men and later was the leader of the workforce commanding two hundred labour that comprised upper caste workers like Brahmins, Thakurs and others. Chamari belongs to the lower caste who are basically cobblers assigned in the hierarchy of caste system. They are now listed under Schedule Caste and were treated untouchable in the past.

In the gang he commanded there were men and women of all the castes including Brahmins, Chattris, and Thakurs, and never once did he offend by rendering less respect to these high-caste men and women than was theirs by birth right, and never once was his authority questioned (2015, p. 169).

This shows that the caste system was very much considered and the fact that Jim was the reason why the upper caste workers tolerated and obeyed the authority of a Chamari is the reality. The caste system is seen in other stories too but Chamari shows the physical condition of an untouchable who is,

lean, weak and bent by the bashing of the society from millennium.

### **The Dacoit Tribes of India**

Jim in the chapter "Sultana" throws lime light on the tribal of northern part of India whom the British branded as dacoit tribes and was in hunt for them always. When Jim encounters the Sultana gang and the latter is killed, he narrates the truth about the dacoit tribes. The British label some tribes who are conservative or habitual thieves as dacoit group and latter begin to hunt them. This idea of exterminating a ethnicity is also disliked by Jim. They instil the idea of dacoits and consider the young ones born in the tribe as dacoits ever since their birth and treat them like criminals. This is seen in many of British ruled colonies. They branded whichever tribe intercept their progress as 'dacoits' and begin hunting them. Jim expresses the bias nature of the British Raj and criticises the decision. The evil of painting some tribe as dacoit is now seldom seen but at Jim's time it was rampant and was only a reason to run the British administration uninterrupted.

### **Bonded Labour System**

India was free from bonded labour through The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act in 1976 and since then saw it's decline. In the present times it is not practiced as NGO's and education awareness among people has successfully fought to eradicate them. But in Jim's time bonded labour was at largely backed by the society's caste system. The story of "Budhu" tells how bonded labour was a gruesome act. Budhu was a bonded labour working for a Baniya for a debt taken by his grandfather. The evil of such a system seen in the Caribbean literature juxtapose with the Indian context. Their the exploited are the blacks and here it is the untouchables. The way through which Jim releases Budhu through threatening the Baniya and paying off his debt reflects how an outsider Jim shows sympathy for a bonded labour but in reality the whole of the subcontinent was nothing but a bonded labour for The Queen in England. Jim's depiction of such system shows for the readers how the downtrodden

and the marginalized were exploited through the inhuman bonded labour system.

### **Cholera and Spanish Flu**

It is through cholera many characters including Chamari succumb in Jim's writings. Cholera was a dreadful disease at those times and many faced death which shows the medical condition and lack of its advancement at those times. The war fever took many lives at that time and people vacated their homes to save their lives. But recent research have brought out that the war fever was actually Spanish Flu which spread during first world war (1918). The British took many Indian soldiers to fight against Germany and France and Jim also headed a troop of Indian men. It is from their the soldiers were infected and the disease was brought here. The war fever i.e., the Spanish Flu and cholera was spreading rapidly and the corpses were discarded in haste to hamper further infection, which made the leopard in the forest feast on them and eventually add humans into their diet which is seen in *The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag* (1948). The Spanish Flu is similar to what we experienced in the recent times, the Corona Virus. It too spread in the air like and we can see in the archive photographs that people wore masks just like we did during COVID to prevent spreading of infection. These recent findings show how Jim and others were unaware of the Flu and calling it war fever were tormented by its death toll. This offers a view into the people and how through isolation and evacuation from the infected areas saved much lives which we practiced during the pandemic.

### **Conclusion**

Jim Corbett is not only a hunter turned conservator but a optics through which we get a glimpse of India from an outsider's view point. His stories offer grasping curiosity and for keen readers, offer the socio-cultural aspects of India during the colonial era and the immediate environment that shaped Jim's writing. His writings offer a rare view of caste system and how it operates and exploits the depressed class and in turn, was a boon for the upper caste. The story of Sultana shows how the brave

tribal people who aspire to be independent and happy were marked as dacoits and start to hunt them in order to establish the British Raj in all nuke and corner of India. The epidemic of cholera and the strange war fever gave the readers a glimpse of how the people were medically lacking at the same time managed to survive all the obstacles and at the end survived. Jim's writings are not only glorifying the tigers but the people who also lived along the tigers and remained as happy folk in the psyche of Jim and readers as well.

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# HUMANITY'S SUFFERING: BECOMING PART OF THE WORLD HUMAN'S EXPERIENCE AND EXISTENCE

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## Abstract

*Civil war, fleeing one's country, and mass displacement are phenomena in many failing and failed states of the world. The displaced multitude of people seek asylum, but the journey to a destination is as hazardous as life back in the war-torn country. Very few nations are prepared to provide asylum, and the procedures for delivering asylum are not at all liberal, friendly, and welcoming. The challenges of uncertainty, identity crisis, and urge to belong continue side by side with hope and resilience. Compared to the masses of displaced people, there are very few instances of legal refuge. That comes after all the hardships and disasters are faced by the fortunate few. They are examples of global responses to human suffering. Many contemporary writers are addressing this, and *A Land of Goodbyes* by Atia Abawi is an instance under study. It contributes to the global understanding of the crisis of civil war, displacement, and individual people's perilous journey for shelter, identity, and existence. Atia Abawi exposes the hardships and perils of displacement, the survival instincts and the resilient nature of humans through the protagonist, Tareq and other characters.*

**Keywords:** *humanity, displacement, consciousness of mankind, identity crisis, world literature*

## Introduction

Civil wars are the decisive reason and means of human displacement across the globe. When we probe the reasons for internal disagreements and distrust, external players' interferences and self-interests are found to be at the roots of such displacements inflicted against the wishes of many individuals, families, and societies. The novel under study, *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*, is illustrative and an appeal to the readers to become the victims' voice in the larger world.

According to the universe's timeline, humans are created in the end. But in our illusion, we humans behave like we created everything and try to exploit our surroundings and fellow creatures. The subject of human beings' complex state of mind is under discussion worldwide in different aspects. Psychological studies also confirm that humans have the most complex minds compared to other creatures. The novel *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* makes readers question the complexity of humans repeatedly. Destiny is personified, and the Destiny narrates the whole novel. The novel begins with the introductory monologue of the Destiny. The very

first statement says, "You were born to die. In that I have no say.

But when it happens, it is not up to me. It's up to humanity and- all too- often- the lack of it" (1).

In the name of Destiny, the writer is trying to shed some light on the complexity of human life and the tragedy of humans caused by fellow human beings. Here, Destiny says, people accuse him of everything, but according to Destiny, he is just the end result of man's choices. Suppose we observe the history and the construction of human society there. In that case, we can notice love, compassion, and fondness in plenty, and at the same time, there is anger, hostility, violence, and many more, which are much stronger and more destructive. The writer says, in the name of Destiny and differentiates the human brain from his heart. According to Destiny, the human heart is a whole different system, which is an intensely more complicated one. The human heart can hold an incredible amount of hate or an incredible amount of love, and sometimes both are the major causes of everything happening. As Destiny says, the growing divide between the mind and the heart is the most dangerous for humankind, and every destruction of human society is caused

only by him. The introductory monologue of the narrator's destiny ends with the below statement, which also supports this: "...yes, you were born to die. But in between, you are meant to live. If we run into each other prematurely, it's not because of my negligence. And often not because of yours. Your world controls me, I do not control you" (3).

The whole novel captivates the reader as a depiction of human suffering caused by fellow human beings. The novel is a means for humanizing ourselves with a deeper understanding of suffering. The novel is full of agony, suffering, death and burial, struggle for survival, rape, trauma, and so on. The introductory monologue, which speaks not about these things but about human complexity, gives a strong base to the novel.

### **Background of the Novel**

There is only blood everywhere. Even the sky, river, and soil is also red. How can it be possible for a man to stay and live in a land that is surrounded only by the aroma of death and blood even though he loves this Land to the full extent? Syrians have no choice but to leave and find asylum elsewhere in a new land only to stay alive. If we glance at the history of Syria, this crisis of blood started in 2011 when Bashar-al-Assad became the President of Syria. The authoritarian rule, lack of freedom, economic problems, and resentment among the groups of Syrians led to the breaking of the Civil War. In 2012, bombings started, and repressions intensified. That led more and more Syrians to flee to neighboring countries seeking asylum. In 2013, chemical attacks also took place, and the Syrian refugee number reached the 2 million mark. In 2014, half of Syrians, that is about 22 million of the total population, were estimated to be affected by the conflict and in need of Humanitarian aid. Islamic extremist group, named ISIS and supported by Iraq, an entity internationally recognized as a terrorist group, added to the complexities of the civil war. It came to prominence in Syria in early 2014. It occupied some regions of Syria and exploited people in the name of religion and God. A number of Western and other countries, notably US, Russia, Britain, and France, participated

in direct military actions against ISIS, making the lives of Syrians even worse. As a result, more and more Syrians risked deadly sea journeys to reach safety in Europe. By 2017, five million refugees had fled conflict-ridden Syria. In 2018, the number of refugees reached 24 million. 50% among them were children, and some of them were even unaccompanied. (Syria Profile)

This has been the situation in Syria. In between the government, rebel groups, ISIS extremists, and interventions by the military forces of other countries, common people had no way other than escaping from the grueling by the warring groups. People are forced to be refugees by the complexity, rage, hatred, and assertion of superiority by some of their own country's people. People in distress chose to undertake dangerous sea journeys instead of staying in their own human blood-soaked Land.

### **Writer's Background and Her Motive to Write This Novel**

Atia Abawi's novel *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* is about such a journey of a young Syrian boy named Tareq aimed at going to Europe. Abawi was born as a refugee in Germany when her parents fled the civil war in Afghanistan in 1981. Later she became an award winning journalist. She decided to work for refugees inspired by a television story of Syrian women with their children as refugees walking on the highways of Europe. She left her other projects and rushed to the refugees' camps for gaining a firsthand knowledge. She says: "I thought here were families risking everything to save their children and it made me think about my own parents, who had done the same. I could see my parents in those Syrians who had had their normal and happy lives turned upside down" (Author Interview). She communicates, helps, hears, and lives with the refugees. Finally, through this novel, she comments on the devastating wounds of the war in Syria and the millions of people uprooted from their homes in the process.

### **The Novel**

In a bomb crash, Tareq loses his mother, grandmother, and three of his siblings. He is unable

to find his younger brother, who is alive or not, which is also unknown. Tareq's father, who is outside their home at the time of the bomb crashing, stays alive and, for the sake of his surviving son Tareq and daughter Sussane, decides to leave for Europe. Before leaving Syria, they decided to visit an elder brother of Tareq's father in a place called Raqqa. By passing many check posts with difficulty, they finally entered Raqqa, which was, by then, occupied and ruled by ISIS. While moving by one of the main roads to Uncle Waled's home, they witnessed the sticks with human heads on top of the spikes. Tareq choked, and horrible scenes of lifeless open eyes got embedded into his memory permanently. Finally, they reached Uncle Waled's home. From Raqqa, they moved forward. Uncle Waled sends his only son, Musa, with them. They reached Turkey and decided to work and collect money for their next journey towards Europe. In Turkey, they saw that refugees were exploited, forced into prostitution out of desperation, cheated out of money, and generally taken advantage of. After some time, for Sussan's safety, Tareq decides to move from Turkey. Because of the shortage of money, Tareq's father stays behind and sends his children forward. Finally, with great difficulty, Tareq reached Greece and then Germany. His lost younger brother, who was sent to a different hospital after the bombing, where a rebel group then took him wanted him to fight with them. When he escaped from their clutches, he was grabbed by ISIS. He eventually contacted his father and reached Turkey. From the start till the end, Tareq met with odds, hostility, and tragedy everywhere. Many characters in the novel look away rather than offer help to the refugees. Yet, there are people and volunteers from different parts of the world to help them. Always, there were signs of kindness and hope. In the society of Humans, we could witness both hostile and kind people, which mirrors the basic contradictions of the human mind.

### **Human Contradictions**

Many of the novel's incidents clearly represent human beings' contradictory and complex nature. It appears to be one of the best novels examining

human contradictions' psychology. At the very beginning of the novel comes a character named Ahmed. He dreamt of being a doctor. But when the war broke out, he joined civil defense, a voluntary rescue team. He and his fellow members rushed towards the war fire while everyone else ran away from it. Ahmed witnessed countless separations, sorrows, and deaths. His only way to cope with these situations was to keep working and helping. When his mother begged him to stop that work, which was deadly dangerous, he said, "If I can't help my people, I am already dead" (22).

So, in the same Land, there were people who were either affected or who killed their own people mercilessly. There were people who were running off, leaving everything behind to stay alive. And there were people who were working and helping the victims by not counting their lives.

In Raqqa, the situation was even worse. We can say it was the extremity of human and religious complexity. People of ISIS punished and killed people in the name of God. They called themselves soldiers of God. They had camp training for children. It was a month or so of brainwashing. There were incidents of kids coming out and executing their own parents for not following their rules. For people like Tareq, who was permanently injured by the death of his family members, it was indigestible. Musa comments, "If they are soldiers of God, God is truly the devil." (54)

Salim, younger brother of Tareq is also grabbed by ISIS. They sent him to a camp to indoctrinate. He says that it had almost worked, but he kept seeing his sister Farrah in his head and could never treat her the way they were being taught that women should be treated. In the middle of the complexly prejudiced People who were killing people violently in the name of God, people who were brainwashed and killed their own family members, Salim's Conscience and Psychology stand separate.

In Turkey, Tareq and Musa met Rami, a Syrian refugee who lost all his family members and even his mother who smuggled him out of Syria, raped by Assad's men. He says that Syria is Home, but this is not; he will go back to Syria once the filthy President

Assad was defeated. Musa picks up an argument with Rami, and according to Musa who saw the evils of ISIS Syria is not just Assad anymore. Rumi says he can live with ISIS not with Assad. Tareq, who remembered both his family members' dead bodies and the execution that he witnessed in Raqqa startles the reader too. Here, both Musa and Rumi are also victims, but they are from different sources. Somehow they fail to know each other's views. That clearly shows that man can only think about himself and narrow his views.

Shayma, one of the Syrian refugee girls met by Tareq and Musa in Turkey, reads a poem that verbalizes Tareq's and other refugee's feelings.

Goodbye Syria, please forgive us.

We didn't want to go...

We saw the people run, and we ran too.

We saw our loved ones die, we didn't want to die too.

The bombs kept dropping,

And we kept falling,

The guns kept firing'

And we falling.

Our rivers went from blue to red, drop by drop.

Our dirt from brown to black, drop by drop.

Our great nation fell, city by city, town by town,

So we left... following the trail of blood and tears. (90, 91)

This simple poem of Shayma reveals the whole situation and the refugees' inner struggles. Even though life experiences are horrible, man thrives in his land. It is difficult to explain man's relationship with his homeland and environment. Again, it shows how complex human feelings are.

Again in Turkey, Tareq and Musa watched an old Syrian woman sitting on the cold, wet ground with her wrinkled, withered hands out, hoping someone would pity her. But her attention was on a stray dog behind her. She silently watched two strangers bringing the dog a bowl of water and food. People who feed a dog are definitely kind but what makes them not feel pity on a fellow human being? Again, the human mind seems complex. When Tareq reaches Greece with his sister Sussane, he is given

food, shelter and clothes, there, it appears that humanity and kindness still exist.

The novel ends with an epilogue, which is a monologue by Destiny. The epilogue says that even though Tareq successfully reached Germany, his new life as a refugee has just begins. Shayma's poem says-

Hello, strange Land, please take care of us.

Hello, strangers, please don't hate us.

We know this will never be home and we will never be yours.

But please remember our hearts beat and

Our blood flows.

And our pain, only a few people know. (91)

As the poem says, refugees are humans just like others. They need acceptance more than anything. The novel's epilogue also clearly illustrates that refugees are humans just like us, deserve our help, and have been forced out of their homes by circumstances beyond their control.

### Conclusion

Atia Abawi's novel *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* depicts mankind's dilemma when the time comes to tear away from the roots of life. People have drifted away to faraway countries and continents, and the question of life, living, and survival has become more begging than the question of uprooting. People see their own sons, daughters, and dear ones die or get killed. Intolerance, discrimination, and loss of status and dignity become their day-to-day life experiences. We can say that the novel keenly observes this traumatic situation and does so with great humanity, showing the reader that Tareq is just a young boy who wants what everyone wants- love, acceptance, a job, and his family. Even though the novel is about Tareq's family, it is not the story of only one. There are thousands of people like Tareq some of them have succeeded in their journey, while some are dead and missed. The novel also depicts mankind's dilemma of helping and not helping the needy. It also depicts how the mind chooses to help some and not others. But as reader representative of mankind, the readers are led to empathize with the uprooted sufferers seeking shelter, home and

empathy. As such the novel has a place among the world literature. And the style of the novel too is unique where the Destiny takes the place for a consciousness where 'destiny' is reinterpreted unlike what is established in human mind. As a narrator it is omniscient representing different characters' consciousness. The Destiny as a narrator is successful in representing the collective consciousness of the displaced and suffering mankind. The novel has achieved a uniqueness in its blend of narration appropriate to the life content of displaced and suffering people, simultaneously representing their just cause.

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# CULINARY CULTURES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JAPANESE AND INDIAN LITERATURE AND THEIR IMPACT ON THOUGHT PROCESSING

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the intricate relationships between food, literature, and cognitive processes in Japanese and Indian cultures. By analysing specific literary works, we uncover how culinary traditions shape thought patterns, cultural identities, and social interactions, illustrating food's role as both a cultural artefact and a mental catalyst.*

**Keywords:** *culinary culture, cultural identities, social interactions, cultural artefact, mental catalyst*

## Introduction

Food transcends mere nourishment; it embodies cultural significance and reflects societal values. This study compares the influences, revealing how food impacts cognition and creativity in the Indian and Japanese rich traditions.

In both Japanese and Indian cultures, culinary practices are interwoven with literature, influencing thought processes and artistic expression. The influence of food and culture on individuals is profound and multifaceted, shaping not only what we eat but also how we relate to food, our identity, and our emotional well-being. Dietary practices in both Indian and Japanese cuisines are deeply intertwined with the cultural, philosophical, and spiritual aspects of life. These dietary traditions not only influence physical health but also shape the thought processes, values, and mental states of individuals. Furthermore, these influences are often reflected in their respective literary works, where food becomes a symbolic and emotional anchor, illustrating broader cultural narratives.

## Cultural Identity and Tradition

**Food as Cultural Expression:** Food is a central part of cultural identity. The types of food people eat, the way they prepare it, and the rituals surrounding eating often reflect deep cultural values, beliefs, and histories. For example, Japanese culture places

importance on aesthetic presentation and mindful eating. India's cuisine is highly regional, with distinct food traditions from the north, south, east, and west. These food traditions help individuals feel a sense of connection to their heritage and cultural community.

**Cultural Rituals and Celebrations:** Many cultures have specific foods associated with holidays, religious observances, and life milestones (e.g., Thanksgiving turkey in the U.S., Diwali sweets in India, or the Passover seder plate in Jewish traditions). These foods carry symbolic meanings and help foster a sense of belonging and continuity across generations.

## Social and Emotional Connection

**Shared Meals as Social Bonds:** Eating together plays a crucial role in building and maintaining social bonds. In many cultures, meals are not just about nourishment but also about socializing, building relationships, and showing hospitality. For example, the communal sharing of food in Middle Eastern or African cultures emphasizes community, while the "family dinner" tradition in many Western cultures reinforces familial ties.

**Food as Comfort and Emotional Expression:** Food is often linked to emotional well-being. Certain foods may be eaten to soothe emotions or evoke memories of home and comfort. For instance,

comfort foods like macaroni and cheese in the U.S., or congee in China, can offer emotional support in times of stress, sadness, or homesickness. Food becomes a tool for coping with emotions and fostering a sense of stability in times of upheaval.

### Health Beliefs and Dietary Habits

**Cultural Beliefs About Health and Nutrition:** Different cultures have unique views on the relationship between food and health. In traditional Chinese medicine, for example, food is seen as a way to balance the body's internal energy (yin and yang) and maintain harmony. Similarly, Ayurvedic diets in India focus on balancing the body's doshas (energy types) through specific food choices. These cultural food systems shape how individuals perceive what is healthy or beneficial for them, influencing dietary choices and overall well-being.

**Dietary Restrictions and Practices:** Many cultures have specific dietary practices or restrictions based on religious beliefs, environmental factors, or ethical considerations. For instance, Muslims observe halal dietary laws, Hindus often follow vegetarian diets due to religious beliefs in non-violence, and Jews observe kosher laws. These food practices shape not only what individuals eat but also how they see themselves and their role within a larger cultural or religious context.

### Food and Social Status

**Food as a Symbol of Status:** In many cultures, food choices can be a marker of social status or economic class. The consumption of expensive or rare foods, such as caviar, truffles, or exotic meats, may signal wealth and privilege. Conversely, certain food practices or the availability of basic foods (like rice, beans, or bread) can reflect poverty or socio-economic challenges. These dynamics shape how individuals see themselves and how they are perceived by others.

Dietary practices in both Indian and Japanese cuisines are deeply intertwined with the cultural, philosophical, and spiritual aspects of life. These dietary traditions not only influence physical health but also shape the thought processes, values, and

mental states of individuals. Furthermore, these influences are often reflected in their respective literary works, where food becomes a symbolic and emotional anchor, illustrating broader cultural narratives.

### The Role of Food in Japanese Literature

**Japanese Cuisine and Its Influence on Thought:** Japanese food culture places a significant emphasis on balance, seasonality, and aesthetic harmony, and these principles have a profound influence on the mental and emotional states of individuals. The Japanese diet, focused on simplicity and mindfulness, is closely linked to the philosophies of Zen Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism.

#### 1. The Aesthetic of Simplicity and Harmony (Washoku)

**Influence on Thought:** Japanese cuisine embodies the Zen philosophy of wabi-sabi (finding beauty in imperfection) and ichigo ichie (treasuring the moment). Meals, especially in traditional settings like a kaiseki (multi-course meal), are meticulously prepared to reflect balance, harmony, and mindfulness. The act of eating becomes meditative, promoting mental clarity, self-awareness, and appreciation for the present moment.

**Literary Representation:** In Japanese literature, food often symbolizes harmony and balance. Works by authors like Haruki Murakami often depict characters in moments of contemplation while consuming simple, seasonal meals. For example, in Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*, the act of preparing and sharing food is an intimate ritual that reflects the characters' emotional states and the subtle interplay of their thoughts and feelings. The minimalist approach to food in Japanese literature mirrors the simplicity and introspection of the characters.

#### 2. The Role of Fish and Seafood

**Influence on Thought:** Fish and seafood play a central role in Japanese cuisine, both in terms of their nutritional value and symbolic meaning. Fish is considered a clean and pure source of protein, linked to purity of mind. The practice of eating sashimi (raw

fish) is a reflection of this purity, demanding a certain mental discipline and presence of mind. The preparation and appreciation of fish also encourage mindfulness and precision.

**Literary Representation:** In works like Yasunari Kawabata's *The Sound of the Mountain*, food, particularly seafood, represents purity, simplicity, and the natural world. Meals involving seafood are often presented as moments of reflection, where the character is drawn into a deep engagement with nature and self. The serene, controlled nature of Japanese cuisine is mirrored in the thoughtful, restrained attitudes of Japanese literary characters.

### 3. Rice as the Foundation of Thought

**Influence on Thought:** Rice (gohan) is the staple food of Japan and is closely tied to the country's cultural and spiritual identity. In Japanese philosophy, rice represents life, sustenance, and the fundamental connection to nature. The act of eating rice is tied to concepts of gratitude and humility, as well as the idea of nourishing both body and spirit.

**Literary Representation:** In Japanese literature, rice often symbolizes the foundation of existence. In works such as Nobel Prize-winning author Kenzaburo Oe's *A Personal Matter*, rice and the act of eating are tied to the protagonist's internal conflict and existential reflections. The simple meal of rice becomes a metaphor for a deeper connection to the cycles of life, reinforcing the mental and emotional complexity that food carries in Japanese culture.

### 4. Food as a Reflection of Seasonal Change

**Influence on Thought:** The Japanese reverence for seasonality in food reflects a larger cultural belief in the transient nature of life. *Shun* (seasonal food) is seen as a way of embracing the present moment, with dishes that change with the seasons, reminding individuals of the fleeting nature of time. This cyclical nature encourages mindfulness and a deep appreciation for the impermanence of life, which in turn influences mental clarity and emotional balance.

**Literary Representation:** This focus on the seasons is mirrored in works like Sei Shonagon's *The Pillow Book*, where food becomes a symbol of

seasonal change and the emotional states tied to it. The changing foods in literature represent the ebb and flow of life, linking characters' thoughts and moods to the rhythm of nature.

**Culinary Aesthetics in Haiku -** The works of Matsuo Bashō frequently reflect seasonal changes and food. For instance, a haiku might evoke the fleeting beauty of cherry blossoms alongside the enjoyment of sakura mochi, encouraging mindfulness and a deep appreciation for nature's cycles.

### The Role of Food in Indian Literature

The food rituals help individuals feel connected to their cultural heritage, passing down practices from one generation to the next.

**Spiritual Significance:** In many Indian traditions, food is viewed not only as nourishment but also as sacred. Offerings (or *prasad*) are made to gods in temples or homes, symbolizing gratitude and blessings.

**Literary Representation:** The concept of food as an offering is often symbolized in Indian literature, where the act of sharing or offering food becomes an act of selflessness and spiritual growth. In works like Ismat Chughtai's *The Quilt*, food serves as a subtle marker of class, gender, and power, but also reflects the characters' emotional and psychological states.

**Indian Cuisine and Its Influence on Thought in India,** food is not merely a source of sustenance but is a central part of religious, spiritual, and philosophical beliefs. The dietary practices in India are shaped by ancient systems such as Ayurveda, religion, and cultural norms. These practices influence not just physical health but also mental well-being and emotional states, which are often depicted in Indian literature.

### 1. Vegetarianism and Ahimsa (Non-Violence)

**Influence on Thought:** Vegetarianism is deeply ingrained in many parts of Indian society due to religious and philosophical principles, especially Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, which emphasize *ahimsa* (non-violence). Consuming vegetarian food is seen as a way to purify the mind and soul. For



instance, the avoidance of meat is associated with promoting clarity of thought, emotional tranquillity, and spiritual elevation. The mental state encouraged by vegetarianism fosters compassion and mindfulness.

**Literary Representation:** In Indian literature, food often reflects moral choices. Writers like R. K. Narayan in *The Guide* or Mulk Raj Anand in *Untouchable* use food to symbolize the social and moral frameworks that govern the lives of characters. For example, in Anand's *Untouchable*, food serves as a metaphor for the social hierarchies and injustices that the protagonist faces. The practice of offering food (or the denial of it) often marks the boundaries of caste and class in Indian society.

## 2. Ayurveda and the Mind-Body Connection

**Influence on Thought:** Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, posits that the body, mind, and spirit are interconnected. Food choices are believed to influence mental clarity, emotional states, and overall cognitive functions. In this tradition, foods are categorized into three types—sattvic (pure and nourishing), rajasic (stimulating), and tamasic (heavy and dull). Sattvic foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are said to promote calmness, clarity, and wisdom, while tamasic foods (e.g., alcohol, meat) are believed to foster lethargy, confusion, and aggression.

**Literary Representation:** Indian literature often portrays food choices as a reflection of one's inner state or spiritual progress. In works like Tagore's *Ghare-Baire* (*The Home and the World*), food is not only a material necessity but also a symbol of the protagonist's internal conflict. The focus on pure, nourishing foods can be seen as a way to maintain clarity of thought and moral righteousness.

## 2. Social and Emotional Connection

**Food as Social Bonding:** Meals in India are often shared in large, familial settings. The concept of a "family meal" is integral to Indian social structure, where food is seen as a way to bind people together, whether at home or in community gatherings. The communal sharing of food also extends to religious

or cultural events, where the act of eating together is seen as an expression of unity and togetherness.

**Food and Hospitality:** Indian hospitality is deeply rooted in food. The phrase "Atithi Devo Bhava" (The guest is God) reflects the cultural value of offering food to guests with great generosity and respect. Food plays a central role in how individuals show affection and care for one another.

**Literary Representation:** In Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, food serves as a narrative device that ties characters to their heritage. The depiction of traditional dishes—such as biryani and sweets—reflects cultural identity and the socio-political landscape of post-colonial India.

**Regional Diversity:** Works like Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* emphasize the diversity of Indian cuisine, showcasing how specific foods carry cultural and emotional weight. Meals in the narrative are deeply intertwined with memory and identity, often evoking a sense of place and belonging.

## Cognitive and Sensory Engagement

Indian cuisine's complexity engages multiple senses, fostering creativity and cognitive flexibility. In novels like Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*, the act of sharing meals during family gatherings illustrates social dynamics and the importance of culinary traditions in shaping relationships and community.

## Comparative Analysis

**Food as a Narrative Device-** Both cultures utilize food to explore themes of community, identity, and emotional depth. In Japanese literature, food often conveys aesthetic and meditative qualities, inviting readers to reflect on their experiences. In contrast, Indian literature emphasizes food's symbolic and relational aspects, showcasing its role in forging connections and cultural identity.

## Impact on Thought Processing

**Japanese Mindfulness:** The focus on seasonal ingredients and presentation in Japanese culinary practices promotes a contemplative mindset. This mindfulness encourages readers to engage with the text on a deeper level, reflecting on the beauty of simplicity and the transient nature of life.

**Indian Relational Cognition:** The sensory-rich experiences of Indian cuisine foster expansive thinking. The communal aspects of dining depicted in works like *The God of Small Things* promote cognitive engagement through shared experiences, dialogue, and relational dynamics, enhancing social bonds and perspectives.

### Conclusion

Food as a Lens for Thought- Both Indian and Japanese cuisines offer more than mere nourishment; they are key to understanding how food shapes individuals' mental and emotional states. In Indian literature, food often represents spiritual purity, caste dynamics, and moral choices, reflecting how dietary practices influence the characters' thoughts and actions. In Japanese literature, food is a reflection of simplicity, mindfulness, and seasonal change, aligning with the cultural emphasis on balance, harmony, and impermanence. In both cultures, food

serves as a powerful lens through which individuals interact with the world, shaping their identities, philosophies, and emotional landscapes, and is frequently explored as a symbol in literary works. Food serves as a vital lens through which we can understand the cognitive and cultural frameworks of Japanese and Indian societies. Analysing literary representations of food reveals how culinary practices shape thought processes, artistic expression, and social interactions.

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## PORTRAYAL OF SELF IN NON-DALIT AND DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY SHOBHA DE AND URAMILA PAWAR

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Comparative study in literature is a field that examines literature from different prospective, which includes periods, languages, and genres. Scholars in this discipline study various works in comparison to each other to understand the complex components that form the historical, gender, economic, cultural, social, philosophical, religious, and linguistic factors of cultures. Scholars can establish a sense of understanding of genre and meaning by evaluating several literary traditions and languages at once through studying literature without borders. When it came to comparison between Mainstream and Dalit literature is concerned they differ in their themes, aesthetics, and purpose.

Mainstream is a type of literature that is considered to be the most typical, conventional, and normal. It's often characterized or inspired by moralities, values and ideal way of life. Dalit literature focuses on the social evils, caste discrimination and the everyday experiences of Dalits. Mainstream works are not applicable in Dalit context. Mainstream aesthetic trinity only benefits the upper caste and has been formulated to suppress the lower ones. Dalit aesthetics does not deliver aesthetics based on pleasure giving beauty. When it comes to Dalit literature the idea of beauty needs to be re-examined and re-analysed. The motto of every autobiography is deliberate opening up of the self. Autobiography is product of inner force or urge to represent the self. It story of success, weakness, defeat, victories, thoughts and fantasies of author's life. 'I' is very important in any autobiography because it represents the honesty of the writer. Therefore autobiography has its unique place in literature. Autobiography it the best way for women to express self or disclose her intense emotions of

joy, depression, self, rejection, restriction, injustice, suffering, struggle, discrimination, The language used by female authors enables them to omit obstacles and constraints imposed by male centric world, and gives an opportunity to liberate their creative potential, and regain the capacity for unlimited expression. It is interesting to study, how these incessant unequal power relations between men and women are protested, argued, revolted, changed and justified by women writers through their characters. They have presented their life with cultural, geographical and historical background. The purpose of mainstream autobiography is to share the experience and achievement of the author, and to help reader to understand the life from their perspective, whereas Dalit autobiographies come as powerful tool for challenging the social order, protesting oppression and asserting identity. Non Dalit writers got a good English education with Christian Missionary and able to write their literature in English. Dalits do not have much educational background at the beginning in their life. They do not know literary protest or movement with literature in the beginning. Usually they write in regional language and later they have been translated into English by various Indian and foreign translators.

Here comparison is made between two eminent Marathi writers autobiographies: Shobha De's *Selective Memories* and Uramila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*. These two are outstanding autobiographies explore two separate worlds which the writer belongs. They are representative works of Mainstream and Dalit literature respectively. Shobha Dé is one of India's most prominent writers. She is a model, a journalist, a socialite, a script writer and a bestselling novelist. She was born on 7 January 1948

in Mumbai into a Marathi Brahmin family, even though she just portrays being Hindu. Her father was a district court judge, and her mother was a homemaker. The youngest of four siblings, she has two sisters and a brother. She was the youngest of four children, with two sisters and a brother. She attended Queen Mary School in Mumbai and graduated from St. Xavier's College with a degree in psychology.

*Selective Memory: Stories from My Life*, a candid memoir, reveals the true self of Shobha Dé behind the public persona. As a woman writer of autobiography she is unique in portraying her 'self' in the story of her life. The portrayal of self in *Selective Memory* happens through the intense scrutiny of men and women of urban elite class of metropolitan cities of India of which Shobha Dé is an integral part of. By delving deeper into the heart of each man and woman she encounters, she portrays her own 'self'. The persona in the self-narrative is consistently confident, candid. She writes about the choices she made, decisions she took, and the influences that shaped her. It is amazing for the openness with which it captures the essence of a fascinating woman who has become a legend in her own time. . De describes her career as a model and magazine editor, and how she observed and chronicled the new India. She also writes about the choices she made, the decisions she took, and the influences that shaped her. De writes about high-society hi-jinks, movie star follies, and celebrity neurosis. De writes in a confident and candid voice. Gender discrimination is a major hindrance in the growth and development of a woman in a patriarchal society. It plays an important role in every sphere of a woman's life and obstructs her freedom of choice especially in the field of job opportunities. *Selective Memory* is an endeavour of Shobha Dé to narrate a story of challenges and success treading an untrodden road totally different from the traditional perspectives of her father. Social stigma associated with the glamorous field of modelling was a major issue for Shobha to reveal her new venture to her father who considered it "cheap and disreputable" (40). He says, "Young girls dream about becoming doctors, lawyers, or engineers... It is not a career for decent

girls. It is not a career at all" (42-43). Shobha did not choose any path to success on her own or by the compulsion of others but success chose her in every field that "happened" to her. The self-narrative is an opportunity for Shobha Dé to reveal to readers the world of modelling, the field of "falsies" as she says, "false nails, false eyelashes, false hair switches...the whole thing were fake, unnatural and comical"(38-39). While giving insights into the darker sides of the glamorous field of modelling which is "narcissistic and shallow" (54) the 'self' chronicling portrays Shobha De as a genuine and serious model who concentrated on the work assigned, that made her feature in internationally famous magazines like *Vogue* and *Time*. Shobha Dé perceives her 'self' in the autobiography mainly as a writer who is an observer of lives around her. The self she narrates in the life story is constituted of what she writes as a creative writer and how does she associates it with her life

Urmila Pawar was born and brought up in the Maharashtra. She belonged to Konkan region and born in Maher community automatically her language is influenced Konkan region and the community. The rustic and tough environment has made her emotionally strong to fight against for the sake self and other. Her autobiography name is basically 'Aaydan' which is translated into English as 'The Weave of My Life: A Dalit woman's Memoir' by Dr. Maya Pandit. Aaydan means weaving of cane baskets. It is the main economic activity of the Mahar community. The writer links her mother's act of weaving baskets to her own act of writing. The story covers three generations of her family. It gives us minute details of the Mahar community its culture and the problem of women belong to that community. Pawar was much sensitive about her caste as well as her poverty, so during school period onwards her conscious mind was aware of the limitations of the person of lower caste and meaning of poverty not described in the books, but the reality was ironically presented. The other important reference about the community living and exploitation of the women are seen in their food preparations at home. It is very evident from the

memoir that separate food preparations were done for men and women and particularly the daughter-in-law is exploited up to the maximum level. Pawar as a feminist, she has narrated her experiences of sexual exploitation at her early adulthood and about her schoolmates and as a Dalit woman has highlighted issues of discrimination she has faced in school, college and in the profession. She has given a narration of wife beating incidents at the home as well as at the community. The narration of pathetic incident of beating a pregnant woman only based on blind faith is touchy as well as alarming for the generations to follow; she also gives the details of the patriarchal approach and gender discrimination. Her inner transformation started with participation in drama at the school/college days and her strong faith in reading books, about Babasaheb Ambedkar and other Dalit writers. Pawar got enough opportunity for developing her writing skills while doing the job at Mumbai office. She was getting enough leisure time to do her writing of short stories, drafting articles, developing women friends and creating awareness about their problems.

The weave of my life- this book or memoir represents the struggle of a Dalit woman who has travelled on a long journey from a small town to a huge metropolis and becomes one of its leading intellectual writers. Through her all works she has tried to make values like justice, equality, freedom, rationality, citizenship, progress, and democracy an integral part of her Dalit feminist utopia. This keeps the autobiography apart from all other autobiographies. This book represents a terrain where the Dalit woman stands today questioning the established ideologies of caste modernity and patriarchy. It questions the nature of the modernity itself in its portrayal of the transformation of the Mohar community in rural and urban Maharashtra. Similarly, it challenges feminist consciousness in the patriarchal domination and gender biases deeply rooted in both in public and private domains in the Dalit movement as well as in familiar legal, social and religious practices. This book is not the only story of her life it represents the entire Mohar Community. Urmila also made her name in social

service she visited slums of Mumbai and try to convince Dalit people to live dignified life. She organised Dalit Movements and Women Liberation Movements. She encouraged her people to get education and lead better life and she has continued her social work. All these works helped to establish her identity in society.

When it comes to use of language Dalit and Non Dalit writers differ in their approach. They both use bilingual and dialect in their writing. Both use simple and plain language. Shobha De's writing style is known for its use of language, which is considered to be brave and ahead of its time. Here are some aspects of her language use: De uses quote lines and phrases from other famous literary personalities like William Shakespeare, Aldous Huxley, and Mark Twain. She uses myths and remarks from the Bible and Bhagvidha Gita in her writings. De's writing style is considered to be transparent and spontaneous. She also incorporates words from other languages like Marathi, Tamil, Gujarati, and Bengali. Her language reflects elite and sophisticated urban society. Through her languages she associates herself with aristocrat class.

Urmila's autobiography is deeply influenced by mother tongue and Konkan region in its presentation. She purposely chooses that language to voice her whole community. The translator retained many words as they are to carry the flavour of the Marathiness in it. Especially the words related to kinship and family are used in original sense by providing glossary for them. Urmila Pawar's use of the plain and dialectal language for expression of self is different, later it became style itself. She introduces the reader the language used by Dalit women for quarrel, curse and the words they used for open discussion of bodily functions which shows earthly humour in her writing style. Openness is another remarkable quality of her autobiography. She didn't hesitate to give her personal account of life including love affair and her first night. She used chronological order in presentation. It covers three generation of Mehar community, lived and believed in different principles. Urmila's autobiography transcendent the boundaries of personal narrative and

it becomes a sociological, a historical and political record. It is criticism of religion as well as a protest against the hierarchy of Hinduism. This autobiography is realistic and socialistic in its approach.

In tone of approach, confession and presentation of personal life is concerned they both are completely different. But both the titles are significant in their own way. Shobhaa De's *Selective Memory* contains many confessional elements. In fact, this autobiography has confessional tone. Memories in the book are selective, narration is candid and makes us to confine to it. She has confessed that intentionally she wants to select the memoir and to present in the form of autobiography. Some memories which she doesn't want to make public are precious and private to her. The book throws light upon the selective memoirs in Shobhaa De's life as a sports girl model, journalist, editor and a writer. But as an author she remained controversial, especially, as a novelist she faced disputes. Heroines in her novels are uncommon, free, blustery and unbearable to the typical Indian mentality. Though selective but it would be interesting to know the elements of confession in Shobhaa De's autobiography.

Urmila presented her life story in the right way with confessional tone. In Urmila's family her father died early. Her mother took responsibility of the family, her mother always think of running the family always busy in weaving the bamboo baskets. Urmila was not intelligent and very untidy in childhood for she used to get abuses from every one and her mother used beat her for everything. Urmila thought her mother didn't love her, but the incident in the school made to Urmila realise her mother's love and affection. From that day she became very serious in her study and never failed. Urmila didn't complaint the family or marriage system, instead she tried to manage it successfully. Urmila's was love marriage which was opposed by her family but she stick to her decision and her family members agreed for marriage with unhappiness. After marriage her mother, sisters, and brothers didn't happy Urmila and her husband they managed all the as formality. In her

husband's house she has earned love and affection from the in laws and her from co-sisters. She got her identity in that house. Later when she continued her education at first her husband supported her later started feeling jealous of her success. She remained salient and tolerated him. As mother she was very strong, she was not like traditional mother, she was at her daughter's side and supported her love and cancelled the marriage just previous day of wedding. Urmila alone managed for the stay her daughter outside for few days and later arranged their marriage. She did all these things in opposition of her husband. Her husband blamed Urmila was responsible for these. But Urmila never try to escape from the reality, she faced it and solved the problem. When her husband was suffering from the cancer he insulted her, and held her responsible for his ill health. She has taken all the things positively.

As mainstream literature Shobha De's selective memory is from the point of view of autobiographical empowerment, that is, the idea of writing as a means of regaining control over one's life. De writes about her early years, her family, and her relationship with her parents, siblings, husband, and children. De describes her career as a model and magazine editor, and how she observed and chronicled the new India. She also writes about the choices she made, the decisions she took, and the influences that shaped her. Here everything is related to her personal life and success. Dalit literature is a genre of Indian writing that focuses on the lives, experiences, and struggles of the Dalit community over centuries, in relation to caste-based oppression and systemic discrimination. Dalit writing such as the autobiographies and testimonios of women authors emphasizing the intersection of caste, class, and gender in the context of social exclusion came through this movement. Dalit women authors have written extensively about the complexities of caste, class, and gender in Indian society. Here we can find the collective voice of the whole not an individual voice of writer.

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## **WOMAN AS SUBALTERN IN INDIRA PARTHASARATHY'S *THE HELICOPTERS ARE DOWN***

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### **Abstract**

*Indira Parthasarathy is a pen name of Dr. Ranganathan Parthasarathy, a great novelist, playwright and a short-story writer from Tamil literature. There are seventeen novels, six collections of short stories and fifteen plays to his credit. He has been bestowed with the Sahitya Academi Award (1970) for his novel Kuruthi Punal, the Sangeet Natak Academi Award (2004) and the Padma Shri Award by the Government of India (2010) for his literary and academic achievements. Many of his works are translated into English and other Indian and world languages. Parthasarathy has represented many subaltern issues with respect to class, caste, gender and ethnicity in his works. The present paper focuses on woman as subaltern in an Indian middle class family. Unattractive wife was neglected by her husband when he happens to meet a girl who resembled his lover before marriage. Amirtham's love affair before marriage and after marriage affects his married life and as a result his wife Thilakam suffers and she is oppressed in the patriarchal society.*

**Keywords:** *subaltern, patriarchy, marriage, youthfulness*

The 'Subaltern' is a term coined by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in society who are under the hegemony of the ruling elite class. Subaltern classes include peasants, tribes, women and other groups denied access to get hegemonic power.

The novel *Helicopters are Down* is set in Delhi in 1970s. It is about a couple at their middle ages married for twelve years without a child. The story moves from present to past and past to present reflecting Amirtham's past and present life. Amirtham is a government employee and Thilakam is a typical Indian housewife.

Thilakam is fond of watching Tamil plays as they comforted her. Amirtham never liked the plays because of their mediocrity. They had competing interests. But he had no choice he had to go to the theatre along with Thilakam:

You are so indifferent- you hate everything I enjoy. You are like a silent Swamiji, a holy man, only interested in reading something! When you go out with me, you act like a goat walking to a slaughterhouse! You never seem to feel you are enjoying your wife's company! Never! (Parthasarathy 2).

Reluctantly he accompanied her every weekend to the theatre and he never watched the play to the

end. But this time to Amirtham's surprise Bhanu an amateur actress caught Amirtham's eyes. She resembled Nitya.

Before marrying Thilakam, Amirtham was in love with Nitya a bold and beautiful girl. But the love did not fulfill into marriage as Amirtham's father did not approve of his love and he instantly arranged his marriage with Thilakam. When Amirtham shared this news with Nitya she was calm and cool. She did not lament and request him to marry her against the will of their parents. She asked him to wait for a while and write his father that he is against the marriage. It did hurt Amirtham's ego as she was not desperate to marry him. He accused her that she was considering caste than their love. Amirtham was irritated and was not ready to wait any more, "Now or never that's my philosophy" (Parthasarathy 7). Amirtham married his cousin Thilakam as per his father's wish but he was never happy. He found his wife unattractive and was leading a mechanical life.

Thilakam was married for twelve years and she was not blessed with motherhood. Thilakam craved for children but was not brave enough to go through a medical procedure in order to conceive. Doctors advised her that operation was necessary for her to



get pregnant but she was scared of the operation so much so that she decided not to have children at all. Amirtham never forced her to go through the operation. Whenever she found kids around her she was eager to express her affection by hugging tightly.

In patriarchal society motherhood is given more importance. It's believed that a woman's life becomes complete only after becoming a mother and is also a psychological and biological need for a woman, "It is in maternity that woman fulfils her psychological destiny. It is her natural 'calling', since her whole organic structure is adapted for the preparation of the species" (Simon de Beauvoir 501). Unable to express her love and compassion towards her own child she had turned bitter and cynic. She was never sensitive to the feelings of people around her. Her friendship with anyone never lasted more than two days.

Amirtham was leading an artificial life with his wife Thilakam. He was regretting his marriage with Thilakam. After he saw Bhanu an amateur theatre actress who resembled his lover before marriage he felt that she had revived his deep seated feelings. After twelve years of marriage he wanted to bring back his youthfulness, "I want to relive my youth ... I would like to experiment- to see if I could bring to life the same emotions, thoughts and enthusiasm of the bygone days. Can I revive my past? Inside every man there's a Yayati lurking" ( Parthasarathy 110). Though Bhanu was much younger than Amirtham in age he was attracted towards her. Bhanu's face, smile and talk resembled Nitya's and Amirtham was overjoyed whenever he met Bhanu.

Amirtham tired of his phony life with Thilakam tells her about Nitya. Thilakam felt cheated. She was very proud of her husband that he was not after other women. It was shattered and another blow of betrayal was waiting for her told her about his meetings with Bhanu. She got angry with him and didn't talk to him for couple of days. Thilakam had grown suspicious of her husband's whereabouts and started checking on him. She was feeling insecure. She was always scared of a possibility that one day her husband would get tired of her. When that

possibility turned into certainty she was heartbroken. Her world was confined to her husband and home. Now she felt that it was drifting apart.

But after few days she became normal. She tried to patch up her married life by sacrificing her ego and she transcended her comfort zone of being a housewife. As a housewife she had the notion that there was no need to look attractive after getting married. After turning thirty she was living the life of old age. But in order to save her marriage and her husband slipping away from her she made some necessary changes in her life. She requested him to go out to some places and asked him to teach her driving car so that she could be liked and appreciated by her husband. Amirtham just avoided her company and gave her silly excuses. Thilakam was trying her best to gain her husband's attention. Even Amirtham doubted if it was Thilakam. She started reading book. She wore beautiful sari and draped it in such a way that it made her look slim and young. She wore make up to look beautiful. But Amirtham instead of appreciating asked her, "Why this lavish display today? ... Who taught you this make up?" (Parthasarthy 141). Amirtham always appreciated Nitya's beauty and was attracted towards her for her beauty, intelligence and her car driving abilities but he got irritated when Thilakam tried to be acceptable by him by adapting herself to his own likes.

Amirtham's indifference towards Thilakam led to quarrels between them. Thilakam was getting angry and was not able to control her emotion she banged her head against the wall. Amirtham thought she was getting hysterical. She cried, "This is hysteria! I am crazy! I am a fool! I have failed to hold on to your love for me! I am lost!" (Parthasarathy 150). Instead of comforting and consoling her Amirtham left her tears to console her and went to office as if nothing had happened.

Amirtham was so obsessed with Bhanu and reviving his youthfulness that it turned him selfish. He did not beat Thilakam she was not hurt physically but mentally she was abused. She was craving for Amirtham's love which was never there for her in his heart. She was under the constant pressure of saving her marriage and was thinking of the ways to do it.

But unable to achieve it she was getting stressed and depressed. She was not able to bring back the harmony and peace of her marriage as it needed the effort from both husband and wife to save the marriage. It demanded the investment of time and emotion from both of them. Instead Amirtham was investing his time and emotion in reviving his youthfulness with Bhanu.

Amirtham's infatuation with Bhanu came to an end when she asked him to divorce Tilakam and marry her. He wasn't expecting this from Bhanu. He never thought of divorcing his wife. It was impossible for him and he knew that Thilakam will never give her consent to it. Getting divorced was not common in those days. It was not acceptable in the society. A divorced woman was not much respected in the society. Amirtham though dared to have an extramarital affair with a younger girl was not ready to divorce his wife and face the society.

The helicopter in the title is symbolic of Amirtham's short lived fantasy with Bhanu. As helicopter can hover in the sky for limited time, Amirtham's youthfulness was revived for short time. He realized his mistake and bid goodbye to Bhanu. Reality was far from his imagination. He expected that Bhanu is a modern girl and she won't mind in having relationship with a married man. He had mistaken modernity. He took women for granted. Like objects that he can use them according to his whims and fancy. He was regretting for his impulsive behavior which was going to cost him dearly. Because of the same impulsive behavior he had once lost his love life.

He went home eager to see Thilakam. But to his surprise it was locked. Thilakam usually never went out in the evening he wondered where she could have gone. He went in by using a spare key that he always had with him. As he entered in it was dark and gloomy not seeing Thilakam he felt lonely.

Every evening Thilakam gave him hot coffee as soon as he came home but today she was not there. Thilakam always took care of her husband and his health. She prepared meals for him even when she was not talking to him. She never failed in performing her duty of wife.

Amirtham was getting tensed when Thilakam didn't arrive even after late in the evening. He noticed a letter on the table. It was by Thilakam she had left home unable to continue the drama of being a happy wife. She wrote, "I know about your whereabouts. Where's the need to prolong our family farce? I can take care of myself". Amirtham was scared for her life. Thilakam had left home not by her choice but by force. Amirtham did not push her out of their home but his indifference and selfishness made her to leave home. She was not well educated and was not used to wander alone. She never imagined her life without Amirtham. Her leaving home meant ending her life.

Thus Woman in a patriarchal society is oppressed. Though Thilakam requested Amirtham for his love and protested against him when he neglected her she was ignored and neglected by her husband. "The subaltern as a female cannot be heard or read (Spivak 104)". Her voice had no recognition. She suffered as a childless woman and as wife she could never gain her husband's love for her.

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# EXPLORING THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL IDENTITY OF CASTE, CLASS, AND GENDER IN BASAVANNA'S VACHANAS

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## Abstract

*Basaveshwara- an excellent trait whose teachings and hopes; trained and preached have existed a beginning of excellent experiments from times. My paper presents the aforementioned great hopes of welcome cornered in the contemporary stage. He talked in terms of Friendly egalitarianism, Caste and Class egalitarianism, work similarity, Religious egalitarianism, and Similarity of Sex thus symbolizing the highlighted ingredients in contemporary's friendly philosophy. Welcome Vachanas operated as a catalyst for friendly change. It's socially obligatory to think and follow specific vachanas, even contemporary ones, to have peace overall. Basaveshwara's labeling of work balance today concedes the possibility of flow in all the streams of existence so as to improve the association and the country with its own government. His "Kayaka" belief insists on the candid discharge pertaining to work responsibilities. We all need to gain plenty of lessons from Basavanna's research; we need to reconsider the unstable social equality and the public lawfulness which has constituted many questions in today's institution. There is that we all need to realize his theory of similarity and the required the way to treat family equally, give respect for each and all being so as to substantiate him and further dream of a better and a grown country with its own government or a planet.*

**Keywords:** preached, kayaka, vachana, occupational equality, social philosophy

## Introduction

Shri Basaveshwara(as known as Basavanna) is highlighted as one of the ultimate superior traits in our religious annals rousing heaps of the nation from 800 years - till contemporary. He, as a free original intellectual, shows a very high order of history that has affected and molded many lives. He was a secret by disposition, an optimist by preference, a statesman by declaration, a man of learning by taste, a humanist by compassion, and a social agitator by assurance. An inventor of a new classless and casteless society established balance and friendly justice. I would like to remember a few of the welcome collective preachings and his extreme concepts that impart the loyalty of history. I through this item of mine, take the responsibility of presenting specific excellent thoughts of welcome that are treed in contemporary's era.

Welcome education and socio-religious ideas that he practiced and exhorted have happened the beginning of a great experiment in experiences that upheld welcome views for decades. He is famous as a socio-religious reformer, a champion of collective

equality, an advocate of "Kayaka" and a prime leader of the "Virashaiva Shift" the one talked in terms of General similarity, Caste, and Class egalitarianism, Pertaining to work similarity, Religious similarity, Egalitarianism of Sex thus that performed as a major meaning of Basavanna --the emphasize factors we find in today's social principles.

Basavanna endeavor hard to cause successful reformation in Hinduism into that friendly immoralities had crept. The friendly and educational conflicts of the Indian humankind including the Karnataka state of the old days were exciting a new instigate within the Hindu people. There was an off-course-spread difference among the crowd. Differences in the way that larger Varna -lower Varna, higher stratum-lower social class, husband and wife, dignified taller profession and disregard able lower occupation and added distinct nesses had broken the growth of public wholeness and unity. The caste scheme had detached the Hindu Society into various hostile divisions and bleeding of the lower castes apiece higher one was the agenda.

Social Equality that was widespread in India during the Vedic ages had vanished surrendered to prejudice. Social Equality that was extensive in India all the while the Vedic ages had faded and surrender to prejudice. The predominance of expansive spread of social difference had confused the mind of Basaveshwara and so he was an determined to withstand the social prejudice that was destined to bring about a serene transformation that would change the minds of the people to recognize the welcome meaning of social similarity.

“All consider being doctored as equals. All permit be clean and loyal to God. Everyone endures work”

Liberal views to a degree these accepted shape in the mind of Basavanna even in welcome teens. He was disgusted against Vedic Brahmanism which he believed was individual of the determinants amounting to the existing public difference accordingly he comprised his mind to underrate the alike.

He chose a friendly method of belief, a peaceable system to achieve the welcome aim of corroborating a society-established public egalitarianism. It was indeed God's grace; Basavanna gave welcome responsibility for the formation of a new humankind, through “Anubhava Mantapa”- a religious legislature at Kalyana.

He was an experienced disposed husband yet generous and self-governing in his welcome approach so further he selected the self-governing method of intersection together for arguing and for lay down the way of public reconstruction and renewal and later the consequence of the analyses were written in the form of “Vachanas” in Kannada dialect. These Vachanas hold ideas about religious, public, moral, and financial issues or matters. They contain the heart of Virashaiva hope containing the ideas of Basavanna.

The Vachanas hold elevated ideals having a connection with man's individual in addition to friendly history. They are respected taking everything in mind the friendly and moral principles than for their classical value. He secondhanded the Vachanas to refer to the inadequacies of the society

and cherished to correct bureaucracy. Through a welcome helpful approach he defined easy life as a certain habit to God.

His Vachanas performed as a stimulant for social change. It's force to think and attend specific vachanas :-

**ಉಳ್ಳವರು ಶಿವಾಲಯವ ಮಾಡುವರು !**

**ನಾನೇನ ಮಾಡುವೆ ? ಬಡವನಯ್ಯ!**

**ಎನ್ನ ಕಾಲೇ ಕಂಬ, ದೇಹವೇ ದೇಗುಲ,**

**ಶಿರವೇ ಹೊನ್ನ ಕಳಶವಯ್ಯ!**

**ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವ ಕೇಳಯ್ಯ,**

**ಸ್ವಾವರಕ್ಕಳಿವಂಟು, ಜಂಗಮಕ್ಕಳಿವಿಲ್ಲ!**

(Basavanna)

Those who have money, build temples for Shiva!

What can a poor man like me build?

My legs are pillars, my body is the Shrine,

My head is the golden pinnacle!

Hear me! Oh Lord Kudala Sangamadeva!

There is destruction for what stands, but not for what moves!

This Vachana means the valid essence of worship. Huge structures erected as source of insignificant criticism and goddesses are valueless all at once hasn't legitimately understood the one God is and what is fellow's friendship accompanying Him. The makeup shall decline but the apostolic practice of a fan never be going to. God is Eternal while the false gods are going to decay. Moreover, this Vachana talks about medicating an individual's own frame as a temple. This has a very deep signification: One's appendages, courage, and mind concede the possibility never undertaking some act that displeases God. One's whole life endure enhanced entirely subservient and compliant to God and His laws. Basavanna attractively clarifies this as follows.

Letter another vachana says:

**ಇವನಾರವ, ಇವನಾರವ, ಇವನಾರವ  
ನೆಂದೆನಿಸದಿರಯ್ಯ,**

**ಇವ ನಮ್ಮವ, ಇವ ನಮ್ಮವ, ಇವ ನಮ್ಮವ  
ನೆಂದೆನಿಸಯ್ಯ**

**ಕೂಡಲ ಸಂಗಮದೇವ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಮಹಾ  
ಮನೆಯ ಮಗನೆಂದೆನಿಸಯ್ಯ.** (Basavanna)

Do not say “Who is he”, “Who is he”, and “Who is he”?

Say that he is ours, he is ours, and he is ours,  
Say that he is the son of Thy own house, O  
Kudalasangamadeva.

Do not reply with the one is he? Who is he?  
Need to treat all human beings as sons & daughters  
of Demigod's home (Mahamane); we need to  
welcome the ruling class just like our brothers &  
relatives because we all are kids of GOD. Basava  
began balance from skilled and continued during the  
whole of welcome existence time. He lectured &  
trained the egalitarianism. He hugged all the below  
crowd like cobblers, fiddle, jewelry makers,  
postponement, farmers, harlots, etc... that are from  
various castes. When crowds are asked if these  
societies are inferior class we avoid them before  
Basava mentions:

ಕೊಲ್ಲುವವನೆ ಮಾದಿಗ ಹೊಲಸು  
ತಿಂಬುವವನೆ ಹೊಲೆಯ,  
ಕುಲವೇನು ಅವಂದರ ಕುಲವೇ,  
ಸಕಲ ಜೀವಾತ್ಮರಿಗೆ ಲೇಸು ಬಯಸುವ  
ನಮ್ಮ ಕೂಡಲ ಸಂಗನ ಶರಣರೆ ಕುಲಜರು.

One who kills is a pariah (Madiga)  
One who eats filth is indeed an inferior person  
(Holey)  
What has birth got to do with the superior class  
or the inferior class?  
Our lord Kudala Sangamadeva's Sharana's  
indeed belong to the superior class as they wish  
for the welfare of all living beings.

Our Sharana's are supporters of all living  
beings. Sharana's are the legitimate superior class.  
We categorize people as a political whole by their  
practice not initially. Individual the one is murder the  
living beings need to be categorized as persona non  
grata. The public the ones are consuming the dirt  
need to categorize bureaucracy as an inferior class.  
The Of noble birth Pandits contended that in Vedas  
and Agamas, we have all the categorization of castes  
we need to trail these as per our sastras Agamas,  
Therefore Basava announces the following “I am a  
son of Madara Chennayy's family”.

### Movement for Equal Rights for Women

In the early Vedic ending, wives had equal rights to  
guys, giving conscientious and social blame. They  
energetically cooperated in the community's  
intellectual and otherworldly existence, wrote hymns  
in the Rigveda, and printed anthems in the  
Enlightenment Shastra's. Women persisted in having  
freedom and respect long beyond the Vedic ending,  
but before, the dark phase of women's slavery  
started.

Manu, a Hindu philosopher, believes that  
women are morally deplorable beings who are often  
shielded by their fathers, husbands, and sons. They  
are not allowed to perform rituals, offer prayers, or  
worship God. This illegal treatment of women was a  
common custom in Hinduism, which Basavanna  
fought against. Buddhism and Jainism emerged as a  
response to Brahmanism's class divisions, and while  
women's salvation seemed on the horizon, it wasn't  
complete.

Basavanna, born into a twelfth-century  
civilization, aimed to free women from their  
traditional roles and provide them with a dignified  
existence. He founded AnubhavaMantapa, a  
religious discussion forum, with the help of Allama  
Prabhu and Chennabasava. Basavanna's respectable  
attitude towards femininity led to a new era marked  
by honor, economic equality, and social equality.  
Many women saints, including Akkamahadevi,  
excelled in various aspects of life, and Basavanna,  
Allama Prabhu, Chennabasava, Siddharamayya, and  
Madivalayya all expressed admiration for her.  
Basavanna's humble and respectful approach to  
women, including introducing her to Allamaprabhu,  
exemplifies his commitment to promoting women's  
empowerment and dignity.

Akkamahadevi, a great women saint poet, is  
crowned as the Saint of Saints, and Basavanna  
participates in a chorus of appreciation. Women were  
treated with respect, but no reformer fought for equal  
religious rights. Basavanna, a 12th-century Indian  
social reformer, declared women's rights to religious  
initiation and redemption. He foresaw and practiced  
the Hindu Code Bill's spirit, a concept envisioned by  
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In 2015, India's Prime Minister

Narendra Modi unveiled a Basavanna statue in London. Basavanna, also known as Bhakti Bhandari or JagjyothiBasaveswara, is the first Kannadiga to have a commemorative coin in his honor.

Research is the ultimate strong weapon that has the skill to mutate the people and influence the opinions and faith of folk over the mob. Through information, the son has found the purpose to live and survey the signification of existence. Vachanas, which were composed and propagated by Basavanna and additional Shiva sharana's, had transferred humankind in the 12th century and lit the spark of revolt. The modern world that is ruled by utilitarianism and inexperience has missed the moral and human principles. Even contemporary society faces similar questions and barriers that challenged public egalitarianism at, a point in time in the past. So, Vachanas are appropriate even today and can help us Mold our existence to make it more significant and persistent.

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# WORLD AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE INFLUENCE OF COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS ON WORLD LITERATURE

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## Abstract

*World literature is witnessing the rise of the new age of storytelling, which is Comics and graphic novels. These forms of literature are modernized and visually appealing. Market and cultural impact are immense from the bird's eye view. It's expanding and educating the people in need of it. Through a variety of genres, it taps into a wide range of audiences and helps to preserve cultural and historical narratives effectively. It acts as a bridge between the traditional and modern storytelling methods. As the trend changes from generation to generation now it's the digital era seeing the boom of Comics and graphic novels.*

**Keywords:** *world literature, visual storytelling, comics, graphic novels*

"If you don't like your destiny, don't accept it. Instead, dare to change it the way you want it to be". Naruto Uzumaki (Chapter 678 Naruto Shippuden). It's a famous quote from Naruto. The iconic manga series, Naruto, was brought to life by the talented artist Masashi Kishimoto. Manga originated in Japan and is a popular style of comic strip storytelling. It is a form of visual storytelling as a branch of Literature.

World literature accounts for the course of written works' conciseness beyond their boundaries and witnesses many perspectives in it. But the new age perspectives in it are the form of storytelling which is the comic and graphic novels. The new age of storytelling from which comic books and graphic novels. They both are a combination of text and images to present a story, but also, they vary in format and depend on the author's way of presenting it.

Comics are continuous art or drawing guise that narrates a story by way of a series of images that go with text and are classically accord in panels. They are published in newspapers, magazines, and also as freestanding series of books. Their characteristics vary from one to another, first of all, they are published in serial setup, as they are frequently issued in installments, on a timely basis such as weekly or monthly. Secondly, there are a variety of genres, that tap upon various classifications such as superhero, sci-fi, romance, psychology, horror, adventure, musical and more. Ordinally the

conversation between the characters is conveyed by speech bubbles the narration of the scene or story and other textual aspects are shown using captions. Furthermore, comics influence popular culture, especially through superhero stories. The prime publishers are Marvel and DC Comics, "Ironman" and "Batman" respectively.

Graphic novels also come under the category of visual storytelling, and they use pictures and texts as a combination. They are published in the size of books. They also dive into a wide reach of genres and topics and use more intricate narratives than conventional comics. They are characterized by series, quality of literature, and a wide range of genres. Firstly, the graphic novels are published in series format, but infinite series. It could be published in one volume or a set. Furthermore, the quality of literature is more urbane, and grown themes are used. It makes these novels feel nearer to the readers and provides depth in quality and narrations. Moreover, it unfolds various genres like sci-fi, non-fiction, fiction, fantasy history, etc. "Maus" by Art Spiegelman could be given as an example. It has won a Pulitzer Prize in the category of graphic novels. As it dives into the story of Nazi Germany's Holocaust. The work allegorically portrays two opposing groups, one vulnerable and the other predatory which are Jews and Nazis respectively.

The new age of visual storytelling form in literature has emerged as influential in recent times. In the digital era, it has been relevant and attracted a wide range of audiences. It enhances the experience through visuals and holds the attention. The global value of the books market in the world is at 110 billion dollars, it's expected to reach about 130 billion dollars by 2030 and in that account, the market value of comics and graphic novels is 15 billion dollars. It comprises nearly 10 percent of the total. This shows us that the readers, the consumers are changing according to the new forms. As it presents itself as an easier and easier to understand through the term itself expresses as "Visual Storytelling". A wide variety of audiences from young kids to mature adults are active consumers of it.

It's a hobby for someone, a way to find solace, or in many ways the audience loves it. Its impact can be witnessed in growing sales and readers. The impact on the world literature as it tries to expand and enhance the narrative techniques. Comics and graphic novels combine both art and words to tell a story through illustration and imagery. Manga Like *One Piece* is one of the publishing works from 1997 and still, it's being published weekly with new chapters on Sundays. Eiichiro Oda the author, and creator of the manga uses the art and texts to narrate the story. Its visual storytelling is at its peak as it withstood the test of time. It's even today the highest-selling Manga ever.

The new age of storytelling became a platform for unheard voices that were marginalized. It helps to bring out the uncharted cultural, political, social, and psychological issues faced by the appeared. Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* tells the story of a woman's oppression and resilience during the Islamic Revolution in Iran. These topics are often seen in a written way but it eventually taps into the Psyche of the reader making the reading more insightful.

Ethnic inclusiveness in comics and graphic novels has paved the way, as it merges the way of narrating storytelling classics from a variety of cultures. This blending of surfaces means the fusion of forms and creativity.

Mangas usually uses diverse genres and the approach to the storyline is very different. The characters have emotional depth, and it always evolves either positive, negative, or neutral. Due to technological progress, the Manga can be reached beyond the boundaries of a country. Cultural exchange takes place too, but it's, only visible when the traditional readers accept new talents and encourage them. Frank Miller's "Sin City" could be an example of the cultural influence of Manga on Western Comics. On the other hand, mainstream comics are accepted globally, and now manga too. The superhero genre has heavily influenced Japanese culture, and it has given birth to proper superhero Mangas such as "One Punch Man" and "My Hero Academia". Complexity in the stories of these kinds of novels is now a common feat. As there are many dynamic themes are explored and mastered by the creators. The themes are based on identity, perceptions, and trauma, and Dwell to the psychological aspects of human emotions.

Comics and graphic novels are powerful educational tools that can engage students with a wide range of subjects, from history and science to literature and social studies. Their visual appeal, accessible format, and ability to convey complex information compellingly make them effective tools for teaching and learning. For instance, "March" by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell is a popular choice in classrooms to teach about the Civil Rights Movement. This graphic novel uses a combination of words and images to tell the story of John Lewis's life and his experiences as a civil rights activist. It is a powerful and moving story that has resonated with students of all ages.

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Comics and graphic novels are potent tools for preserving cultural and historical narratives. They have the power to make complex stories accessible to a wider audience, particularly younger generations. By bridging the gap between oral traditions and written literature, these mediums help to ensure that cultural heritage is passed down through the generations.

A prime example is *Amar Chitra Katha* in India. This series has popularized Indian myths, legends, and historical figures through comics, making these stories engaging and relatable to a modern audience. By visually representing these narratives, *Amar Chitra Katha* has played a significant role in preserving India's rich cultural heritage and making it accessible to a global audience.

Furthermore, comics and graphic novels can document contemporary events and social issues. They can provide a visual record of historical moments, capturing the emotions, experiences, and perspectives of individuals involved. This can help to foster empathy and understanding across cultures and generations. Using various visual techniques, such as panel layouts, character design, and color palettes, these mediums can create powerful and thought-provoking narratives that resonate with readers deeply.

In the present times, educational and career-based themes are surfaced in the comics and graphic novels. The gap between the theory in the classic textbooks which are of the schools also includes comic references to enhance the concept. The very best way that students can relate to this is through stories and images, as both these are illustrated in the comics and graphic novels. Some of the very basic themes as the school library has many journals. As it shows how the virus is harmful to health. In the NCERT textbooks, the comics are used to ask questions to the readers which are high order thinking skills. At times these amaze the readers and improve their analytical thinking. Pedagogical values

that should be taught are represented through illustrations. It assists students to understand varied perspectives in society. To take their responsibilities seriously and have a successful life.

The future of the comics and graphic novels is both bright and dark. As there is space for the widening of opportunities and innovations, at the same time scope for dismissive results if not taken care of. In the era of smartphones and tablets as its the digital era, various platforms are available to publish, showcase, and present their works. Usually, the comics that are digitalized are called Webcomics. Their accessibility is easy through the Internet. Interactive storytelling and short-length stories are easily enjoyable as they consume less time. There are dedicated stores and parlors for the comics, as its influence on the culture is immense. As it started to blend itself in clothing and fashion.

Graphic novels break the stereotypes by challenging the traditional ways and introducing new and complex themes, characters, and narrative techniques. Collaborations across media are possible. Using the present technology as leverage to blend media. Animations, anime, and the new live-action are possible. One piece started as a manga, then anime that is animation, and finally live action is also available.

Graphic novels and comics are faulted for various reasons and often face limitations. They are not considered to be serious in comparison with traditional literature like novels, plays, and prose. Comics and graphic novels both depend more on the visuals than the text. It is also pulled down from the academic and literary circles. The repetition of certain themes can be regularly witnessed with similar representations of characters and arcs in the stories. Limitations inaccessibility is also a concern, the comics and graphic novels are expensive and bulky to carry. The digital formats are concerned with piracy.

Comics and graphic novels are the new age of storytelling visually. They are being evolved over the period, they present expressions of culture and society. The blend of visuals and text offers to

convey captivating and complex storylines across the world.

As time progresses, we can witness massive growth and innovations in this particular field. The diverse voices that are unheard of have access to publish and showcase their perspectives. Time ahead of the comics and graphic novels is considerable. It can entertain, educate, and influence audiences of all age groups. As it challenges the traditional conventions of literature and its dilating nature in literary canons. It has a positive future ahead as it helps in shaping it.

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# BEING AND BECOMING: GENDER, GENRE, AND THE SELF IN THE PERSONAL WRITINGS OF WOOLF, PLATH, AND BEYOND

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## Abstract

*This paper explores the intersections of gender, genre, and the self through the personal writings of Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, and contemporary “digital diaries” of women. By examining Woolf’s *A Writer’s Diary* and Plath’s *The Unabridged Journals*, alongside the growing trend of digital diaries, it argues that women’s personal writing has evolved from a marginalized genre to a transformative tool of feminist resistance. Through an analysis of these intimate forms of expression, the paper highlights how women negotiate their identities, challenge patriarchal structures, and reshape literary traditions, bridging the personal and the political in a dynamic act of self-definition.*

**Keywords:** *personal, women, gender, feminism, genre, digital diaries, self, counter-canon*

## Introduction

Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement.

—Hélène Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*

Women writers have long grappled with the dual burden of asserting their voices within a literary tradition that systematically excludes or diminishes their contributions. Their personal writings, encompassing diaries, journals, letters, and memoirs, have often been relegated to the realm of the “private” or dismissed as overly “confessional” and “emotional”. This marginalization reflects the broader subordination of women’s lived experiences within a canon that prioritizes male narratives. Yet, these personal writings challenge such dismissals by transforming the intimate into acts of resistance. As women writers narrate their own lives, they disrupt the gendered hierarchies of literary value and carve a space for subversive self-definition (Geiger).

At the heart of this resistance lies the interplay between *being* and *becoming*, a dialectic that emphasizes the essence of women’s self-expression in writing. In existentialist terms, as explored by Heidegger, *being* represents a confrontation with existence, an inward acknowledgement of one’s reality, while *becoming* reflects the transformative

journey toward authenticity and growth. Women’s personal writings embody this duality: emerging in their introspective self-reflection while *becoming* manifests as they claim literary space within a patriarchal tradition. These narratives blur the boundaries between the personal and the political, transforming private musings into bold acts of defiance that challenge rigid societal norms.

Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, separated by time and circumstance yet united in purpose, exemplify this dynamic through their personal writings. Woolf’s *A Writer’s Diary* (1954) and Plath’s *The Unabridged Journals* (2000) transcend their immediate contexts, transforming intimate reflections into potent feminist declarations. Woolf’s call to “kill the Angel in the House”, as discussed meticulously by Elaine Showalter, epitomizes her rejection of the societal ideal of domesticity and self-sacrificing femininity, as she reclaims the diary as a space for intellectual freedom and creative autonomy (Showalter 340). Similarly, Plath’s visceral and unfiltered journals challenge the decorum expected of women’s voices, offering a raw yet deliberate articulation of identity. These works embody a feminist counter-canon, redefining literary value by centering the complexities of women’s lived

experiences and interrogating the structures that constrain them (Chartier).

In the contemporary digital age, the tradition of women's personal writing finds new resonance on platforms like blogs and social media, where digital diaries or web journals serve as unmediated spaces for self-expression. These platforms extend the feminist legacy of Woolf and Plath, enabling women to articulate their identities in ways that defy patriarchal expectations. However, scholarship often neglects the critical connections between historical personal writings and contemporary digital narratives. Exploring this continuum reveals how the intimate act of writing, whether in Woolf's careful introspection or Plath's stirring confessions, remains a powerful mode of feminist resistance, reshaping literary spaces and reimagining the boundaries of genre, gender, and the self (Heilbrun).

### **Reconceptualizing the Self: The Dialectic of Gender and Genre**

The question posed by literary critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*,

“What does it mean to be a woman writer in a culture whose fundamental definitions of literary authority are, as we have seen, both overtly and covertly patriarchal?” (Gilbert and Gubar 45)

resonates deeply with the personal writings of writers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, Anne Frank, and Alice Walker. Despite the constraints imposed on their existence, these women writers wield their diaries, journals, letters, and memoirs as powerful tools to dismantle societal norms and reclaim their voices against generations of epistemic violence.

Simone de Beauvoir, in *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, provides a powerful critique of the oppressive societal structures that constrained her bourgeois upbringing, offering a transformative narrative of personal becoming that defies the idealized feminine roles of her era (Beauvoir). Likewise, Anne Frank's widely read diary, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, demonstrates the resilience of a young woman's voice, proving that even in the isolation of extraordinary circumstances, personal

writing can serve as a profound assertion of one's humanity. Moreover, the collected letters and essays of Alice Walker, such as those in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, trace a lineage of creative resistance that foregrounds the intersections of race and gender in the ongoing struggle for self-expression and empowerment. The autobiography of Maya Angelou, from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* to her expansive body of auto-biographical work, powerfully articulates the complexities of Black womanhood, challenging racist and sexist narratives that have long marginalized the experiences of women of colour. Similarly, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* blends memoir, folklore, and cultural critique to chart the author's negotiation of her Chinese-American identity, underscoring the intersectional struggles faced by immigrant women. These seminal texts, alongside the personal writings of Woolf, Plath, and others, illustrate the subversive potential of women's life writings to assert their agency, resist dominant power structures, and redefine the very boundaries of literary expression and act as a counter-canon to dominant male discourses.

*Gender*, as a profound and pervasive socio-political construct, is central to the critical explorations of how women writers critique their highly biased gender roles. As Judith Butler claims in *Gender Trouble*, “Gender is not something that one is, it is something one does, an act... a becoming” (Butler 33) emphasizes the performative nature of gender, suggesting that it is not a fixed identity but a continuous process of enactment. This concept of gender as an ongoing "becoming" aligns with the personal writings of Woolf and Plath, whose diaries serve as spaces where gender is not simply explored, but actively constructed and renegotiated, challenging societal expectations and reshaping their identities in the process. Woolf's *A Writer's Diary* vividly depicts the disruptions and constraints imposed on women writers, stating, "I must break off writing to attend to the roast meat; must consider other people; more than I would were I a man" (Woolf), which reflects the pervasive expectation that women's intellectual pursuits are subordinate to

their domestic responsibilities. Similarly, Sylvia Plath, in *The Unabridged Journals* reveals, like the fig tree analogy in *The Bell Jar*, the weight of these expectations: “I want to live and feel all the shades, tones, and variations of mental and physical experience possible in life. And I am horribly limited” and in another instance, she writes “Again, I feel the gulf between my desire & ambition and my naked abilities” (Plath 273). Plath’s lament reflects an acute awareness of the gendered limitations imposed on her existence, where societal norms stifle the fullness of her creative and existential potential.

Both Woolf and Plath use their diaries and journals to interrogate and resist these oppressive norms, transforming personal writing into a radical act of reclaiming intellectual and creative agency. Woolf’s notion of the “androgynous mind”, introduced in *A Room of One’s Own*, further enriches this discourse, proposing that the ideal writer transcends gender binaries to achieve a harmonious balance of masculine and feminine perspectives (Woolf, 88). However, her diary reveals the practical challenges of embodying such a state, in a patriarchal society that brutally fragments women’s identities. These personal writings thus not only critique the systemic constraints on women’s creativity but also demand a reimagining of the literary canon to include and celebrate diverse, gendered experiences. By positioning the “personal” as a legitimate and subversive space, Woolf and Plath pave the way for future generations to challenge and deconstruct the hierarchies that have long dictated whose voices are heard and valued in literature.

In situating personal writings as a distinct *genre*, it becomes a site of subversion as historically, such writings were relegated to the margins of literary studies. Historically dismissed as trivial, overly emotional, or mere records of private lives, diaries and journals have, over time, come to be recognized for their transformative power, revealing deeper layers of meaning and resistance. Woolf’s *A Writer’s Diary* exemplifies her belief in the necessity of creating a literary tradition outside the confines of the patriarchal canon. As she writes, “I will not have my life narrowed down. I will not bow down to this

dull, uniformity” (Woolf 156), signalling her determination to assert an independent, female literary voice. Plath, too, transforms the diary into a complex, hybrid space in *The Unabridged Journals*, where she fuses the art of personal reflection with the immediacy of lived experience. Karen V. Kukil notes, “Plath’s journals blur the boundaries between the private and the literary, constructing a self that defies neat categorization” (Kukil). By embracing the fragmented, raw immediacy of their personal writings, both Woolf and Plath elevate the personal writing genre into a sophisticated form of intellectual engagement, asserting that women’s lived experiences are worthy of literary inquiry and cultural significance.

Marlene A. Schiwy states in “Taking Things Personally: Women, Journal Writing, and Self-Creation”,

Journal writing is not only a process of self-recording, self-exploration, and self-expression, although it is all of these. It is also a channel of self-creation. We create ourselves in the very process of writing about ourselves and our lives. (Schiwy 234)

This understanding of journal writing as a form of self-creation emphasises the existential nature of the *Self* as dynamic, evolving, and fluid, especially in the context of women's personal writings. In the writings of Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, the self is far from a static entity; it is continually reshaped through the act of writing, becoming a site for both introspection and transformation. Woolf’s diaries, for example, showcase a self that is in constant flux, one that reflects and redefines itself: “How immensely one’s mind works over and alters an incident” (Woolf 94). Plath’s journals similarly capture the tensions and fluidity of selfhood, where doubt and desire for artistic expression are juxtaposed, as she writes, “I know pretty things, but that’s not enough. I want more than anything else to write, and I write nothing” (Plath). This existential journey of self-definition aligns with Simone de Beauvoir’s assertion in *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”, a notion that emphasizes the ever-evolving process of identity

formation. Through their personal writings, both Woolf and Plath resist simplistic, fixed categorizations of the self, asserting instead a complex, ongoing narrative of *becoming*.

In the present digital age, personal writing has emerged as a powerful and evolving medium for self-expression, with digital diaries or web journals, blogs, and social media serving as new platforms for women to document their lives and challenge persistent gender norms. With the advent of technologies such as blogs, vlogs, Snapchat, Twitter, and live feeds, women and girls have harnessed these spaces to document their lives, resist misogyny, and challenge the deeply ingrained structures of patriarchy. Digital diaries, in their multifaceted forms, have become powerful tools for subverting traditional notions of the self and the private, blending visibility with vulnerability in unprecedented ways. As feminist movements like #MeToo, #BeenRapedNeverReported, and everyday sexism in public, as well as personal domains, get addressed, digital platforms now serve as vital spaces for organizing, networking, and confronting contemporary sexism, gender bias and rape culture (Mendes). These digital spaces offer women an unprecedented opportunity to build a collective narrative that critiques and dismantles the gendered power structures in ways traditional media could not. Similar to the existential journeys of Woolf and Plath, women's online writing facilitates an ongoing process of self-construction, where self-identity is continuously renegotiated. As Alison Bechdel, in her graphic memoir, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, contends, this digital self-expression is not merely a chronicle of personal experience but a defiant assertion of the right to be seen and heard in ways that have been historically denied (Bechdel). However, this shift towards digital resistance raises ethical considerations and challenges, such as the emotional toll of public vulnerability, the varying accessibility of these platforms, and the dominance of certain voices over others. Despite these complexities, digital diaries serve as sites of creative and transformative resistance, where personal narratives intersect with collective action, redefining

both selfhood and feminist activism in the digital age. Yet, there is a need for deeper scholarship to explore how these platforms function as dynamic spaces where women navigate and contest rape culture, and how their experiences on these platforms complicate or deepen the struggles for equality. Digital diaries, much like their literary predecessors, are evolving into crucial sites for feminist discourse and action, where the boundaries between personal reflection and political resistance continue to blur.

### Conclusion

The personal writings of Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, and their literary successors demonstrate how women's personal narratives, once marginalized and dismissed, have evolved into powerful acts of resistance and self-assertion. These texts challenge the boundaries between the personal and public, interrogating societal gender norms and the construction of the self. Woolf's and Plath's diaries and journals reveal a continual struggle for authenticity within a patriarchal world, evidently transforming personal writing from introspection into cultural defiance that reshapes women's roles in both literature and society.

The rise of digital diaries amplifies this tradition, turning personal expression into an instrument for collective empowerment and activism. By exploring the intersection of gender, genre, and the self, these writings illustrate how women have long used personal narratives to renegotiate power and identity. From Woolf and Plath to contemporary digital diarists, this evolution reflects an expanding space for women's voices, transcending time and medium. Their writings not only assert the right to self-definition but also challenge patriarchal structures, making personal writing a significant act of feminist resistance. For future research, one can further explore similar works through intersectional and non-Western lenses to deepen the understanding of women's personal writing as a feminist genre.

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# REWRITING HISTORY: REPRESENTATION OF QUEEN HAZRAT MAHAL IN KINEZE MOURAD'S *THE CITY OF GOLD AND SILVER, THE STORY OF QUEEN HAZRAT MAHAL*

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## Abstract

*Rewriting history is a sensitive and profound undertaking, often aimed at re-examining the past to reveal forgotten truths, challenge established narratives, or adapt historical understanding to new evidence. The present paper emphasizes the relevance of political representation and historical fiction in renegotiating women's historical position by concentrating on Begum Hazrat Mahal's portrayal in Kenize Mourad's *In the City of Gold and Silver, The Story of Begum Hazrat Mahal*, a courtesan and later queen to Nawab Wajid of Awadh. Begum Hazrat Mahal was the first woman to combat the British supremacy during the first war of independence of 1857. Her rise from obscurity to popularity is admirable, but her accomplishments frequently go unrecognized or are compelled to conform to the dominant gender expectations of that period. This under representation has led to a deliberate overshadowing of Hazrat Mahal's contribution to the revolt of 1857. Kenize Mourad has seized this historical neglect of women's representation as an opportunity to rediscover the lost legacy of Hazrat Mahal. This paper further highlights how the systemic bias has sustained a distorted historical narrative, which has failed to acknowledge the full scope of women's contributions and resilience throughout history.*

**Keywords:** *history, fictional intervention, women writing, systematic erasure*

## “Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter” Chinua Achebe

New Historicism has bolstered Historical Feminism in contemporary novel writing by providing a framework that emphasizes the relationship between literature, history, and power dynamics which resonates with feminist goals of investigating and confronting gender-related inequalities. This act of rewriting is popularised by the genre of historical fiction. Rewriting history is a sensitive and profound undertaking, often aimed at re-examining the past to reveal forgotten truths, challenge established narratives, or adapt historical understanding to new evidence. Sir Walter Scott, was instrumental in the reinvention of this genre, with emphasis based on the historical fact and depiction of the traditional male spheres of politics and war. As such, there was a marked preference for narratives featuring male

agency and female passivity. In many cases, men were lauded as great explorers, heroes, and adventurers, while female figures, real or imagined were marginalized and featured for romantic interests solely. The association of men with accuracy and historical fact perpetuated the view that writing for and about women was ahistorical, inaccurate, and trivial. This undermined the value of women's history. As a result, the female historical figures were and are solely understood through the male narratives. This inherent factor cultivates a partial view of history, history as the preserve of the male, and problematized historical fiction by, for, and about women.

While this genre has remained popular with both male and female audiences from its inception, in recent times historical fiction has become increasingly dominated by female authorship for a largely female readership. As Goodman states in his



article “History is primarily shaped by men and current readership is mostly of women, who like to read about other women so contemporary writers must explore the topics that include women or empower historical women to narrate their own stories authentically, free from the purported ‘misrepresentation’ of traditional historical accounts.” (Goodman, 2005 n.p)

These current readers, of all the genres in literature, show willingness to read about the previously obscured female figures in history, eventually these figures have now become increasingly visible, palpable, multi-dimensional and undeniably present. As these historical novels are not only written by women, but they also make female historical figures play a central and active role in their plots. One such work is Kenize Mourad's *In the City of Gold and Silver, The Story of Begum Hazrat Mahal*, representing a fictionalised account of the life of a real woman Begum Hazrat Mahal, a courtesan and the queen of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. This novel narrates a fictionalised account of the historical events from Begum Hazrat Mahal's perspective that intervenes the historical narrative and places her as a woman of importance in the historical records, who is missed in the role of honours of Indian history.

Begum Hazrat Mahal is best known as one of the leaders of the revolt of 1857 from Awadh. She finds mention in the works of British eye-witness and sepooy confessions such as W. H Russell's *My Indian Mutiny Diary* (1975), M. R. Gubbin's *An Account of the Mutinies of Oudh, and Residency* (1858) and S. A. Rizvi and M.L Bhargava (Eds). *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh, Source Material* (1957). Not much is known about Begum Hazrat Mahal's life, apart from her being the mother of Birji Qadr and the wife of Wajid Ali Shah. Whatever little is known is a part of scattered and often unconfirmed bits of evidence that has been carefully stitched by the historians. According to a historian Rosie Llewellyn Jones, Hazrat Mahal came from a humble background, her father was an African slave. She joined the Pari Khanna, a music school in Lucknow. By her talents or good looks or both, she caught the eye and fancy

of Wajid Ali Shah, following he made her into one of his many muta (temporary wives). After she gave birth to a son in 1845, her position was elevated to Mahal (a title Wajid Ali Shah gave to his better placed wives, according to Sharar). But by 1850 her fortunes changed when Wajid Ali Shah divorced her under the influence of his mother. She was officially no longer a Begum. But later through a quirk of fate, her son became the king and the wali (governor) of Mughal Badashah and thus she regained her title. She became the power behind the throne that emanated orders in the name of Birji Qadr. The rebellion of the people of Lucknow made her a leader, and she became one of them.

Much like the representation of other female freedom fighters in the above mentioned books, Begum too is presented as a loyal wife and a dedicated mother, who upholds the cause of her husband/son, when the latter are unable to do so on their own. Scholars such as Uma Chakravarti have argued that “the focus of such representations is to put forth an imagery of female sacrifice and bravery, rather than to thread out the specificities of individual woman's role, consciousness or the complexities of her participation.” (Chakravarti & Roy, 1988, p.7). This representation reduces the significance of their personal life and makes the revolt a worthwhile moment rather than the otherwise extra-ordinary life of the women. The historians present these women as mere participants in the revolt and deny them a place in the annals of history.

Mourad uses this obscurity to her advantage by reimagining the earlier life of Begum Hazrat Mahal in the framework of New Historicism and Historical Feminist intervention. Her work *City of Gold and Silver, The Story of Begum Hazrat Mahal* highlights the life of woman who combated the British during the first war of independence, who worked tirelessly uniting the disbanded Hindu Muslim soldiers. Her under-representation in historical records can be owed to two reasons, firstly as she was a commoner and secondly she remained behind the veils for most part of her life. Mourad fills in these gaps by making

use of fiction and weaves a tale of Begum's past life not straying away from historical details.

Begum HazratMahal earlier named as Mahummadi comes to Lucknow, the capital of Awadh from Faizabad as a young girl. After her father's death, she is sold by her aunt to Amman and Imman at the age of twelve. These women are former courtesans who buy young beautiful girls, train them in various forms of arts and sell them to rich nobles. Mahummadi, a creative writer, who finds solace in composition and recitation of poetry is sold to the Nawab, an extraordinary artist himself. In the due course though for a short period he marries her and elevates her position to Begum after the birth of their son BirjiQadr. The Nawab, for the fanciful person he is moves on from her to other women, but she still maintains a cordially relation with the nawab as both of them share a common interest in art. As she knows that "If she wants to retain his affection, she must entertain him, amuse him...but certainly not discuss her problems with him."(Mourad 39)

KinzeMourad in this novel uses the historical set-up and the real people who lived during that period. Still, her narration revolves around her female protagonist exploring her sexuality and agency. She gives glimpses of the harem politics, the depleting condition of the courtesans and their profession, her constant struggle to prove her capability and her inner turmoil of staying true to emotions. Whether it is Hazrat's impassionate love towards Raja Jailal Singh or her love towards her people, Mourad portrays it beautifully through her narration. Her narration also includes a band of women who have subverted patriarchy as well as submitted to patriarchy. The Nawab's mother MalikaKishwar is portrayed as a woman of influence as she confronts the British officer Outram for negotiations, she also goes to London on behalf of the Nawab to defend her son's cause of saving his kingdom.

Initially veiled during her association with the Nawab, she forsakes it as she self-proclaims her regency. She demonstrates extraordinary leadership skills with the support of her well-wishers who share the same hatred for the British. She says, "Reclusion

is a litmus test that destroys the weak and makes the indomitable stronger. To attain their goals, these extraordinary women have to deploy a wealth of intelligence, subtlety, and tenacity. This is how Oriental women, these "submissive creatures", whether shut up in the harem, confined to their homes, or hidden under their veils, generally control the person who imagines himself to be their lord and master." (Mourad74). Mourad re-appraises and reasserts Hazrat's role in history with such statements.

HazratMahal demonstrates remarkable leadership skills as she joins her soldiers on an elephant during the seizure of Kaiserbagh. She is forced to leave the battlefield and escape with her son to Nepal to continue the fight discreetly. Physically in Nepal, her heart yearns to support the freedom struggle. She secretly supports the cause by sending financial aid. The British try to persuade her initially by bribing her and later threatening her to surrender. But her self-respect and her love for her people is beyond the material gains. The British do not permit her to return to India fearing that her presence would further fuel the revolt. In Nepal, she spends her later days educating young girls in her company teaching them the importance of independence and passes away in 1879.

Mourad, with this novel, joins the growing tradition of feminist interventions and female writers who play upon and add to the blurred lives of forgotten women. A woman whose talent and struggle as a female leader in her own lifetime is eclipsed by that of her though weak self-centred husband NawabWajid Ali Shah. This fictional reimagining of her life in the novel is viewed as a feminist intervention- a way of restoring her to her original place in history.

Through intertextuality, Kenze Mourad in her novel negotiates between past and present, history and fiction. By doing so she tries to provide an authentic tale of struggle, patriotism, love and betrayal by shifting between historical documents and fictionalized narration thereby highlighting the subjectivism of historical narrative questioning the

authenticity of history and ultimately undermining history's authority.

This fictional reimagining of HazratMahal not only seeks to reinterpret the role of women like her in a wider historical discourse but also represents an interjection into previous portrayals of biased narratives. Female figures like her who have received attention in both factual and fictional historical accounts have frequently been underrepresented or misinterpreted. This underrepresentation of women based on their gender combined with their personal curiosity drives female novelists like KinezeMourad, InduSuderesan, Chitra Banerjee Divakurani, TanushreePoddar and many others to intervene and publish fictionalized, alternative accounts of women.

The works of these writers have explored historical fiction from a range of cultural, epistemological, and historical positions. They have also substantially re-evaluated cross-disciplinary critical works and have explored issues of national identity within historical fiction. This is a significant move after a lengthy gap during which historical fiction especially that by or about women and their issues has been disregarded by readers and critics in favor of more high-brow accounts such as biography. This wealth of work has helped to re-establish female-led historical fiction as a key area of study.

While it is important to view historical narratives within the scaffolding of their social, political, and cultural contexts, they also serve as a bridge that connects the past and the present. This paper delves into the feminist perspective on historiography. Since women refuse to remain on the periphery of history, historians and scholars focusing on women's history are re-examining historical approaches to meet the needs of women. Historical novels like Mourad's *The City of Gold and Silver*, *The Story of Begum HazratMahal* possess subversive potential as these stories feed women's lives and allow them to have different approaches towards the world- the past and the present. If women do not tell and re-tell stories about their own experiences, the female perspective will remain marginalized and history will remain lopsided, and the future for women much shady and less promising. By including

women's voices and experiences in historical discourse, we pave the way to a more inclusive and empowering future for all. It is through amplification and acknowledgment of women's narratives that a more equitable and promising future for women can be actualized.

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# DECODING COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIALISM IN ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'S *THE LAST GIFT* AND *PILGRIM'S WAY*

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## Abstract

While decoding the colonial and postcolonial effects we get in touch with the natives who have suffered from both the rule and also, we can see more effects on the natives after the colonial rule. The novels *The Last Gift* and *Pilgrims Way*, Abdulrazak Gurnah brings out the nostalgic experience of the immigrants and upholds the rootlessness that they have to face in the new country. There is mixing of cultures and the natives try to imitate the European in order to be one among them. We see lot of racial discrimination in both the novels where the black natives were address as nigger, black monkey. The European had made a law in order to repent their past mistake that is they wanted to give back the framer's land that they had occupied during their colonial rule. The black people hated the white and they said that their tolerance limit level has been crossed by these European and it was time for them to chop the whites into pieces by taking their ancestral revenge. Abdulrazak Gurnah has beautifully brought out all the colonial and postcolonial aspects in a very simple narrative form.

**Keywords:** nostalgic, rootlessness, racial discrimination, hybridity, mimicry and identity crises

## Full Paper

Colonial and postcolonial are interrelated. Colonial is mainly the rule of the European on the foreign land. It began with the human civilization that is by moving from one place to another for the settlement later the people moved to have control over the native people and tried governing them. Postcolonial is the aftermath of the colonialism. It mainly deals with the impacts of the colonial power and how people are facing those problem. Abdulrazak Gurnah is a Zanzibarian writer was also affected with the colonial rule and thus had migrated to England in 1970s. He brings out the colonial impacts and the life of immigrants and the challenges faced by them as asylum seekers. He was also a immigrant and has beautifully brought the impacts that a immigrant had to face in the new land. In the novel *The Last Gift* and *Pilgrims Way*, brings out the effects of colonialism and how people migrated to different countries in order to escape the colonial control or the oppression.

In the novel *The Last Gift*, the protagonist Abbas had moved to London for more than forty years and is currently sixty, was affected by a stroke. He had

never spoken about his past life but after the stroke he began narrating his memories of childhood, school life and his native. Before marriage he was a sailor and had been moving from place to place and meet his wife Maryam in Exter and they both had two children, Jamal and Hanna. Abbas spoke about his experience of a immigrant and had to face inequality of being black in the foreign land, was not accepted among the white people. Abbas mainly narrates his nostalgic experience as a immigrant as well as his past life to his wife and children as his death was nearing while suppressing his past life for so many years. The migrated people or say black people are not accepted in the foreign land and they are seen as other and are thus marginalized. The native people will not consider the foreign land as their home and due to this they are in utter confusion as to which they should call or consider as their home and later they loss their connection with both the countries and thus become homeless. The black people in the foreign land were addressed as monkeys from the dark land.

The narrator's daughter Hanna did not like their father being a black and they were not accepted

equally among other children in school or in society so she decided to change her name to Anna which is very English and accepted by the Europeans. She had discomfort of being a daughter of a black man, she said that; “‘There are times when I hate that they brought me here.’ Hanna said. ‘That they did not find another place to have me and to have you. Not because other place are free from cruelties and lies, but just to be saved from the demeaning pretence. Not to have the chore of pretending to be no different from people who are full of shit about themselves. But I suppose they did not have any choice in the matter, really only an appearance of choice.’” (Gurnah, *The Last Gift* 43).

The Europeans who had colonized and acquired the land of the natives by force and ruled over them and had even had taken natives as slaves but then the European government decided to give back the framing land that was taken by the natives. The Europeans wanted to repent over their past mistakes. Nick, Hanna’s boyfriend and Hanna were having a conversation where they spoke about the condition of the African slaves and the native land and how the European government made a law to return their property or land, he said that; “To give the land back to African peasants. It’s only two or three generations ago that land was taken away. People still remember what belonged to them.” (Gurnah, *The Last Gift* 102)

Abbas who had not spoken about his past life began to narrate them to his wife Maryam after he was struck with the stroke. His wife Maryam began collecting those memories in the written and audio format and whenever she was unable to understand she would just hand him a piece of paper so that he could write the spelling and she can pronounce it without difficulty. Once while he was telling about his school life, he mentioned his home town Zanzibar for the first time because he always felt shame and whenever asked about his hometown then he would say East Africa. Maryam said that; “When she asked him this where question before he replied back home or something like that and then changed the subject. The monkey from Africa. This time he

said Zanzibar without any hesitation.” (Gurnah, *The Last Gift* 146)

Abbas spoke about his loneliness in his youth where he saw a girl at terrace from his room. Later he got married to her and got her pregnant and abandoned her as he thought that the baby was not his child and the girl’s family had made fun of him by arranging his marriage with her. He also explains that he being a black in the foreign land felt lonely and homeless and also narrates how people had treated him. Even his wife Maryam was an abandoned baby and she had run away from her forster parents as she was raped by one of the relative and how she was blamed for the mistake.

After Abbas suffered from the stroke and was admitted in the hospital where he thought that he would not get better and he does not want to die in the strange land which still did not feel like home, he said that; “I’ll never let that happen to me, he said to himself then, I’ll never let myself die in a strange land that does not want me and here he was, more or less on the crematorium trolley.” (Gurnah, *The Last Gift* 53)

Anna did not want her lover Nick to look at her as an immigrant and she knew how hard it was for her father to be a stranger in different land and said he was tough, stubborn man and had somehow kept his balance and advance himself. She said that; “at times she thought she understood how difficult it must be for her father, still a stranger after all these years, coping with the strangeness all his life, so much older than Ma and unable to share the enthusiasms of his children or to make them truly share in his. She stood still for a long moment, thinking about him and begging pardon.” (Gurnah, *The Last Gift* 119)

At the end of the novel, Abbas died and Maryam decided to visit her forster parents and later we have the conversation between Jamal and Hanna through emails about their plans to visit Zanzibar and experience their father’s old school, the huge tree and the bus ride. Hanna promised that she would be writing a small story on the immigrant and thought to call it as “The monkey from Africa.”

In the novel *Pilgrims Way*, Abdulrazak Gurnah brings out Daud's life where he presents the beauty of past and his new journey while understanding his new life in exile. It is the life story of Daud who has moved to England for more than five years and is working as a theatre orderly in a local hospital. Later we get to know that Daud was from Africa who had escaped the revolution that had installed fear in his life and this made him to escape his native and move to England. As soon as he came to England, he began to face financial troubles. He also encounters endless racism in all walks of life. Daud had made two friends named Karta, an African and Lloyd, an upper middle English boy. Once during the conversation between his two friends Karta fell into an argument with Lloyd over being an Englishmen and how they had exploited the black people, he said that; "Fifty million black people, fifty million African were kidnapped from their homes," he raged at Lloyd. 'Although the exact million is still being argued over by rigorous academics who don't want to get the odd million wrong.'" (Gurnah, *Pilgrims Way* 47).

Karta spoke about how Europeans had discovered the African land and how they had made them realize that their customs and religion was bad and the Europeans had come to protect them, he said that; "It was you who discovered us anyways. Wasn't it? We did not exist before you Christian bastards with your religion of life after death came and discovered us. You brought God to us. You saved us from external damnation. You brought light into our heathen darkness and led us from our barbarous natures. I know what I am talking about. My father is a lay preacher. You forbade us human sacrifice, taught us true meaning of compassion, taught us restraint in government, and opened our eyes to our pitifully primitive condition. You taught us how ugly we were, how we smell and how we are lazy and stupid. You even changed our names for us. You made monkeys out of us!" (Gurnah, *Pilgrims Way* 47)

Karta scolded Lloyd and said that the blacks have tolerated their oppression for centuries and now the oppression level has exceeded and they are going to revolt and chop them to pieces and take their ancestor's revenge.

Daud fell in love with a nurse in the hospital where he worked and her name was Catherine who was a white girl but her mother was very true English woman as she did not approve her daughter dating a black man. Catherine had informed her mother that she was going on a date with a black man so her mother scolded her and called her disgusting. As Catherine said this to Daud, he thought that the racist ideology can never be separated from English mindset. He said that; "Nothing surprises me about the racist confusion of the European mind." (Gurnah, *Pilgrims Way* 127)

Abdulrazak Gurnah took the title *Pilgrims Way* which means visiting the shrine of St. Thomas Beckett of a local cathedral but as Daud was a Muslim, he could not complete the pilgrim that he was on the way.

The author Abdulrazak Gurnah has beautifully brought out the colonial as well as the postcolonial effects that impacted the native black people. He mainly focused on the immigrant life and the hardship that they had to face in the stranger's land. Most of his characters are very religious and they try to maintain those practices without any interruption. The characters in the novel want to die in their native land where they will be surrounded by their family and they would die in peace. Thus, colonial and postcolonial has played a huge role in the lives of the black people and they were the main victims of this rule.

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# COLONIALISM AND POSTCOLONIALISM IN SUKANYA DATTA'S SHORT STORIES: AN ANALYSIS

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## Abstract

*This paper is a comparative study of Colonialism, Postcolonialism in Science Fiction of SukanyaDutta. The intersections of Colonialism and Postcolonialism with reference to Science Fiction offer interesting interpretations. If Colonialism is settlement of people in a new land, Postcolonialism examines effects of colonialism. Many Science Fiction writers have delved with colonisation as a subject matter interrogating it with a postcolonial perspective. Having witnessed colonial history of India, Indian Science Fiction writers have been depicting postcolonial themes in their works. One such writer is Dr.SukanyaDatta. Among her short stories, "Eternal Eve" and "So Many Options" from her anthology named Worlds Apart have been analysed in this paper. These two stories portray colonisation of other habitable planets and its effects. It also addresses the concept of identity, displacement, gender, culture, resistance, alienation and technology elucidating colonial and postcolonial perspectives in these short stories.*

**Keywords:** science fiction, colonialism, postcolonialism, identity, culture, resistance

## Introduction

Colonialism is settlement of people in a new land. It's a practice of taking control of another land and inhabiting it with settlers to gain profit from its resources and economy. And Postcolonialism analyses its effects. A prominent writer PramodNayar in the book *Postcolonial Literature an Introduction* writes that colonialism is settlement by Europeans in non-European countries. Postcolonialism seeks to get political, cultural and economic freedom. It also refers to living conditions of newly independent nations. Many writers have dealt with these two historical processes in their writings unravelling their varied dimensions. Science Fiction is no exception.

Many Science fiction writers have employed themes of colonialism and postcolonialism to portray futuristic concepts such as inter-planetary colonisation and its effects, as also the resistance offered by the colonised planets to overcome its ill effects. In this technological and artificial intelligence era with a lot of futuristic possibilities, it seems plausible that colonisation of other planets

may not be just a fantastical proposition. Therefore this idea has been popular among science fiction writers who have used the tropes of colonisation of other planets by dwellers of Earth, and postcolonial revolt by the colonised in their writings. Some of such works are H.G. Well's *War of Worlds*, Ursula K. Le Guin's *The World for World is Forest*, and Vandana Singh's *Distance and Oblivion: A Journey*. Among them, SukanyaDutta is an Indian Science Fiction writer, whose stories can be analysed in the framework of colonialism and postcolonialism.

This paper is an attempt to undertake a comparative analysis of colonialism and postcolonialism in the select short stories by Dr.SukanyaDatta. Datta holds a doctorate in Zoology from University of Calcutta and has authored many short fiction published in anthologies such as *Worlds Apart*, *Once a Blue Moon* and *Beyond the Blues*. Among her short stories, "Eternal Eve" and "So Many Options" from her anthology named *Worlds Apart* have been analysed in this paper. These two stories portray colonisation of other habitable planets and its effects.



### Comparative analysis of Colonialism and Postcolonialism in “So Many Options” and “Eternal Eve”

In the select short stories colonialism is represented as the process of colonisation of other distant planets. The short story “So Many Options” includes the elements of colonialism and postcolonialism. Datta describes the reason behind colonising other planet as being depletion of resources on Earth, climate change and pollution. It is certain to find new planets which could support human settlement. Earth sends coloniser-crafts with humans to colonise other planets. Accordingly Earth colonises planets such as Kappa Sol 3, SigDel, and Zeta Sol3. It had sent coloniser crafts filled with a balanced ratio of male and female species to other colonised planets. These Colonies were under the control of Earth. Eventually some of the colonies became self-ruling.

The author also futuristically presents that, towards the end of twenty first century, Earth will be in critical condition because of ecological crisis, environment degradation, and natural resources will beat verge. Therefore she presents that Earth begins to colonise other habitable planets. The rich nations from Earth take control of planets which are abundant in resources like Planet alpha sol 3 and Planet beta sol 3. United Nations colonised Kappa Sol planet as it had small amount of water resource and minerals.

Among the colonised planets, Sol 3 (10<sup>th</sup> colonised planet) is powerful. Population on Kappa Sol 3 sums up to seventy three original aborigines as its founding parents and twenty seven indigenous Indians. Captain Seattle from Planet Kappa Sol 3 goes on to the task of Cultural exchange mission to another colonised planet SigDel. SigDel has been depicted as a peculiar planet with its species having no gender; they were hermaphrodites (having both male and female reproductive organs). People of SigDel could transmit messages using mind waves. They could communicate through minds. They never wanted the Sol 3 colonizers to find them, hence were creating mind blocks. As colonisers colonise people’s mind, culture and language, they pose threat to the existence of colonised people. A prominent

postcolonial theorist, NgugiwaThiang’O emphasises the necessity of decolonisation of language and mind to regain and retain nativity of colonised people. At a public lecture at Wits University he said that, “In colonial conquest, language did to the mind what the sword did to the bodies of the colonised”(qtd. in Wills) Similarly in this story “So Many Options, people of SigDel planet read minds to know about colonisers tactics and are creating barricades to mind as a defiance to colonisation.

One of the characters in this story, Tarchi is a SigDel Commander of the force. He welcomes Seattle to his planet. Commander of interplanetary friendship spacecraft Atiti expresses his thoughts to commander Tarchi regarding speculations he had on a Seattle, who had come to their planet SigDel on a mission of cultural negotiation. Here Atiti speaks about the visitor from Kappa Sol 3 planet making reference of colonisation. He said:

*“Remember the mental hostility we picked up from the visitor from planet alpha sol 3- Earths first venture at space colonisation? Remember the avariciousness of the visitors from Beta Sol 3? You haven’t forgotten the absolutely nasty behaviour of those from Gamma Sol 3. Have you? Keep your guard up at all times or else we will have to resort to local-memory amnesia for this visitor too. SigDels are getting rather fed up of having to create mind blocks so that sol 3 colonisers never again find their way back to us.”(Datta 189-190)*

But Tarchi made it clear that according to his perception Seattle is a friend. It was a friendly visit from Kappa Sol 3. SigDels never wanted colonisers to find the route of their planet. They had a special power to erase a memory temporarily. So they are creating mind blocks to suspicious visitors to their planet. It was their strategy to keep away colonisers. Creating mind blocks to guard themselves from Sol 3 colonisers is an act of resistance to colonisation. “Postcoloniality captures strategies of resistance, negotiation, and cultural assertion”. (Nayar 26)

Another planet Zeta sol 3 is Earth’s sixth colony. It is the planet full of women citizens. Author depicts a planet completely managed by women. With its beautiful cities and lakes, it has rich water sources.

This water resource is the main purpose behind SigDel's friendly relationship with Zeta Sol3. In the history of colonisation colonisers always aimed at gaining wealth, power and resources from its colonial land, and water definitely will be a precious resource in future.

Further the story reveals that, as time passes most of the colonial planets transform into independent planets. Gradually Earth loses control over its colonies. The colonies attain more power. Kappa planet is the first planet which became self-sustained planet. It relied on itself instead of its coloniser planet Earth for any sort of help. Sol 3 marvelled in science and technology. Now it is sending coloniser crafts to colonise other planets. From this it is clear that Kappa Planet has overcome the colonial sufferings and it has transformed into the most powerful planet among other colonised planets. The story therefore ironically presents the never ending processes of colonisation and resistances to it, showcasing that fight for survival and power underscores all endeavours.

The next story "Eternal Eve" is also amenable to a postcolonial analysis. The story is set on the Planet Mars. It is powerful and an independent planet. The author SukanyaDatta describes that the protagonist of the story Pritha, had been born on Earth, but now she is the citizen of Mars. Her name is derived from a Hindi word 'Prithvi' which means Earth. She is obsessed with Earth's culture and often visits holographic Earth museum on Mars. Pritha liked the lifestyle of Earth. When she had been taken to space tour to Earth in her school days, she visited museums and admired the jewellery of women. She expresses her views to her mom-

*"The jewellery the women wore...exquisite. We don't have comparable on Mars."* (Datta 145)

She is charmed by the jewellery and desires to wear it. But Pritha's mother considers such things as frivolous on Mars. Pritha experiences cultural alienation and dislocation from her ancestral culture. She is enticed by her native land's culture, customs and beliefs. Like her, some people on Mars were mesmerised and captivated by the life on Earth and

experience the discomfort of displacement from native land.

As in the introduction to *Empire Writes Back* author Bill Ashcroft et al. writes that, "displacement is a characteristic of postcolonial societies whether they are formed by a settlement, intervention, or a mixture of both,"(9) some characters in this story experience a sense of displacement. Pritha feels dislocated from being away from the Earth, her ancestral land. Living on Mars, she feels alienated from her roots and is caught in dual-identity. According to Homi Bhabha "identity constantly moves between positions, displacing others and being displaced in turn". (qtd in Nayar 50)

Another character in the story is Alator, who had been born on Mars. He had visited Earth just once when he was in school. He is in love with Pritha and as she is very fond of all Earthly things, he gifts her rose plant which was grown on Earth on Valentine's Day. The smell of the soil in terracotta pot and rose plant reminds her of her native land.

Alator's father worked in recycling unit of Asteroid, where small asteroids were smashed up to extract minerals from it. These minerals were essential to fuel life and economy on Mars and Earth. From this it is revealed that Mars is helping Earth by providing resources and minerals presenting Earth's dependence on its former colony.

### Conclusion

Hence the present paper is a comparative study in the framework of Colonialism, Postcolonialism in the Science Fiction of Sukanya Datta. It is an analysis of the process of colonising alien planets and its effects as well as the conditions of the postcolonial planets. The characters portrayed by the author, in the short stories "So Many Options" and "Eternal Eve" experience displacement, identity crisis, resistance to colonial rule, and alienation. They are caught in the throes of dual-identity. Eventually some of the colonised planets transform into technology driven society and get liberated. This fictional representation however has a possibility of becoming a reality in the present era of science and technology and Artificial Intelligence. Also, there is a prospect

of Earth dwellers establishing settlement on other planets, which in turn may bring strong possibilities of repetition of colonisation and resistance to it.

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# PROMOTION OF NEGRITUDE IN AIME CÉSAIRE'S *RETURN TO MY NATIVE LAND - A STUDY*

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## **Introduction**

Aime Césaire is a French Caribbean intellectual. He has struggled to decolonize/emancipate the entire society of blacks through his career as a writer; politician; and revolutionary. He felt that exposing the political and cultural Colonization/colonialism is a pre requisite for the emancipation/decolonization of only the Blacks of across the African continent but also across the world. He is one of those who coined the term 'Negritude' and who took the Negritude Movement forward. His *Return to My Native Land* is a manifestation of promotion of 'Negritude'. Hence an attempt is made to evince how this poem promotes Negritude in this paper.

## **Colonialism – A Note**

Colonization of various countries by the Europeans is the darkest phase and event in the human history. It is said that Europe had colonized almost all countries across the world. As many as four hundred and six countries were the colonies of such European countries as the United kingdom, France, Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, Germany, Russia, Denmark, Sweden and Italy. It is observed that almost all African countries conquered by seven European countries like Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy, Spain and Belgium. It is also known as The Scramble for Africa

The Europeans entered the African countries first as Missionaries and then as traders.

They took advantage of the state of ignorance and lack of unity among them politically and culturally in a steady yet firm way. They used two major strategies to colonize them the natives and namely inflicting tyranny/violence and infusing inferiority compiles The foreigners used such modern weapons and rifles that the native's were taken aback

and overtaken by the unheard, unknown panic, as guns and thus were made to surrender themselves to the white outsiders.

The natives were purchased. The lands were taken over. The mines were taken into possession. Then the countries were conquered completely. Afterwards, in name of development and progress in creating the transports (roads, railways), infrastructure such buildings dams, bridges and others, the colonizer exerted their supremacy over the natives entirely.

The evils of colonization got exposed gradually. The human slavery was worst of them. The natives were transformed into slaves in their own homeland on the one hand and transported to America, England and other colonies for free labour in the plantations and fields. Acute poverty was next in the order. Disruption of family was the next serious impact of colonization on the natives. The ethnic community and family way of life was interdependent among the people and homestead. In the farming/agriculture there used to be a sense of community collective cooperation. At the family level the system of homestead was in practice. According to this system, men and women undertake the work equally. Their livelihood depended on the crops of and cattle. When the men were sent to the mines and other plantations, the organic integrity of the families was damaged. The women and children were left in lurch.

It led to the next evil of colonization namely prostitution. Without land and the men of the families, the women became Victims of starvation and other problems. Without land and the working men of the families, the women became victims of starvation and other problems. There was no source of income for their survival. Thus they were forced into the prostitution. Besides, the natives under the

control of the foreign rule were put to the most heinous punishments. In other words, they were treated like 'things' not like human beings. This was the condition of the blacks in South Africa, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Jamaica and the Caribbean Islands

However the colonizers had an Achilles' heel too. In order to project themselves as the well wishers of the Blacks, they provided them opportunity to receive higher education at the institutions in the United States of America and England. Those who received Such Western education followed two paths of the Western Culture. They are also called compradors. The other set of them became nationalists protesting against the colonial rule, culture and ideology. They are also known as anticolonialists. They supported the local leaders rising against the colonial rule.

Writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, of Nigeria; Ngugi wa Thiong'o from Kenya; Tsitsi Dangarembga from Zimbabwe; Sylvia Wynter from Jamaica; Aimé Césaire and Franz Fanon from Martinique; Steve Biko from South Africa associated themselves with the intellectual agitation against the white colonial rule. Various forms and modes of attempts were made by them to establish a collective Black Consciousness among which writing was also one the creation of 'Negritude' is a major part of this mass anti/decolonial movement.

### **Negritude -A Note**

Aime Césaire is credited with the creation of the term Negritude: Robin D.G.Kelley makes a reference to this in his 'A Poetics of Anticolonialism' which appears as Introduction in Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* thus: "Césaire, Senghor, Leon Damas, and others, were part of a different intellectual circle that centred around a journal called L'Étudiant noir. In its March 1935 issue, Césaire published a passionate tract against assimilation, in which he first coined the term "Negritude."" [12].

Though there was a sense of demanding a universal unification of the Blacks in the political principles and concepts of the Black liberation activities, this term became current and gained

momentum at once. Negritude originally denotes a universal union of Negroes and it came to connote various attempts made through literature by various Black writers to voice against colonialism. Negritude is defined in The Oxford Companion to English Literature as follows:

A term denoting a movement in literature that dates from the 1930s, deriving impetus from French speaking African and Caribbean writers. It sought to recover and define in the richness of black cultural the dominant values of European colonialism, as a emerging specially protest against French and the French policy of assimilation. Prominent members included the poet and essayist, Leopold Sédar Senghor, who became the first President of the Republic of Senegal in 1960; Aimé Césaire, poet and dramatist from. Martinique... and Leon Damas (1912-78), from French Guiana. [706].

Negritude is defined in key Concepts in Post-colonial studies also. It provides additional information about it and thus it is worth while to note as follows:

A theory of the distinctiveness of African personality and culture. African Francophone writers such as Leopold Sédar Senghor and Birago Diop, and West Indian colleagues Such as Aimé Césaire, developed the theory of *négritude* in Paris in the period immediately before and after the Second World War. These African and Caribbean intellectuals had been recruited under the French colonial policy of assimilation to study at the metropolitan French universities. The fact that they came from diverse colonies and that they were also exposed in Paris to influences From African-American movements such as the Harlem Renaissance, may have influenced them in developing a general theory of negro people that sought to extend the perception of a unified negro 'race' to a concept of a specifically African personality: [166].

These definitions of Negritude 'show that the term was coined by Aime Césaire and pursued by like minded black intellectuals as the watch-word/principle to create awareness among the blacks for uniting several factions and organizations of

black champions together into a pan universal organization in order to destabilize the colonial values and to erect their cultural values. The members of this group consisted of poets and essayists. Further, it also serves as a theory of the distinct African personality and culture. The members had come from diverse colonies with an exposure to African-American movements like the Harlem Renaissance. It also suggest the influence of creating a general theory of negro people as a whole and a unified" negro race demonstrating the idea of African personality. In order to promote the African personality, there was a dire need demoting colonial perspective of African personality. To achieve this goal, these poets attempted to expose the impact of colonization on the life of the blacks in terms of the quality of their living and culture, which is will result in the rejection of colonial rule as well as colonial culture.

Promotion of Negritude in *Return to My Native Land*: Though Aime Cesaire was born and raised upto eleven years of his age in Basse-Pointe in Martinique and he stayed in Fort-de- France for about the eleven years on account of his education/studies. After being away from Martinique for some span of time, he experienced a sense of alienation in his own home town among his own people when he returned there. The experiences of alienation within one own land form the first Part of *Return to My Native Land* which in turn is a feature of the poetry of Negritude.

Cesaire realizes the harm of colonial rule to the natives of Martinique and reflects upon it at the opening of the poem in an unusual non-European prose form. The following is cited from the poem as an illustration in this regard: "At the end of the small hours abud with the frail light of coves, hungry, hail-marked with smallpox, blown to its bits by alcohol the Antilles shipwrecked in the mud of this bay, wickedly shipwrecked in this town of dust. [10]

The poet states that the natives are inflicted upon anguish by the colonization as they are victims of leprosy, consumption, Women, hunger of children, corruption, sodomies, slaughter, prejudice, stupidity, prostitution's hypocrisies, lusts, betrayals, lies and

others. Subsequently, the hypocrisies of the colonial claim that the white rules have brought about civilization through development t and progress are exposed in the poem. It is accomplished in the depiction of the house of the poet in the most pathetic Condition. The following demonstrates it thus:

My far distant happiness which makes aware of my true misery: a lumpy road plunging into a hollow where it scatters a handful of huts: a tireless road charging at full Speed towards a hill at whose top it is brutally drowned in a stagnant pool of dwarfish houses, a road madly climbing, recklessly descending, and the wooden wreck comically hoicked upon tiny cement legs which I call our home, its hairdo of galvanized iron buckling in the sun like a drying hide , the dining room, the rough floor with its glistening beads of nails, the rafters of pine and shadow which run across the ceiling, the ghostly chairs of straw, the grey light of the gas lamp, varnished and quick with cockroaches, the lamp buzzing till it hurts.... [15-16]

In the course of the poem, the poet describes another house in a narrow street with a bad smell. Accordingly, there are rats along with his six siblings in their house. As a result, panic is aroused in the Poet. The house is a sort of a shack with In a miserable condition with the old tin roof leaking rust down. The bed from which his race emerged is fixed on the kerosene drums sot made up of elephantiasis, goat Skin and banana leaves. This is satire on the colonial notion of progress.

The colonial history of African falsifies that that the Africans never had a concrete god, religion and its celebrations. It was said that they were heathens and worshiped their diseased ancestors. On the contrary, they claimed themselves to be superior in having the Christian religion and god. The poet decolonizes this notion by making fun of the Christmas celebration the illustration of which is given as shown under:

Christmas had agoraphobia. What it wanted was a day of continual bustle and preparation and kitchen work, a day of cleaning and anxiety  
in-case-ther's-not-enough,

in-case-we-run-short,  
 in-case-they-think-it-dull,  
 then in the evening a small church...

ALLELUIA

KYRIE ELESON... LEISON... LEISON

CHRISTE ELEISON... LEISON... LEISON

Not only mouths are singing, but hands, too, feet, buttocks, genitals, the whole fellow creature flowing in sound, voice and rhythm [17-18]

It is not gain said that the Christmas Is celebrated en mass with full fervor. There used to a month long Christmas carols along the streets, erecting Christmas tree, Santa Claus visit, colorful decoration in the month of December. But the poet satirizes by stating that it has had agoraphobia. The sacredness in the observation of the prayers in the churches is humiliated by describing that buttocks and genitals were also singing. Emile Snyder Observes this aspect as: "Yet in this meaningless Martinique life spent in the watching of the passing of Seasons (25) there is one moment of expectations, and that is the season of peace and plentifulness for the belly. C'esaire then a militant Marxist, attacks the Christian religion". [199]

The poet feels frustrated by his disowning town, poverty of the people and lack of unifying/organizing themselves. It leads him to decide to leave his home town However, he attempts to justify his decision to project himself as an image of the collective misery of the water world which includes hyena-men, leopard-men, a jew-man, a Kaffir man, a hindu man, a man from Harlem, the famine-man, the insult-man, the torture- man. Thus he leaves Martinique.

However, the sense of negritude does not permit him to stay away from his people and land. Hence, he returns to Martinique twice and stays there permanently. He undertakes the responsibility of taking the message of negritude to his people through rejection of the colonial ideology and rediscovering the history, culture of his ethnicity characterized by nobility. The awakening of negritude in him is expressed in the following lines of the poem thus:

Look at the tadpoles of my prodigious ancestry  
 hatched inside me!

Those who invented neither gunpowder nor  
 compass

Those who tamed neither steam nor electricity  
 those who explored neither sea nor sky

but those who know the humblest corners of the  
 country of suffering

those whose only journeys were uprootings

those who went to sleep on their knees

those who were domesticated and Christianized

those who were inoculated with degeneration...

But what strange pride suddenly fires mes) (54-66)

After recollection of the ethnicity and colonization of the natives, a new fire is ignited for liberation in him. The responsibility of the Negro revolutionary conveyed to the people. He employs negritude as a navigation to arouse a sense of black unity. He calls for the transformation of the individual Blacks and separate Black organizations into one single Universal entity. It is evident in: "'I give you my quick words Consume and wrap and as you wrap kiss me with a Violent kiss me trembling until I am the furious WE"[79]. Cesaire gives clarion call to the blacks for the unity burying the national and colonization barriers and boarder in the world because the rise and upsurge of the black's rebellion had individually started In South Africa, Nigeria, West Indies, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Jamaica, Martinque and in other African lands. Negritude aims at not only at racial freedom but also is against the superiority altitude of the whites with the blacks. It also shows that the African, history, culture and values were misrepresented and ruined by the white rulers. As a surrealist Cesaire invokes the old black champions to guide him. He wants to follow the leaders of his own race in the pursuit of black revolution leading to the black Unity. Cy Grant notes about the poem rightly thus:

The poem is a plea for wholeness, a recognition that blackness which transcends race. It was not limited in its meaning as the term & negritude has come to mean. Cesaire identified with that state of total belonging that can be only be found with an integration of mind and Spirit, man and nature ancient African animism and spirituality.

### Conclusion

Aime Cesaire's *Return to My Native Land* is committed to promote the spirit of negritude. It evinces the impact of colonialism/colonization on the native people. Accordingly poverty, starvation, backwardness are inflicted upon them. Then the indifferent attitude of the natives towards the western educated blacks is seen as a consequence of the colonization. After this, the necessity of negritude is highlighted through a satire on Christmas, return of the poet to his native land with a zeal of educating and organizing the blacks for agitation against the colonial values and rule by following the path of the former champions of Black who fought and died for the cause of the freedom of blacks/Africans. Therefore it is concluded that Aime Cesaire's *Return to My Native Land* deals with the theme of promotion of negritude.

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# DEBRIEFING MULK RAJ ANAND'S CONTEMPLATION ON SUBALTERN: A CRITIQUE FROM 21ST CENTURY INDIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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## Abstract

*The conflict between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to frame and re-frame the historical events driven by cause-effect theory from time to time has received prominent place in the world history due to its changing magnitude in accordance with the pace of geo-natural cycle, socio-cultural-economic-political and religious transformations across the globe. Man is one of the beautiful creations of the nature and considered to be a social animal and rational too, hence being in chain and tending to share the roots and branches of his existence with the like-minded species is necessarily a true fact irrespective of caste, creed, color and status without any discrimination and bias. But tens of thousands of pages of history of mankind reveals the devil effect of disparity, imbalance, ill-treatment, class clashes, agitations, revolutions, reformations and innovations driven by the traditional practitioners, fundamentalists, anti-human and anti-social elements since the time when man started to lead a collective and civic life, and paved provided space to demarcate two distinct groups as human exploiters and sufferers. The sensitive and far-sighted notion of the scholarly members of the think tank clubs reflected in the form of writings, preach and practice has sowed the seeds of novel approaches to perceive the human beings just as human beings duly respecting each other. Since the civilization several great thinkers, laureates, experts, revolutionists, reformers and advocates of humanity have contributed a lot through their noble deeds to minimize the gap and distance between the class and mass people in order to ensure equity and equality of opportunity to the marginalized. Yet, some of the ugly remains of the evil practices of human discriminations on the basis of birth and socio-economic status are still bothering as a dangerous threat to mankind even in the most advanced 21<sup>st</sup> century is a very sensitive matter to think seriously in order to provide justice to the marginalized and enable them to come to the mainstream of human life. The neo-historians have to face the challenges of taking forward the glimpses of present history through 'bottom-up' approach to the generations to come. In this regard several governmental and nongovernmental organizations of varied dimensions are striving hard to achieve and ensure equity to all the citizens in the developed and developing countries. Accordingly, in India various academic institutions and especially higher education centers are putting into efforts to sensitize the field of literature still more effectively in order to continue the practice of rigorous sparking so achieve overall transformation in the public system. In view of the above discussion, the present paper is intended to just put in a little effort to recall and debrief the diverse perceptions and contemplations of socially committed novelist Mulk Raj Anand about democracy, autocracy, hypocrisy, bureaucracy, dictatorship and individual autonomy and their inter and intra connectivity, relevance and significance and pros and cons in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> century advancement in manifold perspectives of the society.*

**Keywords:** *debriefing, contemplation, subaltern, perspective, diverse perception, marginalized, discrimination, imbalance, tolerance in silence, bottom-up, mainstreaming*

## Introduction

Literature is one of the strongest medium of societal transformation. Literature as a tool and as an effective medium of stimulus-response process will pave a perfect path to hear the unheard, strengthen the voice of voiceless and act as a beacon light to enable the problem creators and

problem solvers to maintain equilibrium in their stand and plays a vital role with intentional adoption of several requisite techniques like hue and cry, pick and choose, contrast and contract and specific means of practicum to a specific socio-economic and political issue. The linguistic and non-linguistic institutions, establishments, and

higher education councils: organizations: bodies across the country are working for the cause of humanity and uplift the status of subalterns through well planned, orderly organized and meticulously designed academic activities and streams in the form of independent disciplines, department, branch or wings of studies. The sincere efforts of such bodies and organizations are praise worthy and trust worthy as they are consciously trying to address the issues and concerns of deliberately neglected sects, sex and group of categorically ill classified persons. The branch of Subaltern studies is one among the budding and emerging branches which is playing an eye opener instrumental role to revisit the best modern possibilities to bring the marginalized groups on the societal main stream to ensure the success of democracy in the Indian diverse culture from socio-economic-political perspective.

### **Concept and Definitions of Subaltern**

The Architect of Indian Constitution, Vishwa Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar while addressing the Constituent Assembly opined and warned as follows; “we are entering an era of political equality. But economically and socially we remain deeply unequal society. Unless we resolve this contradiction, inequality will destroy our democracy”.

A million dollar question stands in front of all of us is that, have we truly achieved ‘equality’ as ensured in the preamble of our constitution? Have we really constructed subalternless society during the period of 75 years of post-independence? The answers to both the questions lead to negation!

The victims of poverty; socio-economically backward persons especially peasants and vulnerable labors of middle age are placed as subalterns in the pages of world history, later who forms a separate group to attract the attention of the sensitive minds to improve their existence much against resistance.

The cruelty of classification of human beings on the basis of birth, skin color, work performed, wealth possessed and religion practiced etc., has

been subjected to condemnation by the social reformers, religious leaders and political philosophers and advocates of humanity across the globe since time immemorial. However, the intensity and rigorousness of the exploitation of multilayered, marginalized, voiceless and unheard persons in the bottom row of the human hierarchy.

The resultant of two Latin words ‘sub=next below’ and ‘alternus=every other’ is the derivation of the term “subaltern” which describes the miserable status of the persons of socio-economic-political and religiously least ranked and knocked down to the border lines of the society openly denying the rights of equality, equality of opportunity, dignity and individuality.

Subalterns are defined as the deliberately distinguished group of victims who are socio-economic-politically marginalized, culturally ignored, purposely denied individual status and subjected to violence by the dominated factions of prejudiced society. It is a kind of invisible war between the least number of powerful persons with arms and ammunitions and a large number of common people without weapons and instruments.

### **Scope, Diversity and Dimensions of Subaltern studies**

‘Revolution’ and ‘freedom’ are the two prominent words born out of the cause-effect theory which have gained universal popularity and received wide attention of the globe since 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and lead to conceptualize, classify, segregate, analyze, synthesize, coin, modify, edit, add and delete several socio-economic-political and religious equations, inequalities and haunting issues beyond the geographical frontiers and thereby sowed seeds to many distinguished branches of pedagogy. “Subaltern” studies is such one of the new concepts emerged as an independent branch of study originated out of the Marxist philosophy of Antonio Gramsci an Italian Linguist and Socio-Political Philosopher who coined the word ‘Subaltern’ and used first time in his Since the time immemorial, the biological origin of the mankind witnessed manifold

diversions in its way of human life and travelled through several ups and downs in its way to pave the path to form history to enlighten the future generation.

The varied dimensions of post-colonial socio-economic-political and cultural scenario are facing controlled treatment by the hegemonic and powerful hierarchical attitude which promotes the unwanted exclusion of the persons belongs to weaker section. Precedential dominance over the poor and unorganized group of subordinates is being taken for granted by the elite and royal class.

Though the quantum of painful repercussions experienced by all types-categories-groups of subalterns across the globe are same in magnitude and dimensions, but nature of discrimination, anticipatory approaches, treatments, management of issues and their concerns etc., differ in several major pockets of Western, Eastern, Middle East, Africa, Asia and South Asian countries.

Since the time immemorial the enormous emphasis laid by the literary field over the societal concerns in manifold dimensions has been reframed with a new look and design to enable the voiceless to raise their voice against the inequalities and protest for their rights in an appropriate proportion. The scope of the literary field in this regard may sometimes leads to raise a question; that is it like putting the cart before the horse? Definitely not, the issues of subaltern received wide publicity through the narratives, writings, articles, seminars, symposiums, publications, dialogues and group discussion monitored through a class of writers and members of think tanks through their reflective sharp thoughts and pens.

Hence, the scope of subaltern studies has occupied a remarkable position in the contemporary literary field.

### **Profound Philosophers of Subaltern Studies**

The turning point that lead the mass people especially the sufferers of subordination of social rank, socio-political-religious power, individual autonomy and authority and inability to express

their botheration to unite, resist, agitate and protest against the injustice, ill-treatment, in-human and disregard to put an end to the violence against them has become possible under the umbrella of the constitutional provisions in India. Similarly the citizen charters of the United Nations Organization gave emphasis to protect the interest of the suppressed at global level. The far sighted fore thoughts of several social thinkers and sharp narratives of literary warriors helped reflecting the extent of pain experience by the subjugated, marginalized and underestimated groups. Several prominent writers strived hard to bring forth the seriousness of the unwanted societal issues and concerns related to 'the other' in the post-colonial period through their mighty pen and papers and finally succeeded to form a separate and independent branch of studies or discipline which is specifically termed as 'subaltern studies' at global level.

The yeoman contributions given by the great architect of the Indian constitution Vishwa Ratna Dr.Babasaheb Ramaji Ambedkar to uplift, rationalize and improvise the status of the large group of downtrodden by dedicating his entire life, wit, zeal, energy and total existence. The process of mainstreaming the neglected and rejected class witnessed expeditiousness just due to the widest, strongest, largest and exhaustive socio-economic-political-religious-cultural-legal provisions knitted in the form of web and occupied the total space in the post-independent Indian scenario.

Followed by Antonio Gramsci, in India veteran activists like Ranajit Guha-the founder of a popular organization 'The Subaltern Studies Group' and a few some other scholars like Chakrabarthy Chandirma, Gayatri Chakrabarthy Spivak, Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarthy, Gyanendra Pandey, Vivek Chibber, Gautham Bhadra, Gyan Prakash, Shahid Amin and Saurabh Dube like several many others are put into sincere efforts to unveil the unwanted ugliness of the societal attitude towards certain persons belongs to classless, powerless, penniless and identity less groups and the consequences of denial of the

natural rights of such groups through their fictional and non-fictional literary narratives in the Indian context.

### **Literary impact and Paradigm Shift in Subaltern Status – The Dual-Magic in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Socio-Economic-Political perspective**

The humanistic approaches and principles as envisaged in the writings of great narrators like E P Thompson, Carlo Ginzburg and Hayden White have by and large influenced the skills, efficiency, pattern and mode of presentation of modern age 'Subaltern Studies Historians'.

Change is the only unchangeable law of the nature and the society and it is a continuous and dynamic process, as a result the concept, definition and dimensions of caste, gender, occupation, ethnicity, poverty, language, religion, culture-custom-tradition, beliefs in myths and superstitions, feudal system, weaker sex, sexual minorities, east-west encounter, colonial, post-colonial, burdened and such other several human development indicators have changed their shape, size and impact factors.

Class-power-status dominant societal practices portraying and projecting the subalterns as a symbol of silence, kindness, forgiveness, tolerance, saturated, broad hearted and more over voiceless against all types of violence and exploitations at multilevel throughout their life with masked willingness, snubbed desires, much against their conscious and conscience duly sacrificing their self-actualization and self-realization.

The modern measures and technically driven initiations with multi-level checking at global, national, state and local level through governmental and non-governmental agencies to bring parity in rights and duties have compelled the prejudiced society, the infected traditionalist mindset, the egoistic sense of fake elatedness and artificial royal highnesses to come out of the illusion and accept the ground realities and be practically honest to honor and respect the status of subalterns on par line with their own status, duly

providing them socio-economic-political-cultural equity and equality of opportunities.

### **Subaltern Portraits in the works of Mulk Raj Anand**

Mulk Raj Anand is one of the creative, sensitive and realistic writers of English literature in India. The characters and portraits are symbolically depicts the grave effects and the sour experiences tasted as victims of marginalized, exploited, abused and downtrodden, plight, the other and subjugated state.

The inter personal and intra personal relations plotted in his fictional and non-fictional works reflects the then contextual realities and hardness of the societal attitudes towards religious hypocrisy, feudal system, East-West encounter, the place of woman, superstitions, poverty, hunger, exploitation, struggle for existence, tolerance in silence, voices heard and unheard, under privileged, excluded, second grade citizens, deprived, neglected, denied, ignored, quest for identity, regardless of age and humanity anddeplored religious beliefs etc., are his common themes.

### **Untouchable (1935)**

The characters of Bakha-Lakha and Sohini are the sensitive concerns of Mulk Raj Anand regarding – caste, poverty, employment and dignity of labor, work underweighted labor, societal contradictions on work and principle of "work is worship", underestimation on the basis work, illusionary concluded ill fate and surrendered to superstitions, triply marginalized gender bias, starvation, snubbed emotions- disregarded feelings, miserable life under always controlled situation and inhuman inter-intra personal relations etc., are compelling the civic society to bring changes in its approach and practice.

### **Coolie (1937)**

Munno- a 17 year old minor - a destitute character symbolized as a victim of the cruelty of poverty, exploitation, capitalism, industrialism and

colonialism and its extended clutches geared around the non-payment of loan, child labor and denial of child rights. The theme of the novel revolve around; violation of labour interests, migration, health-hygiene, efforts in search of employment, right to live, struggle for bread, butter and shelter, seldom experiences of conditional and stationary love-care-concern and human approach, peasantry, industrial, economic in equality, quest for self actualization and self realization, untimely death – due to chronic ill health, victim of royal dictatorship and mourning tolerance in silence.

### **Two Leaves and Bud(1937)**

Tragic story of Gangu's family with his wife Sajani, son Budhu and daughter Leila is a symbolic representation of the exploited, subjugated and marginally reduced life of poor, helpless, innocent peasants of Assam during the British resume and their pitiful life as tenanted labors of tea plantation who are consistently subjected to financial constraints, sexual abuse and assaults, health and hygienic hazards, merciless death and its warranted rituals, priceless and costless life and death of powerless, greed and lust of persons with power and position and at last prejudiced, biased and racial judiciary which holds the mirror to the magnanimity of miserable life of the Indian subaltern peasants during the colonial period.

### **The Village (1942)**

Lalu Singh a main character of a first part of a trilogy- *The Village* who was a peasant in Punjab and an aspirant of joining the British Army in order to meet the requirements of his family. The socio-economic-political scenario of British ruled Punjab and the socio-racial constraints to join the Army and the internal biases rooted with racial, colonial and social discriminations hold the mirror to the reality of the subjugation of subalterns of the context.

### **Across the Black Waters (1939)**

The second trilogy – *Across the Black Water*, Mulk Raj Anand further narrated the affinity and

affection of Lalu Singh towards his little piece of land and his struggle to retain it for the sake of his family at the cost of his life putting across into the dangers of World War-I to fight against the German but in vain to survive his land. Again the misuse, exploitation, inhuman suppression of the innocence by the dictatorship attitude of the ruling British officers and victimizing the voiceless poor class subalterns recklessly and snatched the living rights of the poor peasants.

### **The Sword and the Sickle**

Lalu Singh a Punjabi peasant with his entire family and a piece of land became a victim of the greedy attitude of the landlords and British Officers though his compelled to serve as a sepoy in the British Army and fought against the German force in France on behalf of British. Symbolically speaking the sword is a sign of blind power without humanity and the sickle is a feeble victim in front of merciless mighty force of cruelty and suppression.

### **The Bubble (1984)**

Being influenced by Gandhian Principles, Mulk Raj Anand stick up firmly to his concern and comments on religious chauvinism, mixed influence of western culture on Indian customs and traditions, disgraced status of woman in the disintegrated Indian subcontinent, intense poverty and intolerable hunger and starvation etc., holds the mirror to the sarcastic position of subalterns during post colonial period.

### **The Old Woman and The Cow (1960)**

Gouri, the protagonist heroine of the dually titled novel and represents the pathetic conditions rural pockets of Indian socio-cultural and religious scenario and compels the social thinkers for anticipatory remedial measures to uplift their subaltern status. The deprived and denied natural rights, basic needs and emotional security of the female species and deliberate misuse of bio-psycho-physical helpless conditions of 'the other' are the serious concerns repeatedly and

consistently advocated by Mulk Raj Anand in this novel too.

### **The Big Heart**

The novel is all about inter and intra personal relations In the British ruled rural India and induced influence of the divide and rule policy of the colonial authorities and the pros and cons of modern industries over the indigenous home crafts. The marital and extra marital relation among the opposite species with low health profile and the devil effect of incurable contagious diseases and its related issues are once again the notable sensitive concerns of the author. The concept of slavery, agitation for freedom, patriotism, individual and collective goals, mutual kind concerns, liberal family policies which ultimately results into the ironical tragedy to prove again the delicate state of the subalterns.

### **The Road (1961)**

Bhiku a major character of this novel resembles with that of Bakha's role in Untouchable with similar caste based discriminations and its anti human treatment within the race and the overall state of slavery under the colonial rule clearly emphasizes the triply marginalized conditions of the caste based subalterns. The ghostly disease of division of human beings on the basis of caste and its psycho-social deep effects and mutual rivalry reflections in manifold dimensions of traditional Indian set up are once again the major concerns of the author.

### **Constitutional Provisions : Institutions and Autonomous Bodies- Mainstreaming of Subalterns**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century distinguished social reformer, prowess legal expert, accomplished global scholar, the architect of Indian Constitution Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar always opined that "wherever there is any conflict of interest between the country and the untouchables, so far as I am concerned, the untouchables' interests will take precedence over the interests of the country". The importance and

intense magnitude of the essence of freedom for free and independent thinking can be well gauged through the words of Dr. Babasaheb Ramaji Ambedkar who is also necessarily regarded as one of the strong advocates of subaltern perspective.

In order to eradicate and curb the discriminatory behavior of the diseased and prejudiced societal approach, a large number of set of ordinances, acts, rules, regulations and legal aids have been framed to safe guard the interest of the victims of the pre-notioned and paralyzed customs and traditions and forced to implement them unconditionally to ensure equity and equality of opportunity and retain the human dignity irrespective of caste, creed, color, class and cache of individualistic characters.

In order to uphold the freedom endowed by the super natural power without any kind of discrimination certain constitutional bodies have been established to assure the dignified life and to lead respectful life being liberated from the strong hold of 'subalternness' treatment duly placing themselves on the mainstream of the human society.

The following are some of the few Constitutional Institutions and Bodies which have been formed to cater to the effective narrations of several literary scholars and critics; NCBC-National Commission for Backward Classes(Art-338B), NALSA – National Legal Services Authority for weaker section, NCSC- National Commission for Scheduled Castes(Art 338), National Commission for Scheduled Tribes(Art-338A), CLM : Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities(Art- 350B), CAG : Comptroller and Auditor General of India(Art-148), Advocate General of India(Art-76), AGS : Advocate General of the States, State Public Service Commissions, Election Commission of India, Women Rights Commissions at State and National Level, Child Rights Commissions at State and National Level, Labor Commissions and Commission for Senior Citizens and Persons With Disability.

### **Major Projects and Programmes to Mainstream the Subalterns**

Under the provisions of the Constitutional framework and directive principles of state policies, innumerable number of schemes, plans, projects, programmes and pro-progressive guaranteed activities like skill oriented occupations, new educational policies, high-tech health care programmes, user friendly technological assistance, freebies based on-gender, age, class, ethnicity and social groups, promotion of girls education- beti bachao : beti padhao, rehabilitation of; sex workers, minorities, unorganized groups of workers and their welfare measures, pro-labor industrial culture, controlling and maintenance of desirable sex ratio, congenial and cordial environment to expedite the process of mainstreaming through multi layered checks and crosschecks in a campaign mode with public-private-partnership approach within the assured limits of constitutional provisions.

Political participation, vociferous treatment for distribution of resources, benefits and facilities, health mission, mother hood protection and maternity leave extended period for women employees of not only government sector but also private and public enterprises.

### **Conclusion**

Contemporary Indian writings in English especially the literary contributions of creative novelist Mulk Raj Anand has spared sufficient space through fictional and non-fictional segments to review the factual and contextual status of subaltern groups from category-specific angle to re-address, re-define, re-consider, re-visit and reframe the intrinsic and extrinsic issues duly subjecting them to horizontal and vertical dissection in order to draw induce specific bodies to pay their attention to a specific issue in a more specific manner to reach the outreach and proceed to attain the goal of mainstreaming the subalterns especially the Dalits, Women, Socio-Economically Unemployed Youth, Persons of ignored and suppressed communities and factions, Peasants and Un-Organized Labors,

Senior Citizens and Persons with Special Needs, Orphans and Victims of un-usual and un-expected situations. The characters portrayed by Mulk Raj Anand represent the pathetic state of deprived and under privileged persons and group of affected subjugates during pre and post-colonial period. In spite of the efforts and contributions of the literary narratives the size and burden of the subalterns in Indian sub-continent is not completely vanished and disappeared. The clutches of anti-human and anti-social elements are still strong, active, alive and are under the strong hold of unseen hands of powerful factions of the hierarchy based public system and have become an impediment to actualize the goal of mainstreaming the subalterns, and hence the dream of attainment of universal equity and equality has remained as a dream in itself. Hence, there is an emergent need of collective effort not only by the governmental and non-governmental agencies; the higher educational institutions are also expected to contribute their still best through humanistic and exact science branches to uplift the downtrodden and enable them to come to the mainstream of the modern Indian society to prove the true achievement of millennium development goals at global level. India is being considered as one of the developed and strongest countries with large and huge size of human resources need to make optimum use of relevant technology and to proceed to rebuild the country with classless and casteless society where in every citizen must live with self-esteem, honour and dignity as dreamt by Lord Buddha-Lord Basaveshwar and Bharat Ratna Dr. Bheemaroo Ramji Ambedkar in order to meet the 21st century challenges, emerge as a model country to the rest of the contemporary world. To achieve this, still more precious, valid, solid, and contextually relevant narrative contributions from the literary scholars, researchers and fictional and non-fictional laureates irrespective of language barriers are expected to ensure the mainstreaming of subalterns as expeditiously as possible.

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# MAINSTREAM AND DALIT LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE EXPLORATION OF MARGINALIZATION AND AGENCY

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## Abstract

Mainstream Indian literature largely reflects the cultural and social ethos of dominant castes and classes, often universalizing experiences while sidelining marginalized voices. In contrast, Dalit literature arises as a powerful counter-discourse, exposing caste-based oppression and highlighting the lived realities of marginalized communities. This article explores the distinctions and intersections between mainstream and Dalit literature, focusing on how the latter acts as a form of resistance and self-expression. By analyzing thematic concerns, stylistic choices, and sociopolitical contexts, it underscores the unique role of Dalit literature in challenging hegemonic narratives. Unlike mainstream literature, which often seeks universality, Dalit literature politicizes personal experiences to confront caste-based inequities. In doing so, it not only subverts the mainstream literary canon but also reshapes India's cultural identity by amplifying marginalized voices and reclaiming agency. This dynamic interplay between mainstream and Dalit traditions enriches India's literary heritage, fostering a more inclusive and diverse understanding of its complex social fabric.

**Keywords:** caste oppression, resistance, self-expression, marginalized voices, cultural identity, hegemony, inclusivity

## Introduction

Mainstream Indian literature, historically shaped by upper-caste writers, frequently presents a sanitized narrative of the nation's socio-cultural realities. Often emphasizing themes like nationalism, spirituality, and individual struggles, it tends to universalize experiences while marginalizing the voices of oppressed communities. Works such as R.K. Narayan's *Malgudi Days* portray an idyllic rural India but largely ignore the pervasive realities of caste discrimination. This omission, as Arundhati Roy critiques, reflects the upper-caste literary tradition's tendency to **"erase uncomfortable truths while glorifying imagined harmonies"** (*The God of Small Things*, 1997).

In contrast, Dalit literature offers a raw and unfiltered portrayal of caste-based oppression and systemic marginalization. Rooted in the lived experiences of Dalit communities, it narrates stories of resilience, identity, and agency. Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan: A Dalit's Life* vividly recounts the indignities of untouchability, emphasizing that **"caste is a disease that eats away the soul"** (Valmiki, 1997). Similarly, Bama's *Karukku* sheds light on the intersection of caste and gender,

presenting a searing critique of societal and institutional oppression.

This divergence reflects not only aesthetic differences but also entrenched sociopolitical inequalities. While mainstream literature often seeks to universalize and aestheticize, Dalit literature personalizes and politicizes, positioning itself as a form of resistance. Dalit writers **"write to survive, to assert, and to resist,"** as Sharan Kumar Limbale articulates in *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature* (2004).

By challenging hegemonic narratives, Dalit literature redefines India's literary space, shifting the focus from imagined ideals to harsh realities. Its rise as a cultural movement signifies a reclamation of voice and identity, ensuring that the narratives of the oppressed are not erased but celebrated as an integral part of India's evolving cultural and literary identity.

## Theoretical Framework

The analysis of mainstream and Dalit literature can be effectively situated within the frameworks of postcolonial theory and subaltern studies, both of which interrogate power structures and amplify marginalized voices. Postcolonial theory, which

critiques the dynamics between the colonizer and the colonized, finds a parallel in caste hierarchies within Indian society, where dominant castes perpetuate cultural hegemony over Dalits. As Gayatri Spivak famously asks in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, “*Can those who have been silenced and oppressed find space to articulate their subjectivity?*” Dalit literature answers this question affirmatively by reclaiming agency and challenging entrenched narratives.

Subaltern studies, with its focus on the histories and voices of those excluded from dominant discourses, aligns closely with the ethos of Dalit literature. Scholars like Ranajit Guha emphasize the need to recover the stories of marginalized groups, asserting that “*the history of the subaltern is the history of resistance*” (*Subaltern Studies I*, 1982). Similarly, Dalit literature disrupts mainstream literary frameworks by prioritizing the lived experiences of Dalit communities. Works like Omprakash Valmiki’s *Joothan* and Bama’s *Karukku* exemplify this ethos, challenging the silence imposed by caste oppression and asserting the agency of marginalized voices in India’s literary and cultural narratives.

### Defining Mainstream Literature

Mainstream Indian literature is characterized by works predominantly authored by upper-caste and urban writers, often reflecting dominant cultural and philosophical ideologies. Rooted in traditions that prioritize Brahmanical and elitist perspectives, it extends from ancient Sanskrit epics like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* to contemporary Indian English literature by authors such as R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, and Vikram Seth. These works often construct a homogenized vision of India, emphasizing themes like nationalism, spirituality, and modernity while overlooking the realities of caste oppression.

For example, R.K. Narayan’s *Malgudi Days* presents a microcosm of Indian village life, celebrated for its simplicity and humor. However, as Dalit scholar Kancha Ilaiah notes, such narratives “*erase the caste-based hierarchies and violence*

*embedded in rural life*” (*Why I Am Not a Hindu*, 1996). Narayan’s idyllic portrayal omits the systemic discrimination that defines the lived experiences of marginalized communities, reinforcing an incomplete and sanitized cultural narrative.

Modern Indian English literature also continues this trend, often engaging with issues of global relevance while sidelining caste. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, for instance, is a monumental narrative about postcolonial identity and nationalism but scarcely addresses caste, which Ambedkar famously called “*a system that divides laborers, not labor*” (*Annihilation of Caste*, 1936).

While these works are celebrated for their literary craft and thematic depth, their silence on caste reflects a broader issue within mainstream literature. By prioritizing universality and aesthetic finesse over the specific struggles of marginalized communities, mainstream literature often reinforces dominant ideologies. As a result, it leaves little space for voices from the periphery, necessitating counter-narratives like Dalit literature to provide a fuller and more authentic representation of India’s socio-cultural fabric.

### Dalit Literature: A Counter-Narrative

Dalit literature emerges as a potent expression of the lived experiences of Dalit communities, bringing the harsh realities of caste oppression to the forefront. It is deeply political and serves as a counter-narrative to dominant, upper-caste ideologies. Pioneering figures like B.R. Ambedkar, Omprakash Valmiki, and Sharan Kumar Limbale have made significant contributions to this genre by challenging Brahmanical hegemony and reclaiming agency for Dalits. As Ambedkar emphasized in *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), “*Caste has killed the public spirit; caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible.*” This highlights the social fragmentation and systemic oppression that Dalit literature seeks to challenge.

Omprakash Valmiki’s *Joothan: A Dalit’s Life* (1997) is a landmark work in Dalit literature. Through an unflinching recount of his experiences as an untouchable, Valmiki exposes the systemic

dehumanization embedded in the caste system. He writes, *“The truth of our lives cannot be understood by those who live in ivory towers.”* Valmiki dismantles the myth of caste as a harmonious and functional system, revealing instead its violence and degradation.

Similarly, Bama’s *Karukku* (1992) explores the intersectionality of caste and gender, highlighting the compounded discrimination faced by Dalit women. Bama’s narrative powerfully illustrates her awakening to caste inequalities, as she notes, *“We are crushed by caste and crushed further by our womanhood.”* Her work emphasizes the resilience of Dalit women in the face of dual oppression.

By foregrounding such voices, Dalit literature not only asserts the humanity of Dalits but also challenges the erasure of their struggles in mainstream narratives, demanding recognition and justice.

### Themes in Dalit Literature

Dalit literature is deeply rooted in the lived experiences of marginalized communities and is defined by its recurring themes of resistance, resilience, and the reclamation of identity. It not only exposes systemic caste oppression but also celebrates the courage and spirit of Dalits in confronting centuries of discrimination.

**Caste Oppression :** One of the central themes in Dalit literature is the stark depiction of caste-based violence and oppression. Sharan Kumar Limbale’s *The Outcaste (Akkarmashi)*, (2003) vividly portrays the humiliations faced by Dalits. Limbale writes, *“My poverty and my caste were like two thorns in my flesh, pressing deeper every day.”* Through such narratives, Dalit writers break the silence around the dehumanizing effects of caste and challenge its normalization in mainstream discourse.

**Resilience :** While acknowledging the pervasive suffering caused by caste discrimination, Dalit literature also celebrates the resilience and agency of marginalized communities. Bama’s *Karukku* (1992) exemplifies this theme by chronicling her struggles as a Dalit woman while emphasizing the strength she derives from her community and faith. Bama writes,

*“We may be crushed, but we will rise again. The fire within us cannot be extinguished.”* This focus on survival and defiance reclaims hope and humanity amid systemic oppression.

**Reclamation of Identity :** Dalit literature actively resists cultural and linguistic elitism by embracing regional languages and dialects, reclaiming a marginalized cultural heritage. By writing in Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, and other local tongues, writers reject the dominance of Sanskritized or English literary traditions. As Limbale asserts in *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature* (2004), *“Dalit literature is not simply literature; it is a movement for the reclamation of identity, history, and voice.”*

Together, these themes redefine Indian literature, amplifying voices that have long been suppressed and affirming the dignity and humanity of Dalit communities.

### Stylistic Differences Between Mainstream and Dalit Literature

The stylistic differences between mainstream and Dalit literature stem from their distinct objectives and intended audiences. While mainstream literature often emphasizes aesthetic refinement and caters to elite sensibilities, Dalit literature prioritizes accessibility, rawness, and political engagement to amplify the voices of marginalized communities.

**Language and Accessibility :** Mainstream literature frequently employs sophisticated language, intricate metaphors, and a universalized narrative style, often alienating marginalized readers. Writers like Anita Desai use intricate psychological realism to explore themes of alienation and inner turmoil. For instance, in *Clear Light of Day* (1980), Desai’s lyrical prose reflects upper-middle-class concerns, largely divorced from systemic oppression. In contrast, Dalit literature uses direct, evocative language that communicates lived realities with unflinching honesty. Arjun Dangle, in his short story “Promotion” (*Poisoned Bread*, 1992), writes, *“For us, life is not about beauty or dreams; it is about survival. Words are our weapons.”* Such prose

rejects literary elitism, making Dalit narratives accessible and relatable to the oppressed.

**Aesthetic Priorities :** Mainstream literature often prioritizes artistic finesse, striving for universality and entertainment. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), for example, uses magical realism to weave a complex, layered narrative about India's postcolonial identity, yet it rarely engages with the caste system. Dalit literature, on the other hand, foregrounds authenticity and political resistance. As Sharan Kumar Limbale asserts in *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature* (2004), "***Dalit literature does not seek beauty; it seeks truth.***" This approach reflects its purpose: to provoke, disrupt, and transform societal norms by confronting caste oppression head-on.

By rejecting mainstream conventions and embracing an unapologetically confrontational style, Dalit literature challenges the hegemony of the literary elite, carving out a distinct and revolutionary space within Indian literature.

### Intersectionality and Emerging Dialogues

While mainstream and Dalit literature are often viewed as oppositional, emerging narratives reveal areas of intersection. Writers like Rohinton Mistry in *A Fine Balance* (1995) and Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things* (1997) incorporate caste as a significant theme, thereby challenging the exclusivity of the mainstream canon. Mistry's novel, for instance, portrays the struggles of Dalit characters like Ishvar and Omprakash, highlighting the brutal realities of caste oppression. Similarly, Roy's depiction of Velutha, a Dalit character in *The God of Small Things*, emphasizes caste-based violence and systemic discrimination. However, such portrayals often face critique for their outsider perspective. As Dalit scholar Gopal Guru points out, "***Non-Dalit writers can only observe caste from the outside; they cannot truly embody or understand its lived experience***" (*Economic and Political Weekly*, 2000).

Efforts to translate Dalit works into English have further bridged the gap between mainstream and Dalit literature. These collaborations amplify marginalized voices, making them accessible to

wider audiences. For instance, the translation of Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* and Bama's *Karukku* has brought Dalit perspectives to the global stage. Such initiatives create a richer and more equitable dialogue within Indian literary traditions, fostering inclusivity and challenging the dominance of upper-caste narratives in the literary canon.

### Challenges Facing Dalit Literature

Despite its profound cultural and political significance, Dalit literature faces numerous challenges that hinder its visibility and impact within the broader literary landscape. These challenges reflect deep-rooted systemic inequities and cultural biases that continue to marginalize Dalit voices.

**Marginalization in Publishing :** Dalit literature often struggles for representation in mainstream publishing, which remains dominated by upper-caste gatekeepers. Works by Dalit writers are frequently overlooked in favor of narratives that conform to dominant aesthetic and cultural norms. Sharan Kumar Limbale aptly observes, "***Dalit literature is not just ignored; it is deliberately kept out of the mainstream to maintain caste privilege***" (*Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature*, 2004). The lack of institutional support limits the reach and recognition of Dalit authors, confining their works to niche audiences.

**Tokenism :** When Dalit writers are included in anthologies, literary festivals, or academic discussions, it is often as a token gesture rather than genuine inclusion. Such practices reduce their voices to symbolic representation rather than engaging with their contributions on equal terms. As Dalit scholar Gopal Guru critiques, "***The recognition of Dalit intellectuals is often conditional, ensuring that their critique does not disrupt the dominant narrative***" (*Economic and Political Weekly*, 2000).

**Linguistic Barriers :** Many Dalit works are written in regional languages such as Marathi, Tamil, or Hindi, reflecting the grassroots origins of this literature. However, this linguistic diversity can act as a barrier to wider readership. While translations of works like Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* and Bama's *Karukku* have increased accessibility, the

majority of regional Dalit writings remain unavailable to non-native readers, limiting their impact beyond their immediate communities.

Addressing these challenges requires systemic changes in publishing, genuine inclusivity, and increased efforts to translate and promote Dalit literature to ensure its rightful place in Indian and global literary traditions.

### The Role of Dalit Literature in Social Transformation

Dalit literature transcends the boundaries of a mere literary genre; it functions as a powerful sociopolitical movement aimed at raising consciousness and mobilizing collective action. By exposing the injustices of caste, Dalit writers not only document oppression but also challenge readers to question and resist the entrenched social order. As Dalit scholar and poet Namdeo Dhasal asserts in his poem *"The Ballad of the Dust"* (*Golpitha*, 1972), **"We are not meant to live, but to fight."**

B.R. Ambedkar's *Annihilation of Caste* (1936) exemplifies how Dalit literature serves as a catalyst for social reform. While not a traditional literary work, Ambedkar's polemic critiques the foundations of the caste system and calls for its dismantling. His assertion that **"Caste is a system of graded inequality"** challenges the very fabric of Indian society and becomes a blueprint for Dalit liberation. Ambedkar's work continues to be a source of intellectual and political inspiration for those fighting against caste-based oppression.

Similarly, the poetry of Namdeo Dhasal combines literary artistry with revolutionary fervor. His works, such as *Golpitha*, depict the harsh realities of Dalit life while urging societal transformation. In Dhasal's words, **"We are the breath of revolution; we are the fire of the masses."** His poetry not only critiques caste but also empowers Dalits to reclaim their dignity and humanity, urging them to break free from the chains of societal marginalization.

Thus, Dalit literature's sociopolitical significance lies in its ability to inspire action,

provoke thought, and serve as a voice for those historically silenced.

### Conclusion

The coexistence of mainstream and Dalit literature highlights the complexities inherent in India's socio-cultural fabric. Mainstream literature, predominantly created by upper-caste writers, offers a panoramic view of Indian society, often focusing on universal themes such as nationalism, modernity, and individualism. In contrast, Dalit literature offers an intimate and unflinching portrayal of caste-based realities, revealing the systemic violence and exclusion faced by marginalized communities. As Dalit writer Sharan Kumar Limbale states, **"Dalit literature is not merely an expression of pain but also an act of resistance"** (*Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature*, 2004). This juxtaposition of perspectives creates a dynamic literary ecosystem where the experiences of both the privileged and the oppressed are brought to light.

The rise of Dalit literature as a counter-narrative has been instrumental in challenging the hegemony of mainstream literature. By critiquing and deconstructing the dominant caste narratives, Dalit literature exposes the exclusionary nature of Indian literary traditions. Writers like B.R. Ambedkar, Omprakash Valmiki, and Namdeo Dhasal have used literature as a platform for social change, urging the abolition of caste-based discrimination. As Ambedkar famously declared, **"In a democratic society, caste is the negation of democracy"** (*Annihilation of Caste*, 1936).

Dalit literature enriches India's literary heritage by amplifying voices that have been historically silenced. It challenges the mainstream canon and redefines the nation's collective identity by insisting on the inclusion of marginalized perspectives. The future of Indian literature lies in fostering dialogue between these diverse traditions, creating a more equitable and inclusive cultural landscape. By embracing both mainstream and Dalit literary traditions, India can build a richer, more inclusive literary culture that reflects the full spectrum of its societal realities.

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# QUEST FOR IDENTITY: A STUDY IN CORMAC MCCARTHY'S *THE ROAD*

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## Abstract

*This research paper aims to unearth the experiences of people who lost their identity because of migrating from one place to another to get shelter with the reference to the American Novelist Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006). The novel depicts a world in which an unnamed natural disaster has destroyed the northern region and stresses survival in a harsh and harsh environment. The characters projected in the novel are in a state of exile, grief, and perplexity seen throughout the novel. The effects of the natural calamity on society and the environment are deeply uprooted in this paper. The novel *The Road* is a post-apocalyptic novel, that deals with the gruelling journey of a father and his young son over several months across a landscape blasted by an unspecified cataclysm of scarcity, cannibalism, violence, and moral decay. This paper also deals with the concept of displacement and the crisis they experienced due to the unnamed natural disaster. The research article has analysed that lives find ways through which the lives of displaced people can be made better and most importantly they would have attained resilient social support and finally good mental health.*

**Keywords:** *losing home, disaster, parent-child relationship, ecological conditions*

## Introduction

Human beings are the only creatures having six senses. Everyone wants to be unique and find their original identity in this society. In the phase of the 21st century, people have different lifestyles. According to their needs and wants, they have to face some problems in day-to-day life. In this contemporary world, a man or a family cannot live without a home to stay in, they cannot survive peacefully in this society. They could not sleep, did not have a place to live, and lost their identity in this society. For a person or a family, being displaced is an unbearable thing. Displacement happens in many ways in different lives. For example, animals in the woods are displaced because of seasonal changes, water scarcity or desolation of the forest. In society, people displace themselves to find jobs, societal problems and there are so many reasons like cause of poverty, natural disasters, sudden loss of business and many others. This research article deals with the quest for identity because of being displaced from home in the phase of unspecified disaster by nature.

Further, this study also investigates the problems faced by the characters in the novel.

*The Road* is a post-apocalyptic novel written by Cormac McCarthy, which was written in 2005, and was published in the following year 2006. *The Road* won the Pulitzer Prize in 2007. This work contains the characters who have gone through the disaster unspecified cataclysm characterised by places filled with ashes, fire, dense and cannibalism. Such kind of place is situated in the northern region of America. The novel depicts a world in which an unnamed disaster has destroyed the northern region and stresses survival in a harsh and unforgiving environment. The father and son searched for shelter, and they faced many difficulties in this phase.

In that case, this research paper attempts the quest for identity for the beings displaced. Cormac McCarthy was a well-known American writer, well-versed in the themes of Western, post-apocalyptic, and Southern Gothic genres. His first novel *The Orchard Keeper*, and also written twelve novels. There are so many writers in American

literature, but Cormac McCarthy was different from all the other writers. In the novel's introductory part, McCarthy's works found literary landscapes like majestic, sharp-shoed buttes in the palest shades of painted society. Cormac McCarthy was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1933. McCarthy's literary career started early age. *The Road*, is the masterpiece of his literary career.

### Literature Review

Previous researchers have interpreted the novel *The Road* in the themes of existentialism, rapid transmission, recovery from psychological trauma, apocalyptic grail narrative, and more about various ecocritical frameworks. With these references and surveys done so far, the researcher has come up with a new perspective of reading the select novel in search of the identity of characters in the novel in the phase of being displaced. Particularly the characters in the novel lose their identity and have faced problems because of losing their home and being displaced.

### Methodology

The researcher is going to interpret and explore the character's identity crisis through a detailed study of the selected novel. This research comes under the qualitative method. Each character is viewed and estimated through the lens of a conceptual framework of identity, displacement, hope and ecology.

### Objectives of this study

To trace the identity crisis of the characters in the select novel.

To bring out the problems they have faced being displaced from their home.

To analyse the steps taken by the characters to find hope in difficult times.

### Ecological Condition

The novel begins with unpredicted action in the environment. This reason makes the characters set out from the home. Father and son stayed in the dark in the woods. "When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night, he'd reach out to touch

the child sleeping beside him. Nights dark beyond darkness and the days greyer each one than what had gone before" (McCarthy 1). Mridu Sharma in her article "Analysis and Study of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* as a Dystopia" elaborately detailed that *The Road* characters should move to the south barren, silent and nightmarish (Sharma 32). Everyday they keep moving from the desolated country to find their shelter lost in the time of an unnamed cataclysm. Half burned dead bodies, decayed and rapped, on the voyage from north to south. That scenario makes the boy frightened, to convince the boy's father that they are not a scary thing or bad instead they are corn or something else and keep away the boy from that.

"In the morning they went on. Desolate country. A board nailed to a barn door. Ratty. A wisp of a tail. Inside the barn, three bodies hanging from the rafters, dried and dusty among the wan slats of light. There could be something here, the boy said. There could be some corn or something. Let's go, the man said" (McCarthy 16).

Here home is very comfortable for the boy or whoever facing problems like this the best place to live and keep the children and own their identity.

### Representations of Displacement

Home is inevitable for everyone in the world. In this context characters in the novel have to travel alone from their home. The father asked the son about his friends the boy answered yes suddenly a lot to him. He misses his friends daily. He asked about his friends the boy said that all of them died in the disaster. They kept moving from the place and searching for a place to make a temporary camp to stay that night. The survivors made a camp house and stayed for three days at the foot of the mountains. "Three nights later in the foothills of the eastern mountains" (McCarthy 27).

Dominy Jordan J in his article "Cannibalism, Consumerism, and Profanation: Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and the End of Capitalism" finds that *The Road* is the only key to move one place to another from the place and also from the uncivilized society of this environment.



They couldn't make a few more steps to move from that place because of the bad weather and heavy snow. They got tired of facing the problems. The father of the boy carried across the field, stopping to take a rest at each fifty counted steps. When he got to the pines he knelt and laid him, in the gritty duff covered him with the blankets and sat watching him. They looked like they had escaped from a deathcamp. They were Starved, exhausted, and sick with fear.

In the *Catalyse* father has only a goal to save the boy from the disaster, but his age would not support him. They have to rest every fifty steps. Because they have to cross the pine wood forest the night then only they will be able to reach the detitanation. In the end, they have to stay in the night, the reason the entire forest became dark everywhere. But here snow and climate made the night much darker than everyday night times. They found a half-destroyed room and they found something to eat, searching for any possibilities to sleep over the night.

The father and son need food to eat, but they do not get any food or water. They travelled for a long time in the barren landscape. There are no lives and every place was fired with no chance to get food. Father asked the boy whether you wanted food the boy answered with his action of shaking his head.

Here the boy needs food to eat but there is none. So, as this father, if we are going to eat somebody instantly the word father says that we never go to eat anybody. Starvation makes lives become the people who eat humans, like cannibals, the work contains the characters of people who eat human flesh made the boy eat somebody for their food. After some sometime started crying and asked the father if we were going to die tonight. The boy is a good human and also has the motivation "carrying the fire". The sign of carrying the fire is to have constant courage and braveness to overcome this situation.

The characters don't have a place to move from one place to another because of the dark, whenever the characters have to take one step to move place to secure their self the safe, always keep a pistol and a lamp and the most important thing is hope and the

courage to overcome the fear in this unimaginable dangerous place.

"There's no place else to go. This is it. I want you to help me. If you don't want to hold the lamp you'll have to take the pistol. I'll hold the lamp. Okay. This is what the good guys do. They keep trying. They don't give up. Okay" (McCarthy 145).

Keeping their hope Lydia Cooper in her article "Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* as Apocalyptic Grail Narrative" contrasted with the father's refrain that the boy must "carry the fire". Kelly Dent "The Unbearable Trauma of Being: Death, Hope, and (in)Humanity in the work of Cormac McCarthy" gives about the characters hope survivors have hope that they will have a better future when they move towards the South.

### Conclusion

The identity crisis of the characters in the novel has been interpreted in the light of conceptual framework. The ecological, environmental, mental and physical problems faced by the father and son are traced out in this study. The remedial actions and words of the characters are elaborated in this study. This research will help people who come across similar situations or even worse in this world. It will reduce their stress and expose them to various sides of the life crisis.

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# FAMILY DYNAMICS IN MEGAN ABBOTT'S *YOU WILL KNOW ME: A STUDY*

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## Abstract

*Megan Abbott is an American author of crime fiction. She is especially celebrated for her classic crime writing from a female perspective. One of her mystery thriller novels is You Will Know Me which was published in 2016. This novel describes the life of a gymnastic prodigy child and a family who will do whatever for their daughter. Abbott was more inspired and fascinated by her parents having exceptional children which will bring the heat on reading this novel. Abbott was very curious how having a prodigy child would affect a family and its dynamics. The research paper deals with an examination of family dynamics with reference to You Will Know Me. Family dynamics is a configuration of interaction, relationships and roles between the members of a family. Therefore, the narration follows a protagonist, Devon Knox, a hopeful Olympian gymnast and her parents have imposed with excessive burdens on themselves emotionally and financially to support their daughter. The findings reveal the family is the prelusive unit for the socialization of children and a major source of practical and emotional support.*

**Keywords:** *Family, Love, Relationship, Desire and Ambition.*

Megan Abbott is an American author, especially an author of crime fiction. She was born on August 21, 1971 - and non-fiction. She is also a producer of television, journalist, and screenwriter. Her fictional stories are surrounded by a detective situation featuring a tough unsentimental protagonist and an act-of-fact would be towards attitude of violence. Her classic novels and short stories have been worked on the subgenre of writing from a female perspective.

Megan Abbott's one of the finest Novels, *You Will Know Me* (2016) is a breathless roller-coaster of Murder mystery. This novel follows a family of Knoxes where the protagonist is a Gymnast prodigy. The parents of the protagonist Katie and Eric Knox have taken advantage of the excessive burdens on themselves to support their daughter emotionally and financially in this novel, The protagonist killed a young man who was their family friend. He was killed in a hit-and-run car crash concisely before a gymnastics competition.

Family dynamics is a configuration of interactions, relationships, and roles between the members of a family. It contains some of the patterns such as empowerment, respect, trust, dignity, confidentiality, and advocacy. which all lay out the family arrangements, rules, and emotions. Family dynamics can be beneficial or unbeneficial.

Some families may have negative interactions tangling their members strongly. This is called dysfunctional families: Interpersonal interactions among family members have lasting impacts and influence the development and well-being of an individual via psychosocial, behavioral, and physiological pathways. Thus, family dynamics and the quality of family relationships can positively or negatively impact health. (Jabbari)

All struggles have significant negative tangles on the family's mental health. Family dynamics are vital for the growth and development of each and everyone in the family. They should have the ability to see and interact with the world. Because one of the

primary sources of a relationship's security or stress is that family members depend on each other for emotional, physical, and economic support. It also plays an important role in well-being and mental health; hence they are often very complicated.

The researcher has applied the qualitative method of descriptive type in this research. The research is about family dynamics which describes and explores a deeper perspective of real-world problems that happen in and out of the family and society which is interconnected and thus frames a good or bad society.

The novel is narrated by Katie Knox, her daughter of Devon Knox, a gymnastic Prodigy is the protagonist of this novel. When she was in the womb, Katie, she and Eric's father of Devon, would talk about the feeling of Devon's body arching and minoring in her womb. While Katie was popping in a sudden sound keeled down in pain, Eric was helpless as her stomach seemed to be Alien horrors: "It was no alien, but it was something extraordinary. It was Devon, a Marvel, a girl wonder, a Prodigy, a star. Devon, kicking her way out, out, out, out." (16)

Katie and Eric never believed and cared about sports or even any competition. Eric also lacked interest in playing; he had dispassionately played baseball in High school. Devon at first was joined to the Tumbuangels Gym with a Frankenfoot where she got into an accident. She screwed up into the rust-later lawn mower at age 3 yet, in a mysterious way her foot helped her: The Human Rubber Band, Katie called her. "Supergirl, Eric called her. Monkey-bar superstar! (18)

Coach T took her to the Elite path which means, it is a national and international level competition. That is Devon needs to qualify as an Elite gymnast. From Junior Elite to Senior Elite. Coach T was having a Conversation with Eric and Katie that Devon should make the world championships before she changes. Here changes mean, he explains that the changes take place in the physical development of girls during their adolescence: "Changes? Katie asked. "Changes," he said, "They all change. Become Women. Glorious women." (23-24).

In the novel *You Will Know Me* the family seems too much connected to achievement, and love between a husband and wife, a parent and child, or in other relationships that become complicated and difficult to understand outside the domain of achievement. In this novel, ambition and desire come into disunity of relationship in her characters.

Devon was 13 years old when she completed a regional competition. So, a group of impulsive parents and their gymnast daughters are celebrating her success. Next, she is on the track of the Olympics. Katie was so proud of her daughter as they highlighted Devon's natural abilities and her fitness for competition. As her parents sacrifice personal and also financial everything in their lives goes around Devon, her training at a gym and her future. However, Devon was out at Elite Qualifiers.

She is 15, Devon is on track to be considered for the Olympics - and Katie begins to wonder, in the few moments she has to think, about the psychological cost of this for her daughter and the rest of the family. That cost is mirrored in events outside the heads of the characters. Yan Beck, a young man who helps at the gym and is involved with the coach's niece, is run down by a car at night, and suspicion falls on almost everyone in the small circle of their gymnastics world. Drew develops scarlet fever, leaving Katie to think, with increasing anxiety, that theirs is a "sick house" (Writer)

Katie had a conversation with Ryan's mother Helen. Helen confesses to Devon's mother that she doesn't have any idea what is going on in her son's brain. That is sometimes Helen can't understand Ryan's actions that he does. She felt it was like living with an alien. This made Katie think about her extraordinary child. This ignited Katie, that she knows about Devon's state of being and thought process.

Katie comes to know, whether Devon has been suppressing and denying anything to her and now she comes to know that Hailey and Ryan's relationship broke up when Ryan has shown interest in Devon. Though they had been in a relationship and slept together, and also when Ryan confessed his love to her, Devon intended no feelings toward Ryan. Devon

had all emotional feelings and energy are always towards her gymnastics. Here, it clearly states the mother-daughter relationship that Katie as a mother knows very well about her daughter's emotions towards when she loves or is obsessed with.

Finally, "parental support" is one of the important influencers of family dynamics. Throughout the Novel, through parental care and support Eric and Katie sacrifice their whole time for the Olympics. In the end, when Eric learns about Devon's relationship with Ryan is involved, he is horrified that a grown man had a relationship with the child and Eric says Devon that the emotional complications of their relationship are sex would risk her gymnastics career. When Devon confronts the truth to her mother Katie, she suspects her that she wasn't really telling the truth. In the town, all people think that Hailey is not the reason for Ryan's death also at the same time town people have so much invested in Devon. Also, a father, Eric also supported Devon and Katie convinced herself and her heart and she decided that there was nothing wrong with leading a normal life after all Ryan's death was an accident.

After Devon's console from the murder, all the people from town eagerly gather at the elite Qualifiers to watch Devon's Competition. The novel also ends with, Devon would come to do her championship routine and whether she succeeds or fails: A healthy family has some key characteristics that cause it to function well. These include open communication, emotional support, shared authority and responsibilities, support, attention to others, balance between work and home, respect, safety, and love.

Family dynamics play a vital role in this novel. The strength is the dynamics between the family's role and the competitive world of gymnastics. It is the center of the Knox family's role and competition in the world of gymnastics. As it is a centre of Knox family Eric and Katie sacrifice too much for their daughter's Olympic goals. It was about parental care and support. This novel is also influenced by the elements of family dynamics like dignity, hierarchy

within the family, addictions, disabilities, and parental support.

Katie as a mother, was overpowered by her changing daughter Devon. Eric as her father was obsessed with helping Devon to achieve her dreams and work towards gymnastic competition. Devon is Devon's brother, an often-neglected boy in this novel but notices more than anyone realizes a gymnastic prodigy, Devon herself is bonds of a teen caught up with frightful and ferocious in a competitive world of Elite gymnasts. These all portray parent-child issues and sibling relationships which all go around mystical thriller and suspense throughout the novel being the novel. Being sacrificial parents, the tension laid on both emotional and financial stresses of having high high-performing child in this hyper-competitive world which also Devon's lawn mower accident could ruin their family. Their parents have given up so much to chase Devon's dream of spending time taking her to practices, and competitions, auditing the footage of her performances and also expenses in gym dues, registration fees, costumes, and coaching while their house and car fall apart.

Therefore, desire, jealousy, confusion, low self-esteem and ambition of a teenage girl play a vital role and influence of family dynamics. Thus, if there is a healthy family relationship, society will flourish automatically Family is a basic fundamental and primarily the smallest social group where the members are united and have healthier bonds of kinship. Family is the prelude unit for the socialization of children and a major source of practical and emotional support. Thus, a good family provides the members with creating and influencing a good social identity.

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