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Special Issue on

CROSS - CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS: EMERGING LITERARY DISCOURSES IN CONTEMPORARY MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Special Issue Editors-in-Chief

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The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science. agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Research should be at the core and must be instrumental in generating a major interface with the academic world. It must provide a new theoretical frame work that enable reassessment and refinement of current practices and thinking. This may result in a fundamental discovery and an extension of the knowledge acquired. Research is meant to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous works, solve new or existing problems, support theorems; or develop new theorems. It empowers the faculty and students for an in-depth approach in research. It has the potential to enhance the consultancy capabilities of the researcher. In short, conceptually and thematically an active attempt to provide these types of common platforms on educational reformations through research has become the main objective of this Journal.

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

The post covid world has seen many interesting developments. The online culture in conferences and webinars has exposed students and faculty to many voices across the globe. Negotiating and exploring new cultures and literary texts and theories has been made easier through various platforms and the world wide web.

Books emerging from deliberations helps the academic community to systematize and clarify the various subtle and complex nuances of cross-cultural interaction, thereby providing insights and revelations into the ways in which cultures interact and negotiate with one another. Even as an outline emerges from these generalizations, a caveat to us in the Indian context is that most of the ways of studying culture, tradition, and interaction between these are derived largely from Western concepts. So, it is imperative that we move away from colonial concepts and derive and indigenous one. I am sure this book will definitely serve as a resource for a better understanding of such matters.

Dr. LILIAN I JASPER
Principal
Women's Christian College, Chennai.

Editorial Note

As the world becomes increasingly multicultural with globalisation and migration shaping multiple discourses, cross-cultural negotiations play a pivotal role in shaping our understanding of identity, community, and belonging. Given this premise, this compilation, *Cross-Cultural Negotiations: Emerging Literary Discourses in Contemporary Multicultural Societies*, brings together an array of academic papers that address the need for nuanced discussions on cross-cultural interactions in an increasingly interconnected world. Thus, it serves as an invitation to reflect on how literature, as both a form and a discourse, can mediate and shape the negotiation of cultural identities.

This compilation is hence timely and relevant, as it invites scholars and readers alike to engage with the complex and evolving nature of cross-cultural negotiations, encouraging a more nuanced exploration of how literary discourses can inform our actions within multicultural societies. For instance, several papers in this compilation, present the intricacies of negotiating cultural identities, challenging traditional notions of multiculturalism, and fostering dialogue across diverse cultural landscapes. By engaging with these emerging literary discourses, readers can gain understanding of how literature not only reflects but also shapes our perceptions of multiculturalism.

As you delve into this collection, we hope that you are inspired to reflect on your own experiences and assumptions about cultural exchange, and to engage with the profound questions that these emerging literary discourses bring to the fore.

Editors

Aim & Objectives

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

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EMERGING LITERARY DISCOURSES IN CONTEMPORARY MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

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Abstract

This article explores emergent literary discourses within contemporary multicultural societies, employing thematic analysis to identify and interpret patterns across diverse texts that reflect the complexities of modern cultural landscapes. Highlighting key features such as hybridity, fluid identities, and intercultural dialogue, the study categorizes nine distinct literary discourses that examine themes of globalization, migration, power dynamics, and belonging. Through analyses of contemporary works by authors, the article demonstrates how literature engages with and responds to the dynamic narratives of multiculturalism in today's globalized world. It asserts that in contemporary multicultural societies, emergent literary discourses serve as transformative spaces where identities, narratives, and cultures converge, reflecting the hybrid nature of modern global interactions and the evolving dialogues that shape collective understanding.

Keywords: *identify negotiation, cultural hybridity, postcolonial narratives, transcultural dynamics, narrative intersections, cross-cultural experiences, power and representation*

Introduction

The landscape of literary studies has undergone significant transformation in recent decades, shaped by the forces of globalization, technological advancement, and socio-political change. As societies become increasingly interconnected, the dynamics of literature and culture are evolving to reflect these changes. This shift has led to the emergence of new literary discourses that explore, interrogate, and celebrate cultural diversity, hybrid identities, and the complex experiences of individuals in multicultural settings. The field of literature now extends beyond traditional boundaries, embraces voices from previously marginalized groups, questions dominant narratives, and presents more nuanced perspectives on identity, power, and belonging.

The term "emerging literary discourses" encompasses a wide range of contemporary themes, styles, and genres that respond to the realities of a multicultural world. These discourses include narratives that address issues such as migration, diaspora, postcolonial identity, gender fluidity, environmental sustainability, and social justice. At the same time, they challenge conventional notions of authorship, genre, and textuality by incorporating digital media, interactive storytelling, and cross-cultural influences. These new forms of expression reflect the changing experiences of individuals in a globalized world, where identities are fluid, borders are porous, and cultural exchange is both celebrated and contested.

In multicultural societies, emerging literary discourses serve a dual role. On one hand, they document and preserve the diversity of cultural experiences, and provide a platform for voices that have been historically excluded or marginalized. On the other hand, they foster dialogue and understanding among different communities, and promote empathy and mutual respect. Literature becomes a space where readers encounter the "Other," grappling with the complexities of cultural

difference while recognizing shared human experiences. Readers are encouraged to question their assumptions, broaden their horizons, and cultivate a more inclusive worldview through engagement with diverse perspectives.

This article explores the significance of emerging literary discourses within multicultural societies. It examines how these discourses reflect and shape contemporary understandings of identity, power, and cultural belonging. The article also discusses the role of literature in fostering intercultural understanding, and highlights the ways in which authors and texts from diverse backgrounds contribute to a more complex and inclusive literary canon. Finally, the article identifies areas for future research, suggesting that the continued study of emerging literary discourses is crucial to understanding the evolving nature of literature in a globalized world. Through this exploration, the article aims to underscore the vital role of literature in bridging cultural divide and fostering a more connected and compassionate world.

This article focuses its attention on the following two broad-based research questions:

1. How do emergent literary discourses within contemporary multicultural societies reflect and influence evolving notions of cultural identity, belonging, and shared narratives?
2. In what ways do contemporary literary expressions in multicultural contexts address and respond to global challenges such as migration, social justice, and cross-cultural understanding?

The axiomatic statement is articulated as follows: In contemporary multicultural societies, emergent literary discourses act as transformative arenas where identities, stories, and cultural perspectives intersect, embodying the complex hybridity of global interactions and the evolving dialogues that shape shared understanding and social cohesion.

Method

In the context of contemporary multicultural societies, thematic analysis serves as a valuable tool for examining emerging literary discourses that reflect the complexities of diverse cultural identities, experiences, and interactions. This analysis aims to explore how thematic analysis can be applied to literary texts and discourses to uncover insights into the socio-cultural dynamics of multicultural environments. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, who have contributed significantly to the method through their seminal work, *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners* (2013), define thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data. They emphasize its flexibility, enabling researchers to capture diverse perspectives across different fields. Their detailed six-step approach outlines familiarization, coding, theme development, review, definition, and report writing.

1. Engaging with the data (literary texts) to gain an initial understanding of their content and context;
2. Generating initial codes from the data, which are representative of significant features related to the research question;
3. Organizing codes into potential themes that capture the essence of the data;
4. Refining and redefining themes to ensure they accurately represent the data;
5. Clearly articulating what each theme represents and how it contributes to understanding the broader research question; and
6. Integrating the themes into a coherent narrative that reflects the analysis and its implications.

Results

In multicultural societies, literary texts often emerge as sites of negotiation and contestation over cultural identities, values, and narratives. Thematic analysis

can illuminate how literature responds to and shapes these dynamics in various ways:

Themes	Explanation	Example	Exposition
Identity & Belonging	Themes related to identity formation, cultural heritage, and the quest for belonging are prevalent in works that explore the immigrant experience or the lives of marginalized groups.	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*	Themes of race, identity, and the complexities of belonging in a transnational context can be analysed through thematic coding, revealing how characters navigate their cultural identities in diverse settings.
Intercultural Dialogue	Literature often reflects the tensions and synergies that arise from interactions between different cultures. Through thematic analysis, scholars can explore themes of cultural exchange, conflict, and understanding.	Salman Rushdie and Jhumpa Lahiri.	Their texts may reveal how cultural narratives evolve through dialogue and tension.
Power Dynamics & Representation	Emerging literary discourses challenge or reinforce power dynamics within multicultural societies. Thematic analysis can help identify themes related to representation, marginalization, and agency, as demonstrated in contemporary works that critique colonial legacies and advocate for social justice	Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness.*	It provides insight into how literary texts respond to political and social inequities.
Globalization & Transnationalism	The impact of globalization on cultural identities is another theme that can be explored through literary texts. Thematic analysis allows researchers to investigate how globalization influences narratives, character experiences, and cultural exchanges.	Zadie Smith and Hanif Kureishi.	Their works depict characters who navigate complex identities shaped by multiculturalism and the pressures of cultural blending in modern, interconnected societies.

The following table indicates the features and the importance of multicultural societies:

Features	Importance	Indian Context
Cultural Diversity	Promoting Tolerance & Understanding	Religious Diversity
Social Cohesion & Inclusivity	Fostering Innovation & Creativity	Linguistic Diversity
Intercultural Interaction & Integration	Strengthening Global Competence	Cultural Practices & Festivals
Policy of Multiculturalism	Supporting Economic Growth	Caste & Regional Identity
		Legal & Policy Framework

The following table presents the emergent literary discourses and the example literary texts:

Emergent Literary Discourses	Literary Texts
Diaspora & Migration	Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003)
Postcolonialism & Decolonisation	Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind* (1986)
Intersectionality	Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* (2017)
Environmentalism & Eco-criticism	Richard Powers' *The Overstory* (2018)
Transnationalism	Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017)
Queer Theory & LGBTQ+ Narratives	Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019)
Feminism & Gender Theories	Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019)
Identity & Hybridisation	Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988)
Globalization and Cultural Homogenization	Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017)

Analysis and Discussion

A multicultural society is one in which multiple distinct cultures, ethnicities, languages, religions, and social practices coexist within the same geographical area or nation. In such societies, people from various cultural backgrounds maintain their unique cultural identities while interacting with and contributing to the broader community. Multiculturalism recognizes and values diversity and promotes inclusion and tolerance by encouraging the coexistence of different cultural expressions.

Features of Multicultural Societies

Multicultural societies celebrate the coexistence of multiple cultures, allowing individuals to retain their unique traditions and practices while contributing to a shared community. This diversity enriches social experiences and broadens perspectives. According to Modood, "A multicultural society not only tolerates but also promotes the preservation of distinct cultures, recognizing the contributions that various traditions, languages, and beliefs make to a collective national identity." (2013, p.25) In countries with multicultural policies, schools often celebrate festivals from various cultures, such as Christmas, Diwali, and Eid, and introduce children to diverse traditions. This builds a foundation of mutual respect from an early age.

While diverse, multicultural societies strive for inclusivity to ensure that all groups feel represented and valued, this principle often leads to policies and practices that promote equal rights and opportunities. "The strength of multicultural societies lies in their capacity to foster an environment where differences are respected and social cohesion is achieved through inclusivity, not uniformity." (Parekh, 2000, p. 46) In Silicon Valley, a global tech hub, the presence of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds has contributed to ground-breaking innovations. Companies recognize that diverse teams are often more creative and efficient in developing solutions.

Multicultural societies encourage intercultural dialogue and cooperation and help to reduce prejudices and promote mutual understanding among groups. Vertovec asserts that "True integration in a multicultural society is a two-way process, requiring adaptation and understanding from both majority and minority groups." (2010, p. 137) Individuals who grow up in multicultural societies are often more adept at adapting to foreign cultures, an asset in careers that require international collaboration, such as diplomacy or multinational corporations.

Many multicultural societies adopt policies that officially recognize and protect cultural diversity. Such policies aim to empower minorities and support

cultural expression without fear of discrimination. According to Taylor, "Multiculturalism as a public policy framework seeks to support cultural plurality, accommodating different cultural identities within a unifying civic structure." (1994, p. 52) In Canada, immigration policies prioritize skilled professionals, many of whom come from various cultural backgrounds. This multicultural influx has helped Canada address labour shortages and fuel growth in high-demand sectors like technology and healthcare.

Importance of Multicultural Societies

Multicultural societies hold significant importance in the contemporary world, where globalization, migration, and interconnectivity bring diverse cultures into closer proximity than ever before. The need for multicultural societies emerges in various social, economic, and political domains, and offers both practical benefits and fostering ethical values of inclusion and mutual respect.

In multicultural societies, exposure to various cultural practices and worldviews can help combat stereotypes and biases. When people from different backgrounds coexist, they can develop empathy and understanding, reducing societal divisions. "The essence of a multicultural society is not simply to tolerate difference but to encourage dialogue and mutual respect, creating an environment where diversity becomes a source of strength." (Banks, 2008, p.19) In countries like Canada and Australia, multicultural policies encourage schools to educate students about various cultural practices and histories. Events such as "multicultural days" in schools allow students to share their traditions, languages, and festivals, helping them understand and respect each other's backgrounds from a young age. This builds social cohesion and minimizes conflict.Tolerance in multicultural societies does not mean mere acceptance but involves active engagement and learning. This understanding helps bridge cultural gaps, reducing discrimination and promoting equality across all groups.

Diverse cultural perspectives enhance problem-solving abilities and creativity as individuals contribute unique insights shaped by their backgrounds. This diversity drives innovation in fields like technology, arts, and business. Cox says, "Cultural diversity is linked to creativity; it enables people to view challenges from different perspectives, leading to innovations that would otherwise be unreachable in homogenous groups." (2001, p. 45) In the technology and business sectors, diversity has proven to be a strength. For example, companies in Silicon Valley, like Google and Apple, benefit from employing people from all over the world. Each individual brings unique insights shaped by their culture, which can lead to innovative product designs and marketing strategies that resonate globally. Studies have shown that diverse teams tend to be more innovative and perform better than homogeneous ones. Multicultural environments encourage "out-of-the-box" thinking because they allow different worldviews to interact, inspiring novel solutions that wouldn't emerge in a more uniform group. This cross-pollination of ideas is a key driver of economic and technological progress.

In a globalized world, multicultural societies prepare individuals to operate within international contexts. This exposure helps individuals develop the skills needed to engage across cultures, which is essential in diplomacy, business, and other global endeavours. According to Deardorff, "To navigate the complexities of our interconnected world, individuals must develop the skills to understand and communicate across cultures. Multicultural societies are foundational in fostering this global competence." (2006, p. 27). Individuals in multicultural societies like Singapore and the Netherlands grow up exposed to multiple languages and cultural practices, making them more adaptable and culturally aware. This "global competence" is especially valued in

international roles, where understanding and respecting cultural differences is crucial for effective communication and relationship-building. Multicultural societies nurture "global citizens" who can navigate cross-cultural interactions with ease, whether they are travelling, studying, or working abroad. This readiness for global interactions fosters not only personal growth but also enhances a nation's ability to collaborate internationally.

Multicultural societies often attract a wide range of skilled immigrants, boost the workforce and contribute to economic development. In many cases, this influx supports sectors like technology, healthcare, and academia by bringing in varied expertise."Multicultural societies benefit economically from a diverse workforce, as immigrants bring new skills, ideas, and experiences that enrich industries and stimulate local economies" (Portes and Rumbaut, 2014, p. 62). In the United States, immigrants have historically been a significant source of entrepreneurial activity. Many successful businesses were founded by first- or second-generation immigrants, contributing substantially to the economy. In Canada, immigrants make up a large portion of the workforce in healthcare, technology, and education, filling essential roles that support the nation's economic and social well-being. In addition to filling labour gaps, the diverse perspectives that multicultural societies bring can help local businesses expand globally as they have a workforce familiar with different markets, languages, and consumer needs. Moreover, a multicultural workforce brings insights that can improve customer relations and help companies develop products that appeal to a broader range of customers worldwide.

Therefore, given the current scale of global migration, countries increasingly need to accommodate cultural diversity to foster peaceful coexistence. Multicultural societies are often seen as exemplars of democratic values as they emphasize equal respect and representation for all communities.

As issues like climate change, public health crises, and economic instability require coordinated global efforts, multicultural societies facilitate collaboration by nurturing intercultural competence. Thus, multicultural societies contribute not only by enriching social fabrics but by providing practical advantages in addressing the needs of a connected world.

India as a Multicultural Society

India is widely recognized as one of the most prominent examples of a multicultural society, known for its extensive diversity in language, religion, customs, and traditions. This diversity is not only acknowledged but is protected and promoted by its constitution and policies, making multiculturalism a defining characteristic of Indian society.

India is home to major world religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism, each with significant followers and historical contributions to the nation's culture and values. This religious diversity is not only respected but also legally protected as the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion as a fundamental right. "India is a living example of a pluralistic society where people from different religions coexist, bound by the principle of sarva dharma sambhava, or respect for all religions" (Sen, 2005, p. 14). Religious harmony is symbolized by festivals celebrated across communities. For example, Diwali, though a Hindu festival, is celebrated by people of various religions. Likewise, Christmas, Eid, and other festivals receive cross-cultural participation.

India has twenty-two officially recognized languages and hundreds of regional languages and dialects, reflecting its linguistic diversity. This multilingual fabric is supported by policies that recognize these languages in governance, education, and the media. Khubchandani says, "The linguistic diversity of India is unparalleled; languages are not just a means of communication but form the basis of cultural identity and social connection." (1983, p. 35).

India's Parliament proceedings allow members to speak in their respective regional languages, and thus promote inclusivity. This policy recognizes the cultural value of linguistic diversity while also ensuring equal participation in governance.

Indian society embraces a wide array of cultural practices and festivals, from Diwali and Eid to Christmas and Guru Nanak Jayanti. These festivals are celebrated nationwide, often crossing religious and cultural lines, reinforcing mutual respect and participation. "The Indian social landscape is marked by its rich tapestry of festivals, where each community celebrates its own traditions while also taking part in others', symbolizing the inclusive spirit of Indian multiculturalism" (Nandy, 2001, p. 64). In many cities, one can witness Christmas, Eid, Holi, and other festivals celebrated in public spaces, reflecting the nation's collective cultural expression. In areas like Kerala, people from different religious backgrounds often participate in each other's festivals.

India's multiculturalism also encompasses diversity in caste, region, and ethnicity. Caste and regional identities shape social interactions, political representation, and even culinary practices. Efforts are continuously made to address historical inequalities and promote inclusivity through reservations and affirmative action. Chandra says, "Indian multiculturalism involves a complex interaction between caste, region, and religious identity, balancing historical injustices with policies of social inclusion." (2000, p. 89). The reservation system in India is an attempt to address social inequalities, especially for historically disadvantaged castes. This policy promotes inclusivity by providing educational and employment opportunities to marginalized communities.

India's commitment to multiculturalism is reinforced by its legal and policy frameworks, which uphold minority rights and protect linguistic, religious, and cultural freedoms. The Constitution's Articles 29 and 30, for example, safeguard the right of minorities to conserve their culture and establish institutions of their choice. "The Indian Constitution itself is a testament to the country's multicultural vision, emphasizing cultural diversity as a strength and enshrining protections for minority communities." (Austin, 1999, p. 203). Article 29 of the Indian Constitution allows any community to conserve its language, script, and culture, and Article 30 allows minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. These provisions uphold India's commitment to its multicultural ethos.

Thus, India's multiculturalism has contributed to its resilience and adaptability, fostering an environment where diverse groups can coexist peacefully while maintaining their unique cultural identities. This legacy remains significant in the modern world as India balances its traditional values with rapid globalization, making multiculturalism a cornerstone of its democratic and social identity.

Emerging Literary Discourses

Emerging literary discourses refer to newly developing or evolving themes, perspectives, and critical frameworks in literature that reflect current social, political, and cultural changes. These discourses arise in response to contemporary issues, such as globalization, identity politics, environmental crises, and technological advancements, and they challenge or expand traditional literary themes and methods of analysis.They often focus on underrepresented voices and marginalized experiences, and offer fresh insights into the complexities of modern life. They explore new narratives, address global concerns, and emphasize intersectionality of gender, race, class/caste nationality, inclusivity, and the plurality of human experiences; challenge dominant narratives. Therefore, reflect the complex interplay of identity, migration, globalization, and cultural hybridity. These discourses also shape how literature is created,

interpreted, and understood in the context of an ever-changing world.

Defining "emergent literary discourses" involves understanding how evolving narratives in literature address the complexities of cultural identities and social interactions in diverse societies. Raymond Williams, for example, emphasizes that discourses emerge as part of cultural materialism, where literature acts as a medium to explore social, political, and cultural dynamics, revealing new frameworks for interpreting identities and power structures within multicultural contexts. (1985) His work underscores that these emergent discourses are shaped by ongoing historical and social processes, creating a continuous dialogue between literature and society. Emerging literary discourses have also been explored through lenses like globalization, postcolonialism, and critical theory, each contributing distinct perspectives on the transformation of narratives in response to societal changes. Sources such as *Edinburgh Scholarship Online* provide additional scholarly insights into these transformations within contemporary multicultural contexts.https://academic.oup.com/nyu-press-scholarship-online/book/18762/chapter-abstract/177009370?redirectedFrom=fulltext

Diaspora and Migration

This discourse explores the experiences of people who have moved from one country to another, often as a result of colonization, war, economic necessity, or political unrest. Contemporary literature in this area focuses on themes of displacement, belonging, cultural adaptation, and identity fragmentation. It examines how migration shapes the individual's sense of self and community. In Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), the novel portrays the challenges of growing up as a second-generation immigrant in the U.S., grappling with the tensions between Indian heritage and American identity. The protagonist's shifting identity represents the complexity of belonging in multicultural societies.

Postcolonialism and Decolonization

This discourse critically examines the legacy of colonialism and how it continues to affect societies, cultures, and literature. Writers in this area often seek to reclaim indigenous narratives and challenge Eurocentric worldviews by focusing on the histories, languages, and experiences of colonized peoples. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) advocates for the use of native languages in African literature, and for critiquing the dominance of colonial languages and the cultural erasure that results from it. His work emphasizes the importance of language in reclaiming identity in postcolonial contexts.

Intersectionality

Contemporary literature increasingly reflects the concept of intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, which examines how overlapping social identities—such as race, gender, class/caste, and sexuality—interact to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. This discourse often highlights the multiple, interconnected systems of power that shape individuals' lives. Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* (2017) explores police brutality and racial inequality through the lens of a young Black girl, Starr, who witnesses the killing of her friend by police. The novel brings together issues of race, class, and systemic oppression, demonstrating the complex dynamics that shape marginalized communities.

Environmentalism and Eco-Criticism

This emergent discourse addresses the relationship between human societies and the environment, often with a focus on climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice. Writers within this framework explore how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized communities

and challenge anthropocentric views of the world. Richard Powers' *The Overstory* (2018) interweaves the stories of diverse characters whose lives are connected by their relationship with trees. The novel critiques human exploitation of the natural world and advocates for a deeper ecological consciousness that transcends national or cultural boundaries.

Transnationalism

In a globalized world, transnationalism emphasizes the flow of people, ideas, and cultures across borders. Literature in this discourse often challenges the traditional notion of fixed national identities, showing how contemporary identities are formed by multiple cultural influences and global interconnections. In *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid, the movement of characters across borders reflects the erasure of physical barriers in a transnational world. The novel offers a perspective on migration that transcends national limitations, emphasizing shared global experiences.

Queer Theory and LGBTQ+ Narratives

Queer literature in contemporary multicultural societies often challenges heteronormativity and explores fluid gender identities, sexualities, and the societal norms that confine them. This discourse advocates for the recognition of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, especially within traditionally conservative or patriarchal cultures. Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019) combines a coming-of-age story with a complex exploration of queer identity, immigrant experience, and intergenerational trauma. The novel deconstructs traditional narratives about masculinity and identity in a multicultural context.

Feminism and Gender Studies

Contemporary feminist literature continues to explore issues of gender inequality, but in increasingly intersectional and global contexts. This discourse critiques patriarchal systems and addresses the diverse experiences of women from different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. In *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo (2019), the lives of twelve women of African descent intersect, revealing their struggles with identity, gender, race, and sexuality in contemporary Britain. The novel showcases how race, class, and gender shape women's experiences differently in a multicultural society.

Identity and Hybridization

This discourse examines the construction of identity in multicultural societies, focusing on the fluidity of identity in a globalized world. It often critiques the binary notions of "us vs. them," suggesting that identity is hybrid and constantly evolving as a result of cultural interaction.

Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) explores the conflict between personal and collective identity in a multicultural world, portraying the hybridized identities of characters who straddle different cultures, religions, and histories.

Globalization and Cultural Homogenization

This discourse addresses the tension between the global spread of Western culture and the preservation of local, indigenous, or traditional cultures. Writers explore how globalization leads to cultural homogenization but also how it allows for the creation of new, hybrid forms of expression.Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) touches on the effects of globalization on India's traditional culture, critiquing how political and economic forces shape local identities and cultural practices in a globalized world.

Suggestions

To enhance students' understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism through emergent literary discourses, curriculum design can play a

critical role. Here are some strategies and suggestions to embed multicultural perspectives in a literature curriculum effectively:

1. Curriculum includes works by authors from different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds in the syllabus. This representation exposes students to multiple worldviews and experiences, helping them appreciate the richness of diverse perspectives. It should include authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Haruki Murakami, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Chinua Achebe, whose works provide insight into African, Asian, Latin American, and diasporic experiences.When students study literature from varied cultures, they gain a broader understanding of global issues, challenges, and values, fostering empathy and cross-cultural awareness.

2. It should encourage students to compare themes, values, and cultural expressions across different texts. Comparative analysis can reveal both unique cultural elements and universal themes, highlighting the interconnectedness of human experiences. It should assign students to compare themes of migration in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*. Such assignments help students recognize commonalities across cultures while appreciating each culture's distinct contributions to literature.

3. It should include contemporary multicultural literature that addresses issues like migration, identity, social justice, and global conflicts. These emergent discourses connect more directly with current societal issues, making the study of literature relevant to students' real-world understanding.Texts such as *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie or *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid address migration, identity, and the complexities of globalized societies. Reading contemporary voices allows students to see how literature reflects and engages with today's issues, fostering critical thinking on topics like racism, globalization, and cross-cultural interactions.

4. It should encourage the study of literature in translation or works that incorporate multiple languages can enhance students' appreciation for linguistic diversity and translation's role in cultural exchange. Translation studies also help students understand how meaning shifts across languages, enriching their view of cultural nuances. We should include translated works like *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez or *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, and discuss the translation process.Through translated texts, students gain insight into linguistic diversity and how literature transcends linguistic boundaries to convey universal human experiences.

5. It should integrate literature from indigenous and marginalized communities, which often reflect unique cultural perspectives and historical struggles with colonialism, discrimination, and identity. These narratives offer invaluable insights into cultures that mainstream discourse might overlook.Texts like *There There* by Tommy Orange or *The Round House* by Louise Erdrich bring indigenous American perspectives into focus. Exposure to marginalized voices encourages students to critically examine issues of power, identity, and cultural resilience, developing a more inclusive worldview.

6. It should encourage students to explore and present their own cultural backgrounds and personal stories. This can include creative projects, reflective essays, or presentations on family history, traditions, or values. Such projects personalize the study of multiculturalism and help students connect literary themes to their own lives. Teachers should have students write a narrative or poem inspired by their cultural

heritage or family history, drawing connections to themes in the literature studied.Personal reflection projects enable students to see multiculturalism as relevant to their own identities, helping them appreciate diversity both within and outside their classrooms.

7. It should collaborate with history and social studies departments to provide students with a contextual understanding of the historical and social backgrounds behind multicultural literature. This interdisciplinary approach enriches their comprehension of the texts and the socio-political issues they address. We should pair the study of *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe with lessons on colonial history in Africa. Such connections deepen students' understanding of how historical events shape cultural identities and literary themes, fostering a more holistic view of multiculturalism.

8. It should leverage digital resources to connect students with peers in other countries or cultures. Virtual exchanges, video discussions, or joint projects with schools in different cultural settings can provide direct interactions that complement literary studies. Teachers should organize a virtual book club with students from another country, discussing a multicultural text like *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros. Direct interactions with peers from different backgrounds can bring literature's lessons to life, fostering real-time cultural exchange and understanding.

9. It should introduce students to postcolonial and cultural theories that critique how literature represents and sometimes perpetuates cultural stereotypes or power dynamics. This theoretical lens allows students to critically evaluate literary texts and understand the importance of representation. We should teach postcolonial perspectives alongside novels like *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys or *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie. Learning to apply critical theories empowers students to engage with literature analytically, questioning assumptions and exploring how texts reflect or challenge societal norms.

10. It should link literature studies with community engagement opportunities where students can interact with local multicultural communities. Service learning projects with immigrant groups, cultural centres, or language schools can help students relate literature to real-life multicultural experiences. We should partner with a local cultural centre where students can volunteer and learn about immigrant experiences, complementing their reading of a text on migration or displacement. Community engagement helps students connect their literary studies with real people and stories, fostering empathy and reinforcing the value of multicultural understanding.

Scope for Further Study

Future research in emergent literary discourses is broad and can encompass various areas that address evolving cultural, social, and technological trends. Each of these areas represents fertile ground for research, offering insights into how literature can both reflect and influence the ever-changing dynamics of contemporary society. Embracing these emergent literary discourses can lead to a deeper understanding of cultural, social, and technological transformations, fostering a more inclusive and holistic approach to literary studies.

1. The study of the impact of digital media on literary expression, including genres such as hypertext fiction, interactive storytelling, and social media narratives: The effects of technology on narrative structure, reader engagement, and the definition of "authorship" in collaborative or user-generated content.

2. Examination of how literature addresses environmental crises, climate change, and ecological relationships: The role of literature in shaping environmental consciousness, the portrayal of "climate fiction" (cli-fi), and indigenous perspectives on nature and sustainability.

3. Exploration of how contemporary literature reflects and critiques ongoing colonial legacies and power dynamics: Literary representations of migration, exile, and displacement; the impact of globalized markets on regional and minority literatures; and the evolution of postcolonial theory in a modern context.

4. Investigation of how literature reflects the experiences of migration, diaspora, and transnational identities: The negotiation of identity and belonging in diaspora communities, hybridity, cultural memory, and the role of literature in preserving migrant histories.

5. The study of emerging narratives around gender fluidity, LGBTQ+ identities, and intersectional perspectives in literature: Representation of non-binary and transgender identities, the impact of intersectionality on character development, and queer theory's expansion in literary studies.

6. Examination of literature that explores hybrid identities formed through intercultural exchanges, globalization, and multiculturalism: Themes of cultural fusion and identity negotiation, particularly among second and third generation immigrants, and the literary portrayal of "global citizens" in multicultural societies.

7. Analysis of literature's role in expressing and processing trauma, mental health struggles, and psychological resilience: Representations of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), generational trauma, mental illness, and literature as a therapeutic tool for readers and writers.

8. Exploration of the intersection of artificial intelligence with literary creation, analysis, and interpretation:AI-generated literature, the ethics of machine authorship, and how AI impacts the creative writing process and literary criticism.

9. Investigation of how literature addresses and promotes social justice, activism, and reform: The role of literature in movements like Black Lives Matter, feminist literature addressing modern challenges, and works that highlight socioeconomic disparities.

10. The study of how contemporary literature and literary criticism challenge and expand the traditional literary canon: Efforts to decolonize syllabi, the inclusion of marginalized voices, and the impact of multicultural perspectives on re-evaluating classic texts.

11. Exploration of evolving aesthetics in modern literature, including the blending of visual arts, music, and multimedia with text:Graphic novels, novels with multimedia elements (like embedded images, videos, and hyperlinks), and how these forms redefine narrative structure.

12. The study of literary responses to health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and how they reshape our understanding of vulnerability, resilience, and human connection:Pandemic literature, the psychological impact of isolation, representations of frontline workers, and literature as a record of societal challenges during health crises.

13. Examination of the literary revival of indigenous languages and cultures, especially in response to language endangerment and cultural assimilation: Bilingual and multilingual literary works, preservation of oral traditions, and the role of indigenous literature in sustaining cultural heritage.

14. Investigation of how literature can be used to study cognitive processes, empathy, and emotional responses:Literary empathy, the

psychological effects of reading fiction on the brain, and how narrative structure influences reader perception.

15. Research on how literature interacts with fields like philosophy, sociology, political science, and psychology: How literature reflects and critiques scientific discoveries, the blending of literary and philosophical discourses, and interdisciplinary methodologies in literary analysis.

Conclusion

The emergent literary discourses in contemporary multicultural societies reveal a vibrant landscape where diverse cultural narratives intersect, challenging and reshaping traditional understandings of identity, belonging, and power. These discourses reflect the fluidity and hybridity of modern life, illustrating how literature serves as both a mirror and a critique of globalized realities. As writers navigate and negotiate the complexities of multicultural experiences, their works offer valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of cultural exchange, fostering a deeper appreciation for the nuanced identities that shape our interconnected world.These emerging literary discourses reflect the complexity of contemporary multicultural societies and highlight the diverse experiences of individuals navigating globalized, interconnected cultural landscapes.

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GENDER DYNAMICS AND FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES IN POSTCOLONIAL NIGERIA: INSIGHTS FROM ADICHIE'S "HALF OF A YELLOW SUN" AND "WE SHOULD ALL BE FEMINISTS"

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Abstract

This article explores the gender dynamics and feminist perspectives in postcolonial Nigeria through a close examination of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Half of a Yellow Sun" and "We Should All Be Feminists". Adichie's works challenge entrenched patriarchal structures and offer a nuanced critique of gender inequalities within the socio-political context of postcolonial Nigeria. Through the lives of her female protagonists in 'Half of a Yellow Sun', Adichie portrays the resilience, agency, and struggles of women against traditional gender roles during the Nigerian Civil War, a period marked by both national upheaval and personal transformation. In "We Should All Be Feminists", Adichie further amplifies her call for gender equality, advocating for feminism that embraces inclusivity and seeks to dismantle the deeply ingrained cultural norms that subordinate women. This article argues that Adichie's feminist perspectives are not only rooted in Nigeria's historical and cultural context but also resonate with global discourses on gender, making her work a powerful contribution to contemporary feminist thought. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this study illuminates how Adichie's narratives challenge the patriarchal status quo and promote the reimagining of gender roles in modern African society.

Keywords: *gender dynamics, feminism, postcolonial, patriarchy, female agency, masculinity, african feminism, equality, identity.*

Introduction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a celebrated Nigerian author and feminist, is known for her impactful literary works that delve into themes of identity, gender, and post colonialism. She was born on September 15, 1977, in Enugu, Nigeria, and spent her formative years in Nsukka, where her family resided in close proximity to the University of Nigeria campus. Adichie's writing skillfully intertwines personal anecdotes with broader societal and political matters, presenting astute analyses of patriarchy, colonial inheritances, and the intricacies of Nigerian culture.

Adichie's first novel, 'Purple Hibiscus,' published in 2003, was highly praised for its depiction of a family grappling with domestic violence amid the backdrop of political unrest in Nigeria. Her second book, "Half of a Yellow Sun," released in 2006, delves into the effects of the Nigerian Civil War (Biafran War) on individuals, especially women, and is widely regarded as a significant work in African literature. In "Americanah," published in 2013, she addresses themes of race, immigration, and identity, centering on the experiences of a Nigerian woman in the United States.

Adichie is known for more than just her fiction writing - she is also a strong supporter of gender equality. Her TED Talk and essay 'We Should All Be Feminists' (2014) gained international attention and encouraged discussions about the importance of a more encompassing feminism. Adichie has been honored with various accolades for her work, such as the Orange Prize for Fiction, and continues to be a prominent figure in modern literature and feminist ideology.

For good reason, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's name is frequently brought up in discussions concerning gender, feminism, and Nigeria. Through her writing and engagement in the real world, Adichie has established herself as a formidable voice, shedding much-needed light on the nuanced gender dynamics in postcolonial Nigeria. Half of a Yellow Sun and We Should All Be Feminists are two of Adichie's works that delve deeply into these topics by fusing storytelling with a biting critique of patriarchy.

In "Half of a Yellow Sun," Adichie immerses us immediately into the turmoil of the Nigerian Civil War (Biafra, anyone?), yet it's the subtle integration of the daily struggles women endure, particularly when their sense of self, desires, and goals are frequently overshadowed by a society dominated by men, that truly captivates. Adichie's characters are not merely dealing with the conflict; they are challenging deeply ingrained gender roles that have persisted for centuries. Her female characters are resilient, intricate, and — to our pleasant surprise — unafraid to assert control over their destinies, even amidst chaos.

Subsequently, we encounter "We Should All Be Feminists," a discourse where Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's voice resonates with a distinct clarity and conviction, articulating the proposition that gender equality is an irrefutable imperative. In this piece, Adichie advocates for feminism as a universal cause, challenging societal norms that impede progress for both genders. Her argument is both audacious and invigorating, underscoring the urgency of embracing equality.

"Half of a Yellow Sun" (2006), a critically acclaimed historical novel, delves into the Nigerian Civil War, also referred to as the Biafran War (1967–1970). Adichie skillfully intertwines the narratives of three pivotal figures—Olanna, an affluent Igbo woman; Ugwu, a young domestic servant; and Richard, a British expatriate—within the tumultuous setting of the conflict. Through their intertwined stories, Adichie delves into the harrowing consequences of the war, including the toll on human life, widespread famine, and the intricate dynamics among ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Adichie adeptly navigates the political and personal ramifications of the war, accentuating the resilience of her characters, particularly the women, as they strive to fulfill their roles within a patriarchal framework amidst the turmoil. The narrative explores themes of love, loyalty, betrayal, identity, and survival, presenting a compelling depiction of the human toll exacted by warfare. "Half of a Yellow Sun" is lauded for its compelling storytelling, profound emotional impact, and insightful examination of colonial legacies and the challenges faced in the aftermath of colonialism in Nigeria.

"We Should All Be Feminists" (2014), authored by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, is a seminal and impactful essay that draws upon her TEDx talk of the same title. In this piece, Adichie articulates a persuasive case for the necessity of gender equality, extending its benefits to all individuals, not solely women, and advocates for a feminism that is both inclusive and accessible. Utilizing personal narratives and insights from her experiences across Nigeria and beyond, Adichie scrutinizes the entrenched gender roles and societal norms that perpetuate disparities.

This article delves into a variety of critical issues, including the stringent expectations imposed on both genders, the societal conditioning of women towards prioritizing marriage over personal aspirations, and the pervasive acceptance of sexism in daily life. Adichie underscores the imperative to confront and dismantle these detrimental norms, championing a vision where gender does not restrict individual potential.

"We Should All Be Feminists" has exerted a profound cultural influence, rendering feminism more accessible and fostering global dialogues on gender equality. It serves as a rallying cry for a paradigm shift, encouraging societies to nurture their children in a manner that fosters fairness, respect, and equitable opportunities for everyone.

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"**Gender Dynamics and Feminist Perspectives in Postcolonial Nigeria: Insights from Adichie's "Half of a Yellow Sun" and "We Should All Be Feminists"**

1. **Postcolonial Context and Sexual orientation in Nigeria"**
   "Colonial Impact on Sex Roles": Analyzing how colonialism cleared out behind patriarchal structures that kept on shape sexual orientation relations in postcolonial Nigeria.
   "The Nigerian Civil War as a Backdrop": Exploring how *Half of a Yellow Sun* employments the Biafran War to outline sex dynamics, appearing how national emergencies impact women's roles and identities.
   "Women in Postcolonial Nigeria":Tending to the struggles and agency of women in navigating post-independence Nigeria, especially in relation to conventional expectations.

2. **Women and Women's Agency in the book - "Half of A Yellow Sun" and "Olana and Cain":**
   Exploring Feminist Symbols as Complexity as Adichie's Gender Theories. Through education, relationships and war experiences, the two women implement women's resistance to patriarchal oppression.Adichie's exploration of women' contested power and autonomy in a male-dominated environment is explored in "Themes of Power, Autonomy, and Resistance. Feminine expectations and submission are challenged by personal choice, relationships, and freedom".In the book "The Intersection of Gender and Class," women in their mid-life, both Olana and Kainine, who are well-educated and wealthy, but also have different gender roles, experience class-based changes.

3. **Adichie's Advocacy for Gender Equality in "We Should All Be Feminists"**
   'Defining Feminism for a Nigerian Audience': In her essay, Adichie advocates for a more inclusive and practical approach to feminism that resonates with African communities. She emphasizes that achieving gender equality is crucial for the advancement of society.
   'Cultural Expectations vs. Feminist Advocacy': This section delves into Adichie's examination of cultural standards that impose strict definitions of masculinity and femininity, highlighting her assertion that these standards contribute to ongoing gender inequality.
   'Dismantling Patriarchy': Here, Adichie urges the deconstruction of patriarchal structures that restrict women's opportunities, illustrating how

cultural norms are ingrained from an early age through socialization processes.

4. **Masculinity and Gender Dynamics in Adichie's Literature**
   Exploration of African Masculinity
   This analysis focuses on the depiction of male figures in "Half of a Yellow Sun" and "We Should All Be Feminists," delving into the challenges posed by conventional masculinity. For example, the character of Odenigbo exemplifies the intricate nature of masculinity within a transforming societal context.
   "Redefining Gender Roles": Adichie posits that feminism encompasses not only the emancipation of women but also the redefinition of masculinity, fostering the emergence of men who are more emotionally and socially liberated.

5. **"War as a Catalyst for Feminist Awareness"**
   Examining how the Biafran War in 'Half of a Yellow Sun' serves as a backdrop for women's increased roles in politics, survival, and leadership, highlighting their adaptability and resilience in crisis situations. "Political Feminism in Nigeria": Adichie's works often link the personal to the political, showing how women's personal struggles for autonomy reflect broader struggles for gender equality in Nigerian society.

6. **The system of patriarch and Social Norms:**
   Talking about how both pieces challenge ingrained patriarchal structures that restrict women's responsibilities in the home, workplace, and social settings. Adichie believes for gender roles to be renegotiated in a way that is advantageous to both men and women. Empowerment via Education: highlighting how "Half of a Yellow Sun" presents educated women as important change agents and how Adichie emphasizes the significance of education as a weapon for women's empowerment and independence.

7. **Regional circumstances or Universal Feminists Integrating Nigerian Feminism to Worldwide Feminist Discussions:**
   Adichie's works reflect the particular difficulties encountered by Nigerian women while interacting with worldwide feminist concepts. Universal Takeaways through the Experiences of Nigeria: Adichie's feminist views, albeit particularly unique to Nigeria, are relevant elsewhere, especially when it comes to discussing gender injustice, established gender roles, especially the possibility of global feminist reform.
   Rethinking Gender Relationships: In a nutshell Adichie's writings propose for a rethinking of gender roles in postcolonial Nigeria, where the deconstruction of patriarchal structures can be favorable to both men and women.
   Adichie's Contribution to African Feminist Thought: Showcasing Adichie's significant contributions to discussions about African feminism, this subsection emphasizes her conviction that gender equality is essential to the advancement of Nigerian society. These comprehensive assessments of Adichie's writings explore how feminism as well as gender dynamics interact with postcolonial Nigeria's sociopolitical and historical background while also advancing broader feminist ideas globally.

Conclusion

The writings "Half of a Yellow Sun" and "We Should All Be Feminists" and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie provide significant insights into the ways in which feminist ideas and gender dynamics shaped postcolonial Nigeria. Adichie attacks ingrained male-dominated structures that restrict women's positions in society with her nuanced depictions of female characters and her forceful feminist campaigning. Adichie demonstrates in "Half of a Yellow Sun" how women's autonomy, resiliency, and their interaction of

gender and class are highlighted against the backdrop of the Nigerian Civil War. She amplifies her disapproval both modern society standards in "We Should All Be Feminists," proposing that a new understanding of both men and women is necessary for fostering true gender equality. *Adichie's* works are not merely reflections on the condition of Nigerian women; they are calls to action, encouraging the renegotiation of gender roles in ways that benefit both men and women. By linking personal experiences to broader social and political issues, Adichie bridges the gap between local Nigerian realities and global feminist discourses. Her vision of a more equitable society is rooted in the belief that dismantling patriarchal systems is essential not only for women's liberation but for societal progress as a whole.Adichie's contribution to feminist thought in postcolonial Africa is both profound and far-reaching. Her works push for a future where gender equality is not just an ideal, but a lived reality. Through her storytelling and advocacy, Adichie continues to reshape the conversation on gender, offering a powerful feminist blueprint for Nigeria and beyond.

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GLOBALISATION OR NEOCOLONIALISM: THE CULTURAL COLONISATION OF INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ARVIND ADIGA'S THE WHITE TIGER

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Abstract

Globalisation is the most talked-about phenomenon after postmodernity be it any field from Polity to Economy to Sociology. It has becomea core idea for International Relations and Policy Making. It has blurred the geographical boundaries and made the entire world a village. It advantages are numerous as it has made life easier on all the avenues with fast transportation and communication. It touches our lives at many levels and its impact can be felt in all walks of life. It evokes the happy metaphor of the world being a melting pot of culture but on closely observing it the trend says otherwise. The results of Globalisation are not equal and fair among the countries. If globalisation is a positive phenomenon which allows the different cultures of the world to integrate and have a cultural exchange then why is it so that this exchange is unilateral? They never got influenced by our culture whereas we love to follow them. In reality, globalisation is the new tool of the West to enforce Western-Centrism and colonise other cultures. Arvind Adiga in his Man Booker Prize winning novel The White Tiger (2008) explores the adversarial impact of globalisation on Indian Culture. He delves deep into the different layers of Indian society and exposes how the influence of Western languages, sense of dressing, and Western lifestyle are responsible the cultural degradation of Indian society. Adiga in his novel explores how globalisation is being used as a weapon by the West to influence young minds by establishing Western Culture as an aspirational model. It is the same old product of the West but repackaged and relaunched under the garb of cultural assimilation. It is nothing but a way to acculturate India. This paper attempts to analyse how globalisation is paving the way toward cultural colonisation of India with special reference to Arvind Adiga's The White Tiger.

***Keywords:** globalisation, neocolonialism, cultural colonisation, assimilation, and acculturation*

Introduction

Globalisation turns out to play a pivotal role worldwide. Its impact can be felt in all spheres of life. It has blurred the existence of geographical boundaries and turned the entire world into a common cultural hub. Indians might mistake it for Bharatiya philosophy of "Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam" which translates to "the world is one family". Bharatiya style "Acceptance" allows you to follow your culture in the most pristine way on the other hand Western style "Assimilation" requires you to one way or the other to convert to their way of life. The Western Cultural hegemony is extremely detrimental to our cultural values, ethos, and traditions as it turns us into a herd to blindly follow the Western cultural norms as the best and the only acceptable norm because of its association with ideas such as modern, and rational. On the other hand, indigenous and native culture is seen as traditional, orthodox, and irrational. In popular perception, globalisation is a facilitator of plurality and diversity or it is the melting pot of cultures. On the contrary, it facilitates the gradual and unconscious eradication of heterogeneity. It is the one-way street that promotes Western Centrism as the only accepted norm. globalisation is being used as a weapon by the West

to influence young minds by establishing Western Culture as an aspirational model. It is the same old product of the West but repackaged and relaunched under the garb of cultural assimilation. It is nothing but a way to acculturate India. Cultural dominance is an economic, scientific advancement, and cultural hegemony of the Western developed nations to regulate the direction of both economic and social progress of the whole world. If not then why is it so that only developed nations of the world set the cultural values and standards of the civilisations?

Arvind Adiga in his debut novel *The White Tiger* exposes this darker side of globalisation. The West is using globalisation to achieve the missionary agenda of converting the entire world into their way of life through the marginalisation of the Indian culture. Modern-day colonisation is not the same as it used to be in the past because it is just not possible to practice the old form of imperialism in the present, but that does not mean in ultra-modern times there is no dominance at all. It is still present in the contemporary world but the ways to achieve imperialistic ambition have changed now it is the indirect form of colonisation that is being practiced which can also be termed Neo-colonialism. The concept of colonisation has been substituted by the new political term globalization.

Culture informs one of one's own identity, it endowed people with a unique perspective to see themselves and the groups with which they identify. It is a system of transmittingfrom one generation to another. Be it any community, cultural or ethnic group, each has its own set of values, beliefs, and ways of living. The observable aspects of cultures are food, clothing, celebrations, religion, and language which is only a part of a person's cultural heritage. Apart from that, every culture has different and unique shared values, customs, and histories. Culture shapes the way a person thinks, behaves, and worldviews which makes up the concept of culture. A shared cultural heritage bonds the members of the group together and creates a sense of belonging through community acceptance. Every culture has something unique to offer in the global pool of thought therefore, it has every right to exist. Homogenising it would mean killing the uniqueness and beauty. Difference does not always mean opposition. We must learn to appreciate the differences. As culture shapes one's identity, it is imperative to protect one's own culture and civilisational heritage.

The White Tiger (2008) readers are informed through the character of Balram, that he is, writing a letter to the Chinese President Wen Jiabo narrating his own success story as an entrepreneur. While narrating the story the way he praises China as a Country and the amount of contempt and self-loathing he has towards his own country is something Adiga wants his readers to pay attention to. India has been once the victim of colonisation for almost two centuries and it took a huge toll on our self-confidence as a Nation and Civilization. Indian history has been rewritten by the colonisers which perpetuates the image of India as a defeated civilization. It's unfortunate that even after gaining independence long ago, none of the so-called native governments took any active interest in the way our history has been taught to us in schools. When you let your people have such a poor self-image then they become vulnerable to the threat of being preached by other people.Therefore, the concerns raised by Adiga in this novel become all the way more crucial to be worked upon.

Content

Language has intrinsic value as it helps in the expression of culture. Language is a means of communicating values, beliefs, and customs, it fosters feelings of group identity and solidarity. It is a means to ensure that a culture its traditions, and

shared values must be conveyed and preserved. As language is fundamental to cultural identity, therefore, it is crucial to keep one's language alive. As languages disappear, cultures die, hence killing a language means the eradication of the culture.

> "Neither you nor I speak English, but there are some things that can be said only in English" (Adiga 3)

At the very beginning of the novel itself, Adiga raises the issue of language. The English language no longer serves as a means of communication but it has become a class or a status symbol. Language is an important tool in the hands of the Western people to control the minds of the Indian masses.The English language enjoys a unique fascination amongst the youth and the masses in general. The situation in our society is such that people learn the English language with much enthusiasm for different reasons to maintain their social strata, to have better employment scope, and to show off.The reasons are many but the result is the murder of indigenous languages. Nonetheless, in present-day Indian society, the use of foreign languages has gained rapid momentum and seems to be the need of the hour for this ultra-modern society. Adiga through his novel explores the typical Indian psyche of the masses and their infatuation towards the English language and displays the dominant role of English not only in speaking level but also in their psychological point of view. Balram shows an obsession with the English language because as per him it is the language of rich people and thus it is worth learning. Unfortunately, the sad part is it is not just Balram's thinking but it is the thinking of the majority of the Indian masses.

The English language is gaining momentum and it is deeply rooted in our country and is the biggest threat to our local languages. Obsession is much higher than a common person can think about it. Names of buildings, roads, pets, etc. are in English.

The way Balram describes the roads of Delhi shows the sheer love for English and its demand in urban masses. Neither he could remember the English names of those places, nor could he speak them properly. Adiga shows the strongly rooted English language in the light part of India; does not matter where a person comes from, he has to prove himself that he can speak English in the city to get a good job. Thoughts and ideologies are still imparted through the languages of the West. Ngugi says language helps in 'spiritual subjugation.' They have been able to seep into the culture and lifestyle of Eastern countries through the English language. In every nation, the English language is imposed by forcing them to keep it as a part of the curriculum in their education system thus, and this is how the West gets the opportunity to get into the minds of young budding minds.

> "Well, that's not exactly right anymore, sir. The 'blackish face' bit is still true although I'm of half a mind to try one of those skin-whitener creams they've launched these days so Indian men can look white as Westerners" (Adiga 12)

The definition of beauty is subjective what is beautiful to one person can be ugly to another. Therefore, beauty is the reflection of a particular culture and the taste of the people belonging to that culture but nowadays in India concept of beauty is limited to White skin and golden hair. It is the Indians' obsession with fair skin that millions of fairness products are coming from the West and flooding the Indian market to change the skin tone of the Indian masses. Millions of Balram are using these fairness creams to look fair. Well, how many people get benefitted from these fairness creams and have been able to change their skin colour is doubtful but one thing is certain, out of our inferiority complex we are giving Westerners a kind of edge to rule us and to hold our economy.

"I found the fellow selling T-shirts. "No," I kept saying to each shirt he showed me—until I found one that was all white, with a small word in English in the centre". (Adiga 152)

Balram was looking for that shirt that he actually, does not like but his master and his master's colleagues liked. He changes his mind and taste to be like them. His fluctuating mentality about the choices shows the uncertainty of the Indians to choose between their own culture and foreign culture. He was looking for a T-shirt which was designed with the English alphabet. Products, with foreign brand tags, like Adidas, Puma, Nike, Ferrari, and several other brands, are a few glimpses of Englishness out of many. They have become symbols of the upper and elite class of Indian societies. The situation is such that even Indian brands keep the Western name for their product to increase their demand in the market. E.g. Allen Solly, Peter England, Louis Philippe, Monte Carlo, and many more. Our preferences and choices are still dictated by the West. Unfortunately, and unconsciously, there is a global acceptance of theCultural Hegemony of the West in the name of modernity and progress.

Conclusion

We are unconscious of the fact that we are completely mentally colonised there is no individuality left in our worldview. We look at our institution and culture with the Western lens. The entire Western logic system is based on the existence of binary opposition but life does not run in binaries. Accepting the fact that traditions and cultures are at loggerheads with development and progress is the Western way of looking at things. One's culture is one's identity and culture and development go hand in hand. What is the use of such development which comes at the cost of one's identity? Adiga's *The White Tiger* is an honest effort to wake up the Indian consciousness at a larger level. He exposes the bitter truth of Western influences subtly with a tinge of humour and sarcasm. On one hand, globalisation fosters mutual growth and cooperation but on the other hand with the advent of globalisation this colonial brainwashing has also gone to the next level. Therefore, it is imperative to combat the possible threat of homogenisation that comes with globalisation.

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AMRITA PRITAM'S PINJAR IS A SYMBOL OF WOMEN'S ENDURANCE AND LOSS OF IDENTITY DURING THE PARTITION

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Abstract

Pinjar (1950) novel by Amrita Pritam,is about the partition of the India, in 1947.Amruta has deeply observed the endurance, abduction and dislocation of Puro, the main protagonist of the novel. This paper presents that how the people suffer during the partition of India and Pakistan. The partition of India and Pakistan resulted in large no mass migration on both sides of the devide.It pasteurizes struggles, violence, murders, marginalization and powerlessness of women. The division of India into two parts was a dark time in the world's history. Pinjar was also made into a Bollywood movie. The film owns the National Film Award.

Keywords: endurance, abduction, partition, marginalization, and powerlessness.

Introduction

"Pinjar, The Skelton" by the noted poet and novelist Amrita Pritam is about the partition. The separation of the land, of five rivers into two parts. The writer through this story brings light upon problem faced by women during the time of partition of India. There were rites, rape cases, abduction of young women were used just as a symbol of sex for the pleasure of men.

The story dramatically captured the trouble and despair of Puro as victim of situations while the story moves on an emotional ride with twists and turns which leaves the reader wonder struck as what will happen the next.

It is the story of a Hindu girl, Puro, abducted by a Muslim man Rashid. Puro betrothed with a neighboring village Hindu boy, Ramchand. Puro, haunted to see Ramchand, the husband. but unfortunately she become the victim of partition and kidnapped by Rashid. Rashid a Muslim by religion who secretly loves Puro, one day finds opportunity, abducts her and marries. Partition time was such

time in which the Muslim and Hindu people fought with each other.

Amrita Pritam in her novel Pinjar narrates the gendered experience of the violence against women during and after the partition of India in 1947. It portrays the plight of women, their struggle and sufferings due to the perpetrators of violence either , in the name of culture, religion and social norms. The novel was translated into English by Kushwant Singh as The Skeleton and into French by Denis Matriage. This novel was brought on screen by director chandraprakash Dwivedi in 2003. Besides critical acclaim, the film also won the National Film Award for best feature film on National Intigration. The film presents the situation of the suffering of both communities of India and Pakistan. It takes on a serious historical subject rarely treated in mainstream cinema: the abduction of thousands of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu women by men of the other religious community, as part of the violence, looting, and "settling of scores" that accompanied partition.

Pinjar highlights the women's sufferings, exploitation and sacrifices because of their

dislocation and abduction during partition. In the major part of the First half of the novel we find that Puro's family is a happy family of two sisters and a brother. Puro is an obedient and ideal daughter. She unquestioningly accepts what her parents decide for her marriage and dreams about the future she is going to spend with Ramchand , her perspective suitor. The turning point in the story arrives when Puro is abducted by Rashid a Muslim boy who is forced for it, to avenge for the similar act committed by Puro's uncle. Thus portraying how conflicts between families, communities and nation are so often brutally played out on the bodies and identities of women. She after struggling a lot manages to escape and goes home, and is told by her father that there is no place for her in the family as she had been abducted which now puts her chastity and fidelity to question: " You have lost your faith and birth right. If we dare to help you, we will be cut down and finished without a trace of blood left behind to tell our faith" (p-23).

Her father refuses to accept her saying that he cannot keep her as nobody will marry her because she has lost her status and identity. Rejection from her own family to accept her is another form of violence. Rejection was a bigger blow of pain than her abduction. She has been doubly exploited: firstly by Rashid, abductor and secondly she is being violated emotionally by her family. Puro is not only disowned her father but her fiancé Ramchand also questions the chastity, purity, and dignity by ignoring to recognize Puro after her abduction.

She returns to Rasid and unwillingly submits her destiny by losing her religion, name, and identity in the process. Her characterization takes an unexpected turn towards the end when she reunites with her family but decides to stay with her husband.

Puro's identity undergoes a drastic change. Rashid forced marriage on her and changes her to Hamida from Puro. Puro as Hamida comes in contact with three females who were also the victim of the gendered violence. All the three characters are treated merely as body, not as humans. Taro is suffering with some unknown disease and is disowned by her husband. Her husband has brought another woman to live with him and forces taro to become a prostitute. She says to Puro: " What can I tell you, when a girl is given away in marriage, God deprives her of her tongue, so that she may not complain. For full two years. I had to sell my body for a cup of pottage and few rags. I am like a whore, a prostitute…. There is no justice in the world, nor any God. He can do what he likes. There is no God to stop him. God's fetter were me and only for my feet". (p- 36-38).

Another female, Kammo is a motherless young girl, who is disowned by her father and she stays at her aunt's house, she is ill-treated and exploited by her aunt. "It was a sin to be alive in this world is full of evil, thought Hamida. It was crime to be born a woman". (p-65).

Lajo, Puro's sister-in-law is abducted by Muslim and kept in her own house. All most all the female characters in the novel are victim of one or the other type of violence. They are oppressed by double yoke of patriarchy and loss of identity.

There is another woman character, who was sexually assaulted and becomes pregnant. The woman was mad and not even aware of the exploited inflicted on her body and a child growing in her. There were many women who were mutilated and impregnated during the tremulous time of partition. Thus, women become the worth sufferers during the partition. The abducted women subject to mass rape and sometimes they paraded naked and finally the so called refugee camps were also not safe for them.

The partition was the worst experience for all, though he/she may Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. Besides women exploitation , there was a great loss of the properties. Trilok, Hamida's brother burns the

Rashid's crop. And inhuman atrocities began throughout the novel. The houses and properties of Hindu and Sikhs put on fire and destroyed.

The novel Pinjar is no doubt an excellent novel highly explores novelists capacity of communicating lot of things in very short. Amrita Pritam has highlighted the deep human psyche during partition. The novel is saga of women's sacrifice, courage and suffering. It is highly focused on the lives of innocent people and their endurance.

Whatever it was Puro or Hamida, Lajo, Taro, Kammo or the mad woman becomes the other during the partition and their voices are silenced, whose identities were subjugated. Puro an ideal character who has goodness and knowledge. The novelist struggles for the emancipation of women and identity.

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GENDERED CULINARY EXPRESSIONS: DYNAMICS OF FOOD AND COOKING IN THE SITCOM *NEW GIRL*

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Abstract

The semiotics of food and culinary culture is a complex area of enquiry. Food and gender have a multi-dimensional relationship. The dynamics of culinary expressions and experiences in popular culture is an important aspect of study. Sitcom spaces are no different. Here, food often becomes a broader cultural entity rather than a mere prop or scene setting. This paper intends to study how food and cooking plays an important role in the formation of gender identities and how gender expressions influence culinary experiences and practices in the popular American sitcom New Girl. The proposed study intends to explore the intersection of gender and culinary expressions focusing on how the characters make use of food and cooking as a way of establishing, negotiating or subverting gendered identities. The study analyses the characters' interactions with food through the lens of social, cultural and individual experiences of gender. The research intends to contribute to the larger discourse of gender perspectives in culinary studies across popular media.

Keywords: *gender, culinary, sitcom, food, cooking*

Culinary culture in literature has always been a subject of keen interest among researchers and critics. Within this broad arena, the relationship between food and gender is a significant sub-track. This relationship is a complex and multifaceted one, owing to cultural semiotics. Though there might be minor contextual differences, there are a lot of universally-shared ideologies and interpretations. Exploring the intersection of food and gender can uncover and illustrate underlying societal expectations and dynamics.

It is a known fact that throughout history, most of culinary cultures and spaces have been gendered. Food has always been more than a mere nutritional source. It is a deep cultural entity holding multiple layers of meanings. This is visible in popular culture representations too. Media can shape public perceptions of culinary culture by subverting or reinforcing gender expectations. The underlying gender politics in media food narratives needs to be evaluated in detail.

New Girl is a popular American sitcom that revolves around the life of Jess Day, a school teacher who lives in a loft in Los Angeles with three men: Nick, a law school dropout turned-bartender, Schmidt, a pretentious, self-proclaimed "alpha-male" and Winston, a quirky, former professional Latvian basketball player turned-policeman. Jess's childhood friend Cece Parekh, a professional model, goes on to become a regular in the show in the later seasons, along with the other four lead characters. The show belongs to the sub-genre of hangout sitcoms and the majority of the sitcom's action takes place in the loft. In *New* Girl, food and cooking plays a major role, especially in the shared living space.

An analysis of *New Girl* focussing on gender and food reveals a multidimensional relationship, engaging with both traditional as well as progressive attitudes. The sitcom is seen to validate traditional notions of gender and food at times but, at other times, these notions are subverted and even, challenged. Food becomes a means of exploring and

expressing identity and agency. Food and cookinghold subtextual implications of gender performance and gendered power relations in the sitcom. The paper studies the portrayal of food and cooking in *New Girl* with respect to gender identity and reveal how culinary expressions correlate to gender. The study explores the major characters' approaches and reception to food and cooking, the interaction of food related humour and gender roles in the sitcom, significance of the loft's kitchen and the link between food and relationships.

Each of the five central characters of the show has a different approach and attitude towards food and cooking that mostly aligns with their personalities. The titular"new girl" Jess Day is the quintessential 'girly' woman. She is warm, gentle and sweet in nature. She likes to knit and bake in her free time. Jess is the primary caregiver of the group. She is the character who cooks the most in the loft. She cooks breakfast for everybody on her first morning in the loft and throughout the series, she is seen cooking food for her friends when they are hurt or sick and making snacks for the group when they hang out. The character of Jess is moulded around the archetypal motherly woman who expresses their love by cooking and taking care of other adult characters in a shared home.

Nick's character stands in stark contrast to Jess's, thereby creating an antithesis to her character. He is the most traditionally masculine of the male characters in the sitcom. Nick's rugged and careless attitude is evident in his approach to food and cooking as well. He fumbles in the kitchen whenever he is given an opportunity to cook. He is clueless and awkward and often commits the most foolish errors in the kitchen. Nick's relationship with food and cooking complements the conventional trope of a traditional man who doesn't know his way around the kitchen. Nick and Jess as a couple satisfies the binary of a woman whotakes pleasure in

cooking and a man who lacks any culinary skills. Nick is a bartender, which one could argue, is a profession somewhat related to food. It is interesting to note how Nick's incompetence in the kitchen vanishes once he goes behind the bar counter. He exhibits self-assurance and an unwavering level of confidence. It is important to note that the profession of bartending is traditionally considered masculine and the character of Nick evidently subscribes to this notion.

Schmidt's character challenges the conservative male character stereotypes and his relationship with food and cooking is an apt representation of this. Schmidt redefines manhood with his elegant taste and supposedly pretentious ways. Schmidt is often criticised by his roommates for his choices being too effeminate, be it his liking for luxurious haircare products or his imported silk robes. However, he refuses to allow this to have any impact on him and proudly owns his choices. Coming to Schmidt's culinary expressions, he believes that a gentleman should have artistic knife skills. He likes expensive and artisanal foods like sushi and parfaits and he cooks elaborate meals like a Thanksgiving dinner, from time to time. He insists on extreme cleanliness and order, especially in the kitchen. He is judgemental, temperamental and annoyingly perfectionistic when it comes to food. Apart from his liking for gourmet foods, he is the shown to be obsessively conscious about healthy eating habits, which might be a result of his body image issues from being formerly obese. This again is not a typical attitude of a traditional male character.

Winston's quirky and eccentric nature reflects in his choice of foods too. He does not have the usual'detached' male attitude towards food. He is seen to be joining in Jess or Schmidt's cooking endeavoursbut is mostly a 'sidekick' in the kitchen. That being said, his culinary choices may be questionable at times. His playful, childlike personality also extends to his attitude towards food.

Winston loves pranking his friends and he uses food for the purpose too. His obsession with his cat drives him to make unconventional foods for it.

Cece's character is designed upon another common trope. She is a professional model who is bold, unapologetic and opinionated. She fears no one and she is unconcerned about others' judgement. Being a professional model, Cece is constantly under dietary restrictions and her relationship with food is often linked with her body image. She refuses to eat cake on her birthday and her friendsfrom the same profession invent new and absurd ways to drink without caloric intake. Cece represents the societal pressure experienced by women to stay 'thin' and maintain accepted beauty standards at the cost of one's happiness. She does not have any culinary skills and neither is she interested in acquiring it. Cece is sloppy and disorganized in the kitchen and for this, her character is contrasted against that of Schmidt's and Jess's. Cece goes on to take up a job as a bartender at Nick's bar which complements her image as that of a daring woman who is unafraid of taking up unconventional challenges.

The loft's kitchen, though it is a shared zone, is quite a gendered space. The kitchen is used by Jess the most, conforming to the caregiver image. Schmidt too uses the kitchen. Winston mostly appears as supplementary character inside the kitchen space, often supporting Jess or Schmidt. Nick's main purpose inside the kitchen is that of a fixer/repairer. He fixes plumbing issues and performs other traditionally 'manly' tasks with his nifty tricks and hacks.Cece is not a preliminary contributor in the kitchen but there are instances where she uses the kitchen space to charm or seduce Schmidt.

Humour relating to food and cooking in *New Girl* mostly reinforces traditional gender roles and expectations. Nick's antics in the kitchen is one such prominent example. Nick's attempt at making breakfast for Jess culminates in creating an inedible mess. Nick's famous dish called "The Sauce" is another joke in this regard. Everyone, including the tough-to please Schmidt, loves this delicacy but the havoc created during the preparation of Nick's specialty is the central comedic focus of the situation. The absurd combination of the ingredients he uses, the chaos he creates during the process of preparation and his inability to identify the purpose of even the most basic utensils are all intended to cause laughter. The irony of "clueless Nick Miller" creating a delicious dish adds to the humour. Jess's obsession with baking and cooking, especially for her friends, is another reinforcement of gender roles used for the purpose of humour. This stereotypical trait of Jess is milked by the writers to a great extent. The episode where Nick and Winston go for grocery shoppingis yet another joke along the same line whenthey turn out to be utterly clueless about the prices of groceries and the requirements oftheir own kitchen. This plotline is created with the same underlying ideology that most men lack any understanding of food or cooking in a household.

Food and cooking are employed as a part of various kinds of relationship dynamics in *New Girl.*Food is often used as a way of expressing romantic love. Characters like Nick, Jess and Schmidt prepare breakfasts for their significant others. Sharing meals and common eating in the loft is a bonding activity among the characters. A major part of their 'hangout' time involves eating together. A lot of important conversations and dramatic plotlines happen during mealtime. Food is sometimes linked to sexual pursuits too. Gestures involving food and sexual innuendoes with food are used, especially by Schmitt and Cece.

This study employs food as a thematic device to explore gender in *New Girl.* Food is used as a prop for gender performance throughout the sitcom. To a large extent, three of the five lead characters in the sitcom reinforce traditional gender roles relating to

food and cooking. The kitchen space in the loft accommodates an apt reflection of this. Apart from this, culinary elements in the sitcom are utilised as a means of exploring the intricacies of relationship dynamics as well. Upon analysis, it is revealed that the culinary expressions in *New Girl* is gendered.

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THE ROLE OF DESERT AS A HUMAN CONDITION OF MEMORY AND MYTH WITH THE QUEST OF IDENTITY IN KUNZURU'S NOVEL *'GOD'S WITHOUT MEN'*

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Abstract

The importance of the 'Desert' used as a human condition because embodying the different themes of the search for meaning, existential quest and isolation. It also reflects the inner turmoil of the struggles of the character in a fragmented world. The portrayal of the desert explores the complexities of modern existence with a source of hope and a confrontation with emptiness of spiritual crisis. In novel each character's journey witnesses the grappling with influence of social expectations, myth and faith. There is a tapestry of spiritual legacies and cultural histories, were intertwines the prospective of revealing the collective identity and complexities marked by uncertainty and dislocation. The narrative spans have different prospective with different time periods, where highlighting the personal identities structured by spiritual quests, historical narratives and cultural myths. The theme of memory serves as a bridge between the past and present, influencing how the characters' define themselves with others in their relationship.

Keywords: *dislocation, cultural memory, structural emphasis, isolation and social expectations.*

The plot is infused with the elements of chronological jumble. The beginning chapter set in 1942 and prolonged by a lengthy section that takes place 2009, followed by the dairy entries of 1775. Douglas Coupland of New York Times, defines the transit as a genre that– "Collapse time and space as it seeks to generate narrative traction in the reader's mind." It crafts a very complex narrative with multiple timelines exploring the themes of identity, search for meaning and belief in a fragmented world. This novel set against the backdrop of the Mojave Desert interlaces the stories of various aspects that including a group of UFO enthusiasts, a young family grappling with loss, and historical figures haunt the landscape. The structure of the novel oscillates between past and present. Myth bad reality. He also highlights the broad cultural narratives with pervasive influence of technology, spirituality and consumerism. The present paper resonates with the contemporary issues of alienation and existential inquiry. The concept of philosophical and underpinnings encourages the readers to understand their own perception and values plays an important role.

The Mojave Desert serves as an isolated setting and is vast and characterised by its harsh overwhelming expanse and harsh environment. Kunzru describes a way that evokes the feelings of introspection and solitude–

"In the desert, everything is stripped away it is place of confrontation with the self" (Kunzru P.12)

The line depicts that the desert act as a catalyst for compelling characters, for self-reflection where they confront their true selves with a mid an environment that strips moving away from the distractions of the modern life.

The novel opens with the story of a beautiful family known as-Jaz and his wife, Lisa and their son, the autistic boy. His son goes missing during a trip to the

desert. Their family journey struggle for identity with familial bounds. Narration also have shifts between various characters and their beautiful journey experiences in the Mojave Desert, including a British Scientist, a couple drawn to the area by UFO phenomena and a Native American Shaman. Every character's story reflects the relationship between their quest of meaning and the desert. Kunzru provides the deep exploration of the American heritage through the character of a Native American Shaman. The narrative emphasizes the enduring the connection between the original inhabitants and the land. The Shaman reflects on the spiritual practices and the cultural memories through generations–

"We are the echoes of our ancestors, wandering in this vast silence" (Kunzru P.58)

The above line explores the theme of the importance of ancestry in shaping identity and historical memory. There is also a historical impact of European colonization on Native American populations, addressing the loss and survival illustrating the tension between the encroaching modern world and traditional way of life. The historical conflict also presented through character reflection with flashbacks that conveying a sense of displacement. The historical theme intertwined with the myth of the American Dream and promises self-discovery and freedom spiritual American narratives highlights the tension between mythological understanding and empirical knowledge, there is interconnected stories creates a dialogue between past and present through different narratives. The desert historical significance, reveals the collective histories and personal influencing identity.

Myth plays an important role in shaping the characters identities. The desert portrays a mythological stories both cultural and personal. Kunzru writes–

"In the expanse of the Mojave, we search for signs for connections to something greater than ourselves" (Kunzru P.134)

It reflects the presence of UFOs and supernatural element in the narrative can be seen as a manifestation of the character desires to escape their realities. Which explores the meaning of indifferent universe. The myth of the American dream explores the disillusionment that accompanies the pursuit of identity in search of meaning. Jaz's struggle with fatherhood and his cultural heritage highlights the complexities of modern self-identity. The exploration of the collective identity within particularly in relation with a cultural memory. The resolution of the novel narrates the unfold of interconnection of the live characters with cumulating in moments of crisis that challenges the connection and desert serves as both a metaphorical space for transformation and psychical journey experiences.

The entire novel reflects the complexities of human experiences, enduring the search for meaning and identity in the changing world with the human fragility of memory. He also explores the rich tapestry of story with personal and cultural histories intertwine within the after indifferent landscape and expansive. The single day time frame creates a cyclical structure to the narrative, where confront their own past and futures. The American Magical realism intertwine reality of American life with supernatural elements highlights the mystical aspects. At the heart of "Gods without Men" is a profound exploration of identity and alienation. Kunzru's characters navigate a landscape marked by cultural dislocation and personal fragmentation. The protagonist's family, particularly, embodies the struggles faced by individuals caught between different cultures and histories. As they grapple with their sense of self amidst societal pressures and expectations, the novel reflects the broader experience of modern existence—one marked by a pervasive sense of isolation.

The quest for connection becomes a central motif in the narrative. Characters seek relationships and understanding, yet frequently find themselves adrift, unable to bridge the gaps between their inner lives and the external world. This theme resonates deeply in contemporary society, where digital connections often replace genuine human interaction, leaving individuals yearning for meaningful relationships. Kunzru also delves into the theme of spirituality, questioning the nature of belief in a

secular age. The characters' journeys reflect a diverse exploration of spiritual paths, from traditional religions to new-age philosophies. The Mojave Desert serves as both a literal and metaphorical landscape for this quest, representing a space where the supernatural and the mundane intersect.

The tension between belief and doubt is palpable throughout the narrative. Several characters experience crises of faith, reflecting the broader societal uncertainties regarding established belief systems. In a world increasingly defined by science and technology, Kunzru prompts readers to consider the enduring human desire for spirituality and connection to something greater than oneself. The impact of technology on human experience is another critical theme in 'Gods without Men.' Kunzru critiques how modern advancements can lead to a disconnection from the natural world, illustrating the tension between technological progress and ecological preservation. The novel's setting, with its stark beauty and inherent dangers, emphasizes the need for balance between humanity and nature.

Characters often find themselves grappling with the authenticity of their experiences in a world saturated by media and technology. This raises significant questions about what it means to live a "real" life in an era where artificiality often blurs the line between genuine and manufactured experiences. Kunzru's narrative suggests that amidst technological proliferation, the search for authenticity becomes increasingly urgent. Time and memory are intricately woven into the fabric of the novel, with Kunzru employing an online narrative structure that reflects the complexities of personal and collective memory. The intermingling of past and present serves to illustrate how historical events resonate within contemporary lives. This nonlinearity emphasizes that the past is never truly forgotten; it continues to shape identities and realities in profound ways.

The exploration of collective memory further underscores the shared human experience that transcends individual stories. As characters intersect in unexpected ways, their lives become intertwined, highlighting the interconnectedness of human existence and the collective search for meaning.

Kunzru plays with the idea of myth and reality, using symbols of divinity to provoke thought about what it means to seek the divine in a contemporary context. This search often leads characters to moments of profound revelation and connection, suggesting that divinity may be found not in religious institutions but in the shared human experience and relationships. Through its exploration of alienation, the quest for connection, and the tension between the sacred and the secular, Kunzru's work challenges us to consider our place in a world that often feels indifferent to our struggles. Ultimately, 'Gods without Men' serves as a poignant reminder of the human desire for connection and understanding in an ever-evolving landscape.

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GENDERED CONTEXT IN SUDHA MURTHY'S NOVEL GENTLY FALLS THE BAKULA: A STUDY

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Abstract

Sudha Murty, a renowned Indian author, has made significant contributions to English literature. Her writings, known for their simplicity, depth, and cultural relevance, have captivated readers worldwide. Sudha Murty's "Gently Falls the Bakula" is an investigation of orientation elements, connections, and cultural assumptions in Indian culture. The novel primarily revolves around the lives of two protagonists, a man named Shrikant and a woman named Shrimati whose lives are interwoven through their personal and professional endeavors. Shrikant generally believed that his own life was substantially more huge than hers and his own will more grounded. However, presently he stood discouraged without Shrimati (p.no168) the novel finishes up with the peruser the acknowledgment Shrikant has toward the end for his savagery in not giving Shrimati her due. Lamenting his choice being in the middle of building a superior profession of him with his oppressive self he decided to keep away from Shrimati in the marriage life. Evaded out of family tension and putting Shrimati alone under mental strain, the novel according to a women's activist point of view causes the peruser to figure out the significance of correspondence, love, and empathy in a relationship.
Keywords: gender context, male domination, inequality, patriarchy

Introduction

Sudha Murty's remarkable literary career has cemented her position as a pioneering English writer. Her works, reflecting Indian experiences and values, have resonated with readers worldwide. Through her writing, she continues to inspire and educate, leaving an indelible mark on Indian literature. who has made huge commitments to Indian writing and society. Her books offer quick reflections on different social and social issues in India, and her composing style is known for its effortlessness and lucidity. Sudha murthy's books has acquired her various honors as well as roused and impacted many individuals, youthful and old. Her writings inspire women's empowerment promote social changes showcase Indian culture globally, works explore gender equality, women's empowerment, and the challenges women face in Indian culture. Sudha Murty's notable works in English literature: Novels are "The Bird with Golden Wings" (1993) – explores themes of love, family, and self-discovery. "Gently Falls the Bakula" (2004) – delves into the life of a young woman navigating marriage, family, and personal aspirations. "The Tiger's Daughter" (2005) – a poignant story of love, loss, and identity. "House of Cards" (2007) – explores the complexities of family relationships and social expectations.

Short Story Collections: "Dollar Bahu" (2007) – stories highlighting the struggles of Indian women. "Mahashweta" (2011) explores themes of love, family, and social issues.

Non-Fiction:"Wise and Otherwise" (2002) – essays on life, relationships, and personal

growth."The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk" (2012) – inspiring stories of everyday people.

Children's Books: "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read" (2004) – heartwarming story of self-discovery."The Magic Drum" (2006) – teaches valuable life lessons.

Awards and Recognition: R.K. Narayan Award for Literature (2001) Padma Shri (2006)IIM-Bangalore's Distinguished Alumnus Award (2011)

Plot

The story revolves around Shrimati, a young woman from a traditional South Indian family, who marries Shrikant, an engineer. Shrimati navigates her new life, balancing personal aspirations with societal expectations. Her struggles to balance her personal aspirations with societal expectations. The novel is set in the 1970s in Bangalore. their marriage seems perfect, but Shrimati soon realizes that her husband's family expects her to conform to traditional roles. "Gently Falls the Bakula" is a heartwarming, thought-provoking novel exploring the complexities of Indian women's lives. Shrimati faces challenges such as adjusting to her new family's expectations balancing her career aspirations with domestic duties, dealing with her husband's changing behavior. Themes are Women's empowerment, Marriage and relationships, Social expectations vs. personal aspirations Self-discovery and growth.

Concept of Gender

A few historians had begun to use the term "gender" in their gender history studies in addition to "women's history". She directly repudiated the use of "gender" as a de-politicized, social-scientized synonym for women or sex, and she. As per WHO gender is the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

Gendered Context in Sudha Murthy's Novel Gently Falls The Bakula

Sudha Murty's "Gently Falls the Bakula" provides a rich narrative that addresses the themes of gender discrimination through the lives and experiences of its central characters, Shrikant and Shrimati. The novel highlights various dimensions of gender disparities and societal expectations that affect both men and women, particularly in the context of Indian society.

Traditional Gender Roles: The novel highlights the traditional expectations placed on women in Indian society. Shrimati's, as a strong and independent character, often challenges these norms, striving for her own identity amidst societal pressures. Her journey reflects the struggle many women face when balancing personal aspirations with societal demands.

Education and Career: The contrasting paths of shrikant and shrimati's serve to illustrate gender disparities in educational and professional opportunities. While shrimati's is ambitious and actively pursues her career, Shrikant's journey is marked by conventional paths often celebrated in male-dominated narratives.

Marriage and Personal Sacrifice: The story addresses the sacrifices women often make for family and marriage. Shrimati's dedication to her career is often juxtaposed against the expectations of her as a wife. This theme raises questions about the price of ambition and the compromises women make in pursuit of their goals.

"Someone like Shrimati, who never ever demanded anything from her husband, was rare".(p.no.142)

Emotional Dynamics: The novel delves into the emotional aspects of relationships, showcasing how gender influences expectations in love and companionship. The emotional labor that women often bear in relationships is a significant theme,

revealing the deeper complexities of human connection.

"Shri, I loved history and I loved you. In fact, once upon a time I loved you more than History. But when you lost your finer sentiments, chasing the success in the world of business, I was left alone with nothing other than history…you knew your goal. Now, I am also clear About my goal and I want to achieve it." (p.no.162)

Empowerment and Individuality: Despite the challenges, Shrimati's journey is ultimately one of empowerment. Her character growth reflects the broader narrative of women's empowerment in modern India, where women strive to carve out their own identities beyond traditional roles.

Contrasting Perspectives: The novel effectively uses the contrasting perspectives of its male and female characters to highlight the gender divide. Shrikant's insights often reflect entrenched patriarchal values, while Shrimati challenges these notions, offering a more progressive viewpoint.

Conclusion

"Gently Falls the Bakula" encapsulates a critical examination of gender roles and relationships in Indian society. Through its characters, Sudha Murty presents struggles, aspirations, and transformations that resonate with readers, encouraging reflection on the evolving dynamics of gender in contemporary society. The novel serves not only as a story of personal growth but also as a commentary on the broader societal shifts towards equality and empowerment.

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THE QUEST OF IDENTITY IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY AGAINST ALL TABOOS IN THE NOVEL *THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS* BY SHASHI DESHPANDE: A THEMATIC STUDY

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Abstract

From ancient text, manuscript, and epics we see positions of Indian women is mostly subdued in compared to men, it might be due to traditions, belief, or the type of physical work in capacity to do and bodily natured. The author tried to personify the nature of women in societal position, which she holds in different phases of her lifestyle, here by taking anecdotes of female protagonist 'Sarita' with any character, irrespective of gender in the novel. In the onset of novel, it seems like females are more oppressed in society in compared to males and later part it becomes conversely. This paper reflects more on such pros and cons of Indian patriarchal society and their taboos which are practiced from the mankind and still seen in the mindset of present world people, irrespective of gender and their repercussion are seen in the society in form of extra marital affairs, sexual sadism, molestation(unisex), gender discrimination, domination towards dwarf gender, emotional suppression, etc. There is not any specific limit for liberties, rights, etc. for any person in this novel, if there exists a limit, it again becomes restrictions, so this article limelight such aspects, and justifies ethical way of leading healthy relationship with any characters in general lifestyle.

Keywords: *subdue, oppressed, patriarchal, gender, taboos and relationship.*

Introduction to Author

Shashi Deshpande was born in the year 1938 in Dharwar, The then erstwhile Mysore kingdom under British Raj, to a well-known Padma Bhusan and Sahitya akademi recipient Adya Rangacharya (Jahagirdar of Agarkhed in Bijapur District). She was schooled in Bombay and Bangalore in her early age, and has a degree in Economics, Law, and Journalism. She worked as a journalist for the magazine '*Onlooker*' for few months.

She published her first collection of short stories in 1978, and her first novel, '*The Dark Holds No Terrors*', in 1980. She won the Sahitya Akademic Award for the novel *That Long Silence* in 1990 and the Padma Shri award in 2009. Her novel *Shadow Play* was shortlisted for The Hindu Literary Prize in the year 2014. Shashi Deshpande has written four children's books, a number of short stories, thirteen novels, and an essay collection entitled *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays*.

Prime Cast of the Novel:-

1. **Sarita (Saru)** :- The lead protagonist and narrator throughout the novel.

2. **Manohar (Manu)** :- Sarita's husband a poet, activist and under paid teacher as profession in third grade college.

3. **Boozie** :- Professor and mentor of Sarita and maintains deep relations without any societal bounding.

4. **Dhruva** :- Younger sibling of Sarita, who drowned and died at early stage, which was turning phase of Sarita's life.

Plot

The Dark Holds No Terrors is the first novel of Shashi Deshpande, it's all about haunting flashback anecdotes of the main protagonist Sarita (Saru). The novel begins with Saru's return to her maternal home after a long gap of one and half decade, here protagonist is well educated (Doctor) financially independent (medical practitioner), middle class, typical Indian spouse, capable of handling persons after understanding their psyche and fulfills her tasks, career, and other personal wishes. Some works of her were fulfilled within societal bounding and other weren't. The novelist writing style looks like feministic perspective and shows lesser importance towards male characters at the beginning of the novel and later part it becomes conversely and justifies every characters irrespective of gender about their roles and also criticizes regarding drawbacks of Indian societal mindset (taboos) with respect to the cast of the novel, The plot ends with protagonist rejoining with her husband and leads a happy family life with a wider maturity and better understanding and coping accordingly.

Virtuous Travelogue of Sarita's Bildungsroman (Saru's Brief Narration)

The Dark Holds No Terrors is a developed version of short story "A Liberated Woman" by the novelist. The story has been bifurcated into four sections. The first three sections have eight chapters each, and the climax section has six chapters. The author has adopted the narrative style, in the random manner between first and third person. The present circumstance is represented in third person and the past are in the first. This dual nature of narration keeps shifting in the alternative chapters. The protagonist place are fictious in nature like metro cities, Bombay, which is referred to the place where Saru's haunting memory had occurred in the past. The other place is a small town near the metro city (Bombay), where the present circumstance take place.

Prime Highlighted Taboos in the Novel

Taboos - It is defined as an activity, behaviour, idea that is generally forbidden nor supported by the society. It also means orthodox type of people who never accepts the changing neo trends of belief, or who are in favor of age-old beliefs.

Sarita's life can be classified into three phases, each phase has its own taboo related issues.

I. From childhood till adolescence – Sarita is a girl child born into a middle-class family and has a younger sibling Dhruva. Her mother Kamala-Tai is a typical Indian woman who follows age old beliefs and wishes such traits should be inculcated to her daughter, whereas Saru is dead opposite to her mother's age-old beliefs. Her mother always did gender discrimination, though both being born from same womb, Always praised for Dhruva's gesture and dexterity in general, on the other hand never appreciated or liked Saru. Her mother always believes that Sarita's life is itself a liability (burden) for their family by saying that she is *Amanat* or *paraya daana* of other family. All household tasks were subjected to Sarita, irrespective of the nature of work. Like this many instances no motherly sentiment was shown to Saru. So, this makes her life miserable, sometimes she feels lost. Inferiority is inflicted to Sarita and Dhruva's work is praised and by saying he is future bread-butter for their family. During her delivery time, her mother says that it was a horrible experience as it rained with cats and dogs like a bad omen, such an evil and hatred feelings she had towards her. Sarita recalls naming ceremony of her brother which was grander in nature and celebrated like

festival, conversely her birthday was not celebrated.

Main twist or turning point of Sarita's during her childhood was accidental death of her brother Dhruva, who died by drowning in the pond, as she couldn't help her brother and she became stunned spectator, which made her mother angry, who in agony accused her as a 'murderer' and cursed her badly every time and reminding this incident till Sarita's adolescent. Her father was completely unconventional character in comparison. He quickly understood the situation of his son's death and never blamed or cursed her, he always encouraged her during school days and allowed her to leave home for her higher studies to another city (Bombay). Sarita developed evil and hatred thought while growing up in home vicinity towards her mother as she had conversely on her.

Here novelist also highlighted the terms like feministic perspective, gender bias, patriarchal taboos, and emotion.

Here after surfing the childhood phase of Sarita, we can also connect to *Mary Wollstonecraft's* work *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1972), Here this paper re-iterates the quest of identity of the female's section. In another novel of *Virginia Woolf's – In Room of One's Own* (1929), here it shows self of women which lacks its own sole-identity.

II. From adolescent till marriage – Sarita was bored, tiresome, developed hatred and was stone hearted towards her mother, She was desperate and eager to get out of this complex labyrinth and wanted to explore the outside world, but never got the opportunity, As she was good in academics, she cleared medical entrance and earned a seat in a metropolitan city medical college, but her mother was not interested regarding this higher education issue, since it becomes burden for their family. Sarita's father supported her regarding this matter and allowed

here to go city (Bombay) for medical college studies.

For the first time Sarita stepped outside the town and was astonished, shocked and amazed to see city lifestyle. Finally, she met like-minded people after admission to medical college, now life was like a utopian world here and compares this to her dystopian hometown world. She was dynamic and study oriented in her college days, and actively participates in co-curricular activities. Here another student named Manohar (Manu) was a student leader in the college, who is dynamic in nature as of Saru, charismatic and handsome. These are the qualities she liked and believed to exist in the person whom she wishes for future soul mate. As the day's passes, she gradually fell in love with Manu, and so did he. Manohar adores her charming and beautiful nature and loved her romantic talks. Saru also liked his romantic talks, his deep knowledge regarding romantic poets Keats and Shelley. Now this love relationship gradually becomes firm grip, and both wishes to get married soon.

As proposal of this marriage came Infront of her parents, father was happy and willing for her to get married as per her choice, But mother was not pleased with this relation, as Manohar belongs to lower caste, which was against the belief of her family tradition. Her mother says, "I know all these love marriages. It's love for few days, then quarrels all the time. Don't come crying to us then", if she didn't say this to Sarita, then she probably won't take such harsh step of getting married to Manohar without her concern.

Now Sarita was fed up with all taboos associated with her mother and wanted to get rid of this orthodox bond permanently. Although she got a green signal from the father. She decides and gets married to Manohar and breaks all ties to her maternal side and attains autonomy of herself. She decides never to

return to her hometown or even establish contacts with her parents permanently.

"Here novelist tried to enlighten readers by showing such an exemplary instance, where key sensitive moral decision and its consequences for a person and nobody can be blamed here. Everyone is right as per their own perspective but only lack in communication and understandings. Only true matured relationship gives a perfect sense and prevents worst consequences led by the virtuous situations".

Sarita's quick decision for marriage can be compared to *Pandavas* in the legendary epic *Mahabharata*, who accepted the proposal for visiting wax palace and participation in the game of dice.

III. Long tortured Married life and Return to hometown. Initial days of married life was good as per Sarita, even though surrounded by filth and stench in the vicinity of her one room apartment. People in neighborhood started liking her as once fire broke out in nearby factory, where she helps the victims as a doctor. Due to this act, she became famous, patients start coming in large numbers for treatment and help. This made her to rise in society in all aspects, whereas her husband Manohar is a low paid teacher in third grade college, Due to steep rise in status of his wife, he feels inferiority and she slowly started neglecting him and her children due to busy schedule of her profession. This creates rift between them, like this many incidents make him feel insulted and ignored. Now Sarita wishes to elevate her career and meets Boozie (handsome and efficient Doctor), As he understood situation soon, he started flirting and exploiting her, though knowing she is married. Both continue their relationship based on their vested interest. With financial help from Boozie she opened new consulting room, This all made more Manohar more agony and

distressed, he started to behave like a doppelganger during day and night, He started to show his grudge on her by assertion like a beast in the night daily and this leads to sexual sadism. This phenomenon repeated for 15 years, and she was unhappy about her marriage decision and started to repent. During daytime Manu behaved as a gentlemen as if nothing had happened. She was unable to express grief to her husband or disclose it to anyone and started restraining the gloom within herself. She was waiting for the right moment to go to her hometown, and it was accomplished on receiving news of her mother's death.

Conclusion

Shashi Deshpande's *Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) shows the mirror on typical real orthodox Indianness and age-old belief practices in the present. Here each character has its own weightage in respective phases of the novel and undergoes liminality, no one is perfect or wrong as per their thought. Mutual understanding and respect for other is not seen in this whole novel, only in the climax, some glimpse is shown in the form of protagonist, as she understood completely the psyche of male and female of their surrounding vicinity by facing and tackling boldly with a pragmatic view on circumstances, Here psyche varies from person to person in real world too, Facing problems should be like a hobby and not a burden. Quest of Identity can be reflected or understood only on decisions and its consequences becomes moral lesson for future generation, only if it works out in real life. Dhruva used to motivate Sarita when she was afraid of dark in her childhood days, This makes her to change her mind to take a U-turn decision by returning to her husband's house and completes the quest of identity.

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UNEQUAL WATERS: EXAMINING CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION IN ACCESS TO WATER RESOURCES IN INDIA

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Abstract

Water is the basic need of life. Upper-class people have to show their power, while lower-caste people are subject to both physical and mental attacks. Upper-class people view water as a weapon to demonstrate their power and keep them in line. When climate began to change the rainfall became less so people relied on Government water supplies but when government water supplies are irregular, lower caste villagers are forced to rely on wells owned by upper castes or have to travel long distances to access public water supplies. About 71 percent of Dalit village settlements do not have access to public water supply. While water itself is a natural resource that transcends borders and political divisions, human societies often impose restrictions and inequalities in its distribution. This paper gives a deep introspection on hydro politics played by upper-class people, this discrimination starts when people touch or talk with lower caste it becomes an impurity, that is When people are denied access to basic human needs such as food, water, shelter, and healthcare, a deep void is created in both humanity and our collective sense of human dignity, in this article A Tamil film called Mamman (2023) by Mari Selvaraj and A Tamil short story called Neer Vilayattu (Water Play) by Perumal Murugan is given as examples to depict the dehumanizing temper tantrums of the upper classes.

Keywords: *hydro-politics, untouchability, dalit movement, violence*

Introduction

In the introduction to 'Annihilation of Caste', the doctor and the saint Arundhati Roy highlight the harrowing story of Surekha Bhotmange forty-year-old Dalit women to underscore the persistent caste-based discrimination and violence in contemporary India. This case study took place in the village of Khairlanji Maharastra. Surekha Bhotamge along with her two sons and her daughter, had purchased a small plot of land in Khairlanji surrounded by farms owned by individuals from the dominant Mahar caste, Surekha's efforts to build a life for her family were continuously thwarted by systemic discrimination. The village panchayat did not allow her access to basic amenities such as electricity obstructed her attempts to build a home. Most notably the village residents prevented her from irrigating her fields with water from the nearby canal which was essential for agricultural productivity.

Additionally, attempts were made by the villagers to encroach upon her land including proposals to construct a public road through her property. Villagers also unleashed cattle to graze on her crops exacerbating her vulnerability. Despite filing complaints with local law enforcement, Surekha received no protection or intervention from the police. The situation escalated when one of her relatives was attacked in the village. While the police initially arrested those responsible the accused were quickly released on bail. This event culminated in an unthinkable act of violence on September 29 2006, when a mob of approximately seventy men and women surrounded Surekha Bhotmange's home. Surekha along with her daughter was dragged out of

their house by the mob. The mob ordered the boys to sexually assault the mother and sister when they refused their genitals were mutilated. Both Surekha and her daughter were gang-raped and beaten to death their bodies along with those of her sons were later found discarded in a conical, initially, the media covered the incident as "morality murder" with the suggestion that Surekha had been involved in an illicit relationship with a relative. However, following widespread protests led by Dalit organizations and pressure from civil society investigation revealed tampered evidence. Public outrage, fuelled by mass mobilization, eventually compelled the authorities to address the gravity of the crime. In court, the primary preparators of this horrific act were brought to trail

The case of Surekha Bhotmange represents one among countless incidents across India where systemic denial of basic human needs has catalyzed violence and discrimination, particularly against marginalized communities such as Dalits. Upon examining case files related to caste-based violence, a recurring pattern emerges: the denial of fundamental necessities often serves as the initial trigger for conflict. In Surekha's case, this began with the refusal of her right to land, housing, and critically, access to water these denials are not isolated but part of the broader socio-political mechanism that perpetuates caste-based hierarchies. The depravation of such essential resources undermines the ability of marginalized communities to live with dignity, creating conditions that exacerbate their vulnerability to further oppression and violence. This systemic denial of basic needs thus forms the foundation upon which more severe acts of discrimination and violence occur

This paper provides a deeper introspection into the denial of water access to the lower communities, an issue that remains deeply entrenched despite the modernization of society and evolving values even as the world progresses caste-based discrimination continues to persist particularly in rural areas where access to vital resources such as water is often controlled by dominant caste groups. This persistent inequality reflects how casteist ideology though challenged by modern legal and social frameworks, remains deeply embedded in societal structures. Recent incidents further illustrate that, despite economic and technological advancement, access to water and other basic necessities is still weaponized as a tool for reinforcing caste hierarchies and marginalizing Dalit communities.

In Surekha's case, the core issue stemmed from her denial of access to water for irrigating her land. Water a basic necessity, became the focal point of conflict as the refusal to allow her to irrigate her fields exemplified the systemic discrimination she faced. This denial not only hindered her livelihood but also highlighted how access to such essential resources is often weaponized in caste-based societies to marginalize vulnerable groups. The withholding of water played a pivotal role in escalating the tension that ultimately led to the tragic outcome of her case.

"A 1920s survey reported that untouchability was practiced in its most brutal and degrading forms in the city, where most people from the depressed castes had no access to public wells, drinking water ponds, or schools." (The MIT Press Reader)

Water as a Tool of Power

Water is a fundamental necessity of life, and denying access to it mirrors the dynamics of hydropolitcs where control over water resources becomes a tool for power and dominance. While water itself is a natural resource that transcends boundaries and political division, human societies often impose restrictions and inequalities in its distribution. In many cases, water is used as an instrument of social control, particularly in caste-based societies, where marginalized communities are deliberately excluded from access to this vital resource. The politics

surrounding water access reveal deeper issues of power, discrimination, and socioeconomic inequalities even though water by its very nature knows no boundaries or political affiliations.

Thus denying water access reflects broader systemic injustice and reinforces existing hierarchies, making it a critical issue in the struggle for social equity and justice. The problem is simple Dalits are not allowed to use the same water sources as the upper caste and if they do untouchables are physically abused and the water tank needs to be purified

When people are denied access to basic human needs such as food, water shelter, and healthcare, it creates a profound gap in both humanity and our collective sense of human dignity. The deprivation of these fundamental necessities not only threatens survival but also erodes the very principles of compassion, empathy, and equity that define human civilization. This gap created by inequality and systemic neglect, fractures communities and undermines the moral fabric of society. It reflects a failure of social and political systems to uphold the inherent rights of every individual leaving those affected marginalized and dehumanized. In such circumstances, the ideals of humanity and human solidarity are compromised making it crucial to address these gaps to foster a just and equitable world for all

Fluid Boundaries in India

In recent months several newspapers and articles have reported on persistent social domination faced by Dalit and SC/ST communities. A particularly distressing case from Rajasthan has drawn widespread attention an eight-year-old young Dalit boy was tragically beaten to death for drinking water from a pot designated for upper-class people, similarly, the School Principal Thrashed an 11th-grade boy for drinking water from his water bottle,

these incidents highlight the deeply entrenched caste-based discrimination that continues to pervade Indian society despite legal safeguards.

On January 14th, 2023 resident of Vegaivayal Muttukadu panchayat in Pudukottai district, discovered human feces in drinking water, resulting in case of vomiting and diarrhoea among children who consumed the contaminated water. This incident highlights the severe challenges faced by the SC community in accessing safe and clean drinking water reflecting the ongoing discrimination and neglect in providing essential resource

Issues like these tend to capture public attention for a short period before fading into mainstream discourse. However, films and short stories that address such topics have more profound and audiences, these mediums create a significant ripple effect in society. They not only raise awareness but also spark dialogue and encourage critical reflection on deep-seated discriminatory practices. The enduring influence of these creative works helps to keep such issues alive in the public consciousness, prompting calls for social change.

Issues like these tend to capture public attention for a short period before fading from mainstream discourse. However, films and short stories that address such topics have a more profound and lasting impact. By portraying this social injustice through narratives that engage and resonate with the audience, these mediums create a significant ripple effect in society. They not only raise awareness but also spark dialogue and encourage critical reflections on deep-seated discriminatory practices. The enduring influence of these creative works helps to keep such issues alive in public consciousness prompting calls for social change

"Mamannan"(2023), a movie directed by Mari Selvaraj the narrative delves deeply into the roots of caste-based oppression. It highlights the stigma faced by the SC community, protagonists from the

pig-rearing group who are marginalized and treated as untouchables. Even though the film is centered on the political struggle of an MLA, The core issue in the narrative stems from the denial of basic resources like water to the lower caste communities, the issue of water discrimination is tied to caste-based oppression a central theme in the film. The movie opens with a harrowing senesce where children from lower caste communities are stoned and drowned by upper caste individuals while they are playing in the pond, this sets the stage for the exploration of caste divisions and systemic discrimination against marginalized communities

Mari Selvaraj has beautifully shown the denial of water access through his movie, many movies in India speak about the underlying problems that lower caste people face,

Perumal Murugan Notorious Tamil novelist and short story writer, in his Tamil short story called **"Neer Vilayattu" (Water Play)** even though the story is focused on the Nature of water and the proclamation of nature and survival, another deeper introspection can be seen in this short story. This story takes place on a coconut tree farm, a very hidden and mysterious well is in the center of the farm, kids call out to the protagonist to play them in the well, but as he is a guest at the home he hesitates,

"உடனே எழுந்து சென்றுவிடவும் முடியவில்லை. தயக்கத்தின் மெலிந்த நூல் முனைகள் அவன் கால்களை இறுகக் கட்டியிருந்தன. பாதம் வியர்த்து ஊன்றியிருந்த தரை பிசுபிசுத்தது. அங்கும் இங்குமாகக் கண்களை ஆசை நிரப்பி அலைபாய விட்டான்." ("நீர் விளையாட்டு - பெருமாள் முருகன்")

The protagonist hesitated and he was very much self-conscious. The social position of the protagonist's caste prevents him from confidently engaging in the act of jumping into the water, playing in the water is seen as a privilege enjoyed by the dominant caste and caste-based divisions are visible in this scenario. This act's protagonist's internal struggles and the larger societal divisions surrounding him. The societal oppression related to accessing water intensifies his fear and reluctance.

In other Dalit writings also **Karukku** by Bama is more of an autobiographical work that discusses the everyday forms of discrimination against the Dalit people, she describes a group of kids who were prevented from drinking water from the same tap used by the upper class capturing the dept of segregation and humiliation,

The Ground work

Many films such as **Pariyarum Perumal, Kammatti Paadam, and Sadgati** as well as numerous literary works depict the suffering and social oppression experienced by marginalized communities. These creative expressions highlight the ongoing caste-based discrimination within society. However, Dr. B. R Ambedkar was the first to lay the foundation for solving these problems and transforming them from theoretical discussions into actionable reforms. Ambedkar's efforts, both through legal framework and social activism, were pivotal in bringing caste-related struggles into the public and political spheres and setting the stage for later cultural and artistic representation

While reviewing school history books it is sad to find only a brief mention of Dr B.R. Ambedkar typically a short paragraph acknowledging him as the architect of the Indian constitution. Beyond this, there is little coverage of his movement's struggle and not much about the impact of his activism. This lack of representation of Ambedkar is the key reason for the limited awarenss. Despite living in the digital age he is often viewed narrowly as a freedom fighter rather than as a pioneering human rights activist

In contrast, Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha and his philosophy of non-violence are widely discussed with his martyrdom, commemorated as a national holiday, however, Ambedkar's contribution including his first major movement, the Mahad Satyagraha where he fought for DalitAm rights to access water from the same takes upper caste individuals to receive far less attention in history books and academic research, this imbalance in representation contributes to the underappreciation of Ambedkar's role as a champion of equality and social justice.

"Mahad is located in Raigad district of Maharashtra. The town located on the bank of river Savitri has a Buddhist historical site. In August 1923, the Bombay Legislative Council passed a resolution stating that people hailing from different classes should be allowed to use places built and maintained by Government. In January 1924, Mahad, which was part of the Bombay Presidency, passed the resolution in its Municipal Council to impose the act. But it failed to administer due to the protest from the caste Hindus. Bashikit Hitakarini Sabha arranged a conference on 19-20 March 1927 in Mahad, where more than a thousand people assembled. At the end of the conference, they stormed into the main tank of the town and they drank water from the tank. The Mahad Satyagraha for the right to water conducted by Dr. Ambedkar was one of the outstanding struggles of the untouchables to gain equal social rights." (Team)

Several IPC sections address caste discrimination, the most important of which is SECTION 153 A. This section's goal is to punish those who engage in willful defamation or assaults on the race, religion, place of birth, language, or other characteristics of any specific group or class, as well as on the leaders and prophets of a religion. The scope of this Section has been expanded to include the criminalization of the promotion of discord, hostility, or animosity toward other ethnic, linguistic, religious, or regional groups, castes, or communities. In this section, moral turpitude offenses are also addressed. The Constitution's Articles 15 and 17 outlawed the untouchability system. The Untouchability (Offenses) Act enacted in 1955 established legal penalties for discriminatory practices. Of all these the basic fundamental rights of humans are liberty, equality, and fraternity, the basic fundamentals are being denied to show the power of the upper caste.

A 52-year-old Dalit woman was assaulted and humiliated, allegedly by a group of caste Hindus, in Thenpalanji village near Tirunagar here on Thursday last. Andichhi suffered major injuries on her left hand and has been admitted to the Government Rajaji Hospital. Trouble began after Ms. Andichhi's daughter-in-law Bhagyalakshmi went to draw water from a hand pump. In some circumstances, a tank has two valves one has twenty an hour of water connection and the other has only one hour of water nearly 90 SC families should fill water. Sometimes upperclassmen would even close the valve, this is to be considered as a serious case of double subjugation.

Ambedkar bravely portrayed that

"We must stand on our own feet and fight as best as we can for our rights. So carry on your agitation and organize your forces. Power and prestige will come to you through struggle" (Aic)

The root cause of this oppression lies in the upper caste's perception of themselves as inherently superior based solely on their position within an invisible caste hierarchy. While caste itself is intangible its impact is devastating, comparable to the effects of a nuclear bomb. This deeply ingrained system inflicts both emotional and physical pain on marginalized communities. Despite its harmful consequences, many individuals take pride in their caste, boasting about their status and perpetuating the cycle of discrimination and social division

Under the guise of culture and religion, people are often treated in dehumanizing ways. In Tamil when a Dalit sits near or talks about something it is referred to as "theetu" which means unclean or unhygienic. This idea reinforces caste-based discrimination believing that all people are equal in the eyes of God. Divinity does not distinguish between upper and lower caste, yet societal practices continue to perpetuate this unjust hierarchy and falsely attribute it to religious or cultural legitimacy.

Conclusion

Though educated people around the world still consider that privilege, the issues remain the same and the only things that have changed are the name and the location of the incident. What is most alarming is the prevailing mindset where individuals view such actions as a matter of pride. Even when facing punishment for murder, they perceive their actions as a significant contribution to society and show no sense of guilt or remorse. This reflects a deeply ingrained belief system that upholds caste-based discrimination as justifiable. We need to eradicate the notion that caste is something to be proud of. For most of the undeniable part is parents giving caste education to their kids, when they grow and come to the society, they pollute others with their ideas. A case study in Kodikulam a village at the foothills of Yanamalai (Elephant Hill), is known for its ancient public well, which provides high-quality water year-round. People from surrounding areas come to collect water in large containers. However, the Dalits in the village are prohibited from approaching the well. A 61-year-old farmer, A. Akkniveeranan, pointed to an area 150 meters from the well, explaining that "Scheduled Castes (SCs) cannot go beyond this point." He added that Dalits must ask someone from the upper caste to fetch water for them, as they are not allowed to collect it themselves. This practice, deeply rooted in tradition, has remained unchanged for generations. The village is predominantly occupied by Kallar and Moopar communities, who openly discuss this discrimination, even with outsiders. The well is associated with four nearby temples, and religious beliefs are often used to justify the exclusion of Dalits

Even animals share water, emphasizing the essential and universal nature of this resource. In the natural world, water is a common good, accessed by all living beings without discrimination. This highlights the stark contrast with human societies, where social, economic, and political barriers often determine access to water. While animals instinctively understand and share water as a communal necessity, humans, in many instances, impose restrictions based on power dynamics, caste, or class, denying access to those most in need.

As you can see the protagonist in Mamannan film Athiveeran, stood up for his people by teaching values, as youngsters must give good moral and ethical values that can develop the nation, caste is a system that is one of the big stone-dragging us down in society unable to take a step towards the development of the society, As Ambedkar said

"Men are mortal. So are ideas. An idea needs propagation as much as a plant needs watering. Otherwise, both will wither and die." (Aic)

highlights how ideas must be fostered and shared widely to survive and have an impact, just as a plant needs water to grow. Just as all living beings, including humans, are mortal and can perish without care, ideas too can fade away if not actively propagated, discussed, or acted upon.

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INSIGHT INTO THE HEART OF A WOMEN AS DEPICTED IN ANITA RAU BADAMI'S "TAMARIND MEM"

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to redefine Anita Rau Badami from the status of Diaspora writer to a writer of Feminist perspective with reference to her debut novel "Tamarind Mem". This research article explores the insight into the heart of Saroja and Kamini and their responsibilities as a woman. This coming-of-age novel discusses the struggle of Kamini as an immigrant in Canada and how she adjusts to her new life, as well as her memories in her home town India, where life was full of energy and happiness. Here we come across the insight feelings of two women for instance Saroja and her daughter Kamini. The novel is narrated from the view point of Kamini and she portrays the inner heart of her mother Saroja, and why she is nicknamed Tamarind Mem.

Introduction

Anita Rau Badami is a Canadian writer of Indian descent, her first debut novel 'Tamarind Mem' (1997) deals with the complexities of Indian family life and women's role in particular which explores the whole saga of Indian family either they live in east or west. In this novel we come across a typical women (Saroja) who is the wife of a railway officer and a mother of two female kids Kamini and Roopa. Saroja, nicknamed Tamarind mem due to her sour tongue but she is bitter because of her loveless marriage and her shattered dream of becoming a Doctor. Saroja's inner heart is discussed in this article, which portrays her as a 'Tamarind mem' solely due to her sour tongue but she is sweet within. I would also discuss Kamini's love for her mother and her father though she feels sometimes that her father is not fair on his side.

Before the novel begins the author gives us a brief quotable passage about Tamarindus Indica (Tamarind tree) which is never used for auspicious ceremonies, as its fruit being sour and it has a Folklore that tamarind tree is the home of spirits that do not let anything under the tree survive and travelers are advised not to sleep in its shades. Here the author is particular about the tamarind tree and its auspiciousness but as we read the novel there is nothing auspicious about Saroja who is nick named as Tamarind mem, she is sweet not sour its her frank nature of talking what she feels, the author portrays her as the shadow of tamarind tree in whose shade she keeps her family safe and secure and follows the duty that each and every Indian woman does.

Inner Yearning of a Women

The novel starts with a phone call from Canada from Kamini who is the narrator and daughter of Saroja in this novel. She is reluctant to tell her mother that how lonely she is in Canada. Kamini has moved to Canada to pursue her graduation, but now she is full of nostalgic who narrates he past memories of her love towards her parents and so on. We can see two generation of women through the talk of Kamini that

is the narrator herself and her mother Saroja through the post card and telephone calls; After each conversation from her mother Kamini is full of nostalgia and she narrates each and every story related to the talk with her mother and sister too. She feels happy and also slightly sad when she remembers her past life. Far from one's own country and family, leaves a bitter longing experience that can't be expressed through words, the pain and agony remain within ourselves with heavy heart we console ourselves that we are here to fulfill our dreams; these agony and untold inner feelings are beautifully portrayed by Badami.

From Kamini's nostalgic talk we come to know that Saroja is not a woman with sour tongue as she is nicknamed by the people surrounded by her. Saroja is just like any other women of Indian family- she has change herself in due course of time due to the situation she has faced as a woman who is born as a girl child into a family and as a woman who is married off into another family.

> "Ma was a different person here, giggling with her sisters, allowing her aunts and cousins to pamper her. I wished we could live in that house forever" (5)

In the first chapter, Kamini describe the behavior of her mother as a soft nature, full of life when she is in her mother's home in Mandya. Kamini's grandmother's house was always full with people, some who are neighbors and other who are relatives who stay couple of days with them and share all the family gossips full of laughter and whispered words. We even find Kamini yearning to live in that house which is full of life instead of the life she is leading in the railway colony which as a child she fears is full with secrets lurking in the corners of empty room with ghosts and goblins about which their maid servant Linda has explained just to calm down the mischievous little Kamini. Kamini also picturize her mother's behavior in Railway colony where her

mother sits motionless in the veranda, and she is always with knitting and hemming and all the household chores which sometimes makes Kamini think that they should leave in their grandmother's house forever.

In a typical nostalgic talk Kamini shows the yearning of her mother when her father goes for an official trip and the quarrel which erupts every time when the order of official trip is planned:

> "What is so special about these trips that you cannot take us with you even once?" Ma demanded just before Dadda left for Darjeeling, a hill station that my mother had been wanting to visit. (44)

The above trivial dispute between husband and wife is quite common in Indian family. Saroja who is longing to visit a hill-station is unable to fulfill her desire though this time the trip is official announced. As usual she was derogated by her husband that official trip is not for family enjoyment. For which, Saroja insist that other family members plan official trip for enjoyment. Here we also come to know the thinking of little Kamini who is just 8 years old; she is ready with her little sister with all her belongings so that if the fight ends with a decision of their mother leaving the house then they would follow her but nothing happens as we know Indian women tolerate everything and change their mind as soon as possible only for their kids and for the dignity of their parents.

Insight Into the Heart of a Women

We come across almost all category of women in this novel and Anita Rau has explored each and every characters of women in a different way. All the women characters are unique and while reading the novel we would find the same characters in and around us, these women are the same whom we meet and talk in our day to day life. For instance, the mother character is the one whom we see every day, Saroja is the mother of 90's kids, the atmosphere in

which this novel has been written flashes the nostalgia in each and every 90's kids. Kamini and Roopa both the siblings are none other than the siblings of Indian family; the inferiority between them, the fight, the easy-going attitude, the love and attachment after each and every argument, sibling favoritism to their parents are all common in Indian family though each parent don't reveal their love for their kids. The below given lines beautifully opens the door of a house where kids argue with their parents on favoritism:

> "You love Kamini more than me because she is prettier than I am", she would say to Ma, looking slyly out of the corner of her eye at me. She knew that Ma in effort to prove that she loved us both equally, …. "See, Kami, what a good sister you have! Make sure you take care of her." (57)

The above line shows the love and care of the mother who puts all the effort to prove their kids that she loves both equally which in general is taken as an advantage by the younger sibling to show how generous they are, which again proves that how the elder one is always given a responsibility to take care of the younger and the readers see the innocent nature of the elder who gets always fooled and proved resentful by the younger.

Remaining women characters are similar to our maternal and paternal- grandparents, aunty and neighbors. Even the house help Linda Ayah is the most eminent person to be mention in this novel, because she is the women who has created all imaginary characters of ghost and spirits in her stories which she tells to Kamini and Roopa, so that they behave properly. For instance,

> "What a tomboy. Come here you puppy, why you hitting all the children in the colony like a wild thing? You bad girl, wait you, a fish bhooth will breathe poison over your face at night,"(57)

Though the above lines are without logic but in our childhood we were made to believe in extraordinary creatures which we dare to believe as real and are haunted by them at night and next time any wrong thing we do we think twice before doing it, this we could say as a Indian psychology to teach children through fears which is beautifully depicted by the author with all its essence which we could picturize, here Linda Ayah also tells the story of fairies who could fly, even the readers get mesmerized with each and every memory of Kamini while reading this novel. All these memories are flashed back to Kamini when she enquires her mother about Linda Ayah. Kamini's alienation is pictured out with these enquiries she makes through phone call to her mother.

Conclusion

As a diaspora writer Anita Rau Badami has delineated the yearning of Kamini through her phone calls to her mother in which we see how lonely she is in Canada and recurring her past life through nostalgia in which she describes the culture, custom, belief of each and every Indian thought whether they are male or female, old or young, educated or uneducated and so on. The lot more Indianness and longing to be again in the motherland with all its smell and feel is portrayed in this novel. The author has done justification by exploring the two generation women of different thoughts and opinion but who are equal in their temperament as a feminist. We find feminism in the talk of both mother and daughter, the former is now free with no more responsibilities which curbed her hands in past and the latter who wants her mother to enjoy her life as a free bird.

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REFLECTIONS OF FEMALE SELF IN VIJAY TENDULKAR'S "SILENCE THE COURT IS IN SESSION"

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Abstract

This paper is to explore about the reflections of female self in the play of Vijay Tendulkar's drama "Silence the Court is in Session". Feminist theory focuses on analysing gender in equality. In this drama Vijay Tendulkar explored discrimination, oppression, sexual objectification, patriarchy and stereotyping. He presents a world dominated by men in which he apparently voices for the women. Leela Benare,an educated and efficient woman refused to be cowed down by men. Vijay Tendulkar is one of the able voice in treating his female characters with understanding and compassion.

Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008) the great Marathi play wright, has introduced remarkable women characters in his plays. Some of the remarkable female characters in his plays are Leela Benare in "Silence! The Court is in Session", Lakshmi and Champa in "Sakharam Binder", Sarita and Kamala in "Kamala". All these women characters represent the Indian women who has long been under supression and cruel domination of men, but is emerging as a new women in modern times. Generally in Vijay Tendulkar's plays women are the centre. It is around the women the most of the action revolves. Tendulkar's female protagonist play over shadow those male characters. Tendulkar's play is a critique of patriarchal values and shows how law operates as a device to silence the voices of women The word "Silence" in the title has a symbolic meaning. In a denotative sense it means the judge's order to maintain silence in the Court, but connatatively it implies silencing the weaker sex plea for justice.

The play's protagonist miss Leela Benare is an unmarried, dedicated school teacher in her early thirties and a member of the cast of the living courtroom. She has never gone late to school for any reason, she has dedicated herself to the uplift of her wards. She has always maintained strict discipline. Her students adore her to the point of making her colleagues and the management jealous of her.

She tells Samant:

> "In school when the first bell rings my foot's already on the threshold …………………………
> Not a bit of room for disapproval – I don't give an inch of it to anyone!".

Inspite of this she was charged for an affair with professor Damle, she became pregnant, however, he cut her off. Benare has recently fired from her job, as her superiors view unmarried motherhood as sinful and worried she would some how pass on her immorality to her students. Benare questions the propriety of her management trying to mixup her personal life with her profession. She feels that she should be judged only as a teacher for she has put her whole life in to it. She has worn herself to a shadow in that job. She has never hurt anyone except her own self.

She says:

"who are these people to say what I can do or can't do? My life is my own – I haven't sold it to anyone for a job! My will is my own. No one can kill those -no one! I 'll do what I like with my self and my life!".(Silence the Court is in Session"(4-5)

This voice of self-assertion, this voice of individuality endows Benare with the identity of a new woman against the coercive attacks of patriarchy. Patriarchy commands false reverence, avarice and fierceness over women. Benare does not want to fit in to the rules and laws framed by men. She would like to come out and oppose the socio-moral code of sexuality outlined by men to control the collection of women, women need supporting their voice, agency and empowerment or marginalization.

"when a man gives his opinion he's a man, when woman gives her opinion, she is a bitch". (Bette Davis)

Miss Benare is courageous enough to accept that she has suffered as a victim of life both as a teenage girl in love with her maternal uncle and later on as a matured woman in love with Prof. Damle. She has borne the brunt of the betrayed of her lovers and the people who are close all alone. At one point she had to make her mind to ask for a life for herself and her unborn child to some of her courtroom collaborators, Ponkshe and Rokde, to marry her and help her raise her child, but has been rejected. She understands the stigma both she and her unborn child will face if it is born without a father and worries about how to move forward. The stress Benare is under in her personal life comes to the surface when Kashikar jokingly charges her with infanticide during an improvised mock trial, over the course of this trial Benare's real troubles are brought to light and other collaborators and ostensible friends take the opportunity to insult what they see as her loose immoral, progressive lifestyle. At the end of the play, although her castmates collect themselves and try to tell her that her prosecution was just a game Benare has been emotionally broken.

Tendulkar's plays were inspired from real life incidents or social upheaval, which throws clear light on harsh realities. "Silence the Court is in Session", is the first significant modern Indian play reveals round on woman as protagonists and victim. In this play Tendulkar tries to explore the world of woman in which a woman, Benare gives up the role of so called an ideal woman and behaves according to her own wishes and as usual the society cannot accept her as an individual and she becomes the object of criticism. Miss. Benare never likes to bind herself with the rules and regulations established by the patriarchal society. She behaves as an individual as one human being greets another without bothering about the limitations of sex.

Thus the character Miss. Benare voices out women's rights and conscious struggles against the oppressive patriarchy. "woman is not born, but rather becomes a woman as a society as a whole manipulates the process of becoming". Rightly said by Simone De Beauvoir in her book The Second Sex (1949).

"Our feet tread upon unknown
And dangerous pathways ever more".

Benare recites a poem which indirectly refers to the dangers she is confronted with she sings treading on dangerous paths of waves shattering on the shore, of light mingling with the dark, of hands burning out of the wound that keeps bleeding of fighting losing battles and of experiences that give delight and then cause a waste.

Benare's life is captured in this tragic poem, for, she is also fighting a losing battle and her romantic experiences are bound to misery. The poem recited by Benare is an extract from a Marathi poem by Mrs. Shirish Pai. It was this poem which suggested the character of Benare to Tendulkar.

Garde Lerner defines the term feminist consciousness "as the awareness of women that they belong to subordinate group that they suffered wrongs as a group that their condition of subordination is not natural but it is societally determined that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs". Victimization of women or gender oppression has extended from life to literature. The author wanted to record not just the life of a courtesan but the tension between her private thoughts and her external behaviour as well as the society in which she was situated. He satirizes the ills afflicting the society and makes the reader-audience introspect itself by showing the society as it is, in all its ugliness. Many of these plays are women - centered and explore their plight in a male-dominated society.

This study is an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the causes of the dichotomy between man's aspirations and achievements. Man is the only creature for whom his own existence is a problem from which he could not escape, till at one stage in his evolution he began to invent problems set for himself novel goals to achieve. His imagination could reconstruct the times before he was born and it could also reach in to the years when he would no longer be there. This pull of the future is irresistible and directs man to strive generation to generation for the fulfillment of his aspirations.

The play enforces painful realization on us, that human society is an organism, not a machine that can be tampered with. Any attempt to radically unsettle the things in order to record them, however generously motivated, may cause incalculable harm. The concept of femininity in Indian literature is shaped through a harmonious blend of metaphysics, social values, individual ideals and oral tradition. As the Indians got the opportunity to be exposed to the western models of Literature the male writers placed woman as an icon of national and social interest. The image of dutiful wife, the devoted mother, and submissive daughter was revealed at women victim of tradition, fate, circumstances, dominance, etc. She emerges at the end of her trial, vibrant, independent, with an inner strength. She accepts convention as a means of survival. Her search for the self ended not in self-denial or self-negation of values, but a merging of herself with that of a daughter, wife, mother, sister so on. Thus woman created a space for herself, along with a coercive togetherness of the family.

Women of the new breed concentrated on the varied persona of the Indian woman. She reflected the concord of ideology and imagination. So also heralded a change in the medium of expression. Women explored many vistas from the subconscious to the unconscious from reality to abstract from self-denial to self-assertion, from negation of the physical to an affirmation of bodily charms. They projected their ultimate experiences, and sexual and moral dilemmas, along with championing the cause of women with an uninhibited candour. Simone De Beauvoir rightly observes. The women of today are in a fairway to dethrone the myth of femininity; they are beginning to affirm their independence in concrete ways, but they do not succeed in living completely the life of a human being.(30)

Miss Benare is an example of the observation of the psychologist. She was torn between her wish and the suppression of the male society. The frustrated male members of the society try to subjugate women to prove their power and superiority in the social hierarchy. They praise motherhood with bombastic phrases but try to destroy Benare's infant in the womb. Benare is stigmatized and sacked from her job. But Prof. Damle the man responsible for her condition, escapes scot-free for he is a male. And Sukathme, the brief less banister, puts the final nail in the coffin of womanhood.

In the final verdict Benare is equated with 'criminals and sinners' and the court orders that she

should live but the child in the womb should be destroyed, writhing in pain, Benare, at first strongly resists and then stifled sobs come from her.

In this study we have discussed major themes and other relevant issues of women subjugated and controlled and not permitted to take decision of then own lives. Miss Benare's life proves to be a battle where defeat is destined at the end.

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TEXTUAL DISCOURSES IN ENGLISH STUDIES

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Abstract

The paper critiques the textual regimentation traditionally found in English studies, particularly the use of the term 'English Literature,' which has become increasingly outdated. It advocates for adopting a more expansive framework such as 'literary/English studies' that includes a wider variety of text formats. In the posthumanist era, the definition of 'text' has broadened to encompass not only classical literature but also films, television programs, graphic novels, journals, commercials, graffiti, and even things such as furniture. This embodies a post-structuralist viewpoint, wherein any entity that may produce meaning is regarded as a text. It enhances transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary methodologies by expanding the definition of 'text.' This broadened perspective enables English studies to converge with multiple disciplines, including media studies, cultural studies, sociology, and visual arts, adjusting to societal shifts in the consumption and production of meaning. Through the examination of multimodal meaning-making, English studies evolves into a more dynamic discipline, adept at navigating the intricacies of modern society that helps the sustainability.
Keywords: *textual discourses, regimentation, text, upgrade, sustainability.*

The evolution of the concept of 'text' in the posthumanist period has significantly transformed the discipline. The contemporary interpretation of 'text' extends beyond the traditional confines of prose, poetry, and drama to include diverse formats such as films, television shows, graphic novels, journals, advertisements, graffiti, and unconventional objects like furniture. This transition corresponds with a post-structuralist viewpoint, in which every entity that can communicate meaning is considered a text. Thus, the discipline acknowledges that meaning is generated not only via written language but also through diverse multimodal expressions that interact dynamically within cultural contexts. This paper analyses the traditional textual limitations established in English studies, particularly examining the phrase 'English Literature,' which is increasingly regarded as an antiquated notion. The word denotes a limited emphasis on canonical works that predominantly overlook the wider and more intricate realm of textual creation in modern culture. In light of this constraint, the article advocates for the adoption of a broader paradigm, such as "literary/English studies," which encompasses a wider array of textual expressions outside conventional literature.

The ramifications of this expanded comprehension are substantial, as it facilitates the improvement of transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary methodologies within English studies. Expanding the notion of 'text' renders the discipline more flexible and open to incorporating approaches from several fields, such as media studies, cultural studies, sociology, and visual arts. This convergence enhances comprehension of meaning consumption and production across many cultural contexts, so allowing English studies to adjust to continuous societal transformations. This enlarged paradigm facilitates an investigation of multimodal meaning-making, emphasising the interaction of linguistic, visual, spatial, and audio elements in the construction of meaning. This approach highlights that texts are not standalone entities but components of a broader semiotic framework that engages with many cultural and technical dynamics. This acknowledgement

enhances English studies by evolving it into a more dynamic field adept at addressing the difficulties of modern society. The redefined function of English studies expands its academic breadth and enhances the discipline's viability amid rapid technological progress and changes in cultural consumption. By adopting many methods of meaning-making, English studies can more effectively address the complexities of contemporary existence, therefore maintaining its relevance and promoting broader critical engagement across disciplines.

Mario Klarer's *An Introduction to Literary Studies* (2004) functions as a fundamental "Introduction to Literature" course designed for novices or undergraduate English majors, while also targeting a "advanced audience" (viii). The book analyses the definitions of 'literature' and 'text,' analyses the three principal textual genres, and explores film along with its relevant vocabulary. Film is recognised as a fourth genre alongside fiction, poetry, and drama to highlight the interconnectedness of literature and film in artistic creation and scholarly investigation (Klarer viii & ix). Film is classified as the fourth principal genre in literary studies, highlighting its parallels with drama. In addition to general artistic expression, the technological medium and technical characteristics are fundamental elements of film production. Three components—spatial, temporal, and acoustic—significantly contribute alongside linguistic factors.

In *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*, Alan McKee defines textual analysis as the act of formulating "an educated guess at some of the most plausible interpretations that might be made of that text" (1). This method facilitates the analysis of many materials, such as films, television programs, publications, commercials, clothing, and graffiti, to comprehend how individuals in particular cultures experience the world at specific moments in time. The term 'text' possesses certain implications. Perfect synonyms do not exist in the English language; words invariably possess nuanced differences in meaning and connotation. The term 'text' possesses post-structuralist implications, shaping our understanding of meaning construction (McKee 4). In the chapter titled "What is a text?", the subsequent question is presented:

> If textual analysis involves analysing texts, then - what exactly is a text?
> Answer: whenever we produce an interpretation of something's meaning - a book, television programme, film, magazine, T-shirt or kilt, piece of furniture or ornament - we treat it as a text. A text is something that we make meaning from. (McKee 4)

Textual analysis involves several methodologies that enable academics to methodically investigate texts to comprehend its structure, content, themes, and underlying significances. A primary method is close reading, entailing a thorough and meticulous analysis of a text, concentrating on elements like as diction, syntax, tone, imagery, and metaphor. This approach reveals nuanced meanings and the author's stylistic objectives, rendering it especially effective for analysing intricate prose, literature, and poetry. Thematic analysis seeks to discover key repeating themes, ideas, and concepts within the text. This approach is optimal for qualitative data, as it reveals themes and patterns from narratives or discourses, offering a profound comprehension of the primary concerns presented in a text.

Content analysis is a prevalent method that entails quantifying and examining the occurrence of particular words, topics, or concepts within a text. This method is widely utilised to ascertain the prevalence of specific concepts and to discern trends or juxtapose several texts. Content analysis may be quantitative or qualitative and is frequently utilised in media and communication studies. Narrative analysis, conversely, concentrates on the story's structure inside a text, scrutinising how components

such as characters, setting, and narrative enhance its overarching significance. This methodology is commonly employed in the analysis of novels, films, biographies, and oral histories, facilitating an examination of how narratives are structured to impart meaning.

Discourse analysis investigates the utilisation of language within particular circumstances, emphasising the interplay between language, power, and social constructions. This approach elucidates the construction of social realities using language, frequently uncovering underlying ideologies and power dynamics. Semiotic analysis examines signs and symbols to elucidate meaning inside a text by decoding the relationship between signifiers (such as images, sounds, or words) and their significations. It is especially beneficial for analysing media texts, ads, and other visual resources, elucidating how meaning is conveyed beyond the written word.

Rhetorical analysis investigates the methods by which a text persuades its audience, emphasising ethos (credibility), pathos (passion), and logos (logic). It is frequently employed to examine political literature, public speeches, or advertising to comprehend persuasive techniques. Structural analysis examines the text's overall composition, encompassing its narrative strategies, genre conventions, and form. This methodology aids in discerning the role of structure in conveying meaning and influence within the text, frequently employed in literary analysis to investigate the interplay between form and content.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a branch of discourse analysis that focusses on how power, domination, and inequality are manifested via language. It serves to illuminate societal inequities and imbalanced power dynamics evident in speech, especially within the social sciences. Corpus analysis, the examination of language using enormous text databases (corpora) and computational methods, is crucial in discerning linguistic patterns and trends within vast datasets. This approach is employed in both quantitative linguistic research and qualitative analysis to investigate language usage comprehensively.

Stylistic analysis examines the unique linguistic and stylistic characteristics of a work, including diction, syntax, and tone. The objective is to comprehend how the author's style enhances the overall meaning and impact of the text, rendering it especially significant in literary study. Frame analysis, conversely, investigates how a text delineates particular topics or issues to influence audience views. It analyses how media texts depict social issues and shape public perception, uncovering the underlying meanings communicated through selective portrayal.

Intertextual analysis examines the relationships between texts, determining how one text alludes to, appropriates from, or impacts others. This method reveals profound meanings by identifying references, allusions, or influences from previous texts, and is frequently employed in literary analysis to comprehend the dialogic relationship between works. Phenomenological analysis emphasises the comprehension of texts through the lens of subjective experience, elucidating how individuals see events or themes within the text and encapsulating the lived experiences and emotional responses it provokes in its audience.

Grounded theory analysis is examining texts to construct theories that arise from the evidence, rather than evaluating a pre-existing hypothesis. This approach is employed in qualitative research to formulate novel conceptual frameworks and hypotheses that are directly rooted in the facts, rendering it especially advantageous in the social sciences for the development of theory from empirical texts. These text analysis methods may be utilised independently or in conjunction for a more

comprehensive knowledge of texts. Researchers frequently employ many methodologies to obtain complementary insights, such as integrating discourse analysis with rhetorical analysis to investigate both the overarching social backdrop and particular persuasive strategies. This multimethod approach is more significant in today's interdisciplinary academic environment, facilitating a more nuanced understanding of the functioning of texts within literary aesthetics and socio-cultural contexts.

The integration of multimedia and non-print texts into English studies has garnered considerable attention, as demonstrated by the contributions of Valerie Muller, John Golden, and others. In her article "Film as Film: Using Movies to Help Students Visualise Literary Theory," Valerie Muller promotes the utilisation of film as an educational resource, whereas John Golden's "Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom" examines how film aids students in comprehending intricate literary theories. These publications, in conjunction with papers such as "On Composing with Non-print Media," contend that film and various multimedia formats possess significant promise as instructional instruments. They emphasise the necessity for educators to include these new media formats into their instruction to facilitate students' development of essential analytical abilities. Through the examination of both the content and the communicative methods of texts, students cultivate "textual intelligence." Jim Burke, in conjunction with the NCTE Virginia branch, advocates for educators to include non-print-centric texts into the English language arts curriculum, acknowledging that students frequently encounter multimedia texts beyond the classroom. The effort aims to prepare future educators to equip pupils for the evolving nature of texts beyond traditional print media. This emphasis on multimedia is crucial in assessing students' ability to engage with the critical

reading of dynamic texts. Given that students are increasingly drawn to multimedia content, irrespective of the appealing presentation of traditional printed texts, a teacher's capacity to promote textual analysis across many media is essential. Philip C. Rule's "Teaching the Film as Literature" posits that film represents the "new literature" of the 21st century, emphasising its capacity for facilitating literary analysis education. The argument regarding the legitimacy of film as a textual medium is illustrated in Gerald Mast's rebuttal to Janet Staiger's "The Politics of Film Canons". Mast challenges Staiger's "formalist fallacy" and her obsession on conforming film to conventional literary frameworks. He contests Staiger's assertion that ideological critics inadequately engage with film as a textual entity and critiques her narrow understanding of spectatorship. Mast's research, among others, advocates for the acknowledgement of film as a textual form—one that imparts meaning, captivates audiences, and mirrors cultural tales akin to conventional literature. The examination of film as text reveals that films possess narrative structures, themes, and visual languages that can be analysed through textual analysis approaches akin to those employed in literary studies, underscoring its artistic and academic significance.

The acknowledgement of unconventional literary forms transcends film, as graphic novels emerge as another media garnering scholarly interest due to their narrative intricacy and artistic value. A multitude of literary theorists and scholars now regard graphic novels as a valid literary form. Will Eisner, a pivotal figure in the realm of comics, in his work *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative* (1996), offers a comprehensive examination of the distinctive language and capabilities of graphic novels for narrative construction. He contends that graphic novels utilise advanced narrative and visual strategies, featuring intricate character development

and thematic richness, thereby attaining the stature of literary works. The amalgamation of visual and textual components facilitates a sophisticated mode of narrative that parallels conventional prose. Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* makes a substantial contribution to the discussion around graphic novels. In the introduction, McCloud examines comics as a medium of visual storytelling that integrates text and imagery to communicate narrative significance. He contends that this amalgamation engenders a distinctive and refined mode of communication that merits scholarly acknowledgement. McCloud and Eisner demonstrate the increasing acceptability of graphic novels in literary studies by perceiving comics as more than mere amusement.

The incorporation of films, graphic novels, and other multimedia formats into English studies signifies a transition towards a more expansive interpretation of 'text.' It represents a post-structuralist perspective, wherein any item that generates meaning—whether film, graphic art, or other non-print mediums—can be considered a text. This viewpoint broadens the definition of literature and modifies English studies to interact with contemporary methods of cultural production and consumption, so maintaining the discipline's relevance in a progressively multimedia-oriented society.

C. S. Peirce, a notable authority in semiotics, underscored the importance of visual language, especially regarding graphic novels, which represent a distinctive amalgamation of visual and textual narrative. His work, shaped by semiotics and visual studies, emphasises the significance of the interplay between visuals and language in expressing meaning. Peirce contended that the interaction among these components is essential in shaping the overall effect of a graphic book, facilitating a complex narrative that captivates readers both visually and intellectually. By examining the interplay between

visual symbols and textual language, Peirce's semiotic framework elucidates the unique narrative methods employed by graphic novels, distinguishing them from conventional literary forms.

Literary scholars and semioticians recognise that graphic novels utilise several literary strategies and narrative techniques that enhance the medium's complexity. Techniques such as symbolism, metaphor, allusion, and foreshadowing are employed to create intricate levels of meaning, enabling graphic novels to explore difficult issues and deeply resonate with readers. A seemingly simple image may possess symbolic significance, enhancing the thematic complexity of the narrative. The amalgamation of literary techniques with visual components enhances the sophistication of graphic novels, facilitating nuanced storytelling that rivals traditional literature in depth and complexity.

Certain theorists view the emergence of graphic novels as a component of the continuous development of literary genres. They contend that literature has historically evolved to accommodate new mediums, integrating various methods of conveying narratives, themes, and concepts. Similar to how novels developed as a prominent literary genre following plays and epic poetry, graphic novels and films are regarded as modern expressions of this literary progression, illustrating the evolving nature of narrative in reaction to cultural, technological, and audience interaction transformations. These theorists propose that graphic novels do not signify a divergence from traditional literature, but instead represent an extension of its adaptive essence, expanding to encompass a wider array of artistic and narrative opportunities.

This development has not escaped the attention of intellectual circles. Numerous colleges and academic institutions now acknowledge graphic novels as a valid area of study within literature, providing courses and programs that concentrate especially on this medium.

This inclusion signifies an increasing recognition of graphic novels as a significant and refined literary genre deserving of academic scrutiny. Through the examination of graphic novels in academic contexts, scholars can investigate their narrative frameworks, visual storytelling methods, and cultural importance, situating them within the wider scope of literary studies. This acknowledgement not only validates graphic novels as a subject deserving of scrutiny but also indicates a wider redefining of literature, incorporating forms that extend beyond conventional written text to encompass multimodal works that appeal to today's varied audience.

The idea of textual discourses in English studies has considerably broadened in recent years, extending beyond conventional printed texts to include multimedia and visual tales, such as films and graphic novels. Academics such as Valerie Muller, John Golden, and Philip C. Rule underscore the pedagogical significance of films and multimedia, positing that they facilitate the cultivation of essential analytical abilities and promote inventive engagement with texts among students.

This transition corresponds with the concept that texts extend beyond print media to encompass other formats, as expressed by semioticians such as C.S. Peirce. Graphic novels are acknowledged for their narrative complexity, utilising literary devices such as symbolism and metaphor, and are progressively examined in academic contexts as valid literary forms.

The growth of textual discourse signifies a comprehensive reinvention of literature, integrating several disciplines and augmenting the flexibility of English studies in response to contemporary transformations in meaning production and consumption. This combination has transformed the discipline, promoting a more inclusive and dynamic methodology for literary analysis that embraces diverse storytelling formats outside conventional printed literature.

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UNRAVELING IDENTITY: A STUDY OF LITERARY PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY IN SHIMMER CHINODYA'S *HARVEST OF THORNS*

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Abstract

Psychogeography, an experimental approach designed by the Situationist International, investigates how geographical locations influence emotions and behaviour. Though the theory was initially employed to trace political movements, counter-urbanism, and social practice, the prospect of applying psychogeography for literary analysis has gradually increased over the years. Shimmer Chinody's Harvest of Thorns (1989) examines the intricacies of life in post-independent Zimbabwe through the lens of Tichafa's family, which is ripped apart by social, political, and religious conflict. The plot particularly revolves around the protagonist, Benjamin Tichafa and his failed attempt to reintegrate into family and society after returning from the Zimbabwean libration war. It delves into his struggles with personal choice, loyalties, and commitments in life. Chinodya portrays Zimbabwe as a ravaged landscape plagued by colonialism and war trauma. Using Catherina Loffler's framework of psychogeography, this study examines how landscapes and spaces interact with the character's psychological growth, behaviour and identity.

Keywords: *psychogeography, postcolonialism, landscape, war, walking, memory, identity*

To read *Harvest of Thorns* from a psychogeographical perspective requires a detailed examination of the literary concept. To begin with, psychogeography is a captivating theory that intersects with various literary genres, including art, architecture, postcolonialism, spatial studies, post-humanism, and feminism. Its ability to bridge the gap between literature and urban spaces has enabled authors to explore the relationship between landscape and personal emotions. The Situationist International coined the term around the 1950s, combining 'psychology' to refer to the mind and 'geography' to denote the study of space and place. Guy Debord the founder of Psychogeography, defined it as, "…the study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or

not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Coverley 8). Though the foundation of this theory aims to chronicle the drastic shift of urban planning, architecture, mass conception and consumerism patterns, its connection to novelistic discourse has grown over time. Merlin Coverley was the first to recognise the literary aspects of psychogeography in her book *Psychogeography* (2010). Her approach to literary dimensions of psychogeography leads to psychogeographical investigation of cities and emotional mapping of characters in literary works. Following Coverley's arguments on psychogeography, Catherina Loffler investigates the effect of geography on people's conduct in her book *Walking in the City-Urban Experience and Literary Psychogeography in Eighteenth-Century London.*

The Characteristics of literary psychogeography according to her include the merging of fact and fiction, the art of walking, and the involvement of multi-sensory experiences. The purpose of this research study is to examine how landscapes and spaces interact with the character's psychological growth and identity in Shimmer Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns* using Loffler's psychogeography framework.

Shimmer Chinodya is one of the earliest African writers to document challenges of postcolonial Zimbabwean identities and war trauma. His fiction,"… seeks to explore and extend the borders of reality, to question and tease matters of identity, class and culture, the past and the present; to explore the human condition in the most interesting and sensitive way possible" (Ziwira). His novel *Harvest of Thorns,* published in 1989 is an African Bildungsroman set in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) between 1950 and 1980 during the liberation war. The novel traces Benjamin Tichafa's journey from childhood to adulthood, altering between his family's values and the radical ideas of Black nationalism. Benjamin's revolutionary spirit drives him to abandon education and join the military. As a guerilla fighter, he faces daily challenges and encounters the harsh realities of liberation war. Upon returning to Rhodesia after independence, he finds out that nothing much has changed, including his families livelihood, compelling him to rethink the vision of freedom. The novel offers a solemn and in-depth look at the double-edged nature of Zimbabwe's bloody revolution. On one hand, it ended the white minority rule, while on the other hand it left people grappling with psychological challenges and identity crisis as they attempt to return to normalcy.

Land has always played a significant role in African culture, communities, and literature. It remains as a symbol of hope and perseverance and often has close ties to nationalism and identity. In *Harvest of Thorns* land is inextricably linked to the character's psychological development and sense of belonging, Chindoya uses land as a powerful metaphor to explore the impact of colonial legacy, territorial disputes and power struggles. By ironically naming the novel as *Harvest of Thorns*, Chindoya makes it obvious that 'land' is source of tension, which keeps the narrative moving. Harvest here denotes the yield, however thorns suggest that the consequence is unpleasant, underlying the recurring pain and struggle the protagonist have to endure to revive the land from the legacy of colonialism and civil war. Benjamin Tichafa's journey of self-actualization is deeply infused with psychogeographic elements. His struggles and disillusionment are linked to his travel through different places that holds personal significance but fails to provide solace.

The novel clearly depicts the first feature of Loffler's literary psychogeography, which is 'the complex interplay between reality and fiction'. Prior to1965, Rhodesia was a British colony ruled by a white minority that enforced oppressive laws to retain power and privilege over the black majority. The following lines illustrates how the whites and the blacks have very different occupational roles, the whites hold positions of power in government workplace while the blacks are restricted to menial jobs,

> Cars kept coming in and out of the gates, driven by white men honked at the line and sat stiffly at the wheel, staring ahead as they swept past. Black men in government khakis strolled across the yard, carrying files, newspapers, tea cups, oil-drenched, aromatic packages from restaurant across the street and sometimes even flowers, in what seemed an endless routine (Chinodya 65).
> In addition to holding position of authority, the whites continued to mock and dehumanise the culture, language and literature of the blacks, "…For God's sake speak proper English! If the queen heard you she'd send you to the

gallows!'… 'I wish my mom could hear this. She thinks our cook speaks rotten English!"(70).

This repressive system gave rise to numerous rebel groups who demanded equal autonomy, political participation and land ownership as of the whites. These groups encouraged young guerrillas like Benjamin to join the military and employed unconventional tactics such as diplomacy, and civil disobedience to oppose the white minority government. In order to pacify this situation, Ian Smith, Rhodesia's then Prime Minister made a unilateral declaration of Independence in November 1965, establishing Rhodesia as a republic. However, these negotiations only led to liberation war, which haunted Rhodesia for the next fifteen years until the country's independence in 1980, with Robert Mugabe becoming the first black prime minister of Zimbabwe. The novel portrays how "… war no longer represents a battle for national sovereignty, but a fight for relative dominance within a hierarchal global system" (Colonial Discourse, Postcolonial Theory 248). The following lines depict the struggle, sacrifice and brutality Benjamin had to experience because of the Zimbabwean liberation war.

I found myself in the thick of things and struggled to make the best of it and survive. That happened to a lot of other people. And that's how this war was won. I never had the chance to experience what other young men experienced. The church robbed me of my childhood and the war took away proper school, friends, holidays and all that. One day I was a teenage student doing prep in the dorm. The next I was a guerrilla shooting Smith's soldiers in the bush. And before I even knew it, I was bringing home a wife. I can't say when or how all that happened. Sometimes I can't believe it happened to me; I think it happened to somebody else (Chinodya 634).

For the people of Zimbabwe the element of progress and home remained a distant dream even with the end of the civil war. The war trauma continued to remain tattooed on individuals and communities as they struggle to reestablish their lost identity. By grounding, war narratives into fiction, Chindoya creates a sense of familiarity and authenticity for the readers. The interrelation between real and literary space further allows us to explore the next feature of Loffler's literary psychogeography, the 'art of walking'.

According to Loffler the rhetoric of walking can be manifested in two forms, first, it helps to trace the narrative structure and second, it emphasises the significance of understanding a place from the walker's perspective. The text presents a non-linear narrative structure as the protagonist Benjamin jumps between past, present and personal memories as he walks into the city. His memories while venturing into the city evokes a sense of yearning for the bygone years of childhood and familial relationships. He recalls the lovely days he spent playing with his mates as he strolls through the once familiar playgrounds and woods, which were now barren and transformed. He yearns for those carefree, innocent days before the complexities of adulthood set in. The sight of the new school and beer halls in the township, reminded him of his youthful rebellion, including the fight he had with his schoolmate for being called a sellout and for burning down a beer hall after being inspired by revolutionary ideals. To quote, "These boys were used by older people who are organising the illegal demonstrations. The older people are hiding behind these boys so the law can't get them." (216)

As he walked through the streets, he ran across people he knew, old acquaintances from school, former teachers and distant relatives, all of whose faces buzzed with many questions, a mix of curiosity and tension. Some hailed unspoken criticism, as though his refusal to complete schooling or follow the conventional path of work defined him as a failure, while others were eager to hear tales of the war,

reminding him of his traumatic days in the battlefield. He observes signs of progress as he continued to walk across the township, such as new roads, aerial TV's, modern amenities, buses, super market etc. However, despite these changes his interaction with the landscape elicited feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. His attempt to reconnect with his hometown was marred with regret and a realisation that, despite physical transformation his emotional connect with place remained unchanged. His emotional topography remained frozen in the past, even while the landscape has evolved with the passage of time. Benjamin here takes the role of the '*flâneur*', "who both records and comes to symbolise the emergence of the modern city..." (Coverley 19).

The involvement of multisensory experience is the third facet of psychogeographical journey. Benjamin gives into what Coverley refers to as the 'genius loci', also known as the 'sense of place', which means "...the atmosphere and aura of a place which is individually felt, and thereby becomes a construct in which individual knowledge, memories, perception and interpretation fuse to become a subjective interpretation of a place" (Coverley 99). As Benjamin strolls across the city, it triggers a stream of thoughts and associative thinking. His memories of home are weaved with a sense of escapism and weight of childhood. First, he flees to war, to escape the humiliation of burning down the beer hall and cutting off his brother's leg. Then his father abandons his family for the illicit partner and his sister Esther elopes with a mysterious man. Reflecting on these events, he remarks, "You could say Ester, father and me are all versions of one song the common tune being that we all ran away from home and from mother- each for different reasons, of course" (Chinnodya 625).

He remembers how he and his siblings were repressed at home because of religious zealotry. Every aspect of their life was suffocated by prayers -

before meal, sleep, even something as mundane as opening a packet of biscuits. They were forbidden from enjoying childhood activities like dancing, watching film, attending games in stadium, playing with friends etc. All they could do was listen to gospels in radios, attend church congregations and participate in fellowship camp meetings. Whenever they saw someone defying these rites of church, they would label them with names like 'Daughter of Satan' or 'Son of Lucifer', 'Gehena', 'Damnation', 'Judas', 'Pillar of Salt'. The church's discipline stiffed their childhood denying them the opportunity to stay young and enjoy all of its joys. Home to him also remained a stature of parental violence. Whenever he and his siblings disobeyed the formalities of the church they were subjected to strict punishments, harsh blows, scathing words and emotional cruelty, all in the name of discipline and religious upbringing. This in particular left Benjamin with a deep-seated sense of vulnerability and sorrow. Benjamin's choice of leaving for the bush was to create a better life for himself and his family. He believed that by fighting and winning the war, he could transform his home and homeland for the better. However, on his return to his hometown he realised that his efforts were in vain. He confesses that he has no other place to call his own, saying, "Where else could I go? This is my home, isn't it?" (610) conveying his attitude of acceptance and sense of belonging.

As he wanders across the church, he recalls how the churches' rigid religious practices had a suffocating grip on him leaving an ineradicable mark on his psyche. He remembers it as a site of trauma, which not only constrained his youthful spirit but also had a major part in establishing a deep sense of fear, shame and guilt. He thinks back to the time when his parents turned him to the congregation in order to purge the devil in him,

"The Overseer" spoke for a long time. He told the congregation about the burning of the beer hall,

about the police, about him…Benjamin was afraid. He felt he had burnt down the whole city. He had burnt down his father's house. He had burnt down the church. He had burnt the pulpit. He had killed a person. That person's face was on the pulpit …his heart filled with fear. He wanted to scream. He wanted to shot. He wanted to run out of the tent into the bush…'Open your heart to Him, Benjamin,' the overseer said, 'Just open your heart and he will drive out the devil' "(223). Memories of these oppressive encounters remain an open wound, its pain remaining raw, unsettling and distressing.

Boarding school was a progressive space for Benjamin, which gave him a different perspective of life. He realised that majority of his peers, who shared a similar religious upbringing, were equally mischievous and rebellious like him. Initially, he was shocked by the sheer audacity of their behaviour like lying, swearing, drinking, watching films and discussing about sex. Benjamin, once shy and obedient, gradually embraced the temporary anonymity it offered him. As he progressed from Form 1 to Form 2, he began to explore the limits of his newfound freedom, engaging in writing hateful notes to instructors whom he hated, bullying newcomers, smoking, and even skipping night studies to raid neighboring farms. His growing disillusionment with the system, the hypocrisy of the church and his father's infidelity led him to join the black demonstration movement. Fearing he would be arrested anytime, Benjamin fled to Zinyemba to join the army, leaving behind the only life he knew.

As he comes across the grassless thorn bush, he recollects the days in the military camp. He trembles at the memory of the commander who suspected him of being a spy and the rigorous investigation that followed before he was permitted to join the guerilla camp. The early days of training were brutal with sprinting and endless drills. The cramped quarters and meager food were a far cry for his former life. He realised that his decision to join the army forever altered the trajectory of his life. His perilous journey into the landscape of war began when he was renamed 'Pasi NemaSellout'. Being transferred to different camps, he groomed himself to become a skilled guerrilla fighter demolishing Smith's army. He realised that war was not just about fighting, but also about battling with starvation, disease and eventful death. The memories of his fallen comrades, bombs, burning of villages, raped women and the children succumbing to unknown illness haunted him forever. Upon returning to his hometown, he faced rejection and was labeled a failure by many, including his family. He laments,

"We were heros during the heat of the war, but now we have been left to lick our wounds. You think we consider ourselves heroes? When you wake up every morning, hitch your gun, and go out in search of death it's idiotic to talk about heroes. Out there it was kill or be killed" (632).

On the whole, the thorn bush remains a poignant remainder of the harsh realities of war and its lasting impact on his life.

Overall the novel, "…describes spatial experiences in relation to social, physical, historical, psychological and geographical dimensions of everyday life" (Catherina 6).

Through Benjamin's psychogeographical journey, one can identify the transformative power of landscape in shaping identity and individuality. In addition to his preferred choices and ideals, Benjamin's identity is shaped by the landscapes through which he travels. Therefore one can note that the novel's landscapes serves as an effective catalyst for Benjamin's introspection, delving into the intricate relationship between geography and psychology and tracing down the transition from childhood to adulthood. Psychogeographical analyses also aids in understanding Zimbabwe's postcolonial melancholia

following its independence from the British and integration into an independent nation.

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A STUDY ON IDENTITY USING CHRONOTOPE IN LISA SEE'S *LADY TAN'S CIRCLE OF WOMEN*

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Abstract

Lisa See is an American writer who specializes in the Chinese American diaspora in the modern era. She focuses on examining women's lives through real-life incidents. The life of Yunxian Tan, a female physician, is chronicled in her historical fiction Lady Tan's Circle of Women. The Chinese culture, including its social and political context during the Ming dynasty, is depicted in the novel. This book contains a chronotope element, a fictitious environment moulded by temporal and spatial features that aid in tracing a particular culture. The paper aims to use chronotope to examine how time and space influence and shape women's identities throughout the story.

***Keywords**: time and space, chronotope, cultural representation, ming dynasty.*

Introduction to the author: Lisa See- A voice of Women

Lisa See is an American bestselling author. Lisa See was born in Paris but lived in Los Angeles. She lived with her mother but spent much time with her father's family in Chinatown. The majority of her works have Chinese themes and are set in China. Lisa writes about Chinese history and culture, with a focus on women's experiences as historical figures, female friendships, their interactions with their communities, and their cultural transformation. Her writings touch on the characters' experiences as Americans and Chinese cultures. The Chinese culture and the American experience of the characters are discussed in her works. Lisa See has written eight historical fiction and *Lady Tan's Circle of Women, The Island of Sea Women, The Tea Girl of Humming Bird Lane* which deal with women characters and their experiences in China, customs, culture in their initial phase of life, the influence of hegemonic powers and their American experience later.

Summary of the Novel

Lady Tan's Circle of Women (2023) is a historical novel by American author Lisa See. The novel depicts the life of Yunxian Tan, a female doctor who lived in imperial China during the Ming Dynasty. Her case collection is the oldest surviving Chinese medical text written by a woman. Raised by her physician grandparents after the early death of her mother, Yun-Xian gets married into a wealthy family and lives a life as a dutiful wife, mother, and daughter-in-law, however through her friendship with a young midwife Mei-Ling, she learns to rebel against tradition. She begins to follow her ambition to heal women of all classes in different walks of life. By providing traditional health care, Yunxian breaks the prevailing cultural belief that values women only for their childbearing and household works. Her friendship circle exhibits a fact that supportive and nurturing women around her has provided the foundation for a fulfilling life.

Chronotope- Concept and its Application

Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope serves as a theoretical framework in literary works by offering a means of analyzing and comprehending the connectivity of time and space within tales. As Bakhtin explains Literary artistic chronotope, To quote, "In Literary Artistic *chronotope* (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature"(Bakhtin 163). It describes how time and space are intertwined to create a unique framework for understanding events, characters, and narratives. The functions of chronotope in novels include contextualizing the narrative, shaping the character experiences, establishing the atmosphere, mood and analysing the genre and style.
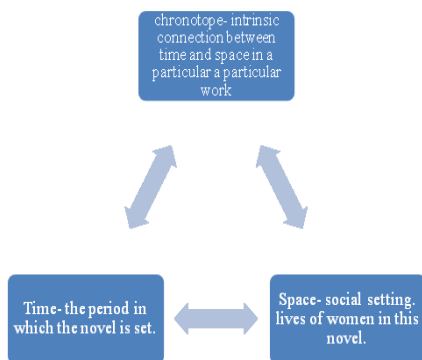

Figure 1.1 Structure of the Chronotope

This research explores the way in which the novel represents and reflects the historical and cultural realities that impacts women. Further it analyses the representation of women's experiences, agencies involved, and societal constraints imposed on women. In this regard the usage of generic chronotope which is one of the type of chronotope helps to trace the chronotopic elements in plot structure and its functioning in the novel.

Further, generic chronotopes play an integral role to understand and visualise the experience of the human lives represented in the works. These chronotopes are characterised by shared temporal and spatial features, common narrative patterns or themes, recurring symbolic or metaphorical associations. In Lady Tan's Circle of Women novel, Lisa See skillfully weaves chronotopes to explore identity crises faced by women in fourteenth century China. The gender identity can be understood through the women's roles, expectations, and their limitations. The social identity can be traced through the prevalent hierarchies within imperial court, scholar-gentry class, and women's communities. The social and gender identity can be explored by specifically using the prevalent "Inner chamber chronotope" represented in the novel which particularly reflects the identity crisis in the novel.
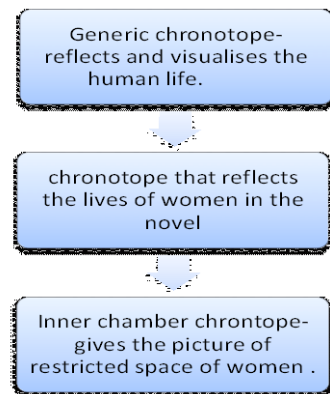
Figure 1.2. Application of Generic Chronotope

The Inner chamber chronotope refers to a symbolic, spatial, and temporal configuration representing the private, domestic realm of women in traditional Chinese society, particularly during the Imperial era. The characteristics of Inner chamber chronotope includes the confined spaces dominated by women, hierarchy and represents the domesticity of the women's life. This shows the way they build the relationship among themselves and search for their identity. Henceforth, the examination of the Inner chamber chronotope, within *Lady Tan's circle of women* will be taken into consideration for the study

of the spatial and temporal elements that reflects the lives of women and their Identity crisis.

Spatial Element

Confined spaces: Examining the social and physical restrictions placed on women in the inner chambers of the imperial court.

The Forbidden City, a complex of palaces constructed in Beijing by the Yongle emperor, is a good example of architecture that stands as a power centre for the entire nation. They employed tiny ornamental sculptures made of porcelain, ivory, wood, and jade. It displays the excellent craftsmanship. But even the empress is not free to move out. Tan's visit to the palace shows that space of women is restricted in the palace. As an Empress, 'She spends most of her days in the special hall' where I first saw her in the Great'(See 225). Apart from the Empress, other women are separately placed in various chambers of the palace including Tan and Meiling. Tan explains the grandeur of the palace and her restricted space which makes her lonely.

> Although I'm confined to the Great Within and the Lodge of Ritual and
> Ceremony, Miss Zhao, as nothing more than my chaperone, has been able to
> move with appropriate caution and transportation through the alleys and
> byways of the Central Borough—an area protected by its own walls and gates
> bracketing the Forbidden City's grounds. (228)

Gender-specific architecture: Examining how structures uphold patriarchal social structures.

The Garden of Fragrant Delight is Yunxian's husband's house. It is larger than her place. It has all the facilities in it. But the women always need to stay in the inner chamber. Tan feels secluded and lonely in the palace. To quote,

> I'll visit the Garden of Fragrant Delights—the garden for which the mansion is named. I shouldn't

wander off alone. If someone sees me, I'll say I'm seeking inspiration for the afternoon's poetry contest. I continue through the covered colonnade, keeping my face down, trying to make myself invisible. The Yang compound has many large courtyards, mini courtyards, wings, and structures. Each family group has its own quarters, with a kitchen, dining hall, and private courtyard. There are buildings for washing, storing grain and other foodstuffs, and housing the lesser servants. Pavilions dot the landscape. Strategically placed portals and lattice windows provide the visitor with vistas of the natural world miniaturized. (102)

The pavilions, courtyards and compounds restrict the space for women. They are not allowed to visit or spend their time in these places. Meanwhile men feel free to use the house for leisure. The males in the home get together with their friends to drink, play cards, sing folk songs, and enjoy the company of a concubine who has been selected for a certain ability. Even in her own house, Yunxian is not allowed to play with others or meet people from outside. She must stay in her room, get help from servants, and attend classes taken by her mother. She spends time in studio to learn skills like painting and calligraphy that defines women in the society. The places may vary but the treatment of women is same. They never get a space to identify their interest and explore new things.

Temporal Elements

The Cyclical nature of time: Studying how women's daily routines and rituals shaped their experiences in life.

As In China, elite ladies are mostly the ones who adhere to the custom of foot binding. They think their husband will find it entertaining. Men enjoy staring at their wives through the moon-shaped form that the bound foot creates. The practice of foot binding permanently harms a woman's foot. They have to continually thread their foot because they grow

shorter than they were initially.Further they need to pass this practice for their children. It was a common concept held by upper class ladies around middle age in China. It is generally believed that women who practice foot binding can become strong and more equipped to handle hard situations in life. "You may be in pain, but keep in mind that foot binding helps you learn to cope with physical discomfort and prepares you for the demands of childbirth" (See 168).

In the middle age, the women were expected to learn calligraphy and embroidery as a pastime and talent. As embroidery skills will help them to prepare their daughters' foot-binding shoes and to weave silk garments. Women can adorn their dresses and use embroidery to cover their bounded feet with shoes. After being married, ladies who can read and write could continue to correspond with their relatives through letters. Yunxian communicates with her grandmother through letters to clarify her medical doubts.
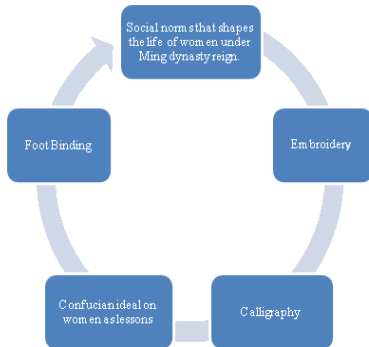

Figure 1.3 Prevalent Social Norms for Women

The elite families maintained a studio in their house. The place is meant for learning calligraphy and painting. They also learn books that hold Confucius, Tao ideals that holds the social norms and traditions to be followed by women. They byheart it and need to follow it throughout their life. *Analects for Women* teaches the importance of learning embroidery and how to behave in husband's house.

The *Books of Ode, Classic of Filial Piety for Girls* (7) are the books taught in the elite family studios to the girls in their childhood. It is made natural for the women to follow these norms without the influence of the outer world.

Examining the ways in which women's relationships are structured across generations.

The relationships among women in the novel is vital to understand the way they adapt to resilient social norms and establish themselves by playing the roles they get. Miss Zhao replaces Tan's mother and takes cares of her. She provides moral support, fulfils her mother's space by providing assistance to Tan in taking lessons, learning painting, embroidery, fixes and prepares for her marriage. Zhao never let Tan till her last breath. Then, as a grandmother Ru finds out the interest of medicine in Yunxian and trains her. Ru also follows up her for years. She imbibes the moral principles in treating patients. By handing over her medical records and books, Ru transforms her legacy to Tan. This inspires Tan to write a medical guide book and help the women to take care of their health. They manage the situations, educate themselves and live a selfless life. They prove that the social odds are meant to be broken and it can never stop a person, especially women.

The bond between Shi and Meiling who are midwives is hereditary. Shi works for Tan's family and trains her daughter Meiling to be a midwife. Their life is normal and different from the elite. They need to face the differential treatment of the society including her friend in certain instance. They also serve them as midwives. They stand as ideal to face hardships and manage themselves in life. They balance their work space and personal connections without being washed away in social stigma.

The various roles such as the maids, concubines, and other roles of women gives the fragile environment they have to build a relationship.

As they are traded as possession to men and forced to leave back their native spsces and are displaced forever. Wherever they live, they create a separate space for them, guide other women and compete with each other. Especially the characters such as Jades, Zhao are concubines turned step mothers, they always rival with their family head. They always feel insecure about their life as the men had rights to sell them. So constantly they try to prove themselves, stay superior to other women in the house. These women are pushed to lose their identity and fit to the social norms and tradition.

Social Elements

Female Bonds: Exposing the Support Systems and Alliances among Women

Meiling and Yunxian maintain an ideal friendship. Meiling is a childhood friend of Tan and they stay as best friends throughout their life. They assist each other when required. There are few instances that define their friendship. In one such instance, Meiling was beaten up with whip due to her inefficiency in presenting herself in front of the Queen. It was a harsh punishment given to women in the reign. Tan assists Meiling her recovery from almost death's door. Tan gives food with medicinal values for her to recover. Meiling's illness impacts Tan too deeply. She even gives her blood to heal her friend. "Each morning I pierce a vein at my wrist, let the blood drip into a cup, add tea brewed with healing herbs, and hold it to her lips. Another cup of tea enhanced with my life force" (247). Though they belonged to different classes of the society, they also stand for each other.

Further, Meiling assists Tan in her lows. As a person Tan stays fragile and often feels ill out of depression. Meiling's presence recovers her health soon. Later Tan is compelled to write a book by Meiling. Tan declines, reasoning that a book cannot be used to practice medicine and that it is not for

sale. Following a discussion, they intend to go over the significant instances and medications which they have previously handled. They share their experiences in the book *Miscellaneous Records of a Female Doctor.* Because it might benefit women to learn more about their bodies and the appropriate use of medications. Therefore, Meiling and Tan Yunxian's friendship is a model friendship. It is brimming with compassion, empathy, and love. As their lives often seem so precarious, women need a partner they can always rely on. Despite the societal stigma and awareness of their social duties, Meiling is one such friend. They frequently contradict their own beliefs. Meiling frequently feels inadequate. However, they never disappoint one another.

Conclusion

Lisa See's "Lady Tan's Circle of Women" offers a generic portrayal of women's lives in imperial China, illustrating how temporal and spatial factors shaped their experiences. The Inner Chamber chronotope vividly captures the confined, hierarchical world where women navigated domesticity and hardship. Through Yunxian's story, See metaphorically represents the struggles women face due to cultural and traditional norms, ultimately presenting her resilience as a powerful symbol of overcoming adversity.

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DISPLACEMENT AND IDENTITY: THE LOSS OF LAND IN *THE ECSTASY OF RITA JOE*

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Abstract

In "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe," George Ryga presents a powerful narrative that delves into themes of diaspora, identity, hybridity, postcolonialism, migration, power, and gender dynamics. Set in colonial Canada, the play offers a profound examination of the Indigenous experience, shedding light on the hardships faced by marginalized characters. Through its intricate storytelling and well-drawn characters, the play illuminates both individual and societal challenges, making it a cornerstone of Canadian theatre. Ryga uses the lens of one Indigenous woman's struggles to comment on the broader cultural and political landscape of Indigenous communities in Canada.

Introduction

George Ryga, a Canadian playwright and novelist, is widely regarded for his poignant explorations of social justice, identity, and the human condition. Born on July 27, 1932, in Okotoks, Alberta, Ryga's work often focuses on the marginalized voices of society, using his lyrical and empathetic writing to bring attention to their struggles. "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe," his most celebrated play, premiered in 1967 and continues to resonate with audiences due to its candid depiction of the challenges faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. Ryga's work is crucial in understanding Canadian theatre's role in engaging with pressing social issues. The playwright passed away on November 18, 1987, leaving behind a legacy of socially conscious literature.

In "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe," Ryga presents the experiences of a young Indigenous woman who migrates to the city in search of a better life but is met with racism, alienation, and the harsh realities of urban existence. This work reflects the broader themes of identity, cultural displacement, and the long-lasting effects of colonialism, portraying the ongoing tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies. The protagonist's journey mirrors the collective struggles of Indigenous communities and underscores the need for reconciliation and social justice.

Characters and Themes

The play is centered on several key characters, each of whom represents different facets of Indigenous life and the challenges faced by these communities in colonial Canada.

1. **Rita Joe** – The protagonist, a young Indigenous woman who seeks a better life in the city but finds herself marginalized by a society that refuses to accept her.
2. **The Teacher** – This character represents the education system, often attempting to assimilate Indigenous students without truly understanding their needs or cultural backgrounds.
3. **The Policeman** – As a figure of authority, the Policeman symbolizes the oppressive societal

structures that Indigenous people must navigate, reflecting the systemic discrimination they face.

4. **Rita's Mother** – She embodies traditional Indigenous values and stands as a reminder of the generational divide between the pressures of modern society and the preservation of cultural heritage.

5. **The Man** – This character represents the temptations and struggles that Rita encounters in her quest for survival in the urban environment.

6. **Jamie Paul** – A significant character who reflects the complexities of Indigenous identity and the personal and collective battles faced by Indigenous communities. Jamie navigates his cultural heritage while confronting the pressures of the urban world, embodying themes of alienation and the impact of colonialism.

Rita Joe's Journey

At the heart of the play is Rita Joe, an Indigenous woman who becomes a symbol of the diaspora, struggling to find her place in a world shaped by colonial oppression. She leaves her home and traditional community behind, hoping to create a better future in the city. However, the realities of urban life quickly reveal themselves as hostile, and Rita finds herself overwhelmed by racism and societal expectations. Her experiences reflect those of many Indigenous people who, seeking new opportunities, are met instead with systemic marginalization.

Rita's personal struggles reflect broader societal issues, particularly the effects of cultural displacement. She is caught between two worlds—her Indigenous roots and the urban landscape, which represents a colonial power structure that seeks to erase her identity. This tension is palpable throughout the play as Rita grapples with the question of who she is and where she belongs.

"I feel like I've lost my way," Rita Joe says at one point in the play, encapsulating the core struggle of the character. Her journey is emblematic of the wider experience of Indigenous people who have been displaced from their land, culture, and identity, reflecting the profound sense of loss and confusion that accompanies cultural dislocation.

The Impact of Migration and Rootlessness

Migration plays a central role in the narrative of "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe." Many of the characters, like Rita, have been uprooted from their communities, either forcibly or voluntarily. The theme of rootlessness pervades the play, as the characters struggle to maintain a connection to their ancestral lands and cultural heritage. This sense of displacement is a defining feature of Rita's life in the city, where she finds herself alienated not only from the dominant society but also from her own cultural identity.

Living in an urban environment presents unique challenges for Indigenous characters in the play. They must navigate the complexities of identity in a world that demands assimilation while simultaneously marginalizing them. This sense of hybridity—being caught between traditional values and the demands of the modern world—shapes the experiences of the characters, particularly Rita.

The longing for connection to one's roots is a recurring theme in the play, and it underscores the broader issue of how colonialism has disrupted Indigenous communities. As they attempt to adapt to life in the city, characters like Rita are forced to confront the loss of their cultural grounding.

Gender Dynamics in the Play

In addition to themes of migration and identity, "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe" also explores gender dynamics, particularly the added challenges faced by Indigenous women. Rita's struggles are twofold: not only does she contend with the economic hardships of her situation, but she also faces the societal

expectations placed on women in both Indigenous and colonial contexts.

Rita's journey reflects the ways in which colonial systems have intersected with traditional Indigenous structures to affect women's identities. The play highlights the unique challenges faced by women like Rita, who are often marginalized not only because of their ethnicity but also because of their gender. As a character, Rita becomes a vehicle for exploring these layered struggles, offering a critical commentary on the intersection of gender, culture, and colonialism.

Examining Rita Joe's Identity

Throughout the play, Rita battles with issues of identity, particularly as they relate to the pressures exerted on her by the colonial society around her. This identity crisis is one of the most significant themes of the play, as it mirrors the broader struggle of Indigenous peoples to maintain a sense of self in a postcolonial world.

Rita's search for acceptance is complicated by the systemic marginalization she experiences in the city. Her sense of self is fractured by the pressures of living in a society that seeks to erase her cultural identity. Ryga's portrayal of Rita's identity crisis is a powerful exploration of how colonialism impacts individuals on both a personal and societal level.

Philosophers like Anthony B. Smith have argued that shared identities, norms, and histories are essential for the survival of cultural groups. Rita's character highlights the tension between her desire to reclaim her cultural roots and the forces of assimilation that threaten to strip her of her identity. This negotiation of identity is not just a personal issue for Rita—it speaks to the broader postcolonial struggle for recognition and self-determination among Indigenous communities.

Language as Power

Language plays a crucial role in "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe," symbolizing the broader struggle for identity and power. Rita's use of her native language becomes an assertion of her cultural heritage and a means of resisting the forces that seek to erase it. In a society where English is the dominant language, speaking her Indigenous language becomes an act of defiance and a way to reclaim her rightful place.

Ryga uses language as a tool to explore power relations throughout the play. English is positioned as the language of the colonizers, while Indigenous languages are marginalized and at risk of disappearing. By mixing both her native language and English, Rita creates a powerful moment in the play, embodying the theme of hybridity and challenging the expectations of conformity within a colonized context.

Patterns of Colonization and Resistance

The play does not shy away from portraying the effects of colonization, both on a personal and collective level. Ryga highlights not only the grief experienced by characters like Rita but also the cultural resistance that emerges in response to these challenges. Through scenes of community gathering and unity, the play demonstrates the power of collective resistance against systemic racism.

Postcolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon have argued that decolonization is a multi-layered struggle, involving both the reclamation of identity and the fight for self-worth. In "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe," Rita's personal resistance becomes part of this broader narrative, signaling the end of silence and the emergence of a new voice for Indigenous communities.

Conclusion

George Ryga's "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe" intricately weaves together themes of diaspora, identity, hybridity, postcolonialism, migration, power, and gender dynamics. Through the story of Rita Joe, the play offers a poignant exploration of the struggles faced by Indigenous peoples in colonial Canada,

highlighting both personal anguish and collective resilience. Rita's journey is emblematic of the broader fight for identity and cultural reclamation in a world that seeks to marginalize and erase Indigenous voices. The play's continued relevance speaks to the universality of its themes, particularly as they relate to marginalized communities around the world. Ryga's work offers valuable insights into the complexities of identity, resistance, and the ongoing fight for recognition and justice. Ultimately, "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe" is not just a story of one woman's struggles—it is a powerful commentary on the enduring strength of Indigenous communities and the importance of maintaining a connection to one's roots and to each other.

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NEGOTIATING IDENTITIES THROUGH CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS IN FILM ADAPTATIONS OF MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE

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Abstract

This research aims to examine how contemporary film adaptations of multicultural literary works depict cross-cultural negotiations and identity formation in a globalised context. The study will be on films such as The Namesake (2006), Persepolis (2007), Slumdog Millionaire (2008), and The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2012), which explore issues of migration, cultural hybridity, and the tensions between tradition and modernity. Through these cinematic adaptations, the research investigates how literary discourses on identity, belonging, and cultural conflict are transformed into visual narratives, shaping the viewer's understanding of multiculturalism in contemporary societies. Drawing from the postcolonial theory (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994) and theories of diasporic identity (Hall, 1996), this study analyses how film adaptations negotiate the complexities of cross-cultural interactions. The research also explores how cinema as a medium adds layers of meaning to the source texts, making these themes more accessible to diverse global audiences. The methodology involves comparative analysis, combining narrative and semiotic analysis to examine how these films reframe and reinterpret their literary sources. The expected outcomes of this study include an intense understanding of how film adaptations contribute to emerging discourses on globalisation, cultural exchange, and identity negotiation. By focusing on the intersections between literature and film, this research highlights the role of cinema in reflecting and shaping the cross-cultural dynamics of contemporary multicultural societies. Ultimately, it seeks to provide insight into how film adaptations can act as a bridge between diverse cultures and literary traditions, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and interpretations.

Keywords: *films, globalisation, cultural exchange, identity negotiation and postcolonial.*

Introduction

The intersection of cinema and literature provides a fertile ground for the exploration of cross-cultural identities and the negotiation of cultural dynamics in contemporary multicultural societies. Adaptations of literary works into film offer unique opportunities to reframe and reinterpret complex cultural themes, making them more accessible to global audiences. This paper examines four significant film adaptations—*The Namesake* (2006), *Persepolis* (2007), *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2012)—and explores how they depict issues of migration, cultural hybridity, and identity formation. Each of these films is based on a literary text that deals with the complexities of navigating cultural differences, making them excellent case studies for understanding cross-cultural interactions in a globalised world.

In an increasingly interconnected world, cultural identity is no longer a static concept but is constantly negotiated and reshaped through interactions with other cultures. As Homi K. Bhabha (1994) suggests

in *The Location of Culture*, cultural identity is inherently hybrid and shaped by the constant negotiation between multiple cultural influences. Films adapted from multicultural literary texts often serve as sites of this negotiation, translating the nuances of cultural hybridity, migration, and postcolonialism from the written word into a visual and emotional experience for the audience. This research will analyse how these adaptations address issues of cultural identity and how they represent the process of negotiating between tradition and modernity, home and diaspora, and self and other.

In the following sections, this paper will examine the literary origins and cinematic adaptations of *The Namesake*, *Persepolis*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Drawing on postcolonial theory (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994) and theories of diasporic identity (Hall, 1996), the paper will explore how each film negotiates the challenges and complexities of cross-cultural interactions in contemporary multicultural societies. Additionally, this study will employ narrative analysis and semiotic film analysis to uncover the visual strategies these films use to engage with their literary sources and communicate themes of cultural hybridity and identity negotiation to a broader audience.

Outline
Title
- *Negotiating Identities through Cross-Cultural Interactions in Film Adaptations of Multicultural Literature*

Key Points
- A brief introduction to the focus of the paper: exploring identity and cultural negotiation in film adaptations of multicultural literature.
- List of four films: *The Namesake*, *Persepolis*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

- These films translate complex cultural and postcolonial literary themes into visual narratives accessible to global audiences.

Introduction
Key Points
Objective of the Study: Analyze how film adaptations of multicultural literature depict the negotiation of cultural identities in contemporary global societies.

Context
- In a globalised world, themes of migration, hybridity, and cultural identity are increasingly relevant.
- These films allow audiences to visually experience the tensions and dynamics of identity negotiations.

The focus of the Paper
- Exploring cross-cultural negotiation through both literary discourse and cinematic representation.
- Highlighting the significance of the visual medium in reinterpreting literary themes of identity and belonging.

Theoretical Framework
Key Points
Homi K. Bhabha's Hybridity
- Bhabha's concept of the "third space", where cultures interact, leads to new, hybrid identities.
- Films provide this "third space" where protagonists negotiate cultural differences between heritage and new environments.

Stuart Hall's Diasporic Identity:
- Identity is not fixed but fluid and constantly reshaped by historical and social forces.
- Relevant for characters in *The Namesake* and *Persepolis* who are in the diaspora, negotiating personal and cultural identities.

Edward Said's Orientalism

- Focuses on how the West constructs stereotypical images of the East.
- This framework is essential for analysing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Slumdog Millionaire*, where East-West binaries are central.

Cinematic Representation:

- Films visually emphasise identity struggles, making literary themes more tangible for audiences.

Film Analysis – The Namesake
Key Points
Overview

- Based on Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, directed by Mira Nair.
- Follows the life of Gogol, a young man from an Indian immigrant family in the U.S., struggling with his dual identity.

Cultural Identity Conflict

- Gogol is torn between his Indian heritage and his American upbringing.
- His name symbolises the larger cultural tension: a Bengali name tied to a Russian writer in an American setting.

Visual Representation of Hybridity

- The film contrasts the visual landscapes of India and the U.S., symbolising Gogol's internal struggle between the two cultures.
- Use of cultural markers (weddings, funerals) to show Gogol's shifting identification with Indian traditions and American values.

Film Analysis – Persepolis
Key Points
Overview

- Based on Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel, directed by Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud.
- Follows the life of Marjane as she navigates her identity amid the Iranian Revolution and, later, life in Europe.

Cultural and Political Identity

- The protagonist's identity crisis is shaped by Iran's political upheavals and the strict social expectations placed upon her as a woman.
- Explores Marjane's transition from revolutionary ideals to personal disillusionment as she experiences exile.

Use of Animation

- Animation creates a unique visual space experience for representing the emotional intensity of cultural dislocation.
- Black-and-white contrasts highlight the stark differences between Iran's traditional, oppressive regime and the relative freedom of Europe.

Film Analysis – Slumdog Millionaire
Key Points
Overview

- Based on Vikas Swarup's novel *Q & A*, directed by Danny Boyle, English Director.
- The story follows Jamal, a young man from the Mumbai slums, whose life is shaped by both Indian and Western cultural forces.

Cultural Displacement and Globalization

- The film is a commentary on India's transition from a traditional, caste-bound society to a globalised, capitalist landscape.
- Jamal's life in the slums contrasts sharply with the Westernized luxury of the game show setting (*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*), symbolising the collision of cultures.

Dynamic Visual Storytelling

- Fast-paced cinematography and non-linear narrative mirror the chaotic, hybridised nature of modern India.
- The game show format itself serves as a metaphor for the unpredictability of life in a globalised world, where success and survival depend on navigating multiple cultural codes and norms.

Film Analysis – The Reluctant Fundamentalist
Key Points
Overview

- Based on Mohsin Hamid's novel, directed by Mira Nair.
- Focuses on Changez, a Pakistani man working in the U.S. pre- and post-9/11, navigating identity crises between his American corporate success and his Pakistani roots.

Post-9/11 Identity Crisis

- Changez's professional and personal identities are deeply challenged by the Islamophobia and suspicion that arose after the 9/11 attacks.
- The film explores the tension between Changez's Western ambitions and his sense of responsibility to his homeland, Pakistan.

Visual Cues of Alienation

- The use of surveillance imagery and sharp contrasts between American and Pakistani settings visually represent Changez's alienation in both cultures.
- The film critiques both the Western gaze and the pressures of cultural assimilation, framing Changes as a "reluctant fundamentalist."

Conclusion
Key Points
Summary of Key Insights

- These films provide rich visual interpretations of complex cultural identity themes from their literary sources.

- Cross-cultural negotiations in these films reflect broader issues of migration, diaspora, and cultural hybridity in today's world.

Role of Cinema in Cross-Cultural Discourse:

- The cinema or film industry serves as a powerful tool to engage audiences with the emotional, political, and personal dimensions of identity struggles.
- The adaptations reframe and recreate multicultural literary works into accessible, compelling narratives that explore the fluidity of identity and the experience of belonging.

Significance

- These films contribute to ongoing discourses around multiculturalism and postcolonial identity, offering important perspectives on how individuals negotiate cultural boundaries in a globalised world.

Introduction of Theoretical Framework and Analytical Approach

The art of adaptation, where a story moves from the written word to the screen, has long been a source of critical engagement. When the source material is deeply rooted in multicultural or postcolonial contexts, the adaptation process not only involves a shift in medium but also a negotiation of cultural identity, power dynamics, and social values. Films such as *The Namesake*, *Persepolis*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* exemplify how cinema can reinterpret literary works to explore and expand upon themes of cross-cultural negotiations, identity formation, and the challenges of living in a globalised world. Each of these films is based on a literary work that delves into the complexities of migration, identity, and cultural hybridity. In *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri's exploration of the immigrant experience is brought to life through Mira Nair's sensitive portrayal

of an Indian-American family navigating their cultural heritage and modern American life. Similarly, *Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical graphic novel, is adapted into an animated film that highlights the personal and political struggles of growing up in post-revolutionary Iran and later experiencing life in the West.

Slumdog Millionaire, adapted from Vikas Swarup's novel *Q & A*, uses a high-energy narrative to tell the story of a boy from the slums of Mumbai who rises to fame on a game show, all while addressing the socioeconomic and cultural divides that define contemporary India. Meanwhile, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, based on Mohsin Hamid's novel, tackles the identity crisis of a Pakistani man living in the U.S. in the aftermath of 9/11, questioning the complex relationships between East and West, tradition and modernity.

Through a comparative analysis of these films, this paper seeks to explore how cinematic adaptations negotiate cross-cultural identities and reimagine the literary discourses of their source texts. The paper will draw upon postcolonial theory, particularly the works of Homi K. Bhabha (1994), Stuart Hall (1996), and Edward Said (1978), to investigate how these films represent cultural hybridity, migration, and identity formation in a globalised world. By examining the visual and narrative strategies employed in these adaptations, the study will uncover how cinema not only reflects but also actively shapes cross-cultural interactions and multicultural discourses in contemporary society.

Theoretical Framework: Postcolonialism and Diasporic Identity

In postcolonial theory, cultural identity is often understood as fluid, dynamic, and continuously negotiated. Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "third space" is particularly relevant in discussions of cross-cultural interactions. This space refers to the hybrid, in-between zone where cultural differences interact, leading to the formation of new identities and cultural expressions (Bhabha, 1994). This idea of hybridity is a key lens through which we can view the experiences of the characters in *The Namesake*, *Persepolis*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as they navigate the tensions between different cultural identities.

Stuart Hall's (1996) theory of diasporic identity further contributes to the understanding of how individuals in multicultural societies negotiate their sense of self. According to Hall, identity is not a fixed essence but a process of becoming, shaped by historical and cultural forces. This fluidity of identity is a central theme in the films analysed in this paper, particularly as characters grapple with feelings of displacement, alienation, and belonging in both their homelands and adopted countries.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) provides another critical framework for understanding how Western societies perceive and construct images of "the other." In films like *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, these constructions of the East by the West are central to the narrative, as the protagonist struggles to reconcile his Pakistani heritage with the Western world's expectations and suspicions post-9/11.

Conclusion

The cinematic adaptations of *The Namesake*, *Persepolis*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* offer profound insights into the intricate processes of cross-cultural negotiation, identity construction, and cultural hybridity in an increasingly globalised world. By translating complex literary discourses into visual narratives, these films create a compelling space where cultural tensions, identity crises, and postcolonial dilemmas are rendered accessible to broader audiences. Through its unique interpretative framework, each film engages with the lived experiences of individuals

caught in the vent of migration, exile, and identity fluidity, providing nuanced perspectives on the challenges of cultural integration and self-definition in multicultural societies. By applying postcolonial theoretical frameworks—specifically Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity and Hall's discourse on diasporic identity—this study underscores the critical role of cinema as a vehicle for reimagining literary themes that address cultural intersectionality. In *The Namesake*, the protagonist's experience reflects the broader immigrant struggle to reconcile inherited cultural identities with contemporary, globalised settings. Similarly, *Persepolis* navigates the complex intersections of personal identity, political upheaval, and cultural displacement. *Slumdog Millionaire* interrogates the effects of class stratification and globalised urban spaces, while *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* critically examines the post-9/11 cultural binaries between East and West, highlighting the complex negotiations of identity and belonging. Ultimately, these films offer critical contributions to broader discussions of multiculturalism, cultural adaptation, and identity formation, revealing how literary adaptation into film can function as a site for cross-cultural discourses. Through visual storytelling, these films facilitate the negotiation of identity, belonging, and cultural difference, emphasising the significance of cinema in reflecting the complexities of cultural hybridity and fostering deeper engagement and understanding of contemporary global issues.

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OF FANTASY WORLDS, ECO-WARRIORS AND MAGICAL SPACES: EXPLORING THE MULTIPLICITIES OF ZORAIDA CORDOVA'S LABYRINTH LOST

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Abstract

Young Adult fiction for LGBTQIA creates alternative spaces for adolescence, regardless of sexuality, gender, culture, ethnicity, and colour. This paper analyses Zoraida Cordova's 'Labrinth Lost'of the Brooklyn Brujas trilogy through the multiple lenses of visibility, recognition, colourism, erasure, trauma, and queer desire situated within the realms of fantasy and or speculative fiction. The narratives incorporate intersectionality, normalise queer desire and condemn supremacist colonialism. The reimagined constructs in the text identify an intriguing juxtaposition of contemporary Brooklyn with a magical counterpart and the tree in Los Lagos recalls the trope of the world tree drawn from Maya, Incan, Aztec, Olmec, and Itzapan cultures. The text depicts LGBTQIA characters of colour, a rare occurrence in itself; and also disabled/atypical characters who are also queer, adding layers of representation within the narrative. With intersectionality as the primary framework or narrative fabric it is possible to define the notion that complex identities and lived experiences are inimical within marginalized communities. LGBTQ fiction for young adults with intersectional representation is pertinent particularly with regard to genres like fantasy or speculative fiction which have a plethora of possibilities for intersectional representation. Many fantasy narratives, specifically under the popular fiction genre do not represent inclusivity with the readers left without the opportunity to critically examine and consider multiple perspectives. Without diversity, the limitations of literature are manifold and the readers with one-sided or narrow perspectives in otherwise engaging narratives are often faced with unanswered queries, unauthentic imaginations and a skewered understanding of the world at large.

Keywords: *intersectional representation, inclusivity, young adult narratives.*

Adolescent literature is an integral canon in the literary sphere and reflects the changes taking place in the larger society and the adolescent perspective, aiming to appeal to the reader. The evolution of a sub-genre with emphasis on LGBTQIA+++ marks the changing approach towards literature in general and young adult narratives in particular. Taking into consideration the nuances of this recently evolved genre, it is vital to scrutinize changes taking place within this growing body of literature. This makes it necessary to ponder if narrators take risks and experiment with their writing, pushing the limitations of acceptable styles of young adult literature with revolutionary constructs of voice and structure opening up the need for more discourse on the same. YA fiction often incorporates multiple voices, perspectives, complexities, and challenges to enhance inclusivity and have wider appeal. These narratives often question the established mores of writing, specifically the linear and chronological pattern with a single perspective by changing both form and structure thus mirroring changes within society itself. It can be perceived that this indicates the new undercurrents in the socio-economic and multicultural realms which dictate how discourses are to be initiated and encourage experimentation in ways this may be accomplished.

Representation serves to normalize forms of queerness as opposed to identification as the deviant opposite of heterosexuality. The ultimate aim of positive representation in young adult narratives is to move away from this exclusive othering of queerness and for the discourses to reinforce that queer is not the opposite of straight, it is merely another identity. However, popular fiction for young adults often falls into the error of identifying hetero-centric depictions of sexuality, wherein representations of queerness are depicted as parallels to heterosexuality. Simply put, the narrative is framed in such a way that the "straight" experience is merely latched on to queer characters and this scenario serves only to complicate the understanding of an already complex nuance. Vu (2017) posits the fantasy genre as "the clearest descendant of romance and adventure fiction" (p. 295) that "relies on the kind of associative logic commonly criticized as 'magical thinking,' in which connections are drawn via analogy, emotion, and desire, collapsing temporal sequence into a vague yet immediate present" (p. 288). The fantasy genre offers a space for the marginalized who are rendered outcasts in many spaces, due to its propensity to subvert social norms. For readers unacquainted with the complexity and nuances of the fantasy genre, it appears to have little influence on the lived realities; some may assume that the conscious veering away from realism renders the plot and characterization unpalatable. Research has pointed out that this is not the case. It is this very nature of the genre that allows for the subversion of societal norms (Fong, Mullin & Mar, 2015; Miller & Blackburn, 2015; Stern, et al., 2019; Bal, 2021)

It is in this context that Zoraida Cordova attempts to draw connections between Latin American tradition, history, identity, and culture in the backdrop of magic, elemental powers, rituals, adventure, and queer desire. The construct of using fantasy to reflect a study of the lived realities, in accordance with many

researchers, provides the opportunity to appreciate real-world problems (Bal, 2021; Fong et al., 2015; Stern, et al., 2019; Garcia, 2017). In their study, Esberk (2014) theorizes the function of fantasy as a subverting genre. Esberk (2014) argues that fantasy successfully goes against social norms, and that the genre itself "aims at subverting, rewriting, and re-evaluating what has already been written" (p. 139), in essence adding yet another perspective to be analyzed. The argument raised is that the genre is not burdened with the norms and constraints that limit other genres.

The first narrative of the Brooklyn Brujas trilogy is calculated to usher the reader into a reimagined contemporary world of magic, where the protagonist Alex Mortiz, a queer Encantrix (a bruja or witch who practices brujeria, a word with a lineage that can be traced back to Vodou and Macumba) who attempts to rid herself of her magical powers on her 'DeathDay', a day of ritual significance drawing inspiration from the Latin American Coming-of-age celebration-Quinceanera. The Deathday or rite of passage ceremony, blends seamlessly with details chosen from myriad cultural mores, it is to be noted that the even deities of Alex's world "*Deos* are drawn from Latin for "the gods". It is the day her family will gather together and call the spirits of the ancestors to bless her and her powers. The ritual doesn't go as planned and the entire Mortiz family of Healers and Psychics is imprisoned in the purgatorial kingdom of Los Lagos, a magical world of deities, fairies, and an evil bruja also the primary antagonist -the Devourer, who has taken over the land. The Devourer craves Alex's powers, and threatens to destroy Alex's family if Alex doesn't give them to her. Alex in the quest to rescue her family is joined by the mysterious Nova and another character named Rishi as she enters a portal.

The magical worlds of popular YA fantasy have been almost exclusively centred around Egyptian/Greek/Roman/Nordic representations, with

Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson Sequence, The Magicians of Egypt trilogy and Magnus Chase narratives being examples of such narratives. The limiting construct to be noted here is that the structure enlightening the world/word building of writers of speculative/fantasy fiction is restricted to the established canon of the myths and legends of the colonizing class. It is thus with positive purpose that Cordova places this colonizing class as a force Alex and others must fight throughout the narrative. The construct is signified symbolically by the Devourer. The Devourer imbibes the life and the power of others to grow stronger and remains hidden behind a facade of death. This can be analysed parallelly with invading European explorers who 'discovered' new continents and decimated or enslaved Indigenous communities while aggressively engaged in the exploitation of natural resources. It is therefore no coincidence that the primary antagonist is a multi-layered oppressor, her tyrannical reign a herald for deprivation, despair, and death in the land.

Alex witnesses' magical creatures in the meadow who ostensibly led a perfect rustic life, but a second glance shows her that "manacles replace [t]heir bracelets." The meadowkin are not in control of their lives despite the appearance of freedom. Cordova symbolically identifies the minority groups in powerful nations who exist albeit faced with micro-aggressions and absent privileges. It is to be noted that the narrative posits Alex's power as derived from her family and cultural legacy whose strength she can harness to free the meadowkin from the shackles. Their lives and freedom are returned to them. Córdova remarks in the Author's Note that she names her witches "brujas and brujos because their origins do not come from northern Europe or Salem. Alex's ancestors come from Ecuador, Spain, Africa, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Her magic is like Latin America—a combination of the old world and new." It is an eclectic mix that identifies the fantasy realm of Los Lagos. Mama Juanita stands with Alex near a pond, which is reminiscent of Beyoncé's delineation of the Youba orisha Oshun in the "Hold Up" song from *Lemonade.* Oshun, the deity of water, growth, and love is depicted dressed in yellow, walking on water, with a cigarillo not unlike Mama Juanita. The cultural and iconic references embedded in Córdova's world of Los Lagos are taken without specific labels of any particular faith practice but create a sense of fellowship regardless.

From the narrative, it is evident that Los Lagos is a replacement for an adolescent cultural landscape with its multiplicities and complexities as Alex navigates the unchartered spaces wherein lies the source of her powers (her cultural legacy), acceptance of self, relationships, and other structures that evolve and change as the teenager transitions into the adult. Alex understands her evolving self and explores her identity, addresses it for the first time without denial in Los Lagos as she undertakes a heroine's journey. Towards the close it is a given that to destroy the Devourer, Alex has to shatter the illusion, unmask the antagonist, and reveal the truth for what it is. The real test is for Alex as she must accept her identity as an encantrix, and take her place in the lineage of brujos and brujas. This brings up the question of rejection or acceptance of self and family which is the central theme in Córdova's book. Córdova creates a paradigm for a pantheon of Deos within a polytheistic magical system. La Mama, El Papa, El Fuego, and other gods whose names reflect their elemental strengths. Brujos, brujas and brujexes are carriers of the powers of the Deos. This is an example of drawing in multiple ideologies and pastiches evident throughout the narrative. Alex explains, "magic is a living thing. It's part of me. I summon it, call it like a snake charmer called the snake out of its slumber. The magic answers back" (297).

Cordova draws upon the nuances of folklore and posits ritual as necessary to wield magic, along with the concept that *cantos* (incantations) have precise elements and directives. Magical skill is always expressed as part of a collective and is communally produced throughout time and space. This finds expression in the pastiche of the *Book of Cantos*, a compilation of spells, prayers, poems, potions, folklore, and diary entries penned by the Mortiz ancestors. In keeping with the theme of inclusivity, Córdova has inserted elements from Santería and Voodoo in the magical ethos, a symbolic reply to the obsession of popular fiction towards Nordic, Gaelic, and Greco-Roman myths and legends.

Cordova pursues a significant agency by the inclusion of white characters only as antagonists. She draws attention to the Black/African part of *Latinidad* in great measure, which is a critical choice particularly as cultural discourse is rife with colorism, trauma, and erasure. A prime example is Alex's great-grandmother Mama Juanita who is "dark as night." Alex discusses the process of colonization by examining her heritage: "My mother's family were run out of their lands in Spain and fled to Mexico. My dad's ancestors were African slaves in Ecuador. They went to Panama and then Puerto Rico. Somehow my blood comes from all over the world and settled in Brooklyn. Brooklyn is my home" (187). The text incorporates intersectionality, normalizes queer desire, and condemns supremacist colonialism. It depicts LGBTQIA characters of colour, a rare occurrence in itself; and also disabled/atypical characters who are also queer, adding layers of representation within the narrative. With intersectionality as the primary framework or narrative fabric, it is possible to define the notion that complex identities and lived experiences are inimical within marginalized communities. LGBTQ fiction for young adults with intersectional representation is pertinent particularly concerning genres like fantasy or speculative fiction which have a plethora of possibilities for intersectional representation. The narrative discourse does not hinge around Alex's sexuality as a problem that should be resolved. The rationale here is that the protagonist navigates through her feelings without worrying about the strings attached or labels. The text harmoniously normalizes queer desire. The relationship between Nova and Alex is emphasized initially in tandem with the stereotypical heteronormative tropes of most young adult fantasy fiction. As the narrative develops the focus shifts towards a relationship between Alex and Rishi -Latina and Guyanese girls, given the same momentum and significance as the previous one. Alex is more concerned with her identity as a powerful *encantrix* with great responsibilities rather than her bisexuality which is depicted in the same paradigm as heterosexuality would be. The usage of Ableist language is perhaps a blot on the literary landscape of the text: Nova's eyes are described as "bipolar" because they experience color shifts and the term "crazy" is employed as an insult.

An analysis of Nova's character is a cue for intersectional analysis. Nova has experienced multiple traumas as he has survived vicious yet systematized power systems, shifting from foster care to the state that incarcerates him. Alex's mom struggles to provide for her family, yet it is Nova who has to deal with a greater threat since he is traumatized by homelessness and hunger. It is ultimately Nova who forces Alex to confront her privileges. Nova is depicted as the quintessence of masculinity, is emotionally absent, and ostensibly based on the popular construct of the stereotypical villain (he is a Person of Colour, has tattoos, and was formerly incarcerated). Nova exemplifies the conflict trope as he is caught in a Faustian bargain with the devil—his back story is conceptualized to prove that organized systems cause desperate people to make the wrong choices.

The Mortiz family is imprisoned within the Tree of Souls, situated in the middle of Los Lagos at the centre of a labyrinth. This concept recalls the world tree, a trope that is drawn from the myths of Maya, Aztec, Itzapan, and Olmec cultures, indigenous to Central and South America besides Baltic, Persian, Norse, Greco-Roman mythologies and Abrahamic constructs. The world tree is identified as an *axis mundi*, a connection between earthly and divine planes. These parallels serve to nurture multiplicities and ethno-cultural inclusivity within the text.

Despite many structural elements identifying with mainstream YA Fantasy fiction Cordova draws in conflicts and constructs identifying that queer people have aspirations, adventures, and lived realities that are unrelated to their sexuality or ethnicity. The narrative is a discourse on adolescent experience in realms similar to the real world in experiences and challenges. The core concepts of responsibility, acceptance, and coming-of-age are reinforced throughout the text. Cordova has posited a world where homophobia does not exist yet traces the conflicts, desires, and experiences that queer people experience in general. Through the normalization of the queer narrative, she shows that queer people require acceptance; which will allow them to live authentic lives. Their lived realities need not revolve around their sexuality, ethnicity, or culture. Cordova's sensitivity to adolescent normativity and queer experience informs the narrative, as she embodies these experiences realistically and dexterously in a way that resonates with the readers.

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THE COMPLEXITY OF BELONGING: IDENTITY AND HYBRIDITY IN GRENVILLE'S *THE SECRET RIVER*

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Abstract

This paper explores the themes of identity and hybridity in Kate Grenville's The Secret River, focusing on the complex interactions between British colonizers and the Indigenous Dharug people. The novel delves into how the colonial encounter shapes the identities of both the settlers and the Indigenous people, particularly through the tensions surrounding land ownership, resource use, and social practices. Central to this exploration is the concept of cultural hybridity, where the protagonist, William Thornhill, navigates the moral and existential dilemmas of living between two worlds: his English heritage and the new realities of life in Australia. Thornhill's shifting identity reflects the broader challenges faced by colonizers as they attempt to reconcile their European cultural values with the foreign landscape and its Indigenous inhabitants. The inability of settlers to embrace hybridity or acknowledge the Indigenous people's deep connection to the land underscores the novel's critique of colonial domination. Through its portrayal of identity and hybridity, The Secret River provides a poignant commentary on the psychological and cultural complexities of colonialism.
Keywords: *postcolonial literature, indigenous, settlers, cross-culture, negotiation, identity, hybridity.*

Introduction

In the context of Australia's colonial history, identity and hybridity are critical concepts for understanding the cultural shifts that occur when distinct groups come into contact. *The Secret River* by Kate Grenville explores the ways in which British settlers and Indigenous Australians navigate their identities within the contended space of the Australian boundary. The novel depicts how the colonizers' sense of self is challenged by their encounters with the land and its Indigenous inhabitants, revealing the fluency of identity and the potential for cultural hybridity. This paper examines how *The Secret River* portrays the processes of identity formation, the tensions between cultural preservation and transformation, and the potential for hybrid identities in the colonial context. It analyses key characters and their relationships to uncover how identity is negotiated, adapted, and often fractured by the pressures of colonization.

Theoretical Framework

This analysis draws on postcolonial theory, particularly Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity, which emphasizes the in-between spaces that emerge in colonial contexts, where identities are neither wholly Indigenous nor colonial but are transformed through contact. The paper also integrates Indigenous perspectives to highlight how colonization disrupts Indigenous identities while resisting complete elimination through acts of cultural survival and adaptation. Ultimately, *The Secret River* reveals the complexities of identity and hybridity within colonialism's violent and transformative processes.

When analysing *The Secret River* through the lens of hybridity ("hybridity commemorates and privileges—a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweeness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference") (Hoogvelt 158) and cross-cultural negotiation ("The word impedes the question of the transparent assimilation of cross-cultural meanings in a unitary sign 'human' culture") (Bhabha 178), the novel reveals how these processes shape identity and cultural exchange. Failed negotiations and violent clashes emphasize the challenges in bridging cultural divides, yet they also underscore the necessity of such efforts. In *The Secret River*, hybridity is a central theme, as seen in the complicated interactions between British colonizers and the Indigenous Dharug people. These moments of negotiation reflect larger colonial dynamics of power, misunderstanding and cultural conflict and illustrate how identity itself becomes fluid and contested within the framework of cross-cultural exchange.

Land Ownership and Identity

One of the key areas of cross-cultural negotiation in *The Secret River* is over land, where differing understandings of ownership reveal the complexities of hybrid identity. For British settlers like William Thornhill, land symbolizes property, possession, and a foundation for building a future. In contrast, the Indigenous Dharug people view land as a communal and spiritual entity something to live with, not to own. This clash of perspectives underpins the tension between the two groups. Thornhill's attempt to claim a piece of land by marking it with fences reflects the settler's desire for stability and control: "He drew a square in the air" (Grenville 149). Meanwhile, the Dharug people continue to use the land freely for hunting and gathering, viewing it as inseparable from their cultural identity. For them, land is integral to their existence, not something to be divided or commercialized in a Western sense. Thornhill's dismissal of Indigenous land rights by stating, "You got all the rest" (Grenville 149), underscores his inability to recognize the Indigenous connection to land, revealing the cultural divide between the two worldviews.

Rutherford informs that "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" (211). The theme of hybridity emerges as the novel explores the involvement of identities shaped by power dynamics. While Thornhill claims the land with the assertion, "My place now" (Grenville 149), his act reflects the colonial mindset but also hints at the complex process of identity formation in a new land. His assertion of dominance through boundary-making symbolizes not only the imposition of colonial power but also a hybrid identity in the making, where his sense of self becomes entangled with his relationship to the land. The Indigenous people, on the other hand, are marginalized in this negotiation. Yet their deep spiritual connection to the land represents a hybrid resistance to the settler-colonial identity imposed on them. The power imbalance between the settlers and the Indigenous people, reinforced by firearms and colonial law, forces these negotiations into unequal terms, but the ongoing presence of the Dharug signifies an unresolved tension. This hybridity, a blending and collision of cultural identities, shapes both the individual and collective experience in the novel, as the settlers' claim to land and identity is always in dialogue with the enduring presence of Indigenous culture.

Language Barriers and Cultural Misunderstanding

The theme of hybridity and identity emerges in the failed cross-cultural negotiations between the settlers and the Indigenous people, where language barriers and cultural misunderstandings play a crucial role.

Thornhill's inability to fully grasp the Dharug language, coupled with the settlers' lack of interest in understanding Indigenous customs, leads to alienation and mistrust. The phrase "Too little language to go around" (Grenville 151) symbolizes not only the literal communication gap but also the deeper cultural division that complicates the formation of hybrid identities. This disconnect highlights the difficulty of navigating a shared identity in a space where both parties struggle to articulate themselves across cultural lines, with language both literal and symbolic proving inadequate.

Thornhill's interactions with the Dharug people are often marked by a lack of comprehension of their customs and values. For instance, when the Indigenous people offer gifts like fish or use gestures to communicate. Thornhill misinterprets these actions as territorial claims or threats, unaware that these acts reflect their cultural practices of sharing and exchanging. The settlers, including Thornhill, also view Indigenous methods such as fire management and sustainable hunting through a colonial lens, recognizing them as basic or ineffective. The inability to understand and respect each other's values and customs hampers the development of a hybrid identity where both cultures could coexist and instead reinforces the barriers to meaningful negotiation and mutual understanding.

Violence and Failed Negotiations

The failure of cross-cultural negotiation eventually escalates into violence. Thornhill and other settlers become increasingly aggressive in their attempts to assert control over the land, resulting in brutal clashes. The novel illustrates how the inability to understand and respect cultural differences leads to tragic outcomes, symbolizing the broader violence of colonialism.

For instance, Thornhill faced an incident where a "woman stood up, a dead snake hanging limp from her hand. She flicked it onto the coals as casually" (Grenville 200); flicking the dead snake onto the coals with casual indifference reflects a disconnect between Thornhill and the Indigenous character. The snake, a potent symbol in many cultures, could represent life, death, or transformation. Here, it appears lifeless, suggesting the failure of communication or the breakdown of any negotiation between the two cultures. The woman's actions, discarding the snake like "a bit of old rope" (Grenville 200), could symbolize the casual yet deep-seated violence of colonialism, where the settlers disregard the value of Indigenous life and land, mirroring the erasure of identity and cultural significance. Thornhill's passive observation and the lack of dialogue between them reflect a failure in understanding and hybridity where instead of a harmonious blending of identities, the two worlds remain divided, reinforcing violence and separation. This scene underscores the clash between British settlers and Indigenous Australians, highlighting the inability to bridge cultural differences, resulting in a form of symbolic violence through this failed negotiation of identity and power.

The Secret River by Kate Grenville explores the difficulties of navigating cross-cultural relationships, highlighting the serious miscommunications, unequal power relations, and violence that characterized interactions between Indigenous Australians and British settlers. The book exposes how the settlers' lack of genuine interaction with the Dharug people resulted in the eradication of Indigenous traditions, lands, and ways of life. Grenville examines the complex and frequently painful process of negotiating identity via the figure of William Thornhill, highlighting the conflicts that arise between moral obligation, survival, and belonging in a colonial setting rife with cultural disruption and hybridity.

Conclusion

This article distinguishes itself from other research on *The Secret River* by offering a nuanced exploration of identity and hybridity within the context of cultural negotiation rather than focusing solely on colonial violence or moral guilt. By examining William Thornhill's identity transformation as he grapples with the duality of his English heritage and his new Australian environment, you highlight the protagonist's internal conflict. This approach goes beyond the binary opposition of colonizer versus colonized by emphasizing how the colonial encounter fosters cultural hybridity, a topic often underexplored in analyses of the novel. The article also focuses on the concepts of land ownership and resource use, showing how that shape both settler and Indigenous identities. The incorporation of themes like cultural hybridity where Thornhill inhabits a liminal space between two cultures adds depth to the analysis. Many studies focus on postcolonial guilt or historical reconciliation, while your approach dives into the transformative identity struggles that arise from colonial interactions and land disputes. The article critiques not only the oppressive nature of colonialism but also the settlers' failure to fully engage with the potential for cross-cultural understanding, which could have led to reconciliation. This exploration of the missed opportunities for cultural hybridity and mutual respect offers a fresh angle that critiques the psychological implications of colonial domination more deeply than typical readings focused on external conflict alone. *The Secret River* not only reflects on historical injustices but also calls for ongoing efforts to cultivate a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally enriched society.

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CROSS - CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS EMERGING LITERARY DISCOURSES IN CONTEMPORARY MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

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Abstract

Agatha Christie, renowned for her intricate mystery novels, not only captivated readers with her compelling plots and unforgettable characters but also subtly navigated the complexities of gender dynamics within early to mid-20th-century society. This paper explores how Christie's works reflect, challenge, and reinforce contemporary gender roles and expectations. By analyzing key characters, narrative structures, and thematic elements, the study reveals Christie's nuanced portrayal of women and men, offering insights into the broader socio-cultural context of her time.

Introduction

Agatha Christie's literary works revolutionized the mystery genre with its complex plot. Intelligent pointing and memorable characters like Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, she creates incredible "detectives" that challenge readers' perceptions. Often employing psychological depth and unexpected twists, such as *The Murder of Roger Aykroyd* (1926) *and And Then There Were None* (1939), in addition to her mastery of plot. Christie also subtly engages with gender dynamics in her stories. her female character especially Miss Marple challenging the traditional gender roles of the time. Although often underestimated due to age or appearance. Christie's women also display intelligence. sharp eyesight and moral authority Subverting stereotyping of women in detective stories, Miss Marple especially challenges the idea that older women are not relevant by using her keen understanding of human nature to solve problems. complex crimes Christie's thorough portrayal of gender and her ability to focus on women as capable, intuitive, and powerful agents of her mystery. It is considered a progressive approach to gender roles in 20th century literature.

Strong Female Protoganists of Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie's representation of female characters, especially her strong female protagonists was unique in the landscape of early 20th-century detective fiction, Christie's women were often intelligent, witty, and complex, defying the era's stereotypes. is an example in this regard. Even though she is an elderly woman But she uses her powers of observation and deep understanding of human nature to solve crimes that baffle even professional investigators. This is different from the world of traditional detective novels which is dominated by men. Christie's female characters, such as Tuppence Beresford from The Secret Adversary (1922), are bold, resourceful, and independent. As part of Tommy and Tuppence, the husband and wife detective duo take an active role in the investigation and Adventurous Tuppence often outshines her male counterpart with her boldness and quick thinking. Christie's women are not limited to traditional domestic roles. Rather, they are seen as agents capable of change and justice. They subvert expectations and reflecting the increasing independence of women in the early 20th century, this portrayal contributed to Christie's enduring

appeal. with her female protagonists complicating power in the world of Crime fiction.

Stereotypical Roles

While Agatha Christie often subverted traditional expectancies, she additionally depicted some girl characters in stereotypical roles, reflecting the social norms of her time. In several of her novels, ladies are portrayed as both dutiful better halves, harmless younger women in want of protection, or femme fatales whose beauty and manipulation drive the plot. These characters frequently adhere to standard gender roles, with young, appealing girls portrayed as romantic or naïve, and older ladies as gossipy or meddling. For instance, lots of Christie's young girl characters, like in *Death at the Nile* (1937) or *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), are written as beautiful and susceptible, searching for the steerage or protection of a male. However, Christie additionally makes use of those tropes to misinform readers, as lots of these apparently simple or harmless girls end up more involved inside the crime than first perceived. Thus, at the same time as a few characters align with stereotypes, Christie regularly used them as a narrative device, gambling with readers' assumptions earlier than revealing extra complex realities. In this way, she blended each traditional and subversive portrayals of girls in her thriller novels.

Gender Relationships and Power Dynamics

Agatha Christie often explored gender relations and power dynamics in marriage and romantic relationships. These forces are often described as complex and sometimes uneven. In many of her works marriage and love serve as the backdrop for a deep investigation into the intrigue, control, and mystery that often leads to crime or murder. Christie had a keen sense of the social environment of her time. and often uses this energy to create tension and drama in his plans.

Imbalance of Power

Many of Christie's novels depict marriages in which one spouse, usually the man, holds economic or social power. While women are expected to conform to traditional roles of submission or self-assertion, however, Christie often undermines this. This means that his partner seems powerless. who is usually a woman accomplice. For example, in *Death on the Nile* (1937), the beautiful and wealthy Linnet Doyle marries a man to whom she appears devoted. But this relationship conceals jealousy, betrayal, and manipulation, which ultimately leads to murder.

Manipulation and Control

In Christie's story Romantic relationships often involve subtle or overt forms of manipulation. Many of her schemes involve married couples or lovers seducing each other. sometimes for personal gain or revenge. In *Endless Night* (1967), a young man marries a wealthy young woman. But his motives are slowly revealed. It shows how relationships can be a battleground for gaining power.

Representing Women in Marriage

Though many of the female characters begin to seem bland. or submissive in a romantic relationship, Christie always gave them a lot of freedom. In novels such as *Peril at End House* (1932) and *The Hollow* (1946), women take control of their dreams. Whether through manipulation, planning, or sometimes through self-rape. Christie always saw women as not victims in relationships but as an active participant Sometimes she uses social expectations of women's weakness to her advantage.

Ambiguity and Partnership

Contrasing with the unusual relationships she usually portrays, Christie also wrote of close relationships. Especially detective pair Tommy and Tupence Beresford, their assets were seen as more equal. Both of them contributed little to the crime. Tuppence

often leads the way in ingenuity and execution. This brings in more progressive views on the relationship. where mutual respect and partnership are possible

Dating Expectations

Christie frequently explores how traditional dating expectations affect romantic and religious relationships. Women in his novels often struggle with pressures of beauty, obedience, and virtue, while men are expected to care and protect. However, Christie undermines these roles. and shows that there is a struggle for power outside. And no girlfriend will have a monopoly on control.

Subversion and Reinforcement of Gender Norms

Agatha Christie often explores the complex relationship between subverting and reinforcing gender norms. On the one hand, she often challenges traditional roles. By creating female characters that challenge society's expectations. Especially the ability to think independently solve crimes and navigating complex relationships, with characters like Miss Marple, who solves crimes using her keen intellect even as a single woman, and Tuppence Beresford, who plays an equal and often leading role in the detective partnership with her husband. Representing Christie's subversion of typical gender norms. These women are neither confined to the home nor dependent on men. But they take on or control their lives as much as the criminal investigations they conduct. On the other hand, Christie also reinforces traditional gender norms through portraying women in stereotypical roles. Many of her female characters Especially in our early works, they are presented as beautiful, innocent, or emotionally weak. and often pressured to protect from the male figure. In some cases, marriage and romantic relationships still reflect traditional power dynamics. where men seek power or control Meanwhile Even though the relationship is complicated But Christie often uses these

stereotypes to attract readers. By allowing women to become the keys to solving the mystery or even revealing it as consultants to both crimes. This thwarts unfinished expectations. Thus, Christie subverts and reinforces gender norms. It presents women as complex and multi-dimensional characters. This can start with two traditional roles. But in the end, she transcended those roles often in surprising ways This delicate portrait reflects the limitations of the era.

Case Studies

Agatha Christie's subversion and reinforcement of gender norms can br verified in her many novels and characters. which is used as a good case study. Here are three important examples:

1. **Miss Marple in *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930)**

   Subversion: Miss Marple is one of Christie's prominent subversions of gender norms. As an unmarried elderly woman living in a small village, Although at first he was thought to be a mean person. But Christie is imbued with Miss Marple's keen instincts. Sharp observation skills and a deep understanding of human nature. This is in contrast to the general image of older women in literature of the time. Miss Marple uses her position as an outsider to observe intellectually egalitarian social behavior. Superior to the male detective in her story she often solves complex crimes by drawing parallels between local gossip. and serious criminal cases.

   Empowerment: Miss Marple is a powerful figure and her character also subtly reinforces some traditional gender roles as she is still in the home area and rarely steps outside the village. and using traditionally "feminine" characteristics such as emotional intelligence, compassion and conscience to solve crimes. This reinforces the idea that women's strengths lie more in their

ability to navigate social dynamics than in their physicality. direct action or struggle.

2. **Linnet Doyle in *Death on the Nile* (1937)**

   Subversion: Linnet Doyle, is a wealthy heiress who embodies the image of a beautiful and privileged woman who was the object of envy and desire. Meanwhile Christie subverts this portrayal by examining the dark consequences of this power and control over others. Especially in the romantic relationships Lynette's ability to manipulate the people around her especially her husband Simon and her ex-girlfriend Jacqueline is evident. It is considered the basis of the story. The final plot reveals how love, passion, and power can destroy relationships. with Lynette becoming the victim and user of the tension. Reinforcement: Linnet's role also reflects traditional gender dynamics. Especially the idea that women's power lies in their beauty and wealth. Her character falls into the archetype of a "dangerous young woman" whose passion has left her behind. Although she was independent at first Linnet's fate is largely determined by her romantic entanglements with men.

3. **Tuppence Beresford in *The Secret Adversary* (1922)**

   Subversion: Tuppence Beresford, one half of the detective duo Tommy and Tuppence, stands out as a strong female protagonist who challenges traditional gender roles. She is smart, courageous, and often takes the lead in her investigative work. Unlike Christie's other female characters, Tuppence is not constrained by expectations of women's roles in society. She's not a passive person. But she is a person who actively seeks adventure. Introduced to the idea of opening a detective agency by her husband. independence quick rationing and her willingness to take risks makes her a Tommy-like partner in her research. Reinforcement: Although

Tuppence has made great progress, But her relationship with Tommy sometimes reflects traditional gender roles: however manipulative and manipulative Embora Tuppence is, Tommy tends to play a more cautious and protective role. It reflects the traditional dynamic of the male protector and the adventurous female. In the same way Their relationship often subverted the dominant power dynamics seen in most marriages of the era. This demonstrates a more equal partnership based on mutual respect.

Comparission with Contemporary Authors

When comparing Agatha Christie's representation of women and gender dynamics. With contemporary writer many similarities and differences emerge. especially the evolution of the female characters. The theme of agency and exploring gender roles. Here's a comparison of Christie's approach with some modern writers:

1. **Agatha Christie x Come to France Character Complexity**

   Christie often presents women who appear to conform to social norms. before revealing their strengths and complexities. On the contrary, Tana French's female characters, as in In the *Woods* (2007), are often presented as multidimensional from the outset. French's protagonist struggles with his identity, relationships, and trauma. They often show weakness and strength at the same time, which adds to their character. Shifts in Agency and Power: As Christie's characters, such as Miss Marple and Tuppence, depart from agency within the confines of their roles, French's characters often face social constraints more directly. It emphasizes the psychological impact of these norms. French delves into the emotional and mental struggles of his characters. It shows their

moments of self-discovery and empowerment in a more subtle way than Christie does.

2. Agatha Christie x Gillian Flynn

Subversion of authority: Christie subverts traditional gender roles. allowing her female characters to play an active role in solving crimes. Often revealing her strength through wit and intelligence, Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* (2012), on the other hand, takes a bold and sexually subversive leap forward. The Amy Dunne character is an example of a complex woman who manipulates expectations. of society regarding femininity in order to make complex plans Flynn's work challenges the idea of the "good wife" and criticizes the role expected of women in society. It reveals the dark side of women's agency.

Dark Issues: Although Christie's mysteries often have human conclusions about justice, Flynn's stories often explore darker themes involving deception, betrayal, and the consequences of manipulation. Flynn's female protagonists blend empowerment as well as masculinity with evil. This results in a more ambiguous portrayal of gender dynamics.

Conclusion

In summary, Agatha Christie,s portrayal of a woman and her gender dynamics has a lasting impact on the mystery genre even though she often violates traditional gender norms. But many of her female characters, such as Miss Marple and Tuppence Beresford, subvert expectations in displaying intelligence, agency, and flexibility. Christie's ability to blend the complexities of women's identities with the tradition of cop fiction paved the way for future writers to explore these themes in greater depth. Contemporary writers including Tana French, Gillian Flynn, Louise Penny and Paula Hawkins build on Christie's foundation, offering more nuanced portraits of female characters. which explores the complexities of psychology emotional depth and the complexity of relationships This evolution reflects broader societal shifts in understanding gender roles and dynamics. It emphasizes the continued relevance of these topics in literature. As we continue to examine the representation of women in literature Christie's legacy remains an important touchstone. It reminds us of the progress that has been made and the work that still needs to be done to achieve equality and accuracy in the representation of both characters.

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A DIASPORIC VIEW: THE FLUIDITY OF IDENTITY IN AMITAV GHOSH'S THE HUNGRY TIDE

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh intricately explores the fluid nature of identity and the concept of boundaries, both physical and psychological. In the novel, The Hungry Tide, he emphasizes how identity is not fixed but shaped by historical, cultural, and geographical forces that constantly shift. The Hungry Tide examines the Sunderbans—a fluid and volatile landscape where the boundaries between land and water, human and animal, are perpetually shifting. Here, identity is similarly unstable, shaped by the forces of nature, migration, and survival. The characters navigate not only the treacherous tides but also their own shifting identities, torn between different cultures, languages, and histories. The novel also interrogates the intersections of environmental, cultural, and individual identities, portraying how these forces interact and transform the self. The novel showcases Ghosh's engagement with the complexities of postcolonial identity, where borders—whether physical, cultural, or psychological—are constantly contested, and identity emerges as fluid, evolving, and intricately connected to the landscapes in which it is situated. This paper captures the thematic exploration of fluidity and identity in both novels, focusing on how Ghosh uses geography, memory, and historical forces to shape his characters' sense of self.
Keywords: *migration, diaspora, identity, displacement, cultural boundaries*

Introduction

Amitav Ghosh is often considered a prominent diasporic writer due to his deep exploration of themes like migration, displacement, identity, and the complexities of belonging across multiple cultures and geographies. His works frequently depict characters who are uprooted from their homelands, forced to navigate new worlds shaped by political, historical, and environmental forces. Ghosh as a diasporic writer portrays his personal experiences growing up in India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and his academic pursuits in the West, have significantly influenced his literary vision. His writing reflects a profound understanding of both the global and the local, creating narratives that transcend national borders.

The concept of identity is not static but rather fluid, influenced by a myriad of factors such as geography, history, and personal experiences. The novel, *The Hungry Tide* portrays the environmental and cultural landscapes that impact individual identities and illustrates that identity is a dynamic construct rather than a fixed entity. Ghosh portrays how these displaced people must navigate new environments and forge connections with diverse groups—ranging from urban intellectuals to indigenous fisherman communities. The story emphasizes the fluidity of identity and the impact of natural forces on the lives of migrants, making survival in this marginal land an ongoing battle. The diaspora in *The Hungry Tide* highlights the themes of loss, adaptation, resilience, and the constant

negotiation between tradition and survival in an unpredictable world.

Fluidity of Identity in *The Hungry Tide*

The fluidity of identity is a recurring and powerful theme in Amitav Ghosh's work, where characters often navigate multiple cultural, social, and geographical boundaries. Ghosh's exploration of identity in the novel, *The Hungry Tide* is dynamic, portraying it not as something fixed or static but as ever-changing, shaped by migration, history, personal experience, and the natural environment change in the lives of marginalized communities in the Sundarbans.

1. **Identity Crisis and Displacement**: The novel presents the plight of the islanders, whose identities are tied to their land and environment. As rising sea levels threaten their homes, their identities are forced to adapt to new realities. Ghosh illustrates how displacement alters personal and collective identities, emphasizing the impact of ecological changes on human existence. The migration of Bengali refugees in Sundarban areas was portrayed in this novel; they also struggled to save their lives in that new place. Culture and economy were encountered between the literate and illiterate people; city developers, hunter-gatherers, and sedentary farmers were connected within a good bond. The hunger strike among the migrants led to a short-term improvement, such as the increase in dole; however, all these aspects were led by natural events. refugee people could develop their areas and build their homes with the materials they found in tide areas. The novel portrays the migration of Bengali refugees to the Sundarbans and their efforts to adapt to a new environment. It emphasizes the cultural and economic exchanges between different groups, including the educated and uneducated, urban developers, hunter-gatherers, and farmers, who build strong bonds despite their differences. The refugees depend on natural resources, using materials from the tidal regions to construct their homes and improve their living conditions. *"What had I expected? A mere jumble, perhaps, untidy heaps of people, piled high upon each other? […] but what I saw was quite different from the picture in my mind's eye. Paths had been laid; the badh – the guarantor of island life- had been augmented: little plots of land had been enclosed 33 with fences; fishing nets had been hung up to dry … Such industry! Such diligence! Yet it was only a few weeks since they had come […] suddenly it dawned on me that I was watching the birth of something new, something hitherto unseen"* (171)

2. **Intercultural Encounters**: The relationship between Piyali Roy, an American-born Bengali marine biologist, and Fokir, an illiterate fisherman from the Sundarbans, exemplifies one of the novel's most important intercultural encounters. Despite the language barrier, Piya speaks English and Bengali, while Fokir speaks only Bengal, their bond grows through non-verbal communication and their shared connection to nature. Piya's scientific knowledge contrasts with Fokir's intimate, intuitive understanding of the environment. Their relationship symbolizes how human connection can transcend linguistic and cultural differences, rooted in mutual respect and a shared purpose. Also, Kanai Dutt, an educated, cosmopolitan translator from Delhi, meets Piya during her research expedition in the Sundarbans. His urban sophistication and command of multiple languages contrast sharply with Piya's more pragmatic and scientific mindset. Kanai views the world through a more cynical, intellectual lens, while Piya is deeply empathetic and passionate about her work with

river dolphins. Their interactions highlight not just cultural differences but also the varied ways in which people from different backgrounds approach knowledge and understanding.

Ghosh tells the story of Nirmal, who is originally from Dhaka. He moves to Calcutta for his studies, and after finishing his education, he becomes a teacher. Nilima, one of his students, falls in love with him, and they get married. Unlike Nirmal, Nilima comes from a family with a long-standing tradition of public service. In 1950, the couple arrives in Lusibari, in the Sundarbans, seeking a safe refuge. However, they soon realize that prosperity is elusive in the Sundarbans, and it takes them some time to adjust, *Nothing was familiar; everything was new. What little they knew of rural life was derived from the villages of the plains: the realities of the tide country were of a strangeness beyond reckoning… Many died of drowning, and many more were picked off by crocodiles and estuarine shark… No day seemed to pass without news of someone being killed by a tiger, a snake or a crocodile. The soil bore poor crops and could not be farmed all year around. Most families subsisted on a single daily meal(79).*

Nirmal and Nilima are deeply shaken when their encounter with the harsh realities of a marginalized community exposes the sheltered nature of their privileged, academic lives. They are horrified to discover the extreme poverty, corruption, and high mortality rates in the Sundarbans, which leads them to question their previous understanding. They reflect on their ignorance, asking, *How was it possible that these islands were a mere ninety-seven kilometers from home and yet so little was known about them? (66).*

3. **Language Barrier**: Language also plays a crucial role in shaping identity in *The Hungry Tide*. Ghosh highlights the linguistic diversity of the Sundarbans, emphasizing how language connects individuals to their culture while also acting as a barrier. The fluidity of communication reflects the fluidity of identity, as characters navigate different languages and dialects. The novel also explores the role of language in reinforcing social hierarchies. Fokir's inability to speak English or participate in the world of formal education puts him at a social and economic disadvantage. His identity, rooted in his deep connection to the local environment, is marginalized in a world where knowledge and power are tied to language and literacy. In contrast, characters like Kanai, who wield linguistic power, occupy positions of privilege, showing how language can be both a tool for connection and a barrier that enforces existing social divisions.

Bengali, the language spoken by the majority of the characters in the novel, is a marker of cultural identity, especially for characters like Piya and Kanai, who have spent much of their lives outside Bengal. For Piya, Bengali represents a link to her ancestral roots, even though she is more comfortable in English. Her return to the Sundarbans and her interactions with the locals challenge her to reconnect with her Bengali identity, even as her primary language of thought and science remains English. Kanai, though fluent in Bengali, has distanced himself from his native culture through his urban, global lifestyle. His identity is thus shaped by his relationship to both Bengali and English, reflecting his dual position between the local and the cosmopolitan. The tension between these languages mirrors the broader tension between traditional and modern identities.

Conclusion

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* offers profound insights into the fluidity of identity. Through the exploration of memory, history, displacement, and intercultural encounters, Ghosh reveals that identity

is not a fixed concept but rather a continuously evolving construct. As individuals navigate the complexities of their environments and histories, their identities transform, reflecting the dynamic interplay between personal experiences and broader socio-political contexts. In an increasingly globalized world, Ghosh's works serve as a reminder of the fluid nature of identity, urging readers to consider the interconnectedness of human experiences across time and space. Ghosh challenges the idea of fixed identities, instead suggesting that identity is a dynamic, evolving process shaped by the fluidity of time, place, and human experience. The author intricately explores the fluidity of identity through various lenses, including memory, culture, history, and migration. This paper examines how Ghosh navigates the complexities of identity in the novel, revealing how personal and collective identities are shaped and reshaped by geopolitical forces and individual experiences.

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MEDIATED MEMORY AND INHERITED TRAUMA:
A POSTMEMORY READING OF
AMY TAN'S *THE JOY LUCK CLUB*

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Abstract
This paper aims to explore the trauma that is inherited by the subsequent generations of immigrant victims who witnessed personal and collective trauma. Feeling the pain of others seem to be impossible however, the experiences can be imagined, evoking a sense of affiliation towards it. Postmemory by Marianne Hirsch provides a grounded conceptual framework against which the tropes of 'familial memory', 'mediated memory' and 'affiliative postmemory' functions in forms of story-telling, artefacts and photographs that connects one generation with another to share the memories of their past and homeland.
Keywords: postmemory, trauma, mediated memory, first and second generation immigrants

Introduction

In an age of paradigm shift, that witnesses globalisation, war, ethnic and territorial conflicts, immigrant literature has become the fulcrum on which the themes of displacement, identify crisis, culture shock, marginalisation, assimilation and homecoming are commonly discussed. Nevertheless the thrust area of discussion has expanded its roots to the interdisciplinary fields of Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Media and Culture studies, offering fresh perspectives on contemporary immigrant literature. One such subject of discussion is the affective nature of traumatic memories diffused from the victims of one generation to the subsequent generations. "The multiplication of genocides and collective catastrophes at the end of the Twentieth century and beginning of the Twenty-first, and their cumulative effects, have made these questions more urgent" stresses Marianne Hirsch in her essay "The

Generation of Postmemory, (109). Trauma inherited by the second generation immigrants in the form of narrative or memoir is different from the lived traumatic experiences of the first generation immigrants. Hirsch points out that "… of course we do not have literal "memories" of others; experiences …(and) no degree of monumentality can transform one person's lived memories into another's. Postmemory is not identical to memory: it is "post," but at the same time, it approximates memory in its affective force." (109). Therefore this paper will employ the conceptual framework of Postmemory a term coined and propounded by Marianne Hirsch in 1992, to Amy Tan's fiction *The Joy Luck Club*.

According to Marianne Hirsch the term Postmemory "describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural, collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experience is that they "remember"

only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively to seem to constitute memories in their own right." (106-107). Hirsch also adds that the "generation after" imagines and endures the traumatic pain of their ancestors in extremity that their own thoughts and life gets displaced. (107) Familial Trauma is transmitted through mediated memory: a cultural channel that makes use of photos, behaviours, stories, miniatures, artefacts, as a source to "affiliative postmemory" (114) that affects the second generation.

Review of Literature

The themes of trauma is frequently explored in Holocaust Literature, War literature, Patriotic Literature, Women's Writings and Postcolonial Literature with a focus on fragmented narrative techniques, effects of trauma and memory on the victims and their identities. Applying the theory of Postmemory: inherited trauma/memory of trauma to immigrant literature, especially the Chinese-American literature is a field that is yet to be explored. Hirsch, initially used the term of Postmemory to Holocaust Studies but later broadened its usage. She emphasizes: "In doing so in this essay I proposed to use the holocaust as my historical frame of reference but my analysis relies on and, I believe, is relevant to numerous other context of dramatic transfer that can be understood as postmemory" (108). This paper will use the two tropes of Postmemory: Mediated Memory and Affiliative Postemory.

Mediated Memory

Mediated memories are those that are transferred through medium such as stories, photographs or any object that allows the second generation to connect with the imaginative trauma of their ancestors or preceding generation. Hirsch states about the mediated memories when she discusses about the narrators of *Maus,* a graphical novel by Art Spiegelman, whose narrators are father and son, representing the first and second generation respectively, their conversation illustrates that "…familial postmemory works through the transformations and mediations from the father's memory to the son's postmemory"(119). Hirsch also adds that the second generation do not have memories of past, "For them, the past is located in objects, images, and documents, in fragments and traces barely noticeable …standing outside the family, the narrator receives the story …and affiliates with it"(119). Such affiliations are traced in chosen book for study *The Joy Luck Club.*

The Joy Luck Club is a tale of transmitted memories of four sets of mothers and daughters who play Mahjong (a Chinese game usually played by four members) and tell stories of the past. Suyaan Woo, one of the mothers was instrumental in starting the Joy Luck Club, where the Chinese immigrants met, and took turns of hosting "little parties (and) pretend each week had become the new year" (Amy Tan, 14). The originator of the club emphasizes that "Each week one of us would host a party to raise money and to raise our spirits... That game and gathering was a symbol of resistance to overcome the fright that was laid by war... We were all afraid. We all had our miseries ... How long can you see in your mind arms and legs hanging from telephone wires and starving dogs running down the streets with half - chewed hands dangling from the jaws. What was worse, we asked among ourselves to sit and wait for our own deaths with proper sombre faces or to choose our own happiness? (Tan, 14).

The mahjong table is a strong symbol of mediated memory. The first generation revives the tile game in an immigrant environment to overcome traumatic memories of past and to build resistance against the impact of foreign intervention but the memories of past gets transpired to the second generation, who view the table as a source of escape

that their mothers had during the difficult times. Jing Mei Woo was entrusted with the responsibility of owning a corner of the table as her mother had passed away. The members of Joy Luck Club and Jing-Mei' s father expect her to be dutiful and smart as her mother. The familial transmission of hope and expectations is highlighted here, when a second generation immigrant is asked to "unfinish(ed) business left behind" (Tan,1) by her mother who was next in line to host the next meeting of the Joy Luck Club. She is reminded of her childhood past and the memories of contempt towards the Chinese silk attires that the family friends wore while playing the game. She calls them 'aunts' and now when she has found a position to play she sees that the familial expectations is high. Her aunts expect her to be as perfect and strong as the mother, the traumatic stories that she had heard from her mother traps her in an imagination. The stories that were narrated by Suyaan Woo evolved with a different ending and disrupting pasts. Jing Mei Woo is trusted with various mediated memories "I never thought my mother's Kweilin story was anything but a Chinese fairy tale. The endings always changed (Tan, 15). On one occasion, Jing Mei was horrified to hear a story about the ravages of war and was compelled to abandon her two daughters which she had from first marriage, while fleeing from Kweilin to Chungking.

Affiliative Memory
The affiliative memory highlights the trauma, pain, sympathy that the second generation imagines. The narratives affects them immensely that they get affiliated towards it. In case of Suyaan Woo, the mother who not only lived harrowing experiences of war and loss of her children but transmitted its effects to her daughter, due to which she was over protected of her child in an immigrant society, she gives her a "young jade pendant" (Tan, 236) for protection. In order to attain for the loss of her two daughters in China, the mother aims to train Jing Woo in piano lessons, attempts to make her the best learner among the Chinese community, proving her friends wrong, that she is not lesser than any other young American. The more the daughter is trusted with expectations, the lesser she works towards the fixed target, thereby exhibiting the untroubled attitude of American environment. The intergenerational conflict arises because of the cues that the distressed mother exhibits. "The language of family, the language of body: nonverbal and no-cognitive acts of transfer occur most clearly within a familial space often in forms of symptoms" (112) asserts Hirsch. These symptoms are affective in nature that they impact the subsequent generations too.

The jade pendant presented by Suyaan Woo is a representation of affiliative memory. When the pendant was given to her she failed to value its meaning but after Suyaan Woo's death she pursues for the reasons and meaning of owning such a rectangular jade. She behaves and imitates the mannerisms of her mother and connects this with the stories that the mother had narrated. When the revelation about the twin sisters from her mother's first marriage comes to her, she decides to meet them, ventures into this alien world of her ancestral homeland that she had witnessed in mind and she regains her senses when she sees them as grown-ups. She says: "That was all my mother had told me about these daughters, so they had remained babies in my mind, all these years, sitting on the side of a road a road, listening to forms whistling in the distance while sucking the patient red thumbs (Tan, 327). The narrations of mothers here functions as a form of affiliative memory, Suyaan Woo's memory serves as a form of Postmemory to Jing-Mei Woo. Hirsch's states that "These events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present. This is, I believe the experience of postmemory and the process of its generation"(107).

Conclusion

The augmented growth in cross-cultural variations, and the challenges faced by the immigrants has given way to explore the new convolutions of variants found in contemporary writings. Therefore, one such fresh avenue is the concept of postmemory that highlights the transmission of traumatic memories from one generation to another. Further, this intergenerational affiliation can be addressed in terms of conflict, resistance, resilience and post- traumatic growth wherein, the second generation not only experience trauma but also render support to their parents to overcome such memories. The descendants also become agents of traumatic memory and further exploration can be done to preserve and protect the factual discourses of traumatic experience.

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TIMELESS NARRATIVES: CROSS-CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN AESOP'S FABLES, PANCHATANTRA, AND JATAKA TALES

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Abstract

This research paper examines the cross-cultural insights derived from moral stories like Aesop's fables, Panchatantra, and Jataka Tales. In this current increasingly globalised environment, this paper investigates how these ancient moral stories had the power to negotiate cultural wisdom, ethics and leadership. Some of the common themes that all these three varieties of story series have are power dynamics, ethical decision-making, adaptability and resilience, and by drawing on these themes, this study demonstrates the relevance of these fables in promoting intercultural understanding and navigating cross-cultural negotiations. This paper will analyze specific tales from each tradition, and thereby reveal how storytelling develops empathy, ethical leadership and conflict resolution across diverse cultural contexts. This research paper also argues that these stories should not be taught with pre-set morals, advocating instead for open-ended interpretations that allow students to develop critical thinking and engage with complex ethical dilemmas from diverse cultural perspectives. The conclusion reflects on how these tales can continue to shape contemporary discussions and also offers directions for further research on their integration into modern education and diplomatic practices.

Introduction

Various literary traditions have had this habit of passing down cultural wisdom through storytelling, and specifically, fables and moral tales have served as tools for imparting life lessons into the younger ones, and therefore, guiding ethical behaviour and negotiating social norms. Our current society has turned out to be highly multi-cultural where diverse cultures meet, but it is through this ancient wisdom that people can gain insights into navigating complex negotiations of identity, power and ethics. This research paper explores cross-cultural themes that are found in three different literary works - Aesop's fables, the Panchatantra, and the Jataka Tales. These three literary works are considered to be three significant collections of moral stories from distinct cultural backgrounds. By analyzing these ancient texts, this research paper expresses universal themes of power, negotiation and survival which also highlight the unique contributions that each tradition makes to contemporary discussion on multiculturalism.

Literature Review

We have a lot of literature that surrounds Aesop's fables, Panchatantra and Jataka Tales, and most of the scholars have explored their moral, philosophical and cultural significance. According to research, Aesop's Fables originated in ancient Greece, and it has been used to reflect on human behaviour, and it often focuses on virtues such as humility, prudence and resourcefulness (Wood, 2015). According to some scholars, these stories present a pragmatic, and very often cynical view of human interactions

where cleverness is rewarded and arrogance leads to downfall (Anderson, 2017). The Panchatantra, which is a collection of Indian tales, is also similarly connected with moral education, but this collection of stories places a stronger emphasis on diplomacy, strategy and the use of intellect to navigate through social hierarchies (Sharma, 2018). On the other hand, the Jataka Tales are associated much with Buddist teachings, and they emphasize compassion, non-violence and the karmic consequence of one's actions, which contributes to an ethical framework that values altruism and mindfulness in negotiations (Jones, 2016).

Cross-cultural studies in literary discourse prioritize the role of these moral stories in developing intercultural understanding. Some scholars say that these stories need to be looked at through a multicultural perspective, which will offer a shared space for negotiating cultural differences (Smith, 2020). Common themes such as justice, kindness and cleverness across different traditions are explored, and this leads to the highlight of how these narratives can serve as a tool for teaching ethics and diplomacy in diverse contexts (O'Leary, 2019).

Analysis: Cross-Cultural Themes in Aesop's Fables, Panchatantra and Jataka Tales

Aesop's Fables, the Panchatantra and the Jataka Tales come from distinct cultural origins, and yet they share several common themes that resonate with the challenges of cross-cultural negotiations. One of the prominent themes in these stories is the idea of power dynamics and leadership. Stories like "The Tortoise and the Hare" in Aesop's fables talk about the consequence of overconfidence and the value of persistence, which offers insights and lessons about leadership styles that come with patience and resilience (Anderson, 2017). In Panchatantra, we have some characters who use intellect and strategy to outwit stronger adversaries. For example, in the

story, "The Monkey and the Crocodile," the brute strength of the crocodile is won over by the clever monkey (Sharma, 2018). The Jataka Tales, with their emphasis on Buddhist principles, depict leaders who are compassionate and selfless. In the story, "The Monkey King," the protagonist sacrifices himself for the good of his people (Jones, 2016).

Another significant theme that can be seen in all these three collections of stories is moral dilemmas and ethical negotiation. Amidst these three moral story collections, we see a lot of characters who are put into a situation where they have to navigate difficult choices, where personal gain is one benefit while the other extreme is ethical responsibilities. In Aesop's Fables, the story of "The Fox and the Grapes," is a good example of this theme integration. The fox's decision to dismiss what he cannot have teaches us a lesson in humility and acceptance (Wood, 2015). Even though the reasoning wasn't the truth in that scenario, it still was acceptance on the fox's part. The Panchantantra's "The Foolish Lion and the Clever Rabbit" similarly talks about the importance of using win to navigate through dangerous situations, which is a commonality on responsibility of leadership as well (Sharma, 2018). In Jataka Tales, ethical negotiation often involves self-sacrifice for the greater good. For example, in the story, "The Banyan Deer," the deer king ends up offering himself to save his herd, which demonstrates a leadership style that is rooted in compassion (Jones, 2016).

Another important theme that is seen in all these stories is survival, adaptability and resilience. This is seen as a key component of cross-cultural negotiations. With regard to a multicultural society, individuals and groups must very often adapt to new social norms, environments and power structures. The characters in the three collections of moral stories are shown to survive mostly by adapting to changing circumstances. In Aesop's fables, we have

a story called, "The North Wind and the Sun," which talks about how the gentle approach of the sun wins over the force of the wind, suggesting that adaptability and cooperation are more effective than confrontation (Anderson, 2017). In Panchantantra stories as well, we have a lot of animals who outwit their enemies by adapting to the situation and expressing their cleverness. On the other hand, Jataka Tales highlights the need for patience and resilience in overcoming adversity (Sharma, 2018; Jones, 2016).

Contemporary Relevance and Application

In today's multicultural societies, these ancient tales present valuable lessons for cross-cultural negotiations. The stories' emphasis on ethical behaviour, adaptability and leadership can be applied to various contexts, and the relevance to real-life scenarios is highly valid. The lessons can be applied to a lot of scenarios including diplomatic negotiations to intercultural communication in globalized work environments. These stories can highly be used in the field of education, where they can be used to teach students about cultural diversity and the importance of empathy and understanding in navigating differences (Smith, 2020). These stories can also be relatable in business negotiations, where the lessons from these tales about strategy, resilience and ethical leadership can help individuals and organizations navigate the complexities of working across cultures (O'Leary, 2019).

In the contemporary setting, we also see a growing interest in storytelling, which helps us understand how these stories are still relevant and can be used as tools for promoting intercultural understanding. According to scholars, the presentation of moral and ethical dilemmas in individuals when it comes to storytelling, creates a relatable and engaging space to develop empathy and encourage individuals to consider perspectives that aren't theirs (Jones, 2016).

The Importance of Avoiding Pre-Set Morals in Storytelling for Education

Moral stories are used a lot in the education system. While using stories like Aesop's Fables, Panchatantra and Jataka Tales in education is very important, it is also equally important that educators avoid providing students with pre-determined morals. By slightly navigating away from fixed interpretations, we can encourage the students to develop their perspectives, rather than programming them to think within the rigid moral frameworks. According to O'Leary (2019), fables should be used as open-ended learning tools that stimulate students to engage critically and empathetically with different viewpoints, and eventually, by practising this, they will learn to respect different perspectives. When students are allowed to analyze the complexities of these stories, they will gradually understand that moral lessons can be multifaceted and influenced by cultural and personal contexts.

Moreover, providing pre-set morals undermind the ability of storytelling to develop intercultural understanding. Stories like "The Monkey and the Crocodile" in Panchatantra and "The Tortoise and the Hare" in Aesop's fables carry valuable lessons on resilience and cleverness, but the students should understand that these lessons can vary depending on the cultural lens through which they are viewed (Sharma, 2018; Anderson, 2017). For example, while one culture could see the lesson through the perspective of humility, the other could see this as a lesson in pragmatism or strategic thinking. Instead of prescribing a single moral as a takeaway, educators should allow students to explore these differences, which will lead to the development of respect in students for diverse interpretations. As Smith (2020)

highlights, stories are not simply moralizing devices but spaces for intellectual and cultural negotiation.

In addition to supporting multicultural perspectives, withholding pre-set morals allows students to try their hand at ethical reasoning independently. When students are encouraged to come up with their moral insights from students, they become active participants in ethical reflection rather than being passive recipients of external judgements. Wood (2015) argues that such an approach develops critical thinking skills, which are crucial in a globalized world. Through this, students will be able to navigate complex, multicultural environments which is the need of the hour. This method also aligns with the cross-cultural education goals, which has its objective aimed at developing learners who can adapt and appreciate varied ethical frameworks without being confined to a singular worldview that is set by these pre-set morals.

Refraining from providing pre-set morals also ensures that students appreciate the nuances of conflict and decision-making. For example, in stories like "The Banyan Deer" in Jataka Tales and "The Foolish Lion and the Clever Rabbit" in Panchatantra, we can see that the characters face a moral dilemma with no clear right or wrong answer (Jones, 2016; Sharma, 2018), meaning the specificity of a solution isn't provided. If educators limit these stories to a single interpretation, they take off the ability of the narratives to provoke deeper questions about leadership, ethics and resilience. Instead, educators should promote discussion and debate which will help these stories to become powerful tools for teaching negotiation and empathy, which are important aspects in today's cross-cultural dialogues (O'Leary, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Aesop's Fables, the Panchatantra and the Jataka Tales, while rooted in distinct cultural traditions work the same way to offer profound insights about universal human experiences, particularly about power dynamics, ethical negotiations and survival. These ancient stories come with richness in moral complexity and adaptability, and they provide a valuable framework for cross-cultural understanding. This makes them highly relevant in today's multicultural society. These stories encourage deeper thinking in people about how individuals and communities can navigate diverse cultural norms and power structures. As we continue to live in an increasingly interconnected world, the lessons that can be derived from these ancient narratives can be applied to modern-day challenges as well, making these stories highly relevant to the contemporary set-up. By avoiding pre-set morals, educators can create a space for students to develop their interpretations, which develops their critical thinking and empathy, which are skills that are necessary for successful cross-cultural engagements. These stories, when used as open-ended learning tools, empower students to explore the complexity of human behaviour across cultures, thus preparing them to be adaptable, compassionate, and culturally aware global citizens. Ultimately, the wisdom that is contained in these timeless tales goes beyond geographical and temporal boundaries, which makes them invaluable tools for both personal growth and intercultural negotiation.

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EXPLORING THE FLUIDITY OF IDENTITY IN VIKRAM SETH'S MAJOR WORKS

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Abstract

The theme of identity is explored by Vikram Seth across his diverse body of work. Seth's treatment of identity in his four key works is explored in this essay. Each work addresses different dimensions of identity, whether shaped by tradition, culture, or personal relationships. Identity is explored through the tensions between tradition and personal desire in A Suitable Boy, set in post-independence India. The Golden Gate explores how personal and communal roles shape individuals' identities in a contemporary American culture. There's a deep connection between the protagonist's life and his music in An Equal Music. When it comes to figuring out who you are, Two Lives explores how migration, past trauma, and cross-cultural connections affect how you see yourself. Through these works, Seth portrays identity as fluid and evolving, shaped by various external and internal forces, highlighting the complexities of human experience.
Keywords: *identity, diverse, culture , communal ,protagonist , trauma.*

Introduction

Identity is a common and complex theme in literature that digs into the core of what it means to be human. Identity encompasses a multitude of dimensions, such as the social, political, cultural, and personal facets of an individual's self-concept. Identity is a common tool used by writers to explore difficult subjects including how one's sense of self is influenced by family, customs, society, gender, race, and historical context. Fictional characters often experience conflicts, metamorphoses, or identity crises that highlight the tension between their own wants and outside forces. In literature, questions of self-discovery, alienation, and belonging are frequently explored in relation to identity. The idea of hybrid identities is frequently covered in literature, especially in stories of immigrants and the diaspora. In the end, literature acts as a mirror for readers to consider their own identities and the factors that have shaped them. Authors challenge readers to consider how identity is created, how it is impacted by forces outside of their control, and how it might change over time by featuring characters with complex and conflicting identities.

Tradition, family, and culture have a major role in defining identity in one of Seth's most well-known works, A Suitable Boy. Lata Mehra and her family's quest for a "suitable" husband for her is the central theme of the post-independence Indian novel. However, the book goes much beyond this story to illustrate how cultural conventions and family expectations determine identity in great detail.

Lata, as a young woman navigating the conflicting demands of tradition and her own desires, becomes symbolic of the larger issues surrounding identity in India. Her family wants her to marry within their caste and religion, reflecting the cultural and social importance of maintaining identity through these ties. However, Lata's personal inclinations towards a Muslim boy, Kabir Durrani, belie these expectations.This tension between personal identity and social role is central to Lata's journey.

Seth also explores identity in post-colonial India, particularly the tension between tradition and modernity, with figures like Haresh Khanna

representing a modernised India with a focus on upward mobility and the removal of caste restrictions. Seth describes how new identities are forming in a rapidly changing society where old institutions like caste, religion and family still hold great power, but are also challenged by individual ambition and social mobility.

The Golden Gate, a novel written entirely in verse, reflects Seth's creative versatility. Set in San Francisco, the novel explores the lives of a group of friends and their personal and social identities. Through his character, Seth depicts a struggle between personal desires and social roles, in a completely different cultural context, like an appropriate boy. The protagonist John Brown is a prosperous expert, but he is deeply dissatisfied with his personal life. His character is heavily influenced by societal expectations as he struggles to reconcile professional success with personal dissatisfaction. Seth uses John's emotional and romantic journey as an example to show how personality can be shaped by outside pressures, even if those pressures are not explicitly expressed. For example, John and Liz's relationship shows how love and connection can bring out different aspects of a person's personality and sometimes lead to inner conflict. Seth also explores the concept of identity through relationships in Golden Gate. For example, another character, Phil, struggles with her identity as a Christian in a world that seems increasingly secular and indifferent to religious values. Her struggle highlights how religion and personal belief systems contribute to one's identity, especially when they conflict with the larger cultural environment. The novel also addresses issues of political identity, particularly through the character of Ed, an outspoken activist. His activism becomes a central part of his identity, influencing his personal relationships and his worldview. Seth shows how a strong alignment with a cause can both define

a person and alienate them to others who do not share the same opinions.

In equal music, the whole is paying attention to research on identity with the world of music, artistic expressions and emotional depth. The protagonist, Michael Holm, is a violinist, and his personality is focused on his music. For Michael, music is not just a profession, it is the essence of his existence, shaping how he sees himself and the world around him.Seth represents Michael's struggle with his emotional identity as he battles with his ex-lover, Julia McNichol, who also plays a key role in defining his sense of self. Their relationship is marked by passion and loss, and when they reunite, Michael's emotional turmoil becomes a reflection of his broken personality. His inability to let go of Julia and his obsession with their past romance show how relationships can shape and sometimes dominate a person's character. At the same time, the set depicts a crisis of identity that artists often face is the tension between personal satisfaction and professional success. Michael's attachment to music becomes both a source of comfort and suffering, since he constantly breaks between his love for his art and the personal sacrifices that he requires. Through Michael, Seth explores how artists define themselves through their work, which can lead to both personal enrichment and isolation. Furthermore, the novel highlights the difference between Michael and Julia's relationships with music, further highlighting the complexities of identity in an artistic context. Julia, who has lost her hearing, embodies the tension between personal and professional identity: her inability to hear becomes symbolic of the loss of a part of her identity that was once crucial to her self-conception.

Telling the story of Seth's great-uncle Shanti and great-aunt Henny, the biographical work "Two Lives" explores the theme of identity through the lenses of history, culture and migration. The book spans

continents and decades, tracing the couple's lives against the backdrop of the tumultuous 20th century, including World War II and its aftermath. Shanti, an Indian woman who goes to study in Europe and ends up marrying Henny, a German Jew, embodies the complexities of diaspora identity. His sense of self is shaped by his experiences as a foreigner in England and Germany. As an indian in a white predominance society, Shanti's identity is constantly evolving - it must navigate in the intersections of race, culture and history to define itself. Henny's identity, on the other hand, is marked by her experiences during the Holocaust. As a Jewish woman, her sense of self is deeply affected by the trauma of losing her family to the war and the anti-Semitism she faced. His relationship between affection and united Shanti reflects the difficulties in interruption between different cultures and the problem of maintaining the united identity facing such historical and personal tragedy. Through two lives, the whole is explored how the search for displacement, movement, and belonging affects personality. The couple's relationship becomes a metaphor for larger themes of cultural and diaspora identity as they struggle to reconcile their personal pasts with their shared present, and Seth's sensitive portrait of their lives underscores the idea that identity is not static, but evolves over time, shaped by personal experiences and historical events.

One of the key lessons we can take from the exploration of identity in Seth's work is the idea that identity is fluid and multifaceted. His characters are often caught between multiple identities cultural, emotional and professional – and their journeys are marked by a constant process of self-discovery and redefinition.In A Suitable Boy, Lata's character develops as he juggles his personal desires with familial and societal expectations. In Golden Gate, John and his friends face the intersection of personal and social identities as they attempt to balance their professional lives and emotional needs. In Equal Music, Michael's identity is inextricably linked to his artistic expression, but he also faces the challenge of reconciling his past relationships with his present self. Finally, in Two Lives, Shanti and Henny's identities are shaped by historical and cultural forces beyond their control, highlighting the impact of external events on personal identity.Seth's nuanced portrayal of identity reflects the complexity of human experience. There are no easy answers or clearly defined characteristics: instead, his work shows that identity is a dynamic, evolving process that is shaped by many factors, including family, community, culture, history and personal relationships. In the world of set, identity is not something that can be easily categorized or limited: it is an ever-shifting construct that one must navigate throughout one's life.

Conclusion

The exploration of identity in Vikram Seth's work represents a deep, nuanced and multifaceted understanding of what it means to be an individual navigating complex cultural, social and personal contexts. In his novels A Suitable Boy, The Golden Gate, Equal Music and Two Lives, Seth explores the various ways in which identity is shaped, challenged and transformed by external influences such as family, tradition, societal and historical events, as well as inner desires, aspirations and emotional difficulties. One of the central themes that appears in Seth's work is the tension between individual identity and societal expectations: in A Supreme Boy, Lata Mehra's path to self-discovery is inextricably bound up with her family's expectations and the broader cultural traditions of post-independent India. The conflict between personal choice and societal norms is one that Seth explores in great depth, showing how people must overcome these pressures to construct their own identities. Similarly, in Golden Gate , John and his friends face the challenge of reconciling their

professional and personal lives, reflecting a more modern, urban struggle between individual desires and societal roles. Seth also highlights the role of relationships in shaping identity. Whether it's Lata's bond with Kabir in A Suitable Boy, Michael's lingering feelings for Julia in Equal Music, or Shanti's bond with Henny in Two Lives, relationships serve as a mirror through which characters come to understand themselves. These personal connections not only define how the characters see themselves, but also influence the choices they make and their sense of belonging in the world. Furthermore, Seth's work emphasizes the fluidity of identity. His characters are not confined to fixed roles or static definitions: rather, they evolve, adapt and redefine themselves each time they encounter a new experience or challenge. This is especially evident in "Two Lives," where Shanti and Henny must navigate the intersections of race, culture, and history to find identity in a foreign land. Their story emphasizes that identity is shaped not only by personal experience, but also by larger historical and cultural forces beyond our control. Essentially, Seth describes identity as a dynamic, evolving process, with his characters constantly introspecting, questioning their place in the world, and negotiating the boundaries between their personal desires and external expectations. Through this, Seth offers a universal message about the complexities of identity in a globalized world: identity is not something static or easily categorized, but a fluid and ever-changing construct shaped by a variety of factors. In this way, Seth's interpretation of identity resonates with readers as it reflects the universal human experience of searching for self-understanding in a complex and interconnected world. His work reminds us that identity is not a destination, but a journey marked by constant change, growth and reinvention.

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HYBRID IDENTITY AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION: A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S NOVELS

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Abstract
Cultural assimilation and identity issues are themes that are often dealt with in postcolonial literature and it reflects vividly the complex nature and experiences of an immigrant. This paper analyzes how Khaled Hosseini's novels represent the process of cultural assimilation and identity through the lens of Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity. The paper conducts a qualitative analysis of the novels, The Kite Runner, A Thousand Splendid Suns, and And the Mountains Echoed. This analysis reveals that Hosseini's characters often experience a hybrid identity, which is neither fully assimilated nor entirely disconnected from their roots. This serves as a place of both conflict and possibility, and it highlights the complexities of trasversing between cultures. This study focuses on the identity formation in the diaspora using the novels of Khaled Hosseini, and contributes to postcolonial literature.
Keywords: *postcolonialism, hybridity, identity, cultural assimilation, khaled hosseini*

Introduction

In an era, where global narratives are dominated by the themes of displacement and migration, there is a more pressing need to focus on the cultural identity that is formed as a result. The cultural identity thus formed carries the traits of the new culture and that of the native. This paper examines how cultural assimilation shapes the identities of individuals who are caught between native culture and the adopted one, and it also focuses on how these individuals navigate hybrid identities, neither fully adopting the new culture, nor fully assimilated into the new culture.

Khaled Hosseini's novels, *The Kite Runner, A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *And the Mountains Echoed* offer a profound insight into the immigrant experiences. His characters often struggle with distorted identities, and their experiences resonate with many around the globe.

While much attention has been paid to themes of migration, redemption, loss and exile, not much focus has been extended to the negotiation of identity due to cultural assimilation. This paper seeks to address this gap by examining the characters sense of self through the lens of Homi Bhabha's theory of Cultural Hybridity.

This paper argues that Hosseini's characters experience cultural assimilation in such a way that they develop fluid, hybrid identities that defy the idea of belonging. In the globalised world, it is quite essential to understand how identities are shaped due to cultural assimilation, as millions navigate the complexities of belonging to multiple cultures.

Literature Review

This literature review seeks to provide an overview of the existing research on cultural assimilation and identity in the context of diaspora literature. This may

be achieved by examining key theoretical frameworks and it would also identify how Hosseini's work fits into existing discussions of cultural hybridity.

Sanjana Reka and Jim Louis Haisler (2023) in their study portray the challenges faced by the second-generation Indian Americans and they also elucidate on the complexities of cultural assimilation. The study also suggests that supportive measures need to be taken to help in their identity formation. Yog Raj Paudel (2023) through his analysis of Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim* focuses on themes of cultural assimilation through a postcolonial lens. Jane Ohlmeyer (2023) in her study pays attention to women and their experiences in colonial Ireland and the role they play in the context of assimilation. Vinita Sharma (2023) in her study analyses the challenges faced by women in diaspora literature, and the complex interplay of cultural identity and gender, particularly through the character of Mrs. Sen. Iqbal, Muhammad, Umair Ahmed Khan, and Shozab Ali Raza Abbasi (2023) in this study pay attention to cultural assimilation, Third Space identity, and the identity crisis faced by the protagonist of the novel "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" through a postcolonial perspective.

Matenova Ayjamal (2024) in his study presents a clear analysis of the themes of memory, identity and love, which often overlap and offer a precise reflection on the conditions of humans as portrayed in Khaled Hosseini's "*The Kite Runner" and "A Thousand Splendid Suns."* Muhammad Asif (2024) in his paper states that the novel, *'A Thousand Splendid Suns',* excellently brings out the struggles faced by Afghan women in a patriarchal society dominated by men. Maghfirotul, Ula and Zuhrul Anam (2024) explore the theme of multiculturalism in "*The Kite Runner*", and especially the relationship between the two main characters who belong to different ethnic backgrounds.

In this connection, the paper examines the complex nature of cultural assimilation and identity formation which are fluid and hybrid in nature.

Theoretical Framework

In order to examine the themes of cultural assimilation and identity struggles of Hosseini's characters, this study adopts Homi Bhabha's theory of Hybridity. The concept of Hybridity is one of the key components of postcolonial theory. It explores how characters in diaspora settings form new identities in the 'in-between' spaces of different cultures. This theory provides a lens to analyze how characters, caught between different cultures, construct hybrid identities that challenge ideas of belonging to a singular culture.

The concept of Hybridity refers to the blending of different cultures, identities etc., thereby forming a new culture. It also states that identity is fluid as it keeps changing and is never fixed. Such an identity carries the traits of both the cultures. Mimicry, the other concept, is the imitation of dominant culture, habit and behaviours. The characters in the novels chosen for exploration are coerced to at least partially imitate the norms of the dominant culture, which in turn places them in an ambivalent situation,- that causes them to both fear and desire these norms..

The concept of Third Space is a unique space where cultures negotiate and new hybrid identities are formed, and this allows cultural innovation. It is a space where both the cultures interact and the marginalized find their voice and they are able to express themselves freely without any form of hindrance.

In applying the Theory of Hybridity, the paper examines how characters reflect the complexities of hybrid identities. The fluid nature of their identities, which is never constant and ever adaptive, resonates with Bhabha's view that cultural identity is never fixed but constantly negotiated. The theory also aids in the

analysis of how these characters resist static binaries and embrace dynamic adaptiveness. The study also seeks to uncover the ways in which they reflect the tension between cultural assimilation and self-identity, thus offering new insights into the complexities of cultural hybridity in diaspora literature.

Methodology

This study makes use of a qualitative approach, and it focuses on textual analysis of the novels. A close reading of the text is important to find the ways in which characters negotiate their identity. The primary method employed for research is thematic analysis, which is a technique to identify and understand recurring themes in a text. The novels selected for analysis are: *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*. Passages from the novels were analysed to understand representations of hybrid identities, and focused on internal struggles and external pressures experienced by the characters. Bhabha's theory of Hybridity is used for the thematic analysis. The concept of 'Third Space' is utilized to understand characters' actions and internal struggles.

Analysis / Discussion

The first novel written by Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*, touches upon the life of Amir, a young boy from a wealthy family in Kabul, Afghanistan. The novel is set against the backdrop of political unrest in Afghanistan, and it explores various themes such as, betrayal, guilt, loyalty, and redemption, along with the process of identity formation as the novel unfolds.

During the course of the novel, the protagonist, Amir, struggles with various aspects of his identity. He happens to be a Pashtun, whereas his friend and loyal servant is a Hazara. His prejudices and his father's expectations towards him shape his identity in the early days of his life. Since, his father always praises Hassan for his courage and loyalty, Amir betrays him. But when the reality that Hassan is his half-brother dawns upon him, the discovery forces him to confront his hybrid identity as both a Pashtun and a Hazara. When he moves to the US he succeeds as a writer which shows his readiness to form a new identity and reflects a process of cultural assimilation.

On the other hand, Baba, Amir's father, resists American culture. He is a courageous, benevolent and popular man in Afghanistan, who struggles with the loss of status and identity after moving to the United States, where he is forced to work as a gas station attendant. He refuses to fully assimilate into the new culture because of his deep-rooted attachment to his traditional values and customs. However, he negotiates between the two worlds when he praises Amir for his success as a writer.

We have one more interesting character in the novel named Sohrab, Hassan's son, who presents a different side to cultural assimilation when he is brought to America after his stay in Afghanistan under the Taliban rule. He suffers from the abuse and trauma that he had experienced and the sense of displacement from his homeland creates a sense of alienation. His inability to assimilate portrays Amir's own struggles with his hybrid identity.

The second novel of Khaled Hosseini is *A Thousand Splendid Suns* spans over three decades of Afghan history. It focuses on the interdependent lives of two women, Mariam and Laila, and the way in which their lives are shaped. This novel is set against the backdrop of Afghanistan's changing political landscape.

The women protagonist, Mariam, is identified as an illegitimate child and this identity shapes her existence. She is made to feel unworthy by everyone around her, especially by her mother and her husband. When she is married to Rasheed, against her will, her identity further degenerates. This shapes her sense of self and she becomes susceptible to exploitation and abuse. Laila's entry in the house

reclaims Mariam's sense of self and purpose, and her act of killing her husband to save the girl is an assertion of her identity.

Laila, on the other hand, values education just like her father, and she comes from a progressive family unlike Mariam. Her identity is that of a modern woman of liberal values which is contradictory to her traditional culture that dominates most of her country. Her marriage to Rasheed forces her to assimilate into the traditional role of a wife and her identity is reshaped. Her escape from the gruesome marriage and her final escape to Pakistan along with Tariq allows her to lead a freer life, but, when she decides to return to Kabul after the Taliban rule, she portrays her complex identity. She exhibits traits of cultural assimilation and identity formation.

Rasheed, the husband of Mariam and Laila, represent the traditional values of Afghanistan. Rasheed has the identity of a man with patriarchial values, and he sees women as subservient to him and he considers them as son-bearing machines. He imposes his authority over the two women and resorts to physical abuse. This fixation to retain his identity leads to his downfall.

Throughout this novel, gender plays a pivotal role in shaping of the identities of the characters. The two women protagonists, Mariam and Laila, experience harsh realities of surviving in a society where women are identified by their relationships to men. The political turmoil intensifies this oppression. However, their relationship helps them to redefine their identities. Their solidarity grows strong and provides Mariam with the strength to reclaim her identity after several years of abuse and subjugation.

The third novel by Khaled Hosseini, *And the Mountains Echoed*, explores various themes such as family, love, sacrifice, and separation. This novel opens with a father, Saboor, narrating a story to Abdullah and Pari, his children, about a farmer who sacrifices his favorite son to save his family from a terrible life. This reflects Saboor's decision to sell his beloved daughter, Pari, to a childless couple in Kabul.

Pari is taken to Paris from Kabul after being adopted by Nila Wahdati, a sophisticated and unconventional poet who is materialistic in the former's immersion into the Western culture, disconnected from her Afghan roots. Her sense of identity is shaped by the dominant culture. This happens due to her foster mother, who gets assimilated into Parisian society and raises her without a connection with the Afghan roots. However, the girl always has a sense of something missing in her life, which portrays her disconnection from her indigenous heritage. When the girl learns about her past, she embarks on a journey to discover her roots. This search for identity highlights the strain between her French upbringing and her Afghan origins.

Abdullah grows up in Afghanistan, and his identity is shaped by the bond that he has with his sister and the traumatic separation that follows. He holds onto the memory of his sister, carrying the scar of their separation even after moving to America, where he builds a new life as a restaurant owner in California. He names his daughter Pari, in honor of his sister. Though, he voluntarily assimilates into American culture, his identity remains attached to the past and the loss of his sister. This indicates that even cultural assimilation cannot wipe out the impact of his Afghan heritage and personal history.

Conclusion

Thus, all these novels provide us with the instances where characters undergo cultural assimilation and their identity gets shaped due to this. They are caught between two worlds which makes a few characters consider as a loss of identity while others take it in their stride and face the odds. The commonality here is that the novels represent the complex and fluid natures of cultural assimilation.

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CONFLICT AND CONVERGENCE IN IDENTITY FORMATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *THE CIRCLE* BY DAVE EGGERS AND *THE BRIEF WONDROUS LIFE OF OSCAR WAO* BY JUNOT DÍAZ

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Abstract

This paper examines the problems of conflict and convergence concerning identity through the comparative study of Dave Eggers's The Circle and Junot DiazsThe Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao. Moved to the realms of heightened personal spheres and the sea of globalisation, both narratives show how people's identities are formed and filled with images from society. The requisite conflict between self and society remains delicate in both. In The Circle, Mae Holland's arcs depict how self-determination can contend with an all-seeing empire in surveillance culture, which eventually induces dissonance – someone gets lost in who they are. On the other hand, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao offers a new frontier of culture to cross into as within Oscar de Leon, a cultural dichotomy of being Dominican and American comes as one historical short after another through time's legacies. At a broader level, these texts characterize identity formation that incorporates both conflict and convergence, given globalisation. The need to defend and liberate ourselves turns out to be pertinent and overlapping red threads in contemporary literature. In this case, the analysis draws attention to the proposition that new technologies or cultural exchanges bring specific changes to the existing types of identity. Therefore, contemporary literature can be a follow-up or a preview.
Keywords: *technology, self – identity, globalisation*

Introduction

The 21st century has brought about significant sweeping changes in technology and globalisation that have changed individual and group identities. The change is also captured in literature set during the time or focuses on such complexities as in Eggers's The Circle or Diaz's Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao. The Circle deals with the problems of modern surveillance and the loss of privacy in a fashionable way through social networks. The opposites are illustrated in The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao when the story is about immigration and identity formation through the distorting lenses of history and culture. These texts highlight the complexities of technology and globalisation as factors of identity construction, depicting the tension and homogeneity of modern experiences.

Literature Review

The current body of knowledge regarding the relationship between technology, globalisation, and identifying oneself in the modern world considers these aspects interrelated. It has been shown, for instance, that the use of digital technologies undermines one's identity and leads to a fragmented self-conception in the virtual world (Hamid, 2022). This is different from the studies of globalisation, where it is argued that the exchange of cultures and movements of people makes the idea of identity, as we know it, redundant (Saez 2011). Scholars, too, have studied how migration, alongside the

glorification of a nation via its founding myths, produces what has been termed 'chronotypes of displaced images.' in the study. However, there is also a need for deeper explanations that relate these aspects more directly to the texts of today's literature. This paper sets out to fill this lacuna by examining books like The Circle by Dave Eggers and The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Diaz, which stress the issues of identity within such a socio-political milieu.

The Illusion of Connection: Identity and Surveillance in The Circle

Dave Eggers paints a terrifying picture of a world entirely consumed by technology in his novel *The Circle*. In this world, the boundaries that separate one's private self and the portion available to the public are irrevocably broken. The story's protagonist is Mae Holland, a young woman who, over time, gets increasingly involved with a large technology company named The Circle, which adheres to the values of sharing everything and everyone is connected. However, as Mae advances in the company, she becomes more aware of the effect of such a lucid digital life where nothing goes undetected and everything is documented.

They focused on the role of surveillance simultaneously and critically in contemporary society, which is what eminently forwards Eggers, especially dreads about present-day technological advancements. The Circle bears the war cry many people wish to forget: *'Secrets are lies,'* where total abstinence from privacy is perceived as a virtue. This process of transformation that takes place in Mae reveals the risk that comes with this compulsion of entertaining Being in the Now syndrome, which requires people to be seen at all times. For us, when Mae told that it is an achievement that should be academia Live her life, she states I had to be a part of everything; I had to be seen, and I had to see: This

is because of her increasing need to be one of them which is the purpose exemplifying why and how much the human race has come to accept and internalize being connected fully.

Furthermore, the company's innovative technology, such as the See Change cameras that allow real-time surveillance, exemplifies the invasive nature of technological advancement. Mae's increasing participation in these practices leads to a moral conflict as she witnesses how the loss of privacy affects her relationships. In a poignant moment, she realizes, *"I was not Mae Holland anymore. I was the Circle." (citation?)* This transformation signifies the extent to which the corporation has subsumed its identity, raising questions about authenticity in a digital age. Eggers also explores the consequences of a society driven by social media, where validation is sought through likes and shares. Mae's initial thrill at gaining followers eventually leads to a hollow sense of fulfillment. Reflecting on her interactions, she muses, *"It felt so good to be known. However, somehow, I felt so… alone." (citation?)* This contradiction captures the irony of technology: while it creates a façade of connection, it can lead to profound isolation. Kalden's character serves as a counterpoint to Mae's trajectory, embodying the critical perspective on the Circle's ideology. Kalden warns Mae of the dangers of total transparency, stating, "What you are doing is not good for you or anyone else." His character highlights the ethical dilemmas surrounding technology and the loss of individual agency. As Mae becomes more entrenched in the Circle, she disregards his warnings, illustrating the allure of technological advancement and the sacrifices made for it. *The Circle* critiques the notion that connectivity equates to authenticity. Eggers suggests that the relentless pursuit of transparency can lead to a homogenized identity devoid of depth and personal history. The novel serves as a cautionary tale,

warning against the dangers of a society prioritizing surveillance over individuality and connection over authenticity. Through Mae's journey, Eggers invites readers to reflect on their relationship with technology and its implications on their identities.

Cultural Heritage and Identity: The Legacy of the Fukú in The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

Junot Díaz's The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao intricately weaves the themes of diaspora, cultural identity, and historical narrative into a rich tapestry that reflects the complexities of the immigrant experience. The novel follows the life of Oscar de León, a Dominican-American nerd who struggles with his identity and a sense of belonging amid the weight of his family's history. Through Oscar's journey, Díaz explores how cultural heritage, historical trauma, and the quest for personal identity intersect in a globalized world.

At the heart of the narrative is the concept of the "fukú," a curse believed to afflict Oscar's family. This metaphorical curse serves as a representation of the historical legacies that shape the characters' identities. Díaz writes, *"Fukú, the curse of the New World, has been in our family for generations."* This recurring motif emphasizes that identity is not just a personal construct but is deeply influenced by historical and cultural forces. The weight of the fukú reflects the struggles Oscar and his family faced, linking their present experiences to the historical trauma of the Dominican Republic's past.

Oscar's obsession with science fiction and fantasy literature acts as a coping mechanism, allowing him to escape the harsh realities of his life. He often finds solace in these alternate worlds, which offer him a sense of agency that he struggles to achieve in his life. Díaz writes, *"He was the kind of kid who couldnot tell if he was a nerd or a geek."* This internal conflict illustrates Oscar's struggle to reconcile his passions with societal expectations, highlighting the broader theme of cultural dislocation. His identity is multifaceted, influenced by his Dominican heritage, his love for American pop culture, and the challenges of fitting into both worlds.

The narrative structure reflects identity's complexities as Díaz shifts between different perspectives and timelines. This non-linear storytelling emphasizes the fragmented nature of identity in a diasporic context. For instance, the voice of Yunior, Oscar's love interest and the narrator, provides an outsider's perspective on Oscar's life, revealing both admiration and critique. Yunior observes, *"You think you can just go through life and not be affected by the history that came before you?" (citation?)* This statement underscores the significance of historical context in shaping personal identity and reinforces the idea that individual experiences are inextricably linked to collective histories.

Furthermore, the theme of belonging permeates the novel as Oscar navigates the challenges of being a Dominican-American. He grapples with feelings of inadequacy and alienation, especially in his interactions with peers. Oscar's love for Ybón, a beautiful Dominican woman, represents his longing for acceptance and validation. Díaz poignantly illustrates this yearning when he writes*, "He had to find a way to be in the world, to be a real man." (citation?)* Oscar's struggle reflects the societal pressures that dictate notions of masculinity and identity, especially within the context of immigrant experiences.

Ultimately, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao portrays the complexities of identity formation in a globalized world, emphasizing the interplay of personal desires and cultural expectations. Through Oscar's journey, Díaz illustrates that identity is a fluid construct shaped by historical narratives, cultural heritage, and individual aspirations. The novel serves as a powerful commentary on the immigrant

experience, reminding readers that understanding one's identity involves grappling with the legacies of the past while forging a path for the future.

Contrasting Identities: The Impact of Technology and Globalisation in *The Circle* and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

When comparing The Circle and The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, it becomes evident that technology and globalisation influence identity formation in distinct yet interrelated ways. In The Circle, technology emerges as a constraining force that manipulates identity, while in The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, globalisation presents opportunities and challenges for self-discovery.

In The Circle, Mae Holland's journey illustrates how technological advancement can lead to a loss of agency and individuality. As a tech company, The Circle promotes a culture of total transparency, where sharing personal experiences is encouraged and required. This is epitomized in Mae's experience with the company's motto, *"Secrets are lies."* As she becomes increasingly absorbed in the company's ethos, she loses touch with her authentic self, culminating in a profound sense of isolation. Mae's transformation is marked by her realization: *"I was not Mae Holland anymore. I was the Circle."* This statement underscores the extent to which the corporation has subsumed itsidentity, raising questions about authenticity in a digital age.

In stark contrast, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao presents a narrative where globalisation facilitates cultural hybridity and resilience. Oscar de León, as a Dominican-American, grapples with his identity amid the legacy of the fukú—a curse that haunts his family due to historical traumas. Oscar's journey reflects the complexities of navigating multiple cultural identities as he oscillates between his Dominican heritage and his American surroundings. Also, internal conflict highlights the fluidity of identity in a globalized context, where individuals often embody multiple cultural influences.

Moreover, the two narratives diverge in their portrayal of societal expectations. In The Circle, Mae is pressured to conform to a monolithic identity shaped by the tech company's ideals. The need for constant visibility leads to a superficial existence, where genuine connections are sacrificed for likes and shares. Mae's friends become extensions of her online persona rather than authentic relationships. In contrast, Oscar's experiences reveal the richness that can emerge from cultural diversity. His love for Ybón, a Dominican woman, represents his desire for connection and belonging. Oscar's quest for self-definition is symbolic of the immigrant experience, where navigating cultural expectations can lead to profound personal growth.

Together, these texts highlight the multifaceted nature of identity in a globalized world. While technology in The Circle homogenizes experiences, fostering a culture of surveillance and conformity, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao illustrates how cultural diversity can foster richness and complexity in identity formation. Oscar's journey of self-discovery amid the challenges of diaspora serves as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, suggesting that external forces do not merely shape identity but are also a dynamic process of negotiation and redefinition.

The contrasting experiences of Mae and Oscar offer valuable insights into how technology and globalisation influence identity. The Circle is a cautionary tale about the potential dangers of a tech-driven society that prioritizes connectivity over individuality. At the same time, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao celebrates the complexities and richness of identity forged through cultural exchange and historical legacy. These narratives contribute to a deeper understanding of identity in an increasingly interconnected world.

Conflict and Convergence: Navigating Identity in The Circle and The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

The Circle and The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao present intricate themes of conflict and convergence in forming identity. In Eggers' narrative, the primary conflict arises from the tension between personal autonomy and societal expectations shaped by technology. Mae Holland's journey within the Circle exemplifies this struggle. As she becomes increasingly enmeshed in the company's culture of surveillance and transparency, she grapples with losing her individuality. The mantra "Secrets are lies" encapsulates her conflict, as her desire for authenticity clashes with the pressure to conform to the company's ideals. This creates a profound inner turmoil, evident in Mae's realization and her transformation highlights the dangers of surrendering personal identity to societal demands, emphasizing the conflict between maintaining one's selfhood and succumbing to external pressures.

In The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Junot Díaz portrays the convergence of cultures as characters navigate their identities amidst historical and cultural influences. The concept of the fukú serves as a backdrop, illustrating how Oscar's family history and the broader Dominican experience shape their identities. The fukú, described as "*the curse of the New World,"* signifies the weight of historical trauma and cultural heritage that the characters must confront. Oscar's identity is marked by the legacy of his family's struggles and aspirations, reflecting a complex interplay of cultural influences. Díaz's writing emphasizes the convergence of personal and collective histories, suggesting that individual identities are formed by synthesizing cultural narratives.

Moreover, the dynamic interplay of conflict and convergence illustrates the broader implications of technology and globalisation on contemporary identities. In The Circle, the conflict is primarily driven by technology's invasive nature, which seeks to standardize identities through constant visibility. Mae's journey reflects a societal shift towards a homogenized identity, where individuality is sacrificed for connectivity. In contrast, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao embraces cultural diversity to enrich identity. Oscar's love for Ybón, a Dominican woman, serves as a conduit for understanding and acceptance, showcasing how cultural convergence can foster resilience. His desire to find a way to belong—"He had to find a way to be in the world, to be a real man"—reflects a personal and collective struggle as he seeks to reconcile his Dominican heritage with his American identity.

The conflict and convergence within these narratives suggest that the quest for self-understanding is marked by both struggle and synthesis. While technology in The Circle creates barriers to authentic self-expression, the cultural richness of The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao illustrates how embracing one's heritage can lead to a more nuanced understanding of identity. These texts illuminate the complexities of navigating identity in a globalized world, where conflict and convergence shape the individual's journey toward self-discovery.

Conclusion

In conclusion, The Circle and The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao present intricate themes of conflict and convergence that reveal the complexities of identity formation in our modern world. Both narratives highlight how individuals navigate their identities amidst external pressures, illustrating the multifaceted interplay between societal demands and personal aspirations. In The Circle, the conflict emerges from Mae Holland's struggle against the invasive nature of technology that seeks to standardize and control her identity. The relentless push for transparency and visibility leads to an erosion of individuality, prompting Mae to confront the

moral implications of sacrificing her privacy for social acceptance. This struggle encapsulates the tension between personal autonomy and societal expectations, illustrating how technology can create barriers to authentic self-expression. Conversely, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao portrays a convergence of cultural influences that enrich Oscar de León's identity. His journey as a Dominican American navigating the complexities of diaspora reveals the resilience required to forge a cohesive sense of self amidst historical legacies. The fukúis a powerful reminder of how personal identity is intertwined with collective histories, highlighting the significance of cultural narratives in shaping individual experiences. These texts underscore that the quest for identity is marked by both struggle and synthesis. While The Circle illustrates the conflict inherent in a hyper-connected society, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao celebrates the potential for convergence that cultural hybridity offers. The dynamic interplay between conflict and convergence highlights the ongoing evolution of identity in response to the challenges posed by technological advancement and globalisation. As we navigate an increasingly interconnected world, these narratives' themes of conflict and convergence remain profoundly relevant. Future research could explore additional literary works that address these themes, further illuminating the complexities of identity formation in the context of modernity. By broadening the scope of inquiry, we can deepen our understanding of how individuals reconcile their personal identities with the collective histories and societal pressures that shape their experiences.

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GENDER DYNAMICS IN SELECT CONTEMPORARY PICTURE BOOKS

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Abstract

This paper examines gender dynamics in contemporary children's picture books, highlighting their significant role in shaping perceptions of gender roles among young readers. Traditionally, children's literature has perpetuated stereotypes, with male characters depicted as adventurous and female characters as nurturing. However, recent shift in the contemporary children's book reflect move toward empowerment and egalitarianism. The analysis focuses on three selected works: My Grandmother Can't Cook by Indu Balachandran, which challenges the stereotype of grandmothers as expert cooks; Asha the Auto-Driver by Aruna Shekar, which features a female protagonist thriving in a male-dominated profession; and The Boy Who Wore Bangles by Riddhi Maniar Doda, which explores gender identity and self-expression. These stories collectively promote diverse representations and challenge traditional gender norms, encouraging children to embrace their identities and pursue their passions without societal constraints. Showcasing strong characters and redefining gender roles in contemporary picture books plays a crucial role in fostering acceptance and empowerment among young readers.

Children's picture book plays a vital role in gender socialisation among children. "Gender is a social structure, a set of social practices that shape our identities and relationships" (Connell). Gender dynamics in children's literature reflect broader societal norms and values, and they play a significant role in shaping children's perceptions of gender roles and identities. Traditionally, many children's books have perpetuated stereotypical gender roles, with boys often portrayed as adventurous, active, and brave, and girls being depicted as nurturing, passive, and focused on domestic activities. However, there has been a significant shift in recent years.

Historically, Picture books portrayed women as fragile and weak-minded and most often underscored feminine beauty, instead of giving women an identity. Initially picture books used to limit female voices. Women lacked agency and failed to raise their voices against the problem. Many classic stories featured male protagonists, sidelining female characters or giving them secondary roles. This perpetuated the idea that boys' experiences were more valuable or universal. But currently, contemporary picture books focus on the empowerment of female characters. There has been a notable increase in strong, independent female protagonists who challenge stereotypes. The contemporary picture books engage in reshaping gender stereotypes, defying gender roles and moving towards the portrayal of egalitarian gender roles in their stories. Books featuring girls in leadership roles, engaging in adventures or pursuing careers are becoming more common. Modern literature also depicts boys in more nuanced ways, allowing them to express emotions, pursue non-traditional interests and embrace vulnerability. Contemporary picture books are paving the way for feminist characters. The stories break the limitations of gender roles by portraying strong and unconventional female leads. The contemporary picture book authors focus on gender equality and the empowering of their protagonists. There's a growing recognition of non-binary and LGBTQ+

identities in children's literature, with stories that include diverse gender expressions and relationships, helping to normalize these identities for young readers. Many contemporary authors are exploring the intersection of gender with race, class, and culture, creating richer, more diverse narratives that reflect the complexities of real life. This paper will explore the gender dynamics in three contemporary picture books namely, *My Grandmother Can't Cook* by Indu Balachandran, *Asha, the Auto-driver* by Aruna Shekar and *The Boy Who Wore Bangles* by Riddhi Maniar Doda.

My Grandmother Can't Cook by Indu Balachandran is an unconventional book which breaks the stereotype that all grandmothers are excellent cooks. Unlike the stereotypical grandmothers, Neil, the protagonist of this story is not excited about his grandmother's cooking. He goes to any extent to save his friends from his grandmother's cooking. The 'Paati' in the story attempts to cook traditional Indian and contemporary western dishes but never succeeds. This book makes the readers realize that grandmothers need not be expert cooks. This book makes the readers to question the non-participative grandfathers, who have never been subjected to cooking, while grandmothers have always been restricted and confined within the kitchen. This book normalizes the fact that like grandfathers, grandmothers too can live without mastering the art of cooking. The idea that women should cook is a traditional gender stereotype that has been challenged in this story and it also makes the readers realize that "Patriarchy has no gender. It's a system that restricts all of us, but women are often confined to its domestic expectations." (Hooks). Both men and women need not be skilled and passionate cooks, and the responsibility of cooking can be shared, based on personal preferences and circumstances. This book highlights the fact that it' is important to recognize the versatility of cooking

abilities in individuals, including grandmothers. While the stereotypical image of a grandmother often includes being a skilled and seasoned cook, "All grandmothers can cook, Neil!" (16), the reality is that people can have diverse talents, preferences, and experiences. Not everyone has a natural interest or passion for cooking. Some individuals may prefer other activities or may not have developed culinary skills over the course of their lives. Culinary traditions and roles within a family can vary across cultures. In some families, the responsibility for cooking may be shared among family members, and not all grandmothers may have been the primary cooks in their households.

Asha the auto-driver by Aruna Shekar serves as yet another powerful narrative that breaks gender stereotypes. In a profession often dominated by men, Asha stands out not just for her skilful driving, but for her fearless approach to challenging societal norms. As Sheryl Sandberg opines, "In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders", (citation ??) Asha does not stand out as a women auto driver, instead she shines in her profession. Asha takes pride in her job, proving that women can thrive in any field. She inspires other women in her community to pursue their dreams, be it driving, entrepreneurship, or any other career path. Through her interactions with passengers, Asha fosters connections and builds a sense of community. She shares stories of her journey, encouraging women to support each other and pursue their aspirations, no matter what the obstacles are. This book presents empowerment through work. Asha faces challenges head-on, whether it's dealing with difficult passengers or navigating societal expectations. Her resilience highlights that women can be both strong and nurturing, reshaping perceptions about femininity. By openly discussing her experiences, Asha serves as a role model, showing that it's possible to carve out one's own path. She participates in local events and

workshops, sharing her expertise and empowering others to break free from traditional roles. Asha Challenges the traditional role by taking on a profession typically dominated by men. She defies societal expectations that women should be confined to domestic roles or traditional female jobs. Her character presents empowerment through independence. Asha's choice to drive an auto reflects her desire for financial independence, demonstrating that women can be self-sufficient and pursue careers in non-traditional fields.

*The Boy Who Wore Bangles*by Riddhi Maniar Doda is a touching story that explores themes of gender identity, societal expectations, and self-expression. The narrative typically centres around a boy who, despite societal norms, chooses to wear bangles, which is considered to be a traditionally feminine accessory. This book challenges gender norms. The boy's choice to wear bangles defies traditional expectations of masculinity, showcasing how societal norms can be restrictive and arbitrary "Gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original" (Butler). Wearing bangles becomes a form of self-expression for the boy, highlighting the importance of being true to oneself despite external pressures. The reactions of family and peers can vary, reflecting broader societal attitudes. "I want to wear bangles like Riya… and papa won't let me" (9). (Complete the sentence… in what contet was this said by the boy??? Does he have a name???) The story often touches on acceptance and understanding within families. The boy's journey embodies courage as he navigates his identity in a world that often punishes deviation from the norm. The narrative encourages readers to empathize with those who may not conform to traditional gender roles, fostering a message of acceptance and love.

This story is a powerful reminder of the importance of allowing individuals, regardless of gender, to express themselves freely and authentically.

"One is not born, but becomes a woman" (Beauvoir).

Thus, exposure to diverse representations can help children understand and express their own identities, fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance. The above discussed books that challenge traditional gender roles can empower children to break free from societal expectations, encouraging them to pursue their passions regardless of gender.

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BAITED BETRAYALS IN SAVI SHARMA'S
STORIES WE NEVER TELL

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Abstract

Betrayal shows disloyalty towards an individual, institution or society. An individual may face many betrayals which challenge one's self-identity. It is the interpersonal relationship that contributes self-confidence in identity formation. When an individual is betrayed by another, it taunts the individual and affects self-progression. This paper analyses the factors that lead to the identity crisis in the protagonists of the select novel, through the lens of Identity Oriented Psychotrauma Theory (IoPT) developed by Dr. Franz Ruppert. As a social media influencer, the novel's female protagonist, Jhanvi, faces numerous betrayals in her life. With each betrayal, she looks for substitute identities and dissolves her original identity in the process. The male protagonist, Ashray, gets betrayed by his parents and is left as an orphan. His girlfriend betrays him, and he also loses his Maa (who adopted him). This induces a panic attack and self-denial. The research explores how these two protagonists overcome the traumatic experience of the baited betrayals and gain their identities as individuals in society.

Keywords: betrayals, identity, psychotrauma, traumatic, self-denial, identity oriented psychotrauma theory (iopt), stories we never tell

Introduction

Many people face traumatic experiences at some point of time in their lives. Some overcome these with the sense of belief and motivation. Some struggle to come out of the trauma and face difficulties in the formation of 'self-identity'. When they move from an accustomed environment to an unidentified environment, they lose self-confidence and move away from their track of life and sense of "who they are." The loss of the sense of belongingness, alienation, detachment from parents, and addiction to something or someone affects one's identity. Identity construction is a process. Traumatic experiences hinder the progression of life and affect this. This research paper analyses the main characters from Savi Sharma's novel, *Stories We Never Tell,* and focusses on the identity crises they face because of the traumatic experiences, which they undergo in their cosmopolitan contexts.

Savi Sharma is one of India's highest-selling female authors. Her debut novel is *Everyone Has a Story* (2015). She left her CA studies to become a writer. She has also written *Everyone Has a Story – 2* (2018) (which is the sequel to her first novel), *This Is Not Your Story* (2017), *Stories We Never Tell* (2019) and *The Happiness Story* (2023). Her novels, written in first person narration, capture the attention of readers as they tell stories inspired from real life experiences. The characters from the novel are given separate chapters to narrate their life. Overall, her novels investigate themes such as love, friendship, dreams, hope, courage and recovery.

The novel *Stories We Never Tell* shares the stories of Jhanvi and Ashray -- the stories which cannot be told to everyone. The plot of the novel revolves around the traumatic experiences of these characters which profoundly affect them, and change their lives. When they meet each other, the stories of

their lives that are sordid and care-worn, are woven together. However, these stories subsequently transform the protagonists and direct them to tell a story of 'hope, light and recovery'.

The research uses the Identity Oriented Psychotraumatic Theory (IoPT), developed by Dr. Franz Ruppert, to analyse the characters in the novel. IoPT theorises that healing from trauma is a process that cannot be wholly attained. This framework originates from four theoretical building blocks and one practical method:

- The Human Psyche: well-being, stress and trauma
- Identity and the Trauma of Identity
- The Trauma of Love and the Trauma of Sexuality
- The Perpetrator-Victim-Dynamic in relations
- The Intention Method and the Resonance Technique (IoPT Norway)

Dr. Ruppert's theory argues that healing is a multi-step process and one needs a goal-oriented approach to treat physical or mental disorders. In the context of *Stories We Never Tell*, living one's identity as a whole is the "goal". In order to get in touch with one's own identity, the individual needs a healthy sense of 'self', free will, and emotional connection with one's actions. Without having a healthy relationship with oneself, an individual cannot maintain a healthy relationship with others. An individual, after facing a traumatic experience, will have splits in their personality and identity structure. The three different splits are: the Healthy Part, the Traumatised Part and the Survival Part. Each split contributes to the individual's identity in accordance with their behaviour. The characters in the novel, namely Jhanvi and Ashray, are seemingly affected by Identity Oriented Psychotrauma and overcome the different stages of their split personality after the therapy given to them by their psychiatrist.

Thesis Statement

Being betrayed by their most trusted ones, the protagonists Jhanvi and Ashray face Identity Oriented Psycho Trauma and overcome their struggles through their Healthy Part and goal-oriented approach.

Research Questions

1. Why do the characters Jhanvi and Ashray face identity crises?
2. How do the baited betrayals affect them and change their lives?

Discussion

Jhanvi, the female protagonist in the novel, *Stories We Never Tell*, undergoes a series of betrayals that leave her heart-broken. The novel opens with these lines by Jhanvi, "Heartbreak. Have you ever felt it? The undeniable pain; a moment, a realisation, changes the course of your life. … Choosing between leaving them behind or clinging to a memory of what was. Heartbreak.A human condition, a threat to our sanity that only takes a moment to change our lives." (Sharma 2) She is in a dilemma when the author Savi introduces her female protagonist to the readers. From the first page, the readers are already immersed in Jhanvi's life, and can empathise with their own stories of rejections, betrayals, being unnoticed and much more, which are never told.

In interpersonal relationships, mutual respect and care are important factors. Here, Jhanvi loses her self-respect after being taken for granted and underestimated by her boyfriend Puneet. She says, "He was my whole life, and to him, I was only a chapter in his life. Merely some words to complete his story." (Sharma 3) If one underrates the other in a relationship, it cannot go further--at least, not as an equal partnership. At times, to gain one identity, one

will hide another, thinking that it may hinder them from receiving what they seek (love, friendship, respect, etc). Yet, being "loyal" promotes the relationship to the next level. Jhanvi stays loyal in her relationship whereas her partner does not reciprocate. "At the beginning of our relationship, I hid my social media presence from him. Eventually, as our relationship progressed, I had to be honest with him. I needed to make social appearances, even if they were few and far between." (Sharma 5) Jhanvi eventually starts identifying herself with the behaviour of the others, which is one of the needs created by the Psychotrauma. Even though she gives attention to her boyfriend, he does not reciprocate the love for her. He betrays her by choosing another woman over her. "I told myself this wasn't my fault; that, although I was guarded, I had given him enough of my heart for him to break it, destroying my commitment to him." (Sharma 9) Puneet, Gaurav and Aarav betray Jhanvi. One after the other, she sequentially experiences betrayals which leave her insecure.

Jhanvi wants to focus on her career, without thinking about the past betrayals which bait her by holding her back. The psychotrauma in her, creates a need for substitution, which helps her in the formation of 'self'. She engages herself in social media and spends much time there as an influencer. After the betrayal of Puneet she says,

I ran down the stairs, swallowing down the tears. I had no energy left to fight; this   was another ruined relationship, filled with manipulation and lies. I needed to   focus on my career, needed to formulate a plan to explain why yet another

boyfriend was missing from my profile. I wondered whether my career was the

reason nobody was able to love me, or whether I truly was as distant as they kept

telling me. I don't see myself as unlovable, I think I am capable of accepting the

love of others, but somehow, they all had the same excuse. It was always me; they

never took responsibility. (Sharma 10)

She knows that her career would gain her an identity in the society. Yet, she doubts herself as an unloved person as she experiences the betrayals of her boyfriends one by one. Meanwhile, she accepts the fact that the others are not taking the responsibilities in a relationship like she does. Whenever she thinks about the defiled love, there is an emptiness felt in her heart. She says, "Was I so difficult to love? I scrolled down, the void inside me aching to be filled. (Sharma 18) She wishes to redefine her 'self' by concentrating on her career. It is a kind of displacement that helps her out in survival.

The trauma biography of Jhanvi forces her to make decisions that are abnormal. She chooses to influence the unseen people in social media rather than dealing with people whom she meets in real life. She wants more followers in her social media account and wants to be unnoticed by her known circle. She does not give proper time to spend with her father and mother who are in Delhi. She prefers to stay in Mumbai as a leading social media influencer. She does not want to commit herself in any relationships ever. She tells to herself,

'You don't need a man, Jhanvi,' I told myself. 'You have a good follower count;

you are already invited to some great events. You can be just as famous as these

other women.' Locking my phone and putting it in my bag, I decided to walk to the market. With new clarity and a destination in mind, I pushed my way through the crowds. (Sharma 19)

She pushes herself forward towards her destination, without focusing on the traumatic experiences which culled out her identity in the society. She prefers to stay alone and denies the help rendered by Kaviya, her close friend at times. She is used to being alone as she says, "I was a

loner who enjoyed playing by myself. I did not have a sibling, and as an only child, I was often only in adult company." (Sharma 19) Either, she does not want to be under the surveillance of someone.

Jhanvi becomes more alcoholic and is always in a state of hangover. Yet she never forgets to post photos in her social media page. She became India's leading and famous influencer. When her health deteriorates, her situation gets worse. She concentrates on her job and becomes a workaholic. Meanwhile, she is addicted to alcohol consumption. In a club opening, she becomes critical when she over drinks. "Waves of nausea overtook me as I leaned over the basin, my body ridding itself of the toxicity I had spent the last five days pumping into it." (Sharma 126) Jhanvi, in her loneliness, drinks vodka and dances away her loneliness and pressure caused by betrayals. When she gets admitted in hospital, her father, mother and her friend Kavya take care of her. She finds her followers unfollowing her because what happened in the club. Her brash behaviour was exposed on social media by some girls who came there. She uploads her photo of her hand with IV, with the hospital bed as the background. She wants to prove herself good and explain everything to her followers.

The protagonist Ashray, on the other hand panics at his young age, as he does not have anybody to rely on. Being an orphan, he expects love from someone. Akshita, who is referred as Maa in the text, takes care of him. He says, "In the orphanage, those feelings were fear. Fear of the other children, fear of being hurt and taunted, and fear of never seeing the beautiful woman who showered me with love again." (Sharma 13) Akshita adopts him at the age of five. There is a quest in him related to the sense of belongingness. He does not know to whom he belongs. After being adopted by Maa, he feels loved and secured. Her adoption of him extends for him a sense of identity in the society. Ashray says, "It

was strange for me to not have an idea of my real identity. Who did I belong to before Maa? At times, I felt detached, but Maa was always there to pull me back and remind me that love didn't require blood." (citation???) The first identity gained by an individual comes from his birth, which Ashray has lost. Though he is in search of his lost identity, he regains it in the society out of his demeanour and capacities. The identity given can be replaced by the identity earned.

Ashray decides to search for a better job and attends an interview. He wants to give his Maa a better life. Becoming a successful man in the society will earn him a better identity. He always reflects on the struggles which Maa and he underwent. On the way to his interview, he contemplates on a good future after he gets the job. He says, "On the bus, I reflected on how hard my Maa had worked to ensure that I was able to get the qualifications I needed to be successful. She was a woman who had so little but gave so much. I strived for success, not just for me, but to repay her for all she had done for me." (Sharma 16) He thinks about his darker times in life and wants to replace it with happiness. He is so determined about his future. Ashray gets the job and his extreme happiness replaces his loneliness with new friends. He realises that he has earned a new identity. He gets betrayed at the time of his birth, yet he muddles through the trauma and comes out of it.

When Ashray meets Sakshi, he thinks that he has met his better half. The Goa Music Festival is the turning point in his life. He imagines a life with her and Maa. He says, "But with Sakshi, all my fears and insecurities vanished." (Sharma 85) They spend their evenings together and fall for each other. As weeks pass by, Sakshi starts avoiding Ashray and this causes a trauma in Ashray's psyche. He feels the deep betrayal in his heart. He panics in pain, not able to digest what Sakshi said. Ashray shatters and cries in his mother's arms as soon as he reaches home. In the novel, Ashray says: "Unashamedly, I cried in my

mother's arms. I realised all the betrayal I felt; all the heartbreak I had held inside while Sakshi had spoken." (Sharma 97) He feels like he has lost a part of himself when she leaves him. He identifies himself with the behaviour of the perpetrator Sakshi. The existential needs of an individual such as being loved, protected and wanted are ignored to him. He experiences destruction when he gets betrayed by Sakshi. The psychotrauma stops him working peacefully in the workplace. He isolates himself in his room. He clings on to his Maa and confides in her.

Ashray displaces his trauma by buying a new apartment to make his Maa happy. When happiness surrounds them, a shock hits Ashray. Maa falls down in the bathroom, due to a heart attack. When the Doctor reveals the death news of Maa, Ashray gets a panic attack. He does not accept the reality as his traumatised part still struggles to receive his identity. A life without Maa is destruction for Ashray. The Doctor advises him to take some therapy at the Psychiatrist's clinic.

Jhanvi and Ashray meet at the Psychiatrist's clinic, and the story intertwines here. Though there are several references of their meetings together mentioned in the novel, this is the conscious meeting of these two individuals who are traumatised in different ways. When they get to know each other after sharing their stories of darkness and betrayals to each other, they start supporting each other in the process of healing. Though one cannot attain a complete healing from trauma, they help each other in finding their meaning of life and existence, by giving importance to 'self'. Jhanvi says, "I finally felt alive, accepted not only by those who loved me, but accepted myself."(Sharma 200) Ashray says, "I was living my life, or dreams, with people who loved me and wanted to be in my life." (Sharma 204) Dr Shyam, the Psychiatrist who treats both the characters shares about the sense of abandonment that these two faced in their lives. They complemented each other. The epilogue marks the contrastive ending of the couple's lives. "We walked the path to the main road together in silence, or fingers intertwined. Willing to accept love, willing to give love, willing to truly understand that we are never alone if we allow ourselves to just love." (207) Being betrayed they get traumatised. Being loved they get rejuvenated. The recovery was possible because of the love they have for each other.

Conclusion

Finally, Jhanvi understands that her mental health cannot stop her from achieving her goals and it does not make her weak. And, reaching out to another person for help is not a weakness or being dependent, but it is her strength. Meanwhile, Ashray understands that his panic attacks are just the expression of his belief in the sense of abandonment and fear that he cannot make decisions without the advice and approval of others. The novel says, "They leaned on each other when the pressure was too much for one of them to handle, and they made it through by finding the one thing that every human being needs. Love." (Sharma 202) Both the characters overcome their difficulties in life through therapy and being there for each other.

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UNVEILING THE ROLE OF THIRD-SPACE IN IDENTITY FORMATION IN FUGITIVE HISTORIES

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Abstract

The novel Fugitive Histories by Githa Hariharan, revolves around the post-Godhra riots setting in Ahmedabad, while also locating other characters in Mumbai and Delhi. Spatiality plays a vital role in the depiction of women in the stage of national turmoil in post-independence India. Religious fundamentalism further leads to blurring of lines through inter-religious marriages, like in the case of Mala and Asad, further pushing people into liminal spaces which do not fall under the purview of any particular community's belief. Sara, becoming the bi-product of this communion, becomes a 'hybrid' in terms of communal affinity and also seeks rootedness in personally identifying herself. Thus, the 'third space' plays a crucial role in outlining the circumstances of people who encounter nationalist troubles, directly or indirectly. This 'third space' assumes multiple roles in the course of the trials faced by the various female protagonists in the novel; Bala; Mala, Sarah and Yasmin. The paper seeks to argue how the 'third space' becomes multifaceted and provides hope to the hybrid subaltern, in this case, the women protagonists of Fugitive Histories, to get through the effects of national turmoil.
Keywords: *third space, hybridity, identity, hegemony, colonization*

Fugitive Histories by Githa Hariharan is a novel that deals with the lives of people primarily during the post-Godra riots period. It presents the turmoil and repercussions that a particular community faces, thereby criticizing the animosity and antipathy of one religion over the other. Hariharan portrays the outburst of communal riot and its aftermath in the characters' lives. Communalism in post-colonial India leads to the shackling of the very ground of identity of the citizens of the nation.

The novel revolves around four major characters, whose narration shapes the history of the Godhra riot. This riot plays a pivotal role in shaping each of these characters' identities, irrespective of their direct connection with the riot. The riot politicizes religion and gender, bringing into play, the power politics of gender and religion. It torments the minority and makes them struggle with existential dilemmas.

The riot is a testimonial mirror reflecting the deep-rooted hatred of one religion over the other that it tries to completely erase the existence of a certain community making them lead a life of exile in their very own country. "Contemporary global social, political, and economic events have led to displacements and diasporas of many people" (Khan 470)

Yasmin is the central figure of the novel around whom the whole story of reflection of the riot revolves. She is a character grappling through her life due to the struggle of displacement. She is tormented by the life she wishes to have which is lost along the paths of the past due to the riot. She becomes the victim of the riot making her physically and mentally vulnerable. Sara, who tries to explore Ahmedabad, tries to unveil the mask of normalcy that the city wears. She, by doing so, confronts the horror of

communalism. Sara, being the product of an inter-religious marriage, struggles to find a ground to stand on as she is estranged from the norms of both religions. She eventually negotiates the binaries and creates her own space and ground to stand upon. Mala, the mother of Sara and wife of Asad, becomes a silent sufferer of the Godhra riots. She identifies herself more with Asad and with the demise of him vacuum in her life is created. The vacuum creates a void which causes meaninglessness and poses her with a lot of questions that challenges her identity. Bala, the grandmother of Mala, embodies victimhood irrespective of the influence of the riot. She becomes a victim of gender and religious oppression. All of these characters tend to live in their liminal spaces and by negotiating binaries, find their third space.

The identity, in question, is heavily affected by religion and gender, making it a double-fold burden on the female characters. The religious and political tension of the Godhra riot shatters the base of identity specifically in the case of Yasmin, Sara and Mala. This paper, seeking to argue the role of identity in relation to hybridity, throws light on how the liminal space offers an avenue for the negotiation of existing binaries. This becomes significant as it is intensified due to the pervading national turmoil. Homi Bhabha argues in *The Location of Cultures* that the differences that arise due to binaries would tend to negotiate the very same binaries, thereby opting for a liminal space. And by challenging these binaries, become hybrid. "The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in the moment of historical transformation." (Bhabha 2) The radically open 'Thirdspace' challenges notions of homogeneity, equality, and permanence and celebrates difference, contradiction, and change. (Wrede 12) Yasmin, Sara, Mala and Bala are deviants defying to fall in the line and therefore they challenge the binaries, in one way

or another. Being the minority in the case of either gender or religion or both makes them negotiate the binaries and opt for a liminal space in which they find their stable ground.

The novel presents religion and gender as a force of power being exercised on Bala, Mala, Sara and Yasmin. The power practised establishes a demarcation between the majority and the minority, as the power is practised by Hindus and Men and is practised on Muslims and women. This demarcation becomes much evident as the hatred of one religion over the other leaves no space for empathy and consideration for human lives. In the case of Bala, she is confined to the house. She is caged in patriarchy. She negotiates the binaries of rules and regulations for men and women and by doing so she creates her third space in the store room and attic of the house. "Feminist spatial readings propose that space itself can offer resistance to gender hierarchies." (Wrede 10) "Bala was back in the house, locked in the storeroom. She could still feel his shove, the way she went flying into the room. She could still hear him roar through the locked door that the storeroom was the best place for her to learn how to be a respectable woman." (Hariharan 22) The domestic violence she had to endure from "the big boss" (Hariharan 23) made her arbitrate her position in the house. She never left the house and is confined to it similar to the womanhood confined by patriarchy. She cuts her hair and shaves it out in the storeroom and by doing so she cuts out all the strands that connect her to the societal constraints. She negotiates her gender and religious binaries and her madness is the result of the negotiation. This madness is Bala's practice of agency. Hereby, the mad woman in the attic concept from Jane Eyre is subverted as it is portrayed as a means of exercising will and agency without being worried about societal constraints. The store room and the roof are Bala's liminal spaces and her insanity paves way in

transforming her liminal space into a third space where she can do whatever she feels like. The home Bala is confined to is the microcosm of the society. The confinement and the domestic abuse she had to endure made her break the pattern making her a 'deviant.' She creates a world for herself in the storeroom. The storeroom was given to her as a punishment but the it gave her space to be herself and the room eventually became her space of freedom. "Space itself can become a form of control, of limitation of women's mobility-but also a site of women's actualization, of breaking out of gender constraints, and of achieving power." (Wrede 10) Bala in her liminal space, the storeroom, finds herself, practises her will by breaking constraints such as walking in the house freely, letting her hair free, cutting her hair and by acting upon her will she converts her liminal space into a third space allowing her to navigate the constraints inflicted on her as a woman.

Mala, the mother of Sara, is agonised by the demise of her husband. She identifies herself more with Asad than anyone else. His death creates a vacuum for Mala to brood over. She is oppressed by her religion and her gender. Her constant yearning, "to be someone else" (Hariharan 17) Mala's marriage to Asad can be seen as a manifestation of her will to be someone else. But Mala's confrontation of Asad's paintings makes her question her identity. Asad's last days are highlighted by a deep sense of guilt of inaction which is reflected through his drawings. He is hurt by the riot and its violence that it occupied and devoured him. The isolation phase and the silence that was slowly building of Asad makes Mala feel different. Until this point the religion wasn't a concern but at this point, Mala's stance was at stake. Her identity was challenged. She confronts the painting and grapples with her fractured identity as she questions herself in the relationship and outside it. Those paintings and drawings transform into her

liminal space allowing her to let go of Asad's possessions and find her individual self. The drawings of Asad were deeply disturbing for Mala to look into. Asad's drawings questioned Mala's position as an individual as well as a part of the family. The drawings were haunting memories of Asad questioning her position on the riot. This brings into the family the concept of self and other and thereby creating chaos. Asad's paintings have spectator figures, becoming a manifestation of himself amidst the Godhra riot but it also opens up the unavailability of space within his house to discuss communal issues and had to express himself through his art. Mala is deeply wounded by this and this haunts her. "In what I will call a critical strategy of "thirding-as-Othering," I try to open up our spatial imaginaries to ways of thinking and acting politically that respond to all binarisms, to any attempt to confine thought and political action to only two alternatives, by interjecting an-Other set of choices. In this critical thirding, the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives. (Soja 5) As Soja argues, Mala opts for "an-other" set of choice by letting him go; accepting her difference and negotiates the binary of choices to belong to either of the polarities.

In the case of Sara, she grapples with the existing binaries and eventually starts negotiating the heirarchy which can be seen as an example of what Bhabha argues:

"The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial

passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy"(Bhabha 4)

Sara is the stairwell, never affixing herself to the polarities of her parents' religions. She is a character who initially has to confront many dilemmas as a hybrid, and starts building her identity, exhibiting resilience. She occupies the "interstitial passage between fixed identification," where she identifies herself just as "Sara", neither Hindu nor Muslim. Sara, thus becomes a symbol of hybridization scrutinizing the binary, "hybridization "doubles" irony in its ability to cause one voice to ironize and unmask the other within the same utterance." (Wolf 133) The journey of her pondering about which end she belongs to, to her internal conflicts about the riots and herself to becoming content with whoever she is, Sara stands as a symbol of "Third Space" overcoming the binaries of hegemony and subaltern. "'Yes, I'm beginning to realize how lucky I am. How glad I am that I'm a hybrid' Sara drops her gaze, adds almost shyly, 'I wish I could tell Asad that'" (Hariharan 184) She has to constantly, confront situations that make her question her position in society and therefore questioning her identity. "Muslim Indian or Indian Muslim" (Hariharan 180) The agency that she practices is her liminal space making her embody resistance. She is in her liminal space by rejecting the religions of her parents and also by confronting what both religions have done to each other. The communal riot is between the religion of both her parents puts her identity at stake. As she explores Ahmedabad she embarks on a journey of self-realisation and starts to accept herself for whatever she is. "I'm neither. Sometimes I think I'm Indian. But most of the time I'm just Sara.'" (Hariharan 167)

Yasmin, one of the very prominent protagonists of the story, tussles with the dilemma of home. She yearns for a place to belong which was snatched away from her. "Or maybe she's afraid someone will see her hoping and snatch it away from her like before." (Hariharan 226) The impact of the riot traumatized a child to such an extent that she fears to hope and dream, pushing her to the periphery and made her question her stance in society. Yasmin is the direct victim of the riot and is tormented physically and mentally. Yasmin's story is wrapped along with the stories of Mala and Sara, and Yasmin stands as a connecting point to the bigger picture of the riot and the rest of the characters.

Yasmin also embodies all the dislocated families and the trauma of displacement that they endure. "Sara and Neena are in an auto; they are going to meet some of the dislocated families in their relocated colony." (Hariharan 108) The displacement that is occurring here is the nation disowning a set of people. The riot had positioned two different communities into two different localities therefore intensifying the aversion of one religion over the other. The displacement led to the exile of Muslims which is represented through the family of Yasmin and their neighbourhood. "To this day the dispossessed of Gujarat live in 'safe areas'- Muslim ghettoes-without civic amenities. In Ahmedabad, for instance, people who used to be part of the city's life-bakers, auto drivers, shopkeepers, engineers, school- teachers are now refugees in their own city." (Hariharan 42) The rage and sorrow that are caused due to the displacement are evident through Yasmin's neighbourhood's recollection of the riot taped by Sara and Nina.

But primarily, Yasmin's chaarcter testifies to the torment of grappling for a sense of belonging and home burnt in the past and the inability to accept what the present offers. She occupies a liminal space both in the case of her physical self and mental self. She is displaced in both cases. "Sometimes I feel so homesick. I know I can't go back. But I can't help wishing I could go home so I can see if it's still there"

(Hariharan 125) This yearning for home leads to mental displacement. She stands estranged from her community and family who have almost come to accept their fate. Her photo of her brother constantly reminds her that "missing is not so bad, it's better than dead" (Hariharan 136).

The displacement pushed her into a conscious zone where she had to be constantly careful. The memory that she beholds with herself is an expression of the middle space that prevents her from being reconciled away from the physical and mental displacement. "She can only go home in great secrecy, preferably by air, because on the land she would have to cross a border that's manned day and night" (Hariharan 127). She creates a liminal space negotiating binaries thereby establishing a third space in her mind, primarily. She holds onto the memory of Akbar, through which she revisits and relives her home in her mind in a secure space, where she lets Sara in. She sets this location carefully keeping away from the binaries that either mourns or fumes against communalism.

Yasmin, also can be seen as a character who is mature beyond her age thereby constructing an identity far from her age. The riot has challenged her notion of identity that she has completely reconstructed it. The constant stares that she has to confront make her realize her difference. She is constantly being reminded that she is a victim of the hegemony. "Sometimes, though, Yasmin thinks: there's something these people can't see, both those who stare and those whose eyes merely skim over her. They can't see the feeling trapped inside her, fighting its way out. This is not a simple feeling. It does not have a name, something small and easy to say, like fear or anger or sadness. It is a little of this, a little of that." (Hariharan 149) The physical and mental agony to be constantly careful that is to be alive and not to be raped or even worse killed, is a tiresome trial for a child to undergo. The fear that pervades and is made to pervade makes Yasmin opt for a third space.

"It's a fifteen-minute walk to the point when the road turns into a clutch of narrow lanes as thin as fingers. She needs to get to one of those lanes, to the buildings huddling together like sad, toothless old men. Every day the walk seems just a little longer. Yasmin's schoolbag hangs heavy on her shoulder. But there's nothing to be done but walk down the road, concentrating on the long list of things to be avoided. Stepping into puddles and potholes. Stepping on garbage. Staying out of the way of the zigzagging, spluttering motorcycle and the mangy brown stray dog chasing the black one out of its territory. Walking quickly past the man smiling and whispering into his cellphone, his worrying finger deep in a nostril. Crossing the road to avoid the parked auto, and the driver with the greasy face leaning on it smoking a bidi, his eyes on everyone and everything." (Hariharan 148)

She becomes not just a victim of the riot on a religious basis but also on a gender basis. Thus she becomes subjugated to double oppression.

Yasmin's relationship with Sara becomes her third space. Sara creates that space for Yasmin to negotiate the binary of hegemony and subaltern. "In-between. Whenever Yasmin refers to the safe area in which she lives now, that's the phrase that comes to Sara's mind. In-between: in transit, on the way to somewhere else; there's a sliver of hope in the coupled words that says this place is only in between, there's something else coming after." (Hariharan 142) Sara becomes the hope that she talks about.

Ahmedabad, being explored by Sara and Neena to unveil what the city beholds behind its veil, remains undecipherable till Yasmin comes into the picture. The city in itself can be seen as a mirror of Sara that it remains in a dilemma due to the outburst. Sara identifies herself with the city that reflects the internal torment that Sara undergoes.

"There is, for instance, an open mosque nestling among tall trees, the profussion of leaves making jalis behind the dome. Not far from it Hanuman is being by bathed in milk with the dash of haldi and kumkum so he's turned a more photogenic reddish -yellow. Mosque and Hanuman harmonize, call Sara like a muezzin calling the faithful to prayer" (Hariharan 108-109) of a city waking up to another regular day." (Hariharan 106)

The exploitation due to the riot is physical as well as psychological therefore the aftermath is traumatic. The relocated place where all the Muslim people live is called "Mini Pakistan "(Hariharan 110) the riot has legitimized the animosity of Hindu- Muslim relationship that it has posited two different communities in two different locations. The ambiguity prevailing in the interstitial space masks the harsh reality of what the communal riot has done to the place.

"But there was no enemy to be seen, no danger, the city itself was modestly veiled by darkness. Even when daylight slowly drew aside this curtain, all it revealed was the banal sight of city streets stealing a few more minutes of sleep. And now, in this borrowed room she and Nina are sharing, Sara can hear the ordinary sounds. The all-pervasive image that the city portrays to Sara tends to be undecipherable as she seeks to unveil the truth that lies underneath. "The city has shown Sara its showpieces; its everyday outfits, its torn and yellowing underwear. It's even shown her a flash of dirty bear skin but it remains stranger; it remains unfathomable." (Hariharan 109)

The importance of identifying a liminal space for each of these characters throws light on how identity is shaped by Hybridity and Third space. But the identity in question will be constantly under change irrespective of a particular period or a situation. Until there exists a demarcation of binaries of class, caste, communities, race and gender, there will be hybridities and negotiations of third spaces. Therefore, with the existence of national turmoils or communal clashes, there will be a requirement to formation of Third Spaces.

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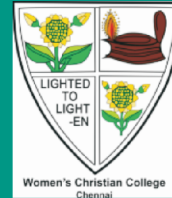
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