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Cultural Cartographies of Power: Marginalized Narratives in Mari Selvaraj's "Vaazhai"

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Abstract

Cinema is a dominant instrument in fighting against the social inequalities prevalent in society. Mari Selvaraj's *Vaazhai* is not one exception to this. This observation was debated with mixed opinions. While a group considers movies as mere entertainment, a few creators employ film as a medium to expose their constant struggle against the oppressors. Mari Selvaraj's *Vaazhai* is an indomitable portrayal of the power dynamics in rural Tamil Nadu. This research explores the film's portrayal of caste, class, and gender hierarchies, focusing on the voices of the marginalized, focusing on analyzing the power of cinematic discourse in amplifying the silenced voices on screens. This study examines how Selvaraj's auteurist vision amplifies the silenced voices of the oppressed and marginalized communities, aiming to understand the socio-political context of Tamil Nadu portrayed through Auteur's lens. The cinema challenges the dominant narratives in recent times and pictures the painful existence of a community, while a community continues to exploit and becomes a threat to its existence. While the dominant narratives have done enough damage and succeeded in stereotyping people, directors like Mari Selvaraj, Pa Ranjith and Vetrimaran endeavour to demystify societal beliefs. The real pain of the exploited experience is transformed on screen, which also serves as an eye-opener. Power Struggle and Graded Inequality permeate society like diseases and counter-narratives can act as the vaccine to disinfect. While films become the counter-narratives, the effect gets intensified and the paper analyses the work from Auteur's lens.

Keywords: Auteur, Graded Inequality, Stereotype, Dominant-Narratives and Counter-Narratives.

Indian cinema has been a site of conflict between hegemonic and subaltern

discourses. Dalit director Mari Selvaraj uses his films, particularly *Vaazhai*, to challenge Brahminical hegemony and document the lived experience of marginalized communities. "Cultural cartography" is the mapping of power relations through cultural representation, and Selvaraj's film maps the topographies of caste violence, resistance, and reclaiming culture painstakingly. This research discusses how *Vaazhai* is a counter-narrative to the historically sanitizing or erasure of Dalit struggles by mainstream Tamil cinema. Through visual symbolism, folk aesthetics, and non-linear storytelling, Selvaraj retrieves marginalized histories and offers a radical reimagining of Tamil identity.

Research Questions:

1. How does Mari Selvaraj's *Vaazhai* build a cultural cartography of power, mapping caste oppression and resistance in rural Tamil Nadu?
2. What are *Vaazhai*'s narrative and aesthetic strategies to subvert mainstream historiography and give voice to marginalized communities?
3. In what ways does *Vaazhai* enrich the discussion of Dalit cinema as political? resistance?
4. Why and how is the name of the film (*Vaazhai – Banana*) important as a metaphor for Dalit resistance and identity?
5. How do the audiences receive and respond to *Vaazhai*'s political message?

Hypotheses:

Vaazhai makes use of a strategic "cultural cartography" where spatial locations (villages, temples, fields) are locations of caste enforcement and contestation, visually inscribing power relations. Selvaraj's deployment of folk aesthetics, dialects, and non-linear narrative is a counter-narrative to hegemonic Tamil cinema, recentring Dalit histories. *Vaazhai*'s reception differs along caste lines, with Dalit audiences reading it as an empowering narrative and dominant-caste viewers reading it through a frame of discomfort or denial. The banana symbol in *Vaazhai* is a layered symbol, symbolising Dalit labour, systemic erasure, and eventual reclamation of dignity.

Null Hypothesis (H0):

The film's spatial representations do not significantly contribute to its denouncement of caste, and the stylistic representation of the film does not overtly counter mainstream film representations of caste.

Methodology:

The research paper employed the following methodologies, which were Textual Analysis, wherein close reading of significant scenes, dialogue, and visual imagery was conducted. Comparative Analysis was the second methodology employed, wherein comparing and contrasting *Vaazhai* with other Tamil Dalit-themed movies yielded valid information. And Reception Studies assisted in analysing audience reviews, interviews, and social media discussions.

Research Discussion:

Spatial Demarcation and Control:

Segregated Spaces:

Selvaraj generally employs environments to starkly contrast living spaces. Vaazhai probably plots power by visually distinguishing between the settlements or settlements of dominant castes and oppressed castes (Dalits). This may be in terms of differences in infrastructure, access to resources (such as water, clean paths), and proximity to centres of social or economic power. The school itself becomes an important location on this map, perhaps represented as a contested space where segregationist ideologies conflict with desires for equality.

Mapping Boundaries:

The movie likely employs visual indicators such as walls, clearly defined routes, fences, or even nature to map the boundaries established by castes. It could map "access rights", indicating where some of the children can or cannot go, play, or even exist safely, thereby showing how power circumscribes movement and potential in space. Cinematography would be part of such mapping.

Symbolic Landmarks and Signifiers:

The 'Vaazhai' Motif: The banana/plantain itself will likely be an important symbol. It might trace out concepts like growth, vulnerability, exploitation, or purity/ritual status, which are likely employed as weapons in caste societies. How the plantain is planted, consumed, controlled, or perhaps reappropriated by subaltern characters would enrich this symbol map. Other Symbols: Selvaraj will often use strong animal imagery or object symbolism. Vaazhai will employ some local vegetation, animals, colors, or common objects as symbolic markers on the map and assign meanings to them in the context of caste status, former subordination (e.g., symbols of degrading work), or nascent resistance (e.g., symbols of education, revolt). These symbols play the same function as legends on the map, guiding the viewer's eye in the Interpretation of the dominant countryside.

Mapping Social Interactions and Embodiment:

Hierarchy Mapping through Interaction: The film likely maps power relations through interactions among children from different caste groups. Speech, gaze, body attitude, and exclusionary or inclusive behaviour map the unspoken rules and social distances as prescribed by caste. Selvaraj is interested in the body as the site where caste power is inscribed. Vaazhai likely maps the manner in which children's bodily life is constructed by caste, their posture, their confidence, and their vulnerability in the mapped spaces.

Oppression and Resistance Patterns in Stories:

Systemic Obstacles Plotted:

The structure of the narrative itself is a map. Vaazhai, probably with the theme of education, probably plots the course of its child protagonists, charting the systemic obstacles they encounter. Key plot points are key locations on this lived experience map, signifying points where caste power actively enters their lives.

Importantly, the film would also map the development of resistance. This could be through isolated acts of rebellion, the quest for knowledge amidst hardship, instances of solidarity between the oppressed children, or implied resistances of dominant caste expectations. The narrative maps these paths, illustrating where and how the power relations can be undermined, even temporarily.

Auditory Soundscapes:

The music and sound design of the film likely contribute to this cartography. Binary musical motifs or ambient sounds corresponding to different places or social affiliations can chart the space aurally, reinforcing feelings of security, threat, oppression, or hope associated with specific locations and interactions on the cultural map. Mari Selvaraj's *Vaazhai* likely employs incisive narrative techniques and suggestive visual choices to consciously resist hegemonic, traditionally upper-caste, historical narratives and social renderings. By bringing to the centre-stage the existence of the marginalised, i.e., the Dalit children brought up within the oppressive structures of rural Tamil Nadu society, the film attempts to build history anew, giving voice, subjectivity, and visibility to the traditionally marginalized who are traditionally confined to footnote or caricature status in dominant narratives.

Centring Marginalised Subjectivity:

The central narrative point of view is likely honed by the experiences, perceptions, and emotional worlds of the oppressed caste protagonists (in this instance, children in *Vaazhai*). Their path, struggles, and tiny victories form the core narrative. This challenges mainstream narratives directly, which sideline or exclude these voices. It forces the audience to witness the lived reality of caste oppression from the inside, voicing through sustained attention and empathy. It reworks history as lived by the marginalised.

Focus on Micro-Histories and Lived Experience:

Instead of epic historical occurrences, the narrative likely centres on the everyday manifestations of caste power –structural humiliation, educational exclusion (a pervasive theme in *Vaazhai*), social segregation in seemingly minor interactions, and the constant negotiation of dignity. This upends hegemonic historiographies, which pass over widespread, everyday impacts of structural inequality. It legitimates "small" stories and traumas of subaltern groups and their worth as historical evidence, laying bare their reality against narratives that belittle or erase it.

Reclaiming and Reinterpreting Symbols/Myths:

Selvaraj attempts to reclaim dominant symbols or native myths/folklore and place them within the text from the point of view of the oppressed. The very title *Vaazhai* (Banana/Plantain) is bound to operate symbolically in this fashion. This approach turns the cultural and historical meaning of the dominant group on its head. Through re-signification of the symbols, the text creates a counter-cultural memory

and claims the agency of the marginalised to narrate their own heritage and identity and thereby secure for them a greater cultural voice.

Episodic or Non-Linear Storytelling:

Although perhaps less obvious than in Karnan, the story could involve flashbacks, dream visions, or an episodic structure corresponding to the cyclical nature of oppression, the burden of historical trauma, or the fractured nature of resistance. This can interrupt the smooth, frequently triumphalist, linearity of dominant histories. It makes space for the interruption of memory and trauma, corresponding to a historical consciousness informed by systemic violence, resisting narratives that envision smooth progress or resolution.

Aesthetic Strategies:

Symbolic Cinematography and Mise-en-Scène:

Using strong visual metaphors (animals, objects, colours), extreme framing (emphasising confinement or resistance), and disclosing details in set design and costumes that reflect the material conditions of marginalised existence. Low-angle shots might be used to represent the intimidating presence of oppressors, while eye-level or slightly low angles might dignify protagonists. These aesthetics create a visual language that communicates subtext, subverts power relations, and legitimates the cultural world of the protagonists. It resists sanitised or stereotypical visual representations common in mainstream cinema and amplifies the unspoken truths of marginalised existence. The 'look' of the film becomes a historical statement.

Visceral and Embodied Representation:

Close-ups of faces showing suppressed emotion or suffering, highlighting bodies subjected to violence, work, or acts of assertion. Lighting and colour schemes are employed to create certain moods that evoke oppression (e.g., unflattering light, muted colours) or resistance (e.g., flashes of warmth, symbolic colour). This achieves a strong affective identification between the viewer and the characters, inviting empathy and subverting detached, objectifying perceptions. It places center stage the physical and psychological cost of oppression, raising the human cost that is suppressed in dominant discourse.

Sound Design and Music:

Using diegetic sounds (real insults, sounds of segregated spaces) and non-diegetic music to situate the viewer in the world of sound of the characters. Silence, too, can be used to emphasise power struggles or withheld trauma. Sound design contributes significantly to giving voice to marginalised groups, sometimes literally (through dialogue or song) and sometimes emotionally (through music that attests to their cultural identity or struggle). It resists the sonic hegemony of dominant culture and presents an aural counterpoint to official discourse.

Juxtaposition by Editing:

Editing that juxtaposes societies of freedom and oppression, acts of violence with acts of resilience, or experiences of social class. It makes critical commentary without overt narration, forcing the audience to make connections and perceive imbalances in the system. It forces the audience to look beyond the surface appearances and find the contradictions in society and history.

Challenges:

Representation and Access of Marginalised Voices:

Challenge of Direct Access: Direct access to the Dalit audience members' perceptions, especially those from rural or marginalised communities, can be logistically challenging. Differences in language, geographical distance, and lack of established research networks in these communities can render data collection challenging. Researchers, who are typically located in dominant social positions, need to be attuned to the power relations involved in the research process. This can affect the manner in which participants offer their experiences and interpretations, and can lead to biased data. Ensuring that the Dalit experiences' interpretations are authentic and not filtered through the researcher's own agendas or frameworks is crucial. This entails employing culturally sensitive research approaches and giving prominence to the voices of the community themselves.

Subjectivity and Interpretation:

Film interpretation is subjective. Dalit audiences, like any audience, will have several readings of Vaazhai. Pinning down common threads of empowerment or resonance requires close reading and attention to the subtleties of these readings. "Discomfort" and "Denial" in Dominant Castes: Measuring "discomfort" or "denial" in dominant-caste viewers is problematic. People may be resistant to freely airing prejudiced views, and hence create socially acceptable responses or more subtle resistances to the message of the film. Researchers' own social locations and premised understandings of caste and cinema can shape their analysis of the film and audience responses. Reflexivity and the use of stringent analytical frameworks are needed to overcome bias.

Scope for Further Research:

The study opens a few avenues for more and more substantial scholarship. Comparative analysis of Selvaraj's spatial politics with other Dalit filmmakers like Pa. Ranjith (Kabali, Kaala) or Vetrimaaran (Asuran) in relation to identifying parallel aesthetic strategies. The researcher can conduct interviews/surveys to explore how caste identity affects readings of the film's spatial metaphor, like temple exclusion, banana groves, etc. Comparison of urban Dalit audience reactions and rural audience lived experiences of lands represented can be conducted.

Conclusion:

Mari Selvaraj's Vaazhai, working within his evolved cinematic idiom, likely succeeds in its "cultural cartography of power". It is not through one but through the careful weaving of spatial representation, charged symbolism, character dynamics,

and narrative unfolding. The film invites us to read its world as a map – one where lines of power along caste determine physical boundaries, social options, and psychological topographies in rural Tamil Nadu. It also tries to map the emergent, often hazardous, paths of resistance and aspiration, particularly through the lives of children who negotiate through this complex geography, so that the familiar terrain exposes its unseen contours of oppression and survival. A close reading of the film would further elaborate on how these specific cinematic moves bring about this mapping effect.

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IMPACT OF CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION ON TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

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Abstract

Cultural globalization refers to the increasing interconnections and interdependence of cultures worldwide, facilitated by advancements in communication, trade, and migration. This process leads to the exchange, adaptation, and sometimes homogenization of cultural practices, values, and traditions. The cultural manifestations of globalization are evident in various areas, including language, food, fashion, entertainment, and religious practices. While globalization fosters cultural hybridization and cross-cultural influences, it also raises concerns about cultural homogenization and the erosion of indigenous traditions. This study examines the varied ways in which cultural globalization manifests in different societies, evaluating its integrative and disruptive effects. The impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices has become a pivotal subject of study in the 21st century as the world becomes increasingly interconnected through technology, media, and international trade. This paper explores the dual impact of globalization—both as a force that dilutes traditional practices and as a tool for cultural preservation—focusing on the role of social media, government policies, and emerging technologies. Using secondary data, this research examines how different communities, particularly rural and indigenous groups in India, respond to global pressures and adapt their cultural practices. It also addresses gaps in existing literature, proposing new insights into the complex relationship between globalization and traditional cultural identity.

The impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices is a significant area of study, as globalization has led to the diffusion of cultural elements across borders, influencing indigenous customs, rituals, and identities. The primary objective of this research is to examine how cultural globalization affects traditional practices and whether it leads to cultural homogenization, hybridization, or adaptation. The study aims to analyze the role of media, migration, and international trade in shaping cultural practices and to assess the responses of indigenous communities to global cultural influences.

Keywords- cultural globalization, manifestation, homogenization, integrative, disruptive.

Hypothesis:

The research is guided by three key hypotheses. Firstly, it is hypothesized that cultural globalization results in the erosion of traditional practices due to the

dominance of Western cultural elements. Secondly, globalization may lead to a hybrid cultural identity, where traditional customs blend with modern influences. Lastly, traditional practices might prove resilient, adapting to globalization while retaining their essence.

Research Design:

The research design for this study, focused on the impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices, will primarily utilize secondary data to explore the influence of globalization on indigenous and traditional cultures. The design will incorporate a qualitative and quantitative approach, analyzing existing reports, case studies, government policies, academic papers, and digital content.

Research Objective:

This paper aims to address the following questions:

How does cultural globalization impact traditional practices in rural and indigenous communities? What role do social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok play in both promoting and altering traditional cultural practices? How effective are government policies and grassroots movements in preserving cultural heritage in the face of globalization? and to understand the roles of government policies, social media, and emerging technologies in the preservation or transformation of these practices. What emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR), are influencing cultural preservation

Data Collection:

Since the study will be based on secondary data, the sources of information will include:

Academic Literature: Peer-reviewed articles, books, and journals related to globalization, cultural imperialism, glocalization, and traditional practices.

Government Reports and Policies: Documentation on government programs, initiatives, and policies aimed at cultural preservation, such as UNESCO reports, GI tagging, and language preservation projects.

Case Studies: Published case studies, particularly from regions affected by globalization, such as India, Africa, and Southeast Asia, focusing on tribal communities, language preservation, and artistic practices.

Social Media Analysis: Reports and digital content on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, where cultural practices (e.g., traditional art forms, languages, festivals) are being promoted or altered.

Data Analysis:

The data analysis will be carried out through the following steps:

Qualitative Analysis:

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to analyse the cultural manifestations of globalization. This research aims to contribute to the discourse on globalization by highlighting both the opportunities and challenges posed by cultural interconnections and the impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices in

the modern world. Content analysis of media representations of traditional practices. Additionally, a comparative analysis of traditional customs over different periods will help understand the extent of cultural transformation. Conduct a thematic analysis of academic papers, government reports, and case studies to identify recurring themes related to the impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices. To evaluate social media content to understand how traditions are being represented, preserved, or altered in the digital space. This could include analysing hashtags, viral trends, and online campaigns related to cultural heritage (e.g., #HandloomRevival, #IndigenousLanguages) .Analyse case studies on government policies and their effectiveness in preserving cultural practices in the face of global influence.

Data Sources and Tools:

Secondary Data:

Online academic databases (e.g., JSTOR, Google Scholar) for peer-reviewed articles and research papers. Government websites and UNESCO archives for policy documents, reports on cultural preservation programs, and case studies. Access to Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok analytics, focusing on trends related to traditional culture. Tools like Hashtagify and Google Trends can be used to track relevant hashtags and keywords. Reports from Cultural Organizations: Resources from organizations like the National Handloom Development Corporation and The Crafts Council of India.

Sampling:

Non-Probability Sampling: The study will use purposeful sampling to select data sources relevant to cultural preservation. Focus on case studies that specifically discuss cultural globalization in India and other countries that have experienced similar challenges. Select social media trends related to traditional arts and languages in various regions (e.g., tribal communities in Northeast India, crafts of South India).

Limitations:

Secondary data might be limited in certain regions, especially regarding grassroots-level cultural movements or indigenous groups that do not have extensive documentation available. Some government reports or industry studies may have inherent biases based on political agendas or economic interests, which may affect the objectivity of the analysis. The study will be limited by the time frame of available data (e.g., older reports may not fully capture recent trends in social media's influence on culture).

Expected Outcomes:

Understanding the dual impact of globalization on traditional cultures, particularly about cultural erosion and preservation. Identifying successful government policies and community-driven initiatives that have sustained traditional practices .Highlighting the role of social media and digital platforms in shaping cultural identity, both positively and negatively. Providing policy recommendations based on the analysis of existing data to enhance cultural preservation efforts in the

digital age. This research design, based on secondary data, will allow for a comprehensive analysis of how cultural globalization is transforming traditional practices. By utilizing existing literature, case studies, and digital content, the study will offer insights into the roles of government policies, social media, and emerging technologies in preserving or altering cultural identities. The findings can contribute to future research and practical policy-making aimed at balancing modernization with the need for cultural preservation.

Introduction:

Cultural globalization refers to the worldwide dissemination of cultural practices, ideas, and commodities. This process has led to a blending of global and local cultures, with significant implications for traditional practices across societies. The influence of globalization is seen in various areas such as language, festivals, arts, and social practices. The paradox, however, lies in the fact that while globalization may contribute to the erosion of traditional cultural forms, it can also serve as a platform for their preservation and promotion, particularly through digital media. Cultural globalization refers to the increasing interconnections and interdependence of cultures worldwide, facilitated by advancements in communication, trade, and migration. This process leads to the exchange, adaptation, and sometimes homogenization of cultural practices, values, and traditions. The cultural manifestations of globalization are evident in various areas, including language, food, fashion, entertainment, and religious practices. While globalization fosters cultural hybridization and cross-cultural influences, it also raises concerns about cultural homogenization and the erosion of indigenous traditions. This study examines the varied ways in which cultural globalization manifests in different societies, evaluating its integrative and disruptive effects.

The impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices is a significant area of study, as globalization has led to the diffusion of cultural elements across borders, influencing indigenous customs, rituals, and identities. The primary objective of this research is to examine how cultural globalization affects traditional practices and whether it leads to cultural homogenization, hybridization, or adaptation. The study aims to analyze the role of media, migration, and international trade in shaping cultural practices and to assess the responses of indigenous communities to global cultural influences.

Several scholars have previously explored the relationship between globalization and culture. Appadurai (1996), in *Modernity at Large*, discusses the complex dimensions of globalization and cultural flows. Robertson (1995) introduces the concept of “glocalization,” emphasizing the coexistence of global and local cultural elements. Tomlinson (1999) and Pieterse (2009) analyze the blending of cultures due to globalization, while Giddens (1990) highlights the transformative effects of modernity on traditional societies. Empirical studies in India, Africa, and Latin America have further demonstrated how globalization has altered traditional

customs while also enabling cultural exchanges. This research builds on these studies to comprehensively understand how globalization reshapes traditional practices in contemporary society.

For this research paper, Cultural Imperialism Theory and Glocalization Theory are effectively applied to analyze the impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices.. This study applies Cultural Imperialism Theory and glocalization theory to analyze the impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices, focusing on specific case studies from India.

Cultural Imperialism Theory (Herbert Schiller, 1976):

This theory argues that dominant cultures, particularly from the West, impose their values, media, and consumer products on weaker cultures, often eroding traditional practices. Traditional festivals, clothing, and indigenous languages are often replaced or influenced by global trends (e.g., Western fashion replacing indigenous attire). Global media platforms (Hollywood, Netflix, social media) influence local storytelling and entertainment, reducing the space for indigenous cultural expressions. The preference for English over local languages in education and communication contributes to cultural shifts. The Cultural Imperialism Theory argues that dominant cultures—primarily from the West—impose their values, media, language, and consumer products on less powerful cultures, often eroding indigenous traditions. This imposition is facilitated through global media, education systems, corporate expansion, and political influence. Cultural Imperialism explains the dominance of global culture over local traditions, Glocalization provides a counterview, suggesting that cultures adapt and blend rather than simply disappearing. This research will explore whether globalization is leading to cultural erosion or transformation, depending on how traditional communities negotiate these influences

Glocalization Theory (Roland Robertson, 1995):

This theory suggests that rather than completely erasing local traditions, globalization results in a blend of global and local cultures, creating hybrid practices. Traditional food practices evolve to include global ingredients while maintaining local flavors (e.g., McDonald's offering McAloo Tikki in India). Indigenous rituals and festivals incorporate modern technology, such as live-streaming religious events. Fashion industries create fusion styles where traditional textiles are adapted into modern designs. .Globalization has significantly altered cultural landscapes across the world, affecting traditional practices in various ways. While some scholars argue that globalization leads to cultural homogenization, others believe it results in cultural hybridity or adaptation

One of the most evident impacts of cultural globalization is the decline of indigenous languages, particularly among tribal communities in India. In regions such as Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Manipur, several native languages are at risk of extinction due to the increasing dominance of English and

Hindi in formal education, media, and administration. The introduction of English and Hindi as primary mediums of instruction in schools has led younger generations to prefer global languages over their native dialects. Parents encourage their children to learn English or Hindi for better career opportunities, often at the cost of their mother tongue. Western digital content, including Netflix, YouTube, and Hollywood movies, plays a crucial role in shaping linguistic preferences. Indigenous storytelling traditions, once passed down orally, are now being replaced by globalized media, reducing the relevance of local languages. Many young people from tribal communities migrate to metropolitan cities for education and employment, where they are exposed to mainstream cultures and languages. Over time, they stop using their native language, leading to its gradual disappearance.

This phenomenon aligns with Cultural Imperialism Theory, as it demonstrates how global economic and cultural forces suppress indigenous linguistic diversity. The dominance of English and Hindi marginalizes tribal languages, leading to cultural erosion. This example shows how globalization can contribute to the loss of traditional knowledge and identity, as language is deeply intertwined with cultural practices, folklore, and historical narratives.

In contrast to Cultural Imperialism, the Glocalization Theory, introduced by Roland Robertson (1995), argues that globalization does not lead to a complete erasure of local cultures. Instead, local traditions adapt to global influences, creating a hybrid cultural identity. This process allows communities to integrate modern elements while retaining their core traditional values.

Case Study: The Transformation of Durga Puja and Navaratri in India:

Traditional festivals in India have undergone significant transformations due to globalization. While they remain deeply rooted in cultural and religious beliefs, these festivals have integrated global elements such as corporate sponsorship, digital technology, and international artistic influences. The grand pandal decorations, once purely traditional, now incorporate international artistic styles. Some pandals even showcase themes inspired by Hollywood movies or global historical events. The commercialization of the festival has increased due to multinational brands sponsoring events, leading to a blend of religious devotion and global corporate influence. The digitalization of rituals has allowed people from across the world to participate in Durga Puja through live-streamed ceremonies and virtual darshans, making the festival globally accessible. Traditional Garba and Dandiya Raas performances now incorporate Bollywood music and even Western pop songs, reflecting a fusion of local and global entertainment trends. Global fashion trends have influenced traditional attire. While earlier, women primarily wore handwoven ghagras and odhnis, today, Indo-Western fusion dresses dominate the celebrations. International tourists and Indian diaspora communities have contributed to the festival's globalization, making it a cultural event that extends beyond India.

These examples illustrate Glocalization Theory, as they demonstrate how globalization does not entirely erase traditional customs but rather transforms them into modern hybrid forms. Unlike Cultural Imperialism, where traditions are lost, Glocalization suggests that cultures evolve by blending traditional elements with global influences. Durga Puja and Navaratri remain deeply cultural and religious but now incorporate new technologies, corporate influences, and artistic innovation from global trends.

The analysis of these two theories—Cultural Imperialism and Glocalization—reveals that globalization has a dual impact on traditional practices. On one hand, Cultural Imperialism explains how dominant global cultures suppress indigenous traditions, leading to the loss of languages and cultural knowledge. On the other hand, Glocalization highlights how communities adapt and modify their traditions, making them relevant in the modern world while still preserving their cultural identity.

The case studies of tribal languages in Northeast India and festivals like Durga Puja and Navaratri show how different cultural elements respond to globalization. While languages face a threat due to cultural dominance, traditional festivals demonstrate resilience and adaptation. This study ultimately suggests that the impact of globalization on traditional practices depends on the ability of communities to negotiate their cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

In addition to the dual impact of globalization on traditional practices, government policies and social media play a crucial role in shaping how cultures respond to global influences. While policies can aid in cultural preservation, social media acts as both a catalyst for cultural erosion and a platform for cultural revival. Governments have implemented various policies to safeguard traditional practices, languages, and customs in response to globalization. These policies aim to prevent the complete dominance of global cultural forces by actively promoting local traditions. The Government of India, through the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), has initiated programs to document and revitalize endangered languages, especially those spoken by tribal communities. This includes efforts to introduce bilingual education and digital resources in native languages. The Indian government grants Geographical Indication (GI) tags to traditional handicrafts like Mysore Silk, Kanjeevaram Sarees, Banarasi Sarees, and Pochampally Ikat, preventing large-scale industrial reproduction of these heritage items and ensuring economic benefits for local artisans. Festivals such as the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland receive government sponsorship to promote indigenous tribal traditions. Several cultural sites, like Hampi and Ajanta Caves, are protected under UNESCO's World Heritage Site Program, preventing commercialization and loss of historical significance.

These policies act as countermeasures against Cultural Imperialism, ensuring that globalization does not entirely erase traditional practices. However,

implementation gaps and economic constraints often limit their effectiveness, leading to unequal preservation efforts across different communities.

Social media has emerged as a double-edged sword in the context of cultural globalization. On one hand, it accelerates cultural homogenization by spreading Western ideals, but on the other, it provides a platform for indigenous and local traditions to gain global recognition. Social media promotes Western beauty standards, consumer habits, and entertainment, leading to the dilution of traditional cultural norms. Traditional Indian wedding ceremonies, which once followed regional customs and rituals, are now influenced by global trends due to Pinterest, Instagram, and celebrity culture. The rise of destination weddings, the use of international wedding planners, and the dominance of Western-style gowns over traditional attire in some urban settings reflect cultural shifts. Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok popularize fast fashion, replacing regional handwoven textiles with global brands. Younger generations opt for Western attire over traditional clothing even in cultural events, accelerating the decline of indigenous craftsmanship.

This aligns with the Cultural Imperialism Theory, as dominant global trends shape lifestyle choices, reducing the space for traditional clothing, rituals, and cultural expressions.

Despite its role in cultural erosion, social media has also empowered local communities to revive, promote, and monetize their traditions. Instagram campaigns such as #HandloomRevival and #VocalForLocal have helped artisans and weavers promote traditional clothing like Chikankari, Phulkari, and Madhubani art, bringing global recognition to dying crafts. Government and NGOs use social media platforms to raise awareness about indigenous art, ensuring direct sales to customers and bypassing exploitative middlemen. Tribal activists and cultural organizations now use YouTube channels and podcasts to teach dying languages such as Santali, Gond, and Bhoti, making language learning accessible to the younger generation. Traditional Baul singers from Bengal, Ghoomar dancers from Rajasthan, and Yakshagana performers from Karnataka now showcase their talents on platforms like YouTube and Facebook, allowing them to reach global audiences while sustaining their traditions economically. This aligns with Glocalization Theory, where traditional cultural elements adapt to global digital platforms, ensuring survival and relevance in a rapidly changing world.

Conclusion:

While government policies provide structural support for cultural preservation, social media plays a dynamic role in both eroding and revitalizing traditional practices. The impact of cultural globalization is not uniform—some aspects of traditional culture face decline under global influences, while others adapt and thrive using modern platforms. Cultural Imperialism remains a dominant force where global media and corporate culture overpower indigenous traditions. Glocalization ensures that not all traditions disappear; instead, they evolve by

incorporating modern elements. The role of government and digital platforms is crucial in determining whether globalization will lead to cultural loss or transformation.

Research Gap:

Unexplored Aspects in the Study of Cultural Globalization and Traditional Practices. Despite extensive studies on cultural globalization and its impact on traditional practices, several gaps remain in the existing literature. Most studies on cultural globalization focus on urban and mainstream communities, particularly in metropolitan cities where global influences are more visible. However, there is a lack of research on how globalization affects tribal and rural communities, especially in terms of language loss, shifts in traditional occupations, and changing rituals. A deeper investigation into how tribal communities in Northeast India, Central India (Gond, Bhil, Santhal tribes), and South India (Toda, Irula, and Kurumba tribes) are responding to globalization in their daily practices. More ethnographic field studies examining the role of media, tourism, and migration in shaping indigenous cultural changes. Insufficient Analysis of Social Media's Double-Edged Role Most studies either criticize social media for promoting Westernization or praise it for cultural revival, but few analyze how both forces coexist simultaneously. There is limited empirical research on the specific digital strategies communities use to balance tradition and modernity. How platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok contribute to both cultural loss and preservation in real-world scenarios. More case studies on how traditional artisans, folk musicians, and language preservation activists are leveraging digital platforms to sustain their cultural practices. An in-depth study of the commercialization of culture through influencer marketing and global trends. Current research tends to either focus solely on Western cultural domination or highlight local adaptations, but fewer comparative studies examine How different cultures negotiate globalization differently (e.g., how Indian, African, and Southeast Asian cultures have responded to similar global influences). The role of regional policies vs. grassroots movements in shaping cultural preservation efforts. A comparative study between India and other countries (such as Japan, Korea, or Latin America) to understand how cultural resilience varies across nations. Analyze how government policies in different countries influence the success or failure of traditional preservation efforts. While government initiatives exist to preserve languages, arts, and traditions, there is a lack of research on how effective these policies are at the community level. Do local communities actively engage with government programs, or do they rely more on self-driven preservation efforts (e.g., NGO initiatives, online movements)? A policy impact assessment examining the actual implementation and effectiveness of cultural preservation programs in rural and tribal areas. Studies on community-led cultural revival movements, such as handloom cooperatives, local heritage tourism, and digital storytelling initiatives. New technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and

Augmented Reality (AR) are increasingly used in museums, cultural heritage sites, and digital storytelling. However, little research explores: Whether AI-generated content (e.g., AI-powered traditional music, digital artwork, or virtual heritage tours) helps or dilutes cultural authenticity. How VR/AR can be leveraged to preserve endangered traditions, such as virtual folk performances or immersive storytelling. Empirical studies on how AI and VR are shaping the future of cultural preservation and representation is needed. Ethical considerations of digitizing traditional knowledge, including ownership rights of indigenous intellectual property.

In conclusion, the impact of cultural globalization on traditional practices is a multifaceted and complex process that requires a nuanced understanding of both global influences and local adaptations. By examining the interplay between government policies, social media, and emerging technologies, this research contributes to a broader dialogue on how cultural identities can be preserved and transformed in the face of global pressures. The study highlights the critical role of indigenous and rural communities, whose resilience and creative adaptation ensure the survival of their traditions in a rapidly changing world. Moreover, it underscores the importance of holistic approaches that combine policy-making, digital innovation, and grassroots movements to foster cultural preservation. As globalization continues to shape our interconnected world, it is essential to explore both the challenges and opportunities it presents for safeguarding the diverse cultural heritage that defines humanity.

The existing literature provides a broad understanding of how cultural globalization influences traditional practices, but gaps remain in regional analysis, digital media's dual impact, comparative studies, policy vs. grassroots effectiveness, and emerging technologies. Addressing these gaps will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how traditions can be preserved while adapting to modern influences.

Key Takeaway:

The future of traditional practices in a globalized world depends on how communities, policymakers, and digital platforms negotiate cultural identity. With conscious efforts in policy-making and responsible digital engagement, traditions can be preserved while embracing modernity.

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CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN PREETI SHENOY'S A HUNDRED LITTLE FLAMES

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Abstract

Postmodern Indian society reflects a hybrid culture. Contemporary writers contribute their writings for the welfare of society. India is a country surrounded by vast resources. Indian society is woven with classical and modern traditions. Preeti Shenoy is an eminent and well-known Indian author. Shenoy's "A Hundred Little Flames" clearly depicts Indian tradition, dividing the modern and traditional ways of life. The generation gap is elegantly visible through the characters. Contemporary Indian novels in English frequently delve into diverse themes, including social issues, that reflect the complexities of modern Indian life and culture. Novelists like Preeti Shenoy often explore pressing contemporary issues such as globalization, urbanization, caste, gender, and political corruption, offering a critical perspective on Indian society. Preeti Shenoy's *A Hundred Little Flames* provides a nuanced portrayal of modern Indian society. The novel skillfully captures the erosion of traditional values in urban life, as embodied by the protagonist's inner conflict between conservative roots and modern aspirations. This paper seeks to explore the cultural representation in *A Hundred Little Flames*, examining the intricate dynamics among tradition, modernity, and urbanization in contemporary India.

Keywords: conservative, modernity , urbanization.

Preeti Shenoy is a multifaceted Indian author, speaker, and illustrator. Shenoy began her writing career as a blogger and later published her debut book, *34 Bubblegums and Candies*, a collection of short stories inspired by real-life incidents. Shenoy's subsequent novel, *A Hundred Little Flames*, was published in November 2017. The tension between traditional values and modern city life is indeed a recurring theme in Indian English literature. Many authors have explored this theme, reflecting the complexities of India's rapid modernization and urbanization. Some notable examples of Indian English literature that explore this theme include: Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* (1991), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). These authors, among others, have delved into the tensions between traditional values and modern city life, highlighting the challenges and opportunities that arise from India's rapid transformation.

Preeti Shenoy's *A Hundred Little Flames* (2017) explores the protagonist's struggles to balance traditional values with modern city life. This theme continues to be relevant in contemporary Indian English literature, reflecting the ongoing negotiations between tradition and modernity in Indian society. The landscape is a vital element in evoking a sense of peaceful life. Preeti Shenoy's vivid depiction of Thekka Madom village scenes, with its lush green surroundings and serene ambiance, is exemplary. In Preeti Shenoy's words, with rains, the greenery took on a new hue hitherto unseen, and transformed the scene on front of Gopal Shankar in a water colour painting. The miles and miles of green paddy field stretched out like carpets, contrasting against the endless light blue sky dotted with fluffy white clouds, till the horizon. It was a picture perfect setting, ideal for advertising Kerala as God's Own Country. Anyone who arrived here as a tourist would gasp in delight when they first set eyes on the picturesque scene (HLF17).

Ayan, who was brought up in the city, visits Thekka Madom for the sake of his father, Jairaj. Ayan initially feels a deep sense of alienation when he visits his grandfather's rural village. The sounds, sights, and ways of life in the village feel foreign to him, even though, paradoxically, it is a part of his heritage. This feeling of being an outsider is compounded by his urban mindset, which clashes with the simplicity and traditions of rural life. As a result, the disconnect between his urban upbringing and his rural roots creates a profound sense of confusion, forcing him to re-examine his identity and values. Ayan's disconnection between his past and present leaves him in a state of existential confusion. He struggles to recapture the fragrance of his past, with ancestral roots, cherished memories, and once-familiar sensations now elusive.

Ayan finds himself torn between two worlds that no longer seem to fully accommodate him. The rapid transformation of the technological world exacerbates the mental dilemma of Ayan and his grandfather, Gopal Shankar. Thekke Madom stands as a poignant symbol of cultural identity, embodying the deep-seated traditions and values that have defined Ayan's family for generations. This ancestral home serves as a testament to the family's rich heritage, with its roots in rural customs, rituals, and the timeless ways of the older generation. For Ayan's grandfather, Thekke Madom transcends its physical structure, representing a continuum of tradition, a sacred space where the legacy of their forefathers is cherished and preserved. Steeped in memories, customs, and a profound sense of belonging. Thekke Madom epitomizes an unwavering allegiance to tradition, community, and familial ties that have been painstakingly passed down through generations. Yet, this cultural identity also underscores the inherent tension between preserving one's heritage and embracing the inexorable transformations of the modern world. Ultimately, Ayan's journey of self-discovery is inextricably linked to his evolving relationship with Thekke Madom. As he navigates the complexities of his identity, he must confront the challenge of

honoring his past while forging a path that is distinctly his own, striking a delicate balance between tradition and transformation.

A long, paved cement driveway, flanked on both sides by overgrown hibiscus bushes which were in full bloom, led to Thekke Madom, the ancestral home, where Gopal Shankar and his siblings had grown up in a large joint family along with their many cousins. Little by little, the joint family had disintegrated, with members moving away to different cities to make a living (HLF 19).

Ayan's immersion in urban life exposes him to a myriad of modern ideas, practices, and values, sparking a crisis of cultural identity. The city's diverse lifestyles, career aspirations, and contemporary societal norms collide with the traditional values he was raised with, leaving him perplexed. As he becomes increasingly enamored with urban culture, he begins to question his own beliefs and practices, torn between the comfort of familiarity and the allure of modernity. The city represents a realm of freedom, progress, and opportunity, while his rural roots emphasize the importance of community, tradition, and family ties. This dichotomy creates a profound sense of tension within Ayan, as he struggles to reconcile his desire for a modern identity with his loyalty to the customs and rituals of his upbringing. The difference in values between Ayan and his grandfather highlights the significant cultural changes that have occurred over time. Ayan's grandfather is deeply rooted in tradition and sees cultural practices as sacred and unchanging. In contrast, Ayan, who has been influenced by city life and modern ideas, questions the relevance of these practices. This clash in perspectives creates tension between them. The older and younger generations have different views on life. The older generation values tradition and continuity, while the younger generation prioritizes progress and personal freedom. Ayan's changing perspective clashes with his grandfather's, making it hard for them to understand each other. Ayan sees his grandfather's traditional ways as limiting, while his grandfather thinks Ayan is abandoning their heritage. This conflict reflects a common struggle: balancing traditional values with modern societal norms. Over time, Ayan gains a deeper understanding of his grandfather's perspective and its emotional significance.

In *A Hundred Little Flames*, the urban-rural divide plays a significant role in Ayan's identity crisis. Raised in the city, Ayan is accustomed to a fast-paced, modern lifestyle. However, his visits to his grandfather's rural village introduce him to a slower, more communal way of life, where relationships and traditions matter more than material success. This clash between two worlds forces Ayan to reevaluate his assumptions about both environments. He struggles with the constraints of rural life, yet appreciates its simplicity and connectedness. As he navigates this divide, Ayan must confront the limitations and strengths of each environment and decide where he truly belongs. Ayan's family struggles to preserve traditional practices amidst modernization, reflecting a broader issue: how to honor the past while embracing the

future. As family members adopt modern ways, cherished customs and rituals fade, creating a sense of cultural erosion. Ayan feels disconnected from his past, while his grandfather mourns the loss of traditions.

The conflict between Ayan and his grandfather highlights the generational struggle to balance cultural continuity with modernity's allure. However, as Ayan navigates urbanization's pull, he realizes the importance of preserving traditions, not just as customs, but as markers of shared history and identity. This realization is a turning point for Ayan, helping him understand the significance of cultural practices. Ayan's grandfather feels frustrated and disconnected from his children, who have adopted a modern way of living that he struggles to understand. His daughter has not visited him in years, and his son, who lives in the city, manages everything remotely, including his father's health and the upkeep of the family home, often relying on phone calls to communicate. As Grandfather Gopal Shankar so eloquently expresses, "people like to live in matchboxes, where there is not even a piece of land. you should always live in a structure where you can step out and feel Mother Earth, not be half-suspended like Trishanku in the sky" (HLF 20).

In contrast to his father's materialistic pursuits, Ayan develops a deep appreciation for traditional family values and heritage. He feels a strong sense of responsibility towards his grandfather and wants to care for him. When his father suggests sending his grandfather to the Ashrayam Mental Hospital, Ayan vehemently opposes the idea. Additionally, he prevents his father from selling their ancestral home, Thakka Madom. Through Ayan's character, "A Hundred Little Flames" sheds light on the plight of elderly individuals, highlighting the abandonment and neglect they often face. As Preeti Shenoy poignantly notes, "We have a Senior Citizens Wing. They are mostly patients abandoned by their families" (HLF 152).

Rohini is portrayed as a strong-willed, independent, and free-spirited individual who inspires Ayan, the protagonist, to re-evaluate his life and priorities. She is a symbol of empowerment and embodies the qualities of confidence, resilience, and determination. Rohini, a strong-willed and independent woman, inspires Ayan with her passion for cultural camps and her courage to challenge societal norms. Unlike Ayan, who struggles with traditional expectations, Rohini is confident in her choices and remains true to herself. Her friendship with Ayan broadens his perspective, encouraging him to question his own values and find his own path. Through Rohini's character, the novel highlights the importance of individuality, self-awareness, and embracing one's true identity. Ayan's confrontation with his father marks a significant milestone in his growth and newfound confidence. As he boldly asserts, "All my life I have trusted you... you BETRAYED that TRUST... YOU HAVE LOST me FOREVER" (HLF 354). Ayan demonstrates his ability to stand up for himself and set boundaries, signifying a profound transformation from a submissive and obedient son to a confident and independent individual.

The cultural representation in *A Hundred Little Flames* is poignant in its portrayal of Ayan's journey towards self-discovery and his grandfather's steadfast adherence to tradition. The bond between Ayan and his grandfather serves as a powerful symbol of the importance of preserving cultural heritage and traditional values. Though Ayan's grandfather passes away, his legacy lives on through Ayan, who comes to appreciate the value of their cultural roots and the importance of staying connected to his heritage and community. Ultimately, the novel highlights the significance of intergenerational relationships and the need to honor and preserve cultural traditions.

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Examining the impact of Migration and Identity Issues of the African Diaspora in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

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Abstract

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* explores the migration and identity struggles of the African diaspora, particularly those from third-world countries. This paper examines how characters like Ifemelu and Obinze navigate racial discrimination, cultural displacement, and assimilation in Western societies. Drawing from postcolonial theorists, it highlights the loss of cultural identity and forced adaptation immigrants face. However, Adichie also emphasizes resilience, as seen in Ifemelu's rejection of the American dream in favor of her Nigerian roots. The novel critiques racial biases and the commodification of identity, advocating for cultural preservation and self-acceptance in a globalized world.

Introduction

The novel *Americanah* is written from the perspective of western culture context that shows the identity formation and its related issues of African expatriates. She brings this content via number of characters like Ifemelu, Obinze, Uju and many more native African characters. This story touches the lands of Nigeria, America and England. Many African fictions talked about the sufferings of slavery and colonization. This work collectively mentions the issues of expatriates under post colonial atmosphere. This covers racism, inequality, displacement of culture and identity crisis. Apart from many research papers, Adichie clearly projected the impact of migration and identity issues of black people from the third world countries.

This paper is about the challenges faced by the characters found in *Americanah*. That is based on the concept of identity challenges of black people who live in America for the purpose of work as well as higher studies. Adichie clearly projected the issues like cultural shock and racial inequalities faced by African immigrants from the first world countries that exist even in twenty first century. People from Israel and other European countries merely face such difficulties but not up to the level of people from third world countries. So that the context of 'diaspora' and 'identity' carry different meaning for the people from such poor countries. There they experience the identity issue after making migration from their country. So this paper is focusing on identity issues experienced by the people who left their roots and culture in their mother land because of poverty, civil war and terrorism. In their mother land, native people would be poor due to their economical condition but they never experience any cultural inferiority since they live among their own community. They would never feel about isolated in the name of colour, culture and language.

Diaspora in Context: Migration and Identity

From the language of Greek, this word 'diaspora' is derived. This word actually denotes the practice of throwing seeds over vast land. This act of throwing seeds would produce plants not in uniform way as farmers do in agriculture. So that various plants shall be found in random order. This can be compared with the lives of people who settled in various countries without having any proper country for them. Here every one can remember Israelites who once tormented over many centuries. After Elizabethan period, the process of colonization made many civilians as refugees and they were forced to be either as slave or as rebellions. So the term 'Diaspora' developed into many contexts through the description of post colonial writers and critics such as the integration of multi culture, searching the real identity in a world that is moving towards globalization.

After the era of industrial revolution, colonization, the working class people started to question their existence and tried to find their real identity out of materialistic culture. This search is about answering to the questions such as "Who am I? and "Where do I belong?" (Columbus, 2019). The search for identity started to expand its branches in different categories such as gender, race, and also language. From Latin, the word 'identitas' is derived. In English, this word is used to identify a person as who he is or what kind of a person he is. At present these terms are associated with large number of people who belong to same community, country and territory. Thus the terms are born like addressing people as 'Indian', 'American', 'Russian' and 'African'. (Hogg, 2014). Academic discussions on identity have evolved through three distinct levels: people who are looking for enlightenment as their identity, the common centralized social identity, and the decentralized identity that emerged in post-modern period. Over time, however, the focus shifted towards understanding identity in the context of societal influences. This change was largely shaped by thinkers like communist philosopher Marx, and many more post-WWII theorists, who highlighted the significant role of different platforms and structures in the general society in the formation of identity (Hogg, 2014). At present, the term identity is not static but changing due to materialistic consumer culture. Possessing wealth eradicates all types of inferior things in any society. (Baumann, 2013).

The Identity issues of African Diaspora found in *Americanah*

Erik Erikson in his work *Identity: Youth and Crisis* used the term 'identity crisis' to state the destroyed values of one person's identity. (Erikson, 1968). In some cases, some set of community or race feel as isolated or alienated when they are not able to tolerate the suppression of particular community or race that is found in major number in a particular territory or a country. A person or community is closely associated with their language and culture. However, exposure to unfamiliar environments often heightens self-awareness and stirs deep emotions during the intervention of foreign culture over native culture. For those in the diaspora, these challenges become more pronounced, leading to face psychological pressure when they are not able to adopt themselves. Edward Said portrays the act of exile as an agonizing yearning for one's native country, a sentiment perfectly reflected in literature that talked about diasporic issues (Said, 2000). Works such as *Americanah* highlight the identity struggles and search for belonging faced by African migrants in foreign societies.

The main issues faced by the third world country people are stress that makes an impact in their mental health and the question of existence because of disconnected culture. This reflects in economy, language and ill-treatment. To make a sustainable life in American land, Ifemelu had to adapt the new American culture by rejecting her roots once placed in Africa. There is no freedom to these third world people to follow their desires instead they are forced to compromise their expectations. They are instructed to reflect the superior society culture and behavior as a mirror to be treated as one among them. Foucault's perspective on the influence of societal power over identity highlights the limitations experienced by individuals in the diaspora (Foucault, 1977).

African immigrants can compromise themselves in their culture, language and dress code but not with their names. Their name would reveal their true identity and make an uncomfortable atmosphere in a foreign land where their culture is treated as inferior. So some immigrants have to hide their real name to survive there with their false identity. (Saussure, 2011). This is considered as a sad practice that they have to abandon their culture, food habit, religious practice and name also. They are not given any choices to live their life as they wish to live in first world countries. In order to avoid racial discrimination, Uju in *Americanah* had to modify her true Nigerian identity as she had to be accepted in her working place. This continues to their children also when they have to move with native American students. The expectation of western countries over African people is projected through the relationship of Ifemelu with Curt and Brain. Here Adichie talks about the interracial issues and its treatment between a black girl and a white guy.

Reconstructing the true Identity of Diaspora

Many African diaspora who settled well in western countries many years ago, still address their native country as "homeland" (Berry, et al, 2023) instead of the country where they settled. This is similar to Srilankan Tamil people remember their birth place even though they have settled in European countries, USA and Canada. However, Adichie exactly touches the act of reconstructing the identity of African diaspora in her *Americanah*. While choosing the language paper in the school, Uju chooses English instead of Igbo language. Though the government has given a freedom of choice, she has to select the second tongue since her children has to survive in that country. Thus the true identity of the younger generation of Africa is detached. This can be applied over the children of Indian parents who settled in America many years ago. All these identity reconstruction would be practiced over the first generation children of African diaspora only, after many generation they may carry the reconstructed identity of first world only. The novel underscores the strength and determination of characters like Ifemelu, who upholds her Nigerian roots despite the pressures to assimilate and the racism she encounters in the United States. Her decision to return to Nigeria questions the conventional idea that success is defined by American standards, highlighting her deep and unbreakable bond with her native country. This is where people can understand the difference between "community" and "society". (Tonnies, 2001). One is specific and another one is general. In this novel, Ifemelu runs a blog to expose the racial discrimination of US over African diaspora. This is an example that how these African diaspora would like to share their emotions as a community and not as a part of first world society. So,

Adichie beautifully establishes the importance and values of being connected with African heritage that is necessary for identity. This can be addressed as racial consciousness. In post modern world, culture and identity is commercialized as a product in materialistic world. That's why business sectors, foreign universities are making new platforms to support multi-culture contexts. Adichie's style of narrative is trying to establish a new culture that is adapting diaspora through their community and language to respect their identity instead of imposing unfamiliar language and religious practice to them. The concept of "Subaltern" (Spivak, 2000) is exercised by Ifemelu's character that is recovering the values of lost identity can be done through by protecting the mother tongue. Ifemelu's character gets this awakening when she interacts with Kimberly who is her employer.

Conclusion

The title of the fiction is *Americanah* where as Ifemelu's character gets rest after leaving her American dream or Americanized dream which is not her pursuit of happiness. Her quest ends after embracing her true identity from where she was born. Throughout her blog posts, Adichie makes awareness about cultural and racial discrimination of first world countries. Even the native black Americans are treated well than the African immigrants. They are simply identified as 'Others' from the perspective of native Americans. That's why these immigrants have to carry 'double identity' in their life while they live in foreign soil. Gradually they possess hybrid identity and forget themselves as a diaspora. However, Adichie's characters are not choosing that path, instead they choose the less used path that is reinventing their identity. Adichie's other works like *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* also talk about race, gender inequality, and class issues. As a writer, Adichie has overcome 'xenophobia' and projected herself as a writer with proper Nigerian identity instead of Americanized identity. *Americanah* explores the importance of reclaiming African identity from dominant Western narratives that often obscure the continent's authentic representation. As a third-generation African writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie plays a vital role in reinvigorating African literature. She challenges the dominance of Western perspectives, bringing Africa and its diaspora into global literary conversations. Her work, along with that of renowned authors like Nobel laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah, highlights the rising influence of African voices in literature. These writers provide fresh insights and contribute to reshaping discussions on African and Black identity in a global context.

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EXPLORING ETHICAL CONFLICTS AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN JODI PICOULT'S MY SISTER'S KEEPER

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Abstract

The novel *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult explores the intricate moral and emotional terrain of ethical dilemmas within familial relationships. The book's main character is Anna Fitzgerald, a young child who was conceived as a genetic match to provide her sister Kate with life-saving treatments for her sickness. After growing up and running into an ethical dilemma with her role as a donor, Anna asks her parents for medical independence.

This critical analysis examines the moral implications of medical autonomy, parental decision-making, and the concept of bodily ownership, especially in light of familial responsibilities. Through a multi-narrative structure, Picoult asks readers to reflect on the competing moralities of love, selflessness, and free will, shedding light on how these ideas affect the relationships within the Fitzgerald family. This essay examines how the book compels readers to think about the complex interrelationship between individual liberties and the moral and emotional responsibilities of family members. Ultimately, *My Sister's Keeper* highlights the fuzziness of right and wrong in situations where life or death is at risk, challenging readers to reevaluate the interactions between medical ethics, familial bonds, and personal agency.

Keywords: Family dynamics, moral conflicts, medical ethics, and personal choice.

Moral dilemma: should an individual, regardless of age, have the authority to decide their own destiny regarding their physical form?

In *My Sister's Keeper*, the moral complexities of love, selflessness, and free will are all interwoven. Through the use of the multi-narrative framework, Picoult offers three different perspectives on the same issue: that of a young child who yearns for independence, parents who adore Kate, and a sister who feels bound to her

brother. Through Anna's trip, the novel asks readers to consider the contradictions in the moral choices that people must make when lives are at stake. Characters are forced to weigh the needs of others against their own, which blurs the definition of selflessness.

Selflessness for Anna entails putting up with excruciating medical procedures to ensure her sister's existence, but as she gets more conscious of her own needs and independence, this selflessness becomes more challenging to uphold. When it becomes difficult to distinguish between self-preservation and self-sacrifice, the emotional complexity of love, whether it be love for a kid or a sibling, is called into doubt.

Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper* are readers to think about the relationship between individual liberty, family duty, and moral quandaries that emerge in life-or-death circumstances. The moral and emotional challenges that family members have when juggling their responsibilities to one another are explored by Picoult through Anna's quest for medical emancipation. The narrative ultimately compels us to face the ambiguities of morality, where choices must be made between one child's life and the love and welfare of another. *My Sister's Keeper* challenges readers to consider the inherent tension between medical ethics, parental decisions, and personal liberties in a society where these forces frequently clash, as well as the intricacy of human connections in the face of illness and suffering.

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TRAUMATIC STATE OF AFGHAN WOMEN IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S NOVEL A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

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Abstract

In this paper, I would like to explain about the struggle of women in Afghanistan, especially the characters of Mariam and Laila. I have selected the novel A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini. Hosseini is the very prominent Afghan born American writer. In this novel, he beautifully portrays the characters and the incidents belong to the Afghan society especially the women characters of his native land. It explores the lives of two unfortunate Afghan women, Both Mariam and Laila are from different family backgrounds, culture and decades even though they forced to become as a member of a same household. They shared their lives together. They struggled a lot as being born as women. The lives of Afghan women have seen three critical eras in Afghanistan history which have affected the status of Afghan women. This novel is a tale about the illness character of strong men and natural strength of weak women. They suffer from domestic violence and yet find love, companionship and consolation from each other. Afghan women were still voiceless and faceless until Khaled Hosseini broke up the silence with the story of Mariam and Laila through their troublesome lives in A Thousand Splendid Suns.

Keywords: Afghan Women, Struggle, Sufferings, Trauma and Violence.

Under the Taliban regime, Afghan women were denied education, right to work, right to move freely, access to adequate healthcare, etc. From the nineteenth century and through the twentieth century, the rulers of Afghanistan consistently attempted to lessen women's restrictions in the country. Throughout the 20th century, Afghanistan continued to be a country dominated by tribes and also men continued to have ultimate control over women. The lives of Afghan women have seen three critical eras in Afghan history that have affected the status of women in Afghanistan.

In Afghan society, a woman's role is dictated by societal rules which portray women as lesser individuals compared to their male counterpart. Women are considered untrustworthy without reasonable cause. Women symbolize honour of family, community and nation and must be controlled as well as protected. So they can maintain their moral purity. Not allowed to raise eyes towards men or make eye

contact with them. They may never come in direct contact with men. A woman must dress properly without showing skin. Not allowed to laugh loudly.

Attention women:

You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by amahram, a male relative. If you are caught alone on the street, you will be beaten and sent home.

You will not, under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be severely beaten.

Cosmetics are forbidden.

Jewelry is forbidden.

You will not wear charming clothes.

You will not speak unless spoken to.

You will not make eye contact with men.

You will not laugh in public. If you do, you will be beaten.

You will not paint your nails. If you do, you will lose a finger.

Girls are forbidden from attending school. All schools for girls will be closed immediately.

Women are forbidden from working.

If you are found guilty of adultery, you will be stoned to death

Listen. Listen well. Obey. Allah-u-akbar. (270-271)

Though the religion of Islam demands that men and women be equal before law, Afghan women have always been denied many of their lawful rights and their lives have been circumscribed behind the veil. Women were forced to wear a burqa in public places to cover their entire body. They are extremely hot to wear and hard to breathe in. Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* not only chronicles the violent of Afghanistan during three decades but also records the plight of women before and during the Taliban era.

In Afghanistan, achieving equal rights for women has always been a complicated one. Their conditions depend on where they live. In rural areas, the question of female employment and education has not been an issue. Khaled Hosseini in his novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has depicted the pitiable conditions of women living in Afghanistan. In this novel, Hosseini beautifully portrayed the culture that exists in Afghanistan. He brings out the strict Islamic laws practiced by Afghan women and the torture they tolerate in daily life. *Thousand Splendid Suns* follows two Afghan women, born two decades apart, whose lives are brought together through a series of largely tragic events

Mariam and Nana lived in the four walls without knowing anything that was happening outside the world. After Nana's death, Mariam started to live in the house of his father Jalil. She was stranger there and felt lonely in the midst of crowd. She felt as if she did not belong there, and remembered her mother's words, "I'm the only

one who loves you. I'm all you have in this world, Mariam, and when I'm gone you'll have nothing. You'll have nothing. You are nothing!" (TSS, 27). She was a burden on Jalil and his other three wives. So, they find a suitor, Rasheed, for her who was thrice aged than she was. She did not want to marry such a man, who was already once married. She cried for help but no one listened her. She was forced to accept and hug this tragedy of forced marriage.

A Thousand Splendid Suns follows the lives of Mariam and Laila, the two wives of the brutal and misogynistic Rasheed. Mariam, the illegitimate daughter of an outcast mother, weds the middle-aged Rasheed at the age of fifteen after her mother's suicide. Her father arranges her marriage when his high-ranking family demands that his embarrassment be sent away. Eighteen years and multiple miscarriages later, Mariam becomes a constant target of abuse from Rasheed. The women characters in this novel suppress all their feelings. Mariam endures a lot while Laila tries to raise her voice.

The novel is a tale about the frailty character of strong men and innate strength of frail women. It explores the lives of two unfortunate Afghan women who belong to totally different backgrounds, and are forced to share the same unhappy household. Their tragedies, unwavering endurances, sacrifices, cruelty, rejection by their families and their brutal husband is narrated. They suffer from domestic violence and yet find love, companionship and consolation from each other.

In the Afghan society, women have very different educational experiences. They are not allowed to learn and Mariam's case is no different. She is tutored by Mullah Faizullah only in the Koran and she learns how to read and write. When she asks her mother about going to school, her mother insists that the only lesson that she needs to learn is how to endure. Ultimately, throughout the rest of the novel, Mariam's capacity for endurance is what allows her to survive the horrible conditions and depressing personal losses.

Though initially, Mariam's marriage and the start of their new lives did not seem so terrible, providing an element of hope, but as days passed, things started to worsen. Rasheed was not a kind husband. In the beginning he was happy to have another person in his house especially after the wedding he changed completely. Mariam's miscarriages add to her woes. Rasheed's behavior towards her was reasonably good till Mariam had a miscarriage. She is unable to bear a child due to several miscarriages. With each miscarriage, Rasheed's behavior becomes more brutal, inhuman and distant.

Mariam's permission is not sought when Rasheed marries Laila. In Afghan society, rules are framed in full favour of men. They are allowed to marry many times as they please and can also divorce their wives when they fall out of favour. Like other woman, Mariam too suffers from similar situation. Her psychological trauma is further increased when she sees Laila sharing her life with Rasheed. She feels unwanted in her husband's house, a condition she had experienced in her father's

house. But at the same time, Mariam is grateful to her husband for not throwing her out of the house. Hosseini paints the picture of male dominated society where girls are hated and no more considered worthwhile.

One evening, Rasheed takes the rice, chews it once and promptly spits it out. He shakes the rice angrily from his fingers and pushes the plate away and storms out of the house. He returns with a handful of pebbles and forces her mouth open and stuffs them in and then orders her to chew the pebbles. Through the mouthful of grit and pebbles, Mariam mumbles a plea. Tears leak out of the concerns of her eyes. In her fear, she does so, breaking the molars in the back of her mouth. He tells her, "Now you know what your rice tastes like. Now you know what you've given me in this marriage. Bad food and nothing else"(94). Then he goes away, leaving Mariam to spit out pebbles, blood, and the fragments of two broken molars.

Mariam's initial anger with Laila is quite natural because she is robbed off her only role in life. Her identity as Rasheed's wife is threatened when a new person enters her life. When she comes to know that Laila is pregnant, she feels inferior to her. Laila lives with varieties of struggle, more bombings, beatings and arguments fill their life. They start fighting even for simple things, but this fight serves as a device to bring them together. Slowly, a friendship develops between the two women. Together, they endure degradation, starvation and brutality at the hands of their husband.

When Laila's second pregnancy makes her and Mariam visit the hospital, they are forced to travel around Kabul due to the shifting of the hospital system, separating men and women into separate hospitals. Only the female staff has been discharged from Kabul's hospitals and there is no clean water, no oxygen, no medicines, and even no electricity. The hospital waiting room is closely packed by women patients and their families. Mariam helps Laila sit down against a wall and assures her that she will be examined by a doctor.

While fighting through the crowd in the waiting room to reach the registration window, Mariam realizes the sacrifices made by a mother. The nurse there informs them that there are only two doctors working in the hospital and they are busy in operations. They have to wait most of the day, in the evening they are called inside and Laila is finally examined by a doctor, wearing a long dark burqa. After examining her closely, she tells Laila that she needs an immediate caesarian section because the baby is breeched and they are late. But there is no anesthesia available for the procedure.

When Laila knows about the lack of anesthesia and that any further delay can harm the baby, Laila just asks the doctor, "Cut me open and give me my baby" (TSS, 259). The doctor goes ahead with the procedure. Laila has to give up her little daughter, Aziza, and put her in an orphanage because Rasheed is unable to feed them all and the girl child is forced to go there. When they place her in the orphanage, Laila and Mariam promise to visit her regularly. In the beginning of Aziza's stay at the

orphanage, Rasheed walks with Mariam, Laila, and Zalmai to the orphanage to visit for 15 minutes. Sometimes, Rasheed starts walking and forces all of them to turn around because he does not want to walk. Then Rasheed begins refusing to go at all.

Women are not allowed out on the streets without a man to accompany them. If they are caught they are beaten and sent home. Since her husband refuses to go with her to visit the child, Laila sneaks out alone. She is often beaten by the Taliban for walking alone. One day a young Taliban beats Laila with a radio antenna. The burqas often protect from the beatings.

One night, Rasheed beats Laila and locks the children up in the room. He puts a gun into Laila's mouth and Mariam tries her best to move him, but she fails. Suddenly, Mariam shows extreme courage when she runs to the back shed to grab a shovel and uses it to murder her violent husband of almost thirty years in order to save Laila.

In the novel, both the women face a lot of difficulties and struggles in their life that every woman faces in Afghan society. Through this novel, Hosseini pictures the real problems of Afghan society. Struggle is a major unifying concept of Hosseini's works. They fight till the end but they never give up. Among other problems rape is one of the biggest problems faced by women in Afghanistan. An article published in Washington Post says, "One of the biggest problems at the camps is when the women go out to gather firewood to cook, and they get attacked and raped" (15).

Khaled Hosseini describes in the novel is really unfortunate not for women only but for humanity at large. The Afghan women are really fighting for their existence of being born women. Khaled Hosseini's canvas is large and beautiful. Hosseini has created the male-dominated patriarchal Muslim world of Afghanistan where women are depressed of equality and freedom.

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Between Two Worlds: Exploring Cultural Trauma in the Wake of Colonialism in Sea of Poppies

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* is a historical novel set during the early 19th century. It explores the effects of British colonialism on various communities in India. At the heart of the novel are characters whose lives are deeply affected by the systemic exploitation, displacement, and identity crises brought on by the British colonial presence in India. The central characters of the novel Deeti, and Paulette undergo profound cultural trauma as they grapple with colonial oppression, forced migration, and a clash of identities. This paper examines how these central characters experience and embody cultural trauma within the context of colonial India, focusing on the socio-economic disruptions caused by the opium trade, forced displacement, and the psychological effects of living under British rule.

Keywords: displacement, trauma, exploitation, imperialism and oppression.

In *Sea of Poppies*, Amitav Ghosh explores the multifaceted impact of colonialism on individuals and communities. Set in the early 19th century during the British opium trade, the novel reveals the profound cultural trauma caused by British imperialist policies. Ghosh's portrayal of characters from diverse social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds offers a nuanced exploration of the psychological, emotional, and cultural upheavals inflicted upon them by colonial rule. In particular, the forced cultivation of opium, displacement, and migration, alongside a fractured sense of identity, are central to understanding the trauma experienced by the characters.

The British Empire's exploitation of India, particularly through the forced cultivation of opium, is the central element of cultural trauma in the novel. The British demanded the Indian peasants to grow opium instead of the cash crops. They then exported it to China and minted huge profit. They enriched the colonial power at the expense of the Indian populace. The characters in the novel were bitterly trapped in the consequences of the exploitative system. They were forced to encounter the economic and psychological burdens imposed by British imperialism.

Deeti is one of the central characters of the novel. All through her life, she faced hardships because of the colonial rule. Initially a village woman, Deeti's life is upended by the opium trade. Her opium addict husband is a crippled and he works at opium factory. Deeti singlehandedly managed the household chores and opium cultivation. Her character is often used to symbolise the struggle for personal freedom

and independence. Though she is a devoted mother and a diligent wife, Deeti faces immense physical and emotional hardships at home.

But what sane person would want to multiply these labours when there were better, more useful crops to grow, like wheat, dal, vegetables? But those toothsome winter crops were steadily shrinking in acreage: now the factory's appetite for opium seemed never to be sated. Come the cold weather, the English sahibs would allow little else to be planted; their agents would go from home to home, forcing cash advances on the farmers, making them sign asámi contracts. It was impossible to say no to them. (29)

The opium trade symbolises the wider impact of British colonialism, which disrupts local economies, robs people of their autonomy, and imposes foreign values. The British not only exploit India's resources but also enforce a system that dehumanises its subjects. As Deeti's experience illustrates, the traumatic effects of colonial policies are personal and profound, with the loss of traditional ways of life leading to both physical and cultural disintegration.

Ghosh demonstrates the extent to which colonialism displaces individuals and communities, both literally and figuratively. The novel follows several characters, including Deeti, who are forced to leave their homeland as a result of the British imperialist system. These migrants experience not only the loss of their homes and communities but also a profound disconnection from their cultural roots.

Deeti's forced migration aboard the ship, *Ibis* represents the physical displacement faced by many individuals under colonial rule. The passage clearly reveals the hesitations of Deeti:

The sensation of a full stomach had made Deeti groggy enough to hear Kalua out in silence, but now, her head boiled over with the heat of many inadmissible fears and she jumped to her feet in agitation. How could he imagine that she would agree to abandon her daughter forever? How could he conceive that she would go to a place which was, for all she knew, inhabited by demons and pishaches, not to speak of all kinds of unnameable beasts? (163)

The cultural trauma of forced migration is compounded by the uncertainty of the future and the inescapability of the colonial system that has stripped her of agency.

Ghosh presents migration as a process of hybridization, where characters are forced to navigate between conflicting cultural identities. The characters, like Deeti, who embark on long journeys are not only geographically displaced but also culturally displaced. As they move through different colonial spaces, they must adjust to new social orders, languages, and practices. The trauma of displacement thus becomes a trauma of cultural rupture, where individuals must adapt to new worlds that threaten their traditional ways of life. Tony Walsh rightly said: "To become a refugee is to become dislocated, often separates violently from home, loved ones,

work and community, and from all that is familiar and predictable. Physical, cultural, psychological and emotional displacement is the heart of the experience”(8).

The displacement experienced by the characters in the novel is further compounded by an identity crisis rooted in cultural hybridity. The forced movement of people across different colonial territories creates a complex interplay of identities, as individuals are exposed to multiple cultures, languages, and social structures. This hybridity, while a sign of resilience, also contributes to cultural trauma, as characters struggle to reconcile their past identities with the new, often hostile, environments they encounter.

Paulette, a French orphan raised in India, is another character who experiences this identity crisis. Although she is not forced into migration in the same way as Deeti, Paulette’s hybridity results from her upbringing in India and her subsequent relocation to Mauritius. Her experience reveals the dissonance between her French heritage and the Indian culture she has come to embrace. Paulette’s experience reflects the psychological dislocation of individuals caught between cultures, unable to fully belong to either.

Paulette’s life begins with a sense of displacement. She is the daughter of a French botanist who lived in India, but after his death, Paulette is left to navigate the world alone. She faces the challenge of balancing her European heritage with the Indian environment around her. Although she speaks French and is connected to her French roots, she is raised in India and understands the local language and customs. This duality makes her feel disconnected from both cultures, as she does not fully belong to either.

The identity crisis is exacerbated by the imposition of colonial power, which dictates the terms of cultural interaction. Paulette’s hybridity is not a choice but a result of the colonial context in which she is forced to navigate multiple identities. Ghosh illustrates that colonialism does not simply affect the material aspects of life but also imposes a deep psychological trauma, as individuals are caught in the tensions between cultures, unable to fully claim one as their own. Despite her position as a French woman, Paulette experiences discrimination because of the colonial system that labels her as "other" due to her foreignness and social status.

Paulette had laboured hard to behave and speak exactly as she should, but not always with success. Just the other day, in referring to the crew of a boat, she had proudly used a newly learnt English word: 'cock-swain'. But instead of earning accolades, the word had provoked a disapproving frown. (105)

Paulette’s journey on the Ibis ultimately leads her to a deeper understanding of the oppression that defines the colonial system. Through her interactions with other passengers, including the indentured labourers and the crew, she begins to see the world through a different lens. Paulette begins to feel empathy for those who are oppressed by the system that also shapes her life, and she understands the broader consequences of colonialism. Her growth on board the ship is not only emotional but

intellectual as well, as she gains awareness of the colonial exploitation that defines her world.

Paulette's time on the *Ibis* is transformative. It is a space where she confronts the colonial structures that have defined her life, forms new relationships that challenge social norms, and begins to forge a path toward self-empowerment. Her journey on the ship is both a literal and metaphorical passage toward self-realization, freedom, and a deeper understanding of the world around her. Through this voyage, Paulette moves from a place of confusion and displacement to one of greater clarity and strength.

Ghosh's narrative strategy suggests that memory and language are intimately connected to cultural trauma. The trauma of colonialism is not just a historical event but is encoded in the memories and linguistic practices of the characters. These elements work together to create a narrative that emphasizes the long-lasting psychological effects of colonial domination.

In *Sea of Poppies* Amitav Ghosh masterfully explores the theme of cultural trauma through the experiences of his characters, who are deeply affected by colonial exploitation, displacement, and the fractured identities imposed upon them by the British Empire. The novel's portrayal of forced migration, and hybridity highlights the ways in which colonialism dehumanizes individuals and disrupts cultural traditions. Through his multifaceted depiction of cultural trauma, Ghosh demonstrates how colonialism continues to shape the lives of its subjects, leaving an indelible mark on their identities and memories. The novel serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring impact of colonialism on both personal and collective levels.

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**ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE IMAGINED: MELUHA AS LITERARY
RECONSTRUCTION OF THE INDUS VALLEY IN AMISH
TRIPATHI'S THE IMMORTALS OF MELUHA**

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Abstract

Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010) presents a fictionalized yet

compelling reconstruction of the Indus Valley Civilization through the imagined world of Meluha. While archaeological findings provide limited insights into the social, political, and cultural structures of the IVC, Tripathi blends historical speculation, mythological adaptation, and modern sensibilities to create a narrative that bridges history and fiction. This paper critically examines *The Immortals of Meluha* as a form of literary archaeology, analyzing its reimagining of Indus Valley urbanism, governance, and scientific advancements through elements such as the meticulously planned cityscape, the caste-like meritocratic system, and the mythologized Somras. Furthermore, it explores the ideological implications of Tripathi's portrayal, particularly in relation to nationalist narratives and the politics of historical representation. By positioning Meluha as a site of imagined antiquity, the novel invites readers to engage with history not as an absolute reality but as a dynamic construct shaped by cultural memory and literary creativity. This study argues that while Tripathi's work does not claim historical accuracy, it serves as a significant cultural text that reflects contemporary India's engagement with its past, blending mythology and history into a speculative yet deeply resonant literary construct.

Keywords: Indus Valley Civilization, literary archaeology, mytho-historical fiction, cultural memory, historical reconstruction.

History, when intertwined with mythology, produces narratives that resonate beyond the confines of time and documented fact. Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010) stands at this fascinating crossroads, where archaeology meets imagination to reconstruct a lost civilization. In the absence

of a deciphered script or substantial textual evidence, the Indus Valley Civilization remains an enigma, open to interpretation. Tripathi's Meluha is not a historical retelling but a literary reimagination, where fiction serves as a bridge between what we know and what we can speculate. This article critically examines how *The Immortals of Meluha* reconstructs the Indus Valley Civilization, exploring its narrative techniques, ideological undertones, and the balance between historical fidelity and creative liberty.

Tripathi's depiction of Meluha as a highly advanced, structured society closely mirrors the archaeological findings from Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The hallmark features of Indus Valley Civilization —planned urban grids, intricate drainage systems, and standardized architecture—are seamlessly woven into the fictional Meluha, giving it an air of authenticity. However, what sets Tripathi apart is his transformation of this ancient setting into a living, functioning society rather than a mere relic of the past. Myths are used for shaping the lives of people to teach the moral lessons and shape the conduct of human beings. As M.H. Abrams in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms* comments in this context:

... a system of which hereditary stories of ancient origin were once believed to be true by a particular group, and which served to explain why the world as it is and things happen as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances and to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives. (230)

By attributing governance, philosophy, and scientific progress to Meluha, he revitalizes a civilization that history has rendered silent. The depiction of a meritocratic, efficient system, governed by the rule of law and scientific advancements such as the Somras, positions Meluha as an idealized reflection of what the Indus Valley might have been. In the novel, Tripathi writes about Srinagar:

Srinagar had been raised upon a massive platform of almost a hundred hectares in size. The platform built of earth, towered almost five metres high. On top of the platform were the city walls, which were another twenty metres high and four metres thick. The simplicity and brilliance of building an entire city on a platform astounded the Gunas. It was a strong protection against enemies who would have to fight their way up a fort wall which was essentially solid ground.

The platform served another vital purpose: it raised the ground level of the city, an extremely effective strategy against the recurrent floods in

this land. Inside the fort walls, the city was divided into blocks by roads laid out in a neat grid pattern. It had specially constructed market areas, temples, gardens, meeting halls and everything else that would be required for sophisticated urban living. All the houses looked like simple multiple-storeyed block structures from the outside. The only way to differentiate a rich man's house from that of a poor man's, was that his block would be bigger. (The Immortals of Meluha, 11)

Tripathi's most innovative narrative device is his portrayal of Shiva—not as a god, but as a man who earns his divinity. By transforming Shiva from a mythic deity into a flesh-and-blood warrior from Tibet, Tripathi disrupts the conventional understanding of mythology and repositions it within the realm of historical fiction. This move serves a dual purpose: it humanizes mythology while lending credibility to the idea that legends are often rooted in historical truths. The narrative of an outsider entering an advanced civilization and reshaping its destiny is a recurring motif in historical discourse, echoing figures such as Alexander the Great or Chandragupta Maurya.

The novel presents a stark contrast between Meluha, the disciplined and structured state, and Swadweep, the chaotic yet vibrant society. This dichotomy serves as more than just a narrative conflict; it reflects historical debates about the transition from early urban civilizations to later, more dynamic political entities. Meluha's rigid legalism, though efficient, leads to stagnation, whereas Swadweep's fluid, decentralized governance fosters creativity but also disorder. This contrast invites readers to question whether civilization is best preserved through order or adaptability, mirroring modern discussions on governance and societal evolution. The religious and cultural elements woven into the landscape add layers of meaning, transforming Meluha into a microcosm of timeless philosophical inquiries. Through this symbolic landscape, Tripathi invites readers to explore not only the fictional world he has crafted but also the profound themes that resonate with the human experience across cultures and epochs. M.H. Abrams in the book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* exclaims: In the broadest sense a symbol is anything which signifies something; in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term 'symbol' is applied only to a word or to a phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or suggests a range of reference, beyond itself. (320)

Tripathi's work can be classified as a form of literary archaeology—excavating historical fragments and assembling them into a coherent, though speculative, narrative. The use of contemporary language and modern analogies may seem anachronistic, yet they serve an essential function: making ancient history accessible to a modern audience. By applying corporate structures, military hierarchies, and even elements of bureaucratic governance to Meluha, Tripathi ensures that readers can relate to an otherwise distant past. This technique, while criticized for its lack of historical purism, effectively transforms history into a living, breathing entity rather than an academic abstraction. As Tripathi writes:

‘Oh no, my friend! The quarters are more than comfortable. They are beyond anything that we could have imagined. What say Maus?’ grinned Shiva at Bhadra’s mother, before turning back to Chitraangadh with a frown. ‘But why the quarantine?’ Nandi cut in. ‘Shiva, the quarantine is just a precaution. We don’t have too many diseases in Meluha. Sometimes, immigrants may come in with new diseases. During this seven-day period, the doctors will observe and cure you of any such ailments.’ (The Immortals of Meluha, 16)

A critical examination of *The Immortals of Meluha* cannot ignore its ideological undertones. The novel subtly aligns with nationalist narratives that seek to reclaim India's past glory, emphasizing indigenous scientific advancements and socio-political structures.

This is particularly relevant in the context of ongoing debates about the Aryan migration theory, where Tripathi's vision of Meluha as a harmonious, pre-Aryan society challenges colonial historiographies. While not overtly political, the novel contributes to the broader discourse on cultural identity, positioning Indian mythology and history as sources of national pride. As Mary Lefkowitz writes:

Mythical historiography ... is presented always as if it were the real thing. Its authors usually prefer not to reveal that they are the inventors of their narratives. Either they are anonymous or, like Plato, attribute the story to someone else, preferably to a dead person or foreigner who cannot be questioned, and set it in a remote or indefinite past, like the authentic myths which it mimics. Composers of mythical historiographers often cite documents that are lost or cannot be easily traced as the primary sources of their information. (358)

The Immortals of Meluha is not a historical text, nor does it claim to be one. Yet, it performs an essential function: it invites readers to engage with history beyond textbooks and archaeological sites. By merging fact with fiction, the novel offers a unique lens through which the Indus Valley Civilization can be reimagined—not as a distant, extinct culture but as a vibrant, evolving narrative. In doing so, it challenges the notion that history is solely the domain of scholars, proving that sometimes, the imagined past can illuminate truths that the historical record cannot fully capture.

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Vikram Chandra's Sacred Games: An Ecocritical Reading

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Abstract

This article gives insight into the ways in which enforcement and institutional vigilante activities portrayed in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* foreshadow the urban thicket of garbage dump yards and slum dwellings. The text will be analyzed from an ecocritical perspective to establish aspects of slow violence and its explicit and implicit results. Chandra's plotline, regarding several entangled human tragedies against the background of refuse, urges a study of the novel through the lens of waste studies. However, he fails to address the reasons for the characters' opinion of Mumbai being uninhabitable and infamous for treating human life as expendable. The novelist also seems to normalize the issues of inequalities in waste management and justifies the anthropocentric utilitarian perception of resources. The depictions of Mumbai gang wars against a disturbingly overlooked state of dilapidated lives and misplaced ideologies mention waste as being both created and ignored. Such representation also compels a close reading of consumerism and criminal aspiration.

Keywords: ecocriticism, slow violence, socio-environmentalism, waste studies

We need to account for how the temporal dispersion of slow violence affects the way we perceive and respond to a variety of social afflictions – from domestic abuse to posttraumatic stress and, in particular, environmental calamities. A major challenge is representational: how to devise arresting stories, images, and symbols adequate to the pervasive but elusive violence of delayed effects (Nixon 3).

The matters of climate change, waste disposal, and potential environmental hazards have been the subject of discussion for several decades now; however, their gravity fails to be reflected in literary discourse, especially those produced in the third world. A partial cause could be lack of adequate representation in the academic domain. However, Indian writers in English have consistently produced works that address these subjects (Mondal et al.; Roy; Abbas et al.). Some of these also serve as reminders of the need to help people unlearn the wrong lessons they had learned in the past. One of these is that all wrong deeds are undoable. This idea stems from the

teachings of the religious scriptures that encourage human beings to overpower all kinds of resources to establish and sustain human life (Sabu and Mudaliar 184-85). This utilitarian perspective seems to have seeped into the value system of the masses – so much so that generating waste has become a practice normalized as rectifiable. For the longest time, the Western notion of India as a land of waste and refuse has been represented widely, especially via films such as *A Passage to India* (1984), *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), *Eat Pray Love* (2010), and *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (2011). These films contain several scenes of a myriad of cultural practices taking place on dusty roads, traffic disturbed by cattle walking about on busy roads, crowded tourist spots, terribly littered public places, and rural homes without proper sanitation or restroom facilities. This has led to a growing need for the country's governing bodies to school the masses in hygiene practices. Popular lifestyle magazines, editorial pieces in newspapers, and several videos and reels circulating on social media speak to people about the need to de-clutter their living and working spaces and get rid of unnecessary things (Sandlin and Wallin 98). However, the masses do not seem to understand that waste only breeds more waste. Thus, there is a need to properly address the concept of responsible de-cluttering and to not remove waste at the cost of accumulating it elsewhere.

Vikram Chandra's novel *Sacred Games* is a narrative of several lives entangled in the urban locales of Mumbai and its suburbs. The work has been explored previously in studies through the lenses of bioethics (Morely 30-33), postmodernist narratology (Barai 266-74), and spectrality and secularism (Herbert 941-71). The author weaves a captivating tale that unravels over several decades, during which the characters develop their own narratives. The complex storytelling overpowers the underlying depiction of waste in its many forms. Chandra's widely famous novel stands slightly apart from the abovementioned works that represent India, for it depicts India not only as a waste-producing nation but also as one that takes pride in the nostalgic aspect of waste as a part of its cultural and geographic subsistence. His writing focuses explicitly on the common man's comfort in the daily rituals of a large population in huddled spaces, almost like a well-oiled machine. For instance, the following passage describes the frustration, as well as the cherishing of the chaotic environment, experienced simultaneously by the dwellers of Mumbai:

Citizens loved to complain about the horror of the morning traffic, which surpassed itself every year, but Katekar loved the enormous bustle of millions on the move, the hurtling local trains with thick clusters of bodies hanging precariously from the doors, the sonorous tramp and hum of the crowd inside the tall hall of Churchgate station. It made him feel alive. (Chandra 72)

Chandra speaks of policeman Katekar's perception of the city, known for its hustle and bustle while thriving as a home to millions. He seems to be in complete synchronization with his environment, conveniently ignoring the health and safety

hazards that meet his eye in the scenes of routine functionality. The policeman also seems to be embracing the quiet resignation of a common person to their surroundings, especially when there are a million other matters to occupy their attention, such as the gender, caste, and linguistic discriminations they face as Indians. Katekar is also visibly relieved to submit himself to the scenes of relative peace and calm, as opposed to the gruesome tasks he carries out as a policeman. Katekar's fondness for such a deranged state of being in the city also points to his involuntary subscription to a "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Schiller 302) that most enforcement personnel are conditioned into imbibing. 'Methodological nationalism' is an individual's belief that the immediate socio-political conditions prevalent in their nation/state, mirror those of the modern world. The concept could also explain his circumscription of events to a limited geographic scale and attaining a sense of gratification in policing a specific section of the region – in this case, Mumbai. The policing also extends to the characters' inward faith in holding on to the past while living in the present. Katekar and other policemen constantly speak of their childhood, youth, and the many influences they have had while growing up, including Bollywood movies. While living in Mumbai, globally known as home to the biggest slum in Asia, these men and women are incessantly reminded of their past and hence associate dirt and refuse with nostalgia. Susan Signe Morrison, in her book, *The Literature of Waste*, writes that "[m]emory and waste are integrally tied to one another" (63). Most of the main characters in the novel are shown as having a long history with Mumbai, having been raised in the city, and having spent the longer part of their lives in familiar streets. Both Katekar and Gaitonde, despite being rivals, share a love for the city and everything associated with it. Even the sight of too many humans crammed into a single vehicle fails to alarm a man responsible for preserving law, order, and the safety of the masses.

Another excerpt from the novel illustrates the barbaric practice of forcing manual scavengers into the act of cleaning waste from the streets after an orchestrated burning down of a particular basti (slum) days before an election. The representation is a little short of normalizing manual scavenging. It is also deeply troubling that Chandra, belonging to the educated and elite section of society and possessing a powerful indigenous voice, speaks of such a demeaning practice without the slightest hint of perturbation. Though activism for social equality has brought the situation of these workers to the attention of the masses severally, the caste-based employment of the backward sections of society in these tasks remains the root cause of the persistence of manual scavenging in India (Wankhede 1-2). Chandra depicts the scene of Gaitonde's plan and execution of a systematic eviction in the dark of the night and continues to the description of the next morning, which implicitly represents crime and cleanup of the resulting collateral damage:

Finally there were too many dead bodies even for the very supreme top, and the reeling roar of the approaching chaos too deafening, and so it stopped. The city cringed and shook itself and began to clean up the debris, bulldozers swept up the emptied grounds and dug foundations, bodies were lifted from the gutters, from the rubbish heaps, and traffic churned through the lanes again. (Chandra 394)

The novelist describes the grotesque scenes that greet the survivors the next day and the internal monologues in the perpetrators' minds through the voice of Gaitonde, who dwells upon the "elegant way to burn a basti" and how "[r]iots are useful in all kinds of ways, to all kinds of people" (Chandra 393-94). Here, the author seems to normalize the death of the poor. He also unwittingly remarks upon the overexploited method of evicting poor people from coveted pieces of land by the rich. There also seem to be insightful pointers on the criminals earning money from such "petty" jobs, the rich attaining property through illicit means and the manual scavengers finding work in the aftermath of the riots (Chandra 394). Mohammed Rafi Arefin writes in his article how those employed to work with waste "are revealing important ways to understand life in cities" ("The Dirty Details"). He addresses the need to treat them "respectfully and carefully" and emphasizes the need for visibility of stories that portray waste and those who "deal with it" so that it "ensures those who work with our most intimate discarded things are safe from ridicule or retribution" (Arefin).

Chandra also appears to be keen on sketching the narrative against a grungy and sooty Mumbai background. In the novel, there is constant mention of vehicles stuck in traffic and dirt enveloping the bodies of people who are out and about in the city. Pollution has been another prominent subject addressed in contemporary environmentalist writings. With an increase in the number of urban fictional narratives produced across the globe, the matter of pollution features in almost every event within the plot of *Sacred Games*. Morrison compares the city to a body that hides its defenseless parts and "sets itself up against the country, home to dungy fields and garbaged landfills out of view" (75). Chandra's mention of the character of Anjali Mathur being frustrated over her aging and damaged body presents the author's vision of the human body against a backdrop of rising environmental dread – in addition to the issues of terrorism and poverty – that looms above Mumbai:

What an easy moderate age had made of her, all the early revolutionary fervor corroded away by – by what? – long hours, bills, this jangling traffic, the poisonous pollution that left films of black on her face and arms. And by professional defeats, a divorce and the abrupt amputation of love, a bone-deep realization that the future was not a limitless meadow, but only a narrow valley bounded by night. (Chandra 362)

Anjali Mathur comes across as a competent and tenacious policewoman who faces several upheavals in the course of her career. She is a deftly armed individual who lives "always between threat and counter-threat, from aggression to response" but,

concurrently, finds such life “suffocating” (Chandra 360). In the chosen passage, environmental shifts seem to be one of her major concerns; Mathur cannot help but think of a life devoid of pollution and violence. Ursula Heise, in her book, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*, writes about how “climate change poses a challenge for narrative and lyrical forms that have conventionally focused above all on individuals, families, or nations, since it requires the articulation of connections between events at vastly different scales” (205). Chandra impressively rises to meet this challenge with his novel. He neatly ensconces the characters’ thoughts and actions with issues he subtly discusses in his work. When faced with the terrorizing possibility of an impending nuclear attack on the nation, Mathur’s character seems to be dwelling upon the relative, however brief, respite, which she finds in her corroding body’s familiarity. Even amidst registering the intimidating event developments in her investigation and search for Gaitonde, Mathur seems to find a connection between the visible damage to her body, the lives of millions at stake, and the drastic environmental changes. Chandra also seems to portray her as the “ecocosmopolitan environmentalist” (Heise 210), dwelling on the similarities between the local ecological details and the global content in watching the city and her career grow in urban planning and networking while being mindful of the repercussions of anthropocentric wastefulness and its contribution to the global crises. Mathur’s dermatological concerns can also be parallel to Chandra’s reference to Gaitonde unabashedly, mentioning his hemorrhoids in conversations with Jojo Mascarenas (Chandra 484, 851).

Research also confirms that it is the population that inhabits the urban areas of the globe that stands to lose the most due to the perilous climatic change. For instance, a study on gendered vulnerability to climate change found that men, owing primarily to education and better exposure to global developments, are more aware of the shielding measures to adopt while dealing with and preventing the repercussions of climatic changes (Daoud). However, from a socio-environmentalist perspective, women can be found to be more vulnerable to environmental degradation than men. In his book, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Rob Nixon writes about “an environmental violence that is low in immediate drama but high in long-term consequences” (131). He emphasizes the susceptibility of women being more than that of men in sustaining any impairment due to a dismissal of the need to augment the “concept of security.” He states that it is the “local forms of slow violence – deforestation and the denuding of vegetation” (Nixon 131), which force women to take stock of their lives, regardless of their location being urban or rural. Whether it is Anjali Mathur ruminating over her degenerating physicality or Jojo Mascarenas listening to the discomfort of Gaitonde’s gastrointestinal diseases, it appears to be women who are more perceptive and empathetic to the uncertainty faced over climate and lifestyle changes.

Chandra speaks of the unfeasibility of ownership as desired by the many policemen who lead the lives of ordinary men in a domestic sense but extraordinary on the work front – which explains the bravado that they display in solving crimes, patrolling the streets of the city, and dealing with suspicious activities. However, even while engaged in a massive chase and detection of explosives, the policemen constantly marvel at the wealth amassed by individuals who strike it big in life and still retain the rustic charisma of the underdogs that they are. In the excerpt below, Sartaj and Katekar discuss the circumstances that forced a young man to commit several crimes to attain goals that seem petty when compared to the severity of his deeds. The men then compare the tragic developments of the case with those of others whom they currently chase:

What he had dreamed of was not impossible, there were men like Ganesh Gaitonde and Suleiman Isa, who had begun with petty thefts and had gone on to own fleets of Opel Vectras and Honda Accords. And there were boys and girls who had come from dusty villages and now looked down at you from the hoardings, beautiful and unreal. It could happen. It did happen, and that's why people kept trying. It did happen. That was the dream, the big dream of Bombay. (Chandra 226)

Chandra also seems to hint at the middle class's tendency to imitate the upper class and attain a semblance of extravagance. The novel includes multiple remarks of the police officers trying severally to find contentment in their respective lives and daydreaming of the ultimate blissful life replete with all the known comforts such as a huge bungalow, an expensive vehicle, and the kind of respect that only money can buy. Chandra also seems to offer his very subtle opinion of people who become wealthy overnight by a sudden stroke of fortune. The excerpt also seems to feature the rise of models and movie actors to stardom, especially if they come from the smaller towns and remote villages of India. Chandra's tone borders on scorn and his vocabulary openly conveys derision. Notably, this narrative thread in Chandra's novel seems to echo Morrison's reading of *The Great Gatsby*. Morrison notes Gatsby's obsession with collecting valuables to fill up his home. Morrison notes Gatsby's obsession with collecting valuables to fill up his home. This act may be viewed as a sort of overcompensation for being born poor, an attempt to climb the social ladder, and a means to cope with unrequited love (63-64). She explains the accumulation of waste as resulting from collecting objects "that substitute for meaning" in an otherwise "meaningless life" (63). The same theory could apply to the description of the gangsters' lives mentioned in the novel. Sartaj seems to be reflecting upon the many opportunities that Mumbai offers to the ordinary people of the country, many of whom travel from other states to the city in hopes of carving a fortune that they can brag about to their people back home. Morrison's notion of accumulating artifacts being as unhealthy as generating waste seems to be nothing more than a matter of class performativity to Ganesh Gaitonde and Suleiman Isa.

Katekar, too, thinks of the things he wishes to attain in life for himself and his family, who uncomplainingly support him in his career as an ever-occupied policeman. Unlike Sartaj – who seeks, among many other things, to mend his broken relationships that, in his frame of reference, have resulted from his lack of affluence (Chandra 784) – Katekar comes across as a more materialistic individual pursuing monetary gain. Thus, at this point in the narrative, the characters appear to be dreaming of a tangible but elusive life of happiness, oblivious to the epiphanic display of waste around them.

The allegoric waste that Chandra seems to bring in is the psychological discord prevalent within the families of policemen. These families live as a unit without the presence of a family member delayed at the workplace and then, if they lose their lives in a confrontation, without the individual altogether. While speaking of Shalini's attempts at supporting her family in their return to a life of normalcy after the death of her husband, Katekar, the author insinuates that a household comprises all sorts of waste – material, bodily and emotional. He portrays the mistress of the house as a woman who grapples with the constant question of children caught in the crossfire of right and wrong. For example, Mohit puts up an opaque act and his inexplicable fascination with the men who go on adventures: "But Mohit was still slipping, leaving his work undone while he sped through life on some secret mission. He hid himself behind his bed, in a nook filled with comics with lurid covers featuring moustachioed, pistol-clutching adventurers. He drew rifles in the margins of his notebooks, and muscular heroes firing enormous, blazing guns" (Chandra 350). Here, Chandra seems to imply that death often brings with it a string of emotions that are neither known nor experienced prior to tragedy. Morrison, speaking of death and its residue, writes that it is only the past that seems to be "tangibly happy" and, hence, things begin to go haywire when we cannot forget the past. She sees memory "as a topless garbage heap," which "can only drive us beyond the brink" (58). In dealing with the pain of loss, Shalini Katekar seems to attempt to gauge her children's emotional fallout in order to help her younger child out of a self-dug pit of past memories. These recollections seem to find manifestations in comic books that detail adventures of men who apparently have much in common with the image of his father that he carries in his mind. In a study conducted by Fradkin, Weschenfelder, and Yunes regarding the psychological effects of comic books upon children who are emotionally vulnerable due to a case of abandoning or orphaning, similar findings have been recorded regarding the power of resource accumulation. The study found that the common troubles of superheroes and the children make the latter seek validation in these works of art. Doing so also builds in them the "resilience" required to rebuild their lives after it falls apart due to a sudden tragic event (Fradkin et al. 413). The resources collected by Mohit include comic books that will eventually be nothing more than the trash that the child may dispose of himself. It could also be

said that the comic books are to Mohit, what cars and other possessions are to Gaitonde and Isa.

Another interesting factor in the novel is the Indians' aggrandizement of the lack of pollution in foreign countries. Upon his return from a visit to his daughter in the USA, Parulkar is complimented by Sartaj upon regaining vitality in his vacation period. Parulkar revels in Sartaj's lack of means to travel to a place abroad and his own superiority in the matter by replying thus: "It is the clean air over there. A morning walk, over there, revives you really. You cannot imagine" (Chandra 412). So confident is Parulkar of Sartaj leading his life in an unclean environment and complete ignorance of Western progressive pleasures that he makes little attempt to mask his condescension.

What seems to slip into oblivion is the fact that the Global North sees the Global South as nothing more than garbage dump yards. Nixon begins his book by recollecting a statement made by Lawrence Summers, former president of the World Bank, in which he suggests that the bank construct an arrangement by which the trash and industrial waste from the wealthy nations may be "exported" to the poor nations for the simple reason that these countries are already polluted, and their environments filled with toxic substances. Nixon points out the deeply problematic rationalization of Summers' "poison-redistribution ethic," the Western notion of "aesthetically unsightly waste," and developing nations as "out of sight continent[s]" (1-2). The fact remains that waste is a troubling issue that seems to have no solution unless a pragmatic awareness is disseminated across the globe and cooperation of all countries, rich and poor, is ensured in the matters of over-consumption, commercialization of consumerism as the answer to human misery and a general lack of compassion for the planet.

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SUBVERSIVE CULTURE AND POSTMODERNISM IN JOHN FOWLES'S THE COLLECTOR

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to discuss the subversive elements in the famous novel of John Fowles *The Collector*. It also carefully analyzes the work in postmodernist perspective. The term 'subversive' according to Cambridge Dictionary is, trying to destroy or damage something, especially an established political system. The subversive elements present in this novel are class system, power of politics and the divisions among the people as 'FEW' and 'MANY'. The postmodern literature is the experimentation championed by writers of the modernist period. The major features of postmodernism are experiment in narrative techniques, form, language, and expression. In this paper we can explore the different narrative techniques of John Fowles, his intertextuality, the subversiveness towards class distinction and many more. Fowles' multilayered fiction explored the tensions between free will and the constraints of society. It also played with the traditional novelistic conventions and challenged readers to give their own interpretations. He tells more yarns and suspense. The individual's behaviour is the result of society, cultural and social patterns. Fowles' is able to see the flaws in each human.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Subversiveness, postmodernism, constraints of society, class distinction, social patterns, power of politics, experimentation

John Fowles (31 March 1926-5 November 2005) was an award winning post World War II novelist of major importance. In 1951, he finished *The Magus* and began working on *The Collector*. *The Collector* was a famous novel at that time. He was at the peak of success in 1960's and 70's. He started writing in his early 20's, because he invented all possible situation in fantasies, which were denied for him in his early days. He was an avid collector of old books and a fascinated student of

fossils. After leaving Oxford University, Fowles taught English at a school in the Greek island of Spetses, a sojourn that inspired *The Magus*, an instant best-seller. This was followed by his fictional works *The Ebony Tower*, *Daniel Martin*, *Mantissa* and *A Maggot*. Fowles' books have been translated into many languages and several adapted as films.

His novels began with an original psychological thriller, *The Collector* (1963). Fowles' writing was dominated by the consciousness of the author as a figure within his own books. He enters into the narrative at certain points to comment on the action, the character's motives and possibilities and to explain how things might have been different. In an autobiographical essay, he mentioned that, he felt alienated from his parents. He has said that he had seemed to come from nowhere. So we can find that most of his heroes are alienated, orphaned and disconnect themselves from outside world. His life is reflected in most of his novels. His novels are undeniably brilliant, intricately plotted and more emotional. According to him, our stereotyping society stamps masks on our faces and makes us feel alone.

In this article, John Fowles' first novel has been analyzed. John Fowles' first novel *The Collector* was published in 1963. It has been reprinted several times and has been translated into many languages. *The Collector* is about a man who is subversive towards the class system in the society. *The Collector* is a story about the abduction of Miranda Gray, a student of art by Fredrick Clegg, a butterfly collector. The story is not in the usual form. It has four sections. The first section is the narration of Clegg about the abduction of Miranda. It is from his point of view. The second one is the words of Miranda, which is written in her diary. Third part is Clegg's narration about Miranda's death. The last part is Clegg's reentry as the collector of girls.

The first section begins with the plans of Clegg for the abduction of Miranda. He captures her with a rag soaked in chloroform. When she awakens, she finds herself in the basement room of Clegg's new brought house. She stays there unwillingly. Clegg tries to please her, with her favorite things. He appreciates her pictures and drawings. Their taste differs. There are many differences between them. Mainly it is the class difference. Miranda is from a middle class background is exhibited in many of the places throughout the novel. Clegg introduces her, when she was returning from the boarding school. In those days boarding schools were costly and only the wealthy could afford. Frederick feels inferior when he knows that Miranda's father is a doctor. He also heard her mother's speech in 'la-di-da' voices. It means she wanted to pretend herself as upper class or sophisticated than others. Frederick always finds a difference between the educated and being pretentious. As well as the football pools were the hobby of the working class people like Clegg rather than the middle class people. Clegg used to earn more in the football pools.

The difference in education is also mentioned in the novel by emphasizing the books they read. Miranda quotes, Robinson Crusoe in her diary. She also compares Frederick to Holden Caulfield in J.D Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. Holden is his own enemy. He tries to connect with people but alienates them with his lack of empathy. Frederick reflects the same character towards Miranda. Miranda sometimes calls him Caliban and sometimes Ferdinand, the names from William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Caliban is the beast or monster in *The Tempest*, who tries to rape Miranda but in *The Collector* Frederick wants the pornographic photos of Miranda. She also disliked the taste of Frederick in choosing clothes and room décor. She looks down on his lack of art appreciation and compares his artistic knowledge with the knowledge of George Paston, her older friend whom she admires a lot. She finally tries to seduce him. This is her only idea is to escape from him but he asks her to pose for some pornographic photos. He immediately develops the fine pictures, cutting off her face. She caught a cold from Clegg and seriously affected. The first section ends with Clegg's recollection, "I thought I was acting for the best and within my rights (TC 113)".

The second section is Miranda's diary. She writes more about her beautiful life before abduction. She writes about her happy life and not about her hard life. After her illness, her entries were short and full of lamentations. The third section is of Clegg. He worries a lot for the illness of Miranda. He takes the temperature and he goes to call a doctor. He waits in the waiting room and feels insecure. He goes to a pharmacy and asks for medicine. He does not help Clegg. Again he had a look at Miranda. At midnight, he goes back to the town to wake a doctor. A policeman frightens him. Clegg is helpless. He is restless, and he wanders around the city to save his love. But Miranda dies. The final section is too short, and Clegg reenters with a new outlook. He is in search of another butterfly of the same social class. He decides that he is responsible for Miranda's death. His fault is kidnapping a girl from different social classes. The collector of butterflies changes as a collector of woman.

PostModernistViews:

The term Postmodern literature is used to describe certain tendencies in post-World War II literature. It is a continuation of the experimentation championed by writers of the modernist period, relying heavily, for example, on fragmentation, paradox, questionable narrators, etc. It is also a reaction against Enlightenment ideas implicit in Modernist literature. The major features of postmodernism are experiment in narrative techniques, form, language, expression, rather than content, social milieu, or psychological characterization.

From the point of view of all the themes and narrative techniques, *The Collector* is striking because its features are not in a coherent account of what happens when Clegg won a large amount of money in the lottery, decides to capture Miranda, a beautiful girl from the neighborhood, and imprison her in the cellar of a

countryside house which he managed to buy with the money he had won. The postmodern writers usually do not give a neatly plotted story and a clear ending. They have many diversions. In postmodernism, it is impossible to have a text without intertexts. But the ways in which these intertexts enter the present text need not be conscious to neither author nor reader. Here the reader is presented with two narratives, one by Clegg and one by his victim, Miranda. Clegg's narration is in first person perspective. Miranda narrates all the happenings through her words in diary. We can also find the omniscient narrator in the last chapter.

The collector's mentality can be linked with the postmodern concept of the simulacrum, which was introduced by Jean Baudrillard. The collector values the outward appearances of the objects, more than their intrinsic value. He does not look at the reality but only the simulations which are represented. Butterfly collectors are interested only on their external beauty of certain specimens, and not in their biological function. Miranda effectively characterizes this mentality of Clegg in her diary, "I am one in a row of specimens. It's when I try to flutter out of line that he hates me. I'm meant to be dead, pinned always the same, always beautiful. He knows that part of my beauty is being alive, but it's the dead me he wants (TC 203)." He confesses of his interests in outward and superficial qualities of his 'object' Miranda, "She smelt so nice I could have stood like that all the evening. It was like being in one of those adverts come to life (TC 82)."

Clegg's mentality is closely linked with the wish, to dominate other people and to have power over them. This is because of the class distinction between Clegg and Miranda. Fowles himself described this book as a commentary on class in England, specifically on class issues such as prosperity, pretension, and the contrasts between the working class and the upper class during the 1950s and 1960s. Clegg wishes to dominate the high class Miranda and these shows the Politics of Representation. He does not understand the mentality and the psychological changes in Miranda. He needs her love alone. He does not bother about her wishes and thoughts. He tries to control her by taking some of her pornographic images. His continuous efforts of justifying what he did, ultimately reveals his egoist motives. His concept of love is structured by his wish to dominate, and it exemplifies the Politics of Representation most obviously. His descriptions do not reveal anything factual about the outside world, but rather tell us something about his psychological make-up and his interests. Miranda as well is subjected to the Politics of Representation by her snobbism. As a product of high class Miranda also tries to dominate Clegg. She represents Clegg only as a half human being, by calling him as Caliban. As she is aware of Politics of Representation, she is able to recognize the inferiority complex in Clegg. Both Clegg and Miranda represent the basics of Politics of Representation, but the attitudes of both the characters are very different. Some of the themes of *The Collector* represent it as a postmodern novel. The major themes

in this novel are class distinction, power and control, photographic images, prison, collecting and art. These themes and techniques clearly depict *The Collector* as a postmodern novel.

Class plays a major role in *The Collector*. The main character, Fredrick Clegg, grows up in a lower-class household and only gains access to a great deal of money when he wins the football pools. With his prize of more than 70,000 pounds, he is able to turn his wildest dreams about the beautiful upper-middle-class Miranda into realities. Frederick thinks about the class variations and subversive towards this system of class divisions. The divisions of “FEW” and “MANY” are clearly visible throughout the novel. Frederick lost his father in a car accident, shortly after that his mother also left him. He was brought up by his aunt. As he was not grown up with his biological parents he feels indifferent when he is with the people who had been brought up in the more traditional and nuclear family.

The FEW are the vital, creative, good individuals of society. (i.e) the upper class. While the MANY are the ordinary, dull, and little people who are not ashamed of being dull and little. (i.e) the lower class. Miranda believes she is one among the FEW and includes Frederick with the MANY, despite his wealth. Frederick is feeling subversive about the class system. He tries to destroy and damage the class system. He won a huge amount in the lottery and bought his own house to include himself in the FEW category. His subversive ideas are exhibited in the way he treated Miranda, the so-called upper class category.

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**“TUGHLAQ: A SEMIOTIC INTERPRETATION OF LANGUAGE,
LITERATURE, AND MEDIA AS TOOLS OF RESISTANCE”**

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Abstract

This paper analyzes semiotics to study Girish Karnad's Tughlaq to comprehend how language, literature, and the media can be used as tools of resistance against ideological manipulation and political repression. Through an analysis of political and social commentary, the study uses a semiotic framework to examine the symbolic structures in the play's dialogue, stage directions, and character portrayals. A complex symbol of failed utopias and disenchantment with power, Muhammad bin Tughlaq is characterized by his contradictory beliefs and oppressive methods. It also looks into how Tughlaq is being reactivated as a locus of cultural resistance through performances, adaptations, and online discourse. The study makes the case that the interaction of mediated representations, linguistic decisions, and literary storytelling not only challenges past authoritarianism but also speaks to contemporary political reality.

Keywords: Political Resistance, Language and Power, Literary Critique, Media Adaptations, Cultural Discourse, Political Allegory, Postcolonial Theatre

Girish Karnad's Tughlaq presents themes of political deceit and disillusionment through language and symbolism. Karnad portrays a severely flawed ruler whose utopian vision slowly crumbles under the weight of his contradictions through complex dialogue, sardonic remarks, and potent symbols. Language as a Deceptive and Ironic Instrument, the Eloquence of Tughlaq: Muhammad bin Tughlaq is described as an intelligent and gifted speaker. To gain the support of the populace, he speaks in an idealistic and persuasive manner. He preaches, for instance, about religious tolerance, justice, and sensible governance—values that both Muslims and Hindus find appealing. Irony in Speech Nevertheless, his actions frequently stand in

stark contrast to his high ideals. While he orders executions without trial, he talks about justice. Despite their elegance, his words often conceal cruelty. A strong sense of irony is produced by this discrepancy between speech and action, which emphasizes the idea of political deceit. Tughlaq uses manipulative rhetoric to defend his divisive choices, such as moving the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad or instituting token currency. He exposes how political rhetoric can be used to cover up failure by portraying these radical actions as progressive even though they cause chaos.

Symbols the capital's move from Delhi to Daulatabad, that reveals disillusionment, represents the gap between the people and the ruler. What Tughlaq views as a calculated move ends up representing his subjects' suffering and migration deaths as a result of blind obedience. The introduction of copper coins, or token currency, is a symbol of Tughlaq's idealism; however, its failure because of forgery exposes both his political naivete and the public's decline in trust. It turns into a metaphor for broken promises and ineffective leadership. Empty Throne: The throne, which is frequently depicted on stage as desolate or empty, comes to represent isolation, loneliness, and the breakdown of leadership. The throne symbolizes the weight of power that Tughlaq is unable to bear as his support declines. Violence and Blood: Tughlaq's idealism frequently serves as an excuse for the recurrent theme of violence and execution, which represents the tainting of lofty aspirations. Death is shown on stage a lot, emphasizing the price of his vision.

Voices of the Ordinary People and the Language of Other Characters: In contrast to Tughlaq's rhetoric, commoners, guards, and courtiers speak plainly and simply. Their fear, whining, and sarcasm act as a reality check, mirroring the general public's growing disenchantment. Through their humorous and cynical dialogue, Azam and Aazam (Thieves) reveal the moral decay of Tughlaq's rule and demonstrate how even criminals lose faith in the failing system.

In Girish Karnad's Tughlaq, semiotic elements—signs, symbols, gestures, and images—are essential because they are tools of resistance to authoritarian control and failing idealism as well as efficient ways to express ideas. These elements give characters—and even the audience—the ability to subvert and challenge Tughlaq's autocratic regime in nuanced yet potent ways. Language as Symbolic Resistance: The Mockery and Sarcasm of the Crowd Through sarcasm, sour jokes, and whispers, the common people, guards, and minor characters frequently make fun of Tughlaq. The public's discontent and resistance are reflected in this casual, informal language, which turns into a symbolic act of rebellion. Although they might not overtly rebel, their mockery damages Tughlaq's reputation as a kind philosopher-king and calls into question his authority.

In the Empty Throne Image, through absence, the throne—which is frequently perceived as remote or encircled by stress and quiet—becomes a representation of lost authority and resistance. The empty throne symbolizes Tughlaq's growing isolation and the way its own people are renouncing authority—a tacit but effective form of resistance. The grandeur that a throne typically represents is resisted by the visual emptiness. Trickster Figures Aziz and Aazam as Semiotic Opposition These two robbers serve as subversive symbols by disguising themselves and taking on different roles. They stand for the survival and wit of the average person, exposing the regime's shortcomings through humor and disguise. They act as an indirect form of resistance to state power by making fun of the system and exposing its absurdities through their conversations and actions.

The fake currency (token coins), through subversion, the forged copper coins—which were the product of Tughlaq's utopian vision—become emblems of resistance. By creating counterfeit coins, the general public takes advantage of the system and engages in a nonviolent kind of mass rebellion. These coins expose the breakdown of law and order and cast doubt on the government's authority over the economy.

The Role of Stillness and Silence Silence has deep significance, particularly during Tughlaq's monologues or following executions. Passive resistance takes the form of silence, especially from citizens and characters like Barani. The ruler's demands for participation and obedience are challenged by this reluctance to express one or respond candidly. Symbolic images of resistance include corpses and graves on stage, the regular presence of dead bodies, or references to them. Tughlaq's philosophical ideals are hauntingly opposed by these images, which silently accuse the regime and symbolize the results of despotism. Tughlaq's prophetic appearance turns him into a semiotic contradiction; he looks like a devout, spiritual man, but he is actually covered in blood and oppression. The irony in this picture turns into a visual critique of power itself, and his appearance turns into a symbolic battlefield where idealism and reality clash.

Media, such as theater, film, and online versions, have reinterpreted Tughlaq in ways that relate to current sociopolitical conditions, particularly those involving authoritarianism, idealism, public protest, and systematic failure. These versions often amplify or reintroduce semiotic elements from the play to critique contemporary circumstances, transforming Tughlaq into a live political allegory.

Tughlaq as a Symbol of Modern Autocratic Leaders: In contemporary productions, Tughlaq is frequently depicted as a modern politician, sometimes with vocal and visual similarities to actual leaders. He emphasizes criticizing populist speeches versus authoritarian actions, technocratic or hyper-nationalist policies that alienate the general populace, and his rhetoric, lofty promises, and contradictory actions. The disparity between public welfare and political vision, Tughlaq is

reframed in this contemporary way as an example of failed leadership in the modern era rather than merely as a medieval tyrant.

Reinterpreting Contemporary Costumes and Sets as Semiotic Subversion: In order to represent how power structures change but maintain comparable dynamics, costumes may combine traditional clothing with business suits, military jackets, or bureaucratic uniforms. In order to reflect state surveillance, bureaucracy, or migration issues—all of which are relevant to the capital shift in the original play—the set design may substitute digital screens, government offices, or border walls for the medieval backdrops. Economic Policy and Currency as Allegory Media adaptations have compared the token currency disaster to demonetization, digital currency reforms, and economic mismanagement in times of crisis. These productions frequently draw a clear comparison between the past and present by highlighting the chaos, forgery, and suffering that the public endures as a result of rash economic decisions.

Sometimes using multimedia projections of public shows, Voiceovers or recorded testimonials mimicking news reports or social media posts, amplified through Media, modern renditions often give more space to choruses, guards, and commoners, so portraying the people not as mere sufferers but as active agents of critique. It captures the democratizing of perspective in the era of media and the internet. In recent staging, some directors combine digital symbolism and surveillance aesthetics with hacked news tickers, drone visuals or surveillance cameras on stage. These symbols reinterpret Tughlaq's obsessive control and paranoia in line with modern surveillance states and digital authoritarianism.

Reevaluating Silence and Stillness, Media adaptations make silence more charged by using sound design and lighting: Darkness descending following every death, Silence is an even more powerful critique of power since sudden microphone feedback or static replacing spoken words and use of mute protest signs or visual metaphors like empty chairs, barricades, or footprints accentuates nonverbal resistance. Tughlaq as the Tragic Antihero in Movies and Documentaries In filmic depictions or documentaries inspired by Tughlaq, the king is sometimes portrayed as a visionary doomed by his context, a lonely intellectual misinterpreted by the masses, or a sad emblem of too ambitious behavior.

A semiotic reading of Girish Karnad's Tughlaq uncovers new dimensions of resistance by highlighting how signs—both linguistic and visual—carry deeper political meanings that transcend the surface narrative. Through this point of view, resistance is not only overt revolt but also a coded, symbolic contestation of power conveyed via sarcasm, silence, costume, setting, and images. These signals challenge the authoritative discourse of the state and let underprivileged voices—often silent in conventional narratives—to express agency and dissent.

The Cultural Trifecta as a Flexible Instrument for Assessing Authority, The cultural trifecta of language, performance, and symbolism—which serve as a dynamic and interconnected instrument for challenging authority—is at the core of this semiotic reading. Especially in the voices of common people and cunning characters who undermine royal rhetoric, language turns into a tool of irony and mockery. Performance reveals the brittleness of political illusions by communicating repressed truths through body language, silence, and spatial dynamics. Through the encoding of policy failures and the weight of disillusionment, symbolism—from thrones to coins to corpses—challenges the grand narratives of progress, unity, and divine kingship. When combined, these components create a multi-layered critique of governance that is relevant to all political eras and cultures, particularly when modified to take into account contemporary sociopolitical realities.

A semiotic reading raises Tughlaq as a site of coded defiance and quiet revolt, and the cultural trinity of language, performance, and symbolism helps scholars to easily critique authority. As the distinctions between theater, media, and digital expression become more blurred, Tughlaq remains a rich source of investigation, debate, and dissent in the evolving field of political narrative.

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BARBARA KINGSOLVER'S PRODIGAL SUMMER: A STUDY IN ECOFICTION

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Abstract

Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* is a strong exemplar of ecofiction, a literary genre that prioritizes ecological concerns and the interconnectedness of human and environmental life. In the Appalachian Mountains, the novel crosses three disparate narratives—those of a wildlife biologist, a young widow turned farmer, and two elderly neighbors—to probe questions of biodiversity, ecological equilibrium, sustainable farming, and human stewardship of the environment. Kingsolver's ecocentric fiction, which is full of scientific data and sensory description, subverts anthropocentric philosophies and promotes peaceful coexistence with nature. In her characters' individual transformations, she depicts nature not as a backdrop but as an engaged, generative force necessary to human survival. *Prodigal Summer* thus makes a valuable contribution to the genre of ecofiction, encouraging environmental sensitivity and precipitating a greater awareness of the interrelatedness of all living things.

Keywords: Ecofiction, Environmental literature, Biodiversity, Ecological balance, Sustainable agriculture, Interconnectedness, Regeneration, Conservation Ethics.

Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* (2000) is a pioneering novel of postmodern eco-fiction, a form that blends environmental issues with literary narrative. It is a novel set in the southern Appalachians that tells the story of three interconnected narratives, which investigate the interdependence of human existence and nature. Kingsolver, an educated biologist and dedicated environmentalist,

employs the novel as much to engage the reader as to promote ecological sensitivity, biodiversity, and the importance of living in harmony with nature.

Since the beginning of human imagination, nature has been the integral component of literature. As a literary movement, eco-criticism examines the interactive nexus between literature and nature, laying stress on the intrinsic connection between human stories and nature. Such a movement has gained momentum, especially in American literature, as it tends to reflect profound association with nature. One such prominent figure in this category is Barbara Kingsolver, whose nature sensitivity is reflected in her works. Born and brought up on a Kentucky farm in a socially conscious and educated environment, Kingsolver has developed an intrinsic respect for nature that is reflected in her writing.

This paper explores Kingsolver's novel *Prodigal Summer* from an ecological perspective. Rich in themes of nature and biological precision, the novel offers a strong picture of the symbiotic connection between humans and their natural environments. Kingsolver states that humans are not superior or distinct from nature but embedded in its very complex web. Using interconnected stories, the novel describes the importance of maintaining a respectful and sustainable relationship with the land.

Located in rural Appalachian country, on the border of Tennessee and North Carolina, the novel uses three intertwined narrative strands called "Predators," "Moth Love," and "Old Chestnut." Every tale is carefully linked to nature and echoes the characters' changing relationships with the environment.

The primary predator of the vanishing shell fish was the musk rat, which had over multiplied to plague the riverbanks during the past half century. What had maintained muskrats in balance, traditionally was the mink (now largely coats) the river otter (also almost extinct), and certainly the red wolf. There was no knowing how the return of the big hungry dog could contribute to restoring balance, even after two centuries of absence. (65)

In "Predators," we encounter Deanna Wolfe, a lone forest ranger and biologist residing in the Zebulon Mountains. Transcendent from the paraphernalia of modern materialism, Deanna spends her days defending the diversity of her environment. She is most troubled by the well-being of coyotes, a species judged and hunted by regional farmers. Coyotes, as a "keystone species," have an essential function to perform in ecological balance. Deanna is aware that eradicating such predators will upset the food chain and bring catastrophic results. Her ideological conflict with Eddie Bondo, who is also a coyote hunter, creates the thematic tension that highlights conflicting opinions on human presence in nature. Literary critic Mary Ellen Snodgrass well points out this dichotomy in her book, *Barbara Kingsolver: A Literary Companion*, explaining the tension between Eddie's hostility towards predators and Deanna's respect for ecological balance.

The second narrative, "Moth Love," presents Lusa Maluf Landowski, a scholarly entomologist whose origins are in war-torn Palestine and Poland. Widowed a short time after marrying Cole Widener, a local farmer, Lusa comes into possession of his farm and at first finds it difficult to adjust to country life. But her scientific knowledge of insects and ecosystems slowly creates a connection with the land. Lusa's love for nature is deep and profound, imagining the Zebulon Valley as a sentient and reliable friend. Her refusal to grow tobacco, a plant notorious for its evil uses, shows her dedication to environmental ethics and public health. Though viewed as an outsider by her in-laws, Lusa assumes her position as a steward of the earth, representing the curative power of nature and a woman's capacity to establish identity through ecological integration.

The third story, "Old Chestnut," is about the opposing philosophies of Garnett Walker and neighboring Nannie Rawley. Garnett, a retired educator, is set on bringing back the American chestnut tree, which was decimated nearly to extinction by a fungus blight. He uses chemical pesticides in his attempts, oblivious to the larger environmental cost. Nannie, on the other hand, is a staunch believer in organic agriculture and environmental responsibility. Their arguments over pest control techniques are part of a broader discussion regarding contemporary agricultural practices and their implications. Through Nannie, Kingsolver reveals the health risks of chemical use, pointing out how such chemicals impact human life as well as ecological equilibrium. Ellen, Garnett's wife, and Rachel, Nannie's daughter, both experience health problems potentially caused by pesticide exposure, further emphasizing Kingsolver's criticism of industrial agriculture.

Kingsolver employs each story to express an overarching eco-critical theme: the inarguable interconnectedness of all life. Deanna's defense of coyotes, Lusa's growing connection with the earth, and Nannie's promotion of organic living all work toward this vision. The novel's final chapter, related from the viewpoint of a coyote, powerfully reinforces the theme that all life forms belong to a larger ecological fabric. This is similar to Aldo Leopold's philosophy in *A Sand County Almanac*, that ethical behavior is that which maintains the "integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community."

Kingsolver demands a transition away from the exploitative and mechanistic conception of nature toward one based on respect and interconnectedness. She rejects the idea that humans are the superior species and instead says we are but one component in a huge web of ecology. With *Prodigal Summer*, she challenges readers to rethink their role in nature and to accept the imperative for sustainable living. Overlooking these realities, as Rachel Carson cautions in "A Fable for Tomorrow," may take us to a world of silence beyond nature's music—a spring without birdsong.

In *Predators*, Deanna Wolfe, a lone biologist and forest ranger, dedicates herself to defending coyotes, a much-maligned and frequently hunted species by local farmers. Her ecological wisdom discloses the importance of predators in sustaining ecosystem equilibrium. Coyotes, as a keystone species, control the population levels of prey animals, thus maintaining the health of vegetation and larger ecological webs. Deanna disallowing the killing of predators challenges prevailing anthropocentric ideologies. As she says, "to kill a natural predator is a sin" (Kingsolver, 323), summing up the ethical drive of the novel.

The philosophical conflict between Deanna and Eddie Bondo, a bounty hunter who wants to kill coyotes, represents the greater conflict between utilitarian and ecological perspectives. As critic Mary Ellen Snodgrass points out, "The hunter hates coyotes as passionately as his lover, biologist and forest ranger Deanna Wolfe, loves balance in nature and the role of all creatures in ecology" (Snodgrass, 53). Kingsolver's portrayal of this connection captures the necessity of communication between opposing ideologies in terms of the natural world.

The story known as *Moth Love* presents Lusa, an entomologist and urban-raised widow who inherits a farm from her husband. Initially alienated from rural existence, Lusa comes to form an intimate emotional and ethical connection with the earth. Her intellectual foundation in insect ecology allows her to see the intricacy of farm ecosystems. In contrast to her in-laws, who find her strange for enjoying moths and honeybees, Lusa believes that "the life of one species is connected to that of another," an idea based on ecological science.

Lusa's refusal to cultivate tobacco—a crop infamous for its health risks—reminds us further of her ecological integrity. Her transformation from stranger to fully accepted land steward is mirrored by her ultimate acceptance of her husband's name, Widener, as a symbol of her connection to the Zebulon Valley. With this, she establishes a feminist ecological identity that identifies her with the land, transcending society's traditional roles.

In conclusion, *Prodigal Summer* is a literary wake-up call that reminds us all of our duty to take care of and conserve the planet. Kingsolver's novel is an affirmation of the potential for fiction to shape ecological consciousness, and it calls us all to adopt a more balanced way of relating to the planet.

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Migration, Metamorphosis, and Cultural Dislocation: A Study on Select Short Stories of Doris Lessing and Margaret Atwood

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Abstract

The paper examines short stories by Doris Lessing and Margaret Atwood through the lens of cultural studies, moving beyond purely aesthetic interpretations to explore the broader cultural dynamics embedded within these narratives. Specifically, it investigates how the stories engage with multifaceted aspects of culture, including power dynamics, ideology and representation, the intersection of culture and identity, and the relationship between culture and social change. By considering the influence of historical and social context, the analysis aims to reveal how these stories portray the distribution and exercise of power within social groups, challenging or reinforcing dominant ideologies through their representations of various social actors. Furthermore, it explores the formation of individual and collective identities in relation to cultural norms and values, demonstrating how the narratives reflect or contribute to processes of social transformation. By paying close attention to the economic, spatial, ideological, and political dimensions of culture, this paper will demonstrate how these elements are intricately woven into the fabric of the stories, revealing the complex interplay between literature and the sociocultural context in which it is produced and consumed, ultimately highlighting the essential role of culture in individual and societal existence.

Keywords: Culture, Society, Cluster, Political dimension, etc.

Introduction:

In the vast tapestry of human existence, culture and tradition serve as the lifeblood of every ethnic group, providing the very framework for social survival. Society itself is constituted by the intricate weave of human interactions and the shared values that define them. Culture, far from being a static entity, acts as a dynamic force, generating meanings and ideas that shape our understanding of the world. Cultural studies, recognizing this dynamism, rejects the limitations of purely aesthetic interpretations, instead embracing a multidimensional view that encompasses economic, spatial, ideological, and political aspects. As Raymond Williams eloquently articulated, our experience forms a network of relationships, and our communication systems, including the arts, are integral to our social organization. Our perception of the world is inextricably linked to our lived reality, and the act of

communication becomes the very process of community, a continuous exchange of meanings that drives growth and change. Thus, experience emerges as the cornerstone of cultural studies, providing the lens through which we can understand the complex interplay between culture and society.

An individual's identity is constructed through the roles they assume and, fundamentally, through their lived experiences. Cultural Studies, however, posits that our understanding of life often obscures the interconnectedness of various social groups. Everyday life serves as the foundation for these experiences, with routine interactions shaping an individual's perception of the world. These experiences encompass seemingly mundane aspects of daily life, such as food, social interactions on public transport, clothing choices, navigating traffic, and the sense of community within their everyday culture. This unique way of life, forged through social interaction, fosters individualism. Lifestyle preferences, acting as a form of self-realization, allow individuals to reshape their feelings, preferences, and sense of security, sometimes involving a conscious or unconscious detachment from familial, class, and other social ties. Ultimately, these lifestyle choices empower the individual to discover and create their own identity, regardless of their background, positioning everyday life as a central arena for personal agency. Migration, while often pursued for personal gain, necessitates navigating significant cultural shifts. Individuals face the challenge of adapting to unfamiliar customs, a process that can be both rewarding and difficult. This study will explore these cultural complexities through a Cultural Studies analysis of short stories by Doris Lessing and Margaret Atwood.

Doris Lessing, a celebrated British novelist, brought the lives of Africans to the forefront of her writing. Margaret Atwood, a cornerstone of Canadian literature, is renowned for her powerful portrayals of women's struggles, including themes of reproductive control and psychological vulnerability.

Doris Lessing's short story, "A Road to the Big City," from the collection *The Sun Between their Feet and Other Stories*, introduces Jansen as he patiently awaits a delayed train for his connection to Johannesburg. His recent week spent with friends, filled with enjoyable memories, allows him to maintain his composure despite the long wait. This patience hints at a certain resilience, perhaps born from navigating the realities of travel in a particular social or geographical context. To pass the time, he visits the station buffet and wanders the streets, observing his surroundings with a detached curiosity, suggesting a man accustomed to solitude or contemplation. This aimless walk, a common trope in stories about waiting and transition, is interrupted when two girls approach him. Lilla, the bolder of the two, immediately offers him cigarettes or wine, startling Jansen with her forwardness. This open offer, potentially laden with social and cultural implications, introduces a sense of ambiguity and raises questions about the dynamics of power and interaction in this setting. Her younger sister, Marie, quietly joins them, sliding into the seat beside him, her shyness contrasting starkly with her sister's boldness and hinting at different approaches to navigating social situations.

As they began to talk, Jansen revealed he'd just arrived in Johannesburg that morning, while Lilla countered that she'd been there a year. She'd eloped from Bloemfontein a year prior, seeking financial independence. During their conversation, Lilla stated Marie had come to learn a suitable trade. Marie then elaborated on their mother, describing her as 'old fashioned' and quoting her as saying, 'She does not want us to be in Joburg. She says it is wrong for girls' (157). Jansen was taken aback by their reasons for leaving Bloemfontein. Following this exchange, they went to a two-room flat above Mac's Golden Emporium, a suburban grocery store. Once inside, Lilla abruptly excused herself, saying she needed to 'phone her friend,' leaving Jansen uneasy with Marie. Shortly after, Lilla reappeared, dressed and made-up, announcing, 'I am going out a little. Oh, keep your hair on. I will be back soon. My friend is taking me for a walk' (159). She then left with a handsome, sun-burned man who touched her intimately. Jansen quickly grasps Lilla's intention: he is meant to become Marie's client. Instead of playing along, however, Jansen urges Marie to leave her sister and return home. Marie dismisses his advice, insisting that Lilla works as a typist in an office. Growing increasingly agitated, Jansen bluntly reveals his assessment of her sister's situation:

Do you know what I am here for? Your sister expects you to take off your cloths and get into bed an... Your sister is a bad girl. You will marry a nice man soon. You won't always have to live by the Railway Lines. I know you hate me. One day you will know I am right and you will be glad. (160-161)

Following his blunt assessment, Jansen purchases a ticket to Bloemfontein and sends Marie home by train. Shifting focus, Margaret Atwood, a prominent figure in Canadian literature, presents the short story "Dancing Girls" from her collection *Dancing Girls and Other Stories*. The story centers on Anne, a Toronto native who, defying her parents' wishes, travels to Holland to pursue architectural research. Despite their disapproval, she moves to Holland. There, she rents a room in the apartment of Mrs. Nolan, a widowed woman struggling to control her two mischievous children. Mrs. Nolan, though seemingly strong, finds her children challenging and maintains a strict demeanor with her tenants. In Holland, it's common for female students from abroad to share rooms, so Anne finds herself sharing with Lela. Anne experiences cultural constraints in Holland, particularly the acceptance of women sharing rooms with men. Lela, her roommate, is a Turkish student pursuing Comparative Literature, characterized by her long hair and a distinctive gold tooth.

Anne harbors a sense of jealousy towards Lela, feeling her own beauty pales in comparison. A month later, Mrs. Nolan informs Anne that a male tenant will be occupying the adjacent room, necessitating a shared bathroom. This cultural practice of sharing a bathroom with a man deeply unsettles Anne, but with no alternative, she reluctantly agrees. Within the apartment, residents adhere to their respective cultural dress codes. Anne discovers the new tenant is of Arab origin. She becomes keenly aware of the masculine presence in the shared bathroom, noting details like shaving blades and stray hairs. When Lela permanently departs with two friends from Hong Kong, Anne finds herself alone in the apartment. She frequently imagines a garden enclosed by a high fence. One day, a loud, explosive sound emanates from the Arab

man's room. Following the loud noise, Mrs. Nolan investigates and, upon discovering the Arab man entertaining dancing girls in his room, angrily chases him through three streets. Anne, confident in her academic dedication, resolves to stay in Holland despite the cultural clashes. However, she experiences a recurring vision: a fence surrounding her, with dancing girls and the everyday Dutch life existing beyond it. This recurring image fuels her desire to overcome the barriers that separate her from the surrounding culture.

Both short stories explore the lives of women navigating cultural transitions, one struggling to adapt, the other seemingly embracing a new environment. In Doris Lessing's "A Road to the Big City," Lilla migrates to Johannesburg, seeking employment. However, her circumstances lead her to prostitution, a stark adaptation to the city's undercurrents. She even attempts to draw her younger sister, Marie, into this life. Fortunately, Jansen's intervention allows Marie to narrowly avoid this fate. This story highlights the potentially destructive consequences of cultural adaptation when driven by desperation.

In Margaret Atwood's "Dancing Girls," Anne forces herself to adapt to certain aspects of Dutch culture, particularly the expectation of shared living spaces, in pursuit of her studies and a degree of independence. Lela, like Lilla in Lessing's story, demonstrates a seemingly effortless assimilation into the new culture, contrasting sharply with Anne's and Marie's struggles to break free from their perceived limitations. While Marie remains confined by her circumstances, Anne ultimately chooses to transcend the cultural barriers she perceives. These stories underscore the complex relationship between individual identity and cultural adaptation. Culture is presented as a powerful force, shaping an individual's life and compelling them to adjust, both physically and mentally, to new environments. This adaptation, however, comes at a cost, potentially leading to the erosion of one's native identity. Yet, the necessity of navigating these cultural shifts is a central theme explored in both Doris Lessing's and Margaret Atwood's short stories.

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A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY TAMIL FILMS VIA THE PERSPECTIVES OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY DEPICTION

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Abstract

The portrayal of culture and identity in contemporary Tamil cinema offers a nuanced reflection of the evolving societal landscape. As a powerful medium of storytelling, Tamil cinema has increasingly become a space for exploring the complexities of identity, heritage, and cultural transformation in post-liberalization India. This study examines how filmmakers navigate the intricate relationship between tradition and modernity, focusing on the intersectionality of caste, class, gender, and regionalism. Through a critical analysis of contemporary Tamil films, this paper explores the ways in which cultural narratives are reshaped, challenged, and reaffirmed, addressing both global influences and local sensibilities. The study analysis the role of cinema as both a mirror and a catalyst for social change, offering insights into how Tamil cinema represents, interrogates, and redefines Tamil identity in a rapidly changing world. By examining key films from the last two decades, the research emphasizes the role of cinema in constructing, contesting, and negotiating cultural norms, while also reflecting the shifting dynamics of Tamil society.

Keywords: Culture, Tamil, Cinema, Identity, Modernity, Tradition, Representation

Contemporary Tamil cinema, a prominent part of Indian popular culture, has evolved significantly over the decades. The narrative threads of Tamil films reflect the cultural, social, and political climates in which they are created. Through a sociological lens, Tamil films can be analysed to better understand how they depict and influence notions of culture and identity. These films offer a unique window into the lives of individuals and communities, reflecting the socio-political tensions, cultural practices, and identity struggles that define modern Tamil society. Tamil

cinema has played a crucial role in shaping the cultural and social identity of the Tamil people, both within India and across the Tamil diaspora. Its impact goes beyond mere entertainment, influencing everything from language and religion to politics, gender roles, and social movements. Here's an analysis of the role of Tamil cinema in representing cultural and social identity

Culture In Tamil Cinema:

Culture is an essential element in the portrayal of Tamil identity in cinema. The cultural fabric of Tamil Nadu, including its language, traditions, values, and religious practices, often serves as both the backdrop and driving force for many films. Cinema acts as a powerful medium through which popular notions of cultural values are either reinforced or challenged.

Tamil films often highlight key cultural markers such as family relationships, respect for elders, traditional festivals, and the importance of community. The idealization of rural life and the portrayal of family as a central institution reflect the conservative and hierarchical nature of traditional Tamil society. However, the increasing urbanization and globalization in recent years have led to a shift in these depictions. Films now often explore the tension between traditional and modern values, such as the clash between the rural and urban, the old and the new, and the local and the global.

One prominent example of this cultural tension can be found in films like *Vikram Vedha* (2017), where characters struggle with personal morality versus societal norms. These movies examine the intersection of individual desires and broader cultural expectations, pushing the viewer to question the integrity of traditional cultural values in a rapidly changing society.

Promotion Of Tamil Language And Identity:

Tamil cinema has been a significant force in the promotion and preservation of the Tamil language. It serves as a powerful medium for showcasing Tamil culture, heritage, and traditions, making the Tamil language accessible to a global audience. In an era where globalization threatens the dominance of regional languages, Tamil films help maintain and propagate the linguistic and cultural identity of Tamil speakers. The emphasis on Tamil as a medium of expression in movies has been crucial in reinforcing the pride and sense of belonging among Tamil people, example films such as *Vishwaroopam* and *Anbe Sivam* highlight Tamil as a language of global significance, reflecting Tamil Nadu's unique cultural history.

Social and Political Influence:

Tamil cinema has a deep connection with the social and political landscape. In many ways, films have acted as a mirror to society, reflecting its issues, values, and aspirations. Tamil cinema has often been a platform for political commentary, addressing issues like caste discrimination, poverty, gender inequality, and regional autonomy. The films of M. Karunanidhi (former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu) and

political icons like MGR (M.G. Ramachandran) and Jayalalithaa played crucial roles in Tamil Nadu's political narrative. Movies like *Nadodi Mannan* (1958) and MGR's films often carried political messages that resonated with the masses, influencing public opinion and political loyalties. The Tamil films *Madras* (2014) and *Kaala* (2018), directed by Pa. Ranjith, addressed the theme of land rights and social justice, highlighting issues of class struggle, oppression, complexities of migration, identity, and the globalized world, helping the Tamil diaspora understand their place in the broader social context.

Identity and The Representation Of Social Classes:

Identity in Tamil films is often shaped by the socio-economic context, and this is particularly evident in the depiction of social class. Historically, Tamil cinema has portrayed the struggles of marginalized communities, particularly the working class, oppressed communities, and the rural poor. The films often focus on their struggles for justice, dignity, and equality within the socio-political landscape. The identity of Tamil cinema is intricately tied to the representation of caste and class dynamics. While early Tamil films largely depicted the heroic narratives of upper-caste protagonists, contemporary Tamil cinema has shifted focus towards portraying the lives of the underprivileged.

Films like *Pariyerum Perumal* (2018) and *Nandhan* (2024) take on caste discrimination, addressing the exploitation of Dalits and the hierarchical caste system that pervades Tamil society.

Moreover, the representation of the urban middle class and the rising affluent society in Tamil cinema further complicates the notion of identity. Movies such as *Master* (2021) explore the tension between the urban elite and the disenfranchised, underlining the socio-economic divides that persist in Tamil Nadu. These films expose how identity formation is often dependent on one's socio-economic status, education, and access to power, reflecting a broader socio-economic divide that has intensified with globalization.

Gender, Sexuality, and Identity:

Gender representation in Tamil films has also evolved over time. Traditional films often showcased women as passive, secondary characters whose roles were largely defined by their relationships with men. Women were typically portrayed in domestic roles or as objects of male desire, reinforcing patriarchal notions of gender and sexuality. However, contemporary Tamil cinema has begun to break away from these stereotypical representations. Movies like *Aruvi* (2016), *Aramm* (2017) and *Kanaa* (2018) present women as strong, independent characters who defy traditional gender roles. These films challenge the stereotypes and reflect a growing consciousness about gender equality in Tamil society. present women as strong individuals grappling with societal issues like caste and patriarchy.

Gender identity and sexuality also play a significant role in films exploring non-normative sexualities. Films like *Nalanum Naliniyum* (2018) and *Super Deluxe* (2019) explore issues of LGBTQIA+ identity, albeit in a nuanced way. These films navigate the complexities of non-heteronormative identities in a traditionally conservative society, offering a critique of the cultural resistance towards LGBTQIA+ issues. In this way, Tamil cinema is slowly but steadily engaging with a broader spectrum of gender and sexual identities, offering a space for more diverse narratives.

Globalization and Transnational Identity:

The process of globalization has had a significant impact on the identity and culture depicted in Tamil films. As Tamil cinema begins to engage with international audiences and the Tamil diaspora, the content of films increasingly reflects the complexities of a transnational identity. Tamil films are now often set against the backdrop of an interconnected world, with characters navigating between Tamil Nadu and various parts of the world. Films like *The Legend of Maari* (2019) and *Vada Chennai* (2018) explore the global movement of Tamil people, addressing issues such as migration, identity conflict, and belonging. These films depict characters who, despite being deeply rooted in Tamil culture, are shaped by their experiences outside of Tamil Nadu, often reflecting the immigrant experience and the tension between preserving traditional identity and adapting to new cultural contexts. This engagement with transnational identity is reflective of the broader trends in Tamil society, where globalization is challenging the boundaries of cultural and national identity. Films have become a space for expressing the complexities of belonging to multiple cultures, as they explore how global influences are integrated into local cultures while still retaining core cultural identities.

- **Impact on social issues and reforms**

Tamil cinema has often addressed social issues, leading to awareness and even driving social change. Films have tackled a variety of societal issues such as dowry, child marriage, untouchability, and corruption, sparking conversations among viewers and in some cases, leading to reforms in social practices. More recent films like *Cuckoo* (2014) *Vada Chennai* (2018), *Asuran* (2019), *Karnan* (2021) have explored urban poverty, the effects of caste-based violence, and the struggles of working-class communities, encouraging social change through awareness.

- **The Role of Music and Dance in Shaping Identity**

Music is another powerful tool used in Tamil cinema to represent cultural identity. Songs and music play a central role in conveying emotions, social messages, and cultural values. The music of Tamil films reflects the rhythm of life in Tamil Nadu, incorporating traditional instruments, folk music, and classical melodies. These songs serve not only as entertainment

but also as a means of preserving and promoting Tamil culture. Iconic composer like Ilaiyaraaja has used his music to blend traditional Tamil sounds with modern influences, creating a soundscape that resonates globally with Tamil-speaking people.

Conclusion:

The sociological analysis of contemporary Tamil films reveals how cinema serves as a mirror to the shifting dynamics of culture and identity in Tamil society. These films capture the evolving complexities of social class, caste, gender, and transnational identity, providing a platform for reflection on the changing norms and values. As Tamil cinema continues to evolve, it not only entertains but also educates and challenges viewers to critically engage with societal issues. Through the lens of culture and identity, Tamil films have the power to influence social attitudes and provoke discussion on important topics such as equality, justice, and human rights. By examining these films through a sociological framework, we can better understand the intricate relationship between cinema, society, and the construction of cultural and social identity.

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The Struggle for Self: Ethnic Identity and Cultural Inequities in Kristin Hannah's *The Women*

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Abstract

This paper explores the themes of ethnic identity and cultural inequities in Kristin Hannah's *The Women*, examines how the characters deal with their individual identity issues in spite of societal and historical boundaries. The article explores how the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity impacts the experiences of female characters, particularly in the face of trauma, oppression, and societal expectations. By using feminist theory, postcolonial discourse, and identity formation theories, this study examines how *The Women* depicts the effects of cultural inequities on self-perception. This paper investigates the complex relationship between cultural belonging and personal identity through a detailed examination of the lives of the protagonists, especially in the setting of marginalised ethnic groups. By focussing on the intersections of race, gender, and class, this study provides light on the constant struggle for self-realization and independence within a strictly defined cultural framework as well as the profound emotional and psychological effects of cultural discrimination. *The Women* becomes a potent reflection on the determination and transformative opportunities of reclaiming one's identity in the face of strong societal injustices when viewed through this lens.

Keywords: Ethnicity, cultural inequities, societal injustices, oppression

The paper examines the lives of its main female protagonists, who experiences the harsh reality of cultural and ethnic inequities in a patriarchal and ethnocentric surroundings in Kristin Hannah's novel *The Women* (2024). In her novel she emphasizes the ways in which personal histories and larger social structures of inequity shape identity, especially ethnic identity. In *The Women*, the women must navigate and negotiate their sense of self in a world that threatens their autonomy, whether through hidden cultural marginalisation or overt discrimination. Kristin Hannah is a well-known and prolific writer who is known for her profoundly emotional and gripping tales. she was born in Southern California, on September 25, 1960. Through her poignant works that often deal with themes of love, tragedy, and resiliency.

Hannah has gained reputation in modern literature. Beginning her writing career in the early 1990s. Hannah has authored a number of works in a variety of genres, including contemporary drama and fiction. . Hannah's writing is distinguished by its emotional depth and its focus on the human condition. Her books vividly depict various people in unexpected situations, reflecting her interest in historical events and emotional challenges. Hannah's work is effective and relevant because she offers a perspective on historical and contemporary issues through her stories and characters. With an emphasis on the protagonists' continuous fight for identity and agency in the face of structural oppression, this essay examines how ethnic identity and cultural injustices are depicted via their experiences.

Hannah had an interest in writing about the Vietnam War for 30 years, which lasted from November 1, 1955, to April 30, 1975, which was an intricate and momentous struggle. It involved South Vietnam, which was supported by America and other anti-communist allies, and North Vietnam, which was controlled by the communist regime of Ho Chi Minh. But the novel did not really come to life until March 2020. During the COVID-19 lockdown, the rising panic, struggles and the anger as shown on the television reminded the author of the struggles of the medics during the Vietnam war. Moreover, the nurses and doctors combating the pandemic on the front lines were overworked, exhausted, traumatized and in many cases as they were unsupported despite making such enormous sacrifices for the rest of the people to fight the pandemic. The disparity of those incidents reminded her of the Vietnam War and its nurses. Hannah wanted to shine a light on the nurses who served in Vietnam and also explore the larger context of a changing America through her narrative. She also wanted to show that protests could be considered a patriotic act. Protesting for the right cause in the right way can have a positive outcome.

The Women is a tale of the 1960s, a challenging and revolutionary era in American history. It is also an epic story of a nation driven apart by politics and conflict of a generation driven by dreams but lost on the battlefield. Moreover, it is an intimate portrayal of a woman coming of age in difficult times. It uses the narrative

of a persistent lady who went to war to narrate the story of all women who risk their lives to save others. Their sacrifice and commitment to their country have all too often been forgotten. A generation is defined by the remarkable idealism and bravery of the protagonist Frankie McGrath in *The Women*, who remains strong during turbulence times in a well-drawn tale of piercing insight and lyrical beauty. Frankie McGrath, a twenty-year-old nursing student, hails from a prosperous family and was raised by strict parents on the beautiful island of Coronado, California. She believes that while men are out at war, women belong at home. She did not give it any thought until her brother's friend Rye Walshin told her that "women can be heroes too,". She has always taken great satisfaction in being a good girl and doing the right thing. However, when the world changes in 1965, she finds herself considering a different path for her life. She follows her brother's lead and impulsively seeks recruitment in the Army Nurse Corps when he ships out to serve in Vietnam. In course of her tenure at the warfront, Frankie will learn the genuine meaning of female friendship and the pain that can result from love.

Feminist theory, especially as expressed by theorists like Bell Hooks and Judith Butler, shows how gender works in institutional settings like the military as a control mechanism in addition to being a social category. Frankie McGrath's womanhood is simultaneously idealized and ignored in the hyper-masculinized society she enters in *The Women*. Even though she performs vital medical work, men soldiers and commanding leaders undercut her authority because they believe her body is unsuitable. In *The Women*, ethnic identity is a significant factor in determining the women's lives. Sustaining their ethnic and cultural identities while facing the imposition of societal norms which often aim to erase or marginalise their past is the main obstacle they face on their journey. Ethnic identity becomes a tool for survival and resistance in a society that tries to stifle it, in addition to being a subject of personal significance. Because of the relationship of their ethnic identities with gendered norms, the protagonists search for selfhood is complicated.

The roles that women need to play are a further manifestation of the cultural injustices they come across, in addition to discrimination based on race or ethnicity. A greater sense of alienation results from these expectations, which frequently restrict their autonomy and mobility throughout society. In negotiating cultural barriers to self-expression, the paper focusses at how these women's ethnic backgrounds become a source of pride and anxiety. The relationship between gender and social inequality is one of the Women's main concerns. In addition to being oppressed by external factors because of their ethnic identities, the novel's protagonists are also bound by societal norms that specify their responsibilities as women. Gender inequality is a widespread problem, and this work examines the ways in which women's ethnic oppression and cultural expectations interact. Hannah exposes the widespread societal injustices that happen beyond of the battlefield via *The Women*. When

Frankie, Ethel, and Barb come home, they face social rejection and are not given the identical status and respect as their male peers. But Barb receives noticeably worse care. Barb must deal with the persistent racial biases of American institutions, such as the Veterans Administration, the healthcare system, and public opinion, while white female nurses like Frankie struggle for recognition as veterans.

Ethnicity in *The Women* is more than background it's a central theme that adds depth to the novel's feminist perspective. Through Barb, Hannah critiques racial injustice, challenges the whiteness of historical memory, and amplifies the voices of Black women veterans. By doing so, she not only tells a more honest story about the Vietnam War but also confronts the cultural systems that continue to exclude and erase based on race and gender. *The Women* is not simply a story about war; it is a story about the struggle for visibility to be seen, heard, and remembered. Hannah's depiction of female military nurses shows how gender roles constrained women during wartime, but it is through intersectional analysis that the novel's full critique emerges. *The Women* successfully restores the voices of women in the story of the Vietnam War. It is more than a gendered narrative of the trauma of war. Although, it is a critique of the cultural and racial injustices that characterise national remembering and military service. Hannah explores the double hardship that women of colour carry whose service is doubly marginalised by gender and race, through Barb's character and the novel's larger racial dynamics. By doing this, *The Women* challenges us to reconsider how we create historical narratives and who is ignored.

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The Paradox of Belonging: Hybridity and Transnationalism in Murakami's Dance, Dance, Dance

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Abstract

Haruki Murakami's *Dance, Dance, Dance* (1988) concerns about isolation, identity, and the pursuit of meaning within an increasingly globalized world. The protagonist, who remains unnamed throughout the novel, sets out on a journey that depicts a splintered sense of emotional and physical belonging. This research explores how the novel addresses hybridity and transnationalism, presenting a multidimensional depiction of belonging where the protagonist, along with other characters, traverses multiple cultural identities and histories, influenced by the forces of globalization.

The paper argues that *Dance, Dance, Dance* portrays a paradoxical representation of belonging: the natural inclination of the characters towards connection and meaning on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the substratum reality of their alienation while in a world whose existing fabric is interwoven by cultural hybridization. Murakami's Tokyo, as an interstitial space where East and West meet, is a site of dispassion for the protagonist as he works his way through ill-fated relationships and memories. These relationships, meanwhile, all serve to highlight the impossibility of linking personally defined spaces to each shifting cultural timescape. Ultimately, Murakami's work both reflects and embodies the contradiction between personal alienation and the undeniable pull of both local and global cultures, suggesting that identity in the postmodern world is never stable. Through its exploration of transnationalism and hybrid identities, *Dance, Dance, Dance* captures the complexity of a sense of belonging in a globalized world,

whereby the lives of people are simultaneously being framed by two incompatible experiences at the local and global level.

Keywords: Transnationalism, Cultural Hybridity, Globalization, Alienation

The intricacies of identity and cross-cultural communication have long been addressed in Japanese literature, especially as Japan maintains a tenuous equilibrium between tradition and modernity. In post-war Japan, cultural relations between Japan and the West were sharper than ever, especially Western ideas influenced literature, art, and philosophy throughout this time, creating a distinctive hybridity in Japanese cultural expression. Furthermore, the notion of national identity became even more complex as a result of Japan's meteoric economic growth in the second half of the 20th century, which positioned Japan as a key factor in a globalized world.

Hybridity and transnationalism have become increasingly prevalent themes in Japanese literature over the past few decades. There is a high degree of hybridity in the works of many postwar and contemporary authors, which refers to the blending of cultural influences from different sources. Transnationalism, the movement and exchange within and among nations and cultures, has been a pertinent theme with a focus on the increasing interconnectedness of the world at large. In a globalized world, authors like Haruki Murakami embody modern identity contradictions by depicting characters that exists between different cultural realms.

Haruki Murakami is one of Japan's most prominent contemporary authors. Murakami's novels have been translated into more than thirty languages and circulated on a global scale. By incorporating Americanism into a Japanese setting, Murakami allows readers from all over the world to easily approach his novels regardless of how much or how little they understand Japan. search for meaning in a divided world. Along with combining mainstream Western and Japanese cultural influences, his work investigates alienation, loneliness and search for meaning in the fragmented world

In much of Murakami's writing, the boundaries between the real and the surreal tend to become blurred as he weaves in elements of magical realism and surrealist influences. The figures of his novel, which are often engaged on an existential mission that characterize hybridity and dislocation which typify modern times. Murakami's treatment of identity, especially with respect to globalization, mirrors the broader cultural shifts in Japan, where Western and Japanese values frequently collide. His novels, including *Norwegian Wood*, *Kafka on the Shore*, and *Dance Dance Dance*, frequently engage with the themes of hybrid cultural identities and the search for belonging, which make his work particularly relevant in the study of transnationalism.

Dance Dance Dance (1988) is a story of an anonymous character who seeks to reconnect with his disappeared former lover while grappling with his own sense of alienation in the world. The unnamed protagonist is often characterized by the notion of an “everyman”; he confronts bizarre and surreal encounters, works with an eccentric people, and undergoes strange happenings in places as distant and diverse as Tokyo and Hawaii. *Dance Dance Dance* is deeply concerned with the strife for meaning, belonging, and personal identity in a world marked by cultural and personal fragmentation. Underlying notions of hybridity and transnationalism play a crucial role in the structuring and thematic concerns of the novel. Murakami's work shows postmodern mixing of cultural elements and *Dance Dance Dance* stands as an exploration of the fluid and hybrid nature of identity in a globalized world. The magical realism and surrealist elements, combined with an unconventional narrative voice, highlights the disjunctions between cultures, identities, and personal meanings.

While exploring the gap of belonging in *Dance Dance Dance*, Murakami reflects on the characters' elements of transnationalism and hybridism and depicts the contemporary Japanese identity as fluid, fragmented and ever-changing due to globalization. The protagonist's journey, marked by surreal experiences and cultural dislocation, reflects the complexities of belonging, suggesting that identity in the modern world cannot be reduced to simple national or cultural categories. The objective of this paper aims to analyze the depiction of hybridity and transnationalism in *Dance Dance Dance*. It investigates how these themes contribute to the paradox of belonging experienced by the protagonist. The paper explores how Murakami's use of magical realism and surrealism reflects the hybrid nature of contemporary Japanese identity. It examines how the novel critiques the notion of fixed cultural and national identities in a globalized context.

Globalization casts a contradictory perspective on the concept of belonging as people are more connected to multiple cultures and spaces than ever before, facilitated by travel, technology, and transnational exchanges. On the other hand, these connections often lead to a sense of dislocation and fragmentation, as individuals struggle to find a single, enduring identity in a world marked by cultural hybridity. In *Dance Dance Dance*, Murakami's protagonist embodies this paradox of belonging—he is at once connected to multiple places and cultures but remains deeply alienated and disconnected from them.

The journey of the protagonist is a discovery of his attempt to balance his Japanese roots he harbors with the Westernization that surrounds him. This sense of alienation is compounded by the globalized setting of the novel, where characters often exist between cultural worlds, reflecting the tension between belonging to a single nation or culture and being part of a broader, transnational world.

Hybridity, as Homi K. Bhabha theorizes in *The Location of Culture*, is the blending of cultures when various traditions and identities meet each other. For Bhabha, hybridity is not so much a syncretic mixing of cultural forms but a constant process of negotiation and adaptation. In Japanese postmodern fiction, hybridity refers to the integration of native Japanese culture with elements of Western modernity. This theme is vividly illustrated in Murakami's work because his characters live in cultural purgatory, where they straddle various cultures without fully succumbing to any single identity.

In *Dance Dance Dance*, the identity of the main character is shaped by both Western and Japanese culture. His individual dislocation is a consequence of this hybridization, as he finds himself unable to fully belong to either one of the cultural realm. The novel mirrors the challenges of living in a postmodern era where national and cultural identities are increasingly multifaceted and diverse. The protagonist of *Dance Dance Dance* embodies hybridity in his relations to linguistic and cultural interactions. His language, often sprinkled with references to Western culture—jazz music, American films, and Western philosophies—reflects the fusion of Eastern and Western influences in his identity. This linguistic hybridity highlights his struggle to navigate a world that is both familiar and foreign to him. Culturally, the protagonist's relationships with other characters that come from various backgrounds, further emphasizes the hybrid nature of his identity. His connections to both Japanese and non-Japanese characters creates a chasm where cultural boundaries blur, reflecting the complexities of belonging in a globalized society.

Murakami's use of magical realism and surrealism in *Dance Dance Dance* reflects the hybridity of contemporary Japanese culture. The blending of the normal and the extraordinary in the narrative mirrors Japan's simultaneously hybrid identity, modern Westernized absorbed and traditional cultural values incorporated. The surreal elements of the novel such as the appearance of ghosts, unexplained phenomena, and dreamlike sequences represent the fractured, hybrid nature of the protagonist's identity, and by extension, contemporary Japanese society.

Transnationalism pertains to the interrelation, intersection, and overlapping of people, cultures, and identities beyond national borders. It emphasizes the migration of culture and identity in a globalized world. In *Dance Dance Dance*, the protagonist's travels between Japan and other countries (such as Hawaii) epitomize the transnational nature of contemporary life. His interactions with individuals from different countries further emphasize the ways in which cultural boundaries are increasingly permeable.

In the context of Japanese literature, transnationalism reflects the growing movement of people and ideas between Japan and other nations, particularly in the post-war era. Authors like Murakami often depict characters who traverse national borders, suggesting that contemporary Japanese identity cannot be understood within

the confines of Japan alone. The blending of different cultures in his works mirrors the transnational experiences of modern Japanese individuals.

In *Dance Dance Dance*, Murakami uses the protagonist's relationships and experiences in both Japan and Hawaii to illustrate transnational connections. These exchanges highlight the fluidity of cultural boundaries, as the protagonist navigates a world where national identities are no longer fixed but are continuously reshaped by global interactions. The novel's settings—particularly the juxtaposition of Tokyo and Hawaii—reflect the transnational nature of contemporary Japanese culture. Tokyo represents Japan's blend of traditional and modern influences, while Hawaii introduces a more explicitly Westernized and globalized space. Characters in the novel also embody transnational identities, as they navigate the complex intersections of culture, language, and belonging.

The paradox of belonging arises in a world where individuals are simultaneously connected to multiple cultural and national realms but are unable to fully commit to any of them. In *Dance Dance Dance*, the protagonist's search for belonging is a constant tension between his desire for connection and the realization that he can never fully belong to one place or culture. Murakami portrays the paradox of belonging through the protagonist's journey, as he moves through different cultural landscapes in search of meaning. His experiences reflect the impossibility of achieving a stable, unambiguous sense of identity in a globalized world where cultural, personal, and national identities are constantly shifting.

The protagonist's experiences in *Dance Dance Dance* illustrate the paradox of belonging in a globalized, hybrid world. As he navigates different cultural realms, he finds that belonging cannot be easily defined by traditional notions of national or cultural identity. Instead, it is a fluid, complex process that involves negotiating multiple influences and connections. The novel suggests that belonging is shaped by a tension between cultural identity and global connectivity. The protagonist's journey reflects the difficulties of reconciling these two aspects of modern life, as he struggles to find his place in a world that demands both cultural rootedness and global mobility. Murakami suggests that belonging is not a straightforward concept but a multifaceted experience shaped by personal, cultural, and global forces. The protagonist's journey reflects the complexity of belonging in a contemporary world where identity is no longer fixed but is constantly in flux.

This paper has argued that *Dance Dance Dance* explores the paradox of belonging through the themes of hybridity and transnationalism. The protagonist's experiences reflect the complexities of identity in a globalized world, where cultural and national boundaries are increasingly fluid and ambiguous. In *Dance Dance Dance*, Murakami explores the paradox of belonging by depicting characters that embody both hybridity and transnationalism, reflecting the fluid and fragmented nature of contemporary Japanese identity in a globalized world.

The hypothesis of this paper—that hybridity and transnationalism create a paradoxical sense of belonging—is supported by the protagonist's experiences, which demonstrate the challenges of navigating multiple cultural worlds and the tension between cultural identity and global connectivity. Further research could explore the role of magical realism in Murakami's depiction of hybridity, as well as how other postmodern Japanese authors engage with similar themes. Comparative studies between Murakami's works and those of other international writers on hybridity and transnationalism could also provide valuable insights.

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A STUDY OF GENDER AND CULTURAL INEQUITIES IN BUTCHI EMECHETA'S JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD

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Abstract

Gender crisis and inequality are central themes in Buchi Emecheta's works, where she consistently explores the complexities of gender roles, particularly the challenges faced by women in both African and Western contexts. Many African women, often abiding by traditional values and societal norms, accept roles centered around homemaking and childbearing. However, they continue to face discrimination in various aspects of life, being unjustly deprived of fundamental rights, including the power to make decisions. This paper explores the dual struggle faced by African women, who must not only liberate themselves from the lingering effects of colonial rule but also resist oppressive cultural traditions deeply rooted in their societies. Emecheta's novel, *The Joys of Motherhood* (2008), serves as a powerful critique of African patriarchy, highlighting the silenced voices of women and the burdens they bear. Through a close textual analysis, this study examines the novel's depiction of gender discrimination, the role of women in African culture, and the societal expectations that confine them. By situating Emecheta's work within the broader discourse on African patriarchy, the paper sheds light on the gender and cultural inequities and the struggles of African women and their fight for autonomy and recognition.

Keywords: Gender crisis, cultural inequality, oppression, discrimination, African patriarchy, self-realization.

Traditional African societies, gender roles were well-defined, with distinct responsibilities assigned to men and women. Men were typically expected to provide for their families, protect their communities, and take part in political and religious activities. Meanwhile, women were primarily responsible for managing household duties, raising children, and nurturing social relationships. As highlighted, “Women in Africa are generally responsible for reproductive work, such as taking care of the children, while both men and women undertake productive work” (KIPTOT 12). Similarly, “Women are mainly responsible for their household’s needs for food and fuel” (Ibid. p. 12).

In the novel, men are traditionally expected to be strong and assertive, sustaining their families through farming and trade, while women take on domestic responsibilities, raise children, and support their husbands. However, the arrival of Europeans disrupts these established gender roles, stripping men of their economic and political influence and compelling women to assume new responsibilities within the community. Similarly, Buchi Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood* portray societies in transition, where women must adopt traditionally masculine traits and roles to navigate changing circumstances, while men are increasingly pushed into roles traditionally associated with femininity. These reversals challenge conventional gender identities, resulting in confusion, conflict, and social disorientation.

In African societies, traditional gender roles were deeply rooted in cultural and social ideologies that defined the distinct responsibilities of men and women. However, the impact of colonialism and modernization has led to significant transformations in these roles. In some instances, women have become more assertive, assuming responsibilities traditionally held by men, while men have taken on roles historically associated with women. This shift has introduced challenges and tensions within these societies.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Emecheta writes: “and they all agreed that a woman without a child for her husband was a failed woman.” (Emecheta 87) She highlights the cultural belief that a woman's value is primarily determined by her ability to bear and raise children. This underscores the central role of motherhood in defining a woman’s worth, reinforcing conventional gender roles and restricting women's autonomy. It also sheds light on the influence of patriarchal systems and how they confine women to traditional expectations.

The novel presents female protagonist who navigate the challenges posed by societal expectations and norms. By analyzing the character’s experiences, actions, and aspirations, one discovers that one of the central themes in novel is the tension between traditional gender roles and the desire for personal fulfillment and autonomy. As a matter of fact, in *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego is expected to fulfill her role as a mother and wife, and her worth is measured by her ability to bear children and provide for her family. However, she yearns for more than this limited role,

stating, “You mean you won’t have to depend on men friends to do anything for you?” “No, she replied. “I want to be a dignified single woman.” (Emecheta, 170) It expresses her desire for independence and personal fulfillment, even if it means defying societal norms. This is the perfect example of Efurú’s journey of self-discovery and the exploration of unconventional paths, making it a pivotal moment for women’s life experiences in the so-called patriarchal structure.

Again, When Emecheta writes You are the senior wife of your husband; you are like a male friend to him. Your place is at his side, to supervise his younger wife. Have you ever heard of a complete woman without a husband? You have done your duty to your father, a man with such nobility of spirit it defied explanation. Now it is to your husband that you should go (Emecheta, 158).

She exposes the traditional or colonial power dynamics within marriage, where men possess the authority to acquire additional wives, leaving women in vulnerable positions and perpetuating their subjugation. The experiences of the female protagonists in the two books under study are shaped by the intersection of gender, class, and race, highlighting the disparities and challenges they face in contrast to men. Indeed, both novels explore the societal expectations and limitations placed on women. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego’s worth, as said earlier, is primarily determined by her ability to bear children and fulfill her role as a mother. Her worth and identity are deeply tied to her reproductive capacity.

Furthermore, the intersection of gender and class further complicates the experiences of the female protagonists. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego’s lower-class status and poverty exacerbate the challenges she faces as a woman. Her economic struggles and the need to prioritize survival over personal aspirations reflect the impact of class on her experiences. In addition, race also intersects with gender to shape the experiences of the female protagonist. As a matter of fact, in the novel, the protagonist belongs to African society where cultural and traditional norms play a crucial role. The impact of race is particularly evident in the cultural expectations and practices imposed on women. It influences the standards of beauty, societal norms, and the dynamics of power within their respective communities. One of Emecheta’s characters emphasizes: “I wish Nnu Ego had been born in our time. When we were young, men valued the type of beauty she has.” (p.37)

In contrast, the male characters in the novels often enjoy the advantages afforded by patriarchal systems and societal expectations. They typically have greater access to education, career opportunities, and the freedom to pursue personal goals. Unlike the female protagonists, men are depicted as possessing more agency and control over their lives. They are not restricted by the same societal pressures and limitations placed on women, enabling them to move through their environments with increased independence and freedom. Indeed, Emecheta writes: “You see, you

won't even allow yourself to be a woman. You are in the first weeks of motherhood, and all you can do is to think like a man, raising male issue for your father, just because he cannot do it himself" (Emecheta, 24-25) Here she demonstrates the societal belief in male superiority and the perception of women as subordinate beings, highlighting the dominance of men in the patriarchal structure. In the same perspective, she adds:

The arrival of her new twin daughters had a subduing effect upon Nnu Ego. She felt more inadequate than ever. Men, all they were interested in were male babies to keep their names going. But did not a woman have to bear the woman-child who would later bear the sons? (Emecheta, 186)

The novel clearly portrays a societal preference for male children, highlighting the advantages men hold in areas such as inheritance and the preservation of family lineage. This reflects the deeply ingrained gender biases that prioritize male offspring and uphold male dominance within familial and cultural structures.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta explores the life of Nnu Ego, a Nigerian woman grappling with the demands of motherhood amid the shifting landscapes of colonial and postcolonial society. Emecheta highlights how rigid gender roles and societal expectations constrain women's autonomy and contribute to their marginalization. Nnu Ego's struggles are further compounded by her economic status; her poverty significantly restricts her options. Torn between traditional rural values and the pressures of urban modernity, she finds herself trapped in a cycle of sacrifice and limited agency.

To illustrate this point, Nnu Ego's husband remarks: "So you see, Nnu Ego, the daughter of Agbadi, that washing the white woman's underclothes was what was able to keep us alive. Only now do you know its value, when even that is taken away from me" (Emecheta, 85). This statement reflects the feminization of African men in postcolonial contexts and the profound effects of colonialism on traditional gender dynamics. The act of washing the white woman's underclothes becomes symbolic of the emasculation African men experience through economic dependency and the erosion of their traditional roles.

Nnu Ego's recognition of the importance of this seemingly demeaning labor underlines the harsh reality of colonial economic structures, which redefined gender roles and displaced both men and women from their cultural positions. The underclothes metaphorically represent the colonial hierarchy, where African men were relegated to subordinate, feminized roles. Through this, Emecheta exposes the complexities of gender relations in a postcolonial setting, emphasizing how colonialism not only marginalized women but also destabilized male identity by stripping men of their traditional authority and livelihood.

Furthermore, Emecheta draws attention to the disparities in reproductive autonomy between the poor and the privileged, revealing the intersection of gender and class in both colonial and postcolonial Africa. For Nnu Ego's husband, this moment also serves as a justification for accepting—perhaps even internalizing—the systemic 'feminization' or 'womenization' of African men, suggesting a resignation to a new social order imposed by colonial rule. Emecheta, in portraying this ongoing societal shift, underscores its permanence and far-reaching consequences. She adds: "It was in this mood of expectancy that she spent the last few shillings she had in preparing Nnaife's favourite dish, a thick and spicy corned-beef stew with peppers and tomatoes." (Emecheta, 85)

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, an intersectional lens reveals the intricate layers of gender within the colonial and postcolonial African context. The novel highlights how gender intersects with other social categories such as class, culture, race, and sex, shaping women's experiences and limiting their opportunities. Intersectional analysis allows for a more nuanced understanding of the complex power structures that influence women's lives and their struggle for self-determination and agency in African societies. Emecheta skilfully portrays Nnu Ego's sense of alienation, demonstrating how gendered expectations and societal norms intersect to marginalize women who diverge from traditional roles. Through Nnu Ego's story, Emecheta underscores the broader implications of intersectionality in understanding gender inequality in postcolonial Africa.

Through an intersectional analysis of the novel, we gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the complex implications of gender in both colonial and postcolonial Africa. The narrative highlights the overlapping influences of gender, class, and culture, revealing how these intersecting forces restrict women's agency and hinder their quest for self-determination.

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Logotherapy and the Human Spirit - Overcoming Trauma Through Meaning

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Abstract

Viktor Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning is a profound psychological and philosophical work that explores human resilience, suffering, and the fundamental quest for meaning. Drawing from his experiences in Nazi concentration camps, Frankl introduces logotherapy, a psychotherapeutic approach emphasizing that the primary motivation in life is the pursuit of meaning rather than pleasure or power. This research paper examines the psychological trauma endured in concentration camps, including dehumanization, physical suffering, emotional numbness, grief, and moral struggles, and how these experiences shaped Frankl's existential philosophy. Through logotherapy, Frankl asserts that meaning can be discovered through work, love, and suffering, offering a transformative perspective on human endurance. His concept of the existential vacuum highlights modern struggles with emptiness and lack of purpose, while his principle of tragic optimism suggests that even in suffering, individuals can find growth and fulfillment. The study further explores the contemporary relevance of logotherapy in psychological treatment, particularly in addressing trauma, depression, and existential crises. Frankl's insights provide a framework for overcoming adversity, fostering psychological resilience, and cultivating a meaningful life. His work remains a vital contribution to existential psychology, psychotherapy, and self-development, offering timeless wisdom for navigating human suffering and purpose.

Keywords: concentration camps, existential psychology, existential vacuum, human endurance, logotherapy, man's search for meaning, meaning in suffering, psychological resilience, psychotherapy, purpose in life, self-development, tragic optimism, trauma recovery

Literature is the body of written, spoken or sung works that express ideas, emotions and human experience. In a psychological view on literature is a reflection of human thoughts, emotions and behaviour. It serves as a medium to explore the human mind, offering insights into personality, identity, trauma, motivation and cognitive processes. Viktor Emil Frankl (1905-1997) was the Austrian neurologist, psychiatrist, holocaust survivor and the founder of Logotherapy, a form of existential theory focused on finding meaning in life. Frankl's work bridges psychology philosophy and human resilience emphasizing that meaning can be found even in the most challenging circumstance. His ideas continue to influence psychology, self-

development and literature making him a key figure in existential thoughts. Frankl published 39 books. One of his autobiographical *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946) a best selling book in worldwide. Which recounts his experience in Nazi Concentration camps and explores how individuals can endure sufferings by discovering purpose. In *Man's Search for Meaning*, basic of Frankl's theory was the primary motivation of an individual is search for meaning in life and the primary purpose of psychotherapy should be help individual find the meaning in life. *Man's Search for Meaning* was first published in German in 1946 under the title "Ein Psychologe erlebt das Konzentrationslager" by Verlag für Jugend und Volk, a publishing house in Vienna. The first English edition was published in 1959 by Beacon Press, a Boston-based publisher Ilse Lasch. Since then, multiple editions have been released by various publishers worldwide.

Trauma in the Experiences in a Concentration Camps:

Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* is a powerful psychological and philosophical work that explores human suffering and resilience. In Chapter 1, titled *Experiences in a Concentration Camp*, Frankl provides a first-hand account of the brutal realities faced by prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. Through his observations and personal experiences, he highlights various forms of trauma, including psychological shock, dehumanization, physical suffering, emotional numbness, grief, and moral struggles. These traumatic experiences not only reveal the depth of human suffering but also serve as the foundation for Frankl's central argument: that meaning can be found even in the most harrowing circumstances.

The Initial Psychological Trauma(Shock and Disbelief) : Upon arrival at Auschwitz, prisoners were immediately subjected to extreme psychological shock. Many were separated from their loved ones without knowing they were being sent to gas chambers. The abrupt transition from their former lives to the horrors of the concentration camp left them in a state of disbelief. Frankl describes how prisoners, stripped of their possessions, identities, and dignity, entered a phase of numbness and emotional detachment. This initial trauma marked the beginning of their suffering, as they struggled to comprehend the inhumane conditions they were forced to endure.

Dehumanization and Loss of Identity : One of the most profound forms of trauma in the camps was the systematic dehumanization of prisoners. They were no longer seen as individuals but rather as mere numbers tattooed on their arms. Their heads were shaved, and they were given identical, tattered uniforms, further stripping them of personal identity. The relentless physical abuse from guards and prisoner overseers (capos) reinforced this loss of humanity. By reducing prisoners to objects, the Nazis sought to break their spirits and instill a sense of powerlessness, making survival an even greater struggle.

Physical Suffering and Starvation : The physical conditions in the concentration camps were unbearable. Prisoners were subjected to forced labour,

extreme weather, and severe malnutrition. Daily rations consisted of watery soup and small portions of bread, barely enough to sustain them.

Disease and exhaustion were rampant due to the lack of medical care, and many prisoners suffered from untreated wounds and illnesses. Frankl notes how starvation and exhaustion led to emotional desensitization—prisoners became indifferent to their own suffering and that of others. This emotional detachment was a survival mechanism, allowing them to endure the relentless physical torment.

Emotional Numbness and Apathy : As the trauma deepened, prisoners entered a second phase of psychological suffering: apathy. Witnessing daily executions, beatings, and deaths became a normal part of camp life. Frankl describes how many prisoners stopped reacting to these horrors, as emotional numbness became a defense against overwhelming despair. Apathy allowed them to conserve their psychological energy, as any emotional investment in their surroundings could lead to complete breakdown. This loss of emotional response was not a sign of weakness but rather an adaptive mechanism to cope with the extreme conditions.

Loss of Loved Ones and Grief : A unique form of trauma that Frankl experienced was the loss of his family. His wife, parents, and friends were taken from him, and he lived with the uncertainty of their fates. This uncertainty prevented traditional grieving; prisoners were forced to suppress emotions to survive. The inability to mourn in a normal way added to the psychological burden. Yet, Frankl found that those who could hold onto memories of their loved ones, even in the absence of closure, were more likely to maintain hope and inner strength.

Moral and Spiritual Struggles : The concentration camp experience also presented ethical and spiritual dilemmas. Some prisoners betrayed others in exchange for small advantages, such as extra food or lighter work duties. Others, however, displayed remarkable acts of kindness, sharing their rations or offering words of encouragement. Frankl observed that those who found meaning in their suffering—whether through faith, love, or a sense of duty—were more likely to endure. He emphasizes that even in the most dehumanizing conditions, individuals retained the freedom to choose their attitude toward suffering.

The traumas depicted in *Experience in a Concentration Camps of Man's Search for Meaning* illustrate the profound psychological and physical suffering endured by concentration camp prisoners. However, Frankl's account goes beyond documenting these horrors; he presents a powerful message about resilience and the human capacity for meaning-making. Through his experiences, he argues that even in extreme suffering, individuals can find purpose, whether through love, faith, or a sense of responsibility. This message remains relevant today, offering insight into how people can navigate trauma and find strength in adversity.

Meaning through Logotherapy:

Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* introduces logotherapy, a

psychotherapeutic approach based on the idea that the fundamental human drive is not pleasure (as Freud suggested) or power (as Adler proposed) but rather the search for meaning. The term logotherapy is derived from the Greek word *logos*, meaning “reason” or “meaning,” and represents Frankl’s belief that people can endure even the most unbearable suffering if they find a purpose in it. Drawing from his personal experiences as a Holocaust survivor and his work as a psychiatrist, Frankl illustrates how individuals can discover meaning through their actions, relationships, and even their suffering. Frankl’s development of logotherapy was heavily influenced by his time in Nazi concentration camps, where he observed that those who survived were not necessarily the strongest or healthiest but those who held on to a purpose—whether it was reuniting with loved ones, finishing a meaningful project, or simply maintaining their dignity in the face of dehumanization. He himself found meaning in his suffering by envisioning himself lecturing on the psychology of concentration camp inmates after the war, as well as by holding on to the love he felt for his wife, even though he did not know whether she was alive or dead. His survival was not merely a result of physical endurance but of a deep commitment to something beyond himself.

According to logotherapy, meaning can be discovered in three primary ways: through work, love, and suffering. The first path—work or creative endeavors—refers to engaging in tasks that contribute to the world, whether through art, science, service, or any meaningful pursuit. The second path—love—involves deep connections with others, where one finds purpose in caring for and supporting loved ones. Frankl emphasizes that love is not just a source of happiness but a profound way to discover meaning, as it allows individuals to see and nurture the potential in others. The third path—finding meaning in suffering—is perhaps the most challenging yet powerful aspect of logotherapy. Frankl asserts that when suffering is unavoidable, one can still choose how to respond to it. By adopting an attitude of dignity and purpose, suffering can be transformed into an opportunity for growth and self-transcendence. One of Frankl’s central arguments is that meaning is not something given to individuals but something they must actively seek. Unlike existentialist views that suggest life has no inherent meaning, Frankl argues that meaning exists but is unique to each person and must be discovered through personal experiences and responsibilities. He contrasts this with what he calls the “existential vacuum,” a state of emptiness and boredom that arises when individuals lack purpose. Many people try to fill this void with pleasure, power, or material success, but these pursuits often fail to bring lasting fulfillment. Logotherapy encourages individuals to confront their existential emptiness and take responsibility for finding their own unique purpose. Frankl also highlights the importance of future-oriented thinking in logotherapy. Unlike psychological theories that focus on past traumas, logotherapy emphasizes looking forward to what can still be achieved. Even in the most desperate circumstances, individuals can hold on to hope by envisioning a future goal. Frankl

often quoted Nietzsche's famous words: "He who has a why to live can bear almost any how." This underscores the idea that when a person has a clear reason for living, they can endure even the harshest conditions.

In essence, logotherapy is not just a theory but a practical approach to life that empowers individuals to find purpose in their actions, relationships, and struggles. It challenges people to take responsibility for their existence and recognize that even in suffering, life can hold profound meaning. Through his experiences in the concentration camps and his work as a psychiatrist, Frankl demonstrates that the search for meaning is the key to psychological and emotional resilience.

Finding meaning in Life: Insight from Man's Search for Meaning:

Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* presents a profound exploration of human resilience, suffering, and the essential drive for meaning. As a Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, Frankl developed logotherapy, a psychotherapeutic approach that argues that the primary human motivation is not pleasure or power but the search for meaning. Through his experiences in Nazi concentration camps and his psychological insights, Frankl demonstrates that even in the most extreme suffering, individuals can find purpose, and this pursuit of meaning becomes the foundation for survival and psychological well-being. At the heart of Frankl's philosophy is the belief that the deepest human drive is the search for meaning. He challenges previous psychological theories, such as Freud's idea that pleasure is the ultimate motivator or Adler's belief that power is the central force in human life. Instead, Frankl asserts that when individuals lack meaning, they experience an "existential vacuum," a state of emptiness that leads to despair, depression, and even self-destructive behaviors. He observed that those who survived the concentration camps were often not the strongest physically but those who had a reason to endure—the hope of seeing loved ones again, completing a significant task, or maintaining inner dignity in the face of dehumanization.

Frankl identifies three primary ways in which individuals can find meaning in life: through work, love, and suffering. Work or creative endeavors provide purpose by allowing individuals to contribute to something larger than themselves, whether through artistic, intellectual, or social efforts. Love, as Frankl emphasizes, is the highest and most profound source of meaning. Even in the brutal conditions of the concentration camp, he found solace in the thought of his wife, proving that love can transcend physical suffering and provide deep purpose. The third and perhaps most challenging way to find meaning is through suffering. When pain and hardship are unavoidable, Frankl argues, individuals can choose their response to suffering, transforming it into an opportunity for growth. This perspective forms the foundation of logotherapy, which teaches that by changing one's attitude toward suffering, one can find meaning even in life's darkest moments. One of Frankl's most powerful insights is that individuals always have the freedom to choose their attitude, even in

oppressive conditions. In the concentration camps, prisoners had no control over their external circumstances, but they could still control how they responded to suffering. Frankl observed that those who retained a sense of inner freedom, refusing to be broken by external forces, were more likely to survive. This belief underscores the fundamental idea of logotherapy: while people may not control what happens to them, they can control how they perceive and respond to it.

Future-oriented thinking also plays a crucial role in resilience and meaning-making. Frankl explains that individuals who hold onto a future goal—whether reuniting with loved ones, completing a meaningful project, or making a contribution to society—are better equipped to endure present suffering. His own survival was tied to the vision of lecturing about the psychology of concentration camp inmates after the war, demonstrating the power of looking forward rather than dwelling on the pain of the past. This future-oriented mindset is a key principle of logotherapy, which encourages individuals to focus on what is still possible rather than what has been lost. Among the many sources of meaning, love emerges as the most profound and transformative. Frankl describes moments in the concentration camp where thinking about his wife gave him the strength to endure suffering. He argues that love allows individuals to transcend their own pain and connect to something greater. Even when physically separated, the act of loving another person provides deep fulfillment and sustains the human spirit. This idea reinforces the notion that meaning is often found in relationships and in caring for others. Another significant concept in Frankl's work is the idea that suffering ceases to be suffering when it is given meaning. If individuals can see their suffering as serving a greater purpose, it transforms into a source of strength rather than despair. This perspective is particularly relevant in trauma recovery, as people who can reframe their suffering into a narrative of resilience and growth often emerge stronger. Holocaust survivors who found meaning in their suffering were more likely to rebuild their lives after the war, demonstrating the life-changing power of this mindset.

Frankl also warns about the dangers of the existential vacuum, a modern phenomenon where people, lacking purpose, fall into boredom, depression, and escapism. In today's world, many individuals seek fulfillment in pleasure, power, or material success, yet these pursuits often fail to provide lasting satisfaction. Logotherapy addresses this crisis by guiding people toward meaning-centered living, helping them take responsibility for their purpose rather than seeking distractions from their emptiness. The responsibility for meaning-making ultimately lies within the individual. Frankl argues that meaning is not something handed down but something that must be actively sought. This idea contrasts with existentialist views that claim life has no inherent meaning. Instead, Frankl asserts that meaning exists uniquely for each person and must be discovered through personal experiences and responsibilities. He introduces the concept of tragic optimism, the idea that even in

suffering, individuals can maintain hope and find meaning. Tragic optimism does not deny pain but acknowledges that suffering can be transformed into growth and resilience.

Man's Search for Meaning offers a profound and timeless message: meaning is the foundation of psychological resilience and human fulfillment. Whether through work, love, or suffering, individuals can find purpose and endure even the harshest circumstances. Frankl's insights continue to inspire people worldwide, showing that by embracing responsibility, cultivating a future-oriented mindset, and transforming suffering into growth, one can live a meaningful and fulfilling life. His philosophy is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and the power of meaning in overcoming adversity.

Conclusion:

The Relevance of Logotherapy in Modern Psychological Treatment:

Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* remains a profound exploration of human resilience, suffering, and the search for purpose. Through his experiences in Nazi concentration camps and the development of logotherapy, Frankl demonstrated that meaning is the central force in human life. He argued that individuals could endure even the harshest suffering if they found a purpose to live for. His insights continue to shape psychological thought, offering a framework for navigating existential struggles, trauma, and adversity. In today's world, logotherapy remains highly relevant in psychological treatment. Many individuals face an "existential vacuum," struggling with feelings of emptiness, depression, and a lack of purpose. Modern mental health challenges, such as anxiety, burnout, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), can be addressed through logotherapy's principles. By helping individuals identify their unique purpose—whether through meaningful work, love, or their response to suffering—logotherapy provides a path toward emotional healing and resilience. Psychologists and therapists continue to integrate logotherapy into counseling, trauma recovery, and existential psychotherapy. Techniques such as meaning-centered therapy, narrative therapy, and purpose-driven interventions draw from Frankl's ideas to help individuals overcome despair and rediscover fulfillment. In clinical settings, logotherapy is particularly effective in treating patients facing terminal illness, grief, and life transitions, empowering them to find dignity and meaning even in suffering. Beyond therapy, Frankl's philosophy offers valuable insights for everyday life. In a world often driven by materialism and external validation, logotherapy reminds individuals to look inward for meaning. By cultivating a future-oriented mindset, taking responsibility for one's choices, and embracing life's challenges with purpose, people can achieve lasting psychological well-being. Frankl's message is timeless: life's meaning is not given but must be actively discovered, and in this pursuit, human beings find their greatest strength.

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The Cultural Trifecta: Intersections of Language, Literature, and Media in Shaping Contemporary Cultural Discourses

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Abstract

Culture is a fluid and evolving construct, shaped by the continuous interactions between language, literature, and media. These three domains act as powerful vehicles for meaning-making, influencing and being influenced by social structures, ideological frameworks, and technological advancements. This research critically examines the dynamic intersections among language, literature, and media, highlighting their role in constructing, contesting, and redefining cultural meanings in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Drawing upon Michel Foucault's discourse analysis and Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, this study investigates how power structures and semiotic processes govern cultural articulations. The research explores transnational cultures, gender inequities, regional literature, digital media narratives, and postcolonial decolonization as key dimensions of contemporary cultural studies. Additionally, it interrogates how social media linguistics, cinematic representations, and globalized communication impact cultural expressions and receptions in an era of digital proliferation.

By analyzing a range of cultural texts—including literature, media artifacts, social media discourse, and visual narratives—this thesis aims to demonstrate how language, literature, and media function as sites of both resistance and conformity. The study ultimately argues that the intersection of these domains produces layered and often conflicting cultural identities, which are constantly being reconfigured in response to globalization, technological advancements, and socio-political transformations. This research contributes to the broader field of cultural studies by offering an interdisciplinary framework for understanding how cultural discourses emerge, circulate, and evolve in contemporary society.

The concept of culture is complex, encompassing social practices, ideologies, and symbolic representations that define human experiences. In an increasingly digitalized and globalized world, cultural meanings are continuously produced, circulated, and contested through language, literature, and media. These three domains not only shape individual and collective identities but also serve as sites of power negotiations, where dominant and subversive narratives coexist.

This thesis explores the intersections of language, literature, and media as integral components of cultural production. It examines how discourses of power, representation, and resistance operate within these realms, influencing the ways in which

culture is constructed and understood. By drawing on critical theories from postcolonial studies, gender studies, media studies, and linguistics, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of cultural discourses in contemporary society.

Research Objectives:

1. To analyze the role of language in shaping and negotiating cultural identities, particularly in cross-cultural and digital contexts.
2. To examine literature as a medium of cultural representation, resistance, and transformation.
3. To investigate the influence of media, particularly digital and visual media, in the construction and dissemination of cultural narratives.
4. To explore the impact of globalization, transnationalism, and hybrid identities on cultural discourses.
5. To critically assess how postcolonial, feminist, and decolonial perspectives contribute to the evolving cultural landscape.

Theoretical Framework:

This research is grounded in interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives, drawing from:

Michel Foucault's Discourse Theory: Examining how language, knowledge, and power intersect to shape cultural discourses.

Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model: Analyzing how media messages are produced, interpreted, and negotiated by audiences.

Postcolonial and Decolonial Theories: Understanding cultural de-linking, border thinking, and the legacy of colonial power structures.

Feminist and Gender Theories: Investigating the role of gender in cultural inequities, media narratives, and literary constructions.

Globalization and Media Theories: Exploring the implications of cultural globalization, digital media, and hybrid identities in shaping contemporary culture.

Key Research Questions:

1. How does language function as a tool for cultural articulation and resistance in an era of globalization and digitalization?
2. In what ways do literary narratives reflect and challenge dominant cultural ideologies?
3. How has the advent of digital media transformed cultural representations and identity formations?
4. What role does media play in reinforcing or subverting cultural inequities, particularly concerning gender, ethnicity, and nationalism?
5. How do regional and transnational cultural narratives contribute to the evolving discourse of global sustainability and cultural diversity?

Methodology:

This study employs a qualitative research approach, incorporating:

Textual and Discourse Analysis: Examining literary works, media texts, and linguistic structures to uncover underlying cultural meanings.

Case Studies: Analyzing specific cultural phenomena, including graphic narratives, cinema, social media discourse, and regional literature.

Comparative Analysis: Investigating cross-cultural and transnational interactions in language, literature, and media.

Interviews and Surveys: Gathering insights from scholars, media practitioners, and authors on contemporary cultural discourses.

Chapters Overview:

Chapter 1: Theorizing Culture – Language, Literature, and Media as Intersecting Discourses

Conceptualizing culture in academic and everyday contexts

The role of discourse, representation, and power in cultural studies

Theoretical perspectives from Foucault, Hall, and postcolonial scholars

Chapter 2: Language and Cultural Identity in a Globalized World

Linguistic diversity and intercultural competence

Social media linguistics and digital communication

The politics of language in postcolonial and hybrid identities

Chapter 3: Literature as a Medium of Cultural Resistance and Representation

Regional literature and cultural interventions

Nativism, nationalism, and colonial trauma in literary narratives

Feminist, gender, and ethnic perspectives in contemporary literature

Chapter 4: Media and Cultural Narratives in the Digital Age

The impact of digital media on mass culture

Cinema, graphic narratives, and subversive cultural representations

Social media's role in shaping public discourse and identity politics

Chapter 5: The Future of Cultural Discourses – Globalization, Sustainability, and Digital Humanities

Cultural globalization and its manifestations

Digital humanities as a new cultural tool

The role of media and literature in promoting cultural sustainability

Conclusion:

This thesis asserts that the intersection of language, literature, and media forms the backbone of cultural production and representation. By critically engaging with various cultural texts and theoretical perspectives, this study highlights the ways in which culture is constantly redefined in response to historical legacies, technological advancements, and social transformations. Ultimately, the research contributes to a broader understanding of how contemporary cultural discourses emerge, evolve, and influence societal structures.

TRAUMATIC STATE OF DIASPORIC WOMAN IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S JASMINE

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Abstract

In the post-colonial international interface, where identities and cultures keep getting defined, discovered, and valued for bridging at a macro level, phenomena such as globalisation and cultural assimilations have emerged to command center space and write the new world script. At the same time, diverse level of confusion and noise among competing cultures creates identity crisis at the forefront that results in accretion of homogenous identity. It is against such slow culture-change, wherein cross-cultural assimilation and immigrant literature, of recent times, has peeled off the blooming identity concerns with a protagonist. The essay is specifically interested in the analysis of cross-cultural conflict and the ultimate quest of identity of Indian immigrant women Jasmine, who attempts to face the issue of loss of culture and attempt to take on a new identity in America. It speaks about how her own personal creative imagination is constantly driven and influenced by cultural tension even though she has faith and pride in the Indian civilisation and society.

Keywords: Identity Crisis, Cultural Conflict, Cultural Assimilation, Immigration, Globalization

Bharati Mukherjee is a diasporic fiction writer and has been the custodian of the migratory experience and enriched expatriate literary works. In fact, her expatriate experience is the major source of her writings. Her novels also touch upon the issue of identity, the notion of belonging, the feeling of alienation and rootlessness, migrations, dislocations and relocations. Her writings are refined by her diasporic self, immigrant existence as well as her personal experience of being a female. In her writings, Mukherjee represents India as a postcolonial writer who imitates the West and now, she is one of the finest authors of postcolonial immigrant existence in America.

A voice familiar in the Indian diaspora, Bharati Mukherjee describes her cross-cultural struggle through women characters in her novels. She too had to grapple with the acceptance of the culture, custom and tradition of other countries, which she describes through her female protagonist's cultural dilemma. The collision of the western and eastern cultures along with the ideologies involved and its impact in the life of the

protagonist is wonderfully depicted in her novel *Jasmine*, it came out in 1989. At the time of her immigration in the US, the protagonist encounters a multicultural society that later changes her into a new being. *Jasmine* happens to be one of the most desired novels of Bharati Mukherjee. The novel is set in the modern time and revolves around a young Indian woman, Jasmine who emigrated to the United States and is trying to adapt to the American culture and changes identities several times in an effort to survive.

The novel captures Mukherjee's victorious style of violent identity adjustment through broad confrontations in the dominant culture. In brief, *Jasmine* is the story of a Punjabi teenage girl Jyoti. She is born in a small extremist-infested village of Punjab and becomes transformed into the characters of Jasmine, Jazzy, Jase and Jane in her journey from an Indian village to the American cities. Jasmin's transformative journey is marked by widowhood, fake documents, murder, rape and a stubborn passion to stay alive through whatever circumstances came in her way. The novel documents the journey of a woman in search of her factual and un-fragmented self and includes the transformations she experiences hopefully surrounded by the positivity.

As the protagonist, Jasmine leaves her country for America to fulfil her desires and realise the dream of her husband and in search of her self-independence and true self in America. She struggles very hard to achieve it and ultimately understands that self-independence has nothing to do with being an American or an Indian but to be peaceful with oneself. The story unfolds as a story of a mid-teenaged girl suddenly widowed at seventeen. She shifts her immediate world from India to America for a new life and hope. It is a tale of displacement and resettlement as the protagonist continues to lose lives to enter newer roles and responsibilities. The symbolic odyssey of the woman protagonist starts with Jyoti of India where she fights against the role that the traditional practices and patriarchal order of her nation had in store for her.

In this novel, the author has dramatized the process and evolution of westernisation, Americanisation in this case, by presenting young Indian girl's sufferings and successes in her struggle to establish a new identity for herself. The novel is written from a first-person's point of view by the female protagonist, who is compelled to undergo a number of identity shifts in her quest for self-enabling and happiness. Violence-wreathed, Mukherjee uses the film-like devices of flashback and cross-cutting to combine Jasmine's past and present. The author has created an exotic and unconventional heroine in *Jasmine*; as devoted as the multiple worlds she inhabits. Still a teenager, when Jasmine is suddenly left a widow, she seems destined to a life of trauma and distress in a tranquil isolation of a small Indian village where she was born. The novel unfolds with the twenty-four-year-old heroine, Jane, as the live-in girlfriend of Bud Ripple Meyer, fifty-four years old, a banker based at Iowa in the US, who by flashback, takes us back to the past retracing her life from her childhood days in Hasanpur, a Punjab state village in India where she was born Jyoti, the unwanted fifth daughter of a poor Hindu family. The story starts with the prediction of the astrologer for Jyoti's lifetime widowhood when she was only seven years old.

Jyoti is described as an entrepreneurial individual with fight reflex in a patrilineal society which is a part of the Indian society. “She was then only seven and shrieked, no! You are a demented old fellow. You have no idea what the future holds for you!” (3). Choosing to defy her destiny, Jyoti begins to empower herself by learning English, for “to want English was to want more than you had been given at birth, it was to want the world”. Having more ambitions and interests than the average girl, she aspires to further study with the intention of becoming a doctor and taking her own decisions in life ahead unlike the girls in the village who are “like cattle” and move “whichever way you lead them” (39). The first conflict Jyoti faces is the one between the patriarchal society and the modern urban world she desires.

Jasmine’s another fascinating transformation starts at fourteen years of infancy when she marries Prakash, an engineering student and an urban male who is a firm believer in equality of both sexes and did not expect a submissive role of an Indian wife. “To break off the past”, Prakash renames her to Jasmine and gradually shapes her to play a new role for herself and become an urban woman. Prakash wanted to strip Jyoti that I had been in Hasnapur and remake me into a new kind of city woman. To cut the past, he gave me a new name: Jasmine. He told me that you are little and sweet and intoxicating, my Jasmine. You’ll shake the whole world with your most treasured. “Jyoti, Jasmine: I shuttled between identities” (70). Then the first major tragedy of her life strikes when Prakash gets assassinated and becomes a victim of the Sikh extremists’ movement. Determined Jasmine now decides to go alone to the US to achieve her dream.

Jasmine felt that since Prakash had created a Jasmine from a Jyoti, then Jasmine should live up to Prakash’s ambitions. Here we can see her bravery and a great willpower of Jasmine, who decides to go on an unexpected trip to a new world. She comes to her brothers to arrange an illegal document in order to immigrate to the US. Yet another tragedy hits when she gets raped by the captain of the ship on the first day of her stay in the US. As an Indian lady, the heroine takes this as a calamitous injury to her because in ethnic culture chastity is typically considered the most precious among all the riches owned by a woman. Being deprived of her chastity, she tries suicide.

Jasmine turns back to her native culture and pray in front of the statue of Ganpati to give her “the strength to survive, long enough to kill myself” (116). Seeking vengeance and punishment of the half-faced man for defiling a Hindu widow, she decked the Goddess Kali and murders her rapist using her devotional forces. When she murders the gruesome half-faced man, Jasmine departs the motel upon which she is luck enough to meet Lillian Gordon, a sort of patron of illegal immigrants who then organizes her meeting with Professor Vadhera who had also played a crucial role in her husband’s entry into the US.

At Florida, her saviour Gordon laments to her that the shoes she wears reveal her culture, “Undocumented aliens wear boxy shoes with ambitious heels” (132). Lillian helps Jasmine to wear a new identity nicknaming her Jazzy before sending a hello word to the Vadheras. Now living in Florida with the Vadheras, Jasmine is surprised to learn

the Vadhera family's daily struggle against the western culture in maintaining their identity as an Indian family. It is hard for her to comprehend why the family is so striving in maintaining their Indian cultural-identity in a foreign nation to them. When the tide turns ugly, Jasmine elects to step away from the orthodox Vadheras. She then relocates herself to Manhattan in hopes of liberating herself from the Indian culture and traditions that had kept her in captivity and engulfed her even in a foreign country.

There at Manhattan, she experiences tranquil living with an American family, comprised of Taylor, his wife Wylie and adopted daughter Duff, who retains her as a caretaker with them. Here she begins to blend herself with the western consumer society and culture by mimicking the dress-up and demeanor of an American young woman. Though, Jasmine tries to integrate herself in the western culture, she still has a soft corner for Indian values and traditions in her heart. Such moments in the context of the Indian culture and traditional norms are found to be spontaneous as well as repeated. Such is the assumption on one's mind when she finds out that Duff is their adopted and unnatural child. Later as Wylie decides to abandon Taylor for her newly found love – Stuart and seek true happiness, Jasmine has another culture shock in store.

Jasmine then discovers that nothing lasts forever even in the American consumerist culture and society of human relationship. As one would expect by now, Jasmine's bliss at Manhattan is short-lived. Though, she is settled in her life looking after Duff but then come the flashbacks of the past regarding the deeds of Sukhi, the murderer of her husband. Just the mention of the name Sukhwinder, the "Khalsa Lion" and the murderer of Prakash, makes her nervous. She makes a decision under the pretence of saving the couple from religious extremists to move to Iowa, where another character is waiting to greet her. Jasmine had a friendship with Bud Ripple Mayer, a banker, in Iowa, who offers her a fresh new life and new name and identity as his Jane. Jane gets into live-in relationship, considered to be unlawful in India's society, with her new sweetheart in the banker. When the couple moves in together, the welcome by Jane of the western culture and the voluntary acculturation on her part are revealed.

Then, when Jane becomes pregnant against her will, she begins to experience a sense of guilt in the persona of her learned cultural heritage. The maddening conflict between Indian cultural norms and American customs takes centre stage by now in the progression of the story. We witness two sides of a girl who had killed a man earlier who had offended her chastity and now blissfully decides to be in a live-in relationship and even gives birth to his child in her womb. Still very much active in her affair with Bud, Jane leaves the lines of communication open with Taylor. Subsequently, when Taylor pleads her over to accompany him and settle in California, she finds herself to be a confused woman and cannot decide on her alternatives. In a quagmire, she is now caught between the conventional dutifulness to the helpless Bud and her persistent affection for Taylor and Duff that splits her into two equally important choices of life in terms of her natural and native values.

Going along with her inner voice, finally Jasmine decides to leave Bud for Taylor. Having shed the skin of her former life, she is now free to be and decide for herself. "I am not choosing between men; I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness. A caregiver's life is a good life, a worthy life. What am I to do?" (240). Her last decision reflects the acculturated aspects of the two societies when she chooses to think of herself first over everybody else. The story introduces one to the life and the transition of an Indian rural immigrant youth. In a span of a few years, Jyoti is transformed into Jasmine, Jase and to Jane; pregnant blissfully by a middle-aged Iowa banker and an adoptive mother of a Vietnamese refugee as well. Jasmine's metamorphosis with its abrupt revolutions but slow evolutionary tempos illustrate the formation of an American living organism. The evolution of her identity from Jyoti to Jasmine to Jane to Jase is symptomatic of the death of one personality and the emergence of another without any apparent ill effects. The heroine does not view her "Indian-ness as a delicate identity to be protected against erasure, now it is a fluid set of identities to be celebrated" (5).

Throughout the story in the Americas, Jasmine is dogged in attempting to create a truer version of herself to be incorporated into the American culture. This is thought of as a struggle for her because she cannot stop dwelling on being trapped between her initial culture and latest one. Much of her former familiar thoughts and practices still remain with her as she tries to acclimate to the newer and foreign ones. Although Jasmine gets lost at times, she is portrayed as a strong as well as a determined mind. Jasmine is never shown to give up in struggle for her actual independence and identity. At the time of intersection of her native land and a foreign land that seem to have consumed the sheltered sphere comprising her emotions and attachment.

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SILENCED VOICES OF KASHMIRIS IN AGHA SHAHID ALI “THE COUNTRY WITHOUT A POST OFFICE”

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Abstract

The Country Without a Post Office by Agha Shahid Ali is a poignant and emotionally resonant poem that explores the themes of loss, exile, and the devastation caused by political conflict. Set against the backdrop of the Kashmir conflict, the poem reflects both the personal sorrow of the poet and the collective grief of those displaced by the violence and turmoil in the region. Through vivid imagery, intertextual references, and a melancholic tone, Ali paints a picture of a land where communication and connection have been severed, symbolized by the absence of a post office. The poem delves into the emotional and cultural fragmentation caused by displacement, while also addressing universal themes of yearning for home and identity. In its elegiac voice, the poem serves as a meditation on the pain of exile, the loss of belonging, and the enduring desire to reconnect with the past.

Keywords: conflict, intertextuality, despair, elegiac voice, political turmoil, displacement. Fragmentation.

Poetry has long been a vehicle for resistance, memory, and reflection. The Count Post Office" was originally published as "Kashmir without a Post Office" in the Graham House Review. Agha Shahid Ali rewrote it, doubling its length and giving it a new title when he published it in the collection The Country Without a Post Office, first published in 1997 is one such poem that reflects the pain of a homeland shattered by war. Agha Shahid Ali, a Kashmiri-American poet, wrote this poem in reaction to the political turmoil in Kashmir, particularly the 1990 insurgency and the subsequent military crackdown that resulted in the suspension of postal services. When Kashmir rose against Indian occupation, resulting in hundreds of gruesome and violent killings, fires, and mass rapes.

The Country Without a Post Office by Agha Shahid Ali is a poignant and evocative poetic masterpiece that explores themes of loss, exile, and political turmoil in the context of the Kashmir conflict. In this essay, we delve into the intricate layers of the poem, examining its historical and political backdrop, its stylistic nuances, and the profound emotional depth that permeates its verses. Set against the backdrop of a region devastated by war and strife, Ali's poem captures the devastating effects of displacement

and the erosion of identity in the face of political upheaval. The title itself a metaphorical reflection on the absence of communication, both literal and symbolic conveys the alienation and grief felt by those who have been torn from their homeland.

Through vivid and striking imagery, Ali not only paints a portrait of the war-torn landscape of Kashmir but also delves into the intimate emotional experiences of those affected by the ongoing conflict. His use of intertextual references, from classical Persian literature to Western poetic traditions, deepens the poem's layers, revealing the poet's ability to traverse cultural boundaries while articulating the universal nature of suffering and longing. Ali's elegiac voice echoes the collective sorrow of a community in exile, giving a voice to the silenced and the displaced. His lyrical style, imbued with a sense of yearning, mirrors the complexities of desire, grief, and the search for home in a world marred by violence.

At the heart of *The Country Without a Post Office* lies the exploration of identity and the struggle for recognition in a world that has forgotten or abandoned the Kashmiri people. The poem's themes extend beyond the immediate political context, resonating with the broader human condition of longing for a lost sense of belonging, the emotional costs of displacement, and the deep ache for connection in the face of separation. Ali's work invites readers to reflect on the intersection of personal grief with collective historical narratives, urging them to confront the reality of a world in which borders and boundaries, both geographical and emotional, divide individuals from their past, their homes, and ultimately, themselves.

Through its haunting beauty and profound emotional resonance, *The Country Without a Post Office* stands as a testament to the enduring power of poetry to capture the complexities of human suffering, resilience, and the indelible marks left by political violence. It is a work that not only speaks to the tragedy of Kashmir but also to the universal experiences of longing, exile, and the search for meaning in a fractured world. Ali's poem is deeply intertwined with the Kashmir conflict, which has been a site of political and territorial disputes between India and Pakistan since 1947. The specific event that inspired this poem was the 1990 uprising, which led to increased violence, the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, and a communication blackout. The title, *The Country Without a Post Office*, is the time when letters were not delivered, representing the silence and solitude of Kashmir. Ali, in exile, employs poetry to voice his sorrow and anger at his country's suffering.

One of the strongest themes in this poem is exile both physical and emotional. Ali, along with countless others like him, was cut off from his home. These undelivered letters in the poem serve as a symbol of longings, severed ties, and calls for justice gone unheeded.

Physical and emotional exile is one of the most powerful themes of this poem. Ali, like many other Kashmiris, was exiled from his homeland. The undelivered post letters in the poem are symbolism for yearning, cut-off relationships, and cries for justice that go unheard. Death is also a repeated symbol in the poem. Grave imagery,

ghostly murmurs, and destruction evoke a haunting picture of Kashmir's suffering. Ali mixes personal grief with collective mourning, and the poem is therefore an elegy for the nation and its people.

The failure of the postal system mirrors Kashmir's loss in the overall discourse. The lack of possibility to send or receive letters becomes a metaphor for silencing of histories, memories, and voices. The poem by Ali contests this silence by testifying to the tragedy. Ali's poetry is rich in imagery, using visual and sensory details to evoke emotions. Phrases like "letters with no addresses" and "graves are their own mailboxes" create haunting pictures of loss and displacement.

Ali draws upon various literary and historical references, including the works of poets like Faiz Ahmed Faiz and T. S. Eliot. He also incorporates Islamic, Persian, and Kashmiri cultural motifs in his writing, which makes it multilayered and richly interwoven with histories. Ali wrote nine volumes of poetry and one of literary criticism (T.S. Eliot as Editor, 1986), and translated one volume of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poems (*The Rebel's Silhouette*, 1992) and edited *Ravishing DisUnities: Real Ghazals in English* (2000), a collection of ghazals (a Persian poetic genre based on repetition, rhyme, and couplets). Elegiac Tone and Lyrical Style. The tone of the poem is elegiac, with a note of lament and wistfulness. Its repetition, rhetorical questions, and musicality strengthen its lyrical nature, making it both an elegy and love letter to Kashmir.

Conclusion:

The Country Without a Post Office is more than a poem about Kashmir; it is an exploration of exile, loss, and the power of memory that overcomes the specific. With rich imagery, powerful symbolism, and historical references, Agha Shahid Ali crafts a moving narrative that speaks to the pain of dislocation and the resilience of the human spirit. His words ensure that even in silence, the voices of the marginalized are not muted.

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CONCEPT OF DISASTER IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract

In English literature, the notion of disaster transcends physical calamities, embracing symbolic, emotional, and psychological upheaval. A disaster is characterized by a sudden, devastating event or sequence of events that inflicts profound harm or transformation, manifesting as natural disasters, personal crises, or moral and existential collapses. Furthermore, disasters in literature frequently serve as pivotal moments, prompting characters to confront their mortality, vulnerabilities, and inner demons, thus propelling the narrative forward. These catastrophic events often symbolize broader societal concerns, reflecting moral decay, political turmoil, or spiritual crises. For instance, the collapse of a family or nation due to internal flaws can mirror the disintegration of the human spirit under duress or corruption. In many cases, disaster catalyzes character development, yielding moments of self-realization or personal awakening. It exposes human existence's fragility and the inability to control fate, as seen in works influenced by tragic traditions, such as Greek tragedies. Disasters also highlight the ambiguity of good and evil, where characters are both victims and contributors to their calamities. Operating on multiple levels, disasters affect individuals physically, emotionally, socially, and philosophically. A personal crisis, for example, can be as destructive as a physical event, impacting one's identity, purpose, and connections. By exploring disaster's multidimensional aspects, literature provides insight into human reactions to overwhelming challenges, revealing underlying existential and psychological forces that shape the human condition.

Keywords: Disaster, English Literature, Human suffering, Vulnerability, Resilience, Catastrophic events, Existential dilemmas, Human Condition, Fate, Personal Agency, Social Commentary, Literary Analysis

William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* exemplifies the tragic hero archetype in classical literature, illustrating the catastrophic consequences of unchecked ambition. Initially, Macbeth is a valiant and honorable soldier, esteemed for his loyalty to King Duncan. However, the witches' prophecy ignites an unbridled ambition within him, setting off a chain reaction of destructive actions. His desire for power becomes an all-consuming obsession, driving him to commit regicide, betray his comrades, and descend

into further violence and tyranny. Macbeth's downfall is precipitated not only by his initial murder but also by his inability to confront the repercussions of his actions.

As Macbeth strives to consolidate his power, his moral integrity deteriorates, and he becomes increasingly entrenched in paranoia and despair. The internal conflict within Macbeth is a pivotal aspect of his tragic flaw, as he grapples with the knowledge that he has betrayed his own nature and transgressed moral laws. Nonetheless, his overwhelming ambition supersedes his guilt and fear, leading him to make increasingly calamitous decisions. Ultimately, Macbeth's demise is inescapable, as foretold by the witches: he is killed in battle by Macduff, consumed by the consequences of his actions and ambition. Macbeth's tragic narrative demonstrates how unbridled ambition can culminate in self-destruction, a theme ubiquitous in Shakespearean tragedy. Through Macbeth's arc, Shakespeare critiques humanity's propensity to pursue power without regard for morality, illustrating how ambition can corrupt and yield personal and societal disaster.

Similarly, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* presents a classic tragedy wherein disaster is driven by the inexorable force of fate rather than personal ambition. Oedipus, the king of Thebes, endeavors to eradicate the plague ravaging his city, only to discover that he himself is the source of the catastrophe. A prophecy foretold that he would slay his father, Laius, and marry his mother, Jocasta. Despite his efforts to evade this fate, Oedipus ultimately fulfills the very prophecy he sought to escape. The tragic irony of the play lies in the fact that Oedipus's attempts to circumvent the prophecy inadvertently lead him to fulfill it. Central to *Oedipus Rex* are the intertwined concepts of fate and free will.

On one hand, Oedipus exercises free will by making decisions intended to safeguard him from his doomed future. On the other hand, his actions directly lead him to the revelation that he has already fulfilled the prophecy, rendering his fate inescapable. Oedipus's tragic flaw resides in his hubris, his arrogance and conviction that he can outwit or evade divine will. His downfall is precipitated not only by his actions but also by his failure to acknowledge the limitations of human control in the face of divine power.

Raja Rao's *The Chessmaster and His Moves* captures the turbulent political landscape of post-independence India, where ideological conflicts and power struggles create an atmosphere of social unrest, epitomizing a societal disaster that underscores the clash between emerging modernity and deeply rooted traditional systems. This upheaval alienates characters, torn between conflicting worlds, as they navigate the struggle for progress while attempting to preserve cultural values. Indian theatre often explores this theme, as seen in Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972) and Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* (1964), where political chaos and moral decay ensue. The novel delves into the tension between traditional values and modernity, portraying this clash as a disaster for characters adapting to a rapidly changing environment.

Alienation becomes a personal and collective disaster, as they struggle to reconcile cultural identities with modern ideals. This theme echoes in Indian theatre, where characters are caught between tradition and modernity. It leads to breakdowns in

relationships and societal disintegration. The alienation faced by individuals navigating modern India is a core theme, as characters experience identity crises due to political, social, and cultural shifts. This existential alienation mirrors personal disasters in Indian plays, where characters face identity crises due to social changes or corruption. Rao's work highlights cultural displacement, reflecting the societal tension as India transitions from its colonial past to a modern nation-state. The displacement felt by individuals serves as a metaphor for disasters created by disrupted societal values and cultural continuity.

Indian theatre often explores cultural displacement, examining consequences of war, loss of identity, and struggles with displacement. Raja Rao's novel also explores life's absurdities through the chess game metaphor, suggesting life's uncertain outcomes and humanity's inability to control fate. This philosophical exploration echoes in Indian theatre, examining absurdities and disasters of meaninglessness and lost agency. The tension between individual aspirations and collective expectations is another theme, where characters struggle to carve out identities amidst societal pressure, raising questions about personal autonomy in a conformist society. This theme recurs in Indian theatre, exploring individual versus collective conflicts and the consequences of personal decisions within corrupt social structures.

Ratan Thiyam's *Katha Collage* is a powerful theatrical exploration of war, conflict, and destruction, set within the framework of Manipuri war dance traditions. By integrating elements of performance art, cultural ritual, and storytelling, Thiyam reflects on the devastating consequences of war on personal, social, and cultural levels. The disaster in *Katha Collage* is multifaceted, encompassing not only external chaos but also internal struggles, as characters grapple with the tension between personal desires and collective needs. This conflict leads to the unraveling of personal identities, relationships, and cultural values, symbolizing the tragic consequences of prioritizing individual desires over the collective good.

Thiyam's use of Manipuri war dance traditions juxtaposes the brutal reality of war with the typically heroic themes associated with these dances, enhancing the emotional resonance of the story. The dance form, once characterized by grace and discipline, becomes a metaphor for the disintegration of values, underscoring the destruction of human lives, cultural symbols, and traditions. At a deeper level, the play explores the social and cultural implications of war, where characters face a cultural crisis that disrupts tradition, society, and shared beliefs.

The cultural rituals that once united people are overshadowed by conflict, representing a profound societal disaster that compromises the spiritual and cultural heritage of the community. Through *Katha Collage*, Thiyam critiques the impact of war on human beings, questioning the moral consequences of conflict and the gradual destruction of cultural values. The play raises poignant questions about the human spirit's resilience in times of war, leading to a moral decay that erodes physical life and the soul of a community. The disaster in *Katha Collage* is layered, involving both immediate

effects and long-term repercussions, including the dissolution of identity, culture, and shared values. By drawing on Manipuri war dance traditions, Thiyam preserves cultural specificity while elevating the play to a universal commentary on conflict's destructive power, making *Katha Collage* a poignant exploration of personal desires, societal needs, and cultural preservation.

Mahesh Dattani's *Seventy Days* is a poignant exploration of the intricate relationships between gender, societal expectations, and family dynamics within a patriarchal society, revealing how these intersections culminate in personal and social disasters. The play sheds light on the stifling effects of systemic oppression, particularly patriarchal systems, on women's autonomy, autonomy, and self-worth. Through the protagonist's internal struggles and familial conflicts, Dattani masterfully exposes the emotional and psychological toll of living in a society that enforces rigid gender roles. The central conflict revolves around the protagonist's desire for personal freedom, which is constantly at odds with the weight of societal and familial expectations.

The character's identity is inextricably linked to her role as a woman within her family and society, highlighting the oppressive force of patriarchy. The play poignantly highlights how patriarchal structures limit women's freedom and agency, causing them to feel trapped in a cycle of subjugation and self-sacrifice. The struggle for autonomy becomes a crucial theme, as the character grapples with both external forces and internalized beliefs about her role in society and family. *Seventy Days* emphasizes the profound psychological and emotional damage that occurs when women are denied the space to define their own identities and lives.

The familial conflict serves as a microcosm of the larger societal issues, highlighting the broader patriarchal structure that governs interactions and relationships. The play critiques the oppressive societal structures that limit women's agency, control, and autonomy, underscoring how these systems lead to cultural stagnation and reinforce gender inequality across generations. Ultimately, *Seventy Days* presents a compelling critique of patriarchal systems, exposing their suffocating impact on women's autonomy and advocating for a reimagining of gender roles that allows individuals to live free from outdated societal norms. By portraying the emotional and psychological turmoil that arises from these systemic issues, the play offers a powerful commentary on the destructive effects of patriarchal oppression.

In conclusion, the concept of disaster in English Literature serves us a powerful tool for exploring the human condition, societal values and the complexities of individual and collective experiences. Through the analysis of various literary works, including Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Raja Rao's *The Chessmaster and His moves*, Ratan Thiyam's *Katha Collage* and Mahesh Dattani's *Seventy Days*, this study has demonstrated how disasters in literature reveal profound insights into human sufferings, vulnerability and resilience. These works collectively highlight the devastating consequences of unchecked ambition, the inexorable force of fate, the clash between tradition and modernity, and the oppressive nature of patriarchal systems.

Ultimately, this inquiry underscores the significance of disaster as a literary theme, offering a nuanced understanding of the human experience and the catastrophic events that shape our lives.

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CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG THE LEARNER

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Abstract

The ability to communicate across cultures has become an essential skill for an individual, organization, and society. This chapter delves into the intricate landscape of cross-cultural communication, exploring the challenges, opportunities and strategies involved in to improvise diverse cultural contexts. The chapter begins with the fundamental concept that underpin cross- cultural communication, such as importance and basic elements of cross-cultural communication, The developmental theory and barriers of cross-cultural communication.

Furthermore, the chapter explore about the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness is a recurring theme throughout the chapter, emphasizing the need for individuals to develop intercultural competence. Strategies for building cultural competence are explored through immersive experience and continuous learning activities.

In conclusion, this chapter underscores the significance of effective cross-cultural communication in fostering positive relationship, reducing conflicts, and promoting collaboration in an increasingly interconnected world. By understanding and appreciating the richness of cultural diversity, individuals and organizations can harness the power of cross-cultural communication to thrive in the global landscape.

Keywords: Cross-cultural communication, Diversities, Learning, Interaction.

Cross-cultural communication is an impactful interaction and transmission of messages with people from different cultures and diversities.

Learning Objectives

- Understanding the concept of cross-cultural communication.
- Understanding the importance of cross-cultural communication.
- Grasping the stages of cross-cultural communication.
- Learning about cross-cultural communication at the workplace.

Introduction:

Cross-cultural Theory involves exploring people all around the world based on their ethnicities, culture, and demography therefore making it possible for them to overcome all the barriers and work together. As it is said' Consistency is the key' Here

people should regularly work on verbal and non-verbal communication and understand the best way to convey ideas across cultural divides.

The continued growth in the globalization of the economy, cross-cultural communication recently played a vital role in multinational companies, and years ahead the definition given is direct but implementing, cross-cultural communication is not as black and white thus prioritizing diversity while hiring has become a trend.

1. Importance of Cross-Cultural Communication: Companies that are multinational and appoints employees from diversities focuses on cross-cultural communication and regulate various program to inculcate better communication skill in their employees to create a positive and flexible working environment, thus Having good communication skill fosters good relationship, eliminates miscommunication, grows a sense of respect with the employees from diverse backgrounds.

2. Basic Elements of Cross-Cultural Communication:

- **Consciousness:** Cultures are deeply ingrained in the fabric of society from the way to cook food to the way we do business, Culture creates a sense of belonging that we truly are connected and to manage this we need to be conscious and aware we must understand that countries have different way and time zones of functioning. The generalized way we follow is not accurate universally to accomplish a task, for instance, people from different cultures evolve over the years and adopt and accept the other culture and evolve over years thus adopted and accepted other cultures Similarly it takes effort and patience to understand what drives the person or an organization you are working under.
- **Prepare:** Being prepared before any encounter is the base of communication before muting your non-native colleague it would be humbler to read about their country and culture. Simple actions like how to greet them and rest are culturally determined, Some countries are comfortable with the idea of proximity but in some, they may take it as an offensive action, One should not focus on perfecting etiquette though it might show that you are desperate to establish good communication which is not accurate. The fact that you have done the research and trying to do the right things in terms of communicating right enough to show people around you that you carry pure respect and care for them.
- **Language:** People usually come from different backgrounds and can manage to speak entirely different languages because the primary expression of any culture is language expression as soon as a person speaks, they will be able to identify their geographical region and social subgroups. When you and your counterpart speak different languages in that case you both must know one common language which is spoken all over. For example, you speak Hindi but another one is fluent in Kanada thus you can use the English language as a common medium of communication. One word in language X may mean positive in one language but the same word in language Y might have a different meaning thus

in such cases you must try and avoid misunderstanding and clarify with the speaker at the moment.

- **Temperament:** One should be extremely careful with the behavioral aspect of your colleague especially the humor part, in many cultures it is not acceptable to crack jokes in terms of business as it is said that Jokes don't translate for instance sarcasm is the basic ingredient to the people of United States but only when it is cracked funnily natives of other countries might take it as an insult or an emotional attack.
- **Neutral:** More commonly to be said receiving you are directly connecting to the vulnerability of a human being because they can easily relate to their ethnicities. Nervousness is again another factor that people fear but there is no weakness in accepting the nervousness People tend to overpower fear because they do not want to mess up. To overcome dreadfulness, it is always necessary to ask for feedback, Your peers would give your counterpart and help you gain opportunities along the way most of all they will easily be able to connect with you.

3. Attributes of Quality Cross-Cultural Communication:

- **Clarity and Candor:** Functioning becomes more meaningful when it is done unambiguously especially when it comes to communicating cross-culturally one has to be clear and candor. Uncertain and Judgmental communication creates toxicity among people from another demesne, thus it becomes challenging for the person to show up what he/she desires and deliver their best services to the firm, while communicating sincerity, frankness, and clarity should be given priority.
- **Cultivate:** Appointed employees generally have a growth mindset and are goal-oriented they have an appetite for development, stagnancy is out of trend and they want more than just paychecks, Optimistic employees tend to involve themselves with employees who carry cultivating a mindset, interact with such employees accurately will help an individual to learn diversified work ethics which would lead him or her to an overachiever, therefore communicating with the ideology of growth would always lead to an excellent operational organization.
- **Collaboration:** Humans propagate on working together in groups or teams as we can see evidently that humans are social beings and their very own existence on serving and being dependent on each other. Unity is the major pillar of any form of communication thus it helps foster comradeship among the employees and boosts their morale and performance for the firm. Collaboration in the context of cultural communication plays a prominent role in making the process of communication complete.
- **Consideration:** While communicating cross-culturally it is essential to

understand that whatever you are trying to convey to your colleague from a distinct culture can decode the message, meaning the message you are conveying is in context to your colleague's understanding or not, the delivery should be empathetic putting yourself in someone else's shoe and being aware of their emotions, attitudes, ideas, desires situations and probable reaction to your particulars. Handle the communication from their point of view make them the universe of your conversation make them believe that whatever you are communicating to the other party their feedback is essential to complete the process of communication.

- **Core Values:** Creating a sense of purpose has to be a core value of communication cross-culturally, to have a sustainable environment amongst colleagues one must reflect purpose while communicating with one another keeping a sense of respect towards associates' ethnicities, and diversity. The values should be woven with the process of communication because it is the base of the connection with the people you are working with and the company, practicing values should be the utmost priority as this generation dwells on consistency and it can make you a better communicator one must not lose the purpose of communication.
4. **Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity:** Benette formed a scale to explain cross-cultural communication and sensitivity towards it he coined a developmental model on Intercultural sensitivity hence having a direct connection to cross-cultural handling. We can consider his developmental model for understanding the sensitivity of cross-cultural communication, it is one of the most influential models when it comes to intercultural communication, engagement, and equity the model describes the typical ways in which people interact interpret and experience cultural differences he also developed understanding towards the progression towards communicating interculturally.
- **Denial:** Denial in cross-cultural communication occurs when people fail to understand that differences exist and that can be consequential when they perceive people from different cultures in self-serving ways. People who are in the self-declining stage would address people from other cultures vaguely and homogenously such as, 'Immigrants', 'Foreigners', 'Asians', etc. or they will demean stereotypically assuming the different traits people of other cultures are carrying the result of lack of physical ability, intelligence, and work ethics or other innate traits.
 - **Defense:** Defense happens when people want to protect their origin, so their perception of other cultures is competitive and polarizing e.g., sensitivity for immigrants coming to their country to co-exist but perceived by natives as they are taking over their jobs and get triggered by the feeling their traditional values will be hampered sometimes employees exalt their own culture over other

cultures, even if communication is concrete they feel offended and victimized in the discussions happening e.g. Leaving the room while discussing the sentimental aspects of the culture, therefore, discussing it should be prohibited in any case and affirmative communication should be practiced interculturally.

- **Minimization:** Minimization of cultural differences occurs when distinct culture worldwide is shared by others and taken as the sense of neglect and disregard towards the importance of culture e.g., race or gender biases in the workplace. Minimization may manifest in arguments that human similarities are more crucial than cultural differences it enables people to understand all humans are alike and they recognize fellow humans around.
- **Acceptance:** The process of embracing emotions thoughts and feelings with internal awareness without any judgment or change and cultural differences are quite obvious and acceptance can make anyone realize that there are different beliefs and value systems shaped by the culture there are legitimate behavioral patterns that cause greater curiosity for fellow humans to get knowledge of other culture and then people seek out to work on cross-cultural relationships and social interactions that were avoided in the past. Like in academics, one should focus on delivering the best regardless of concentrating on which race, caste, or nationality they are teaching.

Benette tries to deliver that acceptance does not endorse the values or behavior of other cultures it means accepting the distinctive existence of cultures worldwide, ideologies shape human behaviors values, and beliefs, and promising the fact that measurement of behavioral aspects is derived and determined culturally.

- **Adaptation:** Adaptation is a stage where people come together to grasp the inclusivity of cultures and inculcate the practices or policies up to an extent and are ready to practice it when required, here They can adapt the perspective of another culture by empathizing and respecting them interculturally and emotionally. They indulge themselves to others to understand their experiences and when they can interact in a relaxed authentic and appropriate way with people from varied cultures.
- **Integration:** The evolvement of Identity and self-understanding to incorporate belief value perspective and behavior covers the idea of integration.

As Bennett, "Integration of cultural difference is a state in which one's experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out during the cultural world views... people can experience themselves as multicultural beings who are constantly choosing the most appropriate cultural context for their behavior."

Integration is most likely to occur in schools or colleges with culturally diverse students and families that are operated by grown-ups whose demographics mirror the diversity of students.

Integration occurs in those who expatriate to other countries for a more extended

period in other countries who travel their whole life by living in extensive parts of the world thus they explicitly adopt and integrate the background of the community.

5. Barriers to Cross-Cultural Communication:

- **Ethnocentrism:** Ethnocentrism creates the idea of Us versus Them here we judge or look at other cultures through our lens it happens when we are deducible and approach according to our belief system towards the paradigm is the right and only way due to which we become judgmental and perceive others behavior odd and improper and have a mentality that can be detrimental.
- **Stereotype:** People generally rely on stereotypical or cliché ideas from different cultures learning about the diversified culture can be useful at the start but people tend to believe certain prior incidents and make a rigid notion about ethnicities or nationalities without ever knowing the actual truth.
- **Psychological Barrier:** When a person's mind is preoccupied and distracted it is difficult for him to be competent People prefer to be unauthentic if their natural preferences are not as they desire and it is not easy to go against it, To manage people cross-culturally must concentrate and need to flex his or her style. For instance, an employee from X country went to Y country to work and in the process of giving feedback he was direct with negative aspects of feedback thus the other employees from Y country might get offended and feel attacked as they are used to the positive approach of getting feedback in that case employee from country X will won't be able to fit in and eventually will leave.
- **Language Barrier:** All teams have customary language to communicate with others but when there is less fluency with the language it might create social isolation among the members People will withdraw themselves quickly which means the team may not get the required inputs Understanding the purpose of the conversation is challenging if the speakers speak swiftly and use too much of slang this might influence competence of people.
- **Demography:** Collaboration with a virtual team is more challenging when the group members come from different places and zones thus, they are unable to perform up to their potential to make people share information they need to show concentration, and after facing many hurdles must interact and build a relationship in a traditional office environment.

6. How to Overcome Cross-Cultural Communication:

- **Be Open-Minded:** Rigidity should be avoided in the beginning and assumptions should not have any place while communicating cross-culturally because believing beforehand what others might feel will create a weak communication and connection circle in the firm One must understand that a person from a different country will carry different values and belief thus his/her approach toward the situations and process of communication will be distinct.
- **Acquire Knowledge:** The best way to establish communication cross-culturally

is to gain understanding and knowledge about other cultures, this way The communicator will be more understanding and respectful of someone else's way of living life Even though your ideologies will not match up it will aid your first few interactions and eventually the research that is done by you would reflect in your way of attending the other person which would make them feel a sense of belongingness and comfort.

- **Diversity Trainings:** Educating your employees about the cultures will be a great help for them to coexist and function efficiently this will break down the barriers because triggering aspects would be discussed healthily. Even sending a welcome email and celebrating festivals will make a lot of difference this will not only educate them but they will feel that their company cares about their well-being and culture and the feeling of togetherness will be more present and will comfort them.
- **Restrain:** Patience is the key to the lock of cultural communication a restrained employee makes sure that communication is smooth cross-culturally and there is no misunderstanding in the process thus he/she makes sure that everyone is comfortable while communicating anything because they are not used to your culture and language they may take time allow them to take extra time and don't be afraid to ask about the clarifications if you are not sure of something As they say: 'You get the chicken by hatching the egg, not by smashing it.' Be patient, and let the egg hatch.
- **Simplicity:** Undoubtedly any communication process should be clear and concise adding jargon and complicated words in the language will make the communication more complicated, slang should also be avoided at all costs, using the speech of a specific region is a no-no it will make the employee highly uncomfortable and they won't communicate to you, it is best to avoid it altogether to prevent any confusion.

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**Media Mirr(erro)rs: Hyper real and the Fragmentation of Self in Margaret
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Abstract:

In Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, the main characters Jimmy and Crake entangle, entertain and explore themselves the evolving relationship between screens, surrealism, media and identity in virtual sphere. The novel portrays the current scenario of virtual dominance, survival and digital surveillance of individual privacy through the screen, making a drastic change in the techno advancement cultural world. Jimmy and Crake who are well secured from performing events and games in the computer addicted to several sites yet go through an inescapable moment and life situation while facing with psychological and mental ill health issues. Gradually, the fantasy overpowers the reality, and human progression and their emotions are challenged and replaced by virtual age of digital advancement. The virtual world places a strong impression on the real world favoring Crake who aspires to venture into producing and destroying anew. Therefore there is a surrealism and distortion in the form of virtual reality, creating an irreplaceable fragmented self and perils of identity crisis in the modern digi-culture which mirrors and errs through manipulated activities. The present study analyses the virtual real worldview and it's intersection of surrealism and VR, and how it becomes the monopoly of divide between the self and the device that are constantly in flux.

Keywords: Digital Sphere, Fragmentation, Hyperreal, Identity, Media Mirrors, Selfhood

Virtual Reality (VR) is the term used in the computer techno field which creates an imitation of the atmosphere in an extraordinary way with immersive experience. Virtual reality displays three types of simulation which are categorized in to non-immersive, semi-immersive, and fully-immersive simulations.

Virtual Reality is nothing but the Computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional image or environment that can be interacted with in a seemingly real or physical way by a person using special electronic equipment, such as a helmet with a screen inside or gloves fitted with sensors. Virtual Reality aims at creating a friendly atmosphere, using technology and advancement in digitalized world, to interact with the human beings just as the natural world exposes the communication one to one or to the group through signs, pictures, writings and oral transmission of language. Virtual reality

out smarts and replaces the traditional flat screen with the fake or replicated and immersive world.

According to Wikipedia, “Virtual reality (VR) is a simulated experience that can be similar to or completely different from the real world. Applications of virtual reality include entertainment (particularly video games), education (such as medical or military training) and business (such as virtual meetings). Other distinct types of VR-style technology include augmented reality and mixed reality, sometimes referred to as extended reality or XR.”

According to Shneiderman, “analyses of VR user-interface issues may be too sober a process for those who are enjoying their silicon trips, but it may aid in choosing the appropriate applications and refining the technologies” (224). Virtual mode atmospheric experience certainly would cause the individual to fall prey to the side-effects pertaining to simulation and mental ill health. And this is well exposed by the manipulated activities performed by Jimmy and Crake in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*.

Margaret Atwood was born on November 18, 1939, in Ottawa, Canada. She is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, and essayist, widely regarded as one of the most significant contemporary writers. Atwood is known for her writings, keen social observations, and versatility across genres. Atwood has contributed and written eight picture books, two graphic novels, nine short fiction collections, eight novels, eight poetry volumes, eleven nonfiction works, and a number of small press editions of both poetry and fiction. Two Booker Prizes have been awarded to her: “*The Blind Assassin*” (2000) and “*The Testaments*” (2019). Her other notable accomplishments include the Guggenheim Fellowship (1981), the National Book Critics and PEN Centre USA Lifetime Achievement Awards, the Franz Kafka Prize, the Governor General’s Award (1996, 1985), the Arthur C. Clarke Award, and the Princess of Asturias Awards (2008). Atwood has been captivated and steered ahead to voice out on environmental issues, genetic engineering, women’s rights and their place in Western culture, and the effects of technology on people. Her work often explores themes of feminism, dystopia, environmentalism, and the complexities of human relationships.

The virtual world divides and keeps the individual aloof from the real world as it has been turned into a tool for deception and perception, creating a false desire and a way to control it. This indicates that people have entered a world where a strong link between humans and their technologies is essential.

More sources of images and videos on the internet, lead the individuals who have access, to education at the same time entertainment purpose in a virtual mode. Virtual entertainment, points to online live or pre-recorded show, that which pars with the offline show, just on-screen as an alternate event, by means of video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Teams and WebEx, including group activities like team building activities and interactive workshops. Entertainment brings about a greater transformation through concerts, music videos, magic shows, dance show, DJ sets and further. The virtual

entertainment pools everybody together from different corners of the world under one platform making a remarkable and unique experience.

In Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, while television represents an important instrument of modern technology, the more important electronic device is computer and internet. As Baudrillard believes, television is the central instrument in the world of technology that breaks down reality which in its more developed way happens in computer. He argues that in our postmodern life, television, films, media and internet destroy the reality, the whole idea of copying the true or false of something is broken down, all we have now are simulation of reality which isn't more or less the "real" thing but the reality which is simulated or changed into hyperreality. He says that in postmodern society, people experience something called "the death of the real" which means people live in a realm of hyperreality. In last capitalist society, the computer totally provides connection to all parts of the globe and modern society with providing many opportunities for capitalist marketing and advertisements and opportunities to associate the pleasure derived from this entertainment with the products themselves.

For instance in *Oryx and Crake*, when Jimmy and Crake search the websites dealing with executions, it is said that "these sites would have spot commercials, for things like car batteries and tranquilizers, and logos painted in bright yellow on the backgrounds walls" (94) which shows how advertisements are used in all opportunities for better selling products to the consumers.

In *Oryx and Crake* the cities are portrayed as high risking area where there are huge amenities for the people to have full access to them. And those people like Jimmy, who had never been to the city, had never seen them. He had seen only on televisions and therefore his experience is a virtual reality experience: "He had seen them only seen it on TV – endless billboards and neon signs and stretches of buildings, tall and short, some of them with clouds of smoke coming out the back; thousands of people, hurrying, cheering, rioting. There were other cities too, near and far; some had better neighbourhoods in them, said his father, almost like the Compounds, with high walls around the houses, but those didn't get on TV much." (31)

Later his virtual reality experience is substantiated with his emotional psyche where he is surrounded by vicarious experiences and activities of unreal life, that is being absent from real life experiences. Jimmy's mother who is a microbiologist, carries on her job by making study on the proteins of the bioforms which is unhealthy to pigeons and modify their receptors. She used to identify the microbes and viruses through the computer screens. Jimmy is introduced to computer screen in the beginning of novel by her mother Sharon. "On her computer screen she showed Jimmy pictures of the cells, pictures of the microbes, pictures of the microbes getting into the cells and infecting them and bursting them open, close-up pictures of the proteins, pictures of the drugs she had once tested:" (33) and Moreover Jimmy's mother expresses her true love to him by being together and playing computer games. "She let Jimmy play with the pictures on her computer, and once he learned how to run the program, he could play war games with

them – cells versus microbes. She said it was all right if he lost stuff off the computer, because all that material was out of date anyway. Though on some days – days when she appeared brisk and purposeful, and aimed, and steady – she would want to fool around on the computer herself.” (34)

So Jimmy repeatedly has a series of vicarious experiences, but rarely a real life experience. All these substitute experience have a negative impact on Jimmy’s psyche. As Raymond Lavoie, Corey King and Danielle King observe in *Virtual experience*, real consequences: the potential negative emotional consequences of virtual reality gameplay, “the strength of the experienced negative emotion is positively correlated with negative rumination after the experience.” (75).

Jimmy begins his friendship with Crake playing computer games, especially chess with him. “He used to play chess with Crake but they’d played by computer, not with actual chessmen. [...] He lets himself drift back to those after-school times with Crake. “Jimmy used to play chess with Crake but they’d played by computer, not with actual chessman.” (44) Crake wins and he was good at chess game all the times. It was harmless enough at first. They might play Extinctathon, or one of the others. three-dimensional Waco, Barbarian Stomp, kwiktime Osama. They all used strategies you had to see where you were headed before you got there, but also where the other guy was headed. Crake was good at those games because he was a master of the sideways leap. Jimmy and Crake employing themselves on different computer chess games leads to the manipulation of life, because it goes against the real and natural way of playing usually adopted by real humans. Here what Jimmy and Crake engage in is not real, but a manipulation of machine programmes. In regular activities of schooling, Jimmy used to frequent school cafeteria with balanced meals and other optional meals. “If there was any lunchtime left over and nothing else going on, he could go to the library and watch old instructional CD-ROMs.” (61) Though Jimmy is quite curious to know things from old instructional CO-ROMs, passion for the computer games fashioned his curiosity and he joined hands with Crake while doing their homework.

Jimmy was always impulsive and led by his emotions in his life; he was often unrefined and uncouth, riding rough with people; he often sought relief in these virtual games with Crake: “Jimmy was impetuous and lacked finesse, so that wasn’t too productive and they dropped it. Or, under pretence of doing their homework, which sometimes they really would do, they would shut themselves up in Crake’s room, where they would play computer chess” (88)

Although Jimmy and Crake are well secured from performing events and games in the computer yet go through an inescapable moment and life situation while facing with psychological and mental ill health issues. The virtual world places a strong impression on the real world favoring Crake who aspires to venture into producing and destroying anew. As an adolescent young boys both Jimmy and Crake eventually end up in engaging their whole life by way of real-life game play.

Apart from the games, the two had other options also. Regularly, when they were not playing these virtual games, they were engaged in watching other virtual stuff in the internet. Most of what they watched was also equally pernicious and harmful. They watched online live beheadings, killing, torture, open-heart surgery, autopsies, executions, harassments and teasings, forced suicides, and also heavy hard core porn. Sometimes they watched violence and porn together or switched from one to another. Gradually they were not able to distinguish between virtual porn and virtual violence.

The virtual reality is now a substitute for reality and when the reality returns, the human psyche takes it as a fantasy. This appeal of the warped violence to the human psyche is done through violent virtual content and games. This explains why the troubled Crake and Jimmy waste most of their adolescence locking themselves inside a room and surfing the internet for violent material such as violent video games and perverted adult sites. Jimmy and Crake are soon rendered incapable of dealing well with their feelings of frustration, anger, loss, betrayal, sexual fantasies that is caused by various adolescent crises such as school issues, sexuality, fragmented families, uncertainty and anxiety, feelings of isolation from family and peer. Their strange friendship is bound by the internet material they take in and the video games they play, mainly *Blood and Roses*, *Barbarian Stomp* and *Extinctathon*. The virtual play of the two becomes a way for the gamification of their physical identity, ultimately turns out to become an epic final game where humanity becomes the object at stake.

Virtual act and computer activities dissociate and distance the individuals more and more by not unifying them into one. The common element of effective participation and inter relation among the human is put off in the western culture. Therefore the individuals live a secluded life even in the existence of a real society. According to Foucault in his *Discipline and Punish*, “The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by collection of separated individualities” (203).

According to Baudrillard, we exist in a hyperreal world, where “things are being replayed ad infinitum.” By calling our surroundings the “ecstasy of communication,” he implies that it has become a hyperreal “simulation” of reality. He argues that, although there is an increasing amount of information, its meaning is continuously diminishing (79).

The study concludes that the Media which has been designed as a virtual technoculture in a modern world puts our world, particularly our culture, at great risk of losing its authenticity and true nature, either directly or indirectly. Propaganda, television, the internet, and other technological tools all function as a surveillance system to manipulate and mould the public’s thoughts and desires, and they are utterly captivated with the magical power of the newest technology. The presentation of cataclysmic possibility is under our way, foreboding the threat that awaits the young minds that are addicted to virtual worlds. The present study is a red alert to all those who may consciously or inadvertently drift into virtual world or unwanted sites for they would soon

be unable to distinguish between authentic and false experiences. Though there are numerous dystopian writings that predict gloominess and doom for the human race, Atwood's genius and brilliance has made *Oryx and Crake* a classic in this category. It is a work that one may ignore only if they have no thought for the future.

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Narrating Colonial Trauma through Language, Literature, and Media in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *After Lives*

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Abstract

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* intricately portrays the colonial trauma experienced by individuals and communities in East Africa, illustrating the deep scars left by imperial rule. Through the lens of language, literature, and media, the novel reveals how colonialism disrupts identities, suppresses indigenous voices, and manipulates historical narratives. Language serves as both an instrument of oppression and a means of survival, as characters struggle to assert their agency within colonial hierarchies. Literature functions as a space for reclaiming lost histories, providing a counter-narrative to dominant colonial discourse. Media, particularly colonial propaganda and selective historiography, shapes perceptions of power and resistance, often distorting the realities of the colonized. By analyzing *Afterlives* through this framework, this paper explores how Gurnah challenges historical erasure and reclaims the voices of the marginalized. The novel not only documents colonial trauma but also asserts the enduring strength of cultural memory and storytelling in shaping postcolonial identity.

Keywords: Colonial Trauma, Language and Power, Literary Resistance, Media Manipulation, Postcolonial Identity

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* is a poignant exploration of colonial trauma, depicting the psychological and cultural upheaval caused by German and British imperial rule in East Africa. Set against the backdrop of the early twentieth century, the novel follows characters whose lives are shaped by war, displacement, and the struggle to reclaim identity in a world dominated by colonial power. Through the lens of language, literature, and media, *Afterlives* critiques the mechanisms of colonial control while also highlighting the resilience of those affected by it. Language functions as both a tool of subjugation and adaptation, literature becomes a means of reclaiming lost histories, and media distorts or erases the voices of the colonized. By analyzing these three elements, this paper examines how Gurnah's novel not only narrates colonial trauma but also challenges historical erasure through storytelling.

In *Afterlives*, language plays a crucial role in shaping power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized. The German colonial administration imposes its language on the local population, reinforcing European authority while silencing indigenous voices. Hamza, one of the novel's central characters, is forced to learn German to survive within the colonial military structure. His linguistic adaptation reflects

the duality of language as both a means of subjugation and a path to agency. Gurnah illustrates how colonial languages often serve as barriers that exclude indigenous people from power while simultaneously forcing them to assimilate.

The colonial imposition of language also disrupts cultural identity. Many of the characters must navigate between their native tongues and the languages of their oppressors, leading to a fragmented sense of self. Hamza's fluency in German gives him access to certain privileges but does not protect him from racialized violence and systemic discrimination. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues, "language is a carrier of culture" (Wa Thiong'o 13), and when a dominant power controls language, it can manipulate cultural narratives. Gurnah's depiction of linguistic hierarchies underscores how colonial trauma extends beyond physical violence, affecting the very means by which individuals express themselves.

Afterlives also shows language as a tool for survival and resistance. Characters like Afiya, who have been denied formal education, still preserve cultural knowledge through oral traditions. The novel emphasizes the power of storytelling and indigenous languages in maintaining history and identity, even in the face of colonial suppression.

Gurnah's novel itself functions as an act of literary resistance, challenging the Eurocentric narratives that have long dominated historical accounts of colonialism. By focusing on the personal histories of those often left out of mainstream historical discourse, *Afterlives* reclaims the voices of the colonized. The novel presents history not as a fixed record but as a contested space where multiple perspectives must be acknowledged.

Literature within the novel also reflects this struggle for narrative control. Colonial officers and European administrators document history through their own biased perspectives, often framing resistance movements as acts of savagery rather than liberation. In contrast, Gurnah centers the experiences of those who suffer under imperial rule, exposing the brutality of the colonial system. As Edward Said notes in *Culture and Imperialism*, "stories are a way of redrawing the map of imperial control" (Said 81). By telling the stories of Hamza, Afiya, and others, Gurnah disrupts the dominant colonial discourse and offers a counter-narrative that acknowledges the complexities of colonial trauma.

The significance of storytelling is further emphasized through the oral traditions present in the novel. Afiya's memories, passed down through familial narratives, highlight how indigenous knowledge is preserved outside written records. Gurnah underscores that literature does not only exist in books but also in the spoken word, reinforcing the idea that history must be told from multiple perspectives.

Media, both as propaganda and selective historiography, plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of colonial rule in *Afterlives*. The novel illustrates how colonial powers use media to justify their control, portraying themselves as civilizers while erasing the atrocities they commit. Newspapers, official reports, and military records

often serve as instruments of misinformation, framing European imperialism as a noble mission rather than an exploitative system.

This manipulation of history is evident in how colonial violence is documented. The German authorities portray their suppression of rebellions as necessary acts of discipline, ignoring the human cost of their actions. The real-life Maji Maji Rebellion, one of the historical events that inform the novel, was presented in European media as a minor disturbance rather than a large-scale resistance against colonial oppression (Iliffe 209). Gurnah's narrative exposes these distortions, urging readers to question the legitimacy of historical records produced by colonial institutions.

The novel highlights how media influence extends beyond the colonial period. The erasure of African voices in historical narratives continues in the postcolonial era, as many official accounts still prioritize European perspectives. Gurnah's decision to focus on ordinary individuals rather than historical figures challenges the notion that only those in power shape history. By amplifying marginalized voices, *Afterlives* disrupts the conventional narratives perpetuated by mainstream media and academia.

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* offers a profound exploration of colonial trauma through the interconnected lenses of language, literature, and media. The novel demonstrates how colonial powers weaponize language to maintain control, how literature can serve as a form of resistance, and how media distorts history to uphold imperial narratives. Through these elements, Gurnah critiques the legacy of colonialism and highlights the resilience of those who have been historically marginalized.

By challenging dominant narratives and reclaiming lost histories, *Afterlives* becomes more than just a novel; it is a powerful act of storytelling that preserves cultural memory. Gurnah's work urges readers to reconsider how history is recorded and who gets to tell it. In doing so, he not only documents colonial trauma but also provides a literary space for healing and resistance, ensuring that the voices of the past are not forgotten.

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**Deception, Justice, and Social Tensions in Agatha Christie's
*Murder on the Orient Express***

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Abstract

Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* is more than just a detective story; it explores ideas about language, media influence, and cultural identity. While some scholars have studied Christie's social themes and her use of misleading language, fewer have explored how these elements work together to highlight the complexity of justice. This paper argues that Christie's use of language, media references, and cultural diversity challenges traditional ideas of crime and punishment. Using Roland Barthes' theory of the hermeneutic code, this paper shows how Christie's storytelling makes readers question what justice really means.

Keywords: Cultural Trifecta, Linguistic Deception, Media Sensationalism, Cultural Identity

Moral Ambiguity:

Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934) is a famous detective novel known for its clever plot and iconic detective, Hercule Poirot. While many readers enjoy the story's mystery, Christie's deeper message reveals her thoughts on social order, media influence, and justice. Critics like Alison Light believe Christie's novels reflect concerns about society and justice (Light 32). Gillian Gill points out that Christie often uses long-winded speech to show when characters are trying to hide the truth (Gill 120). While these ideas are helpful, they often look at language, media, and culture separately. This paper introduces the idea of the "Cultural Trifecta", the combination of language, media, and culture, to show how Christie connects these elements to explore justice. By studying the novel this way, this paper shows how Christie's writing challenges simple ideas about guilt and innocence.

This paper uses textual analysis to explore Christie's writing techniques. Roland Barthes' theory of the hermeneutic code helps explain how Christie creates suspense by

delaying important information. Cultural theory is used to show how Christie's portrayal of different nationalities highlights social tensions and questions traditional ideas of justice.

Christie's careful use of language plays a major role in building suspense and shaping the mystery. Through conversations, silence, and word choices, she reveals clues about the characters. When Poirot tells Mary Debenham, "You are remarkably composed, mademoiselle," her short reply, "Why should I not be?" (Christie 52), suggests she is hiding something. Her defensive tone makes her seem suspicious even though her words are simple.

Antonio Foscarelli's exaggerated stories reveal his attempt to avoid suspicion. As Gillian Gill points out, Christie "uses verbosity as a mask; the more a character talks, the more they reveal their desperation to deflect suspicion" (Gill 120).

Silence is also important in the novel. When Greta Ohlsson nervously refuses to answer Poirot's questions, her silence hints at her hidden connection to the Armstrong case. According to Barthes' hermeneutic code, Christie's use of silence makes readers more curious by delaying key details (Barthes 78).

Christie's characters also use different types of language to reflect their cultural backgrounds. Ratchett's loud and aggressive speech that "I've been getting letters. Damn s coundrels...threatening me!" (Christie 22), contrasts with Poirot's calm and careful way of speaking. This difference shows how language reflects social class, personality, and cultural identity.

Christie's novel also reflects how media stories in the 1930s shaped public ideas about crime. The character of Ratchett is based on the real-life Lindbergh kidnapping case, a crime that shocked the public and dominated headlines. By connecting her story to this famous case, Christie highlights how media attention can create strong opinions about guilt and innocence.

Poirot's decision to let the group responsible for Ratchett's murder go free challenges the typical crime story ending. Instead of presenting a clear hero-villain outcome, Christie shows that justice is complicated. As Alison Light notes, Christie's ending "questions traditional ideas of guilt and innocence, blurring the lines between justice and vengeance" (Light 54).

Christie's portrayal of different cultures is another key part of her novel. The train itself is a symbol of society, bringing people from different backgrounds into one confined space. Onboard are characters from Britain, America, Russia, and Sweden, representing various cultural values. For example, the wealthy American Ratchett symbolizes greed and corruption, while Princess Dragomiroff reflects old European traditions. By mixing social classes and nationalities, Christie shows that crime is not limited to one group — anyone can be guilty. As Poirot warns, "The murderer is with us ... on the train now" (Christie 45), reminding readers that crime crosses cultural and social boundaries.

Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* blends language, media influence, and cultural themes to challenge traditional ideas about justice. By carefully

shaping her characters' speech, Christie shows how language can be used to deceive. By connecting her story to media-driven crime cases, she questions how society judges guilt and innocence. Finally, by including characters from diverse backgrounds, Christie reveals that crime is a universal human problem, not one tied to social status or nationality.

Through her use of the "Cultural Trifecta," Christie encourages readers to question simple ideas of right and wrong, reminding us that truth is often hidden beneath appearances.

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**Breaking the Illusion: Language, Media, and Cultural Ideals in Shaw's
*Arms and the Man***

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Abstract

George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* critiques the illusions created by language, media, and cultural expectations. By blending sharp dialogue, ironic commentary, and social satire, Shaw reveals how these forces shape human perception. Through characters like Bluntschli, Sergius, and Raina, Shaw highlights the dangers of romanticizing war, love, and social status. This paper explores how Shaw's work reflects the "Cultural Trifecta," showing that true maturity arises from rejecting idealism and embracing practicality. By examining Shaw's use of language as a tool for criticism, media's role in reinforcing false ideals, and culture's influence on personal identity, this study emphasizes Shaw's enduring message about truth, self-awareness, and social values.

Keywords: Language and Illusion, Media Influence, Social Expectations, Romantic Idealism, Realism in Literature

George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* is a powerful critique of the false ideals shaped by language, media, and cultural expectations. Written in 1894, the play challenges traditional notions of war, love, and social class. Through sharp dialogue, ironic commentary, and clever character development, Shaw exposes how these three forces shape public perception and personal identity. By blending language as a tool for satire, media as a means of distortion, and culture as a source of social pressure, Shaw critiques the illusions that dominate human understanding. As this paper explores, Shaw's *Arms and the Man* illustrates how embracing practicality over fantasy leads to personal growth and social awareness.

Shaw's strategic use of language plays a crucial role in challenging romanticized ideas about war and love. Throughout the play, Captain Bluntschli, a practical Swiss soldier, uses plain, straightforward language that reflects realism and survival. In contrast,

Sergius, the so-called war hero, relies on exaggerated, poetic speech that embodies empty bravado. Bluntschli's famous remark, "I carry chocolate instead of cartridges" (Shaw 12), reveals his belief that practicality outweighs blind courage in combat. This seemingly simple statement contrasts sharply with Sergius' dramatic declaration: "Soldiering... is the coward's art of attacking mercilessly when you are strong, and keeping out of harm's way when you are weak" (Shaw 20). While Sergius glorifies war through grand language, Bluntschli exposes the reality - survival depends on strategy, not reckless heroism. As Al-Khalili and Jameel observe, Bluntschli's language "exposes the flaws of idealism and emphasizes practicality as the foundation of truth" (Al-Khalili and Jameel 251). Through these contrasting speech patterns, Shaw critiques the illusion of heroism and reveals language's power in shaping misguided beliefs.

Shaw critiques the role of media in reinforcing false ideals. Although written before the rise of modern mass media, *Arms and the Man* explores how storytelling and public narratives influence perception. Raina, for example, idolizes her fiancé Sergius because of the dramatic war stories she has heard about him. Her belief in his heroic image blinds her to his reckless behavior in battle. When Bluntschli reveals that Sergius' actions were foolish rather than courageous, Raina's admiration diminishes. This mirrors how media often distorts reality, creating exaggerated heroes or villains. As *Thinking Literature* explains, Shaw's depiction of Sergius reflects his broader critique of how media "shapes social expectations by romanticizing violence and distorting truth" (*Thinking Literature*). By exposing the gap between Sergius' heroic image and his flawed reality, Shaw warns against blind trust in public narratives.

Cultural expectations further shape the characters' behavior and relationships in *Arms and the Man*. Raina, raised in an upper-class family, feels pressured to maintain an image of "higher love", a dramatic, idealized form of romance. Her attempts to embody this perfect love exhaust her, revealing the burden of social expectations. In one memorable scene, Raina confesses: "Do you know what a higher love is? Very fatiguing thing to keep up for any length of time" (Shaw 35). This humorous yet revealing statement underscores Shaw's critique of unrealistic social pressures. As *Literature PADI* notes, Raina's journey from romantic fantasy to practical love reflects Shaw's belief that true maturity comes from abandoning social illusions (*Literature PADI*). By allowing Raina to shed her false ideals and embrace honesty, Shaw highlights the dangers of conforming to cultural expectations at the cost of personal fulfillment.

The intersection of language, media, and culture drives Shaw's deeper message about self-awareness and truth. Throughout the play, Bluntschli's practical wisdom stands in contrast to Sergius' performative heroism and Raina's romantic illusions. Bluntschli's clear-headed approach ultimately reshapes Raina's perception of love, war, and identity. As *Thinking Literature* explains, Raina's transformation from innocence to experience "reflects Shaw's belief that personal growth occurs when one rejects fantasy and embraces reality" (*Thinking Literature*). This shift reflects Shaw's broader critique of Victorian social ideals, urging audiences to value sincerity over superficial

appearances.

In *Arms and the Man*, George Bernard Shaw skillfully combines language, media, and cultural critique to challenge traditional ideals about war, love, and social identity. Through Bluntschli's honesty, Raina's self-realization, and Sergius' empty bravado, Shaw reveals how false narratives influence human behavior. By exposing these illusions, Shaw encourages his audience to embrace truth, reject blind heroism, and question cultural expectations. His timeless message reminds us that critical thinking — particularly about language, media, and social norms - is essential for achieving personal growth and meaningful relationships. Shaw's exploration of this "cultural trifecta" remains relevant today, as we continue to navigate media influence, cultural pressures, and the search for truth in a complex world.

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The Power of Representation: A Discursive Analysis of Cultural Production across Language, Literature, and Media in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

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Abstract

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* offers a powerful narrative that reflects broader cultural and historical realities. This paper examines the novel through the lens of representation, focusing on the interplay of language, literature, and media. Language functions as a tool of both division and connection, shaping character identities and power dynamics. Literary techniques such as first-person narration and symbolism contribute to the novel's emotional and thematic depth. The film adaptation of *The Kite Runner* further explores the complexities of cultural representation, highlighting the challenges of translating literary narratives into visual media. Through this analysis, the paper demonstrates how *The Kite Runner* exemplifies the power of representation in shaping cultural understanding and interpretation.

Keywords: Representation, Language, Literature, Media, Identity, Power, Dynamics, Symbolism, Film Adaptation, Cultural Interpretation

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* is a novel that transcends personal storytelling to reflect larger cultural and historical narratives. The novel captures the essence of displacement, trauma, and redemption, making it a relevant text for an analysis that intersects with language, literature, and media. The story follows Amir, an Afghan immigrant in America, as he navigates his past and the guilt that has haunted him since childhood. His relationship with Hassan, a Hazara servant and childhood friend, serves as the emotional core of the novel, illustrating themes of betrayal, power, and redemption.

Language plays a significant role in shaping the identities of the characters and their experiences. Amir's bilingualism—his ability to navigate both Persian/Dari and English—reflects his cultural duality. His transition from speaking Persian in Kabul to English in the United States marks his shifting identity. In contrast, Hassan's illiteracy symbolizes the power imbalance between them. The way language is used throughout the novel highlights the barriers between social classes and ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Moreover, the novel explores how language is a means of both oppression and connection. Words are wielded as weapons, reinforcing divisions between the Pashtun and Hazara communities. As Baba says, "There is only one sin, only one. And that is theft... when you kill a man, you steal a life... you steal his wife's right to a husband,

rob his children of a father” (Hosseini 17). This quote demonstrates how language defines moral and social boundaries. At the same time, letters and spoken confessions serve as means of reconciliation and understanding, demonstrating the power of language to heal past wounds.

As a work of literature, *The Kite Runner* employs narrative techniques that heighten its emotional depth and thematic complexity. The novel’s first-person narration offers an intimate perspective on Amir’s internal struggles, allowing readers to witness his guilt, self-doubt, and ultimate search for redemption. The nonlinear storytelling, interweaving past and present, mirrors the way trauma lingers in the mind and continues to shape identity. Symbolism is another powerful literary device in the novel, with objects such as kites, scars, and the pomegranate tree carrying layered meanings that evolve with the narrative. The kites, which initially symbolize childhood innocence and joy, later become tied to betrayal and redemption. Amir’s internal conflict is evident when he reflects, “I ran. I ran because I was a coward... I was afraid that if I said something, that I did something, something would change” (Hosseini 72). The scars Amir and Sohrab bear represent both physical and emotional wounds that link past and present. Through these literary elements, Hosseini crafts a story that is both deeply personal and universally resonant, capturing the human experiences of loss, reconciliation, and belonging.

The novel’s transition into film provides another avenue for understanding its impact, demonstrating how media shapes and reinterprets literature for a wider audience. The 2007 film adaptation of *The Kite Runner*, directed by Marc Forster, translates the novel’s themes into a visual medium, highlighting aspects of Afghan culture and political turmoil through cinematography and performance. However, adaptation also involves modification, and the film alters certain aspects of the novel to appeal to an international audience. While it retains key moments from the book, it simplifies some of the novel’s more intricate psychological dimensions. The portrayal of trauma in film differs from literature; while the novel allows readers to immerse themselves in Amir’s thoughts and emotions, the film relies on visual and auditory cues to evoke the same responses. The film adaptation also sparked controversy, particularly regarding its depiction of sensitive cultural and political issues. Its release led to discussions about how Afghanistan and its people are represented in Western media. The reception of the film highlights the complexities of adapting a culturally rich and politically charged novel for a global audience.

The intersection of language, literature, and media in *The Kite Runner* demonstrates the power of storytelling across different forms. Language serves as a marker of identity and belonging, literature captures trauma and human emotion with depth, and media reinterprets narratives, shaping how they are perceived by global audiences. Hosseini’s novel, through its literary craftsmanship and subsequent adaptation, becomes more than just a personal tale; it is a reflection of historical struggles, cultural displacement, and the search for redemption. By analyzing *The Kite Runner*

through these interconnected dimensions, one gains a deeper understanding of how narratives evolve and endure across linguistic, literary, and visual landscapes.

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Challenging Social Norms Through Language, Culture, and Media in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*

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Abstract

John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* employs a dynamic trifecta of language, culture, and media to critique post-war British society. Through Jimmy Porter's sharp rhetoric, Osborne crafts a language of frustration that mirrors the disillusionment of Britain's working class. Jimmy's language, marked by aggression, sarcasm, and irony, serves as both a personal weapon and a social commentary. Culturally, Osborne challenges British norms by portraying shifting gender roles, class tensions, and the decline of imperial pride. The play's allusions to contemporary media - including newspapers, radio broadcasts, and popular culture - reflect Jimmy's anxieties about societal change. By blending language, cultural critique, and media references, Osborne presents *Look Back in Anger* as a powerful reflection of Britain's struggle to redefine itself in the aftermath of war. This paper explores how Osborne's use of language as a tool for resistance, his commentary on cultural transitions, and his integration of media elements combine to capture the social unrest of the 1950s.

Keywords: Post-war Britain, Language of Anger, Cultural Discontent, Media Influence, Jimmy Porter, Social Commentary

Look Back in Anger, John Osborne presents a compelling exploration of post-war British anxieties by employing a trifecta of language, culture, and media. Through the volatile rhetoric of Jimmy Porter, Osborne creates a linguistic landscape that embodies frustration and rebellion. His sharp, sarcastic language serves as a means to challenge social norms, express discontent, and assert dominance. By weaving cultural themes such as class conflict, gender dynamics, and declining British imperialism, Osborne portrays a society grappling with change. Simultaneously, his references to contemporary media reinforce themes of detachment and disillusionment, positioning the play as a reflection of post-war Britain's identity crisis.

Language stands at the heart of Osborne's social critique, particularly through Jimmy Porter's caustic speech. His verbal aggression is both a personal defense mechanism and a social weapon. Jimmy's language is marked by sarcasm, irony, and rhetorical dominance, which he uses to belittle those around him. As Peter J. Conradi notes, Jimmy's relentless verbal attacks create "a language of rage," a style that exposes his frustration with a society that has marginalized his working-class identity (Conradi 34). His scathing remarks toward Alison's family reveal a deep-seated resentment toward Britain's entrenched class system. Phrases such as "posh" and "bloody old mum" illustrate Jimmy's tendency to reduce the upper class to objects of scorn (Osborne 18). This aggressive language is not merely hostile; it reflects Jimmy's inner turmoil - a cry for attention from a world that has failed to recognize his intellectual worth. Osborne's linguistic strategies expose how language itself can function as a battleground for identity, power, and resistance.

Osborne's portrayal of British culture reveals a nation caught between tradition and change. Jimmy's character embodies the frustration of a post-war generation disenchanted with imperial ideals and social hierarchies. As Christopher Innes observes, *Look Back in Anger* critiques "the cultural inertia of post-war Britain" by portraying Jimmy as a man who challenges outdated norms yet feels powerless to effect real change (Innes 67). His relationship with Alison symbolizes this tension; while Alison represents conventional British values, Jimmy's working-class background and rebellious nature highlight his opposition to societal conformity. The play's exploration of gender roles further reflects cultural instability. Alison's passivity and Helena's assertiveness demonstrate the conflicting expectations placed on women in post-war Britain. Through these characters, Osborne illustrates how cultural expectations limit personal freedom and contribute to emotional repression.

Media references throughout *Look Back in Anger* further reinforce Osborne's commentary on social detachment and anxiety. Jimmy's frequent engagement with newspapers reflects his obsession with public affairs, yet this constant consumption of media fuels his cynicism. For instance, Jimmy's references to political issues such as the Suez Crisis and his disdain for media coverage reveal his frustration with Britain's declining global influence. As John Russell Taylor observes, Osborne's incorporation of media "mirrors the pervasive sense of helplessness that characterized post-war British society" (Taylor 112). By using media as a narrative device, Osborne critiques how information overload fosters detachment rather than awareness. Jimmy's media consumption amplifies his feelings of powerlessness, as he fixates on social injustices without finding a means to address them.

Osborne's ability to intertwine language, culture, and media enables *Look Back in Anger* to serve as a potent critique of Britain's shifting social landscape. By presenting language as a tool of resistance, Osborne captures the frustrations of marginalized individuals like Jimmy, who rely on rhetoric to challenge social constraints. The play's cultural commentary exposes Britain's struggle to reconcile its imperial past with its

uncertain future. Osborne's integration of media underscores the impact of mass communication in shaping public perception and emotional detachment. Together, these elements construct a powerful trifecta that reflects the anxieties of post-war British society. As Britain navigated the complexities of a rapidly changing world, *Look Back in Anger* emerged as a powerful reminder of language's capacity to both challenge and reinforce cultural norms. Osborne's exploration of this trifecta continues to resonate, serving as a timeless reflection on social unrest, emotional vulnerability, and the human desire for meaningful connection.

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Carol Ann Shields Happenstance - An Epiphany into Nuptial Testimony

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Abstract

Canadian literature has been resolutely influenced by international immigration, particularly in recent decades. Carol Ann Shields works mainly probe on the existential aspects and individual self. Marriage is just the inception of a perpetual relationship where men and women determine to live together till death. Family is the principal unit of society, whereas man and woman unite to form a family, for the cause of the procreation and the subsistence of human life. The two vital components of marriage are individual and social. The individual element of marriage is for the man and woman to mutually agree with one and other. The social element of marriage is a persistent relationship to humans as husband and wife. The universal law of marriage is that when a male and female unite, they can create a life out of their own. The wife renounces and sacrifices for her husband and children. The process of giving birth and taking care of her whole family is a significant nature of a woman. A woman surveys for her true personality for being a wife in her marital status. Carol Ann Shields' novels mainly exhibit the existential aspects in marital status and relationship. Happenstance is no repudiation. It portrays the essence of marriage and relationship. Jack is as reflective as Brenda is pragmatic. This paper "Carol Ann Shields Happenstance - An Epiphany into Nuptial Testimony" analyzes the possible operation of femininity and masculinity to maintain relationship in a family.

Keywords: Existence, Marriage, Love, Persistent, Relationship, Procreation

One's life has value so long as one attributes
value to the life of others, by means of love,
friendship, indignation and compassion. ...

Simon de Beauvoir

Carol Ann Shields Happenstance - An Epiphany into Nuptial Testimony:

In Canadian literature, writing began as a competent colonial literature. Consequences of Canadian writers are wide both geographically and historically. They constitute Canada's diversity in culture and religion. Native literature has begun to prosper and is related to many distinct oral traditions, language, and cultural practices. Early European contact and the confederation of Canada, domestic people in North America have occupied the land and have maintained diversity in their culture, related to identity, language, art, and literature. In recent days, Canadian Literature has been

strongly impressed by the emigrants from other countries. In 1980 Canada's ethnic and cultural diversity has been reflected in its own literature, with many of its most projecting writers probing on ethnic minority, identity, quality, duality, and cultural differences.

Carol Ann Shields, born on June 2, 1935, was an American born Canadian novelist, a short story writer, biographer, literary critic, playwright, and poet. Her work exhibits the lives of ordinary people. Her first novel, *Small Ceremonies*, was published in 1976, followed by the *Box Garden* in 1977, *Happenstance* in 1980, and *Swann Mystery* in 1987. *A Celibate Season* in 1991, the most memorable novel reveals consistent missed connections and failure of understanding. It perhaps best exemplifies the cool relationship between her portrayed characters. For the novel *Larry's Party* in 1997, she won the Orange prize and the Prix De Livre. For her last novel *Unless* in 2002, she won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize, Man Booker Prize and Scotiabank Giller Prize. In 2003, she also got the Orange prize for this famous novel. Her last novel *Unless* contains a passionate defense of female writers who write of domestic subjects and basic upliftment of down trodden society. Carol Ann Shields has a clever command of linguistic irony and verbal wit. *Unless* hits the humor shifts from her typically lighthearted banter to comedy of a decidedly black nature.

Carol Ann Shields works are experimental, disassembling of the genre of autobiography. Its focus is on average and usually forgotten middle-aged women. It brings forth the existential questions about the nature of identity, and the definition of the self, that lie at the heart of the work. Shields is highly acclaimed for her sensitive ear for the nuances of language and the way they attach feelings and probe the most delicate atmosphere of human consciousness.

Carol Ann Shields in her novel *Happenstance* splendidly narrates the Man and Woman relationship, and mostly a woman's role in marital relationship and family contriving her existence. Carol Ann Shields *Happenstance*, more rigidly, articulates a recurring feminist theme. This is the abnormal format of containing two books in one novel. Jack Bowman and Brenda Bowman both are main protagonists. Jack is as self-examining as Brenda and both are more practical. Carol Ann Shields excels her views on the differences between male and female conception. These two unique intimate novels tell the stories of Jack and Brenda Bowman during a rate time apart in their many years of marriage. In *The Husband's Story* originally published in 1980 as *Happenstance*, Jack is at home coping with domestic crises and two discourteous adolescents, while inactivated by self-doubt and questioning his worth as a historian.

In *The Wife's Story* which was originally published in 1982, as *A Fairly Conventional Woman*, Brenda Bowman, is a housewife who has recently achieved commercial success and cultural renown as a quilt maker. Brenda, travelling alone for the first time is a stranger in a city struggling with an apparel of emotions, and toying with the point of an affair. She is seen as insightful and never idealistic. As the novel

starts, she is seen leaving her Chicago home to attend a Quiltmaker's conference in Philadelphia. The conference leaves Brenda in an exasperating sensation. She finds herself thrilled to accommodate herself and share a room with the renowned quilter Verna Glanville. She however, finds Verna in the mist of a sexual encounter. Brenda becomes increasingly intimate. She realizes the different ways people plan in their marriages. All these are set against the backdrop of the meetings on crafts.

Over the course of a week, she attends workshops on various phases of quilt making, and makes friends. She becomes progressively intimate with a man she meets. On the first night at the conference, she met him in his room and leaves there her maroon new red raincoat, which she purchased at an excessive price, and finds it missing when she returns. She reflects much on her relationship with her husband Jack and with the two teenage children she has left at home.

Her long nightmare, the loss of love, had inexplicably dissolved. Love was restored, for whatever reason. Jack, perhaps, was persuaded that the grieving process had come to its natural end – and perhaps it had, for Brenda was never able to unwind completely the complicated strands of that winter's despair. Looking back, it seemed to her to be a time of illness; she had been assailed by a freak visitation, and preserved the knowledge that it could happen again.(243).

Meanwhile, Jack remains at home. His half of the story covers the same extent but imperatively none of the same events. Jack is a historian who has been working for years at the same book and is beginning to doubt himself and his subject matter. He reads in a journal that an ex-girlfriend, the girl he left for Brenda, has just published a book on ostensibly the same topic, about the trading practices of Native Americans. His best and perhaps only friend, Bernie Koltz, his best friend separates from his wife and comes to stay at Bowman house; the next-door neighbor attempts suicide. Jack is found as introspective as Brenda is practical. It establishes the differences between male and female thought. While considering the future of his career, Jack is affected by crises. All the while, Jack considers his own role in history and the way that the inscribed versions of events often leave out the most significant points.

Brenda grows at great speed. She gets a shock of reality, yet, retains her sweet sense of openness to the world. Shields chooses a language carefully to describe the characters. In remembering the one moment in their marriage when she felt a "lapse of love." Brenda reflects that, "she had been assailed by a freak visitation, and preserved the knowledge that it could happen again". Jack muse at one point that, just as a written record of events can never express history, "a marriage licence wasn't the history of a marriage." Shields demonstrates here, the marriage is the culmination of a million tiny moments. She strings them together with an intense cumulative power.

Happenstance is thus an intense image of a marriage and of those differences between the sexes that brings life, and a sense of isolation into the most loving relationships. Shields says, "Married! It was another state of being, a state that was

sealed like an envelope in its inviolability. The state of marriage was secret and safe, a circle of charmed light beyond the horizon of the easily capsized now.” (144)

Marriage between man and woman should be an act of love. Honesty, sincerity, kindness, and integrity are forms of love. Every human should be perfectly honest and sincere with the other. There is not a true marriage when the man approaches a woman for her money. Social status, or to lift his ego, because there is no integrity or honesty. The marriage is not of the heart. When a woman says, that she is tired working; and she wants to get married, for reasons of security; her assumption is false. It shows that she is not using the laws of mind correctly. Her safe zone depends upon her knowledge of the communication of the conscious and subconscious mind and its application.

A woman is not dependent on her husband for health, peace, joy, inspiration, guidance, love, wealth, security, happiness, or anything in the world. Her security and peace of mind come from her knowledge of the confidence within her, and her constant use of the laws of her own mind in an effective fashion. Marrying for money or to get even with someone is, of course, a farce and a masquerade. A man and a woman must be subjectively united in the sense that real love or sense of oneness prevails; in other words, two hearts are united in love, freedom, and respect.

The endings of these novels “converge” in the middle, just as Brenda and Jack “converge” at the Chicago airport. Brenda’s absence has made Jack’s heart grow fonder, and at the end of his story, he is reaching out, thankfully, to her. But at the end of her story, Brenda is thinking in the future tense, peacefully going over in her mind the formal routines which she knows will follow. Just before sleep comes, however, Brenda shifts into the present tense and “drifts away on her own.” She has retrieved her life, previously determined by Jack, by motherhood, by marriage.

Carol Ann Shields in her writing, has reviewed the pragmatic picture of modern middle – class woman, Brenda. Through her, she portrays on women’s issues and places a women’s point of view on the world. Shields’s fictional forte is the clarification of the psyche of women. Her feminism sometimes seems a little “uncertain” because it is not anti-male. However, Shields is resistant in her persuasion that exceptionally in Western societies, feminism cannot be ‘anti-male’ since both man and woman must communicate and work towards a better, more meaningful, cordial relationship. Carol Ann Shields matured social awareness has made her to write on the man – woman relationship which she led to her analysis of the institution of marriage in this age of transition. Shields points out the uneasiness of a woman in the habitual role which expects her to be an epitome of sacrifice of woman’s self-identity. She focuses the woman as a monument of devotion and patience.

There are differences as well as parallels between both the stories narrated. Jack’s procrastination as an artist, has an unfinished manuscript that lies languishing for years. In Brenda’s story too though Shields presents her as a doer, there is an

unfinished quilt, probably not to make Jack feel bad about his unfinished book. Jack is portrayed as lazy and so depended on other people. He leaves his kitchen a mess and not changing the ribbon on his own typewriter. Both Jack and Brenda are loyal, though they have the same romantic idea of their shared domestic situation, delighting in the simplicity along with the mark of adulthood. Brenda ends one phase of her life and begins another. Her kids no longer depend on her, though her husband does. She experiences grief over it, and the anger phase seems more prominent. All these differences might seem trivial, but are experiences that create a sense of importance in a couple's married life. In *Happenstance* Shields concludes, that a woman leaving her marital relationship in search of freedom, but the explication of the freedom is to be widened to embraced bonds of loyalty and love. Anthony S. Brennan says, Shields has no interest in grandiose, heroic gestures, rather she is concerned to demonstrate that adulthood requires flexibility, a certain stoical persistence, and a realization that wisdom is a cumulative process not a destination to be plunged towards at others' expense. (80)

This paper thus portrays the simple truth of family relationships and validates the title, "Carol Ann Shields *Happenstance* - An Epiphany into Nuptial Testimony."

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COLONIALITY AND CULTURAL TRAUMA IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S "THINGS FALL APART"

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Abstract

This paper examines the themes of coloniality and cultural trauma in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, examining how British colonialism upsets Igbo society and creates deep psychological and cultural repercussions. Through the figure of Okonkwo, Achebe depicts the individual and collective trauma that arises from colonial rule. The research utilizes postcolonial theory and trauma studies to analyze how colonial domination deconstructs native frameworks, destroys cultural identity, and inflicts epistemic violence. Achebe's novel is also a counter-narrative to Eurocentric representations of Africa, more specifically, a challenge to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe's description of trauma supports Frantz Fanon's theories of colonial psychology with the example of "Wretched of Earth". By placing in the forefront Igbo customs, language, and narrative, *Things Fall Apart* offers an important framework of understanding the long-term impact of colonial domination on colonized cultures. This essay contends that the novel not only records the ruinous power of coloniality but also emphasizes the strength of indigenous narratives in the face of historical erasure.

Keywords: Coloniality, Trauma, Igbo Society, Frantz Fanon

Colonialism has had a lasting effect on once-colonized societies, not just in terms of physical conquest but also cultural and psychological trauma. Coloniality, a concept derived by Anibal Quijano, describes the enduring structures of power, knowledge, and identity imposed under colonial rule, which continue to inform postcolonial realities. Cultural trauma, as described by theorists such as Jeffrey C. Alexander and Frantz Fanon, is the situation where a collective group feels identity fragmentation from forces outside the group.

The book *Things Fall Apart* is authored by the late Chinua Achebe who was a Nigerian writer. The novel is set in the periphery of Nigeria in a small imaginary village, Umuofia just prior to the arrival of white missionaries in their country. As a result of the sudden arrival of white missionaries in Umuofia, the villagers do not know how to respond to the sudden cultural transformation that the missionaries stand

to alter through their new political organization and institutions. This essay thus seeks to examine the impact of European colonization on Igbo culture.

Towards the close of the nineteenth century the majority of European nations moved to Africa and other regions of the globe where they founded colonies. Nigeria was among other African countries that hosted visitors who had come on a mission to colonize; spreading their religion and culture which is subsequently imposed on Igbo. The culture of the individuals of Umuofia (Igbo culture) is greatly threatened by this transformation. Achebe's main intention of composing the novel is due to the fact that he desires to enlighten his readers on the importance of his culture as an African. *Things Fall Apart* gives readers a glimpse of Igbo society just prior to the invasion of the white missionaries on their continent. The colonization invasion threatens to alter nearly every facet of Igbo society; from religion, gender relations and roles traditional to family structure and trade.

Therefore, Achebe accuses the white colonizing missionaries' rule and or invasion of causing the post-colonial oppressed Igbo culture, such oppression is perceivable in terms of the corresponding oppressed social coherence between individual and society. In addition, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* depicts pre-colonial Igbo society as multifaceted, ruled by ancestral customs, oral discourse, and communal rule. But the coming of British colonial officials and Christian missionaries brings with it a novel socio-political order that destabilizes indigenous authority.

Things Fall Apart (1958) is a literary examination of these issues, illustrating how British imperialism causes the breakdown of Igbo tradition, government, and identity. In the downfall of Okonkwo and his people, the novel documents the existential crisis of native societies under colonialism. This essay critically analyzes the ways in which Achebe depicts coloniality and cultural trauma, maintaining that *Things Fall Apart* is both a historical document and a postcolonial resistance text.

The book brings out prominent features of coloniality. The British imposition of Western religion and education makes Igbo knowledge systems irrelevant shows the epistemic violence and cultural erasure the establishment of Christianity brings about ideological disputes, which results in internal strife. The colonial state imposes a non-Igbo judicial system; overlooking Igbo customs, as evident in the arrest of village elders, reflect the legal and political domination. The transition to a colonial economy undervalues native labor and upsets social hierarchies. The disintegration of these systems marks the loss of indigenous identity, leading to a deep sense of cultural loss.

The novel also explores the psychological impact of colonial disruption, specifically through the character of Okonkwo. His refusal to adapt and eventual suicide represent the larger trauma of his community. Okonkwo as Cultural Trauma, his strict adherence to traditional masculinity and aversion to weakness exemplify

the fears of a society under forced change. His failure to adapt to colonial modernity is his undoing. Generational and Ideological Rifts exemplified by, Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, represents the younger generation which welcomes colonial influence, causing an irreparable gap within the family and society.

This inner turmoil is echoed in the greater battles of colonized people. Suicide as a Metaphor for Cultural Collapse, suicide, in Igbo culture, is an abomination. Okonkwo's action represents the absolute cost of cultural disconnection when the person's identity is made obsolete by the outside.

Achebe's description of trauma supports Frantz Fanon's theories of colonial psychology, which posit that colonial subjects are psychologically damaged as a result of systemic oppression and cultural dislocation. Fanon discusses how colonialism induces profound psychological trauma, especially in the idea of "the colonized mind." Colonized individuals suffer from an identity crisis due to having to reconcile their indigenous heritage with the colonizer's imposed identity. This results in internalized racism, inferiority complex, and loss of self-esteem. According to Fanon, this psychological trauma can only be cured by violent resistance and the re-appropriation of indigenous identity.

In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's masculinity and self-concept are closely rooted in the traditional values of his culture. The invasion of colonial forces and the disruption of these values propel him into an existential crisis. His individual tragedy is a reflection of the greater cultural trauma of the Igbo people, where their identity is broken by foreign imposition.

Much of the importance of *Things Fall Apart* lies in its status as a counter-narrative to colonial literature, especially Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Reclaiming African Agency, while Conrad describes Africa as a land of darkness and disorder, Achebe offers a sophisticated pre-colonial civilization with its own morality and system of government. Oral Tradition as Resistance: The employment of Igbo proverbs, myths, and linguistic forms in the novel resists Western literary dominance and asserts African cultural heritage.

Challenging the "Civilizing Mission" Narrative: Achebe uncovers the violence and hypocrisy of colonialism, refuting the notion that European intervention was a force for good. Through reimagining the African experience from an indigenous voice, Achebe subverts the colonial gaze and reinstates historical consciousness.

Things Fall Apart is still a foundational work in postcolonial studies, providing a complex analysis of coloniality and cultural trauma. Achebe not only chronicles the devastating effects of colonial occupation but also highlights the persistence of native identity. The novel's exploration of epistemic violence, psychic dissolution, and postcolonial resistance makes it a crucial text for grasping the enduring legacy of colonial domination. By recovering African history and narrative,

Achebe resists mainstream accounts and confirms the potential of literature as an agent for historical and cultural recovery.

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ANALYSING ALIENATION AND SURVIVAL IN THE WOMAN IN THE DUNES BY KOBO ABE

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Abstract

The theme of alienation and survival are primary in the work of *The Woman in the Dunes* by Kobo Abe. The novel delves into the intricate relationships between human isolation, self-discovery, and primal survival instincts. The unnamed protagonist, an entomologist by profession, finds himself stranded in a secluded village, where he is forced into a reluctant company by a woman who resides in a sand excavation pit. The desert setting of the novel, a wide and unforgiving one, represents both physical and psychological enclosure and strengthens the feeling of alienation. Alienation in the novel appears in various ways: the estrangement of the protagonist from society, the repressive relationship between the man and the woman, and the disorienting impact of their surroundings. The intellectual detachment of his environment, as his attempts at escape prove futile. The woman, by contrast, represents the survival urge. She represents a life that is spent within the parameters of an inescapable cycle of shoveling sand, resigned to a fate she has come to accept. Her existence, even though physically required, becomes emotionally and psychologically stultifying, underlining the idea of alienation as a survival mechanism for dealing with intolerable situations. Analyzing *The Woman in the Dunes*, this essay examines how the interaction of survival and alienation serves as a critique of human existence. It considers how the isolation of characters from society and their desperate struggle to sustain the appearance of life mirrors broader questions of philosophy concerning existence, human freedom, and the quest for meaning in a threatening world. Finally, the book offers a rich reflection upon the way that alienation at once strips bare and reinforces the impulse to live.

Keywords: Isolation, Self-discovery, Environment, Psychological, Alienation, Survival, Human Freedom, Quest

The Woman in the Dunes remains a classic novel of Japanese literature almost half a century after it was published. As Myrna Oliver, writing for the Los Angeles Times put it, this first novel of Abe's "was considered a contender for the Nobel Prize for literature, but was not nominated, partly because the very private Abe

studiously avoided the literary spotlight.” Oliver continues her article by quoting Hisaaki Yamanouchi, who states one reason for Abe’s popularity with Western readers: “He is probably the first Japanese writer whose works, having no distinctly Japanese qualities, are of interest to the Western audience because of their universal relevance.” *The Woman in the Dunes* has been a popular favorite all over the world, sometimes bringing readers to their first experience of Japanese literature in translation. Abe’s works, in general, are more easily translated because of their lack of allusions to traditional Japanese themes. *The Woman in the Dunes* focuses instead on problems that people all over the globe must face. Oliver continues her article on Abe by describing the protagonist, Niki as a man who “is first obsessed with the loss of his identity and with escape, but comes to realize that his sand prison gives him intellectual and spiritual freed When *The Woman in the Dunes* was made into a movie, Brent of the Santa Fe New Mexican offered these comments. He wrote that it “is a haunting allegory probing the fundamental questions of existence and the meaning of freedom.” He continued by stating: “It’s in the man’s surrender to his circumstances that captured the imagination of the existential thinkers of the 60s.” Existentialists believe that life is purposeless, a point that is at the heart of the novel.

Kobo Abe’s *The Woman in the Dunes* (1962) is a surreal, existential novel that explores themes of alienation, survival, and the human condition. Set in an isolated sand dune village, the protagonist, Niki, a schoolteacher and amateur entomologist, finds himself trapped in a bizarre situation. After being taken by the villagers to a woman’s house at the bottom of a sandpit, he becomes a prisoner, forced to help her shovel sand to prevent the dunes from burying the house. The novel uses this peculiar setting to delve deeply into the nature of isolation, identity, and the human struggle for survival in an indifferent world. Through Niki’s experiences, Abe paints a picture of alienation, both physical and psychological, and the complex nature of survival when one’s humanity is at stake.

From the moment Niki arrives in the village, he begins to experience a profound sense of alienation. His arrival in the sandpit, a remote and claustrophobic location, symbolizes his disconnection from the world he once knew. Niki is an outsider, not only to the village but also to the very concept of the life he is being forced to live. His dislocation is palpable, as he is drawn into a situation where he is expected to help the woman, without ever fully understanding why he is there or how he might escape. The physical alienation is mirrored by Niki’s psychological estrangement. Niki’s original life, as an entomologist and a man who sought intellectual pursuits, seems distant from the repetitive, monotonous work that now defines his existence. He is forced to shovel sand day after day, a task that erodes his sense of self and his connection to his past life. His initial reluctance and confusion about his situation gradually shift into a deeper, more troubling form of alienation, where his identity begins to blur with that of the woman, a figure of both oppression

and survival. The constant exposure to the sand and the endless cycle of labor strip away his individuality, and Niki becomes increasingly consumed by the task at hand. This symbolizes the erosion of the human spirit in the face of absurd and repetitive labor that offers no hope of liberation or resolution.

Niki's alienation is also a reflection of his disconnection from societal norms and values. While he initially seeks an escape from the village, his isolation leads him to question his original purpose in life. The entomologist's objective quest for knowledge is meaningless in a world where survival has become the sole concern. This raises the question of whether the pursuit of knowledge or intellectual understanding can ever provide real meaning in a world that seems indifferent to human existence. The village and its inhabitants, who have adapted to their desolate environment, present a form of survival that requires renouncing individuality and submission to the repetitive demands of the sand. Niki's intellectualism, which once separated him from others, becomes increasingly irrelevant in the face of a world that is indifferent to such distinctions.

Survival in *The Woman in the Dunes* is not just a physical struggle but also a psychological one. Niki's struggle for escape from the sandpit becomes symbolic of a deeper, more existential fight for meaning and identity. The sand, which initially represents an oppressive force, gradually becomes a symbol of the inexorable passage of time and the way in which human beings are subsumed by the forces of nature and society. As Niki shovels sand day after day, his identity becomes more and more entwined with the act of survival itself. The sand, much like the weight of existence, is something that cannot be escaped, only endured. The woman in the sandpit, whose life revolves around the same struggle, serves as a reminder of the repetitive nature of human existence and the resilience required to survive it.

In this way, the novel explores the idea of survival as a form of surrender. Niki and the woman are not simply fighting to stay alive—they are adapting to a life that is governed by a set of oppressive forces that they cannot control. Survival becomes a matter of accepting the conditions of their existence and finding ways to endure them, even if it means surrendering one's sense of self. This theme of surrender is further explored through the relationship between Niki and the woman. While the woman initially appears to be a mere victim of circumstance, she reveals a complex, resilient spirit that has learned to survive through submission. She teaches Niki to accept the futility of resistance, and in doing so, she shows him that survival, in its most raw form, requires a renunciation of autonomy.

Abe uses this dynamic to illustrate the tension between individual agency and the broader forces of nature and society. Niki's intellectual resistance to his predicament is undermined by the fact that survival, in the context of the sandpit, requires a form of submission to the forces that dictate life. As Niki becomes more integrated into the woman's routine, he begins to understand that survival is not

simply about fighting against external forces but also about adapting to them. The sand, which represents the weight of existence, cannot be fought; it must be shoveled and dealt with, no matter how pointless the task may seem.

The novel's depiction of alienation and survival reflects broader existential concerns that are central to the human condition, particularly in the context of modernity. Abe suggests that modern life often alienates individuals from meaningful connections with others and from a sense of purpose in their work. In the sandpit, Niki is stripped of everything that once defined him, and he is forced to confront the possibility that existence itself may be a struggle without ultimate meaning or resolution. The villagers, who seem resigned to their fate, represent a form of survival that accepts the absurdity of their existence and continues to endure, day after day. This resignation, while seemingly bleak, also carries a form of wisdom: survival, in its most basic form, is not about escaping suffering, but about learning to live with it.

In the broader context of the novel, Abe seems to argue that alienation and survival are inherent to the human experience, particularly in a world that offers no clear answers or solutions to the problems that individuals face. Niki's transformation throughout the novel from a man seeking to escape the sandpit to one who gradually accepts his fate mirrors the process by which individuals must confront their own alienation and the often insurmountable demands of survival. The novel's bleak atmosphere suggests that while survival may be possible, it comes at the cost of one's former identity and aspirations. In this sense, *The Woman in the Dunes* offers a meditation on the costs of survival in a world where meaning is not easily found.

The Woman in the Dunes presents a powerful exploration of alienation and survival in the modern world. Through Niki's journey, Kobo Abe reflects on the ways in which individuals are alienated from themselves, from others, and from any meaningful sense of purpose in an indifferent world. The novel suggests that survival is not just about resisting external forces but about adapting to them, and in doing so, losing something essential of one's self. The repetitive and oppressive nature of the sandpit serves as a metaphor for the existential struggle that defines human existence, forcing readers to confront the fundamental questions of identity, purpose, and the meaning of life. Ultimately, Abe leaves us with a sobering view of survival, one that requires acceptance of alienation and the relentless passage of time.

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Culture, Language and Literature: Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence through International Literature

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Abstract

The connection between culture, language and literature cannot be overstressed. Culture manifest itself everywhere-language, literature, performing arts, verbal and non-verbal conduct of individuals, etc. We don't merely depict but embody our respective cultures. Cultures can vary in term of codes, conducts, cuisines and culinary delights, coxing, customs, conventions, contraception, costumes or clothing, courtesies, conversation or communication, clock-time, concepts, conveniences, calendars, currencies, contracts, contacts, queues and quietness, courting, questions, crossing, consumerism, collaboration and competition, collectivism and crafts. The current paper throws the spotlight mainly on 'codes' (literature and language), and cursorily, and incidentally only on 'conversations' or 'communication' (norms of polite conversation, observance and flouting of the cooperative principle, and speech acts) and 'curiosities' or 'questions' (norms of acceptable and appropriate questions). Lastly, the paper makes a point that diversity of cultures and diversity of norms of verbal and non-verbal behavior require intercultural communication training and that literature can serve as a source rich enough to foster the competence to communicate appropriately in foreign culture.

Keywords: types of culture, varieties of English, politeness, principle of power, principle of solidarity, intelligibility, comprehensibility, acceptability, appropriateness, intercultural communicative competence.

Culture is like gravity. We do not experience it unless we jump two metres into the air. It jolts us out of our complacency when we are uprooted from our own milieu and planted into another, either temporarily or permanently. It is so glutinous that it sticks to us from womb to tomb. Although, we can integrate ourselves into our adopted culture to some extent, our own culture stays with us perennially, follows us like our own shadow, wherever we go. Consequently, each one of us is an ambassador of our own culture. Our cultural identity peeps through our personal as well as interpersonal behavior, both verbal and non-verbal.

As Patil (2002) says, culture, like a banana flower or onion, exists in layers. We can only understand it if we peel it layer by layer, cover by cover. However, it is easier said than done. The outer layer is easy to perceive as it comprises concrete and tangible manifestations like art, monuments, food, language, etc. The middle layer consists of norms and values, and hence it takes us some time to unfold it. The inner layer is rather difficult to penetrate because it subsumes assumptions about birth, life, death, happiness, unhappiness, and so on.

Culture is a very complex phenomenon. It takes even the most thoughtful, honest and introspective person many years to understand even a small part of their own culture. How, then, can we be sure about what constitutes another culture? Time and again, we come across people who talk as if we could measure the contents and list the characteristics of another culture as easily, accurately and fully as the contents of a suitcase. This is not to say that we ought not to try to understand more about other people's cultures, but only that we must be very modest and tentative about what we think we have found out. There is an old story about two men on a train. One of them saw some naked looking sheep in a field and said, "Those sheep have just been sheared." The other looked a moment longer and then said, "They seem to be – on this side." It is in this cautious spirit that we should say whatever we have to say about the workings of a culture.

The relationship between culture and language has two main aspects to it. First, it is similar to that between generality and specificity or that between a super-ordinate lexical item and a hyponym: language is one aspect of culture. Secondly, language and culture are as inseparable as dance and dancer. It is this inseparability which offers English language teachers opportunities to familiarize their learners with various cultures, and lexical, idiomatic, grammatical and pragmatic properties of different varieties of the English language. At the same time, the synchronous existence of culture and language poses pedagogical challenges for teachers of English as a second/foreign language. The thrust of this paper is to highlight these challenges, which are compounded when a teacher undertakes the job of teaching English to learners coming from widely heterogeneous cultural backgrounds: universalist and particularist, collectivist and individualist, other-centred and self-centred, competitive and cooperative, assertive and reticent, prolix and precise cultures.

The most widely accepted views on the relationship of language and culture are probably those of Malinowski (1964) whose focus on the study of culture as a system led him to the conclusion that linguistic behaviour could best be delineated and interpreted in its appropriate socio-cultural contexts. Thus the basic tenet of Malinowski's functional theory that all aspects of culture are interconnected is perhaps the most widely prevalent idea in cultural linguistics. Language, then, is a part, product and vehicle of culture. Therefore, it is essential to take into account the

relevant socio-cultural contexts of their communication (Behura, 1986). Implementation and violation of communicative rules and the positive and negative sanctions of language should obviously be considered in specific cultural contexts (Albert, 1972) because language is nothing but a set of social conventions (Lander, 1966). As Grimshaw's (1971) diagrammatic representation of the relationship between language and reality shows, reality creates language and language creates reality; reality creates culture and culture creates reality; and language creates culture and culture creates language. Language, therefore, must be investigated within the social context of the community that uses it.

Achebe is a novelist and here he is commenting on creative writing; but what he says has clearly wider relevance and applies to other varieties of English. The point is that all users of language are creative in the sense that they draw on linguistic resources to express different perceptions of reality. English is required to carry the weight of all kinds of experiences, many of which are quite remote from the experiences of the users of the native variety. The new English which Achebe refers to is locally developed.

Ojaide (1987, pp. 165-167), as cited in Patil and Patil (2013) expresses a similar view: "The English I write is neither mainstream British nor American, and I cherish this uniqueness. In addition, I express African sensibility in my writing. This sensibility is different from the Western and the Asian, a little closer to the Asian. Western universals crumble in the African worldview... Knowing my audience and deliberately not aiming at British or American cultural tradition, I emphasize content and meaning in my poetry. I write not to develop the English language, but to articulate ideas as clearly as possible. I do not follow English metric patterns; that is not relevant to my message. For me English is the supra-language on top of my own English Scholarship Beyond Borders: Volume 1, Issue 1. 151 personal language... My writing, though in English, has its roots in Africa, not in England or North America..."

The correlation between the structure of language and the structure of culture are probably best illustrated by the use of pronouns. The relationship between the social and cultural factors and pronominal usage is by no means arbitrary. These factors find an explicit manifestation in oral communication because the social, cultural and economic structures of a society underlie, determine and are realized in pronominal usage. Further, social stratification is reflected in speech communication; pronominal variants used by the so-called "inferiors" in speaking to the supposedly "superiors" are markedly different from those used by friends for friends within the same social stratum. Studies of pronominal usage (Palakornakul, 1975) have provided ample evidence for this interconnection.

Indians seem to give very important role to positive politeness strategies, i.e. politeness constructions intended to increase companionship with the listener. The

function of this strategy is to present information in such a way that although it lies strictly in the speaker's territory of information, it appears to belong to the hearer's territory of information. This strategy tends to make the boundary between speaker and hearer less distinct. Overall, we can derive the following predominant principles of politeness observed in Indian English conversational exchanges: familiarity (treating others like members of the family), sincerity, reciprocity (repaying politeness on the part of others), and indirectness. However, this statement by no means implies that other cultures do not resort to these politeness strategies.

Differences between British and Indian English in the area of speech acts can be linked with different cultural norms and assumptions. A significant difference between British English and Indian English is observed in the domain of complimenting. Unlike British and American compliments, Indian compliments are two dimensional. The person who offers a compliment maximizes praise of the hearer and simultaneously maximizes dispraise of himself/herself. Here is an example from Singh (1959, p.27): "Sardar sahib, you are a big man and we are but small radishes from an unknown garden." This compliment is both an overstatement and an understatement. One remarkable feature of the compliment is the use of the honorific 'sahib'. It is important to note that Indian culture shares with some other cultures this ceremonial show of respect for almost every individual irrespective of their status. The courtesy aspect of Indian culture is manifested particularly in the forms of address. The above compliment is a literal translation of its equivalent in Hindi. A British compliment would not be appropriate in this context. Had the author adopted British norms of complimenting, the compliment would have lost its illocutionary force. Therefore, he replaces the norms of the native variety of English by norms of the non-native variety of English. He warrants the perlocutionary force of the speech act in a way analogous to that in which the Indian speaker would have fulfilled the conditions for his speech act to be successfully appropriate and effective (cf. Broeck, 1986).

In the Indian socio-cultural context involving a host-guest situation, the host is expected to repeatedly coax and the guest is supposed to show considerable coyness. The native English forms such as "Won't you have a second helping?" or "Sure you don't care for more?" will be ineffective or even considered discourteous. The way one treats one's guests is communicative of symbolic messages. It gives off signals of the clearest type as to what kind of person one is. Though to an Englishman, the Indian way of coaxing might sound like some sort of imposition, the overriding rule of Indian table manners is deference. It is rather poor manners not to coax. The example shows that the hosts are required to make a certain amount of fuss and the guests are expected to show a certain amount of reluctance.

Now the issue here is that the phrasing of offers in native British English implies that the speaker is trying not to impose his/her will on the hearer, but that he

is merely trying to find out what the hearer wants and thinks. In Indian English, as in Indian languages, literal translations of this would sound, as has already been pointed out, inappropriate. To ask the guest if s/he wants another helping is to break the tacit rule of Indian hospitality according to which the host does not try to establish the guest's wishes as far as eating and drinking are concerned. On the contrary, the host tries to get the guest to eat and drink as much as possible and even more. A hospitable Indian host, like the hosts in the illustration cited above, will not take a negative response for an answer. That is why Bhagawat Singhji's wife and her relatives in the above example assume that the guests can have some more, and that it would be good for them to have more food, and therefore the guests' resistance or refusal, which is construed to be due to politeness, should be disregarded.

Literature is a slice of life; it holds a mirror to life. Literature, they say, is a seismograph of the society it portrays. George Bernard Shaw was perhaps one of the best advocates of the 'literature for life' camp. His plays were professedly propaganda plays, which aimed at exposing and correcting social follies and foibles. Charles Dickens' novels depicted the contemporary social realities. Thomas Hardy's novels are yet another example. His fiction reflects the conditions prevalent during its production. These conditions include climatic conditions as well. In fact, weather is an important character in Hardy's novels. As we know, sunny weather being a rare condition in Britain, it is a dominant topic of British conversations. Therefore, there are many words to refer to sunlight – shine, gleam, glisten, glitter, glimmer, shimmer, etc. Summer in India gives you a scorching experience whereas summer in Britain offers you a pleasant experience. That is why in one of his sonnets Shakespeare says to his 'dark lady': "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" In the context of British weather, this line will be interpreted as a positive rhetorical question, as a compliment; but in the context of Indian weather, it will be construed as a question carrying negative connotations. Thus literature is loaded with cultural connotations and assumptions.

An important feature of the speech act of coaxing is its cultural relativity. Languages and dialects of the same language differ in their interaction-structuring strategies. It is these socio-cultural differences of organizing process that cause problems of comprehensibility in international communication (cf. Loveday, 1983). As Tannen (1984) remarks, all aspects of the content and form or matter and manner of human communication are culture-specific. Cultural relativity is an intrinsic feature of communication. People learn to communicate meanings in their specific social networks, which by their very nature cannot be global but only local. One wonders with Wierzbicka (1985) that in spite of this obviously 'local' nature of communication it is wrongly claimed that there exist identical strategies across languages and cultures.

The tendency to draw conclusions and make generalizations on the basis of observations of a particular language is a consequence of an ethnocentric bias which ignores the anthropological and linguistic reality that norms differ from culture to culture, language to language and even from dialect to dialect. Wolfson (1986) observes that comments which are accepted as compliments by Americans are often interpreted as insults by some other societies. Speech acts differ from culture to culture in a variety of ways: in their content, in their linguistic realization, their distribution, their frequency, and their functions. For instance, compliments in Indian languages including Indian English display a dual feature of addresser-lowering and addressee-raising; compliments in American English do not show this feature.

Let me reiterate the propositions that the present paper states. First, the relationship between culture and language is like that between the reverse sides of a coin. Secondly, the relationship between culture and literature is similar to that of a dance and a dancer: they are inseparable. Thirdly, as Larsen-Freeman (2012a, p. 23) remarks, "When we focus on language in use rather than language as an abstract formal system, we see it rooted in the context and culture of the local speech community to which the participants belong. Given the increasing social and economic mobility of many people these days, English has become an international lingua franca that is not really owned by any one group of speakers." Larsen-Freeman (2012a, pp.23-24) continues, "...gone is the notion of a homogenized language competence and a mono-cultural identity. In its place is the recognition that one speaker's resources overlap with others, but they are also distinctive. In other words, within unity there is diversity." Fourthly, as Larsen-Freeman (2012b, p.32) suggests, "...developing in one's students an understanding of the attitudes, values, beliefs – the world-view...of a particular target culture is ...important...all too often the other aspects of culture are ignored. They are sometimes addressed through studying literature of the target culture."

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PATRICK BATEMAN IS A MANIFESTATION OF URBAN VOICE IN AMERICAN PSYCHO

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Abstract

Psychology is a vital discipline to analyse the human behaviour, thoughts, emotions and mental health. The status quo of the materialistic world, delves people into an obsession with luxurious lifestyle, commodify emotions and accentuate appearance. The decline in understanding individuals develops a navigation towards emotionless complex relationships and end with anxiety, depression and trauma. The present paper focus on the disillusionments of elite in Patrick Bateman, who is a replica of urban voice stemmed from psychological tensions, violence and criminal acts. He is the prototype of the world, devoid of empathy marking the cessation of civilization. The novel American Psycho centers on Patrick Bateman, the Investment Banker of New York City, perpetrates gory acts of violence by night. The novel trademarks a psychopath epitomizing urban life as a fertile breeding ground for criminals. Childhood trauma underpins a profound impact on such disillusioned crazy individuals. Fuelled by the hunger for blue blooded lifestyle, Bateman evolves domineering, jealous and a tyrannical narcissist. His characterization executes a savage society forging a fearful apocalyptic posterity. The prime purpose of the paper is to perceive the struggles of people with American Dream with unethical means.

Keywords: Trauma, Perpetrators, Materialism, Crime, Jealousy and Savage society.

The major threat in the contemporary society is the augmented crime along the developments of scientific technologies. Crime rate increases every year. It has become unpredictable suspense integrated with horrendous murders. The abundance of social crimes and exploitation of the vulnerable are the sequel of the avaricious urban world. The decline of affinity with nature turned human beings to embrace

violence and transgressions. Individuals exhibit traits like insatiable desire for possessions, focus on luxury goods, prioritise status, and insane for brands to distinguish themselves in a developed society. Patrick Bateman in *American psycho* is the epitome of felony, brutal violence, and horrific murders. His concealed self is a battleground of the bizarre events in the novel. The urban culture that the antagonist developed in the novel symbolise a threatening atmosphere. The present paper focus on the disturbing incitement of Patric Bateman's violence and the impact of superficial urbanization.

Urban apocalypse:

Unveiling the future of destruction is the objective of this paper. The role of apocalypse is evident from ancient myths where God punishes humans through prophecies. The novel *American psycho* is a prophetic revelation of the cursed progeny. In the current days the darker aspects of human lives are apparent in various disciplines. Urban environment plays a substantial role in shaping the protagonist indulge in nefarious activities. Patrick Bateman of *American psycho* is an exemplar of the urban elite gleaming materialism, violence, iniquity and misogyny. Beneath the facade of a charming and sophisticated member of the American society lies the hidden malevolent, perfidious and brutal personality. His narration is weaved with sadism that entails disturbing and barbaric sexual assaults. His addiction to compulsive purchase is an indication that he is psychopath. The uncontrollable urges in him to buy luxurious brands explores the dark narcissistic personality of Bateman who is engulfed by the century of Consumerism.

Disillusionments of elite:

Patrick Bateman earns his self identity as a wealthy Investment Banker, presenting himself a normal member of the society hiding his mask of insanity. Beginning from the disillusionment with the American Dream, the novel examines the idea connected to wealth, status, and material possessions. As Patrick Bateman's character is focused solely on material gain he represents the dark side of this dream, revealing the emptiness and superficiality of a life. Disillusionment with 1980s culture, Bret Easton ellis satirizes the excessiveness of 1980s yuppie culture, revealing the shallow values and morals of the wealthy elite. Bateman's character embodies the worst aspects of this culture, including his obsession with status, wealth, and material possessions. Bateman is also disillusioned with the Social Hierarchies. The delusions of grandeur urban life of 1980s America, reveal that the wealth, status, and power of an individual are used to manipulate and control others. Bateman's is a product of using his wealth and status to exploit and decoy those around him. The absence of spirituality and morality are the components of a well constructed and enforced urban life. Bateman's himself is a man of moral vacuum, revealing distorted to justify even the most heinous acts. He uses his affluence to create a false sense of self hide his criminal psychopathy. He is a psychopath who

commits serious crimes with the assistance of groundless circumstances. Patrick Bateman cannot be spotted any abnormality in his behavior and is a more hazardous material created by urban tradition.

Literature review:

In the contemporary era of modernity, human beings are excessively self concerned producing a cocky lineage. Individuals are disconnected with the society and exhibit callous attitudes. They are obsessed with lavish modus vivendi that they rely on luxury brands where Courtney says,

"I also survived a business school in Switzerland. But I was in Geneva. Evelyn was in Lausanne" (13) and Bateman comments,

"My secretary, Jean, who is in love with me and who I will probably end up marrying, sits at her desk and this morning, to get my attention as usual, is wearing something improbably expensive and completely inappropriate"(61)

The novel's portrayal of toxic masculinity and misogyny has been widely criticized. Bateman's violence and aggression towards women have been seen as a manifestation of a broader cultural problem (Faludi, 1991; hooks, 1994). Bateman turns lunatic, aggravated by narcissistic disorder. The peak of his uncontrollable rage is prevalent in the chapters that follows. The bold and obdurate exhibition of yuppie culture of the late twentieth century in him was praised by some critics and others sentenced it to be a menacing and a threatening novel of crime. (Palgrave, 2000). Apocalypse is a metaphor for the psychological disintegration of the protagonist, Patrick Bateman. Bateman's descent into madness and violence serves as a symbol for the collapse of his own identity and the disintegration of his social world (Krystal, 1988; Simeon, 2006). The depiction of a society of violence, greed, crime, superficiality, Consumerism, materialism, victimization, sexual assault, torment, with Nil empathy and nil emotions. The central figure is a pure psychopath who enrages women with sadistic sex. The illustration of world in chaos, skeptic culture, racial paranoia and cruel anxiety are the representations of the time (Baudrillard, 1991). The metropolitan tradition with a superficial hero who is emotionless is disillusioned by the vanity of its lifestyle. His inner vacuum and purposelessness of mortal existence bestowed him, defeat. the novel's apocalypse as a postmodern trope, reflecting the collapse of grand narratives and the fragmentation of social and cultural identities. The novel's depiction of a world in disarray, marked by chaos, violence, and uncertainty, serves as a commentary on the postmodern condition (Debord, 1967; Harvey, 1990).

Methodology:

The beginning of the novel, with the chapter "April Fools" records the assortments of mundane daily activities of Patrick Bateman with his brutal homicides. His darker impulses and traits of malfeasance begin to surface more explicitly. By explaining the series of events his narration becomes unreliable and

fragmented with intolerable surrealism. Patrick, a man of just 26 years, is an investment banker who works at Pierce & Pierce. Timothy Price, his colleague at Pierce & Pierce, is a rival in the burgeoning materialistic consumerism. A group of harmful, corruptive, and brutal young aspirants of the capitalist society tie up together to form a vicious cultureless- future. They haunt the society vehemently through their shallow understanding of life. Timothy Price boasts,

"I'm resourceful... I'm creative, I'm young, unscrupulous, highly motivated, highly skilled. In essence what I'm saying is that society cannot afford to lose me. I'm an asset"(3)

Evelyn Williams the beautiful and wealthy girlfriend of Bateman, is also exposed to be a product of materialism. She is a hallmark of a materialistic adolescent girl who ruminates more about her social status. Paul Allen and Courtney Lawrence are also introduced as compromising urbane products in Patrick's social circle. In his monologue, his true thoughts and feelings about the people around him gets unveiled which are often cruel and dismissive. The chapter is ironic, as it is a prank on Evelyn, labelling her a cheat which in turn causes her upset and exasperated. Because the objectification of women with Bateman's violent projections are the central theme of the novel. He represses his true feelings and desires, behind a mask of charm and sophistication. This repression leads to a buildup of unconscious tension, released through his violent fantasies and behaviours. His ego is his rational, logical self, which attempts to mediate between his id and superego. However, his ego is weak and ineffective, allowing his id to dominate his behavior. The impression of superficial charm is often produced by a mixture of good looks, youth, and a cheerful disposition." (Freud, 1915, p. 137).

Patrick delineates his everyday morning routine, in the "Morning" chapter that clears the way of his entire narcissism. It includes a series of meticulous and precise actions that still his avariciousness. Beginning from the six foot by four foot portrait of a naked woman- David Onica, washing his face, brushing his teeth with Rembrandt onto a four-tortoiseshell toothbrush, facial massage off with a spearmint face scrub made from Australian gold-black brass, and on weekends or before date he prefers Gerund Natural Revitalizing Shampoo are the highlights of his affliction to the consumerist Culture. His pretentious values postrate when he admits, he's not really in love with Evelyn, but rather uses her as a status symbol. He is an appearance freak who narrates,

"After I change into Ralph Lauren monogrammed boxershorts and a Fair Isle sweater and slide into silk polka-dot Enrico Hidolin slippers I tie a plastic ice pack around my neck.... Then I squeeze Rembrandt onto a tortoise shell toothbrush... Then I use the Probright tooth polisher and next the Interplay tooth polisher... Over the weekend I plan to go to Bloomingdale's or Bergdorf's and on Evelyn's advice pick up a Foltene

European supplement and shampoo for thinning hair... Luis Carruthers recommended the Aramis Nutriplexx system a nutrient complex that helps increase circulation."(26)

Patrick walking through a tunnel in New York City, senses disorientation and claustrophobic, who turns increasingly agitated and undergo a surreal vision. It blurs his reality with fantasy reflecting the instability of the mental condition. Patrick meets with his colleagues, Timothy Price, Paul Allen, and Luis Carruthers, to discuss business deals after the hallucinations created by the murder of a woman. His growing instabilities, need for control and sadistic impulses escalated his psychopathy to commit a brutal murder. He enjoys the aesthetics of rampage rather than moral implications. His Id superpowers his ego and super ego. In the lens of Sigmund Freud, "The 'charming' individual is one who knows how to exploit his charm, that is, his capacity for arousing libidinal impulses in others." (Freud, 1921, p. 105)

Dorsia is the restaurant of haute cuisine, with expensive and exotic ingredients that includes Bateman's expectations of elaborate and sophisticated dishes like "pan-seared foie gras" and "wild mushroom risotto". The atmosphere too serves elegant and refined, with a sophisticated decor and is portrayed as a place where the wealthy and powerful ones visit. According to the theory of Postmodernism, "The world of commodities is a world of simulations, where the image, the sign, the symbol have replaced the real" (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 119). Patricia is represented a complicit in Patrick's objectification and degradation. She wishes to tolerate his abusive behavior and shallow conversation which serves intolerance that enable and perpetuate misogyny. His routine is a scathing critique of toxic masculinity, superficiality, and the objectification of women. He is infused with music and lacks humanity which is explicitly described in chapter Genesis through the rock band specifically, their 1980 album "Duke". The album "Duke" by Genesis includes the songs like, "Behind the Lines", "Invisible touch", "No reply at all", "Man on the corner", "Misunderstanding", "Take it all away", "Turn It On Again", "Alone Tonight", "illegal alien", "invisible touch"and "the last domino"(131) are of Patrick Bateman's musical tastes. It shows his appearance as a connoisseur of 1980s pop music as he name-drops various artists and bands. However, his interest in music is largely superficial that turns to be an useless grandiosity, with lack of empathy, and his need for admiration may be indicative of narcissistic personality disorder. "Narcissistic personality disorder is characterized by a grandiose sense of self-importance, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy" (Kohut, 1971, p. 151). The Patty Winters Show is a fictional television talk show which disturbed Bateman's mind as the topic of the day was Toddler-Murderers. He is stricken by emotionless consumerism as he shifts his mood from sympathy to celebrations. The sudden shifts in mood and behavior, as well as his tendency to prioritize his own desires and needs is seen in the next chapters where he narrates,

"Would Courtney like me less if Luis was dead? ... Would Courtney spend more time with me - the time she now spends with Luis-if he was out of the picture, no longer an alternative, if he was perhaps... dead? If Luis were killed would Courtney be upset? Could I genuinely be of comfort without laughing in her face, my own spite doubling back on me, giving everything away? Is the face that she dates me behind his back what excites her, my body or the size of my dick?... Would I ruin things by strangling Luis?"(151)

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, defense mechanisms are unconscious psychological processes that protect the individual from anxiety, stress, and other forms of psychological distress. In him are found, rationalization, denial, projection, displacement, sublimation, and repression. As Anna Freud, the prominent psychoanalyst and daughter of Sigmund Freud, writes, "Rationalization is a defence mechanism which consists in creating a logical explanation for unacceptable behavior" (A. Freud, 1936, p. 186). Patrick Bateman, exemplifies the use of defense mechanisms to cope with the demands of his societal expectations and his own dark impulses.

Patrick becomes increasingly envious and agitated by the relationship between Luis, his rival businessman with Courtney, his recent girlfriend. Patrick feels threatened by the charm of Luis and develops an unnerving possessiveness concerning the superficiality rather than genuine relationships. His vision blurs slightly around the edges to circle Luis' neck where his thumb meets at nape and index finger at Luis' Adam's apple. Patrick delineates his interest to strangle Luis as he is consumed by envy towards his intimacy to her. Patrick's uncontrollable narration is so exaggerated and unbelievable,

"I want him to know who it is who is killing him. I want to be the last face, the last thing, that Luis sees before he dies and I want to cry out, 'I am fucking Courtney. Do you hear me? I'm fucking Courtney. Ha-ha-ha'"(152). Freud's psychological analogy can be related to the interest of Patrick to strangle Luis. Freud's idea is that a charm of a child lies to a great extent in his narcissism, and his self-contentment. The primary narcissistic personality disorder that Freud puts, "The individual's first love-object is himself." (Freud, 1914, p. 77) matches Patrick's narcissistic behaviour. In contrast to the scene of egoism, a queer theory touches the narration. Psychological instability manifests in Patrick as mood swings, impulsivity, and distorted thinking. His fragmented self disconnected him from the socio-cultural constructions. He encounters a sexual and erotic talk with Luis who sighs, rubs Patrick's shoulders and trembling in want of him. That was the first time when Patrick noted him wearing unzipped pants without difficulty. The shift of queer relationship to a violent and sadistic impulse with no remorse. The capacity for cruelty and his gradual descent into madness is oblivious, where in one swift mood he picked up the dog by the neck

preventing it's throat to bark as it wa tight grip of the throat. Patrick let his hand run seductive across the dog's back infront of its owner and made an embarrassment. In contrast to it, he commits an emotionless murder of that dog. It shows his profound lack of empathy and how he has grown desensitised to aggressive violence viewing it as a mundane and enjoying the same experience. The immediate change of mood that night shifts to an infuriating dinner with Christie, how Patrick calls her but is not her real name. He describes women as commodities, reducing them to mere objects for his sexual gratifications. He relies on cliched erotic expressions of women's physique. She stared up at him with a seventeen years old' gaze. He expressed his interest to watch her private parts and touch in an unimaginable way. He encounters two women sexually, Christie and Sabrina at a time. He also compares Sabrina with Christie and end with worth paying her by the hour. He also made both the women engage in a lesbian relationship. His brutal and savage sexism can be found when he narrates, " then I lay Christie over her, placing the two in a sixty-nine position... still aching from the force of my ejaculation, and I close my eyes, my knees week and shaking... I hold these items out and explain in a hoarse whisper, we are not thorough yet". (168,169).

An hour later he led them impatiently out to the door where both were bleeding but were well paid. He also adds Sabrina will encounter a limp and Christie scratches across her buttocks. Patrick's lack of remorse or guilt after engaging in sexual activities with the two women is consistent with the psychopathic trait of lack of remorse (Cleckley, 1941, p. 38-40). Patrick disregards women's autonomy, boundaries, and consent, demonstrating his sexual pleasure, rather than recognizing them as human beings with agency and dignity. In this context, a defense mechanism employed by Patrick's ego is repression. He represses his true feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and rage, instead presenting a facade of confidence, charm, and sophistication. As Anna Freud notes, "The repressed is... pushed back into the unconscious, and its existence is only betrayed by the symptoms which are produced by the conflict" (A. Freud, 1936, p. 147). Patrick's repressed emotions manifest in his violent outbursts followed by disparate fantasies. On another level, Patrick's murders can be seen as a way to cope with the emptiness and superficiality of his life. Regardless of his successful outlook, he feels unfulfilled and disconnected from the world around him. In this way, his murders serve to temporarily fill this void and provide a sense of thrill and excitement. His pretentious culture of patriarchal murders are to assert his power and control over others. He also feels entitled to do as he pleases and is triggered by feelings of insecurity, anxiety, or frustration. According to Freud's theory, the superego in Patrick is responsible for regulating the id's impulses and enforcing moral standards. However, his superego appears to be severely impaired, allowing his id to run rampant. Despite his heinous crimes, Patrick shows little remorse or guilt, indicating a lack of superego functioning.

Patrick Bateman murdered his ex-girlfriend Bethany after getting her drunk at lunch. He even stabbed a young child to death in a public park without any reason. And on another occasion, he sees a man playing saxophone on the street corner. Bateman quickly pulls out a gun and shoots the man who played saxophone to death, not noticing that he is within the sight of a police car.

The extremity of narcissism is obvious in the chapter 'Tries to Cook and Eat Girl'. His cannibalistic behaviour traumatised the reader. He explains, " I want to drink this girl's blood, as if it were champagne and I plunge my face deep into what's left of her stomach scratching my chomping jaw on a broken rib... This is my reality. Everything outside of yhis is like some movie I once saw. "(331-332). Frenzied, Bateman makes a phone call to his lawyer, Harold Carnes, and confesses all of his crimes, including the murder of the missing Paul Owen. Carnes tells him, Bateman couldn't have killed Paul Owen because the situations are opposing the counsels with Patrick. The novel ends just like as it began with Bateman's out for drinks with his friend, discussing clothing, their work, and other fatuous things. As the purpose of the paper is to perceive the struggles of people with American Dream with unethical means, Patrick Bateman exemplifies it with exact narration. He fails in his motives to come up in the creamy layer of the society. He hides from the mainstream society and exploit his own self destroying a whole community of human beings.

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EXPOSITION OF POLITICS IN INDIAN CINEMA

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Abstract

Cinema has long been a powerful medium for reflecting and shaping society's perception of political issues. In the context of Hindi cinema, numerous films have explored and highlighted various political themes, offering insights into the complex socio-political landscape of India. One of the biggest film businesses, the Indian film industry has had tremendous success. The movie serves as a good entertainment medium and includes some political information that unintentionally reaches viewers. In India, film is the most effective form of communication. The depiction of politics in Bollywood, the Indian film industry, has been the subject of mystery and criticism for a longer period. In this article, we shall examine the multifaceted factors that influence the depiction of politics in films. When we look at Indian cinema through the lens of law, we look at the many factors that affect how politics are portrayed, how these depictions relate to real-life problems with law, and government, and whether these depictions are genuine.

Keywords: depiction, multifaceted, lens of law, industry, political issues

Exposition of Politics in Indian Cinema:

The role of cinema in society goes beyond mere entertainment; it serves as a mirror that reflects the collective consciousness and concerns of the people. Hindi cinema, commonly known as Bollywood, holds a significant place in India's cultural and social fabric. Over the years, Bollywood has produced several noteworthy films that have engaged with diverse political issues, delving into the nuances of power, justice, and governance. This research seeks to examine how Hindi movies have approached and presented political themes, ultimately influencing public perception and understanding. Today, informational entertainment is referred to as infotainment. The best place to watch political films are in India, where the majority of the population

lacks literacy and doesn't have access to or understand modern forms of communication like email and the Internet. Even they are unable to read and understand newspaper headlines. Along with being illiterate, the illiterate also don't routinely purchase newspapers, which prevents them from being informed about the nation's political processes. They only hear oral information about political leaders from party members they engage with on a regular basis. Movies often show what's happening in society and politics. They act as a mirror, showing us what people hope for, what disappoints them, and what they think about their elected representatives. When Indian movies talk about politics, they often show what's happening in the government and how it affects people's lives. It is essential to note that these portrayals often lean towards the negative.

One of the primary reasons behind this stereotypical depiction of politics is the unprincipled behaviour of our elected representatives and the indulgence in corruption among other things. Moviemakers get ideas from these problems and use them to create interesting stories that people want to watch. Amitabh Bachchan's role as a 'cold and corrupt' politician in the film *Sarkar* (2005) substantiates the above argument. This character was a lot like what people think corrupt politicians are like, and it made the movie interesting for the audience.

Even though these depictions may appear exaggerated, they bring attention to a significant problem in India. People have lost faith in the political system due to controversies involving politicians. By dramatizing these issues in films, Indian cinema attempts to demonstrate the need for strict enforcement of legislation against graft, and corrupt practices.

Filmmakers often take into consideration how most people feel about the issues around them. Politicians are portrayed poorly in films since the general populace is disappointed with their involvement in scandals, corruption, and poor performance. A good example is the 1999 Tamil movie "Mudhalvan," directed by S. Shankar. In the movie, a writer takes on the role of a Chief Minister and brings popular transformation that pleases people's imagination. The protagonist plays an ideal politician, providing a novel perspective on the exercise of power. *Mudhalvan* brings to the fore the idea that films act as means to inspire change in society. Satyagraha (2013) directed by Prakash Jha emphasizes the importance of political activism and nonviolent resistance as a means to bring about change in society. It

encourages citizens to stand up against injustice and demand their rights peacefully. The movie also explores the role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions. It showcases how media can be both a tool for change and a means to manipulate the narrative. Satyagraha highlights the importance of youth participation in politics and social movements. It encourages young people to be active and engaged citizens in shaping the future of the nation.

Indian films are known to drive social points. Film directors use political subjects to highlight burning problems in society. By doing so, they might use negative portrayals of lawmakers to draw attention to problems with the way politics work as a whole. Prakash Jha's 2013 movie "Satyagraha," on corruption and the government system is a potent example. Amitabh Bachchan, the protagonist, who plays an activist, stands out for stepping up to corrupt politicians. This cinematic approach highlights the need for legislative reforms and better governance practices. Indian films are known to portray complicated characters with mixed morals. The movie "Raajneeti" (2010), directed by Prakash Jha displayed characters with shades of grey. The movie depicted the harsh realities of politics and the lives of politicians. In essence, there are no strictly good or bad politicians; they are complex individuals navigating a challenging political landscape

Returning to the initial questions, we realise how complicated the connection is between Indian films and politics. It's important to remember that Indian films are both art and entertainment, even though they often show leaders in a bad light for dramatic effect and social commentary. It's important to remember that negative images don't always show the truth. Instead, they should start conversations about problems of law and order. Satyagraha (2013) directed by Prakash Jha emphasizes the importance of political activism and nonviolent resistance as a means to bring about change in society. It encourages citizens to stand up against injustice and demand their rights peacefully. The movie also explores the role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions. It showcases how media can be both a tool for change and a means to manipulate the narrative. Satyagraha highlights the importance of youth participation in politics and social movements. It encourages young people to be active and engaged citizens in shaping the future of the nation.

Yes, Indian politics is full of problems. However, films are expected to act as means to think, discuss, and criticize. Negative depictions are essential for dramatic effects, but they also push for better governance. Both Indian cinema and politics are part of a larger social conversation. Their relationship evolves as they affect, and are influenced by one another. Essentially, movies serve as a reflection of Indian politics, and the political environment presents socio-economic issues that the film industry addresses to raise awareness among the general populace. By studying a range of remarkable movies, this study will highlight the evolving nature of political discourse in Indian cinema and its role in shaping public awareness and engagement with socio-political matters. The findings will contribute to the understanding of cinema as a powerful tool for political expression and social change, and its potential to drive conversations on critical issues in society. Politics may be found in all films. Any movie that deals with humanity or is set in a particular civilization is unavoidably political. The need to gain power is an essential aspect of being a political animal like a human, and cinema, as a form of media, shows this desire of people either directly or indirectly. The Indian film industry is a renowned global producer of films. We can only hope that as the industry progresses, it will demonstrate and contribute positively to the solutions to global issues by inspiring viewers' ideas.

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THE REPRESENTATION OF EXISTENTIALISM IN WAITING FOR GODOT BY SAMUEL BECKETT: EXAMINING THE THEMES OF DESPAIR, ENNUI, AND LACK OF DIRECTION

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Abstract

Waiting for Godot, a seminal play by Samuel Beckett, is a prime example of the existentialist literary movement. The drama, which was published in 1953, centers on Estragon and Vladimir as they wait for a man named Godot. The drama depicts a bizarre and depressing world that echoes existentialism's ideas, such as a lack of purpose, boredom, and hope. The purpose of this essay is to examine how Waiting for Godot depicts existentialism and how the play captures the human condition.

Keywords: Existentialism, Hopelessness, Ennui, and Lack of direction

The 20th century saw the rise of existentialism, a philosophical philosophy that emphasizes the individual's experience of life and the pursuit of meaning in an aimless universe. Many existentialism concepts are embodied in Waiting for Godot, such as the pointlessness of human existence, the lack of a greater force, and the difficulty of finding purpose in life. Estragon and Vladimir, the play's two central protagonists, are caught in a never-ending cycle of waiting for Godot, symbolizing the human experience of seeking a goal that might never come. A prominent element of Samuel Beckett's play Waiting for Godot is existentialism. The play examines the human experience of looking for purpose in a meaningless world by depicting Estragon and Vladimir's existential dilemma. Vladimir's statement, "We are all born mad," is among the play's most well-known quotations that best captures existentialism. Some still are. This quotation emphasizes the notion that Because of our innate irrationality and absurdity, humans can only try to make sense of our existence through consciousness and awareness. According to the quote, the characters are destined to stay stuck in a condition of insanity and crazy since they are unable to get out of their existential dilemma. All things considered, this quotation embodies the central existentialist view that life has no significance and that people must find their own meaning in an empty universe.

The futility of human existence is one of Waiting for Godot's main themes. There is no real sign that Godot will ever show up, thus the characters in the play are

left waiting forever. Estragon and Vladimir lack a sense of direction and time, and their only source of inspiration is the belief that Godot will arrive to end their suffering. But as the play goes on, it becomes increasingly obvious that Godot might never show up, and the characters' despair grows. This sense of hopelessness is further reinforced by the play's gloomy and dreary location, which shows no signs of progress or vitality.

Ennui permeates the drama as a result of the characters' lack of direction and purpose. The majority of Vladimir and Estragon's time is spent playing games, having pointless chats, and waiting for anything to happen. But nothing ever happens, and they get more and more bored. The circular form and repetition of the play further highlight the characters' monotony and dullness, which are inherent to their lives.

A major theme of Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* is absurdity. The universe portrayed in the play appears to be devoid of any intrinsic significance or goal. The ridiculousness of Vladimir and Estragon's predicament is highlighted by the fact that they are locked in a never-ending circle of waiting for someone. Among the most well-known sayings the line from Vladimir's play that best exemplifies this topic is "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful." This quotation emphasizes the characters' helplessness to get out of their situation and the general sense of boredom and hopelessness that permeates the play. The characters' cyclical and incomprehensible discourse further emphasizes the ridiculousness of the play and the sense that everything is ultimately pointless. All things considered, this quotation embodies the play's central subject of absurdity, emphasizing the futility of life and the human quest for purpose and meaning in a crazy world.

Estragon's question to Vladimir in Act I, "What do we do now, now that we're happy?" is one scene that exemplifies the play's ridiculousness. (page 16). In response, Vladimir emphasizes the pointlessness of their existence and their helplessness to get out of their situation in "Wait for Godot" (p. 16). The repeated and cyclical conversation between the ridiculousness and repetition that permeate the drama are further highlighted by the characters. The play's general sense of boredom and hopelessness is emphasized by the characters' incapacity to find meaning or purpose in their lives. This section emphasizes the human search for meaning and purpose in a world devoid of intrinsic worth or importance and perfectly captures the play's ludicrous theme.

The attitudes of the protagonists toward life and their incapacity to discover any intrinsic worth or significance in their existence serve as prime examples of nihilism, a major theme in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*. Act II contains a specific statement that emphasizes the idea of nihilism: Vladimir says, "We are all born mad." There are still some "so" (p. 80). This quotation highlights the idea that people cannot escape their existential dilemma and that existence is fundamentally pointless.

The protagonists are locked in a cycle of waiting and looking for something that might never come, and the play's atmosphere and dialogue further emphasize this sense of nihilism and despair. In the end, the silliness and nihilism of the play emphasize how difficult it is for people to find purpose in life and meaning in a world devoid of intrinsic worth or importance. This section highlights the characters' sense of futility and hopelessness and embodies the play's overarching theme of nihilism. Purposelessness is *Waiting for Godot's* last topic. The characters in the play are looking for meaning or purpose in their life, but they can't seem to find it. They strive to find meaning in their lives and are lost in a world devoid of direction or purpose. The characters' quest for purpose, as demonstrated by their relationships with one another or their expectation of Godot's coming, ultimately turn out to be pointless.

To sum up, *Waiting for Godot* is a potent literary representation of existentialism. The themes of boredom, purposelessness, and hopelessness in the play represent the human experience of looking for meaning in an empty world. The play's recurring themes, circular structure, and desolate environment highlight the characters' quest for meaning and the pointlessness of their life. Beckett's play, which profoundly and provocatively explores the issues of human life and the search for meaning, is still regarded as an important piece of existentialist writing.

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**Bound by Tradition, Driven by Choice: A Study of Neela in Chitra Banerjee
Divakaruni's Victory Song**

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Abstract

This paper explores the themes of marriage, freedom, and cultural boundaries in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *Neela: Victory Song*, focusing on how these elements shape the protagonist's personal journey. Set against the backdrop of India's independence movement in the 1940s, the novel follows Neela as she navigates the societal expectations placed upon her, particularly regarding arranged marriage and traditional gender roles. As Neela gains awareness of women's rights and personal autonomy, she begins to challenge the constraints imposed by her family and society. Her defiance against patriarchal norms parallels India's struggle for freedom, making her story a symbolic reflection of the country's fight for independence. This paper examines Neela's pursuit of self-determination, illustrating how education and exposure to new ideas play a crucial role in shaping progressive thought. The novel's themes remain relevant today, as gender equality, personal choice, and cultural expectations continue to shape lives across the world. Through Neela's journey, *Victory Song* stands as a compelling narrative of empowerment, resistance, and the enduring fight for both personal and national liberation.

Keywords: Arranged Marriage, Gender Roles, Cultural Expectations, Freedom and Autonomy, Women's Rights, Indian Independence Movement, Patriarchy and Resistance, Coming-of-Age, Self-Determination, Empowerment

In *Victory Song*, marriage is depicted as a deeply ingrained cultural expectation in 1940s India. During this time, arranged marriages were not just common but expected, with parents playing a central role in selecting suitable partners for their daughters. Women had little say in the matter, as marriage was viewed as a family obligation rather than a personal choice. Neela's engagement at a young age reflects these societal norms, emphasizing how girls were often denied autonomy over their own futures. However, Neela's aspirations differ from the traditional path laid out for her—she longs for education, independence, and a life beyond the roles of wife and mother. This internal conflict highlights the tension between personal dreams and societal traditions, making her struggle a powerful reflection of the larger fight for freedom taking place in India at the time.

Marriage, as presented in the novel, serves as both a limitation and a cultural anchor. While it is an institution that provides stability and continuity within families and communities, it also becomes a tool of oppression when imposed without personal consent. The expectation that Neela will marry without questioning her role as a daughter and future wife underscores how deeply entrenched these norms were in Indian society at the time. Her journey, however, demonstrates that even within a rigid system, resistance and transformation are possible.

As the novel progresses, Neela's exposure to the Indian independence movement broadens her perspective. She begins to recognize the parallels between the country's fight for liberation from British rule and her own desire for self-determination. Just as India refuses to be subjugated by colonial rule, Neela questions the societal customs that dictate her future. Inspired by the revolutionary spirit around her, she refuses to passively accept her fate, instead seeking an identity beyond the limitations imposed on her. Her defiance is more than just a personal rebellion—it symbolizes a greater movement toward change and the pursuit of justice.

Neela's struggle also sheds light on the rigid gender roles that defined women's lives in mid-20th-century India. At the time, women were expected to be obedient daughters, dutiful wives, and nurturing mothers, with limited access to education and personal freedom. Neela, however, refuses to conform entirely to these expectations. While her family views marriage as an essential milestone, she envisions a future where she can make her own choices. Her resistance challenges the notion that a woman's worth is solely determined by marriage and domestic responsibilities. Through Neela's journey, *Victory Song* underscores the ongoing battle against cultural norms that restrict women's independence.

Education plays a significant role in Neela's transformation. Unlike many young girls of her time, she is exposed to progressive ideas through her interactions with those involved in India's independence movement. This exposure fuels her determination to break free from societal expectations. She comes to understand that education is not just a tool for personal advancement but also a means of empowerment that enables individuals to challenge systemic oppression. The novel highlights that access to knowledge and the ability to think critically are essential for any movement toward equality and independence.

Her defiance does not mean outright rejection of her heritage but rather a demand for evolution within it. She recognizes that traditions have value, but she also believes they should not come at the expense of personal freedom. This nuanced approach to rebellion makes her character relatable and her struggle deeply meaningful. Neela's courage to question and challenge the status quo serves as an inspiration, highlighting the importance of education and exposure in fostering progressive thought.

Neela's personal struggle for autonomy mirrors India's larger battle for independence. Just as the country seeks to break free from British rule, Neela longs to escape the societal constraints that dictate her future—especially in the form of an arranged marriage. Her acts of defiance, whether through questioning authority, seeking education, or resisting imposed traditions, embody the same rebellious spirit that fueled the independence movement.

This parallel reinforces the idea that oppression exists in many forms—political, cultural, and personal. The fight for national independence in India was not just about removing colonial rulers but also about reexamining and transforming deeply rooted societal structures that restricted individual freedoms. Neela's journey illustrates that true freedom goes beyond political liberation; it includes the right to personal choice, self-expression, and autonomy.

Her struggle also highlights the role of women in historical movements. While history often emphasizes the contributions of male leaders, *Victory Song* brings attention to the fact that women were equally active in resisting oppression. Whether by challenging societal norms within their homes or participating in political activism, women played a crucial role in shaping the future of the nation. Neela's personal revolution is a microcosm of the larger shifts occurring in Indian society, demonstrating that social change often begins with individual acts of courage.

Though set in the 1940s, Neela's story remains deeply relevant in today's world. Many of the issues she faces—gender inequality, cultural expectations, and the struggle for personal freedom—continue to affect women globally. Even in contemporary society, arranged marriages, limited access to education, and restrictive gender roles persist in various forms.

In many parts of the world, women still face barriers to autonomy, whether in the form of legal restrictions, economic dependency, or societal expectations. Neela's journey serves as a reminder that the fight for gender equality is ongoing. Her story encourages readers to question societal norms, advocate for education, and support movements that empower individuals to make their own choices.

Furthermore, Neela's transformation illustrates the importance of representation in literature. Stories like *Victory Song* provide young readers with role models who challenge the status quo. By showcasing strong female protagonists who refuse to conform to oppressive traditions, such narratives inspire future generations to pursue their own paths, regardless of societal expectations.

Conclusion:

In *Neela: Victory Song*, the themes of marriage, freedom, and cultural expectations shape Neela's transformation from an obedient girl into a determined young woman who challenges the societal norms imposed upon her. Her resistance to arranged marriage and restrictive traditions mirrors her growing awareness of self-worth and independence, aligning with India's broader struggle for freedom. The

novel serves as an inspiration, encouraging readers to reflect on the importance of personal choice, gender equality, and the courage to challenge unjust societal constraints. Even today, Neela's story remains relevant, as women across the world continue to fight for education, autonomy, and equal rights. By drawing connections between historical and contemporary struggles, *Victory Song* reinforces the idea that the fight for freedom—whether personal or societal—is ongoing. Neela's journey is a timeless and empowering narrative that celebrates resilience and self-determination.

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Hunger by Jayanta Mahapatra: A Dialectical Materialist Critique of Poverty, Prostitution, and Class Struggle

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Abstract

The present article dialectically analyzes Jayanta Mahapatra's *Hunger* from the perspective of dialectical materialism based on Georges Politzer's *Elementary Principles of Philosophy* and O. Yakhot's *Dialectical Materialism* as texts, and particularly in light of materialist analysis of prostitution. The poem's spectral image in which a fisherman offers up his daughter for him to survive is rather more a tragedy of the human more than a cold reflection of class conflict, dislocation, and market commodification of the human body under repressive economic practices. Using Marxist theory, this critique explains how material conditions condition man's behavior, pushing men into actions dictated by their material conditions and not by ethical or moral impulses. The poem vividly depicts the estrangement of daughter and father, a depiction of Marx's theory of estrangement labor. Economic necessity compels the fisherman to sell his daughter, their love a transaction, a vivid representation of how capitalism reduces human beings to commodities. Its consonance with Engels' historical materialistic critique of prostitution, where moral constraints are determined by economic conditions, is glaring. Its disapproval of prostitution, therefore, is a mirror of Engels'. The daughter, out of her volition, is commodified by this poverty economy. Finally, the poem is a rejection of the way human dignity is lost to these exploitative economic models that place in the foreground how survival blackmails one into such actions that keep one suppressed and what is negated are one's moral examinations.

Keywords: Dialectical Materialism, Poverty, Class, Prostitution, Patriarchy, Commodification

Dialectical Materialism is a theoretical philosophy developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that explains reality, society, and historical change in terms of the interaction between material conditions and contradiction. It believes that material existence, rather than abstract thought or divine agencies, shapes human consciousness and social formations. Change arises from dialectic forces where contradiction between opposed forces (e.g., proletariat and bourgeoisie) provokes historical progress to new forms of society. Conflict of class is the driving force of change in society as much as economic forces propel law, politics, culture, and ideology. Capitalism, say, impoverishes and disenfranchises men, placing men

into economically compelled positions and not due to a moral choice. This perception is widely used in Marxist literary theory to understand works that represent social oppression, economic determinism, and class struggle, for instance, Jayanta Mahapatra's *Hunger*, in which human actions are shaped by survival and poverty, rendering human relationships mere transactions.

Material Conditions and Class Struggle in *Hunger*:

Jayanta Mahapatra (1928-2023) was one of the first Indian English poets to make the most significant contributions to the genre. His own poetry, characteristic in being rich in the geography and social life of his home state of Odisha, began to deal with themes of Indian identity, awareness of culture, and the condition of humankind, usually poverty and social disease. With the honor of being the first Indian English poet to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award, Mahapatra's reflective and descriptive poetry made him a globally recognized figure. More than anything else, poems such as "Relationship," "Indian Summer," and "Hunger" made him a strong literary voice in Indian literature, demonstrating that he was capable of combining personal experience and social issues, but remain rooted in his own culture.

This poem believes the behavior of the fisherman and the protagonist is conditioned by their material conditions and not by moral choice, based on Politzer's model. This aligns with Politzer's assertion that "It is not men's consciousness that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness" (Poltzer.,130). He further observes that social being defines human consciousness and not the other way around; thus, the selling of his daughter's body by her father is not a personal failure but due to the economic order coercing people to be exploitative. His daughter, being merely one step removed from a survival strategy, demonstrates how capitalism causes human relation to become commodity bartered goods that must be attained. The non-sentimentalism of the poem is particularly significant, directed toward the material condition that will never be removed, and so people end up commodifying themselves or their dependents if they want to stay alive. O. Yakhot's comprehension of dialectical materialism can also make clear how *Hunger* structures the contradictions among capitalist institutions. flickering dark his hut opened like a wound. The wind was I, and the days and nights before. (Mahapatra)

The fisherman's daughter is the ideal representation of the most exploited portion of the working class—the one whose body is being commodified in the course of exploitation in poverty. Although initially he is disturbed by the commodified nature of the relationship, he does ultimately participate, illustrating how in a capitalist system individuals naturalize and internalize exploitative structures. His sense of guilt comes from passive entrapment in an economics that legitimates and sustains class-based exploitation.

Prostitution as a Phenomenon of Economic Alienation:

A dialectical materialist analysis of prostitution sees it not as a moral failing but as an inescapable consequence of economic systems. Friedrich Engels, in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, sees prostitution as a creation of private property and class exploitation in which women's bodies are commodified in an economic system that degrades them as workers but commodifies them as objects of exchange.

For hetaerism is as much a social institution as any other; it continues the old sexual freedom – to the advantage of the men. Actually not merely tolerated, but gaily practiced, by the ruling classes particularly, it is condemned in words. But in reality this condemnation never falls on the men concerned, but only on the women; they are despised and outcast, in order that the unconditional supremacy of men over the female sex may be once more proclaimed as a fundamental law of society. (Engels.,p.60)

In *Hunger*, the destiny of the girl is a symbol of this process of exploitation—her body is a tool for survival, not out of choice but necessity. The state does not force the fisherman to exploit his daughter directly. Rather, through its institutions of ideology—religion, tradition, and economic policies—it constructs a material reality where such an exploitation is a necessity. The daughter and the fisherman do not revolt against their fate because dominant ideology has socialized them to believe that this is their sole survival strategy. Its central character himself, though enraged, does not resist, proving the dominant ideology relies on economic determinism in imposing compliance.

Historical Materialism and Commodification of the Human Body:

Historical materialism by Marx asserts economic forms shape social relations. The subject, also belonging to the same privileged group, in *Hunger* consumes the body of the impoverished girl the same way that capital appropriates labor. The triadic class dynamic between the fisherman, his daughter, and the narrator speaks of capitalist society where the subaltern is compelled to sell their nearest source of subsistence—their bodies or their labor at substandard rates—while the dominant class exploit them as commodities or sex workers of desire.

With the rise of the inequality of property – already at the upper stage of barbarism, therefore – wage-labor appears sporadically side by side with slave labor, and at the same time, as its necessary correlate, the professional prostitution of free women side by side with the forced surrender of the slave.... here monogamy, there hetaerism, with its most extreme form, prostitution. (Engels.,p.60)

This validates Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, wherein human beings become exchange commodities in a profit economy that degrades human dignity.

Conclusion:

Based on Politzer and Yakhot's dialectical materialist positions, and those of Engels, this essay argues that *Hunger* is less a matter of desire and morality and more an issue of material conditions but a condemnation of the material conditions under which exploitation becomes a necessary condition of life for the working class. Mahapatra's poem exposes the stark reality of economic determinism and how poverty compels men and women into the very language of dehumanization and alienation. The participation of the protagonist, misfortune of the fisherman, and selling of the girl expose together the way capitalist societies naturalize exploitation during periods of material and ideological restriction. Hence, *Hunger* is a literary response to dialectical materialism which forces readers into the realities of class struggle, exploitation of the human life form, and dehumanizing results of economic forms that are culprits of systematic oppression.

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Exploring Anthropocene Anxiety in Contemporary Dystopian Fiction: A Comparative Analysis of Margaret Atwood and Kim Stanley Robinson

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Abstract

The Anthropocene epoch, defined by human-induced environmental change, has intensified global concerns around climate crisis, resource depletion, and socio-political instability. Literature, especially dystopian fiction, becomes a powerful medium through which these anxieties are reflected and critiqued. This paper conducts a comparative study of Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy* and Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future* and *New York 2140*, to explore how contemporary climate fiction navigates themes of ecological disaster, adaptation, and sustainability. Adopting an interdisciplinary methodology that incorporates ecocriticism, dystopian theory, and Anthropocene studies, the research investigates narrative strategies, the role of human agency, and the potential for environmental recovery depicted in these works. Atwood's feminist eco-dystopian lens contrasts with Robinson's science-driven approach, yet both authors underscore the urgency of environmental consciousness. The findings illustrate how fiction can influence public imagination and climate discourse by critiquing current ecological trajectories while envisioning pathways to resilience. This study contributes to climate fiction studies and environmental humanities by emphasizing the cultural significance of storytelling in shaping sustainable futures.

Keywords: Dystopian Fiction, Anthropocene Anxiety, Eco-criticism, Climate Change, Margaret Atwood, Kim Stanley Robinson

The Anthropocene, a term proposed to denote a new geological epoch defined by the human impact on Earth, marks a turning point in ecological awareness. As anthropogenic climate change accelerates, literature serves as a reflective and critical medium to address the growing concerns of environmental degradation and socio-political collapse. Dystopian fiction, in particular, becomes a vessel to channel these anxieties and stimulate discourse. This paper explores how Margaret Atwood and Kim Stanley Robinson, two major voices in climate fiction, engage with the anxieties of the Anthropocene through dystopian narratives that both warn and inspire.

While Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy* presents a speculative future devastated by biotechnological exploitation and ecological collapse, Robinson's *The*

Ministry for the Future and New York 2140 portray global efforts to mitigate climate disaster through socio- economic reforms and scientific intervention. By comparing their literary strategies, this study aims to reveal the cultural, philosophical, and ethical dimensions of climate fiction in the 21st century.

Literature Review:

The emergence of climate fiction or "cli-fi" as a subgenre has received increasing scholarly attention in recent decades. Scholars such as Ursula Heise and Timothy Clark argue that literature plays a crucial role in mediating environmental awareness. Greg Garrard's foundational work in ecocriticism highlights how literary texts reflect and construct ecological values. Dystopian studies, as discussed by Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini, further contextualize how imagined futures critique contemporary power structures and environmental exploitation. Atwood's speculative fiction has been widely studied for its feminist and ecological themes. Critics have examined her depiction of genetic engineering and corporate greed as metaphors for real-world crises. Meanwhile, Robinson's work is praised for its realism and deep integration of scientific discourse, positioning him as a key figure in what is often called "hard cli-fi." Despite their different styles, both authors use dystopia not merely to depict despair, but to envision transformation. However, a comparative study focusing on their treatment of Anthropocene anxiety remains underexplored, which this paper seeks to address.

Theoretical Framework:

This study employs an interdisciplinary theoretical framework combining: Ecocriticism (Greg Garrard, Timothy Clark, Ursula Heise): Examining how literature constructs relationships between humans and nature. Dystopian Theory (Tom Moylan, Raffaella Baccolini): Analyzing the role of dystopia in critiquing social and environmental systems. Anthropocene Theory (Dipesh Chakrabarty, Donna Haraway, Timothy Morton): Understanding the philosophical and historical implications of human agency in shaping planetary futures. These frameworks guide the analysis of how fiction not only reflects environmental anxieties but also contributes to ecological thought and political imagination.

Methodology:

The study uses close textual analysis of the selected novels, focusing on thematic exploration, narrative strategies, and the portrayal of environmental crises. Comparative analysis highlights differences and convergences in Atwood's and Robinson's approaches. Contextual analysis is also used to relate the texts to current scientific and policy debates on climate change.

Analysis and Discussion:

1. Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy Atwood's trilogy – Oryx and Crake, The Year of the Flood, and MaddAddam – presents a world ravaged by genetic

engineering, corporate greed, and ecological collapse. The narrative oscillates between pre- and post-apocalyptic timelines, showing the slow unraveling of the biosphere and the emergence of new hybrid species. Atwood's portrayal of the God's Gardeners, a green religious sect, exemplifies a spiritual eco-consciousness absent in the technocratic world. Her feminist perspective is evident in the depiction of gendered violence and the exploitation of women's bodies in biotech industries. The trilogy articulates Anthropocene anxiety through vivid imagery of extinction, artificial life, and ecological ruin. Yet it also offers a glimmer of hope in the form of community resilience and alternative ways of living in harmony with nature.

2. Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future* and *New York 2140* Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future* opens with a devastating heatwave in India, establishing the high stakes of unchecked climate change. The novel follows the work of an international organization aimed at safeguarding future generations. Through multiple perspectives and realistic detail, Robinson integrates climate science, economics, and geopolitics to depict a possible path toward planetary survival. In *New York 2140*, Robinson imagines a semi-submerged Manhattan adapted to sea-level rise. The narrative emphasizes collective action, technological adaptation, and economic reform. Unlike Atwood's dystopian decay, Robinson envisions a resilient society negotiating with ecological realities. Both novels reveal Anthropocene anxiety, but Robinson's work leans toward "critical utopia," offering pragmatic solutions and systemic change. His fiction aligns with Haraway's call to "stay with the trouble" rather than escape into apocalyptic nihilism.

3. Comparative Reflections While Atwood critiques biopower and patriarchal capitalism through dark satire, Robinson presents institutional reform and eco-modernism as viable responses. Atwood's speculative style blurs the line between present and future, while Robinson's realism roots his narratives in policy, science, and activism. Both authors underscore human agency whether in destroying or saving the planet but differ in their emphasis on individual versus collective action.

Findings:

The analysis reveals that both Atwood and Robinson effectively harness dystopian fiction to critique environmental degradation and socio-political inertia. Atwood's feminist eco- dystopia highlights the intersection of gender, ecology, and bio politics, warning against the co modification of life. Robinson, in contrast, offers a vision of coordinated global action, emphasizing the role of institutions, science, and economic restructuring in addressing climate change. Together, their works demonstrate the potential of literature to inspire critical reflection, foster environmental consciousness, and contribute to climate discourse. They challenge readers to imagine ecological futures that are not only possible but necessary.

Conclusion:

This paper has examined how Margaret Atwood and Kim Stanley Robinson articulate Anthropocene anxiety through dystopian fiction. While differing in style and tone, both authors emphasize the urgency of ecological awareness and the need for systemic change. Atwood's speculative narratives foreground the consequences of unchecked techno- capitalism, while Robinson's realist optimism imagines feasible pathways to climate justice. In an era marked by ecological uncertainty, fiction serves not only as a mirror to our anxieties but also as a blueprint for action. Through their respective visions, Atwood and Robinson contribute meaningfully to the environmental humanities, demonstrating the power of storytelling to influence thought, policy, and public imagination.

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