

Tradition and Modernity in Literature: A continuing Dialogue

Shaikh Ishrat Sultana Abdul Rauf¹, Dr. Meera Nakade Murlidhar²

¹Researcher, Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded.

²Research Supervision, Associate Professor, Department of English Shri Yoganand Swami College,
Wasmatnagar Dist. Hingoli.

Email: shaikhishrat8988@gmail.com

Submitted: 10-sep-2025 Revised: 15-Sep-2025 Accepted: 20-Oct-2025 Published: 31-Oct-2025

Manuscript ID:
IJEWLPSIR-2025-020510



Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA

4.0):

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work no commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.17758131](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17758131)

Link:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17758131>

Volume: 2

Issue: 5

Month: Oct 2025

E-ISSN: 3065-7873

¹Researcher, Swami Ramanand Teerth
Marathwada University, Nanded.
Email: shaikhishrat8988@gmail.com

²Research Supervision, Associate
Professor, Department of English Shri
Yoganand Swami College, Wasmatnagar
Dist. Hingoli.

How to cite this article:

Rauf, S. I. S. A., & Murlidhar, M. N.
(2025). Tradition and Modernity in
Literature: A continuing Dialogue.
International Journal of English and
World Languages & Literature
Paradigm Shift in International
Research, 2(5), 32–35.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17758131>

Address for correspondence:

Shaikh Ishrat Sultana Abdul Rauf
Researcher, Swami Ramanand Teerth
Marathwada University, Nanded.
Email: shaikhishrat8988@gmail.com

Abstract

Literature has always been a dynamic field where tradition and modernity encounter each other. Ancient myths, oral tales, and folk narratives not only reserve cultural memory but also shape collective identity. In modern times, however, literature has taken on the responsibility of questioning, reinterpreting and sometimes challenging these traditions in light of new realities. This paper explores how oral traditions, language, postcolonial perspectives, Urdu literature, and diasporic writing. Specially the works of Khaled Hosseini continue to influence contemporary imagination Khaled Hosseini novels show or represent the culture of colonial legacies war and migration.

In his writing he focuses on the women strength as it is shown in thousand splendid suns where he highlights how traditional notions & family honor intersect with modern fights against partition.

By focusing on some examples from world literature and such as African literature, Afghan literature and Indian Literature to illustrate that tradition is not static but dynamic and its dialogue emerging with modernity that express new values and identity and knowledge for their importance for both cultural continuity and global awareness of literature.

Keywords: Tradition and Modernity, Oral Traditions, Folk Narratives, Postcolonial Literature, Cultural Heritage, Urdu Literature, Language and Identity, Khaled Hosseini, Diasporic Writing, Reinterpretation in Literature.

Introduction:

The relationship between tradition and modernity not a simple opposite but a complex interplay we can say it has always been negotiation tradition always established on beliefs customs, values, behaviors, cultural roots and ethical grounds, modernity, introduces, new ideas, innovation, Technology, scientific approaches and new and modern way to thinking to change the society, social change and cultural evolution.

Literature, more than any other enough tool to brings these two together in creative and explore the theme of globalization Ancient stories, myths, classical stories and Archaeological stores and epics provided the earliest forms of cultural knowledge such as Homes's Iliad, and odyssey and Ramayana and Mahabharata represent ancient stories include classic epics and myths other significant ancient works include Greek philosopher Plato's Republic roman literature ovid's Metamorphoses and Indian philosophical tents including Bhagavad Gita and Upxnishads Fasana-e-Ajaaib by Rajab Ali Beg Suroor, Aag ka Darya by Qurratulain Hyder, Tareekh-e-urdu Noorul Hasan Naqvi urdu ancient writers works.

One thousand and one Nights Arabic ancient story book written by Ibn Tufail, Ibn-al-Muqaffa and Ancient civilization of afghansistan by worrick ball, Lost world of the Goldenking by Frank L. Holt. These are some writers represent their culture moral values, customs and traditions through his writings they were not only entertainment but also provide knowledge and social guidance.

Modern writers, however they were self-conscious separation form traditional ways of writing in both poetry & prose fiction writings modern writings experimented with literary forms with reflected the societal changes of industratrilization rapid growth of technological advancement and the trauma of world war. Modern writers rejected traditional narrative experimenting with new styles, unfiltered thoughts and feelings writer's marks by a conscious decision to move away from the conventions of the past. The rapid growth of industry and the rise of capitalism profoundly changed society, creating new urban landscape that influenced the them and style of literature. New technologies contributed to a sense of a transformed world and mordenn writer engage with changes in their writings, they moved away from traditional values, myths, beliefs, cultural roots, ethical grounds.

Such as Chinua Achebe, Modern African writer, Margaret Atwood Canadian writer both writer famous for their modern writings as well as Indian writer Salman Rushdie space where ancient traditions are reinterpreted to address modern realities such as colonialism, migration gender and globalization. In this discussion we never forget Urdu literature Urdu literature plays a major role Ahmad Faraz, Faiz Ahmad Faiz Ismat Chughtai, Sadaf Husan Monto, Parveen Shakir, Nida Fazil writers convey the message through their works such as love social Justice, feminine empowerment and post partition trauma.

In this modern writers era one of recent writer Khaled Hosseini has emerged has appear as ancestral home voice who bridges Afghan tradition and global reading he try to carrying forward the conversation between Afghan tradition & modernity. His novels such as *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* demonstrate how stories deeply rooted in Afghan's cultural contexts, reveals to human emotions of love, loyalty, loss & resilience.

Oral Traditions & Folk Narratives

Oral traditions folk Narratives are the medium of convey the cultural transmission, traditional stories, via spoken words before literature emerged it is useful to understand the culture of folktales, myths, legends, songs, proverb, poetry serving to us collective memories of history, example Homeric Illiad and Odyssey in Greece, The Ramayana & Mahabharata epics in India. Myths and legends stories about deities like Zeus and Thor and heroic figures such as King Arthur legendary characters in the Jataka tales, Fairy tales like Cinderella, proverb and Riddles, Folk songs Folk dance panchtantra and countless folk cultural activities carry moral lessons.

Modern writers often return to these oral traditions & folk narratives to preserve cultural heritage always challenge dominant narratives, and explore contemporary social issues by reinterpreting traditional stories and using folk elements like rhythm repetition in their work. Indian authors, including Rabindranath Tagore and Contemporary writers like Arundhati Roy, have woven folk elements, myths, and rituals into their works. African literature Hausa literature of Nigeria to discuss contemporary issues like women rights and social change.

Urdu literature too is shaped by oral tradition Sadat Hasan Monto's stories employ the rhythms & street language & everyday idioms Toba Tek Singh use in his writing humor and absurdity reflects the oral culture of Panjabi storytelling. Khaled Hosseini also represent oral traditions in his writings. And the mountains echoed in this novel Khaled Hosseini begin with a father telling his daughter a fable story. This frame Afghan tradition of passing down wisdom through fables. Now Hosseini uses it to highlight modern realities of separation, migration and the fragmentation of families.

Language as a bridge

Language not only a tool to carry culture, emotions, traditions but also a medium to transfer their heritage Language shows as historical events truth across generation and generation language connects communities allows sharing of cultural knowledge and builds empathy.

The preservation of languages is vital for the continued existence of traditions and cultures whereas their loss can lead to erosion of cultural identity.

Chinua Achebe for example, wrote 'Things fall apart' in English but added it with Igbo proverb and cultural proverbs and cultural references try to make the novel a bridge between African tradition and modern readers. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Salman uses Language as a bridge to capture India's postcolonial cultural and linguistic diversity by incorporating Hindi, Urdu and other local words into the English narratives.

Urdu literature provides another example of Language as a bridge. It preserve heritage, fostering unity between diverse cultures and generations and connecting people across national and international borders through its rich literary tradition for example Amir Khusro's poetry written in Persian and Hindi Language but it's a fusion of Urdu Language Though his works Urdu Language developed originally. The work of Author Premchand through his writings in Urdu, also bridging role by making literature accessible to a wider audience shared cultural heritage. Urdu and western philosophical terms to create a language that addressed both Islamic tradition & modern intellectual concerns. Khaled Hosseini represent a contemporary example of this bridging. Hosseini's writing in English but its work deeply represent Afghan's culture, Hosseini makes local idioms accessible to a global audience.

Hosseini rewrite Pashto, Persian and Arabic into English a technique called code mixing to preserve and represent Afghan authenticity using universal themes and western narratives style to make his stories accessible globally. In *The Kite Runner*, *The Kite* fighting clearly describe a traditional Afghan past time the famous phrase 'For you a thousand times over' represent loyalty, sacrifice and friendship values deeply embedded in Afghan Society. Similarly Novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* derives from a Persian poem by Saib-e-Tajiri shows how tradition can travel across languages and centuries to find new life in modern English Fiction.

Post-colonial perspectives

Post colonial perspectives on tradition & modernity analyze how colonization disrupted traditional literary practices postcolonial literature has used same modern forms the novel, the short stories, post colonialism challenges the idea of a single universal path colonialism often conflicting, relationship between colonial "modernity" and precolonial "tradition" post colonial perspectives analyze how colonial legacies of cultural, economics, and political domination continue to shape contemporary societies.

The novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe critiques the destructive impact of British colonialism on Nigerian Society and culture by depicting a pre-colonial Igbo community and the conflicts that arise from the imposition of foreign rule and religion.

Amitav ghosh's Ibis Trigology cultural hybridity diasporic displacement, and fragmented identities. His novel the Hungry Tide, and The Glass Place depict the intersection of global forces with local cultures.

Arundhati Roy's fiction The God of Small Things assess a complex postcolonial perspective on the relationship between tradition & modernity Rerys work critics how patriarchal tradition reinforced by modernity controls women's life's.

Urdu modernist Manto and Chughtai also serve as postcolonial voices Manto's Thanda Gusht and Toba Tek singh reveal the violence voices of partition movements how suffused and cahausted communities, While chughtais lihaaf critics patriarchal structures reiferced by both tradition and modernity. Their work prove that postcolonial writing is not only about recoreving tradition but also interrogating it to build new social realities.

Khaled Hosseini also operates in this postcotorial framework. His four novels reveals the Afghanistan's history of colonial legacies, communities affected by war and migration A thousand splendid suns portrays the resilience of Afghan women against the double burden of patriarchy and political trauble and the mountain echoed shows the structure of oral tales about communities migrated, displacement and exile Hosseini's expatriate position allows him to recover silenced Afghan voices and shows them to global audience, challenging stecreotypes and colonial narratives about Afghanistan.

Cultural Heritage in modern writing

Cultural heritage is preserve the identify of past and shaping our identy with modernity migrated writers always struggle with balancing inherited traditions & contemporary rarities. Modern writers, poet authors reinterpreting traditions, questioning cultural norms, critics on complex and sometimes fraught relationship between tradition & modernity. Modern authors drawn historical & mythological tables to represent historical issues.

Cultural heritage songs, storyteriling, customs, beliefs, languages values are naturally magangible cultural heritage is difficult to preserve, because it may vary to portrayed to globalized world by multiple diaporic writers but inspite of this some works remind us that heritage does not vanish in exile, it adapt and reemerges with renewed meaning.

Saadat Hasan manto demonstrate brutal Short stories to criticize social hypocrisy & The partition Ismat chaughtai who challenged conservative cultural & social norms in lihaaf, Faiz ahmad faiz portry like traditional ghazals as a voices of political struggle & Social resistance.

Khaled Hosseini Afghani writer potrayed the example of writing cultural heritages, trauma & diaspora through his work, The kite runner. A thousand Splendid suns, And mountain echoed. He represent the struggle of two womeis mariam & Laila both are victims of Afghanis cultural heritage, he highlights how traditional notions of family honor intersect with modern fights for dignity, love and survival, Hosseini represent audience both women is oppressive & emporvering dimensions. In the novel and the montian echoed examples like artifacts such as folk songs lamdsapes & poefry serve as heritage symbols. Hosseini's works remind us heritage does not vanish in exile it adapts and re-emerges with renewed meanings.

Mohsin Hamid's modern writings use cultural heritage as a central theme of his work shows shapes of identity mainly in the content of migration, globalization novel post-9/11 Return Home. Relation between east & west in Exit West. Hamid explains fluidity of cultural heritage in an age of mass migration Jhumpa Lahiri modern writings frequently work Bengali American experience to explore cultural heritage to explore themes of identity displacement of belongings for Indian American immigrants. His work interpreter of Maladies represent the inner lives of Indians and Americans cultural & emotional struggle. Inspite of these writes Rohinton Mistry's novels represent cultural heritage of the parsi community in Mumbai with theme of identify & displacement.

In modern Urdu literature writer drawn the rich cultural heritage to explore there of identify Qurratulain hyder's Aag Ka darya (River of Fire) represent the history through memory of migration using cultural leritage by trading characters reincarnated from ancient Magadha Kingdom to the trauma & partition.

Tradition & Modernity Reinterpretation

The dynamic process of the reinterpretation of tradion & modernity refers ancients myths customs and beliefs that legends in new ways. Tradition & modernity refers to ancestral beliefs customs, rituals and values passed down through generations, providing a sense of history & belonging.

Reinterpretation relationship between tradition and modernity include modern authors post colonial authors and contemporary writes represent simple conflict with two faces are interwoven, adaptive and often in tension with one another like.

Chinua Acheba novel 'Things fall apart' depict the pre colonial Igbo society in Nigeria as complex and rich with traditions, customs, and laws R.K. Naryanas, malgudi days set in the fictional town of malgudi subtle negotiations and transformations that occur when traditional values meet modernizing forces reinterpretation seen in Urdu modernism work Ismat Chughtai's novel Lihaaf some writer interpreted can Lihaaf deep rooted Patriachal society and its norms which pressurize Nawaab to marry with Begam Jan. Some are interpreted the traditional domestic space in histories. By doing so, Something to be blindly preserved but as something to be interrogated & reshaped.

Khaled Hosseini's novels The kite runner, A thousand & plendid suns both interpreted the traditional Afghan's game kite fighting into a metaphor for innocence, betrayal & redemption A thousand splendid suns represent the character Mariams endurance from her husband, domestic violence, fathers in justice it is transformed from persion poetic image it reinterpret Afghanis myths, values traditional memories in modern forms. The example show

that Hosseini's works cultural symbols preserved and make them speak to modern struggles of migration trauma & reconciliation.

Conclusion

The dialogue between tradition and modernity in literature is a dynamic process of negotiation folk narratives oral traditions and myths are remains of our ancestress modern writes used those remains as a sources of strength they others used these tools such as the novel form, post colonial critiques, global readership that allow these traditions to reach wider audiences.

In Urdu literature and Afghani writer Khaled Hosseini clearly demonstrate this process from sir monto's short stories to tauba tek sigh's humor & absurdity reflect the oral culture tradition, fair's revolutionary poetry and Khaled Hosseini's diasporic narratives, we see how tradition and modernity constantly enrich to each other.

Hosseini, in particular, bridges Afghan cultural heritage and modern storytelling reinterpreting oral traditions, linguistic idioms & cultural memories in ways that resonate globally.

Literature shows us the traditional preservation does not erase simply it gives strength to modernity they can adapt the content and creating new possibilities for growth and innovation writers present them work to honor the wisdom of the past while making it speak to the challenges of the present by doing so, literature becomes a bridge between cultures, histories & future ensuring that both tradition & modernity remain vital forces in shaping human identity.

Acknowledgment

The researcher expresses deep gratitude to Dr. Meera Nakade Murlidhar, Associate Professor, Department of English, Shri Yoganand Swami College, Wasmatnagar, Dist. Hingoli, for her valuable guidance, encouragement, and constant support throughout this research work.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Works Cited

1. Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Penguin Books, 2006.
2. Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Harper Perennial, 2007.
3. Atwood, Margaret. *The Penelopiad*. Canongate, 2005.
4. Chughtai, Ismat. *The Quilt and Other Stories*. Translated by Tahira Naqvi, Kali for Women, 1996.
5. Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *The Palace of Illusions*. Picador, 2008.
6. Faiz, Faiz Ahmed. *The Rebel's Silhouette: Selected Poems*. Translated by Agha Shahid Ali, University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.
7. Ghalib, Mirza. *Ghalib: Selected Poems and Letters*. Translated by Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, Penguin Classics, 2009.
8. Ghosh, Amitav. *Sea of Poppies*. Penguin Books, 2008.
9. Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. Riverhead Books, 2003.
10. Hosseini, Khaled. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Riverhead Books, 2007.
11. Hosseini, Khaled. *And the Mountains Echoed*. Riverhead Books, 2013.
12. Iqbal, Muhammad. *The Secrets of the Self (Asrar-e-Khudi)*. Translated by Reynold A. Nicholson, Macmillan, 1920.
13. Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies*. Mariner Books, 1999.
14. Manto, Saadat Hasan. *Kingdom's End and Other Stories*. Translated by Khalid Hasan, Penguin Books, 1987.
15. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Heinemann, 1986.
16. Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. Jonathan Cape, 1981.
17. Hyder, Qurratulain. *River of Fire (Aag Ka Darya)*. New Directions, 1998.
18. Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Faber & Faber, 1990.
19. Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance*. McClelland & Stewart, 1995.