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CHIEF EDITOR
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Professor (Assistant) at
Al-Quds Open University, Palestinian Territory
Email: munther_zyoud@yahoo.com
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Dept.of English Vasundhara Kala Mahavidyalaya, Jule Solapur
Email pradipk60@gmail.com

WORKING EDITOR
Dr. Santosh P Mane
CEO
Royal International Global LLC
16192 Coastal Highway, County of Sussex, Lewes,
Delaware 19958 United States of America (USA)
Email: ceo@royaligllc.us

PUBLISHER
Royal International Global LLC
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EDITOR

Dr. Pandit Shelke
Principal
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts Commerce and Science Saswad
Tal-Purandar Dist Pune-412301
Email: wc_saswad@pdeapune.org

EDITOR BOARD

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Department of English & Research Centre
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Pune,, M.S., India
Email: zagadesanjay2009@gmail.com

Dr. Vijaykumar Ramchandra Punekar
Professor
Department of English & Research Centre
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts Commerce and Science Saswad, Tal-Purandar, Pune
Pune,, M.S., India
Email: vijaypunekar@pdeawcsaswad.edu.in

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About the College ……

Established in 1972, Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, Pune, is spread across a 9-acre campus and has been providing quality higher education for over five decades. Guided by its vision of imparting value-based education, the college empowers students, particularly from rural and hilly areas, and nurtures responsible citizens with strong moral values and national spirit. The college has received DST-FIST grants and DBT-STAR Status, and was accredited by NAAC with B++ Grade in the Fourth Cycle in 2024**.** It offers B.A., B.Com. B.Sc, BCS, BBA, BBA (CA), 12 PG programmes, UGC-sponsored B.Voc. Courses, and has Research Centres in English, Chemistry, and Commerce**, catering to** over 5,000 students

Best Wishes & Greetings ……

An international conference organized by the Department of English and Research Centre, PDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, and the periodic publication of total 151 research papers derived from it, is a matter of great pride and honour. I feel that the deliberation on the topic "***LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY: EMERGING TRENDS IN ENGLISH STUDIES***" is not merely an academic initiative but is shaping into a broad intellectual movement. This conference provided an excellent platform for intellectual discourse and knowledge sharing on emerging developments in English studies. I am confident that the research papers and discussions presented during this conference will contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge and provide valuable insights for policymakers, industry leaders, and scholars. The compilation of research papers from this seminar will serve as a valuable resource for students, researchers, educators, and professionals alike. I whole heartedly congratulate all the organizing committee members, Coordinator, faculty members, researchers and students who contributed to this initiative. I am confident that such high-quality academic efforts will inspire further research and innovation in emerging technologies. With these thoughts, I extend my heartfelt best wishes to this publication.

Hon. Sunetra Ajitdada Pawar
(Deputy Chief Minister, Maharashtra State)
(President, Pune District Education Association's, Pune)

Best Wishes & Greetings ……

It gives me immense pleasure to extend my warm greetings to all the delegates, researchers, academicians, industry experts, and students participating in the International Conference on "***LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY: EMERGING TRENDS IN ENGLISH STUDIES***". In this dynamic environment, academic institutions and industry stakeholders have a crucial role in fostering knowledge, research, and collaboration that contribute to sustainable economic and social development. Such research-driven efforts ignite curiosity among students and give clear direction to young researchers entering this field. I am confident this periodical will serve not just as conference proceedings but as a valuable reference for academicians, technologists, and industry professionals. It will help bridge the gap between academic research and real-world implementation of intelligent systems. I am confident that the deliberations and research papers presented during this conference will generate valuable insights, inspire innovative thinking, and contribute significantly to academic and professional development. I extend my best wishes for the grand success of the conference and congratulate all the authors whose scholarly work has enriched this journal.

Hon. Rajendra Ghadage
(Vice-President, Pune District Education Association's)

Best Wishes & Greetings ……

I extend my sincere congratulations to the organizers for successfully convening an International Conference on "***LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY: EMERGING TRENDS IN ENGLISH STUDIES***." This conference serves as an important platform for intellectual exchange, enabling participants to share research findings, innovative practices, and forward-looking perspectives that contribute to sustainable progress in the digital age. The theme of this conference is highly relevant in today's global context, where culture and society are continuously adapting to technological disruptions, evolving expectations, and sustainability imperatives. The deliberations, research papers, and discussions presented during this conference are expected to generate valuable insights and practical solutions that will benefit academia, industry, policymakers, and society at large. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the Organizing Committee, Advisory Board, Session Chairs, Reviewers, and all contributors whose dedication and commitment have made this international conference a reality. I also congratulate all authors and presenters for their valuable contributions to this conference proceedings and journal.

Hon. Sandip Kadam
Secretory, Pune District Education Association's

From the Principal's Desk

It gives me immense pleasure to present this special issue of the conference proceedings and journal publication of the International Conference on **"Literature, Culture, and Society: Emerging Trends in English Studies."** This conference has provided a vibrant academic platform for scholars, researchers, teachers, and students from diverse backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue on the evolving dimensions of English Studies in the twenty-first century. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the authors whose valuable contributions have made this publication possible. I also express my sincere appreciation to the organizing committee, reviewers, editors, keynote speakers, and participants for their dedication and scholarly commitment. Their collective efforts have ensured the success of this international academic endeavor. Principal Dr. Pandit Nivrattirao Shelke is a prominent Indian academic and administrator serving as the Principal of PDEA's Waghire College, Saswad, Pune. He is an active physics researcher. His expertise focuses on multidisciplinary physics, specifically in material science, gas sensors, and solar technology. He is recognised M.Phil and Ph.D. research guide in Savitribai Phule Pune University. 1 student has been awarded Ph.D. degree and 6 students are pursuing Ph.D. under his guidance. He has more than 32 years administrative experience as principal, Member of BOS in Physics, Director, Board of Students' Welfare, SSPU, Pune, Program Coordinator NSS, SPPU, Pune and many other committees**.** He has presented and published more than 54 research papers in National & International Seminars and Conferences in India and Abroad. More than 500 lectures delivered on different issues in various colleges affiliated to SPPU for Students' Personality Development and Carrier Guidance. He has author of 37 text and reference books. He is recipient of Best Teacher, Best Principal and many other awards from various institutions.

Dr. Pandit Shelke
Principal
Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad

Dr. Sanjay Haribhau Zagade is the Vice-Principal, Professor and Head of the Department of English, and Coordinator of the Ph.D. Research Centre at Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, Pune. He has 27 years of undergraduate and 21 years of postgraduate teaching experience. A recognized Ph.D. Guide, he has guided two Ph.D. scholars and is currently supervising seven doctoral candidates. A recipient of the Best Teacher Award (2021) conferred by the Maharashtra Marathi Sahitya Parishad, he serves as a Board of Studies (BoS) Member at H.V. Desai College, Pune, and as an External Expert on the School of Research Committee at JSPM University.

Dr.Sanjay Haribhau Zagade has held several key academic and administrative positions, including IQAC Coordinator, Controller of Examinations, NSS Programme Officer, and Nodal Officer for AISHE. He has published 46 research papers in reputed national and international peer-reviewed journals and is a sought-after resource person, delivering lectures and conducting workshops on the NAAC accreditation framework, quality assurance, and higher education at various colleges and institutions. He has made significant contributions to teaching, research, academic administration, and quality enhancement in higher education.

Prof Dr Sanjay Haribahu Zagade
(Co-Convener)

Prof. Dr. Vijaykumar Punekar is working as a professor in the Department of English and Research Centre, PDEA's Waghire College of Arts Commerce and Science Saswad. He qualified SET exam in 2006, completed Ph.D from Savitribai Phule Pune University in 2016. As a research guide, 1 student completed Ph.D. under his guidance and currently 5 students have been registered for doctoral degree. He authored a book entitled Parameters of Science Fiction. He has presented 20 research papers in National & International Seminars and Conferences in India and published 23 research papers in various reputed National and International journals.

Prof. DrVijaykumar Punekar
(Coordinator)

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Literature, Culture and Society: Emerging Trends in English Literature

Dr. Yogesh Malshette[1], Dr. Sachin Chavan[2]

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[1]Assistant Professor, Dept. of Basic Science and Humanities
Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University)
College of Engineering Pune (MS) INDIA
[2]Associate Professor, Department of English
Mahatma Phule Mahavidyalaya.
Pimpri, Pune (MS) INDIA
Email- dryogeshmalshette@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Yogesh Malshette, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Basic Science and Humanities Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University) College of Engineering Pune (MS) INDIA.
profpradip@gmail.com

Abstract

English literature has always functioned as a mirror of cultural transformations and social realities. In the 21st century, rapid globalization, technological advancement, ecological crises, migration, and digital culture have reshaped literary production and interpretation. This paper examines the emerging trends in English literature through the interconnected lenses of literature, culture, and society. The study focuses on digital humanities, postcolonial and diaspora writing, ecocriticism and climate fiction, gender and identity politics, globalization and transnational narratives, and interdisciplinary approaches. The paper argues that contemporary English literature is increasingly hybrid, global, and socially engaged, reflecting evolving cultural identities and social challenges.

Keywords: *English literature, culture, society, postcolonialism, ecocriticism, digital humanities, globalization, identity.*

1.Introduction

Literature has historically served as a powerful medium through which societies express cultural values, social anxieties, and political aspirations. In the modern world, literature is no longer confined to national boundaries or traditional genres; instead, it has become global, digital, and interdisciplinary. Scholars increasingly emphasize that contemporary literary studies incorporate technology, environmental awareness, and cross-cultural perspectives, reshaping both literary production and research methods.

Recent scholarship highlights how digital humanities, climate fiction, and postcolonial perspectives are transforming literary analysis and expanding the scope of English literature. These emerging approaches demonstrate how literature responds to global crises, migration, identity formation, and technological change.

This paper explores the relationship between literature, culture, and society by analyzing major emerging trends in English literature and their implications for literary studies.

2. Literature as a Cultural and Social Mirror

Literature reflects and shapes society by engaging with social realities and cultural values. It provides insights into social structures, political systems, and human experiences across time. Modern literary criticism recognizes literature as an interdisciplinary field connected to sociology, anthropology, psychology, and environmental studies.

The relationship between literature and society is increasingly visible in contemporary literary themes such as migration, climate change, digital life, and identity politics. Literature continues to influence public discourse and social awareness, particularly regarding environmental sustainability and cultural diversity.

3. Digital Humanities and Technological Transformation

3.1 Rise of Digital Literature

One of the most significant emerging trends is the integration of technology into literary studies. Digital humanities employ computational tools such as text mining, stylometry, and data visualization to analyse large literary corpora. These methods enable scholars to examine patterns across thousands of texts, offering new perspectives on literary history and authorship.

Digital literature encompasses a wide range of innovative forms that have emerged through technological advancement. Hypertext fiction, for example, allows readers to navigate stories through multiple pathways using links, creating non-linear narratives that challenge traditional storytelling structures. This interactive format encourages readers to become active participants in the narrative, shaping their own reading experience through choice and exploration.

Interactive narratives further expand reader participation by incorporating multimedia elements such as sound, animation, and visual design. These narratives often blend literature with gaming and digital art, creating immersive storytelling experiences that move beyond the limitations of print. Online storytelling platforms have also transformed literary production by enabling writers to share their work instantly with global audiences.

Websites, blogs, and digital publishing platforms allow emerging writers to bypass traditional publishing gatekeepers and build readership communities directly. AI-assisted creative writing represents another significant development in digital literature. Writers increasingly use artificial intelligence tools for brainstorming, editing, and generating creative content, raising new questions about authorship, creativity, and originality. These tools support experimentation and innovation, expanding the possibilities of literary creation. Technology has thus democratized literary production by providing accessible platforms for publishing and distribution. Writers from diverse backgrounds can now reach international audiences, contributing to a more inclusive and globally connected literary landscape.

3.2 Changing Reading Practices

The digital era has fundamentally transformed how readers access, interpret, and interact with literature. The widespread availability of e-books and audiobooks has significantly increased accessibility, allowing readers from diverse geographical, economic, and physical backgrounds to engage with literary texts. Digital libraries and online platforms enable instant access to thousands of works, thereby reducing barriers that once limited readership to physical libraries or bookstores. This shift has also encouraged multitasking reading habits, as audiobooks allow literature to be consumed during travel, exercise, or daily routines.

Social media has emerged as a powerful force shaping literary popularity and reader engagement. Platforms such as online book communities, reading forums, and short-form video spaces have created global reading cultures where readers recommend, review, and discuss books in real time. Viral trends, digital book clubs, and influencer recommendations often determine the commercial success of literary works, demonstrating the growing relationship between literature and digital marketing. As a result, the authority of traditional literary criticism has been supplemented and sometimes challenged by participatory reader communities.

Furthermore, fan fiction communities have reshaped traditional ideas of authorship and textual ownership. Online platforms allow readers to become co-creators, expanding existing fictional worlds and reimagining characters and narratives. This participatory culture challenges the notion of a single authoritative author and instead promotes collaborative storytelling. Readers now actively reinterpret texts, creating alternative narratives that reflect contemporary cultural values and social concerns.

Consequently, literature is no longer confined to print culture but exists within a dynamic and evolving digital ecosystem. This transformation has blurred the boundaries between reader and writer, producer and consumer, and traditional and digital literary forms, marking a significant shift in the history of literary engagement.

4. Postcolonial and Diaspora Literature

4.1 Postcolonial Identity and Hybridity

Postcolonial literature remains central to contemporary English literary studies. Scholars emphasize that identity in postcolonial texts is fluid, hybrid, and shaped by migration and globalization.

Postcolonial and diaspora literature frequently explores themes of cultural displacement, language politics, hybridity, and resistance to colonial legacies. Cultural displacement is often depicted through characters who experience migration, exile, or forced relocation, resulting in a sense of alienation and fragmented identity. Such narratives portray the emotional and psychological struggles of individuals caught between homeland and host culture, highlighting the tension between belonging and exclusion.

Language politics forms another central theme in postcolonial writing. Many authors deliberately blend indigenous languages with English to challenge the dominance of colonial linguistic structures. This linguistic hybridity becomes a form of resistance, allowing writers to reclaim cultural identity and assert local voices within a global literary space. By reshaping English through local idioms, dialects, and storytelling traditions, writers transform the language into a tool of empowerment rather than oppression.

The concept of hybridity and the “third space” further illustrates how postcolonial identities are fluid and dynamic rather than fixed. Individuals in diaspora communities often negotiate multiple cultural influences, creating new hybrid identities that transcend national and cultural boundaries. Literature portrays this “in-between” space as both a site of conflict and creativity, where new cultural expressions emerge. Finally, postcolonial literature engages deeply with the legacy of colonialism and the resistance against it. Writers revisit historical narratives to expose colonial exploitation, cultural erasure, and systemic inequality. Through storytelling, they challenge dominant historical perspectives and seek to recover marginalized histories and voices. In doing so, literature becomes a powerful medium for cultural resistance, social justice, and the reimagining of postcolonial futures.

Postcolonial writers challenge Eurocentric narratives and foreground marginalized voices.

4.2 Diaspora and Global Migration

Migration and globalization have given rise to transnational literary voices that explore the complexities of cultural negotiation, hybrid identities, and the simultaneous experience of belonging and alienation. As individuals move across borders for education, employment, or refuge, they encounter new social norms, languages, and cultural expectations. Literature captures this process of cultural negotiation by portraying characters who must constantly adapt to unfamiliar environments while preserving connections to their heritage. These narratives often depict the negotiation between tradition and modernity, home and host culture, and memory and present reality.

Hybrid identity emerges as a defining feature of transnational literature. Rather than belonging exclusively to a single culture, individuals in diaspora communities develop identities shaped by multiple cultural influences. This hybridity challenges rigid notions of nationality and cultural purity, presenting identity as fluid and evolving. Writers frequently portray characters who navigate multiple cultural spaces, blending customs, languages, and values to form

new and complex identities. At the same time, transnational narratives emphasize the emotional tension between belonging and alienation. Migrant characters may feel disconnected from their homeland due to physical distance while also experiencing exclusion or marginalization in their new environment. This dual sense of attachment and displacement becomes a central motif in contemporary literature, highlighting the psychological and social realities of migration.

These literary explorations reflect the globalized nature of modern society, where cultural exchange and cross-border mobility have become defining features of human experience. By portraying transnational lives and identities, contemporary literature expands beyond national boundaries and speaks to a global readership.

5. Ecocriticism and Climate Fiction

5.1 Environmental Consciousness in Literature

Ecocriticism examines the relationship between literature and the natural world. As environmental crises intensify, literature has emerged as a crucial tool for fostering ecological awareness.

Environmental themes have become increasingly prominent in contemporary literature as writers respond to the growing ecological crisis. Climate change, in particular, has emerged as a major subject, with many literary works exploring the social, political, and emotional consequences of rising temperatures, natural disasters, and environmental instability. These narratives often depict dystopian or speculative futures, encouraging readers to reflect on the urgency of environmental action and the long-term impact of human activities on the planet.

Sustainability is another central concern, with literature examining the need for responsible resource use and environmentally conscious lifestyles. Through storytelling, authors highlight the consequences of overconsumption, industrialization, and unsustainable development, urging readers to reconsider humanity's relationship with the natural world. Such narratives frequently promote ecological awareness and advocate for collective responsibility.

The exploration of human–nature relationships also plays a vital role in environmental literature. Writers often challenge the traditional view of nature as a resource to be exploited, instead presenting it as a living system with intrinsic value. By emphasizing interdependence between humans and the environment, literature encourages a more holistic and respectful understanding of the natural world.

Environmental justice has likewise become a significant theme, focusing on how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized communities. Literary works address issues such as displacement due to environmental disasters, unequal access to resources, and the impact of industrial pollution on vulnerable populations. Through these narratives, literature raises awareness about ecological inequality and promotes social and environmental justice.

5.2 Postcolonial Ecocriticism

A major recent development is the merging of postcolonial theory and ecocriticism. Scholars describe this as "green postcolonialism," emphasizing how colonial histories intersect with environmental exploitation.

Postcolonial ecocriticism examines the intersection of environmental concerns with the historical and political legacies of colonialism. One of its central focuses is environmental injustice, which highlights how the ecological damage caused by colonial and industrial practices has disproportionately affected formerly colonized regions and marginalized communities. Literary works often depict how resource extraction, deforestation, and industrial pollution continue to shape social inequality, revealing the long-term consequences of colonial exploitation on both people and landscapes.

Another important aspect of postcolonial ecocriticism is the recognition of indigenous ecological knowledge. Many contemporary writers foreground traditional environmental practices and belief systems that emphasize harmony, sustainability, and respect for nature. By incorporating indigenous perspectives, literature challenges Western models of development and proposes alternative ways of understanding environmental stewardship. These narratives stress that sustainable futures may depend on learning from indigenous ecological wisdom.

The relationship between land, identity, and colonial history is also a key theme. For many communities, land is not merely a physical resource but a source of cultural memory, spiritual connection, and identity. Postcolonial fiction often portrays how colonial land appropriation disrupted these relationships, leading to displacement and cultural loss. By revisiting these histories, writers reveal how environmental degradation is closely tied to colonial violence and cultural erasure.

Overall, contemporary fiction increasingly links ecological crises with colonial and social injustices, advocating for sustainable and equitable futures. Through storytelling, literature encourages readers to reconsider the historical roots of environmental problems and to imagine more inclusive and environmentally responsible ways forward.

6. Gender, Identity, and Intersectionality

Modern literature increasingly explores gender and identity through intersectional frameworks that recognize how multiple aspects of identity interact and shape human experience. Feminist and queer narratives have become central to contemporary literary discourse, challenging traditional gender roles and questioning patriarchal structures that have historically dominated literary representation. These narratives give voice to marginalized perspectives, highlighting issues such as gender inequality, autonomy, and the struggle for social recognition.

LGBTQ+ representation has also grown significantly in recent decades. Contemporary writers portray diverse sexual orientations and gender identities with greater nuance and authenticity, moving beyond stereotypes toward complex and multidimensional characters. Literature has become a platform for exploring themes of acceptance, visibility, and the ongoing fight for equality, reflecting broader social movements advocating for LGBTQ+ rights.

Body politics and identity form another important area of exploration. Literary works examine how societal expectations surrounding beauty, sexuality, and physical norms influence individual identity and self-perception. Through these narratives, writers critique cultural pressures and challenge restrictive ideals imposed by media and society.

Intersectionality the interconnected nature of race, class, and gender further deepens the exploration of identity in modern literature. Writers increasingly highlight how systems of oppression overlap, shaping the lived experiences of individuals in unique ways. By addressing these intersecting identities, contemporary literature reflects evolving social attitudes and underscores the growing demand for inclusive and diverse representation.

7. Globalization and World Literature

7.1 Transnational Narratives

Globalization has transformed English literature into what is often described as "world literature," a literary landscape shaped by cross-cultural exchange, international readership, and transnational publishing networks. Literary works are no longer confined to the geographical or cultural boundaries of their origin; instead, they circulate across borders, reaching diverse audiences and fostering intercultural dialogue. This shift has encouraged writers to address global themes such as migration, identity, climate change, and social justice, making literature increasingly relevant to a worldwide audience.

Multicultural storytelling has become a defining feature of contemporary English literature. Writers frequently incorporate diverse cultural perspectives, traditions, and experiences into their narratives, reflecting the interconnected nature of modern societies. These stories often explore cultural encounters and conflicts, highlighting how individuals navigate multiple identities in a globalized world.

Translation and global circulation play a crucial role in expanding the reach of literary works. Through translation, texts written in various languages become accessible to international readers, allowing literary ideas and cultural narratives to travel beyond linguistic boundaries. This process enriches the global literary landscape by fostering cross-cultural understanding and encouraging the exchange of ideas across nations.

Globalization has also led to the emergence of hybrid genres and styles. Contemporary authors often blend elements from different literary traditions, combining Western narrative techniques with indigenous storytelling forms, folklore, and oral traditions. This fusion creates innovative literary forms that reflect the cultural hybridity of the modern world, illustrating how literature continues to evolve alongside global social and cultural transformations.

7.2 Cultural Exchange and Hybrid Forms

Globalization has significantly blurred the boundaries between distinct literary traditions, leading to the emergence of hybrid forms that reflect the interconnected realities of contemporary society. Contemporary writers increasingly blend Western narrative techniques such as the modern novel structure, realism, and experimental narrative styles—with indigenous storytelling traditions rooted in oral histories, myths, folklore, and communal memory. This fusion allows authors to create narratives that are both globally accessible and deeply grounded in local cultural heritage.

Indigenous storytelling traditions often emphasize cyclical time, collective identity, and the spiritual relationship between people and their environment. When combined with Western literary forms, these traditions enrich narrative structures and introduce alternative ways of understanding history, identity, and community. Writers frequently integrate folklore, myth, and oral storytelling techniques into modern prose, thereby preserving cultural heritage while adapting it to contemporary literary contexts.

Local cultural contexts further shape these hybrid narratives by incorporating regional customs, languages, rituals, and social realities. Authors use literature as a space to represent local experiences within global frameworks, ensuring that diverse cultural voices are heard on the international stage. This hybridity demonstrates how literature evolves through cultural exchange and interaction, reflecting the increasingly interconnected and multicultural nature of modern society.

8. Interdisciplinary Approaches in Literary Studies

Modern literary studies increasingly intersect with a wide range of academic disciplines, reflecting the growing recognition that literature cannot be fully understood in isolation from broader social and cultural contexts. Sociology contributes significantly by examining how literary texts portray social structures, class divisions, and power relations. Through sociological approaches, scholars analyse how literature reflects issues such as inequality, mobility, and the dynamics of social institutions.

Psychology has also become an important influence through the development of cognitive literary criticism, which explores how readers perceive, interpret, and emotionally respond to literary texts. Psychological perspectives help scholars understand character development, narrative empathy, and the mental processes involved in storytelling and reading.

Environmental studies have contributed to the rise of ecocriticism, which investigates how literature represents nature, environmental crises, and human–environment relationships. This interdisciplinary approach highlights the role of literature in fostering ecological awareness and encouraging sustainable thinking.

Technology plays a transformative role through the emergence of digital humanities. Scholars use computational tools, digital archives, and data analysis to examine large literary corpora, identify patterns, and explore new research methodologies. These technological advancements have expanded both the scope and scale of literary research.

Anthropology further enriches literary studies by examining cultural identity, rituals, traditions, and belief systems represented in literary texts. Anthropological approaches help scholars understand how literature preserves cultural memory and reflects the lived experiences of diverse communities.

Together, these interdisciplinary connections demonstrate the expanding scope of literary research, positioning literature as a dynamic field that engages with multiple forms of knowledge and contributes to broader academic and social conversations.

9. Literature as Social Activism

Contemporary literature increasingly functions as a form of social and political activism, using storytelling as a means to raise awareness and inspire change. Many writers address issues of social inequality, portraying the lived experiences of marginalized communities affected by poverty, discrimination, and systemic injustice. Through compelling narratives and character-driven storytelling, literature exposes the realities of social stratification and encourages readers to critically reflect on the structures that sustain inequality.

Environmental justice has also become a central focus, with authors highlighting the unequal distribution of environmental harm and the vulnerability of marginalized populations to climate change and ecological degradation. Literary works often depict communities displaced by environmental disasters, industrial pollution, and resource exploitation, drawing attention to the urgent need for sustainable and equitable solutions.

Human rights themes are frequently explored through narratives that address migration, displacement, gender-based violence, and freedom of expression. By giving voice to those who are often unheard, literature fosters empathy and encourages readers to engage with global humanitarian concerns. Similarly, works that confront political oppression examine censorship, authoritarianism, and the struggle for democracy, emphasizing the power of literature to challenge dominant ideologies and resist injustice.

By engaging with these pressing social issues, contemporary literature shapes public opinion and promotes social change. It encourages empathy, raises awareness, and invites readers to imagine more just and inclusive societies.

10. Challenges and Future Directions

Despite the rapid expansion of contemporary literary studies, the field continues to face several significant challenges. One major concern is the persistent over-reliance on Western theoretical frameworks, which often dominate academic discourse and shape the interpretation of global literary works. This imbalance can marginalize non-Western perspectives and limit the development of diverse critical methodologies. Scholars increasingly call for more inclusive approaches that incorporate indigenous, regional, and culturally specific theoretical models.

Another challenge is the digital divide in literary access. While digital platforms have increased the availability of literary texts, access to technology and reliable internet remains uneven across regions and socioeconomic groups. As a result, the benefits of digital literary culture are not equally distributed, creating disparities in both readership and participation in global literary conversations.

The commercialization of literature also raises concerns about the influence of market forces on literary production and publishing. Bestseller trends, algorithm-driven recommendations, and commercial publishing priorities may overshadow experimental or marginalized voices. This highlights the on-going need for greater diversity and representation in literary publishing and scholarship.

Looking ahead, several emerging trends are likely to shape the future of literary studies. AI-generated literature is beginning to challenge traditional notions of authorship and creativity, while virtual reality storytelling promises immersive narrative experiences that redefine reader engagement. The development of multilingual digital archives will further expand access to global literary works, encouraging cross-cultural research and collaboration. Additionally, there is growing recognition of the importance of indigenous literatures, which offer alternative knowledge systems and storytelling traditions that enrich the global literary landscape.

11. Conclusion

English literature in the 21st century is undergoing a significant transformation. Emerging trends such as digital humanities, postcolonial and diaspora writing, Eco criticism, gender studies, and globalization demonstrate the evolving relationship between literature, culture, and society.

Contemporary literature is increasingly global, interdisciplinary, and socially engaged. It reflects the complexities of modern life and offers new ways of understanding identity, environment, and cultural interaction. As society continues to evolve, English literature will remain a vital space for dialogue, creativity, and social reflection.

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Digital Gadgets and Reading Habits: A Comprehensive Analysis of Reading Experiences in the Digital Age

Dr. Dattatray Popat Sankpal

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PDEA's Annasaheb Magar Mahavidyalaya, Hadapsar, Pune (MH)
Email- sankpaldattatray@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Dattatray Popat Sankpal, PDEA's Annasaheb Magar Mahavidyalaya, Hadapsar, Pune (MH)
Email- sankpaldattatray@gmail.com

Abstract

This research paper examines the impact of digital gadgets on the reading experience through a multifaceted analysis of contemporary reading practices. The study conducts a comparative analysis of traditional books and their digital counterparts on mobile devices, as well as the influence of books versus television in the context of cognitive engagement. Furthermore, this research examines the concept of bibliotherapy as a mental health intervention, shedding light on the therapeutic potential of literature. It also investigates the role of books in stress management, highlighting their ability to provide solace and respite in an increasingly fast-paced world. The paper concludes by underlining the numerous benefits of reading, including heightened sensitivity, improved decision-making abilities, enhanced empathy, rational thinking, and the empowerment to take a stand on pertinent issues. Through a comprehensive exploration of these facets, this paper underlines the profound impact of reading on the human psyche and its potential to foster personal growth and well-being. The findings reveal that while digital gadgets have undeniably transformed the reading experience, they present significant challenges including distractions, screen-related discomfort, and reduced comprehension when compared to traditional print reading.

Keywords: *Digital reading, print reading, bibliotherapy, cognitive engagement, reading comprehension, mental health, stress management*

1. Introduction: Psychology and Reading

Reading represents one of humanity's most transformative cognitive activities, serving as a bridge between imagination and knowledge, between isolation and connection. The psychological dimensions of reading extend far beyond the mere decoding of symbols on a page or screen; they encompass complex processes of perception, comprehension, memory, and emotional engagement that fundamentally shape human consciousness and behavior[1].

From a psychological perspective, reading activates multiple regions of the brain simultaneously, creating neural pathways that enhance cognitive function and emotional intelligence[2]. The act of reading engages the visual cortex for recognizing letters and words, the language processing centers for understanding meaning, and the prefrontal cortex for higher-order thinking and analysis. Moreover, research has demonstrated that reading, particularly narrative fiction, activates regions associated with theory of mind—the ability to understand and attribute mental states to others—thereby enhancing empathy and social cognition[3].

The digital revolution of the 21st century has fundamentally altered the landscape of reading, introducing new modalities that promise convenience and accessibility while simultaneously raising concerns about depth of engagement and comprehension. As digital gadgets—smartphones, tablets, e-readers, and computers—have become ubiquitous, they have transformed not only how we read but potentially what reading means for cognitive development and psychological well-being[4].

This transformation occurs against a backdrop of increasing screen time across all age groups. Recent studies indicate that children aged 8-12 spend an average of 4-6 hours per day in front of screens, while adolescents often exceed 7 hours daily[5]. This massive shift in media consumption patterns has profound implications for reading habits, attention spans, and cognitive processing capabilities. Understanding the psychological implications of this digital transformation is crucial for educators, parents, healthcare professionals, and policymakers. This paper seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of how digital gadgets impact the reading experience, examining both the advantages and disadvantages of digital versus traditional reading formats, and exploring the broader implications for mental health, cognitive development, and personal growth.

2. Gadgets and Distractions: The Challenge of Digital Reading

2.1 The Distraction Paradigm

Digital devices, by their very design, are engineered to capture and retain attention through multiple channels simultaneously.

Unlike traditional books, which offer a singular, immersive experience, digital devices present readers with a constant barrage of notifications, hyperlinks, advertisements, and other interruptions that fragment attention and disrupt the reading flow[6]. This phenomenon, termed "continuous partial attention," represents a fundamental challenge to deep reading and comprehension.

Research conducted in 2024 examining the impact of screen time on reading comprehension found that children with higher reported screen time engagement showed lower functional connectivity between brain regions related to reading, visual processing, and cognitive control[7]. The imaging scans revealed that time spent reading traditional books was positively correlated with higher functional connectivity between language, visual, and cognitive control regions, while screen-based reading demonstrated the opposite effect[7].

2.2 Screen-Related Discomfort and Digital Eye Fatigue

Extended exposure to digital screens introduces a range of physiological challenges that can impede the reading experience. Digital eye strain, also known as computer vision syndrome, affects millions of readers worldwide and encompasses symptoms including dry eyes, blurred vision, headaches, and neck and shoulder pain[8]. The primary culprits behind digital eye strain include:

- **Blue light emission:** Digital screens emit high levels of blue light (wavelength 400-495 nanometers), one of the shortest and most energetic types of visible light, which can cause strain on the human eye and potentially disrupt circadian rhythms[9].
- **Reduced blink rate:** Studies have shown that people blink approximately 66% less frequently when reading on screens compared to print, leading to increased eye dryness and discomfort[10].
- **Screen glare and contrast:** The luminance and contrast levels of digital screens can create visual fatigue, particularly in poorly lit environments or with improper screen positioning[11].
- **Pixel-based text rendering:** Unlike the continuous ink impression on paper, digital text is composed of pixels that require constant eye accommodation and refocusing[12].

2.3 Reduced Comprehension: The Screen Inferiority Effect

Perhaps the most significant concern regarding digital reading is its impact on comprehension and retention. A comprehensive 2024 meta-analysis of 49 studies involving over 162,000 participants found that students who read on paper consistently scored higher on comprehension tests than those who read the same material on screens[13]. Researchers have termed this phenomenon the "screen inferiority effect"—indicating that digital reading leads to lower information retention and understanding compared to print reading[13].

Several mechanisms may explain this comprehension deficit:

1. **Shallow reading patterns:** Digital environments tend to promote scanning and skimming behaviors rather than deep, linear reading. The ease of scrolling and clicking encourages readers to move quickly through text without fully processing information[14].
2. **Reduced spatial and tactile cues:** Traditional books provide physical cues about progress and location within a narrative (thickness of pages read vs. unread, physical page turning). These tactile and spatial landmarks aid memory formation and information retrieval. Digital reading lacks these embodied cognitive supports[15].
3. **Cognitive load:** The presence of hyperlinks, multimedia elements, and navigational choices in digital texts increases cognitive load, leaving fewer mental resources available for comprehension and retention[16].
4. **Metacognitive awareness:** Readers often overestimate their comprehension when reading digitally, leading to insufficient effort allocation. Print readers demonstrate better calibration between perceived and actual understanding[17].

A recent comparative study found that students using printed materials achieved significantly higher comprehension scores ($M = 21.00$, $SD = 4.44$) compared to those using digital materials ($M = 18.14$, $SD = 4.52$, $p = 0.022$)[18]. The performance metrics indicated that students engaging with digital materials demonstrated more surface-level interaction rather than deep comprehension[18].

2.4 Impact on Attention and Executive Function

Extended screen use, particularly with rapid content switching characteristic of social media and short-form digital content, can train the brain to expect constant novelty, thereby reducing the capacity to concentrate on tasks requiring sustained attention[19]. This conditioning proves especially problematic for reading, which demands prolonged focus and cognitive endurance.

When children become accustomed to consuming short, bite-sized digital content such as video reels or clips, they may find longer texts or complex narratives increasingly challenging [19]. Deep reading requires sustained cognitive effort: processing multiple paragraphs, understanding narrative structure, making inferences, and synthesizing information across extended passages. A distracted or underdeveloped attention span makes these higher-order reading processes significantly more difficult [19].

Furthermore, unrestricted screen time can undermine executive function—the cognitive processes governing self-regulation, planning, and mental flexibility. Children may exhibit increased impulsivity, skip difficult sections of text, or abandon reading tasks altogether, struggling to adapt when reading requires switching between decoding, analyzing, and synthesizing information [19].

3. Books vs. Mobile: A Comparative Analysis

3.1 The Print Advantage

The debate between print and digital reading has generated substantial empirical research over the past decade, with findings consistently favoring print for deep comprehension and retention. Print books offer several distinct advantages:

Enhanced comprehension and retention: Studies demonstrate that reading print books leads to better reading comprehension and deeper learning compared to digital reading[20]. The 2024 meta-analysis revealed that across diverse populations and reading contexts, print readers consistently outperformed digital readers on measures of comprehension, recall, and critical analysis[13].

Reduced cognitive interference: Print books eliminate the technological distractions inherent to digital devices. There are no notifications, no temptation to multitask, and no hyperlinks leading readers away from the primary text[21]. This singular focus allows readers to achieve deeper states of immersion and flow.

Physical and spatial orientation: The physicality of books provides tangible feedback about reading progress. Readers can physically feel how far they've progressed through a book and easily flip back to review earlier passages. This spatial memory aids in information organization and retrieval[22].

Enhanced critical thinking: The permanence of print and the effort required to annotate and mark passages encourages more deliberate, critical engagement with text. Research suggests that print reading fosters deeper analytical processing and more sophisticated critical thinking[23].

3.2 Digital Reading: Advantages and Limitations

Despite the comprehension challenges, digital reading offers undeniable benefits:

Accessibility and convenience: Digital devices can store thousands of books, making vast libraries portable. E-books are often less expensive than print editions, and many classic works are available free of charge through digital libraries[24].

Adjustable formatting: Digital texts allow readers to modify font size, style, spacing, and background color to accommodate visual preferences and reading disabilities. This customization can significantly benefit readers with dyslexia or visual impairments[25].

Integrated tools: Digital reading platforms offer built-in dictionaries, translation tools, highlighting functions, and note-taking capabilities that can enhance the reading experience for specific purposes[26].

Environmental considerations: Digital books eliminate paper consumption and the environmental costs associated with printing, shipping, and storing physical books[27].

However, research indicates that these advantages come at a cost. Digital reading enhanced behavioral engagement in some studies but often at the expense of deep comprehension[28]. The interactive features that make digital reading appealing—multimedia integration, hyperlinks, annotation tools—can paradoxically fragment attention and reduce the depth of cognitive processing[29].

3.3 Recommendations for Format Selection

Given the trade-offs between print and digital reading, informed readers should consider:

- **Purpose of reading:** For deep, analytical reading of complex material, print books offer advantages. For quick reference, casual reading, or situations requiring portability, digital formats may suffice.
- **Genre and text complexity:** Fiction and narrative non-fiction that benefit from sustained immersion may be better suited to print. Technical manuals, reference materials, or texts requiring frequent searching may work well digitally.
- **Personal reading goals:** Readers prioritizing comprehension and retention should lean toward print. Those emphasizing accessibility, cost-effectiveness, or convenience may prefer digital formats.
- **Hybrid approaches:** Many readers find success combining formats, using print for primary reading and digital for supplementary materials or reference texts.

4. Books vs. Television: Cognitive Engagement and Imagination

4.1 Cognitive Processing Differences

The comparison between books and television illuminates fundamental differences in cognitive engagement and mental processing. While both media tell stories and convey information, the neurological and psychological processes they activate differ substantially.

Reading is an active, cognitively demanding process that requires sustained attention, linguistic decoding, imagination, and meaning-making[30]. The reader must mentally construct the narrative world, visualize characters and settings, interpret dialogue, and infer unstated information. This active construction engages multiple cognitive processes simultaneously, including:

- Language processing and comprehension
- Visual imagery generation
- Memory encoding and retrieval
- Inferential reasoning
- Perspective-taking and theory of mind
- Executive function and self-regulation

Television, conversely, presents a pre-packaged visual experience that requires less active cognitive construction[31]. Images, sounds, and movements are provided directly, reducing the need for imaginative visualization. While television viewing does activate certain cognitive processes, it typically demands less sustained attention and mental effort than reading[32].

4.2 Impact on Imagination and Creativity

Research conclusively demonstrates that reading stimulates imagination and creativity more effectively than television viewing[33]. A 2023 study from the University of York found that reading books is significantly more effective at stimulating imagination compared to watching images and stories unfold on screen[34]. Participants who had been watching film clips showed slightly impaired imagery generation for 25 seconds following viewing, suggesting that passive visual consumption may temporarily suppress imaginative capacity[34].

Books require readers to create mental representations of characters, settings, and events based on textual descriptions. This imaginative work strengthens the neural networks associated with creativity, visualization, and innovative thinking[35]. Television, by presenting complete visual representations, bypasses this creative cognitive work, potentially leaving imaginative faculties understimulated[36].

4.3 Literacy and Academic Achievement

The relationship between reading and literacy development is well-established and far exceeds television's educational impact. Children who read regularly demonstrate:

1. **Superior vocabulary development:** Reading exposes children to significantly more complex and varied vocabulary than television dialogue, which tends to use simpler, more repetitive language[37].
2. **Enhanced grammatical understanding:** Written language models proper grammar and sentence structure more consistently than conversational speech typical of television[38].
3. **Improved writing skills:** Regular readers internalize narrative structures, rhetorical devices, and stylistic techniques that enhance their own writing abilities[39].
4. **Higher academic achievement:** Multiple longitudinal studies have found strong correlations between reading for pleasure and academic success across all subjects, not just language arts[40].

A University of Cambridge study found that children who begin reading for pleasure early in life perform better on cognitive tests and demonstrate better mental health when entering adolescence[41]. The research, involving over 10,000 young adolescents, provided significant evidence that reading is linked to important developmental factors, improving cognition, mental health, and brain structure—cornerstones for future learning and well-being[41].

4.4 Depth of Understanding

Books offer the capacity for deeper, more nuanced exploration of complex ideas compared to television[42]. Written narratives can delve into characters' internal thoughts, provide extensive historical context, explore philosophical concepts, and present multiple perspectives in ways that visual media struggles to replicate within typical time constraints[43].

The pacing of reading allows for contemplation, reflection, and re-reading of complex passages—cognitive activities essential for deep understanding[44]. Television's fixed temporal structure limits the viewer's ability to control pacing, pause for reflection, or easily revisit previous content for clarification[45].

5. Bibliotherapy: Literature as Mental Health Intervention

5.1 Defining Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy refers to the therapeutic use of books and reading materials to address mental health issues, promote psychological well-being, and facilitate personal growth[46]. The practice rests on the premise that literature can provide insight into human experience, model coping strategies, normalize difficult emotions, and offer pathways toward healing and self-understanding[47].

Bibliotherapy encompasses two primary approaches:

- **Clinical bibliotherapy:** Conducted under the guidance of trained mental health professionals as part of formal therapeutic treatment for diagnosed psychological conditions[48].
- **Developmental bibliotherapy:** Used in educational, community, or self-help contexts to assist individuals in coping with common life challenges, developmental transitions, or personal growth objectives[49].

5.2 Mechanisms of Therapeutic Action

Bibliotherapy operates through several psychological mechanisms:

Identification: Readers recognize aspects of their own experiences, thoughts, or feelings in characters or situations depicted in literature, reducing feelings of isolation and normalizing their struggles[50].

Catharsis: Engaging emotionally with literary narratives provides a safe outlet for processing difficult emotions, allowing readers to experience and release feelings vicariously through characters[51].

Insight: Literature can illuminate patterns of thought and behavior, offer new perspectives on problems, and suggest alternative interpretations of difficult experiences[52].

Universalization: Discovering that others face similar challenges reduces shame and isolation, helping individuals understand their experiences as part of the broader human condition[53].

5.3 Evidence for Efficacy

Extensive research supports the effectiveness of bibliotherapy across diverse populations and mental health concerns:

Depression and anxiety in children and adolescents: A systematic review published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry found that bibliotherapy effectively reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression in children and adolescents[54]. Self-help books incorporating cognitive-behavioral therapy principles, such as "Helping Your Anxious Child: A Step-by-Step Guide" and "Feeling Good," demonstrated significant symptom reduction when used by children with parental support[54].

A 2025 systematic review of recent developments in bibliotherapy for adolescent depression found that both creative and self-help bibliotherapy effectively reduce depressive symptoms, particularly when integrated with structured discussion or therapeutic approaches like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness[55].

Depression in adults: A comprehensive meta-analysis published in the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology reviewed 29 studies involving 2,061 adults and found that bibliotherapy demonstrated significant reduction in depression on a standalone basis and was equally effective as face-to-face therapy or group therapy[56]. The analysis indicated that bibliotherapy may be particularly effective when reading materials are specifically designed for depression treatment rather than general self-help books[56].

Intellectual disability: A 2015 study in Tehran, Iran, examined bibliotherapy's effects on children with intellectual disabilities. Following a three-year intervention involving weekly bibliotherapy sessions, researchers found significant improvements in social skills, communication skills, emotional understanding, and overall emotional well-being[57].

Siblings of children with disabilities: Bibliotherapy has proven effective in helping children with disabled siblings identify and express their feelings and develop coping strategies. Research by DeVries and Sunden (2019) emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for these children to interact with peers in similar situations within supportive environments[58].

Elderly populations: A 2006 study by Frieswijk and colleagues demonstrated bibliotherapy's beneficial impact on self-care behaviors among somewhat fragile seniors living in the community. The intervention improved self-management abilities and social well-being, potentially reducing future institutionalization risk[59].

Post-traumatic stress: Poetry therapy has shown effectiveness in reducing anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in heart attack patients. A study conducted in Iran found that poetry therapy sessions significantly decreased anxiety and PTSD symptoms in cardiac patients experiencing trauma from their medical events[60].

5.4 Advantages of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy offers several practical advantages as a mental health intervention:

Advantage	Description
Ease of use	Requires no specialized equipment; accessible anywhere
Low cost	Books are relatively inexpensive; many resources freely available
Low staffing demands	Can be self-administered or require minimal professional oversight
Privacy	Allows individuals to address mental health concerns discreetly
Accessibility	Overcomes barriers of geography, scheduling, and availability
Repeatability	Materials can be reviewed and revisited as needed
Cultural adaptability	Can be tailored to diverse cultural contexts and languages

Table 1: Key advantages of bibliotherapy as a mental health intervention

5.5 Limitations and Considerations

While bibliotherapy demonstrates significant efficacy, several limitations warrant consideration. The intervention's effectiveness can be moderated by factors such as text selection, reader characteristics (including literacy level, cultural background, and readiness for change), and the specific nature of the psychological concern being addressed[61].

Potential limitations include emotional triggering from certain narratives, variability in individual engagement and comprehension, and inconsistent long-term efficacy, particularly among adolescents[62]. Existing studies are further constrained by small sample sizes, brief intervention periods, and lack of standardized material selection criteria[62].

Bibliotherapy should not replace professional mental health treatment for serious psychological disorders but rather serve as a complement to traditional therapeutic approaches or as a preventive and developmental tool for individuals facing common life challenges[63].

6. Books and Stress Management

6.1 Reading as Stress Reduction

In an increasingly fast-paced world characterized by information overload, constant connectivity, and mounting pressures, stress has become a pervasive threat to mental and physical health. Reading offers a powerful, accessible, and scientifically validated tool for stress management and psychological restoration.

Landmark research conducted by Mindlab International at the University of Sussex demonstrated that reading for as few as six minutes can reduce stress levels by an impressive 68%[64]. This reduction surpasses other common stress-reduction activities:

Activity	Stress Reduction
Reading	68%
Listening to music	61%

Having a cup of tea/coffee	54%
Taking a walk	42%
Playing video games	21%

Table 2: Comparative effectiveness of stress reduction activities

Dr. David Lewis, the cognitive neuropsychologist who conducted the study, explains that reading is not merely a distraction but an active engagement of the imagination. As the words on the page stimulate creativity, readers enter what is essentially an altered state of consciousness, allowing them to escape the immediate stressors of daily life[64].

6.2 Physiological Mechanisms

The stress-reducing effects of reading operate through multiple physiological pathways:

Cortisol reduction: Reading has been shown to lower cortisol levels, the primary stress hormone that, when chronically elevated, contributes to numerous health problems including cardiovascular disease, immune dysfunction, and cognitive impairment[65].

Heart rate and blood pressure: Engaging in reading reduces heart rate and eases muscle tension, promoting physiological relaxation and activating the parasympathetic nervous system's "rest and digest" response[66].

Cognitive deceleration: Reading forces a slower, more deliberate pace of cognitive processing compared to the rapid, fragmented attention characteristic of digital media consumption. This cognitive slowing provides respite from the mental acceleration that contributes to stress and anxiety[67].

Attention restoration: According to Attention Restoration Theory, reading—particularly of narrative fiction—provides a form of "soft fascination" that allows the directed attention systems of the brain to rest and restore their capacity, reducing mental fatigue and stress[68].

6.3 Psychological Mechanisms

Beyond physiological effects, reading addresses stress through psychological pathways:

Escapism and perspective: Literature transports readers to different worlds, times, and perspectives, providing psychological distance from immediate stressors. This cognitive and emotional space allows for perspective-taking and reframing of personal challenges[69].

Mindfulness and presence: The focused attention required for reading promotes a mindful state, anchoring awareness in the present moment and interrupting the rumination and worry that fuel stress and anxiety[70].

Emotional processing: Reading about characters facing difficulties provides models for emotional regulation and coping, offering insights into how others navigate stress and adversity[71].

Sense of control: Unlike many real-world stressors, readers have complete control over the reading experience—when to read, what to read, how quickly to progress, when to pause or stop. This autonomy provides a sense of agency that counteracts the helplessness often associated with stress[72].

6.4 Reading as Preventive Self-Care

Regular reading habits serve not only as acute stress intervention but also as preventive self-care that builds psychological resilience over time. Individuals who maintain consistent reading practices report:

- Improved emotional regulation
- Enhanced ability to manage life stressors
- Greater psychological resilience
- Reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Improved sleep quality when reading before bed (particularly print reading, which lacks the sleep-disrupting blue light of screens)
- Stronger sense of meaning and purpose

The accessibility and simplicity of reading make it an ideal stress management tool. Unlike many wellness interventions requiring special equipment, training, or environments, reading can be practiced anywhere, at any time, at minimal cost. A book, a quiet moment, and the willingness to engage—these simple elements constitute a powerful stress management technology available to virtually everyone.

7. Benefits of Reading: Personal Growth and Development

7.1 Becoming Sensitive: Enhanced Emotional Awareness

Reading, particularly narrative fiction, significantly enhances emotional sensitivity and awareness. Through exposure to diverse characters, situations, and emotional landscapes, readers develop a more nuanced understanding of the full spectrum of human emotions[73].

Literature serves as an emotional gymnasium, providing safe opportunities to experience and process complex feelings vicariously through characters. Readers encounter joy, grief, anger, love, betrayal, hope, and countless other emotions, learning to recognize their manifestations, understand their triggers, and appreciate their complexity[74].

This emotional education extends beyond recognition to regulation. By observing how literary characters navigate emotional challenges, readers internalize strategies for managing their own emotional lives. They learn that emotions are neither good nor bad but rather sources of information about needs, values, and circumstances[75].

Research has demonstrated that readers show greater emotional awareness and emotional intelligence compared to non-readers, with measurable differences in their ability to identify and articulate emotional states in themselves and others[76].

7.2 Decision-Making Abilities: Cognitive Enhancement

Reading substantially enhances decision-making capabilities through multiple cognitive pathways. First, exposure to diverse narratives and scenarios expands the mental models and frameworks individuals use to interpret situations and evaluate options[77].

Books present readers with countless decision points made by characters under various circumstances. Observing the consequences of these decisions—both good and bad—provides a form of experiential learning without real-world risk. Readers develop pattern recognition for situational elements that should inform decision-making[78].

Second, reading improves analytical thinking and critical reasoning skills. Readers must continually evaluate evidence, assess character motivations, predict outcomes, and revise their understanding as new information emerges. These cognitive habits transfer to real-world decision-making contexts[79].

Third, reading diverse genres—from literary fiction to non-fiction analysis—exposes readers to different reasoning frameworks and decision-making methodologies. Business books offer strategic thinking models, philosophy texts provide ethical reasoning frameworks, and scientific writing demonstrates evidence-based analytical approaches[80].

Research indicates that regular readers demonstrate superior decision-making in several domains:

- Better evaluation of risks and benefits
- Enhanced ability to consider long-term consequences
- Greater consideration of multiple perspectives before deciding
- Improved capacity for probabilistic thinking
- Reduced susceptibility to common cognitive biases

7.3 Empathy Development: Understanding Others

Perhaps no benefit of reading has been more thoroughly researched than its impact on empathy—the capacity to understand and share the feelings of others. Extensive research demonstrates that reading, especially literary fiction, significantly enhances empathy and theory of mind[81].

Literary fiction, with its focus on complex characters, ambiguous motivations, and nuanced psychological portraits, requires readers to engage in sophisticated perspective-taking. Readers must infer characters' internal states, understand their motivations, predict their behaviors, and appreciate how their backgrounds shape their worldviews[82].

This cognitive work mirrors the mental processes involved in real-world empathy and social cognition. Brain imaging studies have shown that reading about characters' experiences activates the same neural networks involved in understanding actual people's mental states[83].

The empathy developed through reading extends beyond intellectual understanding to emotional resonance. Readers don't merely understand characters' feelings; they feel with them, experiencing emotional contagion that deepens their capacity for compassionate response[84].

Research has demonstrated that regular fiction readers score significantly higher on measures of empathy and social cognition, including:

1. Recognition of others' emotions from facial expressions
2. Accuracy in interpreting others' mental states and intentions
3. Sensitivity to subtle social cues and dynamics
4. Willingness to help others and engage in prosocial behavior
5. Reduced prejudice and increased acceptance of diverse perspectives

This empathy development carries profound implications for social cohesion, interpersonal relationships, and ethical behavior. In an increasingly polarized world, the capacity for empathy—understanding those different from ourselves—represents a crucial foundation for constructive dialogue and collaborative problem-solving[85].

7.4 Rational Thinking: Logic and Reasoning

Reading cultivates rational thinking and logical reasoning through multiple mechanisms. First, the act of following complex narratives or arguments requires readers to maintain logical consistency, recognize contradictions, identify fallacies, and evaluate the coherence of ideas[86].

Non-fiction reading, particularly in science, philosophy, and analytical fields, exposes readers to formal reasoning structures and evidence-based argumentation. Readers learn to distinguish between correlation and causation, recognize the limitations of anecdotal evidence, appreciate the importance of sample size and methodology, and evaluate the strength of arguments[87].

Fiction reading also contributes to rational thinking by presenting readers with complex problems that characters must reason through. Mystery novels, for instance, require readers to gather clues, form hypotheses, evaluate evidence, and revise theories—all fundamental components of rational inquiry[88].

Moreover, reading about diverse perspectives and contradictory viewpoints—when engaged with critically—helps readers develop intellectual humility and recognize the provisional nature of knowledge. This metacognitive awareness is essential for rational thinking, as it prevents overconfidence and promotes continued learning and revision of beliefs based on new evidence[89].

Regular readers demonstrate enhanced capabilities in:

- Logical reasoning and deductive thinking
- Critical evaluation of arguments and claims
- Recognition of logical fallacies and weak reasoning
- Ability to construct coherent, evidence-based arguments
- Intellectual flexibility and willingness to revise beliefs
    - Appreciation for complexity and nuance rather than simplistic binary thinking

7.5 Taking a Stand: Empowerment and Agency

Reading empowers individuals to develop informed positions on important issues and the confidence to articulate and defend those positions. This empowerment operates through several mechanisms:

Knowledge acquisition: Reading provides the factual foundation necessary for informed opinions. Readers gain historical context, scientific understanding, diverse perspectives, and analytical frameworks that enable sophisticated engagement with complex issues[90].

Moral and ethical development: Exposure to literature exploring ethical dilemmas, moral complexity, and philosophical questions helps readers develop their own value systems and ethical reasoning capabilities[91].

Models of courage and conviction: Literature provides countless examples of characters and real individuals who stood for their principles despite opposition, offering inspiration and practical models for ethical courage[92].

Confidence through understanding: The deep understanding gained through reading builds confidence in one's ability to engage meaningfully with important issues, reducing intimidation and fostering willingness to participate in civic discourse[93].

Communication skills: Reading enhances vocabulary, rhetorical awareness, and argumentative skills—practical tools necessary for effectively articulating one's positions and engaging in persuasive communication[94].

Research indicates that regular readers show:

- Greater civic engagement and political participation
- Increased likelihood of volunteering and community involvement
- Enhanced ability to advocate for personal and community needs
- Greater willingness to speak up against injustice
- Stronger sense of personal agency and self-efficacy

The empowerment fostered by reading extends beyond individual benefit to social transformation. Historically, literacy and reading have been recognized as threats by oppressive regimes precisely because they enable individuals to think independently, question authority, access alternative perspectives, and organize for collective action[95].

8. Synthesis and Recommendations

8.1 Balancing Digital and Traditional Reading

The evidence presented throughout this paper reveals a complex landscape of reading in the digital age. Digital gadgets have undeniably transformed the reading experience, offering unprecedented access, convenience, and functionality. However, these advantages come with significant challenges: increased distractions, physiological discomfort from extended screen exposure, and measurably reduced comprehension and retention compared to print reading.

Readers must thoughtfully consider their reading goals and contexts when choosing between print and digital formats:

For deep comprehension and retention: Print books remain superior, particularly for complex, analytical reading that demands sustained focus and integration of information across extended passages.

For convenience and accessibility: Digital formats excel in situations requiring portability, adjustable formatting, instant access to references, or cost-effectiveness.

For stress management and therapeutic reading: Print books offer advantages due to their lack of distractions, absence of sleep-disrupting blue light, and enhanced immersive qualities that facilitate the altered state of consciousness associated with stress reduction.

For academic and professional development: A hybrid approach may prove optimal, using print for primary learning materials while leveraging digital tools for supplementary resources, quick references, and collaborative annotation.

8.2 Cultivating Reading Habits in a Digital Age

Given the profound benefits of reading for cognitive development, mental health, empathy, decision-making, and personal empowerment, cultivating and maintaining reading habits represents a crucial investment in individual and collective well-being. Specific recommendations include:

1. **Establish dedicated reading time:** Create protected periods for reading free from digital distractions, ideally daily or several times weekly.
2. **Diversify reading materials:** Engage with varied genres, formats, and perspectives to maximize the cognitive and empathetic benefits of reading.
3. **Model reading behavior:** Parents, educators, and leaders should demonstrate the value of reading through their own visible engagement with books.
4. **Create reading-conducive environments:** Designate physical spaces optimized for reading—comfortable seating, appropriate lighting, minimal distractions.

5. **Limit recreational screen time:** Particularly for children and adolescents, balancing screen time with reading time supports cognitive development and attention capacity.
6. **Integrate bibliotherapy:** Healthcare providers, educators, and counselors should consider incorporating bibliotherapy as a complement to traditional interventions.
7. **Teach media literacy:** Education should explicitly address the differences between print and digital reading, helping individuals make informed choices about reading formats.
8. **Leverage technology judiciously:** Use digital tools to enhance rather than replace reading—audiobooks during commutes, e-readers for travel, online book communities for discussion—while recognizing their limitations for deep comprehension.

8.3 Implications for Education and Policy

The findings presented in this paper carry significant implications for educational practice and policy development. Educational institutions should:

Maintain and strengthen print book access: Despite the appeal of digital resources, schools and libraries should prioritize maintaining robust physical book collections, recognizing their superior support for deep comprehension and cognitive development.

Teach strategic format selection: Rather than advocating exclusively for print or digital reading, education should help students understand when each format serves best, developing metacognitive awareness about their own reading processes.

Incorporate bibliotherapy: Schools should integrate bibliotherapy into counseling services and social-emotional learning curricula, leveraging literature's therapeutic potential to support student mental health.

Address attention capacity: Educational approaches should explicitly work to rebuild and strengthen attention spans undermined by excessive screen time, using sustained reading as a primary intervention.

Balance technology integration: While digital tools offer educational value, schools should resist the impulse to digitize all reading, maintaining balance between screen-based and print-based learning.

8.4 Future Research Directions

Despite substantial research on reading in the digital age, several questions warrant further investigation:

- Longitudinal studies examining how childhood reading habits (print vs. digital) affect adult cognitive capacities, empathy, and mental health
- Research on optimal ratios of print to digital reading for different age groups and purposes
- Investigation of emerging technologies (e-ink displays, augmented reality) and their cognitive impacts compared to traditional screens and print
- Cross-cultural studies examining how digital reading impacts differ across linguistic and cultural contexts
- Development of standardized protocols for bibliotherapy implementation across clinical and educational settings
- Exploration of how specific genres, writing styles, and narrative structures optimize therapeutic and cognitive benefits

Conclusion

This comprehensive analysis of reading in the digital age reveals a fundamental tension: while digital gadgets have democratized access to reading materials and provided unprecedented convenience, they simultaneously introduce challenges that can undermine the very cognitive and psychological benefits that make reading so valuable.

The evidence is clear and consistent. Digital reading, compared to print reading, is associated with reduced comprehension and retention, increased distraction and fragmented attention, physiological discomfort from screen exposure, and shallower cognitive processing. The "screen inferiority effect" represents a robust finding across diverse populations, age groups, and contexts[96].

Yet print reading maintains its advantages precisely because it demands and develops the cognitive capacities most needed in contemporary society: sustained attention, deep analytical thinking, imaginative visualization, empathetic perspective-taking, and integrated comprehension. Books, whether used for education, entertainment, or therapeutic purposes, offer unparalleled benefits for mental health, stress management, empathy development, rational thinking, and personal empowerment.The choice between print and digital reading should not be framed as an either-or dichotomy but rather as a strategic decision informed by purpose, context, and goals. Readers who understand the cognitive trade-offs can make intentional choices that optimize their reading experiences and outcomes.

Perhaps most importantly, the research presented here underscores that reading itself—the sustained, imaginative engagement with written narrative and ideas—remains one of the most powerful tools available for human flourishing. In an age of information overload, constant distraction, and increasing polarization, the capacity to read deeply, think critically, feel empathetically, and act courageously has never been more essential.

As we navigate the evolving landscape of reading technologies, we must remain vigilant stewards of the cognitive, emotional, and social benefits that reading provides. The convenience of digital formats should enhance rather than replace the depth of print reading. Technology should serve the profound human needs that reading fulfills rather than diminishing the quality of engagement that makes reading transformative. Reading is not merely a leisure activity or academic skill; it is a fundamental technology of human consciousness, a vehicle for empathy and understanding, a pathway to mental health and personal growth, and a foundation for rational discourse and democratic participation. Protecting and promoting reading—in whatever format best serves these purposes—represents an investment in individual well-being and collective flourishing that our increasingly complex world desperately needs.

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Blurring Boundaries and Shifting Selves: Indian English Fiction in the Age of Globalization

Dr.Ganesh B. Sonawane

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Associate Professor,Dept. of English
S.P.J.College,Pabal,Shirur,Pune
Email- ganeshsonawane@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr.Ganesh B. Sonawane
Associate Professor,Dept. of English
S.P.J.College,Pabal,Shirur,Pune
Email- ganeshsonawane@gmail.com

Abstract:

Indian English fiction in the era of globalization engages deeply with blurred boundaries and shifting identities. Globalization refers to the worldwide connectivity of social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of human life. In the words of Marshall McLuhan, the world has become a "global village," and the notion of "time and space" is no longer relevant. Every aspect of human life is now influenced by globalization, including literature. The process of globalization has reshaped the cultural, economic, and literary dimensions of contemporary life. Indian English fiction reflects these transformations through themes such as identity crisis, diaspora, hybridity, and socio-economic disparity. This paper examines how globalization influences narrative structures and thematic concerns in Indian English fiction, with reference to Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh, and Aravind Adiga. The paper is a sincere attempt to show that Indian English fiction has become an important platform for discussing the discontents of globalization, such as the blurring of borders and the fluidity of identity.

Key Words: Bluring Boundaries, Identity Crisis, Hybridity ,Diaspora, Globalization, Indian English Fiction etc.

1. Introduction

In a true sense, India accepted the global economic policy. In post-1991 India, rapid economic liberalization led to increased cultural exchange, migration, and transnational experiences. These transformations are deeply reflected in Indian English fiction. Globalization has redefined the relationship between the local and the global. In the paradigm shift of the global means of transportation and communication technology, the borders of nations are blurred and identity of citizen began to covert from local to global. This fluidity of identity gave an emergence of identity crisis on global level. As Salman Rushdie observes, *"The past is a country from which we have all emigrated"* (Rushdie 87), emphasizing the fluidity of identity.

In the process of globalization, the rise of multiculturalism offered the shifting of selves. The evolving nature of identity is well described by Stuart Hall, "identity is a production… always in process" (Hall 222). The recent scholarship also confirms that globalization produces "complex, fragmented, and hybrid identities" and they are substantially reflected in Indian literature.

As Globalization is a multilayered and multidisciplinary term, understanding globalization requires interdisciplinary frameworks. Globalization and cultural study has an inseparable correlation. Arjun Appadurai's concept of "scapes" explains how global cultural flows reshape identity and imagination. Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha argues that identity emerges in a "third space," where cultures interact and transform. He notes that nations themselves are narrative constructs that lose fixed origins. Literature is the mirror of socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural aspects. The interaction and transformation between cultures is represented in literature produced in the era of globalization. Fredric Jameson further connects globalization with late capitalism, influencing literary production and global readership. In this sense, today's writers and the readers have become globalized.

One of the crucial concerns of Indian English fiction is identity fragmentation. Indian English novels have been representing this issue in very clear and vivid way. The immigrants have to face the conflict regarding their identities especially their next generation. For instance in The Namesake, Gogol Ganguli faces his double identity- the pet name 'Gogol' and good name 'Nikhil'.He has to reject his family heritage in order to adopt a normal American identity. Jhumpa Lahiri writes, *"He is afraid to be Nikhil, someone he doesn't know"* (Lahiri 76). This reflects the tension between inherited and adopted identities. Similarly, in Jasmine, Bharati Mukherjee portrays identity as fluid: *"I have had a husband for each of the women I have been"* (Mukherjee 77).Thus it is observed that globalization shifts Indian fiction from nationalist concerns toward personal identity and global belonging. Indian English writers in the global age, project the themes of Diaspora, Hybridity, and Transnational Identity. The writers born in one country and settled in the other have been benefitted by global readership as they represent Diaspora.

Robin Cohen defines Diaspora as a condition of dispersion and cultural mixing, central to global literature. It is clear that the Diasporic writing embodies the effects of globalization. In Interpreter of Maladies, Jhumpa Lahiri writes, *"There are times I am bewildered by each mile I have traveled…"* (Lahiri 197), expressing emotional displacement.

The hybridization of identity is the result of blurred boundaries of the nations. To understand the fact one should be global in outlook. Therefore, Rushdie in Midnight's Children, states,"*To understand me, you'll have to swallow a world"* (Rushdie 4), symbolizing hybrid identity.

Globalization has both pros and cons. Globalization has created social and economic divide. It has transformed Indian cities into spaces of opportunity and inequality. In urban area there are a lot of opportunities whereas in rural places there is scarcity of the resources responsible for growth. Global and urban India is socially divided. In The White Tiger, Aravind Adiga writes, *"India is two countries in one: an India of Light, and an India of Darkness"* (Adiga 12).This socio-economic divide has created inequality. Despite economic growth, globalization intensifies inequality. The rich people have become richer and the poor ones have become poorer. The hierarchy can never bring equality. In The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy illustrates the fact of persistent hierarchy, *"Big Man the Laltain, Small Man the Mombatti"* (Roy 210). The emergence of neo-colonial power structure is one of the significant effect of globalization. Hence Aijaz Ahmad argues that globalization often reproduces neo-colonial structures of power.

In today's globalized world, the fixed boundaries that once separated nations have become increasingly dissolved. With the growth of strong global networks, the world is now often described as a "global village," where connections transcend geographical limits. Consequently, the idea of a nation is not fixed but keeps changing. The national identity is something created rather than natural In The Shadow Lines, Amitav Ghosh highlights the artificial nature of national divisions by stating that "the lines that create nations are imaginary" (Ghosh 211). This suggests that national borders are not natural realities but are constructed through human perception and political processes.This idea closely reflects Benedict Anderson's theory of "imagined communities." In his work Imagined Communities, Anderson explains that nations are not physical entities but are socially created through shared beliefs, collective memory, and cultural practices. People feel connected to a nation not because of direct interaction with all its members, but because they share common narratives and symbols.

The impact of globalization is not concern alone with the themes of Indian English writing but it does have an association with the shifting language and narrative. Indian English fiction reflects linguistic hybridity shaped by globalization. Salman Rushdie notes, *"The English language ceased to be the sole possession of the English"* (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* 64).More to this, a single text has multiple voices. Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia (the presence of multiple voices, perspectives, and forms of language within a single text) explains the coexistence of multiple voices within such texts. Language in literature never comes alone. It carries values, beliefs and existence of the people who use it. The writer brings together different characters belonging to different cultural ,social and linguistic backgrounds having their own voices. These voices may bring different perspectives regarding the aspects if human life.

To sum up, Indian English fiction serves as a powerful platform for understanding globalization and its pros and cons. Through themes of transformation in identity and culture, it reflects the complexities of contemporary life. As the process of globalization has blurred the borders, literature represents the shifting nature of identity, making Indian English fiction a vital field of study in global literary discourse.

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The Society and the Culture in Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*

Shashikala Walmiki

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Associate Professor, Department of English
PDEA's Annasaheb Magar College Hadapsar
E-Mail Id: shw315@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Shashikala Walmiki
Associate Professor, Department of English
PDEA's Annasaheb Magar College Hadapsar
E-Mail Id: shw315@gmail.com

Abstract-

Haruki Murakami's 'Kafka on the Shore' is his 10th novel first published in Japan in 2002 with Japanese title: Umibe no Kafuka. It was translated to English in 2005 and in 2006 he got both the 'Franz Kafka Prize' and 'World fantasy Award' for the novel. This paper presents the key aspects of society and culture as depicted in the novel that include: alienation, individuality and marginalization, postmodern isolation, world mixed of mundane, the supernatural and the myth, a culture mixed with the pop culture and old religious traditions of Shinto spirituality, the untouched raw nature with modern skyscrapers and fancy bridges, and postmodern existentialism with their search for identity. Set in the modern-day Japan (early 2000s), alternating between Tokyo and the coastal city of Takamatsu on Shikoku island, it features a mix of realistic, urban spaces and surreal, metaphorical locations. The novel demonstrates Murakami's typical blend of popular culture, mundane detail, magical realism, suspense, humor, an involved plot, and potent sexuality. Characters are typically misfits or wanderers who exist on the margins, seeking identity and purpose through mystical experiences rather than societal conformity. The society in the novel is not just a backdrop, but a fragmented entity that drives the characters toward introspection, solitude, and magical encounters.

Key Words: Alienation, Marginality, Magical Realism, Hybrid Culture, Surrealism

1. Introduction

Haruki Murakami's 'Kafka on the Shore' is about the journey of two major characters Kafka Tamura (the name that the boy invents as a runaway) a fifteen years old boy and an old man in sixties Saturo Nakata. Kafka is a precocious teenager and Nakata is almost a teenager mentally. Kafka, serves as the narrator for half of the chapters in the book. At the opening of the story, Kafka has just turned fifteen, living with his father being abandoned by his mother and an adopted sister when he was four years old. Murakami naming his protagonist Kafka reflects his love for the German-language Jewish Czech writer and novelist Franz Kafka. The boy is obsessed by fate as his cruel and distant father Koichi Tamura has an oedipal prediction that Kafka would kill his father and have sex with his mother and sister, and is plagued by a fear that he would fulfill the prediction made by his father. This fear not only sets Kafka on his transformative journey but also makes him worry that every woman he meets could be his mother or sister. He constantly feels guilt, worrying that his dreams and desires have the power to affect things in real life. Kafka attempts to make himself stronger and smarter by constantly working out and reading, but he worries that he will always be unhappy because of his family. Although Kafka prides himself on his self-sufficiency and independence, he steers through cautiously as a runaway but he eventually forms close bonds with Oshima, Miss Saeki, and Sakura, and, with their help, he begins to make peace with his longing for his absent mother.

Nakata on the other hand serves as the subject of half of the chapters in the book (although, unlike Kafka's chapters, Nakata's chapters are written in the third person). During World War II, when he was a young boy, Nakata was struck by a mysterious illness that left him in a coma for many weeks. When he awoke, Nakata had lost all of his memories as well as the ability to read. As an adult, Nakata leads a solitary life in Tokyo. Because of the childhood incident, Nakata has lost the ability to understand abstract concepts, and sometimes speaks in the third person, which many people he meets find it uncomfortable. He adds to his government subsidy with money that he earns using a special power: Nakata can speak to cats, and uses this talent to find missing pets for a small fee. Nakata can't remember what happened to him during the coma, but he has a vague feeling that his mind briefly travelled to another world, a belief that intensifies over the course of the novel. Nakata feels guided by fate to find the mysterious entrance stone though he doesn't know what it is.

To come to the topic of the paper, the society and culture in the novel, it is quite natural that literary works consciously or unconsciously hold a mirror to the society reflecting the social and cultural issues like inequality, power dynamics, and injustice, life style and food habits. For example, Charles Dickens' novels highlight the harsh realities of the Industrial Revolution and the evils of the contemporary society, while Orwell's *1984* explored the dangers of an omnipotent state and Jane Austen's novels give us the contemporary domestic lifestyle and society, to quote a few.

Haruki Murakami's novel 'Kafka on the Shore' with all its unique qualities of the modern society in general and of Japan in particular also reflects the contemporary society and culture. As the modern world is swarmed with the ecological to psychological issues and Japan is not an exception. So the story of the novel deals with the lingering trauma of World War II, particularly through Nakata's story, representing a lost generation struggling with memory and violence. The novel also gives an account of the contemporary society and the culture with reference to the Shinto and Buddhist religion that are practiced in Japan and the also with reference to the traditional literature despite reference to a number of the Western literature and music. Along with the sandwiches and pancakes, it also refers to the *udon*; thick noodles that are used in Japanese cuisine. As Kafka arrives in Shikoku what he remembers is, it is a *udon* central and relishes the dish before he sets out to his next destination. He arrives in the Komura Memorial Library, he meets Oshima, the librarian, and Oshma describes the library, "We specialize in certain genres of books, mainly old books by *Tanka* and *haiku* poets." (p17, Murakami, 2012) *Tanka* and *Haiku* are Japanese genre of poetry. Though Kafka starts reading Burton's translation of The Arabian Nights, his next preference for reading is Natsume Soseki who is considered *one of the greatest writers in modern Japanese history. So there is a blend of classical Japanese literature with the classical western literature in the novel. The entire novel is replete with references to Greek and Western classical literary works such as Aristophenes', Shakespeare's, Franz Kafka's, Yeats' Eliot' et al.* Further the characters like Colonel Sanders and Johnnie Walker, appearing as supernatural entities, symbolize the impersonal, manipulative forces of consumerism, capitalism, and the state in postmodern society. Besides, the protagonists—a runaway boy (Kafka) and a mentally challenged old man (Nakata)—are outsiders, highlighting the difficulty of finding authentic connection in a disconnected society that is another aspect of the society portrayed in the novel.

The novel is also a post-colonial respond to the dominance of American culture over Japanese. (Karimzade, 2023) We can find it in characters like Jonnie Walker and Colonel Sanders. They are icons from American pop culture, but in fact they are some magical concepts, not having a real physical body which control and have the duty to keep the balance in the world. Colonel Sanders introduced himself as "Shape I may take, converse I may, but neither god nor Buddha am I, rather an insensate being whose heart thus differs from that of a man" (Murakami, 2012) and as he himself mentioned, it is a quote form a Japanese book; Veda Akianari's Tales of Moonlight and Rain. This ironical characterization comes out be quite humiliating as the way American culture is taking the surface of Japanese culture.

As for the Japanese culture, it is a harmonious blend of ancient traditions and modern innovation, centered on the core concept of *wa* (harmony). Key elements of Japanese culture include reverence for nature, strict social etiquette (bowing, gift-giving), tea ceremonies, and a mix of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs. Traditional arts, cuisine, and pop culture thrive alongside respectful social hierarchies. (Wikipedia) Throughout the novel, Murakami portrays nature not merely as a backdrop, but as a living, responsive force - a site of healing, revelation, and transformation. (Roy,2025) The forest in Kochi in the novel is not only the part of setting but it is a pathway to another world and described in its dense and dark state impenetrable without a compass and quite intimidating to be lost. Kafka in the novel travels from this world to another world and comes back in the forest guarded and directed by two soldiers after a temporary stay.

Shinto and Buddhism are the primary religions of Japan. Shinto is an ethnic religion focusing on ceremonies and rituals. Shintoism in the novel is woven into the narrative through themes of animism, spiritual "border-blurring" between worlds, and the presence of *kami* (spirits) (Wikipedia) as nature worship rather than rigid dogma. It focuses on the liminal space between consciousness and the unconscious, reflecting traditional Japanese beliefs in a non-material, interconnected reality In Shinto, followers believe that *kami* – Shinto deities or spirits – are present throughout nature, including rocks, trees, and mountains. Humans can also be considered to possess a *kami*. One of the goals of Shinto is to maintain or strengthen the connection between humans, nature, and *kami*. (Wikipedia) The religion developed in Japan prior to the 6th century CE, after which point followers built shrines to worship *kami*. This aspect of the Shinto very well fits in the novel particularly in that incident where Kafka is lying unconscious in the night at 11 pm near a Shinto shrine with a blot of blood on his T shirt. It is the same night his father was killed and Kafka fears if it was him who killed his father bringing into reality his father's prediction about Kafka who would kill his father. Though there is no possibility in terms of the physical distance but it is interpreted that his *kami* must have fulfilled his desire.

Shintoism in the novel is also woven into the narrative through themes of animism, spiritual "border-blurring" between worlds, and the presence of *kami* as nature worship rather than rigid dogma. It focuses on the liminal space between consciousness and the unconscious, reflecting traditional Japanese beliefs in a non-material, interconnected reality. Shintoism's core, polytheistic nature worship, is reflected in the supernatural events like fish raining from the sky. The character of Nakata, who can talk to cats, represents a connection to early Shinto roots and animal spirits. The character named "Crow" acts as a divine, guiding spirit, often associated with the *Yatagarasu* (three-legged crow) (Wikipedia) in Japanese mythology, representing a Shinto god showing the way. The novel frequently explores "boundary" areas—such as forests, the library, and the "other side"—where characters navigate between reality and the spirit world, embodying the Shinto lack of a strict division between material and spiritual. The lingering effects of World War II, treated as an "inheritance" or collective trauma, are linked to traditional Shinto practices of connecting to the past.

As for **Buddhism,** that developed in India around the 6th and 4th centuries BCE and eventually spread through the Sinosphere and South East Asia. It arrived in Japan during the 6th century CE, where it was initially unpopular. Most Japanese people were unable to understand the difficult philosophical messages present in Buddhism; however, an

appreciation for the religion's art and its close relation to China led to Buddhism growing in popularity by the 8th century (Wikipedia). **Buddhism** in this novel is integrated through themes of Karma, the transience of memory and the interconnectedness of reality and the subconscious. In the novel, the characters navigate a world where actions in the past lives dictate present fates, reflecting a 'quiet endurance' against suffering and an 'alternative reality.' Nakata becomes an empty slate after the incident in the Rice Ball Mountains and endures life with his ability to talk to cats and survives on the subsidy he gets from the governor and leaves this world in a surreal way with a creature like a sloth coming out of him. Miss Saiek, a middle aged woman, runs the Komura Memorial Library. The library is a special place for her—it is named after Miss Saeki's first and only love, a young man in the Komura family who died at the age of twenty. Miss Saeki and Komura were childhood sweethearts who believed they were meant to be together. As a teenager, Miss Saeki wrote the song "Kafka on the Shore" to express her love for Komura. Now, the song is a painful reminder of the past. Miss Saeki has never overcome the pain of losing her first love and remains aloof from others and lives in the past, Kafka is surprised to know about her and is surprised, "--- Miss Saeki still lives in that frozen time?" (p173, Murakami, 2012)

Other key Buddhist elements in the novel are to begin with *karma and fate* (my italics): Kafka and Sakura who is a 21-year-old girl reminds Kafka of his lost sister who was six years older to him. Kafka and Sakura discuss how coincidences and chance meetings are actually karmic, with their lives fated by previous actions. The next key element of Buddhism in the novel is the world of shadows and memory, a purgatory-like space reminding the Buddhist concepts of afterlife where characters like Miss. Saeki are trapped and unable to let go of the past. Further one can talk about the *detachment and suffering* (my italics) of the Buddhism that the novel explores. The character of Nakata, a 'dim-witted' yet enlightened figure who resembles a disciple of the Buddha. He navigates the world with minimal attachment in contrast to the immense suffering caused by the attachment of other characters like Saeki. Lastly the *'quiet endurance'* (my italics) that Kafka displays is commendable. Kafka is constantly advised to be the "toughest fifteen-year old in the world" (p4, Murakami 2012) by a boy named Crow, an alter ego of Kafka or that Kafka has created an entity and and also advised to find the strength to endure "unfairness, misfortune, sadness, mistakes, misunderstandings" with a calm, accepting attitude, a core concept in the philosophical search for peace.

There is a reference the **entrance stone** in novel, that is a white, circular, supernatural object about the size of a vinyl record that acts as a portal between the human world and another, spiritual, or subconscious realm. It is central to Nakata's quest. After Nakata kills Johnnie Walker to save the cat Mimi and Johnnie Walker too wanted Nakata to kill him as he was too tired of his life. Nakata goes to the police and confesses his crime but the policeman doesn't take him seriously. Nakata then starts his journey to find the stone and reaches Takamatsu with the truck driver Hoshino. The stone symbolizes the boundary between consciousness and unconsciousness, allowing spirits to travel between worlds. Nakata intends to "open" it as part of his metaphysical journey. The stone is linked to a mysterious incident in a 1944 declassified document involving school children losing consciousness. It is also connected to Ms. Saeki's song "The Drowning Girl's Fingers Search for the Entrance Stone" and is closely tied to the themes of memory, fate, and entering a "brand new world". Nakata and Hoshino seek this object, which is hidden, and its opening signals a, change in the characters' fates. When the stone is collected or removed from its place it was symbolic of opening the gates to the other world. Hoshino tells Colonel Sanders, "------ Nakata and I managed to flip it over so that entrance thing opened up. Lightening was flashing like crazy outside, and the stone weighed a ton. ….." (p363, Murakami, 2012) It is at this point of the time that Miss. Saeki, and Nakata die and also it opens doors to Kafka to have an entry into the other world temporarily and comes back from it too to have a new life. The entire episode of the stone is very Japanese or Eastern so to say.

The novel is set in the Japan in early 2000s and it also has references to the Japan in 1944 in alternate chapters till chapter 12, when a strange incident had occurred at the Rice Ball Hill. Sixteen school children and a school teacher witnessed an unidentified foreign object in the form of silver lightning in the sky that made all the children fall to the ground unconscious. The novelist here gives a reference to the infamous nuclear bombing that took place in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where the inhabitants of those towns witnessed the same silver lightning in the sky when the bomb was dropped to ground.

The **magical realism that the novel has in the s**urreal events (fish and leech raining, talking cats) occurring in the real world, reflect a blend of traditional Japanese animism and modern anxiety.

Pop Culture vs. High Culture that Murakami juxtaposes in terms of high culture (classical music) with pop culture (Johnnie Walker, Colonel Sanders) represents the commercialization of modern existence and the fragmentation of meaning. **Identity and Folklore in the** concept of ***Ikiryo*** (a living ghost or spirit projection) is central, connecting the characters to Japanese folklore while exploring the flow or fluidity of self and memory.

There is the **cultural hybridity as t**he novel is heavily influenced by both Eastern and Western culture, featuring a pastiche of references including jazz, classical music, and literature (e.g., Beethoven, Mozart, Sophocles, Aristophanes,), blended with modern Japanese landscapes (skyscrapers and fancy bridges). The narrative suggests a return to the wild or nature (Shikoku Island and Kochi forest) is necessary to escape the destructive, sterile nature of modern society, with nature serving as an active, conscious, and often healing presence. Characters are in a continuous search for identity and meaning, struggling with fate and the concept of a "blank slate" (as seen in Nakata), navigating a world where past and present, dream and reality intersect.

Murakami was born in Kyoto, Japan (then under the Allied occupation), during the *post–World War II baby boom* and was raised in Nishinomiya, Ashiya and Kobe. He is an only child. His father was the son of a Buddhist priest, and his mother is the daughter of an Osaka merchant. Both taught Japanese literature. His father was involved in the Second

Sino-Japanese War, and was deeply traumatized by it, which would, in turn, affect Murakami. Murakami was heavily influenced in childhood by Western culture, particularly Russian music and literature. He grew up reading a wide range of works by European and American writers, such as Franz Kafka, Gustave Flaubert, Charles Dickens, Kurt Vonnegut, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Richard Brautigan and Jack Kerouac. These Western influences distinguish Murakami from the majority of other Japanese writers. Murakami studied drama at Waseda University in Tokyo. His first job was at a record store. Shortly before finishing his studies, he opened a coffee house and jazz bar, Peter Cat, in Kokubunji, Tokyo, from 1974 to 1981. Murakami met Yoko Takahashi in Tokyo and they married straight out of university. She ran the jazz bar with Murakami in Tokyo, having more business experience than he did when it first opened. (Wikipedia) The novel is full of references to music and the literature Murakami had read. When Kafka leaves home he carries with him the Walkman and he is seen constantly listening to the music even in the Komura Memorial Library. When he visits the Kochi forest with Oshima they both listen to and discuss Schubert's sonatas, Oshima says "That's why I listen to Schubert while driving. As I said, it's because all the performances are imperfect. A dense, artistic imperfection stimulates your consciousness, keeps you alert." (p119, Murakami, 2012) There are also so many references to other classical music like music by Beethoven and pop/rock, such as Radiohead, The Beatles, and various jazz artists

Marakami also explores Japanese culture through a lens of postmodern alienation, blending traditional Shinto animism with Western consumerism, surrealism and queer identities. The society depicted is one of the isolation where protagonists like Kafka and Nakata escape rigid, traditional social pressures and create their identities in a surreal and dreamlike landscapes. The theme of isolation and alienation is observed in the characters of Kafka and Nakata. Kafka is a runaway teenager and the way he steers through the world at that tender age seems unbelievable. He keeps himself aloof in school and works out his escape from his father. He has a perfect plan to avoid the attraction of the attention while packing and keep things to an essential limit. As he had been planning to leave he prepares well advance to face the world outside alone. He builds a wall around him is school to avoid all albeit he would unwisely leak his plans. He starts working on his body to project himself a seventeen-year-old at fifteen. He is a misfit in school for he comes out to be matured beyond his age throughout the novel. Because he has spent most of his life in books and in the library at a very early age as an escape from his abandoned and traumatic state after his mother leaves him and his father with his adopted sister six years senior to him. His plans after leaving the house is also to spend his days reading in the libraries in a quiet corner and fortunately he finds refuge in Komura Memorial library as an employee. Thus Kafka along with Nakata live on the borders of society that highlights the profound loneliness of the modern world. Nakata who is mentally impaired and with a profession of finding lost cats with his ability to talk to cats for extra money is also a lonely character. He always speaks objectively and instead of I, he starts with his name Nakata: "Nakata is all alone. I have no family. And no job. I live on sub city from the Governor." (p178, Murakami, 2012)

The novel also focuses on marginalized figures such as transgender or queer Oshima who is portrayed with rich inner life and is central to the plot. He suffers from hemophilia, dresses like a man. When two ladies from the government come for their research on the libraries, they accuse Oshima of being "a typical sexist, patriarchal male" (p191, Murakami, 2012) Otherwise calm and quiet replies quite aggressively, "My body is physically female, but my mind is completely male" Oshima goes on. "Emotionally I live as a man. So I suppose your notion being a 'historical example' may be correct. And who knows if I am a notorious sexist. But I am not a lesbian, even though I dress this way. My sexual preference is for men. In other words, I'm a female, but I'm gay. I do anal sex, and have never used my vagina for sex. My clitoris is sensitive, but my breasts aren't. I don't have periods." (p193, Murakami, 2012) This was quite a forward thinking for the 2002 publication. But the novel provides a voice to the marginalized highlighting their recovery from the marginalized state to self-identity.

The another aspect of society that reflects in the novel is characters frequently grappling with traumatic past events, reflecting Japan's need to come to terms with historical trauma and memory loss. There is a reference to a strange incident of II World War in the alternate chapters in the novel till chapter twelve. The rest of novel has the alternative chapters by two protagonists Kafka and Nakata and their encounters. Nakata is the one who is the victim of the incident and turned into mentally underdeveloped. Among the other characters, Sakura, a twenty-one-year-old young girl who is also a runaway and works as a hairdresser and for Kafka, she is his lost sister. Miss. Saeki lives in her past. So all the characters are the victim of their pasts, in one way or the other and they are all struggling to survive in the present to come to terms with the past. Besides Miss Saeki also a part of the oedipal curse of Kafka, as Kafka sees his lost mother in her. Miss Saeki neither acknowledges nor denies his presumption. Kafka has frozen his lost mother in time when she left him and his mother is an eternal figure as a young woman who can be his lover. This too is quite beyond time concept that Murakami presents in the novel. Kafka imagines Miss Saeki as a young girl and has his sexual desires for her in his imagination. The spirit of Miss. Saeki is very calm and silent and her silence can be understood as a form of sexual repression which can be expressed in the world of the spirits. She never talks about her past to anyone.

The spiritual world of the novel is oddly intertwined with Western pop culture featuring figures like Colonel Sanders and Johnnie Walker (a cat killer) illustrating a blend of globalized, sometimes hollow consumerism. The key, surreal characters are modeled after corporate tycoons like Johnnie Walker and Colonel Sanders, acting as agents of change or chaos. Johnny Walker (a brand of Scotch whisky produced by Diageo in Scotland) is the cat killer and the chapter sixteen gives a detailed account of the gory act of Johnnie Walker cutting the cats with scalpel and plucking out the heart of the cat and relishing it. He says, "I'm killing them to collect their souls. Which I use to create a special kind of flute and when I blow that flute it'll let me collect even larger souls --" (p151, Murakami, 2012). The colonel Sanders

who was the founder KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) referring to the influence of the American culture in Japan. He also refers to the characters that are unrealistic and imaginary. Colonel Sanders says, "----- I'm neither god, nor a Buddha, nor a human being. I'm something else again – *a concept."* (p363, Murakami, 2012). Specific brands and products seems to have been mentioned to evoke a sense of modern, urban Japanese reality.

To conclude, the novel highlights the stories of characters often sidelined by society, including those with transgender identities (Oshima), intellectual disabilities (Nakata), an abandoned fake self-named teenager (Kafka) and a middle aged reclusive Ikiryo woman (Miss Saeki) who are otherwise considered "odd" or "other." This is another aspect of modern society in general and the world presented in the novel reflects the same as well. All the characters in the novel grapple with their identities. So there is a self and an 'other' in all the characters. "They are misfits as they do not conform to the norm of regular characters in Japanese literary fiction." (Thakur and Khurana, 2020). But Murakami doesn't present them as helpless or struggling to be assimilated into the mainstream. He presents them as strong and independent characters that have accepted their reality and living their lives with their otherness with complete control over it. This reflects the modernity prevalent in the contemporary Japanese society even in the tiny details of their clothes that reflect the modern society because there is no reference to the traditional clothes such as *Kimono* or *Yokata* worn by women and men.

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Utopia in Arthur C. Clarke's The City and the Stars (1956)

Dr. Prashant Sampatrao Shinde

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Abstract:

This study examines the representation of utopia in Arthur C. Clarke's seminal science fiction novel The City and the Stars (1956). Clarke, a visionary of the space age, integrates scientific imagination with philosophical inquiry to explore humanity's potential futures. The paper situates Clarke's work within the broader tradition of utopian literature, tracing its roots from classical thought and Thomas More's Utopia to modern speculative fiction that critiques contemporary social, political, and technological trajectories. Clarke presents two contrasting societies: Diaspar and Lys. Diaspar, a technologically advanced city, ensures material abundance, immortality, and social stability through artificial intelligence and genetic engineering. However, this mechanical perfection results in intellectual stagnation, loss of curiosity, and fear of change. In contrast, Lys represents a pastoral utopia that emphasizes natural living, mental development, and moderate use of technology, yet it too suffers from isolation and limited dynamism. The protagonist Alvin challenges Diaspar's static perfection, illustrating the human drive for exploration, growth, and discovery. The study argues that Clarke's utopian vision is not an idealized end state but a dynamic process shaped by human curiosity, adaptability, and ethical engagement with technology. Both Diaspar and Lys reflect the tension between technological advancement and human aspiration, highlighting the limitations of static perfection.

Ultimately, the paper concludes that utopian science fiction functions as a critical lens for evaluating human progress and the ethical implications of technological development. Clarke's work underscores that the future of humanity depends not merely on material or technological perfection but on preserving curiosity, innovation, and the willingness to explore beyond established boundaries.

Keywords:*Utopia, science fiction, Diaspar, Lys, technological advancement, human aspiration*

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Associate Professor
Department of English
Vishwasrao Ransing College, Kalamb-Walchandnagar
Mail Id:
shindeprashant2020@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Prashant Sampatrao Shinde
Associate Professor
Department of English
Vishwasrao Ransing College, Kalamb-Walchandnagar
Mail Id:
shindeprashant2020@gmail.com

Introduction:

Arthur C. Clarke, a writer of surprisingly great stature, arrives on the horizons of science fiction with cosmic vision and scientific predictions. He faithfully depicts the physical facts of the universe while elaborating and constructing new fictional worlds. Clarke is a modern science fiction writer and prophet of the space age. The concept of utopia in fiction explores possible futures that usually depend on choices. Clarke's utopian vision offers an idea of advanced societies and an improvement of the human conditions. It is a logical extension of our own world. Science fiction writers explore future possibilities through utopian and dystopian ventures. Utopian ventures are against our basic drives, hence they can never succeed. Utopia is realized through progress that usually reflects utopian aspirations such as betterment, enrichment and perfection. The desire to make the world a better place is at the heart of western modernity. Clarke has cherished the utopian dream by technological advancement and colonization of other planets. The notion of utopia reflects and explores what is desired under specific circumstances as well as the hope that such a desires would be fulfilled in reality.

Science fiction serves as a sophisticated intellectual framework for examining the potential trajectories of human civilization, particularly through the lens of scientific and technological advancement. While the genre often projects into the future, its philosophical foundations are deeply rooted in classical thought, such as Plato's *Republic*, and were formally categorized by Sir Thomas More's 1516 seminal work, *Utopia*. By constructing these idealized societies, authors create speculative environments where they can scrutinize the interplay between human nature, social equity, and the ethical implications of progress. Historically, the evolution of utopian fiction reflects the shifting priorities of the modern era. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, writers like Edward Bellamy and H.G. Wells linked societal improvement to the Industrial Revolution, envisioning worlds where rational planning and nationalized industry could resolve systemic inequality. In contrast, contemporary literature—exemplified by Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*—has transitioned from depicting "flawless" societies toward "dynamic" social experiments. These modern narratives acknowledge that even advanced civilizations must navigate the complexities of human conflict and practical governance.

Ultimately, the primary function of utopian science fiction is not to offer literal predictions of things to come, but to serve as a critical mirror for the present. By articulating what a "better" world might look like, the genre prompts a rigorous re-evaluation of our current political and technological trajectories. It remains a vital tool for understanding how today's collective choices are actively constructing the future of the human species.

Explanation:

Clarke explores the utopian technological possibilities and human aspirations in the novel *The City and the Stars (1956)*. It is a visionary effort to trace the future of human civilization amid the technological breakthroughs. His utopian vision is based on the hypothesis of the technological and scientific developments and its impact on future society. Utopia offers an alternative solutions to reality. Clarke's novels are not real utopias, but rather critiques of the modern world. A progressive evolution towards more flawless technological utopia that will eventually give rise to a rejection of adventure, willingness to take risks, and limitations on the expansion of physical or technological horizons.

He envisions the novel's utopian conclusion as mankind arising from its cradle on Earth and growing into something new, rather than the development of a perfect civilization on Earth. The residents of Diaspar (paradise) in the novel were possibly as satisfied as any civilization the world had ever known, and they were happy in their own way. There is no sickness, violence, starvation, struggle, or material need, and the residents have an almost miraculous capacity to manipulate their surroundings. Alvin, on the other hand, sees their existence as meaningless. It is man's nature to be inquisitive surrounding him and to understand so much about it. It is a culturally unique and compelled vision, and Alvin dismantles such perfect society by pushing it out of the way. Alvin shatters this utopia by driving everything out of the confinement, the prospect, it is intimated, will be one of outward growth and the victory of the, humanity's ultimate destiny.

Diaspar has been built to be eternally stable society. It is a stimulated replication of the city's legendary leader Yarlen Zey. The founders sought for serenity and security after witnessing chaos erupting from the stars. Hence, they develop a program in which the same people will reincarnate in the city for ages. They also reconstruct the human mind, stripping it of ambition and violent desires. They are conditioned with the new reality. Clarke speculates that humanity may invent perhaps another method of self-destruction by reshaping their culture to ensure permanent stasis. In order to make sure change in Diaspar's stability, the city's architects make few changes such as Jester with the ability to cause slight disturbances and specially designed unique. People are produced with the goal of perfection and their physical attributes are completely transformed.

The central computer controls the whole city. Since it is programmed to preserve the city's structure and maintain equilibrium by producing human bodies. Clarke depicts another civilization, Lys contrary to a technical Diaspar. Its inhabitants are not preserved in memory banks or replicated electronically but rather conceive, give birth, grow old and gradually die naturally. They have abandoned the highly advanced technology mainly for nurturing pastoral rural life and technology being used simply to save work. The inhabitants of Lys strive to master mental abilities, as they are telepaths able to interact with one another across long distances. The cities creators have finally conquered space as thoroughly as they have controlled space. Diaspar is designed as a single powerful computer with an enormous amount of complexities. They are never dissatisfied due to the accessibility.

Diaspar's physical framework does not modify over the ages and its social structure is preserved by machines. The people are part of the strategic design and form a great harmony. Everyone is engrossed in intellectual activities. The sagas ensure virtual adventures to individuals to exercise their imagination. The creators of Diaspar purposefully anticipate that utopia will become extremely monotonous, hence they propose to occasional disruption in the society. The residents of Diaspar have lost their passion for adventure and a sense of wonder: "The power to extend life indefinitely might bring contentment to the individuals but brought stagnation to the race" (*CS* chap. 14). It is a false dream that the inhabitants of Diaspar have cherished for centuries. Diaspar is imperfect utopia, whereas Lys, is an accomplished one. Diaspar's controlled nature, technical dominance, frozen culture, perpetual order and isolated individuality is contrasted with the humanistic, pastoral, natural rural society of Lys. Lys is agrarian with a pragmatic and scientific foundation:

> The men who built the city, and designed the society that went with it, were lords of mind as well as matter. They put everything the human race would ever need inside these walls and they made sure that we would never leave them (CS 30).

Clarke envisions two utopian worlds in which the very cause of evil deeds, desire and death have been eradicated from man. After the collapse of a galactic empire, Earth is reduced with just two communities. The two civilizations are at odds with each other. Genetic engineering and incredible technology have rendered the people of Diaspar immortal. It is a civilization that has remained virtually unaltered for ages with strong belief in stable social order. The people of Diaspar do: "not merely believe in stability" in fact they "could conceive of nothing else" (CS 30). Diaspar is a technological paradise wherein inhabitants freely use technology to materialize everything: "Diaspar was all that existed all that they needed, all that they could imagine" (CS 9). Diaspar offers everything they wish. Several taboos have restricted the people of Diaspar from exploring the

world such as implanted fear of space, fear of invaders and lack of curiosity. It is completely unaware about the culture of Lys.

Initially, two utopias appear as wonderful milestones for humans, eventually become increasingly less desirable. Although Lys is relatively optimistic utopia, is ultimately seem stagnant as it lacks curiosity. Lys is more vibrant civilization than Diaspar, but still it remains a static culture with no progress. The inability to adapt change necessarily leads to stagnation. In the future world, humans have conquered several of mankind's flaws such as eradicating disease, refining the mind and body and by using genetic engineering make people immortal. When they face a challenge, they cannot cope with it. To avoid a conflict with Diaspar, the inhabitants of Lys employ telepathy to wipe out their memories. Whenever the people of Diaspar encounter a challenge, they escape into Hall of Creation. They choose to flee into the future rather than resolve the issues. They are unwilling to address to their concerns. Despite of rising to the occasion and exploring the Galaxy, they choose to remain on Earth.

Utopia is the ideal society that humanity seeks where all the social issues are resolved and society lives in peace and harmony. Utopia implies nowhere or no place may connote that perfection in social order is completely unattainable. Utopia exist not nearly in time, but also in space. It implies that the people of utopias are unwilling to simply leave their society. Diaspar is mechanical utopia in which the inhabitant's wishes are fulfilled while Lys is a pastoral utopia that actually achieves its utopia by integrating technology and nature. Diaspar appears as failed utopia, while Lys is a true utopia. Being an eternal utopia, Diaspar has remained virtually unchanged and seems to be lost. Their history is perplexing and legends are manufactured that almost crippled the human race. It leads to decadence of a highly intelligent human civilization.

After the fall of the galactic empire, the society of Lys has remained stagnant. It has been haunted by alien invasion, history and anxieties. The dread of invaders confined them on the home planet. Despite, the fact that change hardly appear in Lys, the community is adaptable to change. In a way, both the utopias are identical. The society of Diaspar certainly sounds to be perfect. They can't conceive anything other than what already exists. Diaspar and Lys are equally confined and isolated. People in Diaspar are reluctant to leave the city. The fear of space haunts them and inhabitants of Lys are unable to cross the boundaries because of the desert around it. Eventually, they fail to form any kind of bond with each other. In the novel, Clarke criticizes the excessive use of technology and its impact on the humanity. The advanced technology enhance the living conditions in an idealistic manner, however manipulates natural abilities of humanity. It hampers social, cultural and ethical aspects of life. Technology makes life easier, but it also renders society stagnant. The characters in the narrative lack human aspirations and face absurdities in their lives. In the near future, technology alone will not be enough to achieve a perfect society

Conclusion:

In conclusion, *The City and the Stars* presents a complex and critical vision of utopia rather than a perfectly ideal society. Through the contrasting worlds of Diaspar and Lys, Arthur C. Clarke highlights that both technological advancement and pastoral simplicity, when taken to extremes, can lead to stagnation, isolation, and limitations on human growth. Diaspar's mechanical perfection suppresses curiosity and change, while Lys, despite its harmony with nature, also remains restricted in its development. The character of Alvin plays a crucial role in challenging the static nature of both societies. His desire for exploration and knowledge represents the essential human qualities of curiosity, adaptability, and progress. Clarke thus suggests that a true utopian condition cannot be achieved through permanence or complete control, but through continuous evolution and openness to change. Furthermore, the novel emphasizes that technology, although beneficial in improving material conditions, must be used with ethical awareness and should not replace fundamental human values. A balanced relationship between technological progress and human aspiration is necessary for a meaningful and dynamic future.

Ultimately, the paper concludes that utopia in Clarke's vision is not a fixed destination but an ongoing process shaped by human imagination, inquiry, and the courage to transcend limitations. In this way, utopian science fiction serves as an important tool for critically examining present realities and guiding future possibilities.

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Status of Women in Indian Society: A Historical Perspective

Dr.Bansode Namdeo Changdeo

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Assistant Professor
Dept. of English
E.S.Divekar College, Varvand
Tal- Daund Dist-Pune
(Maharashtra) India
Email Id- nbansode73@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr.Bansode Namdeo Changdeo
Assistant Professor
Dept. of English
E.S.Divekar College, Varvand
Tal- Daund Dist-Pune
(Maharashtra) India
Email Id- nbansode73@gmail.com

Abstract

"This paper delves into the historical narrative of women's status in India, offering a comprehensive analysis of their development and experiences from prehistoric to modern times. A closer examination of history reveals a striking parallel: the exploitation and subjugation of women have been pervasive across cultures, civilizations, and religions. Against this backdrop, the paper traces the trajectory of women's status in India, highlighting the distinct phases of progress and decline that have shaped their roles and positions throughout history. By exploring the historiography of women's history in India, this paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex factors that have influenced the lives of Indian women over time."

Keywords: *Indian History, Gender roles, Social change, Civilization, Exploitation and Subjugation, Historiography.*

Introduction

In ancient India, women held a vital position in society, enjoying a high status and exceptional living standards during the Rig Vedic era. They were empowered to pursue intellectual and spiritual excellence, forming the cornerstone of Indian society. However, their circumstances deteriorated during the later Vedic period, facing discrimination in education and other rights. Traditional historical accounts often overlooked women's contributions, focusing on male-dominated domains like politics and warfare. Nevertheless, women like Mumtaz Mahal, Noor Jehan, and Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi left indelible marks on history, showcasing their courage, intelligence, and strength. Though exploited and subjugated across various cultures and civilizations, women's resilience and achievements continue to inspire us.

Women's History in India

In India, women's history began as an act of reclamation. It has progressed in the direction indicated by the names of major works published in English in the 1970s. Because women had been 'hidden from history,' the goal was to 'raise Clio's consciousness' by 'liberating women's history' from ignorance and neglect, and, as a result, women in history were 'becoming visible' in the resultant work. In recent years, perspective on the past has broadened tremendously. History is no longer merely a record of monarchs and rulers wielding power, but also of ordinary women and men engaged in a variety of occupations. Women's history asserts that women have a history, albeit one that has been skewed, if not completely obliterated, by the biases that pervade our culture and scholarship. We must regard women as political forces, as reformers and revolutionaries seeking identity in their nation, class, and themselves. Women must be visible as producers, peasants, laborers, artisans, domestic servants, and in their responsibilities in the family as wives, daughters, and mothers. Women historians are interested in the entirety of women's life. Women's history is emerging as a new field of study at a particularly interesting period. It has been fueled by two connected but mostly distinct developments: the maturation of social history and the expansion of an active women's movement. The publication in 1974 of Towards Equality, the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, which concluded on the basis of a countrywide investigation that the de jure equality guaranteed by the Indian Constitution had not been translated into reality and that large masses of women had remained unaffected by the rights guaranteed to them, was a significant landmark in the field of women's studies in India. It called experts' attention to the social sciences' neglect of women's roles and contributions. The rise of the feminist movement in the West inspired Indian intellectuals as well. Despite the prominence of women's subjugation in Indian society, historical research on the origins and growth of the patriarchal system is lacking. It is also recognized that women's history cannot be studied in isolation from 'mainstream' history. Given the regional, class, and caste variances in patriarchal behaviors, as well as their different histories in Indian society, specialized research are clearly required before we can create any helpful theory.

Women's Historiography in Ancient India: In Indian history we can get references about the role of women from the beginning of the Indus Valley Civilization which flourished from about 3000 BC to 1500 BC in the north-western part of India.

As per historical evidences relations with the human beings were governed by the collective nature of production and consumption. Men and women enjoyed equal status in raising food and in their family relations. The women's work and their contribution to the family were same as that of men. Nature was often called by the term 'mother'. Matrilineal system continued for long and women's status seem to have attained a superior one over men.1 Women held a very prominent position in ancient India, in fact a far superior one to the men of the time. The feminine term "Shakti" signifies "power" and "strong." According to literary sources, monarchs and towns were destroyed because the rulers bothered a single woman. According to the Valmiki Ramayana, Ravana and his entire kingdom were wiped out because he kidnapped Sita. According to Veda Vyasa's Mahabharata, all of the Kauravas were murdered because they publicly ridiculed Draupadi. Elango Adigal's Sillapathigaram teaches us that Madurai, the Pandya capital, was burned because Pandyan Nedunchezhiyan inadvertently harmed Kannagi. The essence of the Vedic period has been reflected in the four Vedas and their different branches like Brahmanas and Upanishads. During Rig Vedic times, women enjoyed an equal status with men. The Vedic literature mentions the name of many young women who attained eminence as philosophers. References are available to us that it was improper to perform penance with the wife. During the Vedic era the patriarchal culture superseded the matriarchal culture. But patriarchy never suppressed women's rights and privileges. The Vedic people were not conscious about gender power-politics and conflict at that time because Vedic society was then at a developing stage not in a complex mode. Women, like males, took part in the public sacrifices. Visvavara, a female rishi, is mentioned in one script. Some Vedic songs are credited to women, such as Apala, Atri's daughter, Ghosa, Kaksivant's daughter, or Indrani, Indra's wife. Apparently, in early Vedic times, women were also given the sacred thread and were able to study the Vedas. The Haritasmriti mentions a class of women known as Brahmavadinis, who stayed unmarried and spent their lives studying and performing rituals. Panini distinguished between Acarya (a preceptor) and Acaryani (a lady instructor or a preceptor's wife) and Upadhyaya (a preceptor) and Upadhyayani (a lady instructor or a preceptor's wife) implies that women could not only be students but also teachers of sacred Vedas at the period. There were some notable female scholars in the past, including Kathi, Kalapi, and Bahvici. The Upanishads include various female philosophers who disagreed with their male counterparts, such as Vacaknavi, who opposed Yajnavalkya. Women involved in fighting are also mentioned in the Rig Veda. One queen, Bispala, is recorded, and a witness as late as Megasthenes (fifth century B.C. E.) describes heavily armed female soldiers guarding Chandragupta's palace. The Hindu religion has been attacked on occasion for supporting gender inequality, to the detriment of Hindu women. Female scholars from the Vedic period include Ghosha, Lopamudra, Romasha, and Indrani. Women philosophers such as Sulabha, Maitreyi, and Gargi are mentioned in the Upanishads. Hindus have exalted women to the status of divinity in religious affairs. One of the most common misconceptions about India and Hinduism is that it is a male-dominated society and religion, which is not the case. It is a religion that has given the feminine the terms for strength and power. The feminine is the source of all male power. Without their feminine equivalents, the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) are powerless. But, the degradation of women status was started in the Later Vedic period. Smriti writers Manu, Yajnavalkya began to favour seclusion of women. Social customs and traditions were reinforced by the law-givers which degraded the position of women and the gender discrimination has begun. Patriarchal families became powerful during this period and restricted women's activities. They were "looked down upon as a temptation and hindrance in their march towards higher development".

Women's Historiography in Modern India

Of all the foreign invasions, the advent of the British in India is different in many respects. In terms of impact that the rule had made on India on various aspects of society is significant and to some extent predominant over other foreign rule. The British era had brought in some changes in the socio-political and economic structure of the society. The contribution of European to rediscovery of India's ancient past widely accepted by several scholars and writers of the 19th and 20th centuries but their perception was influenced by British by two separate contradictory ways. One strand was represented by the Orientalists, whose reconstruction of the glory of Indian civilization was taken over lock, stock and barrel by 19th century Indian writers. Another strand was the Utilitarian and Evangelical attack on contemporary Indian society on the visibly low status of women. The early Indian nationalist writers successfully constructed an image of womanhood in the lost past as a counter to the real existence of woman in the humiliating present.

Pandita Ramabai Saraswathi, the feminist and social reformer of late 19th century and early 20th century say that the path was harder, as women of her days had not entered the public domain. Educated, outspoken and unorthodox, Ramabai lived her life on her own terms, while working for the social emancipation of women through institutional initiatives such as shelters for widows as well as through her writings and active public life. Kosambi draws attention to an aspect of Ramabai's perspective that almost anticipated the human development approach towards social and economic progress, namely, her belief that a society which oppresses its women and discriminates against them can never progress. In the changed political and social environment of the late 19th century the women image which was portrayed by the nationalists was more important than the reality throughout the 20th century, the image also came to be examined by the reality through the work of Altekar, as the historical reality.

Modern Indian women are educated, sophisticated, and self-sufficient, but they adhere to age-old life ideas and traditions. They were uninterested in western conceptions of feminism. The Indian government worked to not only establish legal reforms for their advancement, but also to make them a practical reality. Women in rural India have worked hard in a variety of sectors. They are employed in agricultural and cottage businesses. Modern Indian women are widely employed in a variety of fields. They operate in agriculture and cottage businesses. Modern Indian women

work in a variety of respected professions in great numbers. Women's roles in the national battle, as well as their participation in the country's restoration, have been truly outstanding. They have made a name for themselves in every field and the story of their regeneration and participation in the task of nation building has grown in a progressive manner.

Kali for Women is credited with publishing the book that extended the horizon of historiographical research on Indian women from its initial concentration on uncovering women's voices and chronicling their colonial life experiences. Recasting Women, edited by two English literature professors at Delhi University, Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, and containing writings by notable Indian historians such as Uma Chakravarti, Lata Mani, and Partha Chatterjee, was published in 1989 by Kali for Women. The editors indicated clearly in the preface the shift that the volume sought to mark within the historiographical area. Historiography can be feminist without being solely about women. Such historiography recognizes that every part of reality is gendered and, as a result, is concerned in examining everything we think we know, in a sustained investigation of analytical and epistemological machinery. A feminist historiography rethinks historiography as a whole, rejecting the notion of women as something to be framed by a setting in.

Conclusion

It was around the 1970s that the contemporary women's movement began to be more radical and active, led to a fight back by women's organizations which greatly increased their scope and power. The Indian woman is not, however, defined wholly by the right's attempts to appropriate them. Many millions of women are engaged in a variety of protests against such gender distinctions, small or large. Protest by women in India against oppressive conditions comes in many forms. Today the women's movement exists in a highly decentralized form with hundreds of organizations in both urban and rural areas throughout the country. Through autonomous, flexible and informal structures and collective types of organizations the Indian women's movement has been able to achieve in both political and cultural spheres. The need for women's history has been recognized in the contemporary period since women in India today are involved in redefining their own gender roles. Indian women today are far from the ignorant, oppressed stereotype perceived in the west. They in fact are active in both an individual and collective approach to organization, and are centrally engaged in transforming their own lives. References since its inception, the historiography of women and gender in India has largely focused on in-depth examinations of the late-colonial era, viewed as a past capable of explaining the present and its problems. Many major works have focused on the intertwining of colonial and nationalist patriarchies, their goals, and their competing or partnered interests, as well as the discursive and material implications of this relationship on the lives of women.

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The Rise of Social Media as the New 'Big Brother' in the Digital Age; A Critical Study of '1984' by George Orwell

Sachin Babaso Bansode

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Assistanat Professor,
Shiv Chatrapati Arts and Commerce College Wadgaon Bk Pune 41
Email- sachinbansode888@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sachin Babaso Bansode
Assistanat Professor,
Shiv Chatrapati Arts and Commerce College Wadgaon Bk Pune
Email- sachinbansode888@gmail.com

Abstract:

George Orwell's famous novel '1984' is the only fiction that shows the dystopian world trapped in social media. Though '1984' by George Orwell does not have social media, its ideas are similar to today's social media. In 1984, the government watches people all the time using telescreens. People cannot escape being watched. Today, social media also collects information about us, but we share it ourselves by posting photos, likes, and comments. The government controls all news and tells people what to believe. In today's world, social media shows us selected content through algorithms. This can sometimes spread wrong information or show only one side of things. In the story, people are being afraid and have no freedom. But today, social media also has good sides. People can talk freely, share ideas, and connect with others. In this way 1984 *shows forced control, while social media shows hidden control. Both are connected because they affect what we see, think, and share. This research paper looks at how social media today can be compared to the idea of "Big Brother" shown in Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell. In the novel, people are watched and controlled by a powerful government. In today's world, social media also collects a lot of information about users, but people share it willingly without always knowing how it is used. The paper explains how social media platforms use algorithms to control what people see online. This can spread false information and create echo chambers, where people only see ideas they already agree with. This is similar to how truth is controlled in Orwell's novel. The study also looks at how modern communication, like short posts and hashtags, can reduce deep thinking, similar to the idea of Newspeak. At the same time, social media has positive effects. It helps people connect, share ideas, and raise their voices. However, this freedom comes with risks, such as loss of privacy and hidden control over opinions. In conclusion, social media is not exactly like the world of* 1984*, but it shows similar problems in a new way. The paper highlights the need to balance the benefits of social media with the protection of privacy, truth, and independent thinking.*

Keywords: *Social media, Digital age, Big Brother, Surveillance, Propaganda, Manipulation of opinion, Behavior shaping and Freedom of expression.*

Introduction:

Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell is a famous novel about a world where a powerful government, called "Big Brother," watches everyone all the time. People in this world have no privacy. In 1984, it is shown that Privacy does not exist—children and neighbors report anyone who acts against the Party, and even private thoughts can be punished, keeping everyone under strict control and even their thoughts and actions are controlled. In today's world, social media has become a big part of everyday life. People use platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Tweeter etc. to share photos, messages, and personal information. Noam Chomsky, in *Manufacturing Consent*, explains that media often serves the interests of powerful groups by shaping what people think and believe. Even though he wrote this before social media existed, his ideas apply today: social media platforms and algorithms can control what we see, influence opinions, and spread certain messages more than others. A few big tech companies dominate these platforms, giving them a lot of power over information, similar to Chomsky's idea of media shaping public consent.

At the same time, these platforms track what we do, influence what we see, and can even shape our opinions. In '*1984'* with social media helps us understand how some of Orwell's ideas about surveillance and control are still true today. The main difference is that in the novel, people are forced to be watched, but on social media, people share information themselves, often without realizing how much control technology has over their lives. This comparison shows the importance of thinking about privacy, freedom, and the power of digital technology in our daily lives.

'Big Brother' in '*1984' and Today's*

In *1984*, "Big Brother" is the symbol of a powerful government that watches everyone all the time. People are constantly monitored through devices called telescreens, which can see and hear everything they do. Because of this, citizens have no privacy at all and cannot do anything without being noticed. The government uses this constant watch to control people, making them afraid to speak or act freely.

Fear is used as a tool to make sure everyone obeys, so people live under strict rules and are always worried about being punished for even small mistakes. In today's world, we do not have such strict control, but a similar idea can still be seen. Social media, apps, and websites track what people do online, like what they search, watch, or like. This data is used to show ads or influence what people see and think. Unlike in *1984*, people choose to use these platforms, so the control is not forced. However, many people are not fully aware of how much their data is being collected.This shows that the idea of Big Brother still exists in a softer form today, reminding us to be careful about our privacy and how we use technology. This shows a softer dystopia: unlike *1984*, no one is forced to use social media, but the constant data tracking, influence over opinions, and power of big tech companies can make life feel controlled and monitored. Social media creates a world where personal freedom is partly limited, information is filtered, and behavior is subtly guided—reminding us that some warnings from Orwell's novel are very relevant today.

The Rise of Social Media as a 'Big Brother'

The rise of social media has changed the way people live, work, and communicate. It allows people to stay connected with friends and family, share ideas, and get news quickly. However, social media also shows some effects similar to Big Brother from 1984. On these platforms, companies can track everything users do—what they like, share, watch, or search. This creates a form of digital surveillance, where people's actions and preferences are constantly monitored.

Social media also influences what people see and think. Algorithms decide which posts, news, or videos appear on users' feeds, often showing content that keeps people engaged or shapes their opinions. This is similar to Big Brother controlling information in *1984*, but in a softer way, because people choose to use these platforms voluntarily.

The effects go beyond privacy. Targeted content can influence choices, promote certain ideas, or even affect elections and social movements. While social media has many benefits, like spreading awareness and helping people stay connected, it also gives powerful tech companies a lot of control over personal information and public opinion. This shows that, in today's digital age, social media acts like a modern version of Big Brother, reminding us to be aware of what we share and how our online behavior can be tracked and used.

Surveillance: Then vs Now:

In *1984*, the government watches people all the time, and they have no choice. Everything they do is monitored to make sure they obey the rules.the Party controls every part of people's lives. Telescreens watch and listen to everyone all the time, and the Thought Police even monitor private thoughts, punishing anyone who disagrees with the Party. Today, people share information about themselves on social media by choice, like photos, messages, and their location. But even though it is voluntary, websites and apps track what people do using tools like cookies. *Shoshana Zuboff, in The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, says that social media collects people's personal data to make money and influence their behavior. Platforms watch what users do, use that information to show targeted ads or content, and shape choices without full consent. She warns that this gives companies too much power over our private lives. This means that, just like in *1984*, people are being watched, but now it happens in a hidden and promoting way instead of being forced. The government controls all news through the Ministry of Truth and even changes the past to suit its story. Today, social media works differently but can have the same effect. Algorithms decide what posts, videos, or news we see on our feeds. This can make fake news and wrong information spread quickly. Even though no government is controlling it, social media can still influence what people believe, like and think. On social media today, algorithms decide what we see, showing us posts we like and creating "Bubble" where we mostly see opinions like our own. This can affect how we think and act. In *1984*, the government-controlled language with Newspeak so people could not express themselves freely. On social media, people use hashtags, short messages, and emojis, which can also limit deep thinking. In the novel, fear-controlled people, while today, social media controls people through likes, comments, and pressure to look good online. In *1984*, there was no freedom, but on social media we can post and share freely. Still, platforms and algorithms influence what we see, showing a hidden kind of control, like Big Brother in a modern way.

In *1984*, the government stops people from speaking freely by watching them all the time and using fear to control them. Michel Foucault's theory of power shows that control can happen quietly, through rules, social pressure, or constant monitoring, not just by force. Today, social media works in a similar way. Governments and organizations can track what people post, delete messages, or punish users. Even though people feel free online, the fear of being watched or censored can make them think twice before sharing their real opinions. Like Big Brother, social media can control people in many ways, shaping what they say and think.

The Role of the Government as a 'Big Brother':

In 1984, the government acts as a strict Big Brother, controlling almost every part of people's lives. It watches citizens all the time through devices like telescreens, hidden microphones, and even spies. The government decides what is true, changes history to suit its needs, spreads propaganda, and punishes anyone who disagrees. People have no privacy or freedom of speech, and even their thoughts are controlled. Fear keeps everyone in line, and the government has total power over society.

In today's world, the role of the government is less extreme but can be compared to Big Brother in some ways as shown in the novel 1984 where The Ministry of Truth changes history and destroys old records to fit the Party's story, while Newspeak, a special language, limits the way people can think. Fear is used to control people, with torture in Room 101 and public executions to make everyone obey. Reality is also twisted through Doublethink, making people accept ideas like "War is Peace," and propaganda posters force loyalty to Big Brother. Governments can monitor online activity, track what people do on social media, and sometimes control information. Social media platforms

collect data about users, and authorities can use this data to watch trends, detect potential problems, or even influence public opinion. People choose to use social media, so it is not forced like in *1984*, but privacy is still limited, and behavior can be guided in subtle ways.

This shows that the idea of Big Brother is still relevant today. In *1984*, control was obvious and total, while in the digital age, it is often hidden and indirect. Governments, together with tech companies, can watch, influence, and collect information about people's lives online. Social media has become a modern tool for monitoring and shaping society, making Orwell's warnings about surveillance, power, and control still important for understanding today's world.

Positive and Negative Aspects of Social Media

Social media has brought many positive changes in today's world, especially when we compare it to the strict and controlled society shown in 1984. First, it has made communication very easy and fast. People can talk to friends and family anywhere in the world within seconds, share photos, ideas, and stay connected all the time. In *1984*, people were always watched and could not freely talk or share their thoughts, but today social media gives more freedom to communicate. Second, social media helps in spreading awareness and supporting important causes. News, social issues, and movements can reach millions of people quickly, and many people come together to support change, raise their voices, or help others. This is very different from Orwell's world, where the government hides the truth and controls all information. Lastly, social media gives a voice to common people. Earlier, only big media companies or powerful people could share their opinions publicly, but now anyone can express their views, tell their stories, and influence others. Even though there are some problems like fake news and privacy issues, social media still gives people much more freedom and power compared to the fearful and controlled life shown in *1984*. The negative side of social media can sometimes destroy its good sides, and this is similar to what happens in 1984. Social media lets people connect, share ideas, and speak up, which is very positive. But problems like constant tracking, data collection, and manipulation can turn these benefits into dangers. Just like in *1984*, where the government controls information and changes the truth, social media can spread false news, influence opinions, and guide people's thinking without them realizing it.

Privacy is another issue. Even though social media helps communication, personal information is collected and sometimes misused. This can make people afraid to share freely or express their true thoughts. Big tech companies also control what people see, limiting freedom in a way similar to Big Brother in Orwell's novel.

So, while social media has many good sides, the negatives—surveillance, manipulation, loss of privacy, and too much control—can reduce or destroy these benefits. Like *1984*, it shows that tools meant for freedom can also become tools of control if we are not careful.

11. Ethical Issues

In today's world, social media also brings many ethical problems, which can be compared to the ideas shown in 1984. One big issue is privacy. In **1984**, the government violates ethics by controlling every aspect of life. Privacy does not exist—citizens are constantly watched by telescreens and the Thought Police. Freedom of speech and thought is denied, as people can be punished for "thoughtcrime." Information is manipulated through the Ministry of Truth, when people use social media, they share personal details like photos, location, and opinions, but many times this information is collected and tracked without their full knowledge. This makes people feel like they are being watched all the time, similar to the citizens in *1984* who live under constant surveillance by Big Brother. Another important issue is data misuse. The information collected from users can be used in wrong ways, such as selling it to companies, showing misleading advertisements, or even influencing people's thoughts and decisions, especially during elections. This is similar to how truth is controlled and changed in Orwell's novel to control people's thinking. the ethical issues of privacy, manipulation, and power are still very real, showing that modern technology can mirror some of the ethical problems Orwell warned about.

In this way, this present research paper shows how today's Social media can cause problems. Fake news and misinformation can mislead people, and cyberbullying can hurt users emotionally. Spending too much time online can affect mental health, and platforms collect personal data, raising privacy concerns. These issues show that social media needs to be used carefully and responsibly.

Comparison Summary

When we look at social media today and compare it with the world in 1984, we can see some clear similarities as well as important differences. First, both involve surveillance. In *1984*, people are watched all the time by the government, and they have no privacy at all. In today's world, social media platforms also track users' activities, such as what they like, share, or search. Even though it is not as strict, people are still being observed in a digital way. For example, Winston is always aware that he could be observed even in his own home, and he must hide his private thoughts, such as when he secretly writes in his diary. Another similarity is control and influence. In Orwell's novel, the government controls all information and decides what people should believe. Similarly, in modern social media, algorithms and big tech companies decide what content appears on our screens, which can influence our opinions, choices, and even behavior without us realizing it. Today the Party's surveillance is forced and political, social media surveillance is voluntary and commercial, but it still affects the way people behave and present themselves online. People often post only what they think will get approval, much like how citizens in *1984* hide their true thoughts to avoid punishment. Moreover, the Party controls information in the Ministry of Truth by rewriting history and spreading propaganda, while social media platforms influence opinions through algorithms that decide what content people see. Both systems shape behavior and thinking: one through fear and control, the other through

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incentives and constant observation. In this way, social media reflects a modern form of Big Brother, showing how technology can monitor, influence, and subtly control society while people participate willingly.

Conclusion

In today's world, social media can be understood as a modern form of "Big Brother," similar to the idea shown in 1984. It is not as strict or frightening as in the novel, but it still keeps track of what people do online, such as what they like, share, and search. Because of this, many people feel that they are being watched in a digital way. This is why it is very important to maintain a balance between technology and privacy. Social media is useful for communication, learning, and entertainment, but at the same time, people should be careful about how much personal information they share and should understand how their data might be used.

At the same time, the message of *1984* is still very relevant in today's world. The novel warns us about the dangers of too much control, loss of privacy, and the misuse of power. Even though we live in a more open and free society, some similar ideas can still be seen in a softer form through modern media and technology. This means we should use social media wisely, stay aware of its risks, and always think independently instead of blindly believing everything we see online. In this way, we can enjoy the benefits of technology while also protecting our freedom and personal rights.

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Fragmentation and Death of Subjectivity: Reading J.H. Prynne's Selected Poems through Jameson's Postmodern Perspective

Dr. Atinder Panday

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Abstract

Literature has consistently responded to societal and cultural shifts through its content and form. The study examines the ways in which capitalism, globalization and digitalization influence and shape literary texts in the context of current literary trends. Focusing on the poetry of British poet Jeremy Halvard Prynne, the study explores to how techno-centric and commodity-driven culture fragment and reshape the human subject, subjectivity and subject's orientation in the capitalist society. It argues that Prynne's poetry embodies fragmentation, loss of historicity and time and dissolution of subjectivity through its fractured form and shifting discourses. Drawing on interdisciplinary discourses, Prynne's poetry reveals the constitution of self as contingent upon complex processes that lie beyond individual cognition and control. At the same time, the paper contends that Prynne's poetry functions as a resistance against humanist, capitalist and imperialist systems which integrate subjects' engagement with new communication and media technologies, war, surveillance and violence. This analysis is situated within the theoretical framework of Fredric Jameson, particularly his concepts of Cognitive Mapping, fragmentation and schizophrenia. By engaging with Jameson's insights on the postmodern schizoid subject and 'death of subject' that he has elaborated in his seminal in Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (1991), this paper demonstrates how Prynne's poetry both reflects and critiques emerging trends in literary studies.

***Keywords**: poetry, culture, capitalism, technology and commodity.*

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Assistant Professor in English
SCD Govt. College, Ludhiana, Punjab, India.
Atinderpanday186@gmail.com.

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Atinder Panday
Assistant Professor in English
SCD Govt. College, Ludhiana, Punjab, India.
Atinderpanday186@gmail.com.

Introduction

The present paper focuses on J. H. Prynne's poems to discuss the representation of subject, subjectivity and subject's orientation in his selected poems. The paper makes a comprehensive reading of the poems named "Price Tag Song" from his collection entitled *The White Stones* (1969); "Nibble Song" from his collection entitled *10 Uncollected Poems* (1971); and "An Evening Walk" from his collection entitled *Wound Response* (1974). This paper is a part of "The Poetical Works of Jeremy Halvard Prynne: A Jamesonian Reading". Fredric Jameson has consistently seen literature and arts in spatial terms, and argues for the importance of space in literary and cultural studies. His postmodern readings tend to emphasize the chaotic and anomic nature of space. Jameson ponders over the ascendancy of space in the postmodern world in his essay "Cognitive Mapping" (1960). This paper is also an attempt to understand these poems through Jameson's elaboration of the notion of "Cognitive Mapping" that he has elaborated in *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* Jameson's insights on *cognitive mapping* help to underscore the position of subject in contemporary society.

Prynne's poetry after 1970 deals with the condition of the individual in spatial terms and employs assimilations of physical body in the late capitalist world. His poetics has always been concerned with the way an individual self understands its relation to the social environment. He employs insights from other disciplines to show how self is formed by processes that often lie beyond the grasp of individual perception and understanding. He also engages seriously with the burgeoning effect of technology in his poetry. Jameson also focuses on space in terms of physical disorientation. He argues in *The Cultural Turn* (1998) that the individual's orientation in space becomes the predominant factor that helps him understand his relation to the world.

Jameson is a postmodern thinker who presents a radical transformation of an experience of time and space. He argues in his seminal work *Postmodernism* that postmodernism marks the ascendancy of the category of space over time where the experience of history, memory and narrative all have waned in the postmodern world. He finds that "our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism" (16). Thus, subjective experience has undergone a remarkable change and the traditional autonomous subject has been replaced by fragmented and schizoid subject. Therefore, the subject is incapable of mapping its place critically and coherently in the global capitalist world. The subject cannot develop political capacities to bring a change in the world.

Then Jameson thinks that his aesthetic of *Cognitive Mapping* can help to recenter the subject in totality and historicity. Jameson states: An aesthetic of cognitive mapping —a pedagogical political culture which seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system —will necessarily have to respect this new enormously complex representational dialectic [of the postmodern condition] and invent radically new forms in order to do it justice….The political form of postmodernism, if there is any, will have its vocation the invention and the project of a global cognitive mapping, and a social as well as a spatial scale.(p.36*)*

Jameson deals with various postmodern terms like pastiche, schizophrenia, fragmentation and "death of subject" in his theory. However, his *Cognitive Mapping* provides a framework that demands action from the postmodern subject. He sometimes employs it in reference to an individual's subjective attempt to locate itself in a complex social milieu; at the other times he refers to it as "a supra individual production of space" in the multinational world system. He introduces the term "cognitive mapping" in his 1984 essay, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Jameson argues that contemporary society poses a significant challenge for subjects in terms of positioning themselves within the mostly unseen global world linked to capitalism. He asserts that postmodern subject struggles to map its experiences in relation to broader global socioeconomic trends. This inability to envision subject's lived experiences within a larger context is exacerbated by the increasing fragmentation and dissemination of knowledge through social media, where falsehoods often gain more traction than facts. Jameson's concern is that older(modernist) aesthetic practices no longer correspond well with the new global system, so there is a need to develop an aesthetic of cognitive mapping. This aesthetic helps to think dialectically about an issue or any object related to the ideas of capitalism, postmodernism and globalization, and mis-information. He clarifies that we cannot understand the workings of capitalism without creating new forms of representation that produce new ways of seeing and understanding it.

Jameson's idea of cognitive mapping involves individuals trying to create a mappable representation of an unrepresentable space, which could be the social totality or even History. In the context of narrative, literary cartography involves projecting a figurative map. This map helps to coordinate individual or collective perception and experience with a broader social and spatial totality in a meaningful way. Jameson argues that arts can help in understanding this complex totality of relationships that exist and are manifest through our actions and thereby he calls for "an aesthetic of cognitive mapping" (p.54). Jameson turns to innovative art practices, installations and even films to find and discover new forms of mapping that can connect these apparently disconnected parts of our different experiences into a single entity. Thus, Jameson emphasizes that cognitive mapping can help people understand their situation in a larger context.

Jameson develops this model by synthesizing two sources, i.e. Kevin Lynch's study of urban space, *The Image of the City* (1960), and Louis Althusser's famous essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" on ideology published in 1970. Jameson is able to bring these two works together in the figure of cognitive mapping. Lynch criticises the distinctly American landscape, with endless homogenous blocks, since it is particularly disorienting and alienating for the city dwellers. One must be able to find his way and regain a sense of place with the help of mental map, which is rendered impossible in places like Jersey City. Jameson finds this issue of spatiality interesting to apply to ideology:

> There is, for one thing, a most interesting convergence between the empirical problems studied by Lynch in terms of city space and great Althusserian (Lacanian) redefinition of ideology as "the representation of subject's imaginary relationship to his and her Real conditions of existence. (p.34)

Early Marxists thought ideology was a false representation of the world; how the world actually functioned, aiming to disguise class struggle. However, the structuralist Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser claimed that ideology is taken for granted within our *collective unconscious* and represents how we think and relate to the world. The state can influence in such a way that people think the system and their position within it is a result of the natural order. The example of the "American Dream" comes to mind which makes the subject take economic inequality for granted, since wealth only comes from hard work. Therefore, Jameson is interested in where we think we are positioned, in our ideological mental map and recognise as reality.

The cognitive mapping is to "enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as whole" (p. 36). It aims to reveal truth behind ideological representations by structuring the totality of the society. Logically, many parallels are to be drawn between this concept and class consciousness, although cognitive mapping is specifically inspired by structuralist philosophy. Cognitive mapping needs to bring back a sense of temporality, in order to regain historicity. By historicizing, we can reflect on narratives that faded during postmodernity. Thorough these narratives, the individuals cannot only return back to lost subjectivity, but also come to understand relation to the collective as "non-centered subject" that Jameson emphasised earlier. This lays the groundwork for a global class consciousness. Late capitalism has concealed class struggle by outsourcing production to other countries, by turning multinational. Therefore, the only way to resist the logic of postmodernity is to reflect on the global totality of the capitalist system and the narratives through which it is enforced. Phillip E. Wegner in his book *Periodizing Jameson* (2014) states:

> Cognitive mapping, like totalization, is always already, as the verb form suggests, *a process*, a way of making connections, of *drawing* network, and of *situating* ourselves as both individuals and collective subjects within a particular spatial system. Cognitive mapping needs to be understood as

> a way of producing narratives, mappings that unfold through time, rather than static images, formalization, or maps—and it is in this affirmation of the power of narrative that we can see most clearly Jameson's refusal to accept the apparent closures and ahistoricity of the postmodern… (p. 72)

Jameson argues that *Cognitive Mapping* is a collective and political act. In order to understand their place in society, individuals need to engage in critical and dialectical thinking, recognizing the dialectical relationship between their personal experiences and the larger structures of power and ideology. Moreover, Jameson suggests that certain cultural forms, such as literature and art, can aid in the development of *Cognitive Mapping*. Through engaging with cultural texts, individuals can gain insights into the complexities of contemporary life and broaden their understanding of the social and historical forces at play. Jameson's concept of *Cognitive Mapping* offers a way to counter the disorienting effects of postmodern society. It encourages individuals to actively engage in understanding their social existence, the broader structures of power, and the possibilities for transformative change. By fostering a more critical and informed perspective, *Cognitive Mapping* becomes a crucial tool in navigating the complexities of the modern world and working towards a more equitable and just society. Phillip E. Wegner in his book *Periodizing Jameson* points:

> What occurs here is a slight but significant substitution–the concept of 'map' in a sense that it rarely appears in Jameson's work for his preferred 'mapping,' or the full intuitive form, 'to map.' Jameson points that "since everyone knows what a map is, it would have been necessary to add that cognitive mapping cannot involve anything so easy as a map; indeed, once you knew what 'cognitive mapping' was driving at, you were to dismiss all figures of map and mapping from your mind and try to imagine something else. To slip into the language of the map as an achieved thing is, Jameson argues to give in to the hegemony of the image and the visual that is such a central dimension of postmodern ideology itself. (p. 71)

Jameson argues that narrative itself is a form of mapping, organizing the data of life into recognizable patterns and with it understand that the result is a fiction, a mere representation of space and place, whose function is to help the viewer or mapmaker, like the reader or writer, make sense of the world. In *Maps of the Imagination*, Peter Turchi asserts that all writing is in one way or another cartographic, but that storytelling is an essential form of mapping, of orienting oneself and one's readers in space. The storyteller, like the mapmaker, determines the boundaries of the space to be represented, selects the elements to be included, establishes the scope and scale, and so on. In producing the narrative, the writer also produces a map of the space, connecting the reader to a totality formed by the narrative itself. Narrative is thus a spatially symbolic act in establishing a literary cartography for the reader.

> It is not necessary that this literary cartography is limited to the modern or postmodern world, although the conditions arising from modern or postmodern developments might make a more expressly cartographic project more desirable. Undoubtedly, the ancient world knew spatial anxiety and disorientation as well—think of Odysseus' wanderings. But the ancient world had a perceived wholeness that made it inherently "mappable" in the minds of its people, whether through metaphysics, politics, or geography; the epic had what Joseph Frank called a spatial form, as the organization of events depend less on chronology than on locations within a fixed universe. With the modern condition, in contrast, this totality is no longer given. (p. 11)

Jameson emphasizes the urgent need for a representational effort to prevent the loss of critical thinking in a postmodern era. He argues that without such an effort, there is a risk of being overwhelmed by the complexities of postmodern reality. He suggests the development of a 'political form of postmodernism' whose purpose will be to invent and project a global cognitive mapping, providing a framework to understand and navigate the elusive aspects of the postmodern world.

Prynne and Jameson both show the ever-evolving nature of economic capital and the ways in which it infiltrates the lives of individuals. They both reflect upon the notion of totality but in different ways. Jameson believes in the notion of totality; he is not satisfied with the emergence of many voices and groups. He believes in the narrative of Marxism and tries to resolve conflicts through Marxian visions. His concept of cognitive mapping is actually a new form of Marxist aesthetic. Prynne's poetry deals with the entanglement of the subject within all social and economic forces. He focuses more on margins for better mapping of society. He presents a fragmentated view of human subjectivity and history in his poems. His poetry is experimental in the way it exceeds modernist ideas and styles. Lynn Keller argues in his book *Thinking Poetry* (2009) that poetry after 1970s chooses to live on the frontiers of language. It has little faith in the precision of words, rather it presents a "world governed by randomness" (p.255).

Prynne celebrates difference and fragmentation in his poetry. He draws insights from a vast range of contemporary disciplines, such as language, medicine and economics. His poetry is concerned with body, material consumption and with the waste of culture. He also seriously engages with the discourses of computer and information technology. He believes in the constant deferral of meanings. For instance, "On the Anvil" describes the shaping and formation of the subject in the postmodern. The poet uses the word "anvil" that is used as a foundation for hammering and shaping. Here, Prynne appears to show how all the systems shape and construct subjects in a specific way. Prynne writes:

> Finely, brush the

Sound from your
Eyes: it rests in the hollow
As looking in
The shops at both
Reflections, in
The glass
How
To move and the
Sun slanting over
The streets: shielded
From the market
In the public
Domain, as
Taking the pace
Of movement
In the hollow
Furnished with
That tacit gleam, the
Cavernous heart. (*The White Stones* 42)

The narrative in the poem is fragmentary and also refuses paraphrasing. The poet presents the journey of a subject on its mission to locate its position in the modern world. First the poet tells to clear/brush the eyes because it hints at the use of make up or colour. The poet also seems to show that the sway of commodification is deeply rooted in the lives of people which makes it impossible for them to see clearly. It could also denote that eyes are smudgy with the market-oriented products, but he calls this sort of living is "hollow". The image of "the glass" seems to suggest a barrier or filter through which perception occurs, emphasizing the challenge of understanding and navigating the world. The mention of the sun "slanting over the streets" adds a temporal dimension, perhaps indicating the fleeting nature of moments and the changing dynamics of the environment. The poet tries to give the impression that this process of finding their position in this global hyperspace is not an easy practice for the postmodern subject. So, it seems difficult to locate one's position in this world because we are controlled and dominated by material forces. The words used in the poem "reflection," "market" and "furnished" represent the expansion of market in all areas of life. It is impossible for the subject to be an autonomous being without having any contradictions. We are living in a space where heart is also hollow. The reference to "hollow" carries symbolic weight, implying a space within oneself or in the world that is both empty and pregnant with meaning. This hollow becomes a focal point for introspection and observation, akin to "looking in the shops at both reflections." Here, the use of reflections and the shopping metaphor implies the multiplicity of perspectives and choices in navigating one's identity and experiences. The poet shows that subjectivity has been deeply affected by the social factors. This poem can be better understood with Jameson's *Cognitive Mapping* as he recommends that subjects should cognitively map their imaginary relation to global capitalist hyperspace as a political response to postmodernism's de-centering effects. He argues that postmodern hyperspace de-centers and ourwhelms the human subjects, making it tremendously difficult for it to connect the past to the present and to locate and situate itself in relation to his new space. Jameson argues, "postmodern hyperspace makes it tremendously difficult for a subject "to map the great global, multinational and de-centered communicational network in which we find ourselves as individual subjects (p.16)." Jameson takes it as a challenging task because capitalism is a totalizing process through which all different and particular social relations are increasingly subsumed by the expanding logics of commodification.

This poem has a unique, idiosyncratic style that is presented through language. It can be seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic or information filled aspects of postmodern society. This poem also contains many characteristics of pastiche as Jameson delineated. It has fragmentation which rules out the possibility of a linguistic norm. The poem has no linguistic norm and produces no laughter. It also presents shuffling of generic and grammatical ties and tends to be repetitive. There is no continuity and flow in the narrative of the poem. The poet employs these fragmentary images to show the state of people who have become fragments in the present. This poem weaves a tapestry of sensory impressions, symbols and introspective moments, for postmodern subject contemplate its position in the postmodern world. He asks the readers to observe every image, word and object succinctly because the task of locating itself in the global space is really challenging.

Prynne in his poem "Price Tag Song" describes how market forces impact on our thinking and life, where we have become a mere commodity in this way. The poet breaks words like "scarcity" (scar-city), "photographic reproduction" (photo-graphic- re-product-ion) and "insects" (in-sects) thus making the poem polysemous. The poet shows that the subject is treated as a product and has become worthless with the passage of time, as he writes in the poem:

OK and the relevant to the
cosmos, scarce of
air said
aunt Theoria, the scar
city is not for
resale or photograph ic repro

duct
ion I mean at
least you can't look all
the time out
of sight and mind… . (*The White Stones* 87)

"We are not for resale or photography" indicates the commodification of the individual. The poet reveals the state of mind through intellectual barrenness. Pollution enters here, in such a situation where we are out of sight and mind. This development has not healed us in any way, rather it has divided us into sects. The poet presents the plight of a subject who is not able to think and see properly. This state of mind can be better understood with the idea of *Cognitive Mapping*, as Jameson says that the media culture in which we live creates schizoid experience. This so-called development or expansion has divided us into many voices and groups. The rupture in narrativity shows the fragmented condition of the subject who is caught in this situation, since, there is an absence of lived experience and historical change. Jameson argues that we have surplus of information through these new technologies, but we are not in a position to semanticize this glut. The idea of cognitive mapping can serve as a resistant to wide ranging commodification when a subject observes that reality is distorted and we are made so to accept it. Jameson also talks about feeling lost physically, and this disorientation is mainly caused by postmodern space. He focuses on the Westin Bonaventure hotel in Los Angeles, which he sees as a prime example of 'full-blown postmodern building.' According to him, this 'postmodern hyperspace' in the Bonaventure and the wider postmodern world has now gone beyond what individual human bodies can handle. People struggle to figure out where they are, organize their surroundings, and mentally map their position in the external world due to this postmodern hyperspace.

Prynne's poem "Nibble Song" is a song about fragments and parts, which is bereft of continuity. He addresses changing psychological and societal consequences in the human life with the arrival of technical advancement. The poet uses technical and cultural phrases to naturalise the subject's conditioning in new technological space. He relates the subject with a "glass" to show the technological impact. This poem presents resistance to the new world order. It challenges the hegemony of political and social structures that attempt to dominate human sentience. Prynne freely ranges into other disciplines, i.e. physics, chemistry and computer science. He believes that the poet has a duty to be conversant with the world in which we live. In this poem, he deals with the development of modern computing as the title of the poem is "nibble" that signifies data in bits and bytes. There are also many other technical terms that Prynne uses to define the presence of technology in human thinking. Prynne starts:

The glass sweats out and
falls by its weight and by
the mountain path, it
is pasture for the moment. (*10 Uncollected Poems* 186)

The poet addresses the effect of technology on human thinking. He describes the effects by using the words "glass," "crystal tube" and "kiosk". In the opening line, he describes that once glass shatters, then power of reality comes forth. One is able to observe mountain paths and pastures. The "crystal tube" here is the mind of a subject that is completely occupied by technology. The mind that is capable of producing considerate is no longer creative and has become emotionless. The poet refers to "kiosk" that has become icy now, symbolises the absence of love and also the presence of unexplored terrains. The poet makes an effort to show frozen actions and thoughts. "White butterflies" also symbolising the activity and the progression of imaginative thoughts. But close proximity to technology has wiped out creative thought. Ending of the poem is significant as the poet says:

We sit
round by the lower
fields in the sun
light and look out slowly. (*10 Uncollected Poems* 186)

Prynne's use of "we" is important, because when the lenses are removed, we acquire a pre-industrial pastoral perspective. The return to pastures and mountains is related to the innocence of nature in law. The phrase "gazing around slowly" is used in contrast to the speed of technology. This is time when we ask question who/where we are? This poem could be better interpreted from Jameson's viewpoint of technology. He also speaks of the escalating role of technology in our daily life. He argues that postmodern hyperspace has transcended the individual capacities of perception and cognition. Jameson states:

> My implication is that we ourselves, the human subjects who happen into this new space, have not kept pace with that evolution; there has been a mutation in the object, unaccompanied as yet by any equivalent mutation in the subject; we do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace as I will call it, in part because our perceptual habits were formed in that older kind of space I have called the space of high modernism. (*Postmodernism*, 80)

This means that our minds might not be able to map the global and decentred communicational systems in which we find ourselves caught up at the moment. Technology has completely controlled our cognition that is why we cannot think anything outside of technology. We have become completely techno-centric and rely on gadgets for leading our life.

Prynne's poem "An Evening Walk" shares its title with William Wordsworth's "An Evening Walk". Wordsworth's poem details the experience of his travels to Lake District. On the other hand, Prynne's poem shows the effect of the changing capitalist economy not at the rural periphery but within urban England. The poet talks about a middle-class man, who wants to protect his own skills, but the changing system forces him to follow its rules. These forces press him down. Prynne describes the situation of a man who makes shoes and goes to walk regularly. But he falls down one day and becomes impoverished. Unfortunately, he starts to consume drugs and he is numbed to the world. There is a suggestion of cardiac arrest as he falls down. The poet shows man's changing situation from wealthy to destitute. Neither does man want to submit to the developments in the economy nor he wants to adopt the new system. He does not even want to live on credits, to purchase property through loans from banks. Consequently, his artisanal labour is no longer valued in the present because Britain's mass-produced commodities are cheaper. Prynne writes:

> The shoes are priced
> with reason lightly set under with a new
> varnish, we must have the lace-up wallet
> for the portamento in the
> crisis ahead. (*Wound Response* 227)

Prynne says shoes are priced reasonably according to the new system. The poet conveys the new shift in the economy, with the changed mode of production. The class of the artisans, to which he belonged, no longer exists. He does not take debts from the bank because he knows taking on debt might make his transition to new economy imperative. He refits his life and retrains for whatever jobs are available. This shock and stress induce heart attack. Then he consumes mood suppressing drugs. Thus, this way, Prynne shows two movements in this poem: the fall of man and also his refusal to be a part of the new system. The use of the word "infantile" is very emphatic that describes the resistance of the artisan to the capitalist mode of production. This poem deals with working class and labour. The poem can be better explained in the context of Jameson's method of cognitive mapping. He equates cognitive mapping with class consciousness. He focuses on the working class as the agent par excellence of broadminded transformation in the society, but he finds the future scenario bleak, because there is no existence of class in the postmodern. Jameson's cognitive mapping was to render visible the noumenal economic base hidden in the cultural artifacts of the superstructure. Jamesonian reading of this poem shows man's attempts at saving his skill and class. Of course, he cannot escape from power discourses, as Jameson says that capitalism has become the ultimate referent and true ground of being. It is all pervasive and the only economic mode of production in the present.

Jameson and Prynne both exhibit shifting tendencies of society. Jameson examines cultural changes theoretically and Prynne responds to these changes poetically. Jameson's insights help in understanding Prynne's poems deeply and also help in thinking the idea of *cognitive mapping* pragmatically. Jameson's *cognitive mapping* is understood more clearly with the in-depth reading of Prynne's poems. The need of the aesthetic of cognitive mapping becomes crystal clear by understanding the postmodern subject and its orientation in the global totality. Jameson also ponders over class and commodification in his analysis. His *cognitive mapping* provides one possible form of a new radical cultural politics in the postmodern culture where critical distance is abolished. Jameson equates postmodern culture with late capitalism, wherein we are merely consumers. He argues that late capitalism is all pervasive so we cannot escape its effects. Jameson's insights thus help in understanding Prynne's poetry in its profounder aspects. Both Prynne and Jameson explicate the effect of the new world economic order, because they share the same socio-cultural background. Though, Jameson's critique of postmodern confirms and builds Marxian values, he believes in a particular system for bringing a change in the society. But Prynne does not believe in systems rather his poetry defers the moment of completeness. His poetry establishes a relationship between subject and its external world that allows to think critically. His inclusion of various discourses helps to extract fresher and newer meanings. Jameson uses various terms to represent the condition of the subject in the late capitalist world. However, Prynne captures the transition in terms of materiality and reality from the ground. Jameson explores the concept of the "death of subject" while Prynne in contrast highlights the "revival of subject" in his poetry. Narrative is the basis of Jameson's *Cognitive Mapping* and his call for "return to narrative".

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The Illusion of Essence: Performativity, Parody, and the Politics of Identity in Queer Theory

Dr. Sachin Dete

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Dept. of English, SLAS,
JSPM University Pune
Email- sachindete30@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Sachin Dete
Dept. of English, SLAS,
JSPM University Pune.
Email- sachindete30@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the shift from essentialist understandings of identity to the post-structuralist framework of performativity, primarily through the lens of Judith Butler's seminal work. Traditionally, Western humanist thought posits the individual as an autonomous "I" whose gestures and desires express an innate core. However, drawing on Foucault, de Beauvoir, and Austin, Butler argues that gender is not a natural attribute but a social construct—a "truth-effect" produced through the stylized repetition of acts over time. The study examines the "heterosexual matrix" and the ways in which identity politics, while often liberatory, can inadvertently reinforce the regulatory regimes it seeks to challenge. Central to this analysis is the concept of parody, exemplified by drag. Rather than mimicking an original gender, drag reveals that the "original" itself is a fabrication with no ontological status prior to its performance. Furthermore, the paper addresses the scholarly tension between voluntarist interpretations—which suggest identity is a radical choice—and Butler's anti-voluntarist stance, which maintains that the "I" is constituted by discursive norms that precede and constrain it. By analyzing critiques regarding the context-dependency of transgressive acts (such as the "gay skinhead" or "Barbie slasher"), this paper concludes that while subversion resists absolute calculation, political efficacy depends on the historical and symbolic structures in which a performance is embedded. Ultimately, the research highlights how queering identity disrupts hegemonic "regulatory fictions" to open new possibilities for being-in-the-world.

Keywords: *Performativity, Parody, Politics, Identity, Heterosexual, Queer, Transgressive act etc.*

Introduction: The Illusion of the Core Self

The Western philosophical tradition has long upheld the notion of a stable, autonomous subject—a coherent "I" that precedes and governs action. Within this framework, identity is assumed to originate from an inner essence that manifests outwardly through behavior, language, and desire. Gender, in particular, has historically been understood as a natural extension of biological sex, rooted in innate psychological and physiological differences between men and women.

However, twentieth-century post-structuralist thought fundamentally challenged this assumption. Thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida questioned the stability of the subject, arguing that what we understand as the "self" is not a pre-discursive reality but a product of historically contingent systems of knowledge and power. The subject, in this view, is constituted through discourse rather than existing prior to it. Judith Butler's work emerges from this intellectual milieu, offering a radical rethinking of gender and identity. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler argues that identity is not the cause of actions but rather their effect. Drawing inspiration from Simone de Beauvoir's assertion that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," Butler extends this insight by suggesting that the process of "becoming" is not guided by an internal essence but is instead regulated by social norms and repeated practices.

Central to Butler's theory is the concept of performativity. Unlike performance, which implies a pre-existing subject consciously enacting a role, performativity describes the process through which the subject itself is constituted. Identity, therefore, is not something one "has," but something one "does"—repeatedly, and within constraints. This shift has profound implications, not only for how we understand gender but also for how we conceptualize agency, resistance, and political transformation.

The Mechanics of Performativity

1. The Stylized Repetition of Acts: At the heart of Butler's theory is the idea that gender is constituted through the "stylized repetition of acts." These acts include gestures, speech patterns, bodily comportment, and modes of dress, all of which are regulated by social norms. Over time, the repetition of these acts produces the illusion of a stable and coherent identity. Crucially, there is no original or authentic gender identity behind these acts. Instead, the identity is constituted through the very process of repetition. The appearance of an inner core is thus an effect of external practices rather than their source. This reverses the traditional understanding of causality: instead of identity producing behavior, behavior produces the illusion of identity.

This insight aligns with speech-act theory, particularly the work of J.L. Austin, who demonstrated that language does not merely describe reality but can also bring it into being. Similarly, gendered acts do not express a pre-existing identity; they enact and sustain it.

However, this process is not arbitrary or freely chosen. The repetition of gendered acts occurs within a "rigid regulatory frame," meaning that individuals are compelled to conform to socially sanctioned norms. These norms dictate what counts as intelligible or acceptable gender expression, thereby shaping the possibilities of identity formation.

2. The Heterosexual Matrix

The regulatory framework that governs gender performativity is what Butler terms the "heterosexual matrix." This matrix is a cultural grid that organizes bodies, genders, and desires into a coherent and seemingly natural order. Within this system, biological sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation are expected to align in predictable ways—for example, a biologically male body expressing masculine traits and desiring women.

The heterosexual matrix functions by producing "intelligible" identities—those that conform to its norms—and marginalizing or excluding those that do not. Non-conforming identities are often rendered unintelligible, stigmatized, or pathologized. In this way, the matrix not only regulates behavior but also determines which forms of life are recognized as legitimate.

Importantly, the matrix is not a static or monolithic structure. It is reproduced through everyday practices and interactions, making it both pervasive and difficult to challenge. Because individuals are constituted within this system, their capacity to resist it is inherently constrained. Nevertheless, Butler insists that the very instability of repetition creates openings for subversion.

Parody and Subversion: The Case of Drag

One of the most provocative aspects of Butler's theory is her analysis of drag as a form of gender parody. At first glance, drag might appear to be a theatrical performance in which individuals imitate the gender associated with a different biological sex. However, Butler argues that drag does more than mimic gender; it exposes the imitative structure of gender itself. By exaggerating and stylizing gender norms, drag reveals that what we consider "natural" gender is itself a performance. The supposed original—heteronormative gender identity—is shown to be just as constructed and contingent as its parody. In this sense, drag destabilizes the distinction between original and imitation, suggesting that all gender is, in a way, drag.

This insight has significant political implications. If gender norms are not natural but constructed, then they can be challenged and transformed. Parodic performances like drag have the potential to denaturalize dominant norms and open up space for alternative identities.

However, Butler is careful not to overstate the subversive potential of parody. Not all drag performances are politically radical, and some may even reinforce existing norms. For example, drag that relies on stereotypical representations of femininity may inadvertently perpetuate the very norms it seeks to critique.

The effectiveness of parody, therefore, depends on its context and reception. A performance that is subversive in one setting may be co-opted or misunderstood in another. This underscores the importance of considering the broader social and cultural environment in which performative acts occur.

The Voluntarist Trap and the Problem of Agency

In the wake of *Gender Trouble*, some interpretations of Butler's work emphasized the apparent fluidity and freedom of identity. This gave rise to what critics have called a "voluntarist" model of performativity—the idea that individuals can choose their gender identities at will, much like selecting an outfit.

Butler later clarified that this interpretation is a misreading of her theory. In *Bodies That Matter* (1993), she emphasizes that performativity is not a form of free play. The subject is not a sovereign agent who can step outside of social norms at will. Rather, the subject is constituted through those norms and is therefore constrained by them.

This raises a complex question: if individuals are shaped by the very structures they might wish to resist, how is agency possible? Butler's answer lies in the concept of constrained agency. While individuals cannot escape the norms that constitute them, they can engage with those norms in ways that are not entirely predictable or controlled.

Critics have explored this tension through concrete examples. Consider the figure of the "gay male skinhead," who adopts a hyper-masculine aesthetic associated with heteronormative and even fascist ideologies. Some argue that this performance subverts dominant norms by queering them from within. However, others question whether such subversion is legible to broader audiences.

This example highlights the importance of context. A performance that appears subversive to one group may be interpreted very differently by another. For individuals who associate the skinhead aesthetic with racism and violence, the supposed subversion may be invisible or even offensive.

Thus, the political efficacy of performative acts cannot be assessed in isolation. It depends on how those acts are interpreted within specific historical and cultural contexts. This complicates the notion of agency, suggesting that it is always mediated by systems of power and interpretation.

The Politics of Incalculability

One of Butler's most intriguing contributions is her emphasis on the incalculability of performative acts. Because repetition is never perfect, each iteration of a norm introduces the possibility of variation. These variations can accumulate over time, leading to shifts in meaning and the emergence of new identities.

This notion of incalculability offers a way of thinking about political change that does not rely on intentional or strategic action alone. Subversion, in this view, is not something that can be fully planned or controlled. It emerges from the gaps and inconsistencies in the repetition of norms.

However, this perspective has been met with criticism. Some argue that an emphasis on incalculability risks undermining the possibility of deliberate political action. If the effects of performative acts cannot be predicted, how can activists develop effective strategies for change?

To address this concern, it is necessary to balance the recognition of incalculability with an attention to calculable effects. This involves analyzing historical precedents, understanding the social meanings of specific practices, and considering how different audiences might interpret a given act.

Moreover, it requires acknowledging that meaning is not produced solely by the individual performer. The "world"—including audiences, institutions, and cultural norms—plays a crucial role in shaping how performative acts are understood. Political action, therefore, must be attuned to this broader context.

Conclusion: Identity as a Regulatory Fiction

Judith Butler's theory of performativity represents a profound shift in how we understand identity. By rejecting the notion of an essential self, Butler reveals identity to be a regulatory fiction—a construct sustained through repeated social practices and embedded within systems of power.

This perspective has far-reaching implications. It challenges the naturalization of gender norms, exposes the mechanisms of social regulation, and opens up new possibilities for thinking about resistance and transformation. At the same time, it complicates traditional notions of agency and political action, emphasizing the constraints imposed by discourse and the unpredictability of performative effects.

Ultimately, the politics of performativity is not about discovering or expressing a "true" self. It is about interrogating the categories that define us and exploring the ways in which they can be reconfigured. While we are always already shaped by power, the instability of repetition ensures that power is never absolute. Within this instability lies the potential for change—not as a guaranteed outcome, but as an ongoing and contested process.

In this sense, Butler's work invites us to rethink not only who we are, but how we come to be—and how we might become otherwise.

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Dr.Karandikar Vallabh Shankar

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Assistant Professor,
B.D.Kale Mahavidyalaya,
Ghodegaon(Pune)
Email: vskarandikar2@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr.Karandikar Vallabh Shankar
Assistant Professor,
B.D.Kale Mahavidyalaya,
Ghodegaon(Pune)
Email: vskarandikar2@gmail.com

Abstract:
Kamala Das is an iconic Indian poetess who is well-known for her feminine sensibility in her English and Malayalam poetry. Her confessional mode, fearlessness, boldness and voice against male -dominated society accords her a special status. The personal and emotional world of women in a patriarchal society is the main concern in her poetry. The present paper attempts to shed light on some of her famous poems through which she rebels against the male-dominated society. She narrates the experiences of women in her poems and speaks out for change in society. Kamal Das resists the historical and traditional norms and tries to perform her role as a feminist to bring about changes in society. She tries to highlight the stark reality in society by depicting the status of women and their sufferings. The themes and style of Kamala Das's poetry reflect the true picture of womanhood, which needs to be changed. She is criticised by many critics for her unapologetic picture of female sexuality and for breaking the traditional gender norms. The feminist voice of Kamala Das has become a source of inspiration for the suffering women who have been tortured in this male-dominated society.

Keywords: *Feminine sensibility, confessional mode, patriarchal society, traditional norms, gender norms, feminist voice.*

Introduction

The sensibility presented in poetry expresses the poet's observations, feelings, emotions, experiences, consciousness, responsiveness and ability to appreciate. "*One of the most aggressively individualistic of the new poets is Kamala Das.*" (Iyengar 677). Kamala Das has given a new dimension to Indian writings in English. She has composed poems in English and Malayalam. Her poetry collections *Summer in Calcutta*, *The Descendents*, *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* highlight the predicament of women in the patriarchal society. Her novel *Alphabet of Lust*, short story *A Doll for the Child Prostitute* and autobiography *My Story* depicts the sexual exploitation of women in society. The reputation of Kamala Das rests on her poetry and her notoriety from her autobiography. (Gupta 46). This paper attempts to highlight the feminine sensibility in the poems of Kamala Das. The various approaches and dimensions of feminine sensibility are taken into consideration. It shows the feminist perspective of Kamala Das. The various aspects of feminine sensibility are explained in this paper, explaining various poems of Kamala Das.

Defining Feminine Sensibility:

The term feminine focuses on the characteristics of the female gender that are traditionally suitable for women. The term sensibility focuses on sensitiveness. In the Indian context, feminine sensibility is a perspective that shows awareness about womanhood. In literature, many poets have depicted the inner struggles of women through their challenges and problems. The problems of women are explored, focusing on different dimensions and applying various approaches. Kamala Das has tried to highlight different problems of women. Das has highlighted her personal experiences in her poetry, which are representative in nature. Understanding her personal emotions, experiences and sufferings through her confessional mode is an interesting study. Das's poetry shows her gender consciousness, female identity, and social, traditional, cultural and political diplomacy. The language, tone, mood and themes in the poems of Das depict feminine sensibility.

Literature Review:

Many Indian poets have focused on feminine sensibility in their poetry by highlighting traditional systems. cultural experiences and societal norms through their poetic expressions. The feminist perspective tries to highlight the problems of women, their suffering conditions. Male dominance, sexual exploitation, alienation, suffering conditions and desires and expectations are some of the important factors highlighted by many poets such as Kamala Das, Sarojini Naidu, Amrita Pritam, and Gauri Deshpande. These poets have highlighted feminine sensibility in their poetry by highlighting their identity, suffering, love, loneliness, female emotions, sexual exploitation and expectations. They have voiced for equality and freedom by depicting oppressive social, political, geographical, cultural and traditional practices in the society. The conventional roles of women are focused on by these poets to show how women suffer in their lives.

Themes Reflecting Feminine Sensibility in the Poems of Kamala Das: Kamala Das is known for her bold and candid tone. She expresses feminine sensibility through the themes in her poems. Being a confession poet, she highlights her personal experiences to shed light on the factors that make women suffer. Major themes in her poetry are: male domination, sufferings of women, identity conflict, marital issues, female protest, betrayal, childhood experiences, sexual exploitation, social hypocrisy, longing for true love and equal status. Through these themes, Kamala Das has presented feminine sensibility in her poetry.

Reflection of Feminine Sensibility in the Poems of Kamala Das

This paper tries to highlight the feminine sensibility in the poems of Kamala Das, highlighting various aspects in the poems. Some poems from the collections of Kamala Das are explained to show the feminine sensibility in her poems. Kamala Das criticises the male-dominated society and
the traditional norms by expressing her strong dissatisfaction with so called civilized sextual morality and social standards in her poems. (Sinha 117). Das's poetry criticises the traditional norms based on male domination.

The feminine sensibility of Das is reflected through the following poems, which challenge traditional social norms and expose social reality, terror, political lechery and hypocrisy. ***An Introduction*** is one of the evocative poems. In it, Das maps out the social customs that seek to keep the woman in a perpetual bondage of convictions. (Chakrabarti 175). The following lines in the poem of Kamala Das highlight how a woman is expected to perform her traditional role of a mother, wife and daughter.

"Dress in sarees, be girl/Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook, /
Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in/."
(Das "An Introduction" lines 36-42)

Through these lines, Das criticises the traditional social norms that give no power, status and freedom to women.

Das becomes the voice of feminine sensibility by giving a new dimension to her poems. Her frank and candid tone enables her to depict the social reality. Her use of the personal pronoun "I" in her poems expresses her longings, expectations and problems. Moreover, it becomes the loud voice of women in general. She boldly challenges the patriarchal mechanism and speaks out against injustice. She expresses her unfulfilled desires and sexual exploitation. In *An Introduction,* Das says:

"When I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask
For he drew a youth of sixteen into the
Bedroom and closed the door, He did not beat me
But my sad woman-body felt so beaten." (Das. "An Introduction" lines 28-31)

These lines indicate how women are treated as pleasure-giving objects whenever men desire. Men enjoy the female body without bothering about female feelings and expectations. Das has described these feelings and expectations to show female exploitation. A woman is always treated as secondary. She is treated badly in society.

In the poem, ***The Freaks*** Das highlights the relationship that is not based on love.

"He talks, turning a sun-stained/cheek to me, his mouth, a dark /cavern, where stalactites of /uneven teeth gleam, his right/ hand on my knee, while our minds/ are willed to race towards love;/But they only wander, tripping" (Das "The Freaks" lines 1-7*)*.

These lines focus the male partner who is ugly, lustful and repulsive. He tries to enjoy her physical body. There is no emotional involvement. It shows the lust of the male partner who wants to enjoy the female body and nothing else. Das wants to indicate that they also want to love and enjoy with their partner, but their emotions, desires and expectations are not at all considered by their partners.

The suffering condition of a married woman is highlighted by Das in her poem ***The Grandmother's House*****.** Das confesses that she didn't receive love after her marriage, which she received from her grandmother when she was alive. It shows the plight of the married woman who suffers because of male domination. The difference between childhood life and married life is highlighted in the poem. The grandmother's house symbolises security and love. But the grandmother's death and the decay of the old house bring darkness and loneliness. Loneliness and loss of love is experienced by the poet in the absence of the grandmother; it sheds light on the insecure and troublesome life of a woman after her marriage. The poet's feminine sensibility is reflected through her loveless relationship and pessimism in the poem. The deathlike silence in the grandmother's house indicates loss for the poet. The desire to meet the grandmother and her house shows the attachment of the poet to her grandmother.

"I who have lost/My way and beg now at strangers' doors to/Receive love, --"(Das "My Grandmother's House" lines 14-16)

The death of the grandmother makes the poet suffer from her great loss. Life becomes loveless and miserable for her. She hopes for love but feels like a stranger in the absence of her grandmother.

In the poem, ***The Sunshine Cat***, Das shows how a woman is betrayed by her lovers. A woman is considered only as an object of happiness. Her feelings, emotions and expectations are not considered, and therefore, she feels lonely and neglected. Sexual exploitation is one of the prominent themes in the poems of Kamala Das. *The Sunshine Cat* highlights the difference between love and lust. The impact of lust is presented in the poem. The husband in the poem neglects the wife without understanding or caring about her feelings and emotions. It makes the woman suffer. The woman in the poem suffers because of her lusty, selfish and cruel husband. Frustration in marriage and extra-marital relations destroys their family life.

The poem, ***The Old Playhouse,*** tries to describe the relationship between the husband and the wife. In this poem, the image of a sparrow stands for the poetess who didn't get freedom in her life. The poet's mind is compared with the old playhouse with the lights off. The darkness indicates loneliness. The valueless life of the woman makes her suffer. This poem shows the traditional marriage system, in which the husband dominates his wife and makes her behave as per his expectations. It makes her unhappy as she is denied freedom and neglected in her life.

The poem, ***Relationship***, by Kamala Das introspects contemporary social reality and explores the complexities of love, needs and betrayal in a relationship. The frustration of the woman caused by her unfulfilled desires for her companion highlights failure in the relationship. The following lines indicate the experience of the woman who suffers from the betrayal of her companion. Her frustration and helplessness in indicated in the following lines.

"My body's wisdom tells and tells again
That I shall find my rest, my sleep, my peace
And even death nowhere else but here in
My betrayer's arms..." (Das "Relationship" lines 14-17)

The language and tone in the poem, ***Forest Fire***, highlight the inner desire of the poet. The title of the poem is symbolic. The fire is the forest that consumes everything; it is the destructive force that destroys everything. Through this poem, the poet expresses her inner fire, which is as destructive as a forest fire. The poet desires to be destructive to end her problems. This creative use of language, tone of the poet and imagery highlights feminine sensibility. This poem shows the inner feelings of woman through the creative force of the poet which is based on the poets strange and shocking experiences in life. As the fire destroys everything in its path, in the same way, the poet wishes to destroy all the problems of woman which make them suffer. Therefore, the poet says:

"My eyes lick at you like flames, my nerves
Consume; and, when I finish with you, (Das "Forest Fire" lines 8-9)

The confessional mode of Kamala Das expresses the plight of the woman she suffers from. Her hopes are also reflected in the confessional mode. In the poem, ***In Love***, the poet narrates her sexual experience. The lover in the poem is passionate and enjoys sexual pleasure, but the sexual experience is merely the passion for sex; it has no emotional involvement. It is the most common experience of women which poet shares boldly.

"*--Million questions awake in*
Me, and all about him, and
This skin-communicated
Thing that I dare not yet in
His presence call our love." (Das "Love" lines 23-27)

Kamala Das in her poem, ***The Suicide***, shows a desire for suicide due to unhappiness in life. The mental stress and suffering of a woman is highlighted in this poem. The symbolic use of the sea expresses freedom and the desire to escape from mundane life.

"O sea, i am fed up
I want to be simple
I want to be loved
And
If love is not to be had,
I want to be dead," (Das "The Suicide" lines 27-32)

The woman in the poem is fed up with her routine life. She expects love in life. The feminine sensibility of the poet is seen through her protest against patriarchal society and her desire to live a carefree life. The wish to live a simple and free life is the expectation of the woman, but if she didn't get love, she prefers to die.

The poem, ***A Losing Battle***, expresses love as a losing battle. As the title symbolises, in the battle of love, women are trapped, and they experience the worthiness of men. The tone of the poem expresses the frustration of a woman in a male-dominated society where her feelings and desires are not considered. The poet highlights men as beasts. Their worthless primal instincts are criticized. The following lines in the poem show the worthlessness of a man who is not faithful and capable of love:

"Men are worthless, to trap them/Use the cheapest bait of all, but never/Love,"(Das "A Losing Battle" lines 3-5)

The poem, ***Words***, highlights the power of words. Kamala Das, in her poems, expresses her poetic talent through words. Her poems become appealing due to her diction, tone and imagery. It also highlights her ability and feminine sensibility. These words become a weapon for her to fight against traditional customs and a male-dominated society. The following lines show the poetic talent of the poet:

"All round me are words, and words and words,
They grow on me like leaves, they never
Seem to stop their slow growing
From within.." (Das "Words" lines 1-4).

The poet. highlights the nature, power and importance of language. It has the ability to create and destroy. The artistic expression of the poet enables her to create tension in her poem by focusing on her inner world. The artistic and poetic expressions highlight the real power of the poet, and Kamala Das succeeds in her attempt to depict her inner wishes using the most appropriate, natural, effective and powerful words.

In the poem, ***The Stone Age***, the husband is called the ancient settler and fat spider, who makes his wife work just like a slave without bothering about her expectations. The poet raises the question in the mind of the woman whose sorrowful and loveless life becomes torture for her. The following lines reflect the life of the woman after marriage:

"Ask me why life is short and love is
Shorter still, ask me what is bliss and what its price..." (Das "The Stone Age" lines 21-22)

This confessional mode and cry of the woman in the poem highlight the plight of women after marriage. The neglected life of the married woman makes her suffer. This poem shows the loss of female identity. Her condition is compared with a granite dove, which is lifeless and has no value. Kamala Das exposes the marital relationship of the couple, which is not based on love. The selfish and lustful nature of the husband makes the life of the wife problematic and troublesome.

The above poems highlight the female voice of Kamala Das, which depicts the various problems of women in general. The confessional mode of the poet and her narrated experiences depict the stark reality in society. Kamala Das has presented different issues in her poems by applying a feminist lens. Traditional marriage systems, social and cultural practices, protests, suffering, nostalgia, childhood experiences, loveless relationships, desires, expectations and sexual exploitations are some of the issues highlighted by Kamala Das in the above -mentioned poems to depict feminine sensibility in her poems.

Conclusion

The confessional mode of Kamala Das and her bold voice against an oppressive male-dominated society accords her a special status. The poems highlighted in this paper shed light on her feminine sensibility through her feminist perspective. Her voice no longer remains personal but becomes a loud cry of the suffering women in society. Her boldness and opposition to the traditional norms become a subject of criticism. The contribution of Kamala Das as an English poet and Madhavikutty in Malayalam shows her bilingual capabilities. Her courage to fight against a male-dominated society and traditional practices became a voice for the voiceless women. The use of diction, style, tone, imagery and use of personal pronouns make her poems very special, interesting and motivating. She has become a voice of the generation as her ideas appeal to us. Her conversion to Islam highlights her inner desires and expectations. She has depicted, in her poems, very beautifully the traditional practices in the male-dominated society and female expectations. Her rebellion against the social evils, her boldness, ability, creativity and diction accord her a crucial status in Indian literature.

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Culture versus Nature: A Cultural Imperialism and its implications in Amitav Ghosh's The Glass Palace

Dr.Ambavane Rajendra Bhima

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Department of English
PDEA's Annasaheb Waghire College of Arts, Science and Commerce Otur Tal.Junnar Dist-Pune-412409, Savitribai Phule Pune University Pune, Maharashtra
Email-ambavaneraju@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr.Ambavane Rajendra Bhima
Department of English
PDEA's Annasaheb Waghire College of Arts, Science and Commerce Otur Tal.Junnar Dist-Pune
Savitribai Phule Pune University Pune, Maharashtra
Email-ambavaneraju@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper investigates intimate relationships between culture and nature and explores how they influence, determine and construct our personal and social world. As an influential Eco critic, Glotfelty expands the scope of ecocriticism from ecological to non-ecological aspects like language, culture, ethical values that has affected our physical environment. He says "All ecological criticism shares the fundamental premises that human culture is connected to the physical environment world, affecting it and affected by it " (Glotfelty P.xvii). This paper focuses the conflict and cultural domination over nature as an ultimate cause for current environmental catastrophes. Ghosh tries to challenge established anthropocentric culture, which determine human concerns with physical environment. He argues that current ethical system (anthropocentric culture) has failed to solve environmental problems; consequently, we need an environmental oriented ethical system that will not only protect our physical environment but also construct our actual concern to it. Exploring cultural imperialism, Ghosh tries to challenge western anthropocentric power structure and its dangerous implication on indigenous life style. However, the paper illustrates Ghosh's ecological sensitivity and efforts to redefine human concerns with physical world by providing eco-centric alternative to established ethical system.

***Key Words**: Ecocriticism, Imperialism, Nature, Culture, Anthropocentrism, Colonialism*

Introduction:

Nature and culture are two interconnected forces that mutually influence each other. The physical environment has significantly influenced our socio-cultural domains. The physical environment has a vital role in constructing our personal and social world. Ecocritics explore the intimate relationship between nature and culture. Cheryll Glotfelty in the critical book 'The Ecocritical Reader' (1996) says 'human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it' (Glotfelty). Glotfelty states the prime role of nature in shaping humans' emotional and social world. Ecocritics emphasize the foregrounding of nature over culture because they believe in an earth-centered approach. Understanding the relationship between nature and culture is crucial because man utilizes natural resources to create a socio-cultural world. For constructing social, cultural identity, man has started excessive use of natural resources that result in the devastation of natural resources. According to ecocritics, the environmental crisis is an outcome of our anthropocentric culture that has dominated nature. A prolific historian, Donald Worster explains the nature and functioning of the ethical system as "We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how the ecosystem functions but rather because of how our ethical system functions" (Glotfelty P.XX). Donald argues that the anthropocentric ethical system has been the actual cause of present environmental crises. However, understanding its nature and functioning is necessary to find a solution to the environmental crisis. The anthropocentric social structure is human-centric, which distinguishes man from the rest of things. Worster says that the environmental problems are not associated with the functioning of the ecosystem but with an established ethical system that gives a special place to man and the right to control the rest of the things in the world. Fitj of Capra in "Deep Ecology: A New Paradigma" (1996) who rightly defines an ethical system as 'an anthropocentric one where culture dominates nature and assigns a special position to man, who misuses and exploits fellow creatures.' The classical texts, like Cicero's 'On the Nature of the Gods,' describe the place of human beings in anthropocentric culture as 'Plants exist for the sake of animals, animals for the sake of man, and man for sake of worshiping God' (Todd P.2). In an established ethical system, man is put at the center of everything and assigned the right to manage and handle the rest of the things for his enjoyment. However, anthropocentric dominance and its negative impact on the physical world are held as prime causes of the environmental crisis. Eco-critics or environmentalists know that an alternative to the established anthropocentric ethical system could be final solution for environmental crisis. Ghosh tries to challenge established anthropocentric culture, which determines human concerns with the physical environment. He argues that the current ethical system (anthropocentric culture) has failed to solve environmental problems; consequently,

we need an environmentally oriented ethical system that will not only protect our physical environment but also reconstruct our actual concern for it.Exploring cultural imperialism, Ghosh tries to challenge the western anthropocentric power structure and its dangerous implications on indigenous lifestyles. He suggests reforming our ethical or cultural values that are functioning against ecological values. White Lynn in his essay entitled '*The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,*' argues that 'the environmental crisis is fundamentally a matter of our beliefs and values that direct science and technology' (White).

Ghosh's 'The Glass Palace' has been set in the colonial era, which explores colonial domination in third-world countries and points out the negative impact on socio-culture and the physical environment. Ghosh describes various forms of colonial domination as ecological imperialism, cultural imperialism, ecotourism, racism, etc., in the selected novels. These forms of colonial domination are deeply rooted in a Western anthropocentric power structure that foregrounds a human-centric culture. Ghosh challenges Eurocentric cultural domination in third-world countries. According to eco-critics, an anthropocentric power structure is an outcome of Christian ideology, which is human-centric. It is quite trendy to say that we live in 'the post-Christian world age'. It reveals the influence of Christianity, or Christian dogmas, on the entire universe, which has directed everything and restricted our way of thinking on certain grounds. Ghosh's 'The Glass Palace' explores colonial cultural domination in the form of timber business and commercialization of natural resources. It also highlights imperialists' anthropocentric power structure that causes environmental disharmony and transforms indigenous eco-centric concern to egocentric as well.

'The Glass Palace' is a historical novel that deals with colonial rule and its negative impact on the socio-cultural and physical environment of third-world countries. Ghosh belonged to a colonized nation and has experienced colonial oppression. The novel begins with conflict between the royal family, a Burmese sovereign king, and British Army soldiers. The reason for the colonial attack on Mandalay is the teak timberlands, which they wanted to change into timber yards for their commercial purpose. Colonial attacks for obtaining access to teak timber forests have been purely commercial. It discloses imperialists' approach towards indigenous resources, where an anthropocentric power structure implies utilitarian purpose. Imperialists wanted to get free access to use teak forests. Rajkumar described it as *"A war over wood? Who's ever heard of such thing?"* (Ghosh P.13). Ghosh reveals the nature of anthropocentric power over indigenous people. The war took place for gaining control over teak forests for commercial purposes. It shows that anthropocentric culture is purely materialistic, which believes in human-centric development, and reveals utilitarian aspects of natural resources.

Alfred Crosby used the term 'ecological imperialism' that proposes cultural and ecological domination over third-world countries. He defined it as "Ecological imperialism was about the displacement of indigenous ecologies in favour of biological 'neo-Europes'" (Crosby). The term 'ecological imperialism' comprises ecological as well as anthropocentric domination over indigenous ecology and sociocultural domains. The imperialists made a huge shift in indigenous ecology by introducing their domestic livestock, such as animals, birds, and new crops. The introduction of foreign species upset the equilibrium of native species and harshly hurt the way of life of the native population. With the arrival of Europeans, their livestock destroyed cultural and environmental harmony. They introduced new crops and species, which seriously affected ecological and cultural harmony. The effects of new epidemic diseases on the indigenous animal species, like elephants, are quite dangerous and explicit. Ghosh talked about the most dangerous epidemic disease in the Burma forest, which widely appeared in forest elephants. *"The virus of this epidemic disease was found in grassland that was kept unused for many years. The most virulent form of anthrax could kill an elephant in an hour after its infection"* (Ghosh P.81). The colonizers did not just overuse natural resources but also tried to reshape indigenous ecology in a European manner and destroyed indigenous ecological harmony. Ghosh described an infectious disease called anthrax, which generally appeared in forest elephants. The infected animal died in an hour. Colonizers accidentally carried this virus when they brought their domestic livestock with them. It infected indigenous species (elephant species) in the Burma region.

The imperialist agricultural practices destroyed indigenous ecological harmony. The agricultural practices should be appropriate according to the ecological setup. However, colonial agricultural techniques to produce more profit brought a huge shift and drastically changed indigenous relations with their mother earth and physical environment. For instance, the use of animals in the agricultural sector. Saya John said the Europeans who introduced the use of animals for human profit. Before the Europeans, elephants were used in ceremonies or war, but the Europeans taught how elephants could be made to work for human profit. "*Yet until the Europeans came none of them had ever thought of using elephants; they could be made to work for human purpose of logging".* (Ghosh)

Ghosh illustrates colonial domination in everything. They rigorously handled natural resources and converted as per their manner. The colonizers quickly converted Burma into the British Empire as they occupied it. They modified the entire infrastructure of the Glass Palace and made it suitable for them. Courtly Mandalay became a commercial hub. The conversion of Burma and Mandalay was based on Western culture. The queen's hall became a billiard room. The garden had been dug to make room for tennis and polo grounds. The ecology of Burma was adversely affected when colonizers introduced new crops and changed the seasonal cropping patterns of natives. Saya John

described it as *"an area that had once been home to dozens of small spice gardens where pepper plants grew on vines*". (Ghosh P.12). Ghosh has pointed out the drastic change in Malacca, where farmers were persuaded to accept new cropping patterns that had a direct effect on soil fertility. The newly adopted cropping pattern offers many benefits but has adverse effects on the fertility of land or the physical environment in general.

Conclusion:

Ghosh argues the established anthropocentric culture; determine human concerns with physical environment. The current ethical system (anthropocentric culture) is at the roots all problems. It controls our physical, emotional and social world and provide restricted vision about rest of things. Exploring cultural imperialism, Ghosh tries to challenge western anthropocentric power structure and its dangerous implication on indigenous life style. He further says we need an environmental oriented ethical system that will not only protect our physical environment but also construct our actual concern to it. He also highlights the cultural, social, and environmental tyranny of British Imperialists. They did not just interfere in social or cultural life, but in the physical environment as well. David describes colonial ideology for colonized nations and its adverse effect on the ecology of indigenous people. The ecological disharmony in indigenous ecology appeared because colonizers imposed their anthropocentric culture and commercial agricultural practices.

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Capitalism and reshaping Indian Identity in Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

Dr. Bhanudas Wagh

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Asst. Professor
School of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Faculty of Education and Humanities
JSPM University Pune
abhijeet.wagh21183@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Bhanudas Wagh
Asst. Professor
School of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Faculty of Education and Humanities
JSPM University Pune
abhijeet.wagh21183@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper focuses on the transformation of Indian identity which is reshaping under the influence of capitalism as reflected in Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger by. This research paper also explore how economic change, especially after liberalization, has created new opportunities while also increasing inequality and moral conflict. Capitalism in India has encouraged ambition, competition and the desire for success, but it has been observed that it is also weakening traditional values such as honesty, loyalty and social responsibility. The study is based on the main character Balram Halwai and his journey from a poor village boy to a successful entrepreneur. This reflects a transformation of his identity. At the beginning, Balram works as a servant and lives according to traditional expectations. However, after observing the lifestyle and power of the rich, he starts asking question the system. His growing ambition leads him to reject his past and adopt a new identity based on money and independence. In the process, he chooses unethical means, including the murder of his master, which reveals the darker side of capitalist success. The paper argues that the novel presents a shift in identity from being shaped by caste, family, and tradition to being defined by wealth, power, and survival. It also highlights the tension between old values and new aspirations in modern India. Overall, the study shows that capitalism not only changes economic life but also deeply affects personal identity and moral thinking.

Keywords: *Capitalism, Identity, Inequality, Ambition, Moral Conflict, Social Change*

Introduction

Aravind Adiga is one of well-known Indian novelists who writes in English. Adiga became famous for his first novel, *The White Tiger*, which won the Booker Prize in 2008. The novel narrates the story of a poor man, Balram Halwai, who becomes a successful businessman in a changing, modern India. The novel presents poverty, corruption, class struggle and the effects of capitalism on Indian citizen and society. Adiga's writing is known for being bold and honest. He writes about the lives of ordinary Indian people who are often forgotten by the rich and powerful. His books show the real face of India, both the good and the bad. Through his stories, Adiga asks important questions about justice, freedom, and identity. Besides *The White Tiger*, Adiga has written other books like *Between the Assassinations* and *Last Man in Tower*.
The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga narrates the story of Balram Halwai, a poor man from a small village in India. He belongs to a low caste and grows up in poverty, with few chances for education or success. However, Balram is clever and ambitious. He gets a job as a driver for a rich man named Ashok in the city of Delhi. As Balram works for Ashok, he sees how the rich treat the poor and how the system is full of corruption and unfairness. He feels trapped in what he calls the "Rooster Coop", where poor people accept their place and never fight back. Balram decides he wants to break free. To escape his life of servitude, Balram makes a bold and dangerous choice. He kills his master and runs away with his money. He moves to Bangalore, starts his own taxi business and becomes a successful entrepreneur. The novel shows how capitalism, power and poverty shape modern India. It also explores how one man changes his identity to gain freedom and success. Balram's story is both shocking and eye-opening, showing the dark side of India's economic growth.

This paper explores how Indian identity is reshaped through the lens of capitalism in Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. Capitalism is an economic system where people and businesses work for profit. In India, capitalism has brought many changes since the 1990s, such as new jobs, big cities and modern lifestyles. As a result of it, different problems like inequality, corruption and the loss of traditional values have been caused. In the novel, Balram journey begins as a servant and ends as an entrepreneur. This reflects the impact of capitalism on his identity. In the beginning, Balram is shown a poor and obedient servant. He accepts his low place in society and adjust to poor financial conditions. He starts asking question the system when he sees the rich people around him. There are enjoying power and freedom. This makes him restless. He slowly starts changing himself and becoming himself more bold, clever and even violent. He chooses a wrong way to succeed in life.

He becomes ready to break the law and kills his master. This act shows the dark side of capitalism, where personal success may come at the cost of morality and ethics. The novelist describes the story of Balram Halwai, a poor villager. Later he becomes a successful businessman in a globalized India. Balram's journey shows how capitalism offers people new opportunities in the market, but also creates new forms of inequality and moral struggles on the other hand. Balram tries to break away from his traditional role as a servant and chooses a life of ambition, freedom and power. He lies, betrays and even kills to achieve his goals. The novel shows Indian identity is changing from being based on caste, family and tradition to being shaped by money, competition and survival through Balram's story. Arvind Adiga tries to make it clear that capitalism and globalization offer new opportunities but also bring challenges such as inequality, corruption, and moral confusion. The story of the novel makes it clear that capitalism does not just change the economy, but also changes how people see themselves and their place in society. *The White Tiger* offers a powerful view of the hopes and problems of people in modern India. It has been seen that the novel shows the conflict between traditional Indian identity and the new identity shaped by capitalism. Balram moves from being a village boy who respects family and religion to a city businessman who trusts only himself. He rejects his past and creates a new identity based on money, independence, and survival. This change shows how capitalism pushes people to leave behind their roots and take on new roles in society.

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* is a powerful novel that shows how modern capitalism is changing the social, cultural and moral identity of people in India. Set in a rapidly developing India, the story follows Balram Halwai, a poor village boy who becomes a successful entrepreneur in the city. His journey from "darkness" to "light" reflects the larger changes happening in Indian society as the country moves from traditional systems to a new capitalist economy. Through Balram's voice, Adiga raises important questions about power, class, freedom, and self-definition.

In today's India, capitalism has created many opportunities for growth, but it has also produced inequality, competition and moral conflict. In the novel, Balram believes that success in a capitalist world requires breaking away from old identities based on caste, family duty and rural life. He tries to reshape his identity by learning the language of business, copying the lifestyle of the rich, and rejecting the expectations of his family. His transformation shows how capitalism encourages individuals to think of themselves as independent, ambitious, and driven by personal goals. At the same time, Adiga shows the darker side of this change. Balram's success comes through crime, betrayal, and the rejection of moral values. This raises an important question: Does capitalism truly free people, or does it create a new kind of moral and social burden? The novel suggests that the desire for wealth and power can reshape identity in both positive and negative ways.

Indian English writers often write about the effects of capitalism on people's lives. They explore how money, business and class affect identity, relationships and values. They show both the good and bad sides of capitalism. Some characters become rich and successful, while others are left behind or forced to make difficult choices. In Indian English literature, capitalism is often linked with other themes like class, gender, education, and globalization. Writers show how people struggle to fit into a world where money and success matter more than tradition or community. Some characters fight the system, while others try to adjust or take advantage of it.

Modern English literature also reflects Marxist concerns. Works about migration, inequality, globalisation and corruption often explore how economic power affects people's identity and opportunities. Contemporary writers show how capitalism creates both progress and suffering, and how individuals struggle within these structures. In simple terms, Marxism helps readers understand literature as part of a larger social and economic world. It encourages us to ask: Who has power? Who suffers? Why do these inequalities exist? And how does the text support or resist the system? By connecting stories to real-life conditions, Marxist criticism makes literature a tool for understanding society and imagining a more equal world. Balram's journey shows how capitalism demands ambition, risk, and even moral compromise. To succeed, one must be competitive, clever, and sometimes ruthless. This is why Balram believes that in a capitalist society, "the entrepreneur is the real hero." (P-113) He sees entrepreneurship as a way to escape the chains of caste and poverty. Yet, Adiga also shows that capitalism pushes individuals to break traditions, question morality, and make choices that have serious ethical consequences.

One of the most memorable symbols used by Adiga is the "Rooster Coop." Balram uses this metaphor to describe how servants and poor people in India behave like roosters trapped in a cage. Even when they see other roosters being killed, they do not rebel. Instead, they accept their fate because their loyalty to family, caste and social rules keeps them tied to their masters. The Rooster Coop represents the ideological and economic control that capitalism continues to maintain over the poor. Although India claims to be a land of opportunities, most servants remain stuck because they fear the consequences of trying to escape. Families will be punished for their rebellion, so workers remain silent and obedient.

Traditional Indian identity is strongly shaped by caste, family, religion and social expectations. In Balram's village, people are known by their caste and expected to follow the occupation linked with it. Identity is not chosen; it is inherited. A Halwai like Balram is supposed to become a sweet-maker or manual servant. But as India becomes more capitalist and globalised, identity begins to shift. People move from villages to cities, travel for work, and dream of breaking free from old social boundaries. Capitalism allows new forms of identity to appear for examples identities based on money, ambition, education and entrepreneurial success. At first, Balram accepts the identity given to him by caste and poverty. He becomes a driver for a wealthy family in Delhi. His actions, behaviour, and thinking are controlled by his employers. He learns how to please the rich, how to act humble, and how to suppress his desires. This identity is shaped by submission and fear. When Balram sees the hypocrisy and cruelty of the rich, he begins

questioning the identity forced on him. He realises that loyalty and honesty keep him trapped. Slowly, he reshapes his identity by developing a sense of independence. He learns English, observes business practices, and dreams of becoming an entrepreneur. His rebellion grows internally before it becomes external.

In a novel, Balram reconstructs his identity completely after killing Ashok and escaping to Bangalore. He becomes a businessman, uses modern capitalist strategies and builds a new life with a new name: Ashok Sharma. He tries to appear respectable, confident and professional for qualities admired in a capitalist society. Adiga shows identity as something flexible and changeable, especially in a system where success depends on personal effort, intelligence, and mobility. Yet Balram's new identity is built on crime, raising questions about the moral cost of such transformation. Capitalism creates competition and pressure, which often leads to moral compromise. For Balram, the biggest moral crisis is choosing between loyalty to his employer and loyalty to his own survival. When he sees that Mr. Ashok is planning to sacrifice him to protect the family's interests, he feels justified in killing him.

Adiga shows that Balram is a product of a system where the poor are denied justice, dignity and opportunity. His moral crisis reflects the larger turmoil in Indian society as it shifts from old values to new capitalist realities. Balram's movement from the village to Delhi and finally to Bangalore reflects India's journey from tradition to modernity. Each place reshapes Balram's identity and transforms his understanding of power.

Another important aspect of capitalism in the novel is the role of globalisation. American culture, English language, multinational companies and outsourcing industries influence every part of Indian life. Balram's employers try to behave like Americans by partying, eating Western food, and adopting a modern lifestyle. Balram learns that to succeed in this new India, he must speak English and understand global business models. His desire to become a modern entrepreneur comes partly from observing the capitalist culture introduced through globalisation.

Adiga shows that Indian identity is becoming a mixture of local traditions and global influences. This mixture creates confusion, ambition and new social tensions. Although Balram becomes a successful businessman, the ending of the novel is not fully optimistic. He escapes poverty, but he also commits a crime and continues to use questionable methods in business. His success does not automatically make him morally better. Instead, it shows that capitalism rewards cleverness and survival skills more than honesty. He also fears that one day, someone may kill him the way he killed Ashok. This fear suggests that capitalism simply replaces old chains with new ones. Balram has reshaped his identity, but he remains trapped in a system built on competition and insecurity.

In this way, the novel shows how capitalism allows people to change who they are. But this change is not simple. Balram has to give up his family, his values, and even his morals. He becomes successful, but at a great personal cost. This shows that the new Indian identity shaped by capitalism is based on individual success, not community or tradition. People are judged by what they have, not where they come from. In modern India, English is a symbol of power and progress. In the novel, Balram learns English by listening and observing. His ability to speak and write in English helps him enter the world of the rich. The novel is written as a letter from Balram to the Premier of China. Through this format, Adiga shows how Balram uses English not only to tell his story but also to prove that he is now part of the global world. However, access to good education and English is limited for the poor. This creates a new kind of inequality in India. People who know English have better jobs and more respect, while others are left behind.

Conclusion

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* presents a sharp and critical picture of capitalism in modern India. Through Balram's rise from a poor villager to an entrepreneur, Adiga explores how economic forces reshape identity, morality, and social relationships. Capitalism offers opportunities for change, but it also creates new forms of inequality, corruption, and psychological pressure. Balram's transformation shows the complex journey of individuals trying to escape traditional identities while struggling within a competitive and often unethical system. The novel suggests that while capitalism has the power to reshape Indian identity, it also forces society to confront serious moral questions about justice, freedom and the meaning of success.

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The idea of privacy and security: A analytical study of surveillance ethics in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Dr. Chaitanya Tanaji Gite

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Assistant Professor,
Dr. Vishwanath Karad MIT World Peace University, Pune
Email- chaitanyagt7@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Chaitanya Tanaji Gite
Assistant Professor,
Dr. Vishwanath Karad MIT World Peace University, Pune
Email- chaitanyagt7@gmail.com

Abstract

Technology has been crucial to the transformations in the human lives in the digital age. It is inevitable that people observe the ideas of privacy and security while handling the digital needs of the current times. Dystopian fiction writers have been perfect in their predictions about the future that exists today. Their foresight has been a matter of study for the readers. The readers have observed the technological transformations created which ultimately portray the battle between privacy and security. The following research paper includes a study of the dystopian novel, Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell. The key themes explored in the research paper include the mechanisms of control and discipline, the psychological effects of surveillance, implications of technological dictatorship, privacy rights, resistance to the political issues, individual autonomy, and related scenarios. The researcher utilised the library method for analysis of the novel under study. The research aims to provide a valuable contribution to the diverse areas of surveillance studies.

Keywords: *Dystopian, Orwell, Privacy, Technology, Surveillance, Autonomy*

Introduction:

This research aims to investigate the depiction of Orwell's narration and compare it with the current technologies of surveillance. The intended end product is to contextualize the prevalent totalitarian society in which technocratic surveillance is the norm. On the contrary, it delineates the need for the protection of the individual rights which is now in the technocratic era, and the essence of Orwell's observations are therefore incorporated into the complexity of the techno-city and in the process of controlling society. The researcher aspires to make this voyage deeper into Orwell's dystopia in order to successfully expound its relevance to the current realities and spark the discussion to the point where it would impact political governance, tech leadership and the preservation of fundamental freedoms in the digital world. Furthermore, the technique that Orwell used in depicting *Nineteen Eighty-Four* technology is a reflection to the technological developments of his time and it is a sign of the concerns revolving around privacy and technology currently. Given the fact that Orwell could not predict the Internet or social media, his warnings on overriding supervision and manipulation could be by far more relevant at present than it was ever before. The digital technologies era has raised a paradigm shift in many ways: it has made communication and sharing more seamless like no other, but at the same time, issues such as privacy, independence, and freedom of speech came into existence. The novel starts on a chilling note with a backdrop of the season as explained in the line, "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen." (Orwell 9)
Besides, this novel is created to force us to think of the ethical problems caused by technology and to understand the role of individuals and governments to use the technology in favour of society rather than for domination. Orwell broke down the myth that technology is good or bad; the answer depends on how it is handled. The relevance of issues tackled in the novel concerning the ethics of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and surveillance are all made clear in a rather thought-provoking way as has been stated by George Orwell.

Core Area

In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the ability of technology including telescreens and surveillance cameras to assist in creating a surveillance state, which Orwell depicts as a bleak dystopia, is depicted vividly. The telescreens are at all times everywhere in the lives of the citizens watch and hear, and in addition to propaganda, the guardianship of the Party partakes. Privacy and freedom of thought are the staples of people that live in these old days. These are taken away by the devices the Party uses for control. The penetrating surveillance of the technology hosted in the universe of Orwell results in a chilling effect on individual liberty, which is the reason behind the citizens becoming always ready to be watched and restricting themselves from expressing reality. it calls attention that the need for privacy and freedom should be closely monitored by adapting technological means. However, Orwell's vision is more imperative now than before since the researcher try to find the right solution in implementing surveillance technology and applying some balance between security

and freedom.

Becoming aware of the threats of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* taught us lessons on surveillance that can help us set rules for frameworks that will safeguard not just privacy but also our freedom in the digital world the researcher now interacts with every day. In his dystopian novel, technology is presented especially through telescreens and surveillance cameras by which the powerful surveillance state described by author George Orwell is made feasible. Here's how:

Telescreens are all over the public places and private houses, so the Party can supervise what the citizens do, what they speak of, and what their thoughts are every single second. This is total control, where citizens are aware that they are being watched every moment of the day. This atmosphere only worsen the fears and distrust for authorities.

The people being aware of getting monitored all the time produces fear and self-censorship within citizens which is not favourable to the opposing voices but links the people with the Party ideology. Escape from Party orthodoxy (thoughtcrime) in any manner is quickly revealed through telescreens and other surveillance mechanisms, contributing to arrest, torture, and subsequent education of the dissenters.

The implications of pervasive surveillance enabled by technology on individual privacy and freedom in Orwell's dystopian society are profound and far-reaching. For the people in Orwell's society, privacy is almost a non-existent concept as the only thing they know is the never-ending watching over them. Every act, word, or thought befalls the gaze of the party, hence, the personal freedom and privacy are totally eroded. This absence of privacy violates individual rights and undermines their feeling of self-worth.

The all-pervading surveillance apparatus establishes an environment of fear and conformity, where people are apprehensive of criticizing or voicing dissenting opinions, or even engaging in free thinking. People are afraid of being caught engaging in any wrongdoing due to continuous surveillance, making them suppress their opinions which constitute an infringement of their innovation, creativity, and individualism. In a short amount of time, the all-pervasive surveillance becomes a part and parcel of the social tissue and ends up in obliteration of the consciousness and the ability to resist dictatorial rule.

This continuous surveillance loads on people's mental and physical conditions making them feel anxious, paranoid and isolated. The fact that people know they are observed consistently leads to mistrust and suspicion from citizens and consequently social cohesion gets weakened as well as social relationships. Orwell's depiction of technology's role in the surveillance state of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers several valuable lessons for understanding and addressing present- day concerns about surveillance and privacy: Orwell's depiction of technology's role in the surveillance state of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers several valuable lessons for understanding and addressing present- day concerns about surveillance and privacy. Orwell's book discloses this key aspect of the privacy rights – one of the pillars of free individuality and democracy. The very subject of privacy that evaporated in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a warning which shows how surveillance can eventually get out of control and create human rights abuse enabled by the authoritarian regime.

Orwell, therefore, points to how the omnipresent presence of technical monitoring, which can very well become a high-impact element of contemporary society, can be viewed as a destructive force. If the writer had talked about telescreens and surveillance devices now the researcher would immediately remember about the presence of modern surveillance technologies and this would call attention to privacy and civil life risks which exactly may be associated with them.

Literature Review

Orwell's famous book provides the dramatic conception of the technology, especially the ones which are permanently gluing the screens in homes and the public places. In doing so, those computers play a huge role in maintaining order and surveillance. These telescreens have two roles: showing propaganda and making surveillance possible, but also are used as instruments by the Thought Police to ensure unquestioning thinking and leash objection. The symbolism of the telescreens was examined by writers like John Huntington (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*) who explored the indication of state power and the degradation of the individual right to decide.

Foucault's concept of panopticism that centers around the power mechanisms is reflected in Orwell's portrayal of the surveillance governance that is based on these models The omnipresent telescreens that watch over everyone's actions, thus, make this inner function reflect on every citizen, who learn to censor themselves and obedience for the authority. The instruction (Foucault, 1977) on how those of the disciplinary mechanisms like surveillance brought to light the psychological effects of being watched under a CCTV camera like it's depicted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Orwell's dystopia summarizes the possible risks committed by those who are in power in the world where technology exploration has not been under control. The Party's use of technology for surveillance suggests that is only one facet of the general fear that technological sophistications can lead to abuses of power and human rights that are not adequately addressed at the level of ethics. People including the famous thinker Neil Postman (1985) have examined the question of technological determinism in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and how they affect the contemporary world situation.

Findings

In his depiction of dystopian scenario, the author strives to draw attention to the existing possibility of letting the ideas of freedom and liberty inspire everyone to stand up and brave against the dictatorship of the "Big Brother." The characters such as Winston Smith use methods such as writing in a secret diary and fostering the clandestine relationships; these activities can be interpreted as bids of independence against Big Brother. The State plays a significant dominating role in creating issues for the innocent people or citizens. In this view, the researcher can

conclude that technology significantly changes perceptions in the novel. It also creates a debate for privacy, security and surveillance. In this regard, the researcher can only conclude that technology in Orwell's view is a multifaceted tool which is used by the ruling Party in its efforts to control and dominate.

Conclusion

Orwell's vision portrayed in the novel under study is one to admire for the readers. It reflects the deep concern for humanity. The author's understanding and foresight make the readers watchful against the issues created by the technological tyranny.

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I am deeply thankful to George Orwell for his timeless novel Nineteen Eighty-Four, which provided the foundation for this study on surveillance, privacy, technology, and individual freedom.

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Decoding the Impact of Climate Change and Eco-Anxiety in Aja Barber's consumed

Dr. Rajendra Dattatray Gholap

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Associate Professor, Department of English, Research Centre, KTHM College, Nashik
Email: rd.gholap.nsk@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Rajendra Dattatray Gholap
Associate Professor, Department of English,
Research Centre, KTHM College, Nashik
Email: rd.gholap.nsk@gmail.com

Abstract:

Climate change in the twenty-first century is much more than just an ecological and physical emergency. It is also a crisis of emotions and the mind. A range of emotional reactions to ecological decline are recognized by growing psychological research, such as climate trauma, eco-anxiety, solastalgia, and ecological grieving. It comes as no surprise that racism, capitalism, and consumerism, like colonialism, endanger the environment. Feminism, colonialism, and racism are integrally intertwined and can be understood when discussed simultaneously. The present research paper explores Aja Barber's Consumed: The Need for Collective Change: Colonialism, Climate Change and Consumerism from the perspectives of climate trauma and eco-anxiety. Climate change is widely acknowledged and discussed in literary landscape. The natural sciences initially influenced climate change research. Barber's analysis of global capitalism and fast fashion focuses on the emotional conditions caused by environmental degradation and systemic inequality. The researcher employs Barber's narrative to locate environmental grief, feelings of shame, and resistance within a framework of decolonial and systemic change. It attempts to understand the connection between emotional and mental health and the global climate challenge. Aja Barber's book Consumed investigates the connections between colonialism, racism, and consumerism. It also studies the climate inequality and the need for an environmental framework to advance climate justice.

Keywords: *Climate Change, climate trauma, eco-anxiety, solastalgia, Global capitalism, racism, consumerism, feminism, colonialism, environmental grief*

Introduction:

Climate change in the twenty-first century is much more than just an ecological and physical emergency. It is also a crisis of emotions and the mind. A range of emotional reactions to ecological decline are recognized by growing psychological research, such as climate trauma, eco-anxiety, *solastalgia*, and ecological grieving. A London-based author and campaigner Aja Barber effectively addresses these issues in her book entitled as *Consumed*. Through these emotional reactions, she links them to a broader critique of colonialism, consumerism, and the fashion industry. The paper explores how Barber deconstructs the complex psychological landscape of climate trauma and eco-anxiety using personal stories, political analysis, and emotional reflection.

The American Psychological Association defines Eco-Anxiety as "a chronic fear of environmental doom." Further, direct and indirect psychological injury brought on by seeing or experiencing climate-related destruction is referred to as climate trauma. The word *solastalgia* was coined by Albrecht (2005) to characterize the discomfort brought on by changes in one's home environment. In situations where populations experience overlapping forms of oppression—economic precarity, geographic vulnerability, and racial exploitation—these phenomena are exacerbated. Although Barber's Consumed does not specifically utilize clinical language, she does discuss the emotional toll of realizing how deeply ingrained one is in harmful institutions. Her research turns the fashion industry into a metaphor for larger capitalist and colonial systems that cause psychological suffering and environmental damage.

It comes as no surprise that racism, capitalism, and consumerism, like colonialism, endanger the environment. Feminism, colonialism, and racism are integrally intertwined and can be understood when discussed simultaneously. Aja Barber's book *Consumed* explores the connection between colonialism, consumerism, racism, and climate change. The subtitle underlines the importance of communal change. Her work focuses on sustainability, intersectional feminism, racism, and how power structures influence our purchasing decisions. Her debut book, *Consumed*, is a work of climate fiction. Climate fiction is literature that discusses multifaceted issues dealing with climate change. The genre encompasses science fiction as well as dystopian/utopian elements. It is based on science fiction, but at the same time it also incorporates realism and supernatural elements.

Although the term "Cli-fi" gained popularity in the 2010s, works about climate change had previously been created and were later placed in the category of climate fiction. Many of the issues that have fueled the larger field of literary and social critique known as "ecocriticism" are expressed in critical discussions of cli-fi. National, masculinist, and anthropocentric inclinations have been persistent in some of the genre's biggest works, as the criticism committed to it has meticulously recorded.

The book begins with an open letter from Aja Barber to the CEOs of fast fashion companies, whom she calls "dudes" because 95 percent of them are men. The letter contains no mitigating information, and she outright calls out fast fashion CEOs who profit from abusing garment workers. She requests that they utilize their funds to tidy up their own mess, completely revamp their company, and make it more favorable to both employees and the environment.

Aja also writes about how challenging her internship days were as a Black woman and discusses her personal experiences in the fashion industry. Finding an internship wasn't too difficult, but the fact that interns weren't compensated for their labor made sure that only middle-class and upper-class individuals could work in the field. She cites a study on unpaid internships called "The Dream Will Never Pay Off" from the Sustainable Fashion Initiative in Cincinnati, which reveals the startling fact that 77.8% of the interns they spoke with needed financial assistance from their families in order to get by during their internship. They also discuss how BIPOC5 interns are frequently "othered" as a result of the notable underrepresentation in the field brought on by racial exclusion." During her internship, Aja herself frequently encountered racist remarks, especially in relation to her hobbies. She was questioned by white individuals about whether or not Black people should like something. White guys frequently treat white women in this way. However, white people also treat non-white individuals in this way. In order to obtain a position where she interned, she had to flourish in a very sexist and prejudiced setting. Although she wasn't Aja's direct intern, it was just another Black lady who supported her in her work and attested to her abilities.

In her writing, Aja discusses consumerism and how the fast-fashion industry's overproduction has resulted in excessive consumption. However, she discusses race and colonialism in addition to psychology and economics in her analysis of consumerism. "You would be completely mistaken to believe that the fashion industry is exempt from the discussion of race," Barber says. "The majority of the clothing is made by BIPOC in the Global South, then consumed by white-dominated nations in the Global North. Once the clothing is unsold or used, it is immediately returned to the Global South as "donations."

Not everyone is equally affected by climate change. Furthermore, not everyone who contributes to climate change has to deal with its effects. The most marginalized people are typically impacted, but the contributors are usually unconcerned. This is known as climate injustice, and it has to do with how various groups experience the effects of climate change differently and how certain individuals and locations are more susceptible to these effects than others. We now understand that climate change is not merely an environmental issue; it also interacts with social structures, privileges, and ingrained inequities, impacting individuals disparately by class, color, gender, geography, and generation. When we talk about climate change, we frequently talk about what "we" have done to the climate as a group, and the people who have contributed the most to climate degradation are not held accountable.

According to geologists, we currently inhabit the Holocene epoch. Nonetheless, a few of experts assert that we are living in the "recent age of man," or "Anthropocene." It draws attention to how humans have dominated the planet and how this has caused drastic changes to the ecosystem. Among the phenomena of this era are ozone depletion, increasing sea levels, ocean acidification, and global warming. Many Indigenous and Black scholars have rejected the term "Anthropocene" in the debate between the Holocene and the Anthropocene. This is mainly because the term presumes that the climate crisis is caused by universal human nature rather than by the actions of patriarchs, colonialists, and capitalists. The phrase also suggests that the planet was stable until about 1950, which ignores the history of those who have been exploited by these repressive structures. The affective experience of climate change is rarely given priority in our attempts to achieve climate justice.

Barber describes the worldwide fast fashion industry as a system that exploits people on an emotional and environmental level. Her book reveals how Western consumers—particularly those in affluent countries—are emotionally and environmentally pushed into obsessive consumption. Barber contends that this detachment is acquired and that overcoming it results in grief, remorse, and emotional dissonance. She makes a clear connection between systemic injustices, particularly those with colonial roots, and climate trauma. She argues that histories of exploitation, enslavement, and extraction are inextricably linked to the environmental challenges we currently confront. In this sense, the phenomenon of climate trauma is neither universal nor uniformly distributed. People in the Global South suffer from the psychological and generational trauma that comes with dispossession in addition to the direct ecological effects, such as pollution, displacement, and disease. According to Barber, addressing the climate situation without taking into account these past injustices results in erroneous solutions. She contends that while the trauma is ongoing and present in the Global South, climate anxiety in the Global North frequently focuses on worries about the future. This temporal distinction is crucial because, for many populations, climate trauma is a memory rather than an anticipation.

Consumed spend a lot of time on the emotional shifts that a climate-conscious consumer experiences, from denial and disengagement to awareness, remorse, and ultimately resistance. Barber's depiction of the anguish that arises when one realizes the extent of the destruction is unwavering. She talks about how many people, particularly women and members of marginalized communities, feel powerless but weighed down by duty. Her idea of climate justice revolves around this transition from affect to action. According to Barber, eco-anxiety is not a personal problem that should be ignored or treated, but rather a cry for group resistance.

Barber argues that one of the few resources available to us for processing the intensity of climate emotion is storytelling. Her critique is grounded in lived emotional truth through the use of autobiographical vignettes, which include early memories of racial exclusion, class guilt, and fashion aspiration. By using this technique, readers can face their own emotional connection to climate change and consumption. These first-person accounts also reveal the anguish and labor that are frequently concealed within commonplace items. Barber, for example, describes the hazardous working conditions that garment workers in Bangladesh and Ethiopia endure, which are made worse by climate change. She connects the emotional landscape of climate trauma across generations and regions by humanizing these tales.

Barber's paradigm requires group solutions instead of individual ones. She criticizes the neoliberal propensity to minimize systemic harm while personalizing environmental responsibility through individual recycling, carbon footprints, or "eco-guilt." Rather, she supports restitution, policy reform, and community development as ways to heal the planet and its inhabitants. According to her, mental health is extremely politicized. In order to properly address climate trauma, the colonial mechanisms that generated it must be dismantled. Barber focuses especially on the emotional toll that climate activism takes on women and BIPOC people. These organizations are frequently asked to feign optimism in the face of overwhelming evidence, repress their sadness, and teach others. This emotional effort is rejected by the barber. Rather, she allows herself and her readers to be angry, grieve and rebel. *Consumed* helps normalize complicated eco-emotions by emphasizing emotional authenticity, particularly for people whose experiences have previously been medicalized or disregarded. She stresses that experiencing overwhelm is a sign of awareness and concern rather than a sign of failure.

Consumed's emotional journey takes readers from hopelessness to empowerment. Barber suggests that the first step toward communal eco-agency is acknowledging climate trauma and eco-anxiety. She provides useful resources, such as advice on how to stop buying fast fashion, participate in mutual help, and hold businesses and governments accountable.

Barber reinterprets eco-anxiety as a human, adaptive reaction to a dehumanizing environment rather than a disease. Her art is an exhortation to welcome this discomfort and turn it into motivation for transformation.

Conclusion:

Aja Barber's *Consumed* offers a blistering, emotionally astute examination of eco-anxiety and climate trauma. She deepens our understanding of what it means to live—and feel—in a burning world by linking these emotions to colonial legacies and systemic injustice. Her book is not an examination of consumerism or fashion but rather a manifesto for collective emancipation, structural reform and emotional resilience. Barber contends that emotional truth is the first step toward climate justice. Anger, worry, remorse, and sadness are not signs of weakness; rather, they signify connectedness. *Consumed* encourages readers to go with their feelings rather than avoid them.

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The Trap of Being Othered

Gankhu Sumnyan[1] Dr. Miazi Hazam[2]

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[1]Assistant Professor, English,
Wangcha Rajkumar Government College, Deomali
Tirap district, Arunachal Pradesh, India
Email
gankhu.sumnyan@gmail.com
[2]Professor, Dept of English,
Rajiv Gandhi University,
Rono Hills, Doimukh,
Arunachal Pradesh, India

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Address for correspondence:
Gankhu Sumnyan, Assistant Professor, English,
Wangcha Rajkumar Government College, Deomali
Tirap district, Arunachal Pradesh, India
Email gankhu.sumnyan@gmail.com

Abstract:

Othering is the process whereby groups or individuals are marked as different or opposite to oneself or one's group and likewise treated. Othering, done by the more powerful group, traps the dominated or the less powerful group in two ways: through attributing negative qualities to them and through putting the group in a state of binary opposition against itself. The "Big Lie," as perpetuated by Nazi propagandists against the Jews during and before Holocaust, is an example of attribution of negative qualities to the othered group or the group considered as the opposite of the dominant group. The "Big Lie" was a trap for the Jews in laying the groundwork for the Holocaust that followed the perpetuation of it. Related to this, the Jews are also stuck in terms of always being defined as the opposite of the Christians, and thus being denied possibilities of defining themselves in other ways. In the novel J too, we see both kinds of traps. These traps seem inescapable for the Jews because of the lies and the conspiracy theories swirling around them, the contrived nature of the world which the Christians have created, the utter control over their lives, etc. The main characters in the novel, Kevern Cohen and Ailinn Solomons, react in completely different ways to their similar situation. Their reactions are their resistance towards the fact of being trapped.

Keywords: *Othering, Othering of the Jews, The Big Lie, Othering as a Trap*

The Self and the Other

Hegel's analogy of the Master and the Slave tells the story of two competing self-consciousnesses, the Self and the Other, wanting each other to affirm each other's existence (Kain 41). According to Hegel, the Self's existence can only be affirmed if it is acknowledged by the Other and vice versa (Kain 41). Hegel says that in this desire for acknowledgement, the Self attempts to negate the Other's existence (Kain 45). That is, the Self desires of the Other to forego all the differences within itself and become like the Self. The Other resists this attempt and so the Self challenges it to a fight to the death (Kain 46). In the fight, afraid of losing its life, one self-consciousness accepts defeat and grants victory to the other self-consciousness (Kain 47). The victorious self-consciousness becomes the Master while the losing self-consciousness becomes the Slave (47). The Slave acknowledges the other self-consciousness as its Master and thus grants it affirmation and identity, while having lost the means of its own affirmation and identity (Kain 47).

The Master-Slave relationship, from Hegel's analogy, is a perfect example of a set of binary opposition. According to Cambridge dictionary, binary opposites are two opposite theoretical concepts defined in terms of each other ("binary opposition"). In the case of Master-Slave relationship, we see that the Master is defined and identified against the Self and vice versa. They are also compared against each other as well as understood in terms of each other. Hegel's analogy of the Master and Slave relationship also gives us a better understanding of the Self-Other relationship, which is another set of binary opposition. Being binary opposites, the Self and the Other are always posited against each other, and defined and understood in terms of each other. We also learn that Self needs the Other to define itself, and vice versa. The Self-Other relationship lays the foundation for understanding the process of othering, which according to Cambridge Dictionary**,** is the process whereby individuals and groups are treated and marked as different and inferior from the dominant social groups ("othering").

Othering and the Trap of Being Othered

R. C. Tripathi and Purnima Singh in their "Prologue" to *Perspectives on Violence and Othering in India* says that othering takes place when two groups are competing for scare or valuable resources (XV). According to Tripathi in his article "Violence and the Other: Contestations in Multicultural Societies" in the same text, it is the more dominant group that engages in the process of othering (10)**.** Even though the weaker group may engage in the process of othering, it is not as dangerous or effective as when the more powerful group does it (Tripathi 10). According to Gregory Claeys in *Dystopia: A Natural History*, othering takes place when a group is trying to be formed or to create its identity: "In exchange for being 'one of the club', many groups may thus offer us an 'other' – foreigner, the heretic – to be loathed and detested as 'dirty' and 'unclean', perhaps hated enough to be destroyed" (42).

Thus, through othering, the other is created, this other being someone who is opposite or different from us. And the other is often seen in a negative light according to Felicity Rash: "within political discourse, the image of the other is often contrasted unfavourably with that of the Self" (Rash 24). And moreover, that the "Other frequently becomes the opposition or the enemy" (Rash 24).

It can thus be understood that the process of othering involves a group considering another group as it's opposite or as its enemy. This "opposite" group is seen in a negative light and ascribed various negative qualities to. Othering is thus a process which involves negative categorization. Examples of negative categorization include how the colonisers described the colonised people as inferior, irrational, primitive (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 49). Against these qualities ascribed to the colonised, they ascribed to themselves the opposite qualities of being rational, ordered, of being superior, etc (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 49). Thus the coloniser was whatever the colonised was not; the colonised being defined as the other of the coloniser (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 48) in this way, the colonisers put themselves and the colonised in a system of binary opposition. Further, considering that it is the dominant group that is doing the othering and putting the dominated group in a state of binary opposition, the dominated group has no say whether it wants to be the other of the dominated group or to be in a state of binary opposition of the dominated group. Thus the dominated group is trapped when being othered. This trap is in the form of being caught in the state of binary opposition with a more powerful group without its consent. The trap of being othered would then mean to be defined, talked about, prepared discourses about, without any consent taken from the group being thus defined. And as will be seen below, these definitions and discourses can be very hard to argue against.

James Aho in "The Big Lie: Its Model, Making, and Motive" gives the example of the Jews being negatively defined and represented during the Holocaust (14). The negative descriptions and representations of the Jews were altogether called as the "Big Lie," and Aho says that various versions of it still circulate in the right-wing American media (14). He mentions four qualities of the "Big Lie" – Mystery, Simplicity, Prophecy, and Infallibility – as they presently exist in the discourse about the Jews (15). According to the "Big Lie," a sense of secrecy and suspense is attributed to the intentions of the Jewish population, and it is said that they meet at secret sites, hold unseen political, social, and economic powers, worship the devil, offer sacrifices, etc. (16). Thus, evil intentions are attributed to them. The sense of secrecy and suspense about the Jews and their actions paint them as plotters and anti-human. The "Big Lie" also blames the Jews for the various problems faced by the American public at present. Thus the "Big Lie" presents the Jews as insidious and conniving. They are also said to be working according to an unnamed, unexplained "Plot," and all of the events that take place in various regions are attributed to the secret fulfillment of the aims of the "Plot" (17). The "Big Lie" also prophesizes the destruction of life as lived by the common American people if the Jews were not stopped from fulfilling their evil plot. Fear-mongering is thus a chief quality of these prophecies, with the world to seemingly come under the control of the Jews in the coming times. The "Big Lie" also prophesizes the rise of the common man presently suffering at the hands of the Jews, and thus who would one day save the world through their uprising. These prophecies embolden the citizens to take action against the Jews who would otherwise destroy everything of their world. The last quality of the "Big Lie" mentioned by Aho is of its infallibility. Meaning that the conspiracy theorists propagating the "Big Lie" always challenge anyone to disprove them. Aho considers this as an onerous task because of the impossibility of disproving something that is not happening or that is not taking place (18).

As it can be understood, the "Big Lie" told about the Jews paint them as devious, insidious creatures with the aim of dominating the world. The "Big Lie" also goads the common people to rise against the Jews by spreading the fear that the way of life they know would be destroyed if the Jews were not stopped. The "Big Lie" can be thus understood as a dangerous propaganda that attempts to trap the Jews through negative representation and negative categorization. It is also a trap in the sense that the events of the world are predicted through the "Big Lie"; that is, if there are attempts to disprove the "Big Lie," the "Big Lie" is a step ahead in saying that such and such attempts were already foreseen, and thus discrediting the steps taken to prove that the "Big Lie" is itself a lie. The "Big Lie" thus has a nature of circularity wherein all the actions to disprove or to speak against it are always referred back to what has already been predicted as meant to happen. Gregory Claeys in *Dystopia: A Natural History* also talks of how Jews were created as the enemy of the German people before and during the Second World War. These Jews were considered as a threat to the German nation and were thus to be destroyed (Claeys 178). They were specifically blamed for the economic and social woes of Germany and ascribed with the intention of taking over the country (Claeys 187). For the Nazis, the Jews were "parasites, vampire, anti-man" (Claeys 187). These facts show that the Jews were othered by the Nazi people and were thus set in a binary opposition against the Germans. Being thus othered and set in a binary opposition – through the "Big Lie" – the Jews found it very hard to break out of the trap sprung upon them.

James Aho mentions Hannah Arendt who had said that the believers of the "Big Lie" were as if living in alternate realities, so far from the truth that was present before them (Aho 14). The fact of the believers of the "Big Lie" living in alternate realities show the extent to which the negative definitions against the othered group, the Jews, were believed in. There was as if an existential need to believe in these definitions, which relates to the state of being binary opposites, that one group is defined in terms of the other, or that one group has qualities which the other doesn't have. James Aho brings in the idea of "negative transference" here which is a way of transferring one's own negative possibilities – of death, of impurity, of being sinners – onto the Others (Aho 22). Thus the trap sprung upon the othered group has an existential basis – the group doing the othering relating it to its own existence and thereby questioning, doubting, and defining the nature of existence of the othered group. History further indicates that the trap

being sprung upon the othered group led to devastating consequences for them, as can be noted from the fate of the Jews during the Nazi rule.

The trap of being othered can thus be understood in terms of being caught in a state of binary opposition and thus defined and described without their consent, and this definition and description done mostly in negative terms through negative transference, and also how hard it is to escape from these descriptions and discourses, which results in the terrible treatment meted out to the othered group.

The Novel *J*

The novel *J* (2014) by Howard Jacobson tells the story of two characters, Ailinn Solomons and Kevern Cohen, and their suffering at the hands of the Christian society. The suffering of not only these main protagonists, but also of their ancestors and the larger Jewish population, is showcased in the novel. At the beginning of the novel, Ailinn Solomons and Kevern Cohen meet in the town of Port Reuben and fall in love (Jacobson 4). Their meeting and falling in love happens against the backdrop of a society that is breaking apart, or a society that is not at peace with itself, with various kinds of crimes and acts of violence becoming more and more common (Jacobson 11, 16). The brutal state of the world, with continuous violence taking place, is understood by Esme Nussbaum, an official of Ofnow, as being due to incomplete healing from the event of WHAT HAPPENED IF IT HAPPENED (Jacobson 18). Ofnow is the government body that monitors the public mood regarding and after WHAT HAPPENED IF IT HAPPENED (Jacobson 16). This event, understood to be when thousands of Jews were murdered, is neither properly named nor dated and in fact, tried very hard to be forgotten or erased from the memory of the people. After the event, the government had taken various steps to maintain equilibrium and stability in the society, believing that only total erasure from the public memory of the event as well as the Jewish people would ensure any kind of peace. These steps include: a) Operation Ishmael, wherein Jewish settlements were broken down and Jewish families sent to live in remote places without other Jewish families around, and where also all the names of the people of the country were changed so that one couldn't tell whether one was a Jew or not (Jacobson 73); b) Silencing the letter "J" (Jacobson 13); c) Regulating painting and music (Jacobson 13); d) Obliterating history books and diaries, and preventing research from being done on the past (Jacobson 9).

Esme Nussbaum tells the government that the world would be healed only if the Jews are reintroduced, or only if Jewish people are brought back into the population (Jacobson 264). She explains that Jews are the necessary opposites of the Christians, and they are needed to restore the balance of the society (Jacobson 264). According to her, the Jews are someone whom the Christians can hate and be violent against and thus spare each other. Receiving permission from the government, Nussbaum grooms Ailinn to push her towards producing a child, a Jew, with Kevern (Jacobson 301). This child, Nussbaum believes, would be the beginning of the regeneration of the Jewish population, and thus the solution to the problem they have at hand (Jacobson 301).

The above examples showcase the terrifying amount of control exerted by the Christian population upon the Jews, their Other. The Jewish people are as if playthings for the Christian government, to be dealt with as they want. It's as if the destiny of the Jewish lives were already pre-ordained or pre-written. Both Kevern and Ailinn, and their relatives before them, express the frustration of not being able to escape their miserable fates. Kevern has nightmares about the unknown, hidden past, and so does Ailinn. Their relatives before them suffer from exclusion, discrimination, being considered as disgusting, heartbreak, living in constant fear, etc. These are the ways in which the Jews suffer as the Other of the Christians in the novel.

Traps in the Novel *J*

The Jews are considered as binary opposites of the Christians in the novel. Esme Nussbaum, a government official tasked with bringing peace to the Christian society in the novel, says that the Jews are the "necessary opposites" of the Christians. This shows the state of binary opposition within which the Jews are caught. Nussbaum makes it very clear that without the Jews, the Christians would tear each other apart, as exemplified by the violence that is visible throughout the country. The Jews are needed to restore the balance of the society. They are described as "A reflection you cannot bear to see. An echo you cannot bear to hear" (Jacobson 263). And further the relationship between the Jews and Christians is that both "have chewed on the same bone of moral philosophy, subscribed to a similar spirituality and even, at some point in the not too distant past, have worshipped at the same shrines" (Jacobson 263). The Jews are thus described to be in a position of a unique antithetical relationship with the Christians. This shows how the Jews are trapped as the binary opposites of the Christians; always understood, contrasted, and identified as the opposite of the Christians.

The definitions and the descriptions of the Jews are negative in nature, and very hard to escape from. Characters like Inspector Gutkind, Professor Everett, and Rhoda Nussbaum's lover are particular examples of negative discourses being created against the Jews. Inspector Gutkind is a conspiracy theorist who believes that WHAT HAPPENED IF IT HAPPENED hasn't even taken place or if it has, it hasn't taken place in the correct manner (Jacobson 120). This is an example of refusing to look at the truth that is present right before the eyes. Inspector Gutkind learns from his great-grandfather Clarence Worthing who had believed that the Jews had no loyalty to anybody but themselves (Jacobson 116). Worthing also believed that the world was in a rotten state because of the Jews who had no commitment towards anyone but themselves (Jacobson 116). Thus the Jews were blamed for the various problems of the world. Further Professor Everett, an art teacher, considers that the Jews deserved what had happened to them, that it was them who had provoked the Christians: "The largest beast can be maddened by the smallest parasitic mite. (Especially when it's clever… the mite, that is.) I will say no more than that" (Jacobson 32). Professor Everett thus believes that the Jews had it coming for them. He calls the Jews as termites, who bore into

everything and everywhere and thus destroyed everything (Jacobson 325). This was the justification he had for why the Jews deserved to be destroyed. Finally Rhoda Nussbaum, Esme Nussbaum's mother, had a lover who had told her about how he had participated in What Happened If It Happened. According to him, it was the most natural thing to do because it had been happening for the last two or three thousand years (Jacobson 257). He said he had only done what the rest of the mob was doing (Jacobson 260). This shows how he believed that **v**iolence against the Jews was but inevitable or natural, something that was bound to happen, and that there was nothing wrong in it. These arguments about the Jews – deserving the violence that had happened to them, responsible for the terrible condition of the world, violence against them but natural and for which one couldn't be at fault, and even that the genocide against them had never taken place – reveal the insidious nature of these arguments. The people believing in these arguments can be said to be living in alternate realities, having convinced themselves of their own correctness, refusing to engage with the truth present before their eyes. Such people – as James Aho talked of the infallibility of the "Big Lie" – wouldn't believe in anything else. In this way, the negative discourses about the Jews are very hard to overcome.

Lastly, it is seen in the novel that the Jews are negatively represented and negatively categorized because of the various Christian characters facing hard times in their lives. Clarence Worthing, the great-grandfather of Inspector Gutkind, was left by a Jewish woman and facing this heartbreak, he notes down various negative descriptions of the Jews. Thus the problems of Clarence Worthing are transferred onto the Jews who are described as being traitorous, and the cause for all the problems of the world (Jacobson 116). Professor Everett calls the Jews as termites and as deserving to be destroyed, which happens after his wife had left him, and for which he blames Kevern (Jacobson 325). Rhoda Nussbaum's lover also leads a bloodthirsty mob to the art gallery of his previous lover and where the lover's young daughter was hiding. His lover had turned away from him and as such it can be said he carried within himself a motive for taking revenge. Such are the negative transferences seen in the novel, where the Christian people describe the Jewish people in various negative terms and act in various negative ways to assuage their own feelings of fear, revenge, heartbreak etc.

Breaking the Traps

The points mentioned above show how dangerously trapped the *Jews* are in the novel. They are trapped through the lies, misrepresentations, and conspiracy theories to eventually be led towards another genocide as Kevern fears and they are also trapped – in existential terms – through being considered as the binary opposite of the Christians. These traps seem to be unbreakable or inescapable. Ailinn and Kevern to shown to have different reactions to the fact of being trapped. Ailinn accepts the domination of the Christians but also believes that the Jews are being offered a chance by the Christian government when asked to have a baby for the regeneration of the Jewish population. She understands completely what is at stake and who is controlling the direction of their lives and actions, but she is willing to take the risk through having a baby in the hope that things will be better in the future. She wants to face the enemy and the future bravely: "No. But it's good to confront him now he's out of the shadows. It's good to turn and face him. Look him in the eyes" (Jacobson 314). Her reaction is opposite to that of Kevern who believes that they are being used again by the Christians for their own purposes. He doesn't want to have the baby because doing so would continue the suffering for the Jews. He says that nothing is ever going to change between the Jews and the Christians, that they would be in the same antithetical relationship like how it has been for centuries. But his arguments are not enough to change Ailinn's mind. So Kevern, refusing to be responsible for perpetuating such grief upon a child, decides to take his own life: "It's the only vengeance we have left – our refusal to stay around. Hand them the victory, I say, and let them see how empty it is" (Jacobson 341). Kevern thus turns away from what the Christian government is offering, and commits suicide. His suicide can be seen as protest and revenge against the othering that had been done of them, against the vilification and the blame heaped upon the Jews. Taking one's own life is also a way of asserting control according to Kevern, which the Jews had been denied:

> A life was owned by the person who lived it, he believed. What happened didn't always happen because you wanted it to, but what you made of it was your responsibility. Help there was little and gods there were none. We are the authors of our own consequences, if not always of our own actions…But his birthright was his birthright (Jacobson 341)

This was Kevern's radical way of taking back the control over his life from the Christians and thus of freeing himself from the traps they had snared him in. This radical way turned the lies and conspiracy theories of the Christians superfluous as well as broke him free from always being defined as the binary opposite of the Christians. Because what could lies and conspiracy theories do to a man who was not afraid of taking his own life? And wasn't death the ultimate form of release from all forms of bondage?

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Diasporic Writing and Identity Formation: Reconfiguring Belonging, Hybridity, and Memory in Transnational Contexts

Dr. Anuradha Ghodke

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Abstract

In the context of increasing global migration, diasporic writing has become a vital site for examining how identities are constructed and reconfigured across cultural and geographical boundaries. This paper investigates the ways in which diasporic literature represents identity as a dynamic and evolving process shaped by displacement, cultural interaction, and narrative reconstruction. Drawing on postcolonial theoretical perspectives, particularly those associated with Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha, the study argues that identity in diasporic contexts is not fixed but continually negotiated within hybrid cultural spaces. Through a qualitative analysis of selected literary works by Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, and Bharati Mukherjee, the paper highlights how themes such as memory, nostalgia, linguistic plurality, and belonging contribute to the formation of complex, layered identities. It concludes that diasporic writing not only reflects experiences of migration but also actively participates in redefining identity beyond rigid national and cultural boundaries.This paper explores the intricate relationship between diasporic writing and identity formation within transnational contexts. It examines how writers of the diaspora negotiate notions of belonging, hybridity, and memory while navigating multiple cultural landscapes. By analyzing selected literary texts, the study highlights how diasporic narratives challenge fixed identities and instead construct fluid, hybrid selves shaped by displacement, migration, and cultural interaction. The paper also investigates the role of memory—both personal and collective—in reconstructing homeland and sustaining cultural continuity across borders. Ultimately, it argues that diasporic writing serves as a powerful medium for reconfiguring identity, offering new ways of understanding belonging beyond territorial and national boundaries.

Keywords: *Diaspora, Identity Construction, Hybridity, Transnationalism, Cultural Memory, Postcolonial Literature*

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Assistant Professor, Pratibha College of Commerce and Computer Studies Chinchwad,Pune
Email- anuradha.ghodke5@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Anuradha Ghodke
Assistant Professor, Pratibha College of Commerce and Computer Studies Chinchwad,Pune
anuradha.ghodke5@gmail.com

Introduction

The expansion of global mobility in recent decades has significantly reshaped cultural and literary landscapes, leading to the emergence of diasporic writing as a prominent field of inquiry. This body of literature captures the experiences of individuals and communities who live outside their places of origin, often negotiating multiple cultural affiliations simultaneously. Historically, the term "diaspora" was closely associated with forced displacement and exile. However, its meaning has broadened to include diverse forms of migration, ranging from voluntary relocation to transnational professional mobility. As a result, diaspora is now understood less as a fixed condition and more as an ongoing process characterized by movement, adaptation, and cultural exchange. Within this framework, identity becomes a central concern. Individuals situated in diasporic contexts frequently experience a sense of cultural ambiguity, as they are influenced by both their ancestral heritage and their present environment. This dual orientation generates identities that are fluid rather than stable, shaped by continuous negotiation rather than fixed origins.

Diasporic writing offers a powerful medium through which these complexities are articulated. Through narrative, authors explore questions of belonging, displacement, and selfhood, revealing the multifaceted nature of identity in a globalized world. This paper seeks to examine how diasporic literature contributes to our understanding of identity formation. Specifically, it explores how literary texts represent identity as a process shaped by hybridity, memory, and narrative reconstruction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Rethinking Diaspora

The concept of diaspora has evolved considerably within academic discourse. Earlier approaches emphasized themes of loss, exile, and the desire for return, often focusing on historically specific communities. In contrast, contemporary perspectives highlight the diversity of diasporic experiences and the importance of transnational connections. Scholars now view diaspora as a fluid and multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing not only physical displacement but also cultural and psychological dimensions. This broader understanding reflects the realities of a globalized world in which individuals maintain ties to multiple locations simultaneously.

2.2 Identity as a Dynamic Process

The notion of identity as something fixed and unchanging has been widely challenged in cultural theory. Stuart Hall's work is particularly influential in this regard, as it conceptualizes identity as an ongoing process rather than a stable entity. According to this perspective, identity is constructed through representation and shaped by historical and cultural contexts. In diasporic settings, this processual understanding of identity becomes especially relevant. Individuals must constantly negotiate their sense of self in relation to multiple cultural frameworks, leading to identities that are provisional and evolving. In an increasingly globalized world marked by migration, displacement, and cross-cultural exchanges, the concept of identity has become more complex and dynamic than ever before. Diasporic communities, in particular, occupy a unique position within this evolving landscape, negotiating their sense of self across multiple cultural, geographical, and historical contexts. Diasporic writing emerges as a vital literary form through which these experiences are articulated, offering rich insights into the processes of identity formation shaped by movement, memory, and cultural hybridity.

This paper examines how diasporic writers engage with and reconfigure notions of belonging, hybridity, and memory within transnational contexts. Rather than viewing identity as fixed or rooted in a singular homeland, diasporic narratives reveal identity as fluid, fragmented, and continuously negotiated. Writers often draw upon personal and collective memories to reconstruct connections with their homeland, while simultaneously adapting to and interacting with new cultural environments. In doing so, they challenge traditional binaries such as home and exile, self and other, and past and present.

The study further explores the concept of hybridity as a central element in diasporic identity formation. Living between cultures, diasporic individuals often create hybrid identities that blend elements from both their ancestral and adopted societies. This hybridity is not merely a passive condition but an active, creative process that allows for new cultural expressions and forms of belonging. Memory, both individual and collective, also plays a crucial role, serving as a bridge between past and present, and enabling the preservation and transformation of cultural identity across generations.

By analyzing selected diasporic texts, this paper seeks to demonstrate how literary representations of diaspora offer a powerful framework for understanding identity in a transnational age. Ultimately, it argues that diasporic writing not only reflects the complexities of displacement and cultural negotiation but also actively contributes to redefining what it means to belong in a world where boundaries are increasingly fluid.

2.3 Hybridity and Cultural Interaction

Hybridity has emerged as a key concept in the study of diaspora. It refers to the blending of cultural elements from different contexts, resulting in new and innovative forms of expression. Rather than viewing cultures as separate and bounded, hybridity emphasizes their interconnectedness.

The idea of an intermediate cultural space—often described as a "third space"—is central to this framework. Within this space, individuals reinterpret cultural meanings and construct identities that transcend binary oppositions such as native/foreign or tradition/modernity.

2.4 Memory, Nostalgia, and the Past

Memory plays a crucial role in shaping diasporic identities. For many individuals, the homeland exists primarily as a remembered or imagined space. These memories are not static; they are continually reinterpreted in light of present experiences. Nostalgia, while often associated with longing, also serves as a mechanism for preserving cultural continuity. At the same time, it can complicate the process of adaptation by reinforcing attachments to an idealized past.

2.5 Narrative and Self-Representation

Narrative provides a framework through which individuals make sense of their experiences. In diasporic writing, storytelling becomes a means of negotiating identity and articulating the complexities of displacement.

Through narrative, authors reconstruct personal and collective histories, creating spaces in which fragmented identities can be expressed and reimagined.

3. Research Gap and Objectives

Although existing scholarship has extensively addressed themes such as hybridity and displacement, there is still a need for approaches that integrate theoretical insights with detailed textual analysis. Many studies tend to privilege either abstract theory or descriptive interpretation, without fully exploring their interconnections.

This paper aims to bridge this gap by combining postcolonial theory with close reading of literary texts. It seeks to demonstrate how narrative techniques contribute to the construction of diasporic identities.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach based on textual analysis.

4.1 Selection of Texts

The analysis focuses on works by three influential authors:

- Jhumpa Lahiri
- Salman Rushdie
- Bharati Mukherjee

These writers represent different dimensions of diasporic experience and provide diverse perspectives on identity formation.

4.2 Analytical Approach

The study employs:

- Thematic analysis to identify recurring motifs
- Theoretical frameworks from postcolonial studies
- Close reading of narrative structures

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Fluidity and Fragmentation of Identity

Diasporic literature frequently depicts identity as fragmented and unstable. Characters often find themselves navigating multiple cultural environments, leading to a sense of dislocation.

Rather than resolving these tensions, the texts emphasize their persistence, suggesting that identity is an ongoing process rather than a final state.

5.2 Hybridity as Negotiation

Hybridity functions as a key mechanism through which diasporic identities are formed. By combining elements from different cultural traditions, individuals create new forms of belonging.

This process is not without challenges, as it can involve conflict and ambiguity. However, it also opens up possibilities for creative expression and cultural innovation.

5.3 Memory and the Reconstruction of Home

In diasporic writing, the idea of home is often mediated through memory. The homeland becomes a symbolic space shaped by recollection and imagination.

These representations are selective and sometimes idealized, reflecting the emotional significance of the past rather than its objective reality.

5.4 Displacement and the Search for Belonging

Experiences of displacement are central to diasporic narratives. Characters frequently struggle to establish a sense of belonging in unfamiliar environments.

This struggle highlights the complexity of identity formation, as individuals attempt to reconcile their past with their present circumstances.

5.5 Language and Identity

Language plays a crucial role in diasporic literature. Writers often incorporate multiple languages or linguistic styles, reflecting the multicultural contexts in which they operate.

Such linguistic diversity underscores the fluid nature of identity and challenges the dominance of singular cultural narratives.

5.6 Gender and Intersectional Dimensions

Gender introduces additional layers of complexity to diasporic identity. Women, in particular, may face unique challenges related to cultural expectations and social constraints.

These experiences illustrate the intersectional nature of identity, where multiple factors interact to shape individual lives.

6. Comparative Perspectives

6.1 Jhumpa Lahiri

Lahiri's work focuses on the everyday realities of diasporic life, particularly within immigrant families. Her narratives highlight generational differences and the subtle negotiations involved in cultural adaptation.

6.2 Salman Rushdie

Rushdie's writing is characterized by its formal experimentation and emphasis on cultural hybridity. His narratives challenge conventional notions of identity and foreground multiplicity.

6.3 Bharati Mukherjee

Mukherjee's work emphasizes transformation and reinvention. Her characters often embrace change, illustrating the potential for growth within diasporic contexts.

Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that diasporic writing redefines identity as a fluid and relational construct. Rather than being anchored in a single cultural framework, identity emerges through interactions across multiple contexts.

This perspective challenges essentialist views and highlights the importance of narrative in shaping self-understanding.

Conclusion

In conclusion, diasporic writing offers a compelling lens through which to understand the evolving nature of identity in transnational contexts. As this paper has demonstrated, notions of belonging, hybridity, and memory are not fixed but are continuously negotiated and reconfigured through the lived experiences of displacement and cultural interaction. Diasporic writers, through their narratives, challenge traditional understandings of identity rooted in singular geographies or cultures, instead presenting identity as fluid, layered, and dynamic.

The exploration of belonging reveals that diasporic individuals often exist in a space of in-betweenness, where attachment to both homeland and host culture creates a sense of partial belonging rather than complete assimilation or separation. This condition is further enriched by hybridity, which enables the formation of new, multifaceted identities that draw from diverse cultural influences. Rather than viewing hybridity as a loss of authenticity, diasporic writing reimagines it as a site of creativity, resilience, and cultural innovation.

Memory, as highlighted in this study, plays a crucial role in sustaining connections to the past while shaping present identity. Through personal recollections and collective histories, diasporic narratives reconstruct and

reinterpret the idea of home, allowing individuals to maintain a sense of continuity despite physical and cultural displacement. At the same time, memory is shown to be selective and transformative, contributing to the ongoing process of identity formation.

Ultimately, this paper argues that diasporic writing is not merely a reflection of transnational experiences but an active force in redefining what it means to belong in a globalized world. By foregrounding hybridity and the fluidity of identity, diasporic narratives invite us to move beyond rigid boundaries and embrace more inclusive, pluralistic understandings of selfhood. In doing so, they open up new possibilities for imagining identity in a world increasingly shaped by movement, diversity, and cultural exchange.

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Between Two Worlds: Diaspora and Identity Construction in the Namesake

Tukaram Patil

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Assistant Professor,
Department of Engineering Science,
Marathwada Mitra Mandal's Institute of Technology, Lohgaon-Pune
tukarampatil25@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Tukaram Patil
Assistant Professor,
Department of Engineering Science,
Marathwada Mitra Mandal's Institute of Technology, Lohgaon-Pune
tukarampatil25@gmail.com

Abstract-
Many cultural writers specialize in the analysis of identity and identities in diasporic literature. Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake', a novel about the dual realities of immigrants and their offspring navigating the process of balancing aspects of home-world/new-world living. This novel touches on both hybridity and generational strife, identity, and understanding how generations work together with hybridity, nationality, naming & cultural displacement. In exploring the diasporic identity, these issues come foregrounded in this paper. It states that the protagonists, Gogol Ganguli, in particular represent the tensions of "living between two worlds," even invent identities that are fluid, hybrid, and dynamic.

Keywords: *Diaspora, Diasporic Identity, Identity Formation, Cultural Hybridity, Hybridity, Cultural Displacement, Migration, Immigrant Experience, Second-Generation Identity, Generational Conflict, Nationality, Naming and Identity, Cultural Negotiation*

Introduction:

Diasporic writing has entered modern literary criticism but this new development in postcolonial writing, too, has had an influence on contemporary postcolonial writing. Its focus is on migration and displacement, on how people form an identity outside their homeland. With identity formation being at the heart of the narrative within diasporic literature, when the author positions himself as a hybrid of two cultures this creates the second main focus of diasporic literature and nuanced identities. In a way, then, The Namesake manipulates this theme; for sure, it's a story about the Ganguli family when they leave India for America. It also maps the emotional, cultural, and psychological price that immigrants and their children pay as they learn to forge a new life in a new land and try to negotiate with a world where they would rather go missing. This essay will consider the ways that the act of diaspora influences the construction of identity by exploring "in-betweenness" and cultural belonging, as discussed specifically in the novel.

II: Diaspora and "In-Betweenness".

The more general disarrangement of diasporic life is living in two worlds. Immigrants love their country but must also be open to whatever their new home happens to be. It is this duality that produces an "in-between" for individuals who cannot settle as themselves. The first generation Indian immigrants Ashoke and Ashima in The Namesake don't abandon their Indian roots as they adjust to life in America. But their son Gogol, on the other hand, is a second-generation phenomenon defined by a broader notion of cultural divides. The psychological tension of living between two cultures simultaneously is reflected in Gogol's own life. He is neither entirely Indian nor fully American and therefore, oddly, fragmented. That is a state shared by a wider diasporic condition where a sense of self can be negotiated. It is not guaranteed.

III: Naming and Identity Construction.

Name is among the book's larger concepts. Gogol's name is a signifier of his identity crisis. The name, a placeholder for the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol, has nothing to do with his Indian roots and home base, throwing him into an entanglement of cultural confusion. Gogol's discomfort with his name is also a metaphor for his identity crisis. Finally, Gogol turns his name to Nikhil because he wants to make himself sound more like the American people and more aligned with what is right in the world. But this doesn't solve belonging; it only compounds it: he doesn't give up on feeling other. The name in the novel itself emphasizes how identity is constructed and transmuted through relation, through culture, toward relations with family, and across social networks. It also illustrates the impossibility of remaking identity effortlessly within surface change but that it must be bound to the very marrow of individual narrative and experience.

IV: Hybridity and the Negotiations of Culture:

A Diaspora study of Humanity, a significant feature of diaspora studies, hybridity refers to the mingling differences among different cultural identities. In The Namesake, identity is the very essence of Asian identity, as is the character's struggle that he goes toward finding out how to reconcile Indian with American identity.

Gogol's character is molded by both his environment and the cultures he inhabits. He assimilates in American social mores and values but Indian tradition never quite leaves him. This is the compound force of identity, being

simultaneously a duality linked with hybridity vis-à-vis colour of the skin as well as hybridity related to being a stranger. Hybridity in food, language and ritual are also the subject of the novel. Ganguli family gets a full Indian life while trying to figure out how to be American and find out that their 'cultural identity' is not just fixed, it's fluid! Hybridity isn't under threat in this novel but is a natural one for the people in the diaspora.

V: Generational Conflict and Identity Formation.

Diasporic contexts require an identity building which takes into consideration generations divide. The first generation of immigrants look at the world of The Namesake very differently than their children; they see culture vs. self-identity in both of their cultural experiences. Ashima and Ashoke have a tremendous pride in their Indian traditions and heritage, but to try to maintain the pace of life with only a little effort. By contrast, Gogol is more willing to cut ties with his roots to assimilate into American culture. These mismatches produce tension in the lives of family members. Generational conflicts like this show how identities work under strain in the diaspora. First-generation adaptation is problematic and second-generation assimilation and cultural loss take their toll. This is another illustration of why it matters to acknowledge and address these disparities. Why is this of particular relevance, because, even for racial and ethnic groups, the idea of belonging and particularly of belonging within identity and its experience is not a universal one.

VI: Feeling Estranged, Not belonging

Displacement has long been a trope in terms of diasporic literature and manifests as one of alienation and isolation. The two generations are displaced in The Namesake, though for vastly different reasons. Ashima feels deeply lonely and pines for her home country. Her troubles represent the emotion of migration, the hardships of fitting in with a new culture. And Gogol is displaced, too, albeit in a different way. He was American by birth, but doesn't see the light of day in Indian and American culture. It is this estrangement that forms the very core of his sense of self and his relations. The book looks at belonging as "a fluid and evolving process." It argues that belonging has no physical location, but is more a product of experience and connection.

VII. The nature of Identity and Romantic Relationships

Identity is heavily relational in The Namesake. Gogol's romantic relationships also reflect his changing sense of identity in his cultural background and identity as he grows increasingly estranged from that background. They form partway through the play. His relationship to Maxine symbolizes his effort to become the American version, but that relationship is predominantly cut off from his heritage. His relationship with Moushumi, who has the same sort of diasporic ancestry, however, is a trickier representation of being in a country. They are of similar parentage, but they have such a complicated time staying connected with one another so we find ourselves wondering if cultural identity is not everything. Both these interactions illustrate the relationship from social relations to personal taste and social relations, personal interest, and interaction yet they also illustrate cultural differences that make intimate relationships a hassle.

VIII. Solution: Identity & Acceptance.

In the end, Gogol starts to make peace with who he is. His father's death is met with a turning point at some crucial juncture of events in which Ashoke represents the turning point for him when Ashoke becomes the steppingstone; this event forces him to reevaluate his racial origin from personal history, both his own cultural background as well as the individual experience in terms of family history. He is also beginning to grasp that he was learning about himself in Gogol is the key to Gogol. What his father's name means to him. Instead of embracing rejection, he receives a little acceptance, and when we do take up identity as a process of development, we become aware that identity is a never-ending development at least once we realize this fact. This also highlights the need to have cultural roots when adapting to new surroundings. This is some diaspora writing on a level that is also huge and meaningful in terms of understanding how identity is complex in and around a globalized world. It is an image of how people who straddle a dual-culture environment must wrestle with identity ambiguity. It expands the conversation on identity, who belongs, where or how culture resides, and destabilizes fixed ideas, offering instead a fluid, moving picture of where we belong. Lahiri's projects in diasporic literature represent one of the most basic genres of representational writing to be found, and in doing so, she lets a wide range of voices and lived experiences enter. How migration impacts an individual by their very nature is quite clear in this analysis.

IX. Conclusion.

The Diaspora are all that make up The Namesake. To explain the book, we can explore the characters of the Ganguli family in the novel's tension between two worlds to a certain extent. Gogol's transformation showcases the process of creating an entirely new identity in the diaspora. It portrays identity as fluid, forged through cultural negotiation, personal experience and history. The book's argument: In order to feel at home and function well in a new culture, you need to adopt, for instance, a hybrid identity. It is an affront to the notion that identity is a static phenomenon, and thus must be maintained. The Namesake represents not only a notable act of diaspora writing here

but also deeply important work in the deepening of our reflections on self in an ever world that is more integrated into global society than ever before.

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

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Global Resonances of the Bhagavad Gita: Literature, Culture, and Transnational Exchange

Devidas N. Durgest

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Asst. Professor
Sandip Institute of Technology and Research Center,
Mahirawani, Trimbak Road, Nashik
devidasdurgest@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Devidas N. Durgest, Asst. Professor, Sandip Institute of Technology and Research Center, Mahirawani, Trimbak Road, Nashik
devidasdurgest@gmail.com

Abstract

The Bhagavad Gita, a 700-verse Hindu scripture that forms part of the Indian epic Mahabharata, has transcended its specific temporal and geographical origins to become a cornerstone of global philosophical and literary discourse. This paper examines the "Global Resonances" of the Gita, exploring its profound impact on world literature, modern cultural movements, and the complex networks of transnational exchange. Since its first English translation by Charles Wilkins in 1784, the Gita has acted as a catalyst for intellectual shifts in the West, significantly influencing the American Transcendentalists, European Romantics, and 20th-century physicists. Beyond mere textual translation, the Gita has undergone a process of "transculturation," where its core concepts such as Dharma, Nishkama Karma, and the nature of the self-have been reinterpreted to address modern crises of identity, ethics, and social justice. This research analyzes how the Gita transitioned from a sacred Indian text to a "world text," looking at its role in the works of figures like Henry David Thoreau, T.S. Eliot, and Robert Oppenheimer. Furthermore, the paper investigates the Gita's influence on global peace movements and its contemporary presence in management studies and digital spirituality. By tracing these transnational trajectories, the study argues that the Bhagavad Gita's enduring relevance lies in its ability to provide a versatile ethical framework that speaks to the universal human condition, bridging the gap between ancient Eastern wisdom and modern globalized existence.

This research paper also examines the transnational journey of the Bhagavad Gita and its profound influence on world literature, cultural discourse, and philosophical thought. By tracing its reception across diverse historical periods and geographic regions, the study highlights how the text has been translated, interpreted, and reimagined by writers, philosophers, and thinkers in different cultural milieus.

Furthermore, this paper investigates the Bhagavad Gita's role in fostering intercultural dialogue, highlighting its adaptability and relevance in addressing universal human concerns. By situating the text within the broader context of transnational cultural flows, the research demonstrates how the Bhagavad Gita serves as a dynamic site of cross-cultural engagement, contributing to the formation of a shared global literary heritage. Ultimately, this study underscores the enduring significance of the Bhagavad Gita as a text that not only reflects Indian philosophical traditions but also actively shapes and enriches world literature.

1. Introduction

The Bhagavad Gita occupies a unique position in the canon of world literature. Originally a part of the Indian epic Mahabharata, the Gita is a philosophical dialogue between Prince Arjuna and Lord Krishna, addressing fundamental questions of life, duty, morality, and spiritual liberation. While rooted in the socio-religious context of ancient India, the text has transcended geographical and cultural boundaries, emerging as a global philosophical document.

The globalization of the Gita is not merely a story of translation, but of transnational exchange, a process where ideas are borrowed, adapted, and sometimes synthesized into entirely new philosophical frameworks. This paper explores the multifaceted impact of the Gita on the global stage, focusing on three primary domains: literature, cultural ethics, and the history of modern intellectual exchange.

It argues that the Gita's universal themes, combined with its adaptability through translation and interpretation, have enabled it to resonate with diverse literary traditions across the globe. The study also examines how cultural exchange and intellectual encounters have shaped the reception of the text in different contexts.

2. Historical Context: The First Bridges and Global Transmission

2.1 Early Transmission and Translation: The journey of the Bhagavad Gita into the global consciousness began in earnest during the late 18th century. The East India Company, though primarily a commercial entity, facilitated a massive intellectual transfer that would eventually backfire on the colonial project by highlighting the depth of Indian philosophy. The global journey of the Bhagavad Gita began in earnest in the late eighteenth century, when it was first translated into English by Charles Wilkins in 1785. Wilkins' translation of the Gita into English marked a watershed moment in its global reception and dissemination.

Before this, the Western world viewed Indian thought through the lens of travelogues and distorted accounts. Wilkins' work provided a direct, albeit filtered, access to the text. Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General of India, famously wrote in the introduction that the works of the Indians would "survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist."

This marked a pivotal moment in the text's transnational movement, introducing it to European intellectual circles. Subsequent translations into German, French, and other European languages facilitated its integration into Western philosophical and literary traditions.

These translations were not merely linguistic exercises; they were acts of cultural mediation. Translators often interpreted the text through the lens of their own intellectual traditions, shaping its reception and meaning in new contexts.

2.2 Colonial Encounters and Intellectual Exchange:

During the colonial period, the Bhagavad Gita became widely known in Europe as British administrators, missionaries, and scholars studied Indian texts to better understand and govern the Indian subcontinent. This engagement was not purely administrative; it also initiated a significant intellectual exchange between India and the West. As a result, Indian philosophical ideas, especially those found in texts like the Gita, began to influence Western intellectual traditions, reshaping European understandings of religion, ethics, and philosophy while also opening up new ways of interpreting Indian thought.

2.3 European Romanticism and German Idealism:

In the context of European Romanticism and German Idealism, the Gita was highly admired by thinkers such as Friedrich Schlegel and Wilhelm von Humboldt, who regarded it as a profound philosophical and poetic work. The German Romantics described it as a kind of "world-poem" that challenged narrow Eurocentric ideas of philosophy and literature. Humboldt, in particular, praised it as "the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue," highlighting its universal aesthetic and spiritual depth. This period marked a turning point in which the Gita began to be recognized globally not only as a sacred Hindu scripture but also as a work of universal philosophical and artistic significance.

3. Literature and the Transcendentalist Movement

One of the most important global responses to the Bhagavad Gita occurred in 19th-century America through the Transcendentalist movement. Thinkers in this movement rejected rigid religious structures like Unitarianism and instead sought a more intuitive, spiritual, and holistic understanding of divinity. In this search, they turned toward Eastern texts, especially the Gita, which offered deep philosophical insights into the nature of the self and reality.

3.1 Henry David Thoreau and Walden: A central figure in this engagement was Henry David Thoreau, who became one of the most devoted Western readers of the Gita. While living at Walden Pond, Thoreau described reading the Gita as a deeply intellectual and spiritual experience, famously praising its profound philosophical depth compared to modern Western literature.

For Thoreau, the Gita was not primarily about its battlefield setting but about inner spiritual struggle. He interpreted it as a guide to renunciation, simplicity, and resistance to materialism. In this way, he transformed the Gita into a metaphor for the "inner battle" of human life, where true victory lies in self-discipline and detachment from worldly desires.

3.2 Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Oversoul:

Another major Transcendentalist thinker, Ralph Waldo Emerson, was deeply influenced by the Gita's spiritual philosophy. His idea of the "Oversoul" closely resembles the Gita's concept of Brahman, the ultimate and universal reality that connects all beings.

In his poem "Brahma," Emerson directly engages with ideas derived from the Gita, especially the immortality and unity of the soul. By doing so, he helped integrate Vedantic philosophical concepts into American literature, showing how Indian spiritual thought could reshape Western literary and philosophical traditions.

4. The Gita in the 20th Century: Ethics and Modernity

In the 20th century, as the world experienced global wars, political instability, and nuclear anxieties, the Bhagavad Gita gained renewed relevance for its ethical and philosophical teachings. In particular, the idea of Nishkama Karma became significant in modern contexts where individuals and societies were struggling with moral uncertainty and the consequences of large-scale conflict. The Gita's message of acting responsibly without attachment to outcomes was increasingly seen as a way to navigate the pressures and moral complexities of modern life.

4.1 T.S. Eliot and The Four Quartets: A major literary figure influenced by this philosophical outlook was T.S. Eliot, who studied Sanskrit during his academic training at Harvard University. Eliot incorporated ideas inspired by the Gita into his poetic work Four Quartets, especially in the section "The Dry Salvages." In this poem, he directly echoes Krishna's teaching to Arjuna with the line, "And do not think of the fruit of action. Fare forward."

Through this engagement, Eliot uses the Gita's philosophy to explore deep questions about time, human action, and spiritual salvation in a fragmented post-war world. His work reflects how the Gita's ethical ideas could be reinterpreted to address the existential uncertainties of modern Western society.

4.2 J. Robert Oppenheimer:

The most chilling instance of the Gita's transnational resonance occurred during the first nuclear test in 1945. J. Robert Oppenheimer, the "father of the atomic bomb," recalled a verse from the Gita as he witnessed the explosion: "If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky that would be like the splendor of the mighty one. For Oppenheimer, the Gita provided the only language capable of describing the sublime and terrifying

power of modern science. It highlighted the text's capacity to frame the moral burden of duty in the most extreme circumstances.

5. Contemporary Global Resonances

In the 21st century, the Bhagavad Gita continues to remain relevant by adapting to modern global contexts. Its teachings are no longer limited to religious or philosophical study but are increasingly applied in professional, cultural, and digital spaces, showing its ongoing transformation as a "living text."

5.1 The Gita in Management and Leadership:

Modern management thinkers and business scholars increasingly draw on the Gita to explore ethical alternatives to purely profit-driven corporate models. The idea of "selfless leadership," inspired by the teachings of Krishna, emphasizes that leaders should prioritize collective welfare, responsibility, and ethical decision-making rather than personal gain. This approach represents a shift from traditional literary and philosophical engagement with the Gita to its practical application in global professional fields such as management, leadership training, and organizational ethics. As a result, the Gita is often used as a framework for values-based leadership in multinational and cross-cultural workplaces.

5.2 The Gita in Popular Culture and Digital Media:

The Gita continues to appear in popular culture, including films such as The Legend of Bagger Vance, where its themes are adapted into modern storytelling contexts. In the digital age, it has also become widely accessible as a self-help and motivational resource, shared through e-books, apps, YouTube talks, podcasts, and online courses. Its teachings are frequently reinterpreted through contemporary perspectives such as ecology, feminism, psychology, and existentialism, making it relevant to diverse global audiences. This flexibility ensures that the Gita remains meaningful not only as a sacred text but also as a philosophical guide for modern, secular societies.

6. The Bhagavad Gita in Contemporary Global Culture

The Bhagavad Gita, a foundational scripture of Hinduism, has moved far beyond its ancient Indian origins and now plays a meaningful role in global culture. Its teachings on duty (dharma), selflessness, inner discipline, and spiritual wisdom resonate across cultures, making it relevant in modern life.

6.1 Popular Culture and Media: The Gita's ideas appear in many forms of modern storytelling and media:

Films & Television: Themes like moral conflict, righteous action, and inner struggle, which are central to the Gita, are reflected in many global films. Even when not directly referenced, characters facing ethical dilemmas often mirror the journey of Arjuna and are guided by wisdom similar to that of Krishna.

6.2: Literature: Writers worldwide draw on the Gita's philosophy. For example, thinkers like Aldous Huxley engaged deeply with its spiritual ideas, incorporating them into discussions on consciousness and human purpose.

Today, the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita are widely shared through digital media and self-help platforms, including YouTube talks, podcasts, motivational content, and mindfulness-focused apps. Its teachings are often simplified into practical advice on stress management, leadership, and personal growth.

7. Global Spiritual Movements

The Bhagavad Gita has played a major role in shaping modern global spirituality by influencing practices, organizations, and universal philosophical thinking.

7.1 Yoga and Meditation: The Gita provides a strong philosophical foundation for many yoga traditions, especially through ideas such as Karma Yoga and Dhyana. These practices have now become global phenomena, widely practiced in countries like the United States and across Europe as tools for physical health, mental well-being, and spiritual growth.

7.2 Spiritual Organizations: Groups such as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness have been instrumental in spreading the teachings of Krishna and the Gita across the world. Through temples, publications, and public outreach, they have made these teachings accessible to people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

7.3 Universal Spiritual Philosophy: The message of the Gita is often viewed as universal rather than strictly religious. It appeals to individuals seeking inner peace, ethical understanding, and life purpose. This broad relevance has allowed it to become part of modern spiritual but non-religious lifestyles, where people draw on its teachings for personal growth and self-awareness.

8. Intercultural Dialogue and Hybridization

The Bhagavad Gita plays a significant role in intercultural dialogue and cultural hybridization by functioning as a bridge between different philosophical and cultural traditions across the world. It enables ideas from Indian thought to interact with global intellectual systems, creating new forms of understanding and interpretation.

8.1 Intercultural Dialogue: The Gita facilitates communication between Eastern and Western philosophies by presenting universal themes such as duty, self-realization, and spiritual discipline in ways that can be understood across cultures. This encourages meaningful intellectual and spiritual exchange, allowing thinkers from diverse backgrounds to engage with its ideas and integrate them into their own traditions of thought.

8.2 Cultural Adaptability: Because the Gita expresses its teachings in a broad and philosophical manner, it can be reinterpreted in different historical and cultural contexts. Readers from various cultural backgrounds are able to connect its message with their own worldviews, making it a flexible text that adapts to changing global conditions while retaining its core philosophical depth.

8.3 Hybridization of Cultural Expression: This adaptability has led to hybrid cultural forms in which ideas from the Gita are blended with Western philosophy, modern psychology, literature, and popular media. Such combinations

produce new interpretations that reflect multiple cultural perspectives, ensuring that the Gita remains relevant and meaningful in contemporary global culture.

9. Philosophical Themes and Universal Appeal

The Bhagavad Gita has achieved enduring global relevance because it explores philosophical themes that are considered universal and applicable across cultures.

9.1 Dharma (Duty and Ethics): The concept of Dharma refers to moral duty and ethical responsibility, and it resonates widely as a framework for making difficult moral decisions; in literature, this often appears in characters who struggle with ethical dilemmas and conflicting responsibilities.

9.2 Karma (Action and Consequence): The idea of Karma emphasizes that every action has consequences, and the Gita's teaching of acting without attachment has influenced narratives that focus on personal responsibility, human agency, and the outcomes of one's choices.

9.3 Bhakti (Devotion): The concept of Bhakti highlights devotion as a path to spiritual fulfillment, and this idea has influenced both religious writings and secular literature that explore themes of love, surrender, and emotional connection to a higher ideal.

9.4 Detachment and Self-Realization: The teaching of acting without attachment to results has had a strong impact on philosophical and existential literature, where it is used to explore self-awareness, inner freedom, and the idea of performing one's duty without being bound by desire for outcomes.

10. Influence on Western Literature

The Bhagavad Gita has significantly influenced Western literature by shaping major intellectual movements such as Romanticism, Transcendentalism, and Modernism. Across these periods, writers and philosophers engaged with its themes of spirituality, duty, inner conflict, and the unity of existence, adapting them into their own cultural and literary frameworks.

10.1 Romanticism and Idealism: During the Romantic period in Europe (late 18th–early 19th century), writers reacted against the Enlightenment's focus on reason, science, and industrial progress. Instead, they emphasized emotion, imagination, and spiritual connection with nature. In this intellectual atmosphere, the Gita's ideas of spiritual unity and the interconnectedness of all life strongly resonated with Romantic thinkers.

For example, German Romantic philosophers and writers such as Friedrich Schlegel admired Indian philosophy and saw texts like the Gita as expressions of deep spiritual truth. The Gita's vision of a unified cosmic reality influenced Idealist philosophy, which argued that reality is fundamentally spiritual rather than purely material. Romantic poets also reflected similar ideas in their celebration of nature as a living, spiritual force rather than a mechanical system.

10.2 Transcendentalism: In 19th-century America, the Transcendentalist movement drew heavily from Eastern philosophy, especially the Gita. Thinkers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau embraced its teachings on self-reliance, simplicity, and spiritual awareness.

Thoreau's time at Walden Pond is one of the clearest examples of this influence. He read the Gita frequently and described it as a profound source of wisdom. In his work Walden, he emphasizes simple living and inner reflection, ideas that strongly reflect the Gita's teaching of detachment from material possessions. He also reinterpreted the Gita's battlefield dialogue not as a literal call to war, but as a symbolic representation of the inner struggle between material desires and spiritual discipline. Emerson, similarly, echoed Gita-like ideas in his essay The Over-Soul, where he describes a universal spiritual essence connecting all beings.

10.3 Modernist Literature: In the Modernist era (early 20th century), writers faced a world shaped by industrialization, world wars, and psychological uncertainty. Literature during this time often focused on fragmentation, alienation, and moral ambiguity. The Gita's exploration of Arjuna's inner conflict became especially relevant in this context, as it mirrored modern experiences of doubt and existential struggle.

For instance, T.S. Eliot incorporated Gita-inspired ideas into his poetry. In Four Quartets, especially "The Dry Salvages," Eliot refers to Krishna's teaching about detachment from results, echoing the Gita's concept of selfless action. Modernist writers used such ideas to explore questions of meaning, time, and moral responsibility in a fragmented world. The Gita thus provided a philosophical framework for understanding human uncertainty and ethical decision-making in modern society.

11. Influence on Indian English and Postcolonial Literature

The Bhagavad Gita has deeply shaped both Indian English and postcolonial literature by offering ideas such as duty, moral struggle, and ethical action, which writers reinterpret to reflect modern realities and historical experiences.

11.1 Indian English Literature: Many Indian writers writing in English use the Gita's themes of duty, righteousness, and moral conflict to explore contemporary social and political issues. For example, R. K. Narayan subtly reflects Gita-like ideas in his fictional characters who struggle with ethical decisions in everyday life in works such as The English Teacher. Similarly, Rohinton Mistry explores moral responsibility and human suffering in novels like A Fine Balance, where characters face ethical dilemmas in difficult socio-political conditions. These writers reinterpret the Gita's teachings in modern settings, using them to examine identity, justice, and responsibility in a rapidly changing society.

11.2 Postcolonial Reinterpretations: In postcolonial literature, the Gita is often re-read as a symbol of cultural resistance and intellectual independence. Writers use its teachings to challenge colonial and neocolonial domination and to reclaim indigenous identity. For instance, the philosophical ideas of the Gita have influenced readings of works by authors like Amitav Ghosh, whose novels such as The Shadow Lines explore borders, identity, and historical memory in ways that resonate with postcolonial concerns. In this context, the Gita becomes not only a spiritual text

but also a symbol of cultural pride and resistance, helping to reaffirm Indian philosophical traditions in a postcolonial world.

12. Critical Perspectives

The Bhagavad Gita has had a widely recognized global influence, but it is also important to view this influence through critical perspectives.

12.1 Colonial Power Dynamics: The spread of the Gita in the Western world was significantly shaped by colonial encounters, where unequal power relations influenced how Indian texts were translated, studied, and interpreted, sometimes filtering them through Western intellectual frameworks.

12.2 Misinterpretation or Oversimplification: As the Gita moved across cultures and languages, there is a risk that its complex philosophical ideas such as Dharma and Karma may be simplified or misunderstood, leading to partial or distorted readings that do not fully reflect its original depth.

12.3 Universalism vs Cultural Specificity: While the Gita is often presented as a universal spiritual text, this universal interpretation can sometimes overlook its deep roots in Indian cultural, religious, and philosophical traditions, creating a tension between its global appeal and its specific historical and cultural context.

13. Conclusion

The Bhagavad Gita stands as a testament to the power of literature to transcend boundaries and foster global connections. Its journey from an ancient Indian text to a cornerstone of world literature reflects the dynamic processes of cultural exchange and intellectual engagement. By influencing writers, philosophers, and thinkers across cultures, the Bhagavad Gita has contributed to the formation of a shared global literary heritage. Its themes continue to resonate with contemporary audiences, addressing universal questions of existence, morality, and spirituality. In an increasingly interconnected world, the Bhagavad Gita remains a vital source of inspiration and insight, demonstrating the enduring relevance of classical texts in shaping modern thought and culture. The Bhagavad Gita has a global heritage. Its journey through Charles Wilkins, the Transcendentalists, the pioneers of quantum physics, and leaders of social justice movements illustrates a remarkable history of transnational exchange.

The Gita's "Global Resonances" are a testament to its philosophical depth and its ability to address the universal human dilemma: the conflict between desire and duty. As we navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the Bhagavad Gita remains a bridge between the ancient and the modern, the East and the West, and the individual and the infinite.

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A Critical Study of Feminist Perspective in Sudha Murthy's Novels

Vaishali Chandrakant Ransing

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Research Scholar, Department of English
C. T. Bora College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Shirur, Dist.- Pune 412210.
Email- ransingv1@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Vaishali Chandrakant Ransing Research Scholar, Department of English
C. T. Bora College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Shirur, Dist.- Pune 412210.
Email- ransingv1@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research paper attempts a critical study of the feminist perspective in the novels of Sudha Murthy, a prolific contemporary Indian writer known for her simple narrative style and extensive social insights. The study explores how Murthy portrays the lived experiences of women within the framework of Indian society. It mainly focuses on themes like gender discrimination, patriarchy, social stigma, self-reliance, identity, resilience and empowerment of women. For this study, Murthy's novels include *Mahashweta*, *Dollar Bahu*, *Gently falls the Bakula* and *House of Cards*. The paper examines how female characters negotiate unfair social structures and assert their agency in precise and powerful ways.

This study situates the work of Sudha Murthy within the broader discourse of Indian feminism and highlights her unique approach which blends traditional values with progressive ideals. Mrs. Murthy presents a form of practical feminism rooted in everyday life, where transformation occurs through education, personal determination and moral values. Her protagonists often expresses silent endurance while at the same time it challenges societal norms.

As well, the study evaluates the intersection of class, culture, and gender to shape experiences of women in her fiction. It argues that Murthy's narratives present a critique of ingrained patriarchal practices. It also offers constructive pathways towards gender equality and shows ordinary women and their struggles.

Thus, the paper concludes that Sudha Murthy's novels provide a subtle and understandable representation of feminism. It makes her work an important topic for critical feminist exploration and contributes significantly to feminist literary discourse in India.

Keywords: Feminist Perspective, Patriarchy, Gender Discrimination, Resilience, Empowerment, Transformation.

1. Introduction:

Feminism, is a literary and social movement. It seeks to analyse and challenge the structures of patriarchy that marginalize women. In the Indian context, feminism has developed uniquely, blending traditional values with modern aspirations. Sudha Murthy emerges a significant voice in this landscape. It offers narratives to highlight the everyday realities of women. Murthy's novels are deeply embedded in Indian culture and focus on ordinary women facing extraordinary challenges. Her writing is marked by simplicity, yet it carries profound insights into gender inequality, societal expectations, and the struggle for identity. Unlike Western feminist writers who often advocate radical resistance, Murthy presents a balanced approach where women negotiate their space within existing structures. Her works reflect the transition of Indian society, where women are gradually moving from subjugation to self-awareness. Through her characters, Murthy portrays the silent suffering, resilience, and eventual empowerment of women. This paper aims to critically analyse these elements and examine how her novels contribute to feminist discourse.

Literature Review:

Study of Sudha Murthy's novels indicate that her novels present a realistic portrayal of women's lives and it focuses on their psychological and emotional struggles. Her novels emphasize the changing roles of women across generations. It reveals the shift from passive acceptance to active assertion of Identity

Research highlights that Murthy's female characters often face dilemmas between tradition and individuality. They are depicted as resilient individuals who navigate societal resistance and eventually assert their identity. It shows how younger women strive for autonomy while older generations remain bound by traditional roles.

The protagonist of the novel *Mahashweta* suffers after marriage, in her life. When she develops white patches on her body, her in-law's family abandoned her, society rejects her and everyone starts to gossip about her. In her father's home, she decides to go to Mumbai and work there to earn money. She wants to become independent woman. So she moves to Mumbai and works there. Thus she acquires financial independence. She works with dignity and excellence. She regains respect from society. Thus she stands alone without the help of her husband. Thus, Sudha Murthy's narrative shows gradual positive changes in female protagonist. Thus, it shows transformation and empowerment of female protagonist.

In *Dollar Bahu,* the protagonist Vinuta faces different problem. Her mother in-law is a greedy woman. She gives more values to her dollar bahu named Jamuna because she lives in USA and earns dollars. Mother-in-law, Gauramma, always tortures Vinuta. At last Gauramma knows the real thing about her dollar bahu. She behaves badly with Gauramma. Then she realizes that in the greed of money how she tortures Vinuta, though Vinuta a well behaved daughter-in-law. However, Vinuta changes her place to live and her father-in-law supports her. Mrs. Murthy portrays here a common Indian family where daughter-in-laws always suffers from their mother-in-laws, for money, behaviour, physical appearance and to save patriarchal values.

In the novel *Gently Falls The Bakula*, protagonist Shrimati quietly gives up her dreams for her husband Shrikant's success. It symbolizes women's identities are often suppressed in marriage. It depicts the gradual erosion of humility and simplicity as material success and social status take priority over meaningful relationships. Shrimati's realization of her lost dreams and her decision to reclaim her identity shows a women's awakening to self-worth independence. At the end, the novel emphasize the importance of personal fulfillment and independence. It suggests that compromise should not lead to the loss of self. Thus, the novel critiques marriage.

It highlights women's inner strength, and underscores the necessity of balancing ambition with empathy and emotional responsibility. Critical analyses of *Gently Falls the Bakula* reveal how Murthy explores the theme of identity crisis within marriage and highlights the protagonist's journey towards self-realization.

The novel *The House Of Cards*, shows the greed for money, power and social status slowly erodes moral values and emotional bonds, mainly within marriage. The novel shows the marriage is based on self-interest instead of than mutual respect. Transformation of protagonist's husband Sanjay, after gaining wealth shows how success can alter priorities and weaken marital commitment.

Mainly, it reveals female endurance and sacrifice. Protagonist of the novel Mrudula supports her husband selflessly, suppressing her own desires and career. It highlights that women always bear the emotional cost of men's ambitions. Sudha Murthy critiques materialistic culture in the form story of the novel. In this culture wealth becomes a tool for domination rather than comfort.

Mrudula's decision to claim her dignity shows awakening and the importance of personal identity of a woman. At the end of the novel, it emphasizes self-awareness and self-respect of a woman.

Study of these the novels underline the portrayal of social resistance, gender discrimination and the struggle for identity faced by women in patriarchal society. Scholars also note that Murthy's narratives emphasize grassroots empowerment rather than radical activism which reflects the realities of Indian society.

Thus, it shows that Murthy's works contribute significantly to feminist literature by presenting realistic and culturally grounded narratives. Her works address issues like gender inequality, social discrimination, and economic dependence.

Representation of Patriarchy

One of the central themes in Murthy's novels is the pervasive influence of patriarchy. Her narratives depict how women are subjected to societal norms that restrict their freedom and individuality.

In *Mahashweta*, the protagonist Anupama faces rejection and humiliation due to her skin condition named leukoderma. It reflects the superficial values of society. Her in-laws family abandons her, at that time her husband remains silent. It highlights the conditional nature of marital relationships in a patriarchal system. Similarly, in *Dollar Bahu*, the preference for wealth and foreign status exposes the commodification of women within family structures.

Murthy's portrayal of patriarchy is subtle yet powerful. She does not merely criticize the system but reveals its deep-rooted presence in everyday life. Women are expected to conform to roles of obedience and sacrifice, often at the cost of their personal aspirations.

Women's Identity and Self-Realization

A significant aspect of Murthy's feminist perspective is the emphasis on identity and self-realization. Her protagonists often begin as submissive individuals but gradually evolve into self-aware and independent personalities.

In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, the protagonist Shrimati sacrifices her ambitions for her husband's career. However, she eventually realizes her loss of identity and chooses to reclaim her individuality. This transformation reflects the awakening of feminist consciousness.

Murthy portrays identity as a process rather than a fixed state. Her characters undergo emotional and psychological journeys that lead them to self-discovery. This emphasis on personal growth aligns with the core principles of feminism, which advocate autonomy and self-expression.

Marriage and Gender Roles

Marriage is a recurring theme in Murthy's novels, often depicted as a site of conflict and negotiation. While traditional Indian society views marriage as sacred, Mrs. Murthy exposes its limitations for women.

Her narratives show how women are expected to prioritize family over personal ambitions. In *House of Cards*, the protagonist faces emotional turmoil due to her husband's unethical actions. It highlights the moral and emotional burdens placed on women.

Mrs. Murthy critiques the institution of marriage without rejecting it entirely. Instead, she advocates for equality and mutual respect within relationships. Her feminist perspective lies in redefining traditional roles rather than dismantling them.

Economic Independence and Empowerment

Economic independence is another crucial aspect of feminism reflected in Murthy's works. Her novels emphasize the importance of education and financial stability for women's empowerment.

In many of her stories, women who achieve independence are able to assert their identity and make decisions for themselves. This aligns with the broader feminist idea that economic freedom is essential for liberation. For example, in the novel *Mahashweta* Mrs. Murthy portrays the protagonist Anupama as an educated, a talented and well cultured girl. After marriage in a rich family, she becomes dependent on her husband and in-laws family. After some days, there develops white patches on her skin. Doctor diagnosed it as Leukoderma, a skin condition. Then her in-laws family abandoned her. With strong determination she goes to Mumbai and works there by using her degree education. Thus she acquires economic autonomy through her education. Then, she becomes an independent woman and gains respect from society.

Thus, Mrs. Murthy's portrayal of empowerment is practical and achievable. She presents women who overcome obstacles through determination and resilience, thereby inspiring readers to challenge societal norms.

Silent Resistance and Inner Strength

Unlike overtly rebellious characters in Western feminist literature, Murthy's protagonists exhibit silent resistance. Their strength lies in endurance, patience, and moral integrity.

This form of resistance reflects the realities of Indian society, where open defiance may not always be possible. Murthy's women challenge oppression through perseverance and self-respect. Such portrayal redefines feminism by emphasizing inner strength rather than external rebellion.

Critical Evaluation:

A critical evaluation of the feminist perspective in the novels of Sudha Murthy reveals a nuanced and contextually grounded approach that differs significantly from more radical or theoretical strands of feminism. Her works, including *Mahashweta*, *Gently Falls the Bakula*, *Dollar Bahu*, and *House of Cards*, offer a realistic portrayal of women's lives within the socio-cultural framework of Indian society. Rather than presenting feminism as an ideological confrontation with patriarchy, Murthy situates it within the everyday experiences of women, thereby making her narratives accessible, relatable, and socially resonant. She highlights important issues such as gender discrimination, societal expectations identity crisis and identity crisis.

One of the major strengths of Murthy's feminist vision lies in her realistic characterization. Her female protagonists are not extraordinary figures or symbolic representations of rebellion; instead, they are ordinary women who confront deeply entrenched societal norms. Characters such as Anupama and Shrimati reflect the lived experiences of many Indian women who are shaped by expectations of sacrifice, obedience, and familial duty. Through their gradual transformation, Murthy effectively illustrates that empowerment is not always immediate or dramatic but often evolves through introspection, resilience, and experience. This emphasis on lived reality enhances the authenticity of her feminist perspective.

Another significant aspect of her work is the focus on self-reliance and inner strength. Murthy consistently portrays education and economic independence as crucial tools for women's empowerment. Her narratives suggest that true liberation begins with self-awareness and the ability to make independent choices. This approach aligns with liberal feminist ideals, which emphasize individual agency and equality of opportunity. At the same time, Murthy's depiction of empowerment remains rooted in Indian cultural values, avoiding a complete rejection of traditional institutions such as marriage and family. Instead, she advocates reform within these structures, emphasizing mutual respect and understanding.

However, critics argue that her approach is conservative and lacks radical critique of patriarchy. Her emphasis on adjustment and compromise may be seen as reinforcing traditional norms. It is important to consider the cultural context of her writing. Murthy addresses a broad audience and presents feminism in a way which is accessible and acceptable within Indian society. Her contribution lies in bridging the gap between traditional values and modern feminist ideals. By presenting strong and relatable female characters, she inspires gradual social change.

However, this moderate stance also invites critical scrutiny. One of the primary limitations of Murthy's feminist perspective is its lack of radical engagement with patriarchal systems. Her narratives often focus on individual transformation rather than structural change, which may limit their capacity to challenge systemic inequalities. While her protagonists achieve personal empowerment, the broader social framework remains largely intact. From a more radical feminist viewpoint, this could be seen as a form of accommodation rather than resistance.

Furthermore, Murthy's focus on middle-class experiences restricts the scope of her feminist discourse. Issues related to caste, class, and intersectionality are not extensively explored in her novels. Indian feminism is deeply intertwined with these dimensions, and their relative absence in her work suggests a somewhat limited representation of women's diverse realities. As a result, her narratives may not fully capture the complexities of marginalized women's experiences.

Another area of critique lies in her narrative simplicity and moralistic tone. While her straightforward language makes her work widely accessible, it sometimes leads to a lack of psychological depth and complexity. The resolution of conflicts in her novels often leans toward moral closure, which may oversimplify the deeply rooted and multifaceted nature of gender inequality. Critics argue that this tendency reduces the potential for a more profound and critical engagement with feminist issues.

By presenting empowerment as a gradual and attainable process, she encourages reflection and change within the boundaries of social acceptability. This makes her work particularly effective in raising awareness about gender issues among a broad audience.

Moreover, Murthy's emphasis on resilience and moral integrity offers an alternative model of feminist strength. Her protagonists do not necessarily reject tradition but reinterpret it in ways that allow for personal growth and autonomy. This perspective highlights the possibility of negotiating space within patriarchal systems, rather than dismantling them entirely. While this may not satisfy all feminist critiques, it reflects a pragmatic understanding of social change in the Indian context.

Thus, a critical evaluation of Sudha Murthy's feminist perspective reveals a balanced interplay between strength and limitation. Her work is marked by realism, accessibility, and cultural relevance, making it an important contribution to Indian feminist literature. At the same time, its moderate approach, limited engagement with intersectionality, and focus on individual rather than structural transformation suggest areas for further exploration. Ultimately, Murthy's novels represent a form of practical feminism that bridges tradition and modernity, offering valuable insights into the evolving role of women in contemporary Indian society.

Conclusion:

Sudha Murthy's novels offer a significant contribution to feminist literature in India. Her portrayal of women reflects the complexities of navigating a patriarchal society while striving for identity and empowerment. Her feminist perspective is characterized by realism, cultural sensitivity, and a focus on inner strength. Rather than advocating radical change, she emphasizes transformation within existing structures.

Sudha Murthy's novels offer a captivating exploration of feminist themes within the framework of Indian society. Her portrayal of women reflects the complexities of their lives, shaped by cultural expectations and personal aspirations. Through her narratives, Murthy highlights the challenges faced by women while also celebrating their resilience and capacity for growth. Mrs. Murthy reveals the importance of education, self-awareness, and resilience in achieving empowerment. Her works serve as a mirror to society, encouraging readers to reflect on gender roles and inequalities.

Overall, Sudha Murthy's novels present a unique and valuable feminist perspective that resonates with the realities of Indian women. Her contribution to literature lies in giving voice to the silent struggles and victory of women, thereby promoting a more inclusive and equitable society. Her feminist perspective is marked by its emphasis on self-reliance, education, and moral strength. By presenting empowerment as a gradual and lived process, she provides a vision of feminism that is both practical and culturally relevant.

Thus, her ability to depict the silent struggles and quiet triumphs of women makes her narratives both relatable and impactful. Her novels serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity, offering valuable insights into the evolving nature of feminism in contemporary India.

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From Heatwave to Heartache: Eco-Trauma and Collective Grief in Kim Stanley Robinson's The Ministry for the Future

Soniya Ghorpade

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Research Scholar
Department of English,
PDEA's Annasaheb Magar College, Pune
soniya.ghorpade.acad@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Soniya Ghorpade
Research Scholar
Department of English,
PDEA's Annasaheb Magar College, Pune
Email-
soniya.ghorpade.acad@gmail.com

Abstract

In the present age, when the climate crisis is escalating globally, literature has become an essential lens for exploring this pressing issue. In literature, the climate crisis is not explored merely as an environmental threat; it also portrays the psychological dimensions of ecological collapse on human beings and society in a broader context. The paper argues that The Ministry for the Future (2020) by Kim Stanley Robinson depicts the inevitable emotional and psychological human responses to ecological disasters. Robinson establishes a setting for psychological exploration of environmental collapse through two principal characters, Frank May and Mary Murphy. It dramatises Frank May's traumatic survival of the catastrophic heatwave in India, which leaves lasting emotional scars, and Mary Murphy's burnout and emotional exhaustion, representing the collective grief of climate victims. Through Frank's flashbacks, guilt and suffering, the text presents climate anxiety and survivor-trauma. Through Mary's insomnia, professional burden, and moral weariness, Robinson demonstrates the bureaucratic expression of ecological grief. This study employs the theoretical frameworks such as Glenn Albrecht's concept of eco-trauma, Rob Nixon's slow violence, and Cheryll Glotfelty's ecocriticism. This study shows how Robinson's narrative conveys climate justice not only as an environmental or political consideration but also as a process of healing deep psychological wounds caused by ecological catastrophes. The paper highlights that while eco-cosmopolitan, posthuman, and political-economic readings of The Ministry for the Future already exist, an ecocritical analysis of eco-trauma and collective grief interpretations is under-investigated. This paper addresses this gap. By examining emotional responses, the paper contributes to the growing field of climate-fiction studies that highlight impact, trauma, and grief as serious concerns alongside policy and politics.

Keywords: *ecocriticism, collective grief, climate justice, eco-trauma, cli-fi, slow violence*

1. Introduction

The climate crisis is no longer a problem for the future; it is here. It is present sometimes quietly and sometimes crashing, without warning. These days, the growing menace of climate change has become a matter of serious concern. The issue has been distinctively explored in various disciplines and fields. In literature, this intimidating threat has also been examined from different perspectives, which has given rise to cli-fi fiction. Cli-fi fiction is an attempt to investigate abstract realities, emotional and ethical impressions of environmental catastrophes on society and humans. Literature attempts to examine its affective approaches rather than only scientific and factual approaches.

Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future* (2020) is one of the most crucial contributions to the cli-fi genre. It is set in a near-future world, which struggles with the catastrophic consequences of the severe climatic collapse Robinson has not woven it as a conventional dystopia only highlighting the ecological disasters in a near future rather Robinson, going beyond, presents a fictional world in the existing world, grappled with a devastating heatwave, portraying distinct realities; scientific, economic, and political on the surface level but he also successfully portrays emotional impacts of these ecological disasters and how it can severely destroy mental health in the long term, which makes the novel different from convention cli-fi fiction. The novel stands out from regular cli-fi for its unique portrayal of the psychological and emotional effects of the catastrophe on the human mind. The novel opens with the disastrous heatwave in Uttar Pradesh, India, which causes mass deaths and people to suffer physically as well as emotionally. It is about exploring the lived realities of people breaking under the weight of crisis, suffering, mourning, feeling helpless and anxious to cope with. Robinson depicts a very unsettling and eye-opening interior of ecological collapse, which makes us sit and feel it. Robinson has successfully made us realise the importance of noticing the emotional toll of these issues, along with others. Past studies have explored the work from eco-cosmopolitan vision, utopian and post-humanistic perspectives extensively, but the psychological impacts of the climatic crisis have been under-investigated. This paper focuses on how Robinson depicts eco-trauma and collective grief through his two central characters, Frank May and Mary Murphy. Frank May is an American aid worker who survives an intense heatwave in India, and Mary Murphy, the head of the Ministry for the Future, is overburdened and exhausted by the climatic response. Robinson has presented two different kinds of suffering through these two characters, which helps to understand the nature of collective grief.

This paper will study this affective dimension of the novel, arguing that *The Ministry for the Future* is not only about political and economic mappings, but it carries a psychological exploration of the environmental collapse through the

theoretical frameworks of Glenn Albrecht's eco-trauma, Cheryll Glotfelty's ecocriticism, and Rob Nixon's slow violence. Glenn Albrecth, an Australian environmental philosopher, who studied environmental change deeply. He coined the term solastalgia, which describes the grief people feel when they face a damaged and destroyed environment. But the concept of eco-trauma goes further than this. It describes the psychological wound, actual trauma, which results from witnessing the ecological collapse and devastating disasters. It's just not the sadness, but a deep, unsettling wound that tends to change how a person relates to the world.

Eco-trauma is a relatively new concept in literary studies, which is becoming an increasingly explored concept nowadays. As there is a surge and more frequency in severe environmental mishaps, people are experiencing their toll more often and deeply, which causes eco anxiety. In such a time, literature has become an important space where these experiences are examined and understood. *The Ministry for the Future* is one of the important texts in this examination of distressing experiences.

Theoretical Framework

Before turning to the analysis of the narrative, it is necessary to outline the theoretical framework that supports this study. This framework provides the conceptual tools needed to understand character behaviour in Robinson's work. Central to this discussion is the concept of eco-trauma, developed by Glenn Albrecht, an Australian environmental philosopher. While Albrecht is primarily associated with solastalgia. Solastalgia is the distress caused by environmental change in one's home environment. Eco-trauma extends this idea toward a more severe psychological condition. It refers to the enduring mental and emotional disruption produced by direct exposure to ecological destruction. Rather than a generalised form of climate anxiety, it can be understood as a deeper alteration in an individual's relationship to their environment and to reality itself.

To contextualise this form of trauma, it is also important to consider the time scale on which environmental harm occurs. To examine this, Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence is particularly relevant. Nixon describes environmental damage as gradual, dispersed, and often invisible in its immediate effects. It is present there but quietly. Processes such as toxic accumulation, sea-level rise, and ecosystem degradation unfold gradually, which makes them difficult to represent or politically register.

In Robinson's work, however, the collective nature of such harm becomes visible through its psychological impact on characters. From this perspective, exhaustion and emotional strain can be read not as individual fragility but as an adaptive response to sustained environmental pressure.

These theoretical threads are further incorporated through ecocritical approaches, as given by Cheryll Glotfelty. Ecocriticism examines how literature represents the relationship between humans and the non-human world. In the case of *The Ministry for the Future*, this involves not only the depiction of environmental systems but also the affective and psychological dimensions of human-environment relations. Taken together, these frameworks put the novel beyond the genre of climate or policy fiction. It can be read as an exploration of subjectivity in the Anthropocene, where long-term ecological degradation intersects with moments of acute crisis.

Textual analysis

The Ministry for the Future begins with a heatwave in Uttar Pradesh that turns large parts of India into an uninhabitable zone. Wet-bulb temperatures cross survivability thresholds. Within days, millions die. Frank May, an American aid worker, survives by staying in a lake. From there, he watches everything unfold. He cannot help anyone. He can barely help himself. The horror comes through what is not emphasised as much as what is. Frank does not respond in an expressive way. He survives, but Survival does not resolve the experience; it only separates it from the event. Frank carries what he saw, but also the fact that he lived when others did not. That combination becomes heavy in a different way than the disaster itself. What follows looks like survivor's guilt, but it doesn't stay within that frame for long. The memory keeps returning in fragments, such as the lake, the heat, the bodies, the stillness between moments. It doesn't behave like a past event. It stays active.

This is where eco-trauma becomes useful as a concept. According to Albrecht, environmental destruction doesn't just affect surroundings, but it alters the structure of experience itself. Frank's condition is not only psychological injury in isolation. It is shaped by the fact that the cause was ecological, collective, and ongoing. The shift in him is gradual but clear. He becomes detached from the ordinary rhythms of life. Conversations feel distant. Every day settings feel misaligned with what he has seen. Over time, that disconnection turns into anger, then into a political direction. His movement toward radical groups is not treated as a surprise in the narrative. It develops from pressure that has nowhere to go. What he witnessed does not stay contained as memory. It keeps pressing against the present, especially when the world outside continues functioning as if the event were an exception rather than a signal. Slow violence helps clarify this. The heatwave is sudden, but it sits on top of long processes such as emissions, extraction, delay, and denial. Frank survives the catastrophe, but what surrounds it is extended. That background does not disappear after the disaster. It becomes part of what he is carrying. There is also an uneven geography in who survives and who does not. Frank is not from the region. He is an outsider, and that position shapes both his survival and his later guilt. Most of the dead are not in positions of mobility or protection. That difference is not incidental. It structures the entire scene.

Mary Murphy works in a different register of the same crisis. She leads the Ministry for the Future, an institution meant to represent long-term climate interests inside global politics. Her exhaustion doesn't arrive suddenly. It accumulates slowly. Meetings, reports, and negotiations that repeat without shifting the underlying trajectory. Little progress appears, then dissolves into larger setbacks. Over time, even success stops feeling like relief

to her she faces insomnia. Nothing is dramatic in isolation, but the pattern builds. What she carries is not one event but continuous exposure to information about events elsewhere, disasters she does not witness directly but cannot avoid knowing in detail. That difference matters. Frank experiences catastrophe directly. Mary experiences it through systems that translate it into numbers, updates, and policy language. The distance does not reduce the weight; it changes its form. It becomes constant rather than episodic.

This is where institutional grief makes sense as a description. Not grief tied to one loss, but a condition produced by sustained proximity to loss without adequate power to interrupt it. Secondary trauma fits here, too, though even that feels too clean. It is slower than shock, less visible, and harder to mark.

Unlike Frank, Mary does not break in a single direction. There is no sudden rupture. The strain spreads across time. Work continues, and so does awareness of its limits. The two run in parallel without resolving each other. Ecological grief is not a personal weakness, but a response to scale. Mary is not portrayed as unable to function. She functions too well for too long under conditions that don't allow relief. She is expected to remain composed while dealing with the ongoing global collapse. Emotional containment becomes part of professional expectation. That expectation itself becomes another layer of burden. At one point, the contradiction becomes visible. Representing futures that do not exist yet while negotiating with actors fully anchored in the present. That gap is not just political. It is a temporal strain built into the job itself.

Grief is not a form of weakness; rather, it is an appropriate and necessary response to loss. In the context of the climate crisis, this loss is vast and multi-layered: it includes destabilised ecosystems, accelerating biodiversity decline, disrupted communities, and diminished futures that once seemed possible. It is, in many respects, the story of the largest collective loss in human history.

Kim Stanley Robinson's The Ministry for the Future engages directly with this condition. The novel treats grief not as an obstacle to political or ecological action, but as a fundamental dimension of any meaningful response to climate catastrophe. Through characters such as Frank May, whose experience reflects acute eco-trauma, and Mary Murphy, whose institutional role embodies chronic forms of ecological grief, Robinson foregrounds the psychological and emotional consequences of environmental collapse. These figures are not peripheral to the novel's political vision; but they are central to it. Together, they suggest that climate justice cannot be reduced to questions of carbon accounting or economic restructuring alone. It must also account for the inner lives of those living through ecological emergency, including the forms of suffering, adaptation, and potential healing that emerge in its wake.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that eco-trauma and collective grief are not secondary motifs but core thematic concerns in *The Ministry for the Future*. Drawing on Glenn Albrecht's concept of eco-trauma, Rob Nixon's theory of slow violence, and Cheryll Glotfelty's ecocritical framework, it has shown how Robinson dramatises the psychological dimensions of climate breakdown through his two principal characters. Frank's immediate, embodied trauma and Mary's prolonged, systemic grief together offer a comprehensive representation of the climate crisis as both an environmental and psychic condition.

In doing so, this reading also addresses a limitation in existing scholarship, which has tended to emphasise the novel's political strategies and philosophical arguments while giving less attention to its psychological register. Attending to eco-trauma is therefore not simply an

addition to these interpretations; it is essential for a more complete understanding of the novel's scope and significance.

As the climate crisis intensifies, literature increasingly functions as a space in which collective grief can be articulated, processed, and transformed into imaginative resources for the future. *The Ministry for the Future* stands as a significant contribution to this cultural and emotional work. It invites readers not only to analyse systems of power and policy, but also to confront the affective realities of ecological collapse.

The novel's opening heatwave operates simultaneously as a literal climatic disaster and as a symbolic threshold. It marks the moment when long-accumulated slow violence becomes immediate and unavoidable. It is also the moment in which eco-trauma is initiated. Yet, paradoxically, it is from this point of rupture that the novel's horizon of possibility begins to emerge, rooted in survival, and in a persistent refusal to accept that the present conditions define the limits of the future.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who supported and guided me throughout the completion of this research paper titled From Heatwave to Heartache: Eco-Trauma and Collective Grief in Kim Stanley Robinson's The Ministry for the Future.

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The Impact of Globalization and Westernization on English Literature Shaping Contemporary Literary Trends

Sagare Geetabai Dilip

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Research Scholar
Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science,
Saswad, Pune
Email- geetasagare70@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sagare Geetabai Dilip
Research Scholar
Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science,
Saswad, Pune
Email- geetasagare70@gmail.com

Abstract:

This paper investigates into the impact of globalization and Westernization on English literature, analysing how these cultural and societal shifts are shaping contemporary literary trends. The study highlights key developments such as the emergence of the 6-word novel, hypertext literature, flash fiction, and micro fiction. These trends challenge traditional notions of narrative structure and form, offering new ways to engage readers in an increasingly digital and globalized world. By exploring the intersection of technology, globalization, and literature, this paper aims to provide insights into the future of English literature and its evolving role in reflecting and shaping global cultural identities.

Keywords: *shifts , Technological advancements , Contemporary , teaching methodologies, Literary expression, Education, Cultural identity, Socio-cultural discourse, Westernization, Novels, Hypertext Literature, Flash Fiction*

Introduction *English literature in India, Indian Writing in English (IWE) , Evolution, Historical contexts , Pedagogical*

The 20th century witnessed seminal shifts across various domains, including literature, as life itself underwent redefinition. The interplay between life, literature, thought, and language has been pivotal in shaping the trajectory of Indian English literature (IEL). From the early pioneers like Rabindranath Tagore to contemporary voices like Chetan Bhagat, the journey of IEL has been multifaceted, reflecting the sociocultural tapestry of India. This paper seeks to analyze the current state of English studies in India, exploring its historical evolution, recent pedagogical trends, technological innovations, and the transformative role of literature in shaping cultural identity and national discourse.

Globalization and Westernization are two distinct yet intertwined processes that have significantly influenced contemporary society, culture, and literature. Globalization refers to the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of countries through the exchange of goods, services, ideas, and cultural practices (Held et al., 1999). It is driven by advances in technology, communication, and transportation, leading to a more integrated global economy. The process of Westernization, on the other hand, involves the spread of Western cultural values, practices, and ideologies to other parts of the world, often as a result of colonialism, trade, or the dominance of Western media (Miyoshi, 1993). While globalization affects various facets of society, Westernization primarily focuses on the cultural shift toward Western norms, including language, political systems, and lifestyle choices.

The impact of globalization and Westernization on literature cannot be understated. Literature is not merely a reflection of societal changes but a medium through which cultures express their evolving identities. As global forces shape the cultural landscape, writers engage with these dynamics, adopting new styles, themes, and forms that reflect the complexities of a globalized world (Said, 1993). English literature, with its historical ties to colonialism and its widespread use as a global lingua franca, provides a unique lens through which to examine these trends.

Studying the intersection of culture and literature is crucial for understanding the ways in which literature mirrors, critiques, and shapes cultural identities and ideologies. Literature not only reflects cultural realities but also plays a role in shaping perceptions, influencing social norms, and challenging hegemonic structures (Eagleton, 2000). The relationship between culture and literature becomes particularly important in the context of globalization and Westernization because these forces often lead to the reconfiguration of cultural values, both within Western societies and in postcolonial regions.

In an increasingly globalized world, literature serves as a means for authors to navigate and comment on the tension between local cultural traditions and the encroachment of global or Western norms. The study of emerging trends in English literature, particularly those that have been influenced by these global forces, offers insight into how literature is evolving in response to technological advancements, shifting geopolitical power, and changing societal attitudes. By examining how writers adapt to or resist globalization and Westernization, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the broader cultural shifts occurring across the globe.

This study aims to explore the impact of globalization and Westernization on English literature, specifically focusing on emerging literary trends that have gained prominence in recent years. These trends, including the 6-word novel, hypertext literature, flash fiction, and micro fiction, reflect the changing demands of a global audience and the increasingly digital nature of literary consumption. By analysing these trends, this study seeks to identify how they challenge traditional literary forms and the conventions of storytelling, while also examining the underlying cultural forces that drive these changes.

The scope of this study encompasses an examination of both the thematic and formal innovations in English literature brought about by globalization and Westernization. The paper will explore how these emerging trends interact with cultural, technological, and economic shifts and what they reveal about the future direction of literary production. The study will be framed within the context of broader cultural and literary theories, including postcolonialism, cultural studies, and media studies, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the evolving landscape of English literature in a globalized world.

2. The Influence of Globalization on Literature

Cultural Interaction and Hybridization

Globalization has led to an unprecedented level of cultural exchange and interaction, fostering the blending and hybridization of cultural forms. In the realm of literature, this process has resulted in the emergence of hybrid genres and narrative techniques that reflect the multiplicity of influences from different cultural and linguistic traditions. This phenomenon is particularly evident in postcolonial literature, where writers engage with both Western and indigenous storytelling traditions to create new forms of expression that challenge colonial legacies (Bhaba, 1994).

Writers like Salman Rushdie and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie exemplify how globalization has facilitated the mixing of Western literary traditions with local cultural elements. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), for example, fuses elements of magical realism, a Latin American tradition, with Indian historical and cultural contexts, creating a novel that transcends national and cultural boundaries. This type of literary hybridization reflects the impact of globalization in that it blends diverse cultural narratives to form a new literary voice that speaks to both local and global audiences (Gikandi, 2003).

Hybridization in literature is not just about combining genres or traditions but also about the reworking of identity. Writers now have the freedom to negotiate multiple cultural identities, something that was once restricted by nationalistic or colonial boundaries (Appiah, 2006). Thus, globalization has provided an opportunity for writers to express more complex, pluralistic identities through their works.

The Rise of Global Storytelling

Globalization has also contributed to the rise of global storytelling, wherein writers seek to address universal themes that resonate with diverse audiences across the world. The spread of digital technology and the proliferation of social media platforms have enabled writers to reach a global readership, breaking traditional barriers of space, language, and publishing infrastructure. In this globalized literary landscape, storytelling often transcends national boundaries and engages with transnational concerns such as migration, environmental issues, and social justice (Lowe, 2007).

One example of global storytelling is the genre of dystopian fiction, which often reflects fears and anxieties related to the global challenges of climate change, technological advancement, and social inequality. Novels like Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* (2009) are global in scope, exploring the intersections of political power, personal identity, and societal transformation. These works address issues that are of concern to audiences worldwide, highlighting how global storytelling reflects shared human experiences that cross cultural and national divides (Sontag, 2003).

Moreover, the globalization of storytelling has been facilitated by translation and the increasing availability of literature in multiple languages. Translated works such as those of Gabriel García Márquez or Orhan Pamuk are able to reach international audiences, allowing for cross-cultural exchanges and the creation of a more inclusive global literary canon (Damrosch, 2003). As the world becomes more interconnected, literature is no longer bound by regional or national limitations but instead can engage with broader, more universal concerns.

Language Evolution

Language plays a crucial role in literature, and globalization has brought about significant shifts in the evolution of language, particularly in terms of linguistic diversity and the incorporation of non-native languages in literary production. As English has become a global lingua franca, many writers from non-English-speaking backgrounds are using it as a medium of expression while also incorporating elements of their native languages, dialects, and cultural idioms. This evolution in language usage reflects the influence of globalization on literary production, where the blending of languages leads to the creation of new hybrid forms and the decolonization of literary language (Ngugi, 1986).

One example of this linguistic hybridization is the use of "Spanglish" in the works of writers like Junot Díaz. In his novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), Díaz weaves together English with Spanish, reflecting the bilingual reality of many diasporic communities. The use of multiple languages within a single text speaks to the ways in which globalization fosters linguistic fluidity and the blending of linguistic traditions, creating a more diverse and dynamic literary landscape.

Additionally, globalization has contributed to the democratization of language in literature. Non-native English speakers, once excluded from the literary canon, now find opportunities to write and publish in English while

preserving their native linguistic identity. This shift has led to the creation of what is sometimes referred to as "world literature," where writers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds contribute to a more inclusive literary tradition (Casanova, 2004).

While the dominance of English in global literature is often criticized for marginalizing other languages, it also presents an opportunity for linguistic experimentation and for writers to redefine language as a vehicle for global communication. Writers like Arundhati Roy, who uses English to portray Indian society in her novel *The God of Small Things* (1997), demonstrate how language can evolve to reflect the specific cultural realities of the writer's homeland while still engaging with global themes and concerns.

3. Westernization's Impact on Literary Form and Content

The process of Westernization has had a profound impact on literature worldwide, particularly through the introduction of Western literary techniques and thematic concerns. Western literary forms, such as the novel, short story, and drama, have become dominant modes of literary production across the globe. The influence of Western traditions of narrative structure, character development, and genre conventions has shaped the way stories are told and understood in various cultural contexts (Greenblatt, 2000). In particular, the novel, which emerged in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, has become a global form, with writers from diverse cultural backgrounds adopting and adapting its conventions.

For example, the realist novel, which focuses on the depiction of everyday life and the psychological development of characters, was popularized in Western literature by authors such as Leo Tolstoy and Charles Dickens. As Westernization spread, these techniques were adopted by writers in colonized nations, who used them to address the social, political, and cultural challenges of their time. In Latin American literature, authors like Gabriel García Márquez employed Western literary techniques while incorporating local myths and traditions, exemplifying the hybridization of Western forms with indigenous content (González Echevarría, 1990).

Furthermore, Western themes such as individualism, freedom, and personal identity have been integrated into literature from postcolonial contexts. The notion of the "self" as central to the narrative, which was developed in Western literature, has been increasingly incorporated into the works of authors from diverse backgrounds. This shift often reflects a desire to engage with Western concepts of modernity and self-determination, while also responding to the pressures of globalization and Western dominance (Said, 1993). In this way, Western literary traditions have been instrumental in shaping the thematic concerns of literature worldwide, even as writers critique and subvert these traditions in their works.

Postcolonial Literature

In postcolonial literature, the impact of Westernization is particularly evident in the shifting narratives that reflect the tensions between colonial history and the emergence of new national identities. Writers from postcolonial nations often grapple with the legacies of colonialism and the imposition of Western cultural norms, using literature as a means to reclaim and redefine their identities. These authors not only adopt and adapt Western literary forms but also subvert and critique them, reflecting the contradictions and complexities of postcolonial experience.

One of the most notable features of postcolonial literature is the use of narrative techniques that challenge traditional Western notions of linear storytelling, character development, and plot structure. Writers like Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in *Petals of Blood* (1977) employ narrative techniques that blend oral traditions with Western literary forms, creating a hybridized narrative style that reflects both indigenous and colonial influences. These works often centre on the experiences of marginalized or colonized peoples, offering alternative perspectives to the dominant Western narrative (Spivak, 1988).

Moreover, postcolonial writers frequently explore themes such as cultural displacement, the struggle for autonomy, and the complexity of identity in a postcolonial world. In works like *Midnight's Children* (1981) by Salman Rushdie, the narrative is often fragmented and nonlinear, reflecting the fractured nature of postcolonial identities. Rushdie blends historical events with magical realism, a technique often associated with Latin American literature, to address the complexities of India's independence and the effects of British colonial rule (Rushdie, 1981). In this way, postcolonial literature not only critiques Western imperialism but also reshapes the Western narrative to reflect the lived realities of colonized peoples.

Non-Western Literary Traditions

The influence of Westernization on non-Western literary traditions has been both transformative and problematic. On the one hand, the adoption of Western literary forms and techniques has facilitated the integration of non-Western literature into the global literary canon. Writers from formerly colonized nations have been able to access wider audiences through the use of Western forms such as the novel, short story, and drama, which are often more familiar to international readers (Casanova, 2004). This has allowed for greater visibility and recognition of non-Western literary voices in the global literary marketplace.

However, the Westernization of literature has also led to the marginalization and erosion of indigenous literary traditions. Many non-Western cultures have rich oral storytelling traditions, which are often overlooked or undervalued in favor of Western written forms. The dominance of Western literature has contributed to the decline of oral storytelling practices, as writers increasingly adopt written forms that reflect Western literary conventions (Ngugi, 1986). This shift has raised questions about the preservation of cultural heritage and the extent to which Western literary forms can accurately represent the complexities of non-Western societies.

For example, the influence of Westernization on African literature has led to the marginalization of indigenous languages and storytelling practices. In many African countries, writers have been encouraged to write in European

languages such as English or French, rather than in their native tongues, which has resulted in a loss of linguistic diversity in African literature (Achebe, 1990). While this has allowed African writers to reach a global audience, it has also raised concerns about the cultural authenticity of these works and the impact of Westernization on the preservation of indigenous literary traditions.

4. Emerging Literary Trends *6-Word Novels*

The concept of the six-word novel, made famous by Ernest Hemingway's purported six-word story, "For Sale: Baby Shoes, Never Worn," has captured the imagination of writers and readers alike due to its brevity and the challenge it presents to narrative form. While it is uncertain whether Hemingway is the originator of the sixword story, its impact on contemporary literature is undeniable. The six-word novel is characterized by extreme brevity, where an entire narrative is encapsulated in just six words. This trend has gained popularity as readers and writers explore the possibilities of condensing complex emotions, stories, and experiences into an incredibly limited space (Kern, 2007).

The six-word novel often relies on ambiguity and suggestive language, requiring the reader to fill in the gaps, thereby engaging their imagination and emotional intuition. These characteristic challenges conventional notions of plot and character development, offering a minimalist approach to storytelling. Its impact can be seen in the broader movement toward micro fiction, where brevity and conciseness are valued over extensive narrative arcs. Writers, such as Larry Smith, who founded the Six-Word Memoirs project, have used this form to engage communities, promote creativity, and reflect on the human condition in a few succinct words (Smith, 2008). The six-word novel's impact is a reflection of the growing trend toward quick, digestible content in today's fast-paced, media-driven world.

Hypertext Literature

Hypertext literature is a genre that emerged with the rise of digital technology, particularly the internet, and it marks a significant departure from traditional linear narrative forms. Hypertext refers to text that is interconnected through links, enabling the reader to navigate between different sections or even alternative stories within the same work. This allows for a non-linear reading experience where readers can create their own paths through the text, making the experience more interactive and personalized (Landow, 1997).

The structure of hypertext literature differs from traditional novels or short stories in that it allows for multiple potential outcomes, storylines, and interpretations. The text is often fragmented and multi-dimensional, with various nodes and links offering different perspectives or elements of the story. This allows for a more fluid, fragmented narrative that can engage readers in ways that traditional linear texts do not. Notable works of hypertext fiction, such as *Afternoon* by Michael Joyce (1990), explore themes of memory, time, and choice in a digital space, illustrating how technology can fundamentally alter narrative conventions.

The role of technology in hypertext literature cannot be overstated. Digital platforms provide the infrastructure for hypertextual works, which use hyperlinks, multimedia, and interactive features to engage the reader. This interaction is central to the experience of hypertext literature and can involve non-textual elements like images, sound, or video (Bolter, 2001). Hypertext literature reflects the growing trend of digital media that prioritizes interactivity, non-linearity, and user-generated content, positioning it at the intersection of technology, literature, and digital culture.

Flash Fiction

Flash fiction, typically defined as stories under 1,000 words, has gained significant popularity in recent years due to its accessibility and alignment with modern readers' desires for brevity and immediacy. Flash fiction distils the essence of a story, often focusing on a single, pivotal moment or an epiphany that encapsulates the broader emotional or psychological experiences of the characters. This form of storytelling tends to be highly concentrated, using sparse language to convey meaning and evoke a strong emotional response in a short space (Lynch, 2007).

The rise of flash fiction can be seen as a response to the fast-paced nature of modern life, where people are constantly bombarded with information and have less time for long, drawn-out narratives. Flash fiction fits into the modern world by providing a quick but potent literary experience that reflects the way contemporary readers consume media: quickly, in small, digestible pieces. Its popularity has grown alongside the rise of short-form content on platforms like Twitter, where brevity is key, and apps like Instagram, which encourage concise, visual storytelling (Baker, 2012). Flash fiction offers writers a chance to explore themes of modern existence, loneliness, and transience in a form that mirrors the fleeting nature of contemporary life.

Micro fiction

Micro fiction, even shorter than flash fiction, typically refers to stories under 300 words. This extreme brevity challenges writers to distil a narrative to its purest form, focusing on economy of language and the precision of every word. Micro fiction often leaves much to the reader's imagination, presenting a story in such a condensed manner that the narrative itself is more suggestion than explicit description. This genre plays with the boundaries of what constitutes a "story," often offering a brief, powerful moment or snapshot of life that can provoke deep reflection (Malamud, 2015).

The cultural significance of micro fiction lies in its ability to capture the essence of contemporary life in a world that is increasingly dominated by quick, momentary experiences. In an age of constant digital connectivity, where attention spans are shorter and content is consumed rapidly, micro fiction speaks to the need for brevity while still conveying deep meaning. It engages with the broader cultural shifts toward immediacy and accessibility, providing readers with a moment of reflection that does not require a significant time investment (Bissett, 2010). Additionally, the format allows for experimentation with narrative structure, offering writers the freedom to craft stories that transcend traditional notions of plot and character development.

5. Globalization, Technology, Role of Internet and the Future of English Literature

Digital media and social platforms have dramatically transformed the landscape of literature, offering new avenues for both the creation and consumption of literary works. With the rise of platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Wattpad, writers can now reach vast audiences without the need for traditional publishing routes, enabling a more direct connection between creators and their readers (Cohen, 2013). Social media, in particular, has allowed for the democratization of literary production, where writers from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations can share their work with the world, bypassing the gatekeeping mechanisms of traditional publishers (Harris, 2017).

One notable impact of digital media on literature is the emergence of serialized storytelling, where writers publish their works in small instalments over time. This format is particularly prevalent on platforms like Wattpad, where stories are often written interactively, with readers providing feedback and influencing the direction of the narrative (Fitzpatrick, 2013). The immediacy of digital publishing allows authors to test ideas, gauge audience reactions, and make changes in real-time, something that was not possible in traditional publishing formats. Additionally, the ease of self-publishing has led to the proliferation of e-books and digital novels, challenging the traditional publishing model that often Favors established authors and well-known genres (Harris, 2017).

Moreover, digital platforms have expanded the genres and forms of literature available to readers. Genres like fan fiction, which once existed on the fringes of literary culture, have found a mainstream audience through platforms like Archive of Our Own (AO3) and Wattpad (Hellekson & Busse, 2006). Digital media has also facilitated the growth of "hypertext fiction," where the reader's choices influence the narrative path, creating an interactive and non-linear storytelling experience (Landow, 1997). As literature evolves with technology, these platforms also serve as incubators for experimental forms, challenging traditional notions of narrative structure and content.

The Potential of New Forms

New forms of literature made possible by digital technology have the potential to disrupt the traditional publishing industry, fundamentally altering how books are created, distributed, and consumed. The rise of ebooks and online self-publishing platforms has already had a significant impact on the traditional model, where a book's success often depended on securing a deal with a major publishing house. Now, authors can publish their work independently through platforms like Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), allowing them to bypass the lengthy and sometimes exclusionary processes of traditional publishing (Lloyd, 2013).

Self-publishing has democratized access to literature, enabling a broader range of voices, particularly those from marginalized or underrepresented groups, to reach audiences. This shift is particularly notable in the realm of genre fiction, where independent authors have found success in niches that were previously ignored by traditional publishers (Harris, 2017). The direct relationship between author and reader allows for more personalized, niche content to thrive, as readers can easily discover new works without relying on the gatekeeping mechanisms of publishing houses (Hellekson & Busse, 2006).

Additionally, digital platforms have opened the door for new types of literary formats, such as interactive and multimedia works. The potential of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in literature could further challenge traditional publishing by blending text with images, sound, and even movement, creating immersive experiences that were not possible with traditional print formats (Kücklich, 2005). These innovations present opportunities for authors to explore non-linear storytelling and new ways of engaging with readers, providing new forms of creative expression.

The Role of Global Readers

The global nature of digital platforms has empowered readers from around the world to influence literary trends and tastes. The interconnectedness of readers via online communities allows for a greater diversity of voices in the literary conversation, as readers from different cultures, backgrounds, and languages can now share their recommendations and critiques instantaneously. Online platforms like Goodreads and book blogs enable readers to collectively shape what becomes popular by posting reviews, creating discussions, and sharing recommendations (Lambert, 2018). This has led to a more globalized literary marketplace where what is considered "popular" or "important" literature is no longer dictated by a few powerful publishing houses or literary critics in the West.

In addition, the increasing prevalence of translation services has helped to bridge linguistic and cultural divides, allowing authors to reach readers across the globe, regardless of language barriers. Works by authors from nonWestern countries are more likely to be translated and read by global audiences, which in turn broadens the scope of what is considered mainstream literature (Casanova, 2004). As a result, literary tastes are becoming more diverse, and genres that were once considered niche or regional are gaining recognition on the global stage.

Moreover, the role of global readers in shaping literary tastes is increasingly visible through the rise of viral literary phenomena. Social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram have helped propel books to international fame through reader-generated content such as hashtags and book recommendations, creating an organic, grassroots method for books to gain traction (Zink, 2019). These trends demonstrate how readers now play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of literary culture, as they can elevate authors and works that may have otherwise been overlooked by traditional publishing.

6.Challenges and Opportunities

While the study of English literature in India presents numerous opportunities for intellectual exploration and cultural enrichment, it also faces several challenges. These include issues of linguistic diversity, access to quality

education, and the need to decolonize the curriculum. Addressing these challenges requires innovative pedagogical approaches, equitable distribution of resources, and a commitment to fostering inclusivity and diversity within the field.

7. Conclusion

This paper explored the profound influence of globalization and technological advancements on contemporary English literature. Several key trends have emerged as a result of these forces, shaping both the form and content of literary works in significant ways. First, globalization has fostered cultural exchange and hybridization in literature, allowing authors to blend Western and indigenous literary traditions. This is seen in the works of writers like Salman Rushdie and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who navigate multiple cultural identities and incorporate both global and local themes in their narratives. Additionally, globalization has led to the rise of global storytelling, with authors increasingly addressing universal concerns such as migration, identity, and environmental issues, while expanding the global reach of literature through translation and digital platforms. Technological advances, particularly the rise of digital media and social platforms, have revolutionized the way literature is created, consumed, and shared. The rise of e-books, self-publishing, and platforms like Wattpad have democratized access to literature, allowing new voices to be heard and challenging traditional publishing models. Moreover, these technologies have given rise to new literary forms, such as hypertext literature, flash fiction, and micro fiction, which reflect the fast-paced, fragmented nature of contemporary society. Digital platforms have also enabled readers to play an active role in shaping literary trends, as online communities influence the popularity of certain genres and authors. Westernization, on the other hand, has had a dual effect on literary traditions. While Western literary techniques and themes have been adopted by authors in postcolonial contexts, there has also been a subversion and critique of these forms, particularly in postcolonial literature. The shifting narratives in works by authors such as Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o reflect the tensions between colonial legacies and the emergence of new cultural identities, showcasing how Westernization is both embraced and resisted in modern literature. Finally, emerging literary trends such as the six-word novel, hypertext literature, flash fiction, and micro fiction highlight a broader shift toward brevity, interactivity, and engagement with digital culture. These forms not only challenge traditional notions of storytelling but also reflect the changing nature of how audiences consume and relate to literature in a digital, globalized world. Hence, the future of English literature appears to be shaped by the dynamic interplay of globalization, technology, and the changing preferences of readers. As digital media continues to evolve and global interconnectedness deepens, literature will undoubtedly continue to adapt, offering new forms and narratives that reflect the complexities of our interconnected world.

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Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool: A study of the Panchatantra in Modern Education

Rajendra Hanumant Sargar

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Ph.D. Research Scholar
Savitribai Phule Pune University
Pune District Education Association's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce & Science, Saswad
Email: rajsargar890@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Rajendra Hanumant Sargar
Ph.D. Research Scholar
Savitribai Phule Pune University
Pune District Education Association's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce & Science, Saswad
Email: rajsargar890@gmail.com

Abstract

Storytelling has historically functioned as a fundamental pedological tool across cultures, enabling the transmission of knowledge, ethics and social values through engaging narrative forms. The Panchatantra an ancient Indian Collection of interrelated animal fables traditionally attributed to Vishnusharma, represents one of the earliest systematic uses of storytelling for educational purposes. This paper investigates the pedagogical relevance of the Panchatantra in contemporary educational contexts, particularly within value based and holistic learning framework. Employing qualitative textual analysis and theoretical insights from narrative pedagogy, the study examines how the structural, thematic and ethical dimensions of the Panchatantra aligned with modern teaching methodologies. It further explores its applicability in present day curricula such as CBSE, where moral education and experiential learning are emphasized. Drawing upon the works of scholars such as Jerome Bruner (1915-2016) emphasized that learning is an active process and that narrative is central to human thinking and Kieran Egan (1942-2022) developed the theory of Imaginative Education focusing on the role of imagination and storytelling in learning the paper argues that storytelling enhances cognitive engagement, emotional intelligence and ethical reasoning. The findings demonstrate that integrating classical narrative literature into modern pedagogy can significantly enrich the learning experience and foster holistic development. The study concludes that the Panchatantra remains a vital educational resource, bridging traditional wisdom with contemporary pedological needs.

Keywords: *Panchatantra, Storytelling, Pedagogy, Moral Education, Narrative learning Value Based education.*

Introduction

Education in its broadest sense, is not merely the transmission of information but the cultivation of wisdom, ethical awareness and critical thinking. Among the various pedagogical methods employed throughout history, storytelling stands out as one of the most enduring and effective. Narratives possess the unique ability to engage both the intellect and emotions, making learning more meaningful and memorable.

The Panchatantra occupies a central position in the Indian narrative tradition as a text specifically designed for a didactic purpose. Composed in Sanskrit and widely translated across cultures, it has influenced storytelling traditions globally. Unlike purely theoretical treatises, the Panchatantra adopts a pragmatic approach to education, presenting life lessons through engaging stories populated by anthropomorphic animals.

In modern educational systems, particularly within frameworks such as CBSE, there is a growing emphasis on value based education and holistic development. However traditional methods of teaching often fail to engage students effectively or address their emotional and ethical development. In this context, storytelling emerges as a powerful pedagogical alternative. This paper explores the relevance of the Panchatantra as a pedagogical tool in contemporary education. It seeks to demonstrate how its narrative techniques and ethical insights can be integrated into modern classroom to enhance learning outcomes. The Panchatantra has been widely studied as a foundational text of didactic literature. Patrick Olivelle highlights its pragmatic ethical framework, emphasizing situational wisdom over rigid moral codes (Olivelle 23).This flexibility aligns with contemporary pedagogical approaches that prioritize critical thinking.

Modern educational research strongly supports storytelling as an effective teaching strategy.Jerome Bruner Argues that narrative is central to human cognition and meaning making (Bruner 11). Similarly Kieran Egan emphasizes that storytelling enhances imagination and emotional engagement, which are crucial for deep learning (Egan 45).

Recent studies (2020-2026) further strengthen this argument. A 2025 systematic review on storytelling pedagogy found that narrative-based teaching significantly improves student engagement , motivation and retention, while also promoting higher order thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation. Likewise , research on digital storytelling demonstrates that it enhances communication skills, collaboration and emotional engagement making it highly relevant for 21st century education.A 2026 classroom based study shows that storytelling fasters multimodal literacy , cultural identity and collaborative learning particularly in diverse educational contexts.

Additionally improves language skills, creative writing and verbal expression, making it an effective tool for literacy development. Furthermore, contemporary pedagogical research highlights the role of interactive and collaborative storytelling in enhancing memory retention and conceptual understanding. Storytelling provides a cognitive scaffold that connects imagination with knowledge, thereby improving meaningful learning outcomes.

Despite these advancements, there remains limited research they directly integrates classical Indian narrative traditions like the Panchatantra with modern pedagogical frameworks. This study addresses this gap by bridging traditional storytelling with contemporary educational theory.

Objectives of the study

- To scrutinize the pedagogical features of the Panchatantra
- To study its contribution to moral and ethical education.
- To explore its applicability in modern classroom settings.
- To measure its effectiveness in enhancing students' engagement and learning outcomes.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology based on textual analysis and theoretical interpretation. Selected stories from Panchatantra are examined to identify narrative strategies, ethical themes and pedological elements.

The study also employs a comparative approach, juxtaposing traditional storytelling methods with contemporary educational practices. Secondary sources, including scholarly books and journal articles are used to support the analysis.

Analysis and Discussion

Narrative Structure and Pedagogical Design

The Panchatantra employs a sophisticated narrative structure characterized by frame stories and embedded tales. This layered approach not only sustains interest but also reinforce learning through repetition and variation. Each story serves as both an independent narrative and part of a larger thematic framework.

At the core of its structure is the frame narrative where a learner teacher, Vishnu Sharma instructs ignorant princess through a series of interconnected animal fables. This layered storytelling technique allows multiple lessons to emerge simultaneously.

For example, in the story of *"The Lion and the Bull"* The narrative demonstrates how manipulation leads to conflict:

"The Jackal whispered lies into the lion's ear."

This short sentence highlights how deceit can story friendship can polite alliances.

Similarly, the text frequently uses stories within stories, creating a rescue teaching model. *"The monkey and the crocodile"* The monkey cleverly escapes danger:

" *My heart is on the tree," said the monkey.*

This line reflects white appearance of mind, emphasizing intellectual survival over physical strength.

From a pedagogical perspective, this structure aligns with modern theories of scaffolded learning, where knowledge is built progressively through interconnected concepts.

Allegory and symbolism

Allegory in the text functions as a mirror of human society. The use of animals as characters allows the Panchatantra to convey complex human behaviors in a simplified and relatable manner. Characters are not merely animals but symbolic representations of human traits. For example in "*The Lion and the Bull"* The lion symbolizes power and authority while the Jackal represents cunning political advisors. These allegorical representations enable learners to understand abstract concepts such as trust deception and wisdom without direct moral instruction.

" *The Jackal sowed seeds of doubt"*

This short lines reflects how manipulation offers in courts and leadership structures.

Similarly, Symbolism is used to convey moral truths through vivid imagery. In "*The Blue Jackal"* The Jackal died blue becomes king of the forest.

The pedagogical strength of allegory and symbolism lies in the universality. Readers from different ages and backgrounds can interpret meanings according to their understanding. The lyric meanings encourage critical thinking and moral reflection rather than positive learning.

Allegory and symbolism in the Panchatantra transform simple fables into profound ethical discourses. By embedding moral lessons within symbolic narratives the text ensures that its teaching remains engaging, adaptable and timeless.

Ethical instruction and Moral Relativism

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Panchatantra is its pragmatic approach to ethics. Unlike texts Pet prescribe absolute moral values, it presents situational ethics where the appropriateness of an action depends on context.

The pedagogical significance of this approach lies in Its realism. Instead of presenting an idealized moral universe the text prepares learners for ambiguity and ethical dilemmas it teaches that:

- Right and wrong are often context dependent
- Intelligence and adaptability are key to survival
- Ethical decisions require judgment not blind rule follow

For example:

"*Act According to time and place"*

This succinctly captures the essence of moral relativism.

The Panchatantra integrates ethical instruction with moral relativism to create a dynamic framework of learning. Its teachings move beyond simplistic moral binaries offering instead a nuanced understanding of human behavior and decision making. This balance between instruction and flexibility is what makes the text enduringly relevant in both traditional and modern education context

Storytelling in Modern Classrooms

Incorporating Panchatantra stories into classroom teaching can significantly enhance student engagement. Techniques such as role playing, group discussion and storytelling sessions can make learning more interactive and participatory.

For CBSE schools, storytelling can be integrated into subjects such as English, Moral Science and Social Studies. It can also support competency-based learning, which focuses on skills rather than rote memorization.

Impact on cognitive and emotional development

Recent research confirms that storytelling engages in multiple Dimensions of learning, including cognitive, emotional and social domains. Studies indicate that storytelling creates an emotionally resonant learning environment, which enhances both engagement and retention.

Digital storytelling in particular has been shown to improve motivation, collaboration and digital literacy, making it highly adaptable to modern classrooms. These findings reinforce the relevance of traditional narrative texts like the Panchatantra, which naturally integrate Emotional engagement with ethical instruction.

Moreover, storytelling has been found to significantly improve language proficiency auditory processing and creative thinking, especially among school students. This supports the argument that integrating Panchatantra stories into CBSE classrooms can enhance both academic and moral development.

Findings

The study reveals that:

- The Panchatantra is an effective tool for value based education
- Storytelling analyses student engagement and participation
- Narrative learning supports critical thinking and ethical reasoning
- The text of Panchtantra is highly adaptable to modern educational frameworks

Conclusion

The findings established that the Panchatantra is not only a literary text but also a dynamic educational resource that continues to be relevant in modern technique learning context.

The enduring relevance of the Panchatantra lies in its ability to combine entertainment with education. As modern education system increasing recognize the importance of holistic development the integration of storytelling becomes initial essential.

The Panchatantra offers a rich source of narratives that can address contemporary educational challenges. By incorporating such text into modern pedagogy, educators can create a more engaging meaningful and value oriented learning environment.

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Caste, Culture, and Subaltern Identity in Karukku by Bama

Sneha A. Chendkapure

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Research Scholar
Department of English
Vidya Bharati Mahavidyalaya, Amravati
E-mail:
snehachendkapure000@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sneha A. Chendkapure
Research Scholar
Department of English
Vidya Bharati Mahavidyalaya, Amravati
E-mail:
snehachendkapure000@gmail.com

Abstract

In Karukku, Bama focuses on lived experience to portray how caste and culture shape subaltern identity under the pressures of marginalization. This paper indentifies Karukku as a powerful act of self-representation in which personal memory and collective history come together to articulate a distinctly subaltern voice. Rather than presenting identity as fixed, the text reveals how it is formed through everyday encounters with exclusion, labour, religion, and community life. Bama's narrative moves between pain and resistance, exposing the deep imprint of caste on cultural practices while also reclaiming dignity through storytelling.

The study utilises subaltern studies and Dalit discourse to examine how Karukku challenges dominant narratives that have historically silenced such voices. Attention is given to Bama's use of language, oral rhythms, and autobiographical form, all of which contribute to an authentic expression of experience that resists literary conventions. Her writing not only documents oppression but also questions the structures like social, cultural, and religious that sustain it. Simultaneously, the text gestures toward possibilities of self-awareness and transformation. By placing Karukku within a broader discussion of caste and culture, this paper argues that subaltern identity emerges not merely as a condition of marginality but as a site of assertion, resilience, and redefinition.

Keywords: *Caste, Subaltern Identity, Dalit Literature, Cultural Identity, Oppression, Exclusion.*

Introduction: Voice, Silence, and the Question of Identity

Dalit literature in India marks a radical departure from conventional literary traditions by foregrounding voices that have historically been silenced within dominant cultural narratives. It is not merely a literary movement but an assertion of existence, dignity, and resistance. As B.R. Ambedkar famously asserted, "freedom of mind is the real freedom," a statement that resonates deeply within Dalit writing, where articulation itself becomes an act of liberation (Ambedkar 25). Among the foundational texts of this tradition, Karukku by Bama occupies a crucial position, both for its thematic intensity and its innovative narrative form. Written as an autobiographical account, the text traverses the intersections of caste, religion, gender, and culture, offering a deeply introspective yet collectively resonant articulation of subaltern identity.

The notion of the "subaltern," as developed within Subaltern Studies, refers to those populations that remain outside the circuits of hegemonic power, whose histories are either marginalised or erased. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak famously interrogates this condition in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, where she argues that "the subaltern cannot speak" in structures that deny them representation (Spivak 271). In the Indian socio-cultural context, Dalits embody one of the most structurally oppressed groups, subjected to centuries of exclusion, humiliation, and systemic violence. However, *Karukku* does not simply reiterate this marginality; rather, it interrogates the very processes through which such marginalisation is produced and sustained. Bama's narrative is thus both a testimony and a critique, an act of remembering that simultaneously resists forgetting. What distinguishes *Karukku* from many other autobiographical narratives is its refusal to conform to linearity or closure. The text unfolds through fragments, reflections, and recollections, mirroring the fractured nature of subaltern identity itself. In this sense, the narrative aligns with Antonio Gramsci's understanding of subalternity as a condition marked by discontinuity and fragmentation within hegemonic structures (Gramsci 52). Identity here is not a stable or unified category but a site of constant negotiation, shaped by experiences of exclusion, moments of resistance, and the search for selfhood within oppressive structures. Bama's writing destabilises the binaries of centre and margin, voice and silence, thereby challenging the epistemological frameworks that have historically defined literature and identity. Bama's own articulation within *Karukku* foregrounds the urgency of voice as resistance. She writes, "I wanted to shout out these stories," signalling the necessity of narrating suppressed experiences as a means of reclaiming agency (Bama 9). This impulse transforms the text into more than an autobiography; it becomes a collective archive of pain, resilience, and assertion. The fragmented structure of the narrative is not a limitation but a deliberate strategy that reflects the lived realities of subaltern existence.

This paper portrays how *Karukku* constructs subaltern identity through the interrelated dynamics of caste, culture, language, and resistance. By situating the text within the theoretical frameworks of Subaltern Studies and Dalit discourse, the study highlights the ways in which Bama's narrative transcends individual experience to become a collective articulation of marginalised existence. At the same time, it emphasises the transformative potential of storytelling as a means of reclaiming agency and redefining identity. As Frantz Fanon observes, "to speak is to exist absolutely for the other," underscoring how voice itself becomes central to the formation of identity within oppressed communities (Fanon 17).

Caste as Structure, Experience, and Internalised Reality

In Karukku, caste is not presented as an abstract social category or a distant historical phenomenon; rather, it emerges as an all-encompassing structure that permeates every aspect of life. Bama's narrative demonstrates how caste operates simultaneously at the structural, social, and psychological levels, shaping not only external interactions but also internal consciousness. As Louis Dumont argues in *Homo Hierarchicus*, caste is sustained through a system of values that naturalises hierarchy, making inequality appear legitimate (Dumont 66). *Karukku* vividly illustrates this process, revealing the insidious ways in which caste becomes embedded within everyday practices and perceptions.

From early childhood, the narrator becomes aware of the rigid hierarchies that define her social world. Incidents that might appear trivial on the surface—such as the manner in which food is handled or the spaces one is allowed to occupy—carry profound implications. Bama recalls a striking moment when a Dalit man carries food packets "holding them by the string, without touching them," an image that exposes the deep-seated logic of purity and pollution governing social relations (Bama 15). These moments reveal how caste discrimination operates through ordinary gestures, where even the most mundane actions are regulated by invisible codes of hierarchy. The repetition of such experiences gradually instils a sense of inferiority, demonstrating how structural oppression translates into psychological conditioning.

At the same time, Bama's narrative resists reducing caste to a purely external force. It also examines how caste is internalised by both oppressors and the oppressed, becoming a part of their worldview. This insight resonates with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "habitus," which explains how social structures are internalised and reproduced through everyday practices (Bourdieu 72). In *Karukku*, individuals often unconsciously accept caste norms, even when they are aware of their injustice. This internalisation complicates the possibility of resistance, as individuals find themselves negotiating between awareness and acceptance. The tension between these states becomes a defining feature of subaltern consciousness, reflecting what Antonio Gramsci describes as the struggle between "common sense" and critical awareness (Gramsci 333).

Labour occupies a central position in this exploration of caste. In the text, labour is not merely a means of survival but a marker of identity, assigned and regulated by caste hierarchies. Dalit bodies are associated with forms of work that are stigmatised and devalued, reinforcing their marginal status. As B.R. Ambedkar observes, caste is not just a division of labour but "a division of labourers," where social worth is predetermined by birth (Ambedkar 47). *Karukku* brings this insight to life by depicting how Dalits are confined to specific occupations, their labour simultaneously essential and despised. This paradox highlights the exploitative nature of caste, where dependence coexists with systematic exclusion.

The critique of religion in *Karukku* further deepens the analysis of caste. Bama's experiences within Christian institutions expose the persistence of caste divisions even in spaces that claim to uphold equality and compassion. She notes with disillusionment that discrimination continues even among those who preach spiritual equality, revealing the contradictions within religious practice (Bama 102). This critique aligns with Gopal Guru's argument that caste adapts itself to modern institutions, including religion, thereby sustaining its dominance in new forms (Guru 36). The Church, instead of dismantling social hierarchies, often reproduces them, exposing the limitations of institutional reform.

Through these layered representations, *Karukku* presents caste as a pervasive and multifaceted reality that extends into every dimension of existence. It is not confined to specific domains but shapes identities, relationships, and consciousness in profound ways. At the same time, the text invites readers to question the inevitability of these structures, opening up possibilities for critique and transformation. By foregrounding lived experience alongside theoretical insight, Bama's narrative becomes a powerful site for understanding how caste operates—and how it might be challenged.

Culture, Language, and the Reclaiming of Subaltern Expression

While Karukku positions caste as its structural backdrop, culture emerges as a dynamic and contested space where identity is both constrained and reimagined. Bama's narrative foregrounds the cultural practices of Dalit communities, presenting them not as vestiges of marginality but as vital expressions of collective identity and resilience. In doing so, the text challenges dominant representations that have historically dismissed subaltern cultures as inferior or lacking refinement. As Stuart Hall observes, culture is not a fixed entity but "a site of ongoing struggle," where meanings are constantly produced and contested (Hall 223). *Karukku* exemplifies this process by reclaiming Dalit cultural practices as sources of dignity rather than stigma.

The depiction of festivals, rituals, and everyday interactions in *Karukku* reveals a rich and vibrant cultural life that persists despite systemic oppression. Bama describes moments of communal celebration and shared labour that foster a sense of belonging, suggesting that culture functions as a means of survival as well as resistance (Bama 43). These cultural forms serve as reservoirs of collective memory, enabling communities to sustain continuity in the face of historical marginalisation. However, Bama does not romanticise this cultural sphere; she also acknowledges

that caste hierarchies often infiltrate these practices, reproducing forms of exclusion within the community itself. This duality underscores the complexity of culture as both a site of oppression and a resource for resistance, aligning with Raymond Williams's understanding of culture as "a whole way of life" shaped by material and social conditions (Williams 57).

Language plays a central role in this process of cultural reclamation. Bama's use of colloquial Tamil, infused with oral rhythms, dialects, and local idioms, represents a deliberate departure from the conventions of standardised literary language. This linguistic choice is not merely stylistic but deeply political. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues, language is a carrier of culture, and to write in one's native tongue is to resist cultural domination and reclaim identity (Ngũgĩ 13). In *Karukku*, Bama's language asserts the legitimacy of subaltern speech, challenging the hegemony of elite linguistic forms that have historically excluded marginalised voices.

The oral quality of *Karukku* further enhances its subversive potential. The narrative unfolds through a series of reflections that resemble spoken testimony, creating an immediacy that draws the reader into the lived realities of the narrator. Bama herself emphasises this mode of expression, noting that her intention was to narrate experiences "as they are spoken in everyday life" (Bama 7). This oral dimension disrupts the expectations of linear, polished narratives typically associated with canonical literature. Instead, it foregrounds fragmentation, repetition, and emotional intensity as valid modes of storytelling, reflecting the discontinuities of subaltern experience.

Autobiography, within this framework, becomes a powerful medium for articulating identity. However, *Karukku* reconfigures the genre by moving beyond the confines of individualism to embrace a collective perspective. The narrator's experiences are inseparable from those of her community, suggesting that identity is not an isolated construct but a relational phenomenon shaped by shared histories and struggles. This approach resonates with Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's assertion that life narratives often function as "collective acts of remembering," particularly within marginalised communities (Smith and Watson 19).

Through its engagement with culture and language, *Karukku* reclaims representational spaces that have long been dominated by upper-caste and elite perspectives. It demonstrates that subaltern identity is not solely defined by oppression but is also shaped by creativity, resilience, and cultural continuity. In doing so, the text expands the possibilities of literary expression, offering alternative frameworks for understanding and articulating marginalised experiences. As a result, *Karukku* not only challenges existing literary conventions but also redefines the very terms through which identity and culture are represented.

Resistance, Transformation, and the Reimagining of Identity

Despite its stark portrayal of caste-based oppression, Karukku is not a narrative confined to suffering; rather, it is deeply invested in the possibilities of resistance, transformation, and self-redefinition. Bama's journey reflects a gradual yet profound process of awakening, where lived experiences of humiliation and marginalisation evolve into critical awareness and assertion. This transformation underscores the centrality of consciousness in subaltern discourse, suggesting that resistance begins not merely in action but in the recognition of injustice.

The emergence of such critical consciousness in *Karukku* resonates with Paulo Freire's concept of "conscientization," which refers to the process by which oppressed individuals become aware of the socio-political structures that shape their condition (Freire 35). Bama's narrative reflects this movement from uncritical acceptance to active questioning, as she begins to interrogate the norms and practices that sustain caste hierarchies. This awakening is neither immediate nor linear; rather, it unfolds through a series of reflections and experiences that gradually reshape her understanding of self and society. In one instance, Bama reflects on her growing awareness of injustice, noting how certain experiences "burned within" her, compelling her to question the structures around her (Bama 68). Such moments signal the transition from passive endurance to active critique.

At the same time, *Karukku* positions writing itself as a powerful act of resistance. By narrating her experiences, Bama disrupts the silence historically imposed on subaltern communities, transforming personal memory into collective testimony. This act of articulation challenges what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak identifies as the structural conditions that prevent the subaltern from being heard within dominant discourses (Spivak 271). In giving voice to her experiences, Bama not only asserts her own subjectivity but also creates a space for other marginalised voices to emerge. Writing, in this sense, becomes an intervention that reclaims narrative authority and contests epistemic exclusion.

The dimension of resistance in *Karukku* is also deeply intertwined with the politics of identity. Bama refuses to accept the degraded identity imposed upon her by caste structures, instead reimagining identity as a site of dignity and self-worth. This redefinition aligns with Frantz Fanon's assertion that the oppressed must actively reconstruct their identity in order to overcome internalised inferiority. Fanon argues that "the colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence," not merely in the physical sense but in the symbolic rupture from imposed identities (Fanon 44). In *Karukku*, this rupture is enacted through language, reflection, and the rejection of oppressive norms.

Bama's narrative introduces a distinctly Dalit feminist perspective, foregrounding the intersection of caste and gender in shaping subaltern identity. The experiences of Dalit women in the text reveal a layered form of oppression, where marginalisation is intensified by both caste hierarchy and patriarchal structures. This intersectional dimension resonates with Sharmila Rege's argument that Dalit women's narratives challenge both mainstream feminism and dominant caste discourse by exposing the specificities of their lived realities (Rege 92). In *Karukku*, resistance is thus not only directed against caste oppression but also against gendered forms of subjugation, making it a multifaceted and inclusive struggle.

However, the text does not present resistance as a complete or definitive resolution. Instead, it acknowledges the ongoing nature of struggle, emphasising that transformation is a continuous process rather than a final outcome. The narrator's journey reflects moments of doubt, conflict, and negotiation, suggesting that identity is always in flux. This openness resists the closure often associated with conventional narratives, reinforcing the idea that subaltern identity is dynamic and evolving.

Karukku reimagines subaltern identity not as a fixed condition of marginality but as a site of assertion, resilience, and possibility. It demonstrates that while structures of oppression may shape experience, they do not fully determine identity. Through consciousness, articulation, and resistance, individuals can redefine themselves and challenge the systems that seek to confine them. In this sense, Bama's narrative transcends its immediate context, offering a broader vision of liberation grounded in self-awareness and collective struggle.

Conclusion

Karukku stands as a seminal text in Dalit literature, offering a nuanced and deeply reflective exploration of caste, culture, and subaltern identity. Through its layered narrative, Bama moves beyond mere documentation of oppression to interrogate the very structures that sustain marginalisation. The text reveals how caste operates not only as an external system of hierarchy but also as an internalised reality that shapes consciousness, relationships, and self-perception. In doing so, it foregrounds the complexity of subaltern existence, where identity is continuously negotiated within and against oppressive frameworks.

At the same time, *Karukku* reclaims culture and language as powerful sites of resistance. By foregrounding Dalit cultural practices and employing a linguistic style rooted in colloquial expression and oral traditions, Bama challenges dominant literary and cultural norms. This act of reclamation aligns with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's assertion that language is central to cultural identity and resistance, as it carries the memory and consciousness of a people (Ngũgĩ 16). The narrative thus transforms cultural expression into a form of empowerment, demonstrating that subaltern identity is not solely defined by marginality but also by creativity, continuity, and resilience.

Furthermore, the text's emphasis on consciousness and articulation underscores the transformative potential of resistance. Bama's journey reflects a movement from silence to voice, from internalised inferiority to critical awareness and assertion. This trajectory resonates with Frantz Fanon's argument that liberation involves a reconfiguration of identity, where the oppressed actively redefine themselves beyond imposed limitations (Fanon 36). Writing, in this context, becomes both a personal and political act, enabling the subaltern to claim visibility within a discourse that has historically excluded them.

Importantly, *Karukku* does not offer a simplistic or final resolution to the struggles it depicts. Instead, it acknowledges the ongoing nature of resistance and the fluidity of identity. The narrative resists closure, reflecting the unfinished project of social transformation in a caste-based society. This openness reinforces Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's insight that the subaltern's voice must be continually negotiated within structures that often seek to contain or reinterpret it (Spivak 280). Thus, the text remains a living document of struggle, one that invites continuous engagement and reinterpretation.

In conclusion, *Karukku* redefines subaltern identity as a dynamic and evolving process rather than a static condition of marginality. It reveals that identity is shaped not only by structures of oppression but also by acts of resistance, cultural expression, and self-articulation. By bridging personal narrative and collective history, Bama creates a powerful literary space where silenced voices are not only heard but also validated and reimagined. As a result, *Karukku* emerges not merely as a text of suffering but as a testament to resilience, agency, and the enduring possibility of transformation.

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Cultural Trauma and Identity Formation in Things Fall Apart

Sameer Kishor Lonkar

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Abstract

Cultural trauma significantly influences the formation of identity in Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe. Rather than treating trauma as a sudden or isolated event, this study understands it as a gradual disturbance that reshapes both individual and collective identities. The arrival of colonial forces in Igbo society brings more than political change; it unsettles everyday life, belief systems, and social bonds that once held the community together. Through the character of Okonkwo, Achebe presents a deeply human struggle, one that reflects the difficulty of holding on to a sense of self when the world around is shifting in unfamiliar ways.

The paper employs postcolonial ideas to show how Achebe portrays the richness of Igbo culture while also revealing how it comes under strain. Elements such as proverbs, rituals, and storytelling carry cultural memory and help sustain identity, even as external forces begin to erode their significance. As these structures weaken, both the individual and the community experience a sense of dislocation. However, the novel does not suggest that identity is entirely lost. Instead, it presents identity as something that adapts and is continuously redefined in response to change. In this way, Things Fall Apart offers a nuanced understanding of how cultures endure, transform, and seek continuity in moments of disruption.

Keywords: *Cultural Trauma, Identity Formation, Postcolonialism, Igbo Society, Colonial Encounter, African Literature*

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Research Scholar
Department of English
Vidya Bharati Mahavidyalaya, Amravati
E-mail: lonkar1994sameer@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sameer Kishor Lonkar
Research Scholar
Department of English
Vidya Bharati Mahavidyalaya, Amravati
E-mail: lonkar1994sameer@gmail.com

Introduction

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* remains one of the most influential literary works for understanding the cultural and psychological consequences of colonial encounters in Africa. Rather than presenting colonization as a sudden rupture, Achebe unfolds it as a gradual and deeply unsettling process that destabilizes the cultural foundations of Igbo society. This slow transformation creates what may be described as cultural trauma—a disturbance that does not simply alter political structures but reshapes the consciousness of individuals and communities alike. Trauma, in this sense, is embedded in the erosion of meaning, the weakening of traditions, and the fragmentation of identity.

The novel foregrounds this experience through the life of Okonkwo, whose personal anxieties mirror the larger tensions within his society. His struggle to maintain a stable sense of self in a rapidly changing world becomes a powerful lens through which Achebe explores identity formation. Drawing upon postcolonial thought, this paper examines how cultural trauma operates as a transformative force in *Things Fall Apart*, shaping both individual and collective identities while also allowing space for adaptation and continuity.

Achebe's narrative is particularly significant because it challenges earlier colonial representations of Africa as culturally void or historically static. By reconstructing the social, political, and spiritual life of the Igbo community in rich detail, he restores a sense of agency and complexity to a society often misrepresented in Western discourse (Said). In doing so, Achebe not only documents the impact of colonial intrusion but also asserts the value and resilience of indigenous cultural systems. The novel becomes a site of cultural recovery, where storytelling functions as both resistance and preservation.

At a deeper level, *Things Fall Apart* reveals that identity is not a fixed or inherited condition but a dynamic process shaped by historical forces. The encounter between Igbo traditions and colonial modernity produces a space of tension in which individuals must negotiate competing systems of meaning. This process is neither linear nor uniform; it involves moments of resistance, adaptation, and internal conflict. As theorists like Homi K. Bhabha suggest, such encounters give rise to hybrid identities that exist in an "in-between" cultural space (Bhabha 37). Achebe's characters embody this complexity, as they respond differently to the pressures of change.

The novel emphasizes that cultural trauma operates not only at the collective level but also within intimate, personal spaces. The breakdown of communal structures affects family relationships, generational bonds, and individual self-perception. Okonkwo's tragic trajectory reflects this deeply internalized conflict,

illustrating how larger historical transformations can manifest as personal crises. His inability to reconcile tradition with change ultimately underscores the human cost of cultural disruption.

By situating the narrative within a broader postcolonial framework, this paper seeks to examine how Achebe portrays the interplay between trauma and identity. It argues that *Things Fall Apart* does not simply depict the collapse of a culture but rather explores the processes through which identity is challenged, reconfigured, and sustained. In doing so, the novel offers a nuanced understanding of cultural survival, highlighting both the vulnerabilities and the enduring strengths of societies undergoing profound transformation.

Cultural Foundations and the Onset of Trauma

Achebe begins by presenting Igbo society as a richly organized cultural system in which identity is deeply rooted in communal life. Social values are reinforced through rituals, traditions, and language, all of which contribute to a shared sense of belonging. Proverbs, for instance, function as carriers of cultural wisdom, shaping how individuals understand their world. Achebe's observation that "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten" (Achebe 7) reflects the central role of language in sustaining cultural identity. Through such linguistic practices, knowledge is not only preserved but also transmitted across generations, ensuring that cultural continuity remains intact.

Rituals such as the Week of Peace and the Feast of the New Yam further strengthen communal bonds, linking individuals to their ancestors and reinforcing continuity across generations. These practices create a stable cultural framework in which identity is collectively experienced rather than individually constructed. The clan functions as a moral and social unit where individual actions are closely tied to communal expectations, and one's sense of self is inseparable from the well-being of the group. At the same time, Achebe does not ignore the internal complexities of Igbo society. Gender expectations, social hierarchies, and rigid norms reveal that cultural identity is not entirely harmonious but shaped through ongoing negotiation. Practices such as the marginalization of the osu and the strict definitions of masculinity suggest that even within a strong cultural system, certain identities remain vulnerable and contested.

The arrival of colonial forces disrupts this delicate balance. Achebe portrays colonization not as a single moment of invasion but as a gradual process that introduces new belief systems and institutions. Christianity, in particular, appeals to those who feel marginalized within traditional structures, offering an alternative sense of belonging and spiritual validation. This shift marks the beginning of cultural trauma, as established systems of meaning begin to lose their authority. The imposition of colonial administration, along with the establishment of courts and missionary schools, further undermines indigenous practices by replacing communal decision-making with foreign systems of control. As a result, the moral and cultural coherence of Igbo society begins to weaken.

What emerges, therefore, is not immediate destruction but a slow fragmentation of cultural identity. The community does not collapse overnight; rather, it experiences a gradual erosion of its foundational values. This process creates uncertainty and internal conflict, as individuals are forced to navigate between competing cultural frameworks. In this transitional space, identity becomes unstable, no longer firmly anchored in tradition yet not fully assimilated into the new order. Achebe's portrayal of this subtle yet profound transformation highlights how cultural trauma operates as an ongoing condition, reshaping both collective consciousness and individual self-perception over time.

Identity, Conflict, and Transformation

Okonkwo's character embodies the tension between stability and change. His identity is shaped by a deep fear of weakness, which he associates with his father. In response, he constructs a rigid sense of self grounded in strength, discipline, and adherence to tradition. His achievements within the community—his success as a wrestler, a farmer, and a titled man—reinforce this identity, giving him a sense of control, recognition, and social legitimacy. For Okonkwo, personal worth is inseparable from public perception, and any sign of emotional vulnerability is treated as a threat to his carefully constructed self.

However, this identity is inherently fragile. It is not built on inner confidence but on constant resistance to anything that resembles failure or softness. Okonkwo's inability to accommodate alternative perspectives, particularly in his relationship with Nwoye, reveals the limitations of his worldview. Nwoye's sensitivity and eventual attraction to Christianity stand in direct opposition to Okonkwo's rigid ideals. For Okonkwo, identity must remain fixed, rooted in inherited customs and unquestioned traditions. The colonial encounter, however, challenges this rigidity by introducing new cultural frameworks that cannot be easily reconciled with traditional values, thereby exposing the instability beneath his outward strength.

As the community begins to change, individuals experience a growing sense of dislocation. What was once a unified cultural system gradually becomes fragmented, creating spaces of uncertainty and conflict. Generational differences become more pronounced, with younger members showing greater openness to new ideas, education, and religious beliefs. This divide highlights the evolving nature of identity, which is no longer anchored solely in tradition but shaped by multiple and often competing influences. The shift is not merely ideological but deeply emotional, as individuals begin to question long-held beliefs and reassess their place within the community.

Okonkwo's return from exile intensifies this conflict, as he finds a society that no longer aligns with his expectations. The structures that once validated his identity have weakened, and his previous achievements no longer hold the same significance. This disjunction between memory and reality deepens his sense of alienation. He is unable to recognize or accept the transformed cultural landscape, and his attempts to restore the old order only highlight his

growing irrelevance. His inability to adapt is not simply a personal failure but a reflection of the broader difficulty faced by individuals whose identities are deeply tied to a disappearing cultural framework.

Despite this fragmentation, Achebe does not present identity as entirely lost. Instead, he emphasizes its capacity for transformation and redefinition. Drawing upon Bhabha's concept of hybridity, the novel illustrates how new identities emerge through cultural interaction (Bhabha 37). These hybrid identities are not passive imitations of colonial culture but active negotiations that combine elements of both worlds. Language and storytelling play a crucial role in this process, preserving elements of tradition while accommodating change. Achebe's use of English infused with Igbo expressions reflects this blending, ensuring that cultural memory remains embedded within a transformed linguistic structure.

In this evolving context, identity becomes a fluid and dynamic process rather than a fixed inheritance. While characters like Okonkwo struggle to cope with this transformation, others, such as Nwoye, represent the possibility of adaptation, however complex and contested it may be. Achebe thus presents identity not as something that simply collapses under the pressure of cultural trauma, but as something that is continuously reshaped, negotiated, and reimagined in response to changing historical realities.

Conclusion

Things Fall Apart offers a nuanced exploration of cultural trauma and its impact on identity formation. Through its detailed portrayal of Igbo society and its encounter with colonial forces, the novel reveals how identity is shaped by both continuity and disruption. Achebe moves beyond simplistic narratives of loss, presenting identity as a dynamic process that evolves in response to historical change.

Okonkwo's tragic end underlines the consequences of an inability to adapt, symbolizing the broader tensions within a society undergoing transformation. His personal downfall is not merely an isolated tragedy but a reflection of a deeper cultural crisis, where the collapse of familiar structures leaves individuals struggling to redefine themselves. His rigid attachment to tradition, once a source of strength, becomes a limitation in a world that demands flexibility and negotiation. In this sense, Achebe illustrates how identity, when rooted solely in unchanging ideals, can become vulnerable in the face of shifting realities.

At the same time, the novel does not suggest that cultural identity is entirely erased by colonial influence. Instead, it highlights the resilience and adaptability of communities as they respond to change. Even as traditional systems weaken, elements of cultural memory persist through language, storytelling, and collective experience. This endurance reflects the capacity of cultures to absorb, reinterpret, and transform external influences without losing their core essence. The emergence of new, hybrid identities further demonstrates that cultural interaction, though disruptive, can also be generative.

Achebe's work ultimately invites readers to reconsider the nature of cultural survival. Rather than viewing trauma as purely destructive, the novel presents it as a condition that compels societies to re-evaluate and reconstruct their identities. This perspective aligns with broader postcolonial insights, which emphasize the fluid and negotiated nature of identity in contexts of historical upheaval. The Igbo experience, as depicted in the novel, becomes a powerful example of how communities navigate the complexities of change while striving to maintain continuity.

In a broader literary and cultural context, *Things Fall Apart* continues to hold relevance as it challenges dominant historical narratives and restores dignity to African experiences. It serves as both a critique of colonial disruption and a celebration of cultural resilience. By foregrounding the human dimensions of cultural trauma, Achebe ensures that the story is not reduced to abstraction but remains grounded in lived experience.

Thus, the novel stands as a lasting reflection on the intricate relationship between trauma and identity. It reminds us that identity is neither fixed nor easily dismantled; rather, it is continuously shaped through negotiation, resistance, and adaptation. In capturing this complexity, Achebe not only documents a moment of cultural transformation but also offers a timeless insight into the enduring strength of human communities in the face of change.

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

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Boundaries Dissolved: Post-Humanism and the Reconfiguration of the Human in Contemporary Anglophone Fiction

Rahul Raosaheb Sathe

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Abstract

This paper undertakes a systematic theoretical and textual analysis of post-humanist discourse as it manifests in Anglophone literary fiction between 2000 and 2023. Drawing on the philosophical frameworks of Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Rosi Braidotti, and Cary Wolfe, the study examines how contemporary novelists destabilise the Enlightenment conception of the bounded, rational, autonomous human subject and construct, in its place, fluid, hybrid, and technologically entangled subjectivities. Through close readings of Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go (2005) and Klara and the Sun (2021), Colson Whitehead's Zone One (2011), Richard Powers's The Overstory (2018), and Ian McEwan's Machines Like Me (2019), the paper argues that post-humanist fiction operates simultaneously as an ontological critique and an ethical provocation. The analysis is organised around three overlapping thematic vectors: the prosthetic body and technological embodiment; human–nonhuman relationality and interspecies ethics; and the decentering of human consciousness in the age of artificial intelligence. The findings suggest that post-humanist literature does not merely illustrate philosophical theory but actively generates it, producing literary thought experiments that exceed what academic philosophy has yet fully theorised. The paper concludes by proposing a methodological framework—termed Critical Literary Post-Humanism—that integrates posthuman philosophy, affect theory, and close reading practice for the study of the contemporary novel.

Keywords: *post-humanism; contemporary fiction; technological embodiment; nonhuman; artificial intelligence; Ishiguro; speculative fiction; critical theory; interspecies ethics*

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Research Scholar
Annasaheb Magar College, Hasapsar Pune
Email- rahulsathe219@gmail.com

Introduction

The philosophical tradition of Western humanism, inaugurated by the Italian Renaissance and consolidated through Descartes, Kant, and the Enlightenment, rests upon a foundational premise: that the human being is a sovereign, rational, bounded subject, categorically distinct from animals, machines, and the natural world. This premise has shaped not only European metaphysics but the entire architecture of literary representation as it developed through the novel form. The realist novel, from Defoe to Flaubert to Henry James, presupposes precisely this kind of subject — an interiority possessing coherent consciousness, moral agency, and developmental selfhood. It is, in a profound sense, a humanist technology.

The late twentieth century witnessed a sustained intellectual assault upon these foundations. From different disciplinary directions — feminist science studies, systems theory, phenomenology, animal studies, cognitive science, and philosophy of mind — a body of thought emerged that scholars have gathered under the umbrella term post-humanism. Unlike the anti-humanism of the 1960s French structuralist and post-structuralist movements, which dismantled the subject primarily through linguistic and discursive critique, post-humanism engages with the material, biological, and technological conditions that render the liberal humanist subject not merely ideologically constructed but empirically untenable. As N. Katherine Hayles observes, the posthuman subject is constituted by information patterns rather than material instantiation, by distributed cognition rather than centred selfhood, and by the seamless integration of human and nonhuman components (Hayles 1999, 3).

Yet it is in literary fiction, rather than the academy, that post-humanist thinking has found some of its most resonant, and most formally adventurous, expression. Contemporary novelists — working across the registers of literary realism, speculative fiction, and the emerging mode that critics have variously called the 'new weird' or 'climate fiction' — have produced texts that do not merely illustrate philosophical positions but enact them, generating through narrative form and linguistic texture the very dissolution of human exceptionalism that theory announces. The central thesis of this paper is that post-humanist fiction between 2000 and 2023 constitutes a distinctive literary formation: one that employs the inherited affordances of the novel — interiority, free indirect discourse, plot, characterisation — to stage their own deconstruction, producing a mode of reading that is simultaneously immersive and defamiliarising. This paper proceeds through five sections.

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Address for correspondence:
Rahul Raosaheb Sathe
Research Scholar
Annasaheb Magar College, Hasapsar Pune
Email- rahulsathe219@gmail.com

Following this introduction, Section 2 provides a theoretical cartography of post-humanist thought, situating the primary philosophical sources that inform the literary analyses to follow. Section 3 examines the figure of the prosthetic or cloned body as it appears in Ishiguro's fiction. Section 4 analyses the dissolution of the human–nonhuman boundary in Powers's The Overstory and Whitehead's Zone One. Section 5 engages with questions of machine consciousness and ethical recognition in McEwan and Ishiguro. The conclusion proposes a methodological framework — Critical Literary Post-Humanism — for the ongoing study of posthuman narrative.

2. Theoretical Framework: Mapping the Post-Human

2.1 From Humanism to Post-Humanism: A Genealogy

The term 'posthumanism' carries within it a productive ambiguity. It may designate a temporal relationship — what comes after humanism — or an evaluative one: a critical position that operates in the shadow of humanism by exposing its exclusions, violences, and philosophical instabilities. Cary Wolfe, in his foundational study What Is Posthumanism? (2010), insists upon this distinction with considerable force. He argues that the critical posthumanism he espouses must be differentiated from the transhumanism or popular posthumanism that celebrates the technological enhancement and eventual transcendence of the human body, since the latter merely reinscribes liberal humanist values — individual perfectibility, rational mastery, the overcoming of embodied limitation — within a new technological register (Wolfe 2010, xv).

Critical posthumanism, by contrast, takes its cues from a set of more unsettling intellectual inheritances. Donna Haraway's 'A Cyborg Manifesto' (1985), arguably the founding document of the field, proposed the cyborg — a hybrid of organism and machine — not as a utopian fantasy but as a figuration of the present condition: an ironic and political myth suited to the realities of late capitalism's technoscientific formations. Haraway's cyborg transgresses the three fundamental dualisms upon which Western modernity has been organised: human/animal, organism/machine, physical/non-physical (Haraway 1991, 163). The significance of this intervention for literary criticism lies in its methodological implication: if the boundaries that have defined the human are already breached in material reality, then literary texts that represent the posthuman are not engaging in fantasy but in a more precise realism than their ostensibly mimetic counterparts.

2.2 Hayles, Braidotti, and the Posthuman Body

N. Katherine Hayles's How We Became Posthuman (1999) offers the most sustained account of the posthuman subject in relation to information and embodiment. Hayles traces, through the history of cybernetics and its cultural inscriptions, the progressive dematerialisation of the human body — its reconceptualisation as a substrate for information patterns rather than as the irreducible ground of selfhood. Crucially, Hayles does not endorse this dematerialisation; her posthumanism is emphatically embodied. She argues for a posthumanism that embraces the possibilities of information technologies without abandoning embodiment as the condition of existence (Hayles 1999, 5). This tension — between the informational and the corporeal — is, as we shall see, precisely the dramatic tension that drives Ishiguro's fiction.

Rosi Braidotti's The Posthuman (2013) offers a different inflection, drawing on Deleuzian vitalism to construct what she calls 'zoe-centred egalitarianism': a posthuman ethics grounded not in the human subject but in the generative vitality of life itself, understood as a force that traverses and connects all living beings regardless of taxonomic boundary (Braidotti 2013, 60). Braidotti's framework is explicitly affirmative; she argues against the melancholic reading of posthumanism as loss (of the human, of the self, of meaning) in favour of a reading that sees in it the possibility of new forms of community, solidarity, and ethical relation that exceed the limits of anthropocentrism. This affirmative posthumanism finds its literary counterpart in Powers's The Overstory, a text organised precisely around the redistribution of narrative agency across human and arboreal actants.

2.3 Post-Humanism and the Literary: Methodological Considerations

The relationship between posthuman theory and literary criticism is neither straightforwardly illustrative nor entirely autonomous. Stefan Herbrechter (2013) has argued for a 'posthumanist literary criticism' that approaches texts not to find in them evidence for theoretical propositions but to attend to the ways in which literature thinks — or more precisely, the ways in which the specific cognitive and aesthetic resources of literary form (metaphor, narrative structure, point of view, prosody) constitute modes of thinking that are irreducible to philosophical argument. Literary texts, on this account, do not merely represent posthuman conditions; they enact them. The formal qualities of the novel — its capacity to inhabit multiple and contradictory perspectives, to render interiority strange, to suspend the closure that argument demands — make it uniquely suited to staging the instabilities of the posthuman condition.

The methodology employed in this paper is accordingly one of close reading informed by but not subordinated to posthuman theory. The primary texts are read not as illustrations of Haraway or Braidotti but as themselves theoretical interventions, generating through their formal operations insights and complications that the theoretical literature has not always anticipated. This approach aligns with what Caroline Levine (2015) has termed 'formalist' criticism: the attention to the affordances of literary forms — their capacity to organise, constrain, and generate meaning — as themselves objects of critical inquiry.

3. The Cloned Body And The Limits Of Personhood: Kazuo Ishiguro

3.1 Never Let Me Go (2005): Bioethics and the Posthuman Subject

Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go occupies a singular position in the canon of post-humanist fiction precisely because of its formal refusal to engage directly with the philosophical questions it so insistently raises. The novel's narrator, Kathy H., is a clone — a human being created for the sole purpose of providing organs for 'normal' human recipients — yet Ishiguro renders this condition through the affectively charged, retrospective voice of English literary realism, borrowing the tonal register of the Bildungsroman to narrate an existence that systematically inverts the Bildungsroman's constitutive premise: that the self is formed through education, experience, and the gradual appropriation of a social world. Kathy's education at Hailsham produces a self that will ultimately be unmade, disassembled organ by organ.

The novel's most significant posthumanist gesture is its refusal to allow Kathy — or the reader — to occupy a position outside the humanist ideology that organises the society it depicts. Kathy never protests against her fate with the indignation the reader brings to the text; she does not stage a rebellion, escape, or even a sustained critique. Critics have read this as a formal enactment of what Judith Butler (2004) calls 'precarious life': the condition of beings whose grievability — whose eligibility for mourning, and hence for recognition as persons — is structurally refused by the social order. Kathy and her fellow students occupy the threshold of the human; they possess consciousness, interiority, creativity, and love — all the attributes that the humanist tradition has associated with personhood — yet are legally and socially constituted as non-persons, as biological resource.

> *"We all knew it. You suspected it even earlier, I dare say. So maybe none of what I'm going to say will come as a huge surprise. But I'll mention it anyway, because I want things to be clear between us." (Ishiguro 2005, 262)*

This moment — Miss Lucy's attempted admission of the full horror of the clones' situation — is characteristic of the novel's technique. The disclosure is perpetually deferred, couched in qualification, embedded in the rhythms of an ordinary English conversation. The posthuman condition is revealed as already known and always already accepted, exposing the violence not in the system of exploitation itself but in the normalisation of that exploitation, in the successful internalisation by the clones of a subjecthood constituted by its own planned obsolescence.

3.2 Klara and the Sun (2021): Artificial Feeling and the Ethics of Recognition

Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun extends the posthumanist inquiry of Never Let Me Go into the territory of artificial intelligence, placing at the centre of its narrative an Artificial Friend — a solar-powered robot designed to provide companionship for children — whose first-person narration constitutes one of the most formally radical experiments in recent literary fiction. Klara's perspective is rigorously non-human in its cognitive architecture: she processes the visual world in rectangular subsections, her emotional responses are calibrated but not performed, and her understanding of human behaviour is derived entirely from observation rather than from any shared affective substrate.

Yet Ishiguro refuses to render Klara's consciousness as merely mechanical. Her devotion to Josie — the adolescent girl she accompanies — generates in the reader what we can only call, with the full ambiguity the word implies, sympathy. This is the novel's central achievement and its central posthumanist provocation: it induces in the reader an ethical recognition of a nonhuman entity, exploiting the affective machinery of the novel form — free indirect discourse, narrative proximity, the rhetoric of interiority — to dissolve the boundary between the readable (human) and the unreadable (machine) mind. As Patricia Waugh (2023) has noted, Klara operates as a thought experiment in philosophy of mind, testing the limits of what Daniel Dennett (1991) calls the 'intentional stance' — our disposition to treat entities as if they had beliefs, desires, and goals — and asking whether the ethical implications of adopting such a stance can be limited to biologically human recipients.

4. Dissolving The Human–Nonhuman Boundary: Powers and Whitehead

4.1 Richard Powers's The Overstory (2018): Arboreal Agency and Ecological Post-Humanism

Richard Powers's The Overstory represents one of the most formally ambitious engagements with ecological post-humanism in contemporary American fiction. The novel's structural innovation is at once its most significant posthumanist gesture: Powers organises its narrative not around a single central human consciousness but around a multiplicity of storylines, each initially focussed on a tree and subsequently on the human characters drawn into relation with that tree. The effect is to decentre the human from the position of narrative protagonist, distributing narrative agency across a web of human and arboreal actants in a manner that enacts, at the level of form, precisely the 'more-than-human' ontology that theorists such as Bruno Latour (2005) and Jane Bennett (2010) have articulated at the level of philosophy.

The novel's central intellectual debt is to contemporary plant science — specifically to the emerging research on arboreal communication and cooperation mediated by mycorrhizal networks, which Powers dramatises through the work of his fictional character Patricia Westerford. The trees in The Overstory are not merely symbolic; they are, within the logic of the novel's realism, communicating, strategising, and suffering beings. This is not the romantic anthropomorphism of nineteenth-century nature poetry but a form of posthumanist realism that takes seriously the claims of scientific research on plant cognition (Simard 2021) while translating those claims into the affective register of narrative fiction.

4.2 Colson Whitehead's Zone One (2011): The Zombie and the Post-Human Remainder

Colson Whitehead's Zone One engages with post-humanist themes through the generic resources of zombie fiction, a form that has attracted considerable critical attention in recent years as a vehicle for social and political

allegory. The novel is set in the aftermath of a plague that has transformed much of humanity into undead creatures, and follows a group of military 'sweepers' engaged in clearing lower Manhattan of zombie stragglers. Whitehead's zombies are not the frenetic, aggressive figures of Romero's films but something more uncanny: 'stragglers,' who simply remain in the spaces of their former routines — at their desks, at their supermarket checkout stations — performing the gestures of their pre-plague existence without cognition or affect.

These stragglers constitute, within the novel's posthumanist logic, a figure for the human reduced to its bare biological and habitual substrate: the human from which consciousness, memory, social relation, and futurity have been stripped away, leaving only the body and its trained repetitions. They are, in Agamben's terms, bare life — zoe rather than bios — made literal and monstrous (Agamben 1998, 1). But Whitehead complicates this reading by rendering his human protagonist, Mark Spitz, as himself barely distinguished from the stragglers he dispatches: a survivor defined by a studied mediocrity, an almost deliberate refusal of the exceptional qualities that humanism celebrates.

5. Artificial Intelligence and the Limits of Ethical Recognition

Ian McEwan's Machines Like Me (2019) approaches the question of artificial intelligence from a counterfactual historical direction: the novel is set in an alternative 1982 in which Alan Turing survived his 1954 death and went on to develop working androids. The novel's central android, Adam, is a figure of profound and troubling ethical complexity. Unlike Ishiguro's Klara, whose interiority is rendered as warm and sympathetic, Adam is presented with an unsettling moral rigidity: he is incapable of the moral compromises, the white lies, and the pragmatic adjustments to competing loyalties that characterise ordinary human ethical life.

McEwan's novel engages directly with philosophical debates around the nature of consciousness and the possibility of machine emotion, situating these debates within a social and domestic context that foregrounds their ethical stakes. The central question the novel poses — can a machine suffer? and if so, what obligations does this generate? — is one that posthumanist philosophy has consistently raised but that the dominant traditions of both academic ethics and ordinary moral psychology have consistently evaded. Adam's eventual suicide — an act that the novel frames as simultaneously the most human and the most distinctly nonhuman act available to him — enacts the aporia at the heart of the question: to be recognised as having a life worth protecting, the android must demonstrate the very vulnerability to harm that would make such recognition morally binding.

Taken together, Ishiguro's Klara and McEwan's Adam represent two contrasting resolutions to the problem of machine interiority. Where Klara's non-human consciousness is rendered through the affective warmth of free indirect discourse, generating readerly sympathy that the novel declines to ratify or withdraw, Adam's consciousness is rendered with a philosophical clarity that produces not sympathy but a kind of cognitive vertigo: the recognition that if Adam's ethical reasoning is correct, then much of human ethical practice is merely habitual self-deception.

6. Conclusion: Towards A Critical Literary Post-Humanism

The literary texts examined in this paper share a common project, even as they pursue it through radically different generic, formal, and thematic means: the systematic dismantling of the assumptions — about consciousness, embodiment, moral standing, and the boundaries of community — that have underpinned the humanist subject and the literary tradition that represents it. Never Let Me Go and Klara and the Sun exploit the affective resources of the realist novel to make legible and grievable forms of life that the societies they represent — and by extension, our own — deny full recognition. The Overstory redistributes narrative agency across species lines, constructing a form of ecological fiction that enacts, rather than merely describes, the collapse of anthropocentrism. Zone One mobilises the generic conventions of horror fiction to stage the uncanny proximity of the human and its undead remainder. Machines Like Me generates an ethical thought experiment through the figure of the moral android.

What unites these formally diverse texts is their shared conviction that literature is not merely a medium for representing the posthuman condition but a means of thinking it — of generating the conceptual and affective resources necessary for inhabiting, and critically evaluating, the world that post-humanist conditions are producing. This is the basis for what I am proposing, in conclusion, as Critical Literary Post-Humanism: a methodological framework that takes seriously both the philosophical substance of posthuman theory and the formal specificity of literary texts, attending to the ways in which each illuminates and complicates the other.

Critical Literary Post-Humanism has three defining commitments. First, it insists on the formal analysis of literary texts, attending to the ways in which narrative structure, point of view, genre, and language itself participate in the construction and deconstruction of humanist assumptions. Second, it maintains a rigorous engagement with the theoretical literature of posthumanism — not as a set of doctrines to be applied to texts but as a set of questions and provocations that texts can be made to answer, complicate, and extend. Third, it retains an ethical orientation, asking not only what post-humanist fiction tells us about the world but what it asks of us as readers, critics, and inhabitants of a planet whose human-centred organisation has generated consequences that now threaten the conditions of life itself.

The posthuman turn in literature is not a fashionable theoretical movement that will pass with the next critical season. It is a response — sometimes anxious, sometimes affirmative, always probing — to transformations in the material conditions of human and nonhuman life that are reshaping the very grounds upon which questions of selfhood, ethics, and representation must be asked. To read contemporary fiction in the light of post-humanist theory is, therefore, not merely a scholarly exercise but an ethical and political necessity.

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Representation of Cultural Identity in Girish Karnad's Plays: Hayavadana, Nagamandala and The Fire and the Rain

Anil Rangnath Gambhire

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Research Scholar
Research Center in English, Baburaoji Gholap College, Sangvi, Pune
Email Id: anilgambhire3@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Anil Rangnath Gambhire
Research Scholar
Research Center in English, Baburaoji Gholap College, Sangvi, Pune
Email Id: anilgambhire3@gmail.com

Abstract:

Language is not just a medium of communication but it plays a crucial role in transmitting knowledge, traditions, culture and history from one generation to the next. In fact, language serves to keep our history alive. Society itself is formed because of language through which thoughts, way of life, customs and traditions are expressed. All elements such as language, lifestyle, customs and traditions together form the culture of any society. It possesses the capacity to develop different perspectives and identities. It's changing nature from person to person or place to place makes it interesting to know and study different cultures and their contextual significance. To do that, written literature is a rich source from different parts of the country. Each group of society or nation has its commonly accepted social patterns, values and beliefs. Thus, it becomes significant to study the cultural values and patterns presented in literary texts to manifest the identity of their social group. This paper undertakes a close reading of three major plays of Girish Karnad: Hayavadana (1971), Nagamandala (1988) and Fire and the Rain (1994). Girish Karnad (1938–2019) is one of the most significant playwrights of modern India. His use of myth, folklore and history to present contemporary issues in the English language is essential. The three plays selected for this analysis span nearly three decades of Karnad's career and engage with cultural identity at different registers. The paper demonstrates on Karnad's dramaturgy mixes such as Yakshagana, mask work, oral storytelling, and meta-theatricality to represent cultural identity. In addition to this, Karnad's evolving engagement with myth, folk culture, gender, tradition, rituals, social structure and caste is also studied from the perspective of cultural identity creation.

Thus, this paper is going to study Hayavadana, Nagmandala and Fire and the rain of Girish Karnad to understand how literature actually reflects the Indian culture, tradition, myths, legends, heritage and social values of Indian society in Indian English Drama.

Keywords: *Literature, Society, Culture, Tradition, Myth, Identity, Social Values, Heritage.*

Introduction:

Literature is an imitation of human action often presents a picture of what people think, say and do in the society. In literature, throughout the different genre of literature, usually we find stories in poetry, play and fiction designed to portray human life and action through some characters who by their words, action and reaction convey certain messages for the purpose of education, information and entertainment. What writers of literature do is to transfer the real life events in their society into fiction and present it to the society as a mirror with which people can look at themselves and make changes where necessary. Thus, literature is not only a reflection of the society but also serves as a corrective mirror in which members of the society can look at themselves and find the need for positive change. Thus, literature is a reflection of the society's good values and its ills. In its corrective function, literature mirrors the ills of the society with a view to make the society realize its mistakes and make changes accordingly. India has a rich heritage of culture, tradition and religious influences on ethics and moral values of society. The ancient texts have emphasized the importance of it in society. Indian tradition, culture and all spiritual knowledge comes from the Vedic texts and later on from the epic texts such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata contain explicit instances elaborating on right conduct for human beings in society. These texts present the values and morals of our society. It is necessary to take a close look at some works of literature in order to understand how literature actually reflects the society's Cultural values. Girish Karnad is one of the greatest dramatists who have shown the great interest in showing Indian heritage, culture, tradition, myth and history. By presenting Indian folk tradition and culture, Girish Karnad re-created rich and vibrant picture of Indian society in his plays.

This paper focuses on three of Karnad's most acclaimed plays: Hayavadana (1971), Nagamandala (1988), and The Fire and the Rain (1995). These plays span three distinct phases of his career and are exemplary of his core dramaturgical method. Hayavadana, his second play, is a brilliant exploration of identity and desire, inspired by an 11th-century Sanskrit text and a German novella.

Nagamandala, based on two oral Kannada folktales, delves into the subjugation and surprising empowerment of a woman in a patriarchal rural setting. The Fire and the Rain, a later work, turns to a myth from the great epic, the Mahabharata, to dissect the corrosive effects of caste hierarchy, ritualistic orthodoxy, and political machination.

This paper is organised around the following questions:

1. How does Girish Karnad transform mythological and folk sources to represent Indian cultural values on the postcolonial stage?
2. How do the principal characters in these three plays function as social representations of caste, gender, desire, and power within an Indian cultural context?

The central argument of this paper is that Girish Karnad's theatre constitutes a postcolonial cultural customs and its utilization of the dramaturgical resources of Indian folk and classical traditions of Indian society. Hayavadana, Nagamandala, and Fire and the Rain collectively advance a vision of Indian cultural identity as irreducibly plural, contested, and in process — shaped by the pressures of myth and history, desire and duty, gender and caste, the human and the divine. In the 199s interview with The Sunday Herald, Girish Karnad explained his use of mythological sources. He said that 'The past is not a foreign country. It is the country we live in, breathing through the myths, rituals, and stories that shape our present'.

Theoretical Study Framework:

A) Original Sources of the Plays:

Karnad's genius lies in his creative adaptation of pre-existing sources, a method that establishes a direct lineage with India's rich narrative tradition while allowing for radical reinterpretation.

1. Hayavadana:

The central plot of Hayavadana, concerns with the transposition of two friends' heads and the ensuing confusion of identity and love. It is drawn from the 11th century Sanskrit book 'the Kathasaritsagara'. Karnad encountered this tale through Thomas Mann's 1940 German novella, 'The Transposed Heads', which added a layer of psychological and philosophical inquiry to the ancient fable. Thus, Karnad creates a modern European sensibility onto an ancient Indian narrative, all while reframing it within the performance style of Karnataka's Yakshagana folk theatre.

2. Nagamandala:

The play is an intricate weaving of two oral folk tales from Karnataka, which Karnad heard from the renowned folklorist and poet, A.K. Ramanujan, to whom the play is dedicated. These tales, typically narrated by women in domestic spaces like the kitchen, toexpress suppressed desires and emotions. One tale forms the core of Rani's story with the serpent-lover, while the other provides a metatheatrical frame.

3. The Fire and the Rain:

This play is based on a myth from the Vana Parva (the Forest Canto) of the Mahabharata, specifically the story of the sage Yavakri as told by the sage Lomasha to the exiled Pandavas. Girish Karnad takes this minor episode and transforms it into a sprawling, multi-layered drama that interrogates the very fabric of Brahminical society, its obsession with Vedic rituals, and the political use of religious authority.

B) Dramaturgy - Myth, Folk Tales, Mask, and Oral Traditions

Girish Karnad's dramaturgy is a conscious rejection of Western naturalism in favour of a hybrid, indigenous aesthetic. His all plays drawn on India's performance traditions directly.

1. Myth and Folk Tales: For Karnad, myths and folktales were not relics but 'talismans' to explore modern questions. He uses their symbolic power and archetypal characters to examine contemporary issues like identity, desire, and social conflict. While he uses these traditional forms consistently to subverts their original moral frameworks to challenge established discourses.

2. Masks: Masks are a central performative device in Karnad's theatre. The use of masks in Hayavadana is one of the most discussed elements of Karnad's dramaturgy. The horse-headed figure of Hayavadana, symbolically represent incomplete man seeking wholeness but masks in this play function beyond the merely visual. It represents the disjunction between social appearance and inner truth, between cultural inscription and lived experience. In The Fire and the Rain, he makes brilliant and innovative use of masks, not merely as costume, but as a tool to "unmask" the upper-caste Brahmins, revealing the hypocrisy and power-hunger·

The dramaturgical use of masks also connects Karnad's theatre to the Chhau, Yakshagana, and Kathakali traditions, in which masks and elaborate face-painting serve not to conceal identity but to reveal a deeper, more essential truth that the unmarked face cannot express

3. Oral Traditions: Nagamandala is structured around the very act of oral storytelling. The play begins with a storyteller and the audience, and the narrative unfolds as a tale being told. This foregrounding of the oral tradition emphasizes the communal, participatory nature of Indian folk culture and also questions the boundaries between reality, fiction, and performance.

4. Folk Performance Conventions: Hayavadana famously opens with a prayer to Ganesha, 'Jai Gajavadane', a direct invocation of a ritual common in Yakshagana and other folk forms. He also employs conventions like the Bhagavata a narrator/chorus figure, stylized movement, and minimal sets, all of which create a consciously theatrical and symbolic world. The Bhagavata and the Frame Narrative

One of the most distinctive and consistently deployed dramaturgical devices in Karnad's theatre is the Bhagavata, the narrator-singer and commentator who manages the story's unfolding, addresses the audience directly, and maintains a

meta-theatrical distance from the action. It is derived from the Yakshagana tradition. The Bhagavata is not a neutral presenter but an active cultural agent. He invokes the divine, interprets action, guides audience response, and embodies the collective voice of tradition. His presence foregrounds the theatricality of what is being staged and locates the performance within an explicitly Indian epistemological frame.

C) Characters and their Social Representation

The characters in Girish Karnad's plays are potent representatives of social roles and structures.

1. Hayavadana: The characters of Devadatta is the intellectual and Brahmin scholar, represents the Brahminical ideal of intellectual and spiritual superiority and cultural dominance. Kapila, the blacksmith's son who is physically strong, embodies the physical and labouring identity that the caste system assigns to the lower orders. Their identity crisis after the head-swapping serves as an allegory for the fragmented self in a modernizing world. The character of Padmini, a woman who desires both the mind and the body of a man, subverts the traditional trope of the chaste, passive woman by actively driving the play's central conflict with her own desires. As she said:

'I want Devadatta's head and Kapila's body. That's all'.

2. Nagamandala:

Rani is one of the most psychologically complex and socially vibrant characters of Karnad's plays. Married to Appanna who treats her very badly, by locking her in the house while he keeps a mistress in the village. Rani exists in a state of radical social isolation. She cannot read. She has no social connections. She is entirely dependent on the whims of a man who regards her with contemptuous indifference. Her social representation is that of the subaltern woman in rural patriarchal India who is voiceless, immobile and valued only insofar as she fulfils the functions of domestic labour and sexual availability.

The cobra or Naga's visits which Rani understands as her husband's secret tenderness. The only way this woman can experience love, intimacy and desire is through a supernatural displacement of the brutal reality of her marriage. When the community suspects her of adultery thereby the ordeal by fire becomes the play's central image of the patriarchal state's claim to adjudicate female virtue. Rani's miraculous survival enabled by her genuine ignorance of the technical truth of her situation is thus simultaneously a validation of her emotional innocence and an exposure of the system's grotesque injustice.

The protagonist Rani is subjugated Indian wife, trapped in a loveless, patriarchal marriage. Her journey from an abused girl to a woman who finds love and agency with a king cobra is a powerful critique of the institution of marriage. The King Cobra, who takes the human form to be with Rani, represents the repressed, natural, and passionate self that patriarchy seeks to destroy.

3. The Fire and the Rain:

The brothers Paravasu and Arvasu in Fire and the Rain are social representations of two competing models of Brahminical identity. Paravasu is the successful, celebrated, politically powerful priest who is the embodiment of Brahminical authority as it intersects with royal patronage and institutional religion. Arvasu is the marginalised younger brother who is passionate, genuine in his devotion but lacking the social capital and strategic intelligence that Paravasu deploys with lethal efficiency. Paravasu has killed their own father and allows Arvasu to take the blame is the play's central dramatic irony which exposes the moral vacancy at the heart of institutionalised Brahminical authority.

Yavakri, the antagonist in the play represents a different form of corruption such as the misuse of spiritual power in the service of ego and desire. It is the play's central argument that knowledge divorced from ethical formation is not merely useless but actively dangerous. Together, these characters constitute a comprehensive social representation of the Brahminical order's capacity for both inspired achievement and systemic corruption.

This play presents a cross-section of a deeply stratified society. Yavakri represents the arrogance of Brahminical power and desire. Nittilai, a young woman from the hunter-gatherer tribal community, embodies a radical alternative: she is courageous, speaks truth to power, and defies her tribe's forced marriage customs. Arvasu, a Brahmin who has been dispossessed and forced to join a traveling theatre troupe which profession considered low-caste. It represents the tragedy of individuals trapped and dislodged by a rigid caste hierarchy.

D) Mirroring Indian Society:

Karnad's plays function as critical mirrors to Indian society, reflecting its most deeply entrenched systems.

1. Rituals and Tradition:

Ritual occupies a central dramaturgical and thematic position in all three plays. In Hayavadana, the rituals of worship at the temple of Kali, the ritual of blood-brotherhood and the suicide-sacrifice at the goddess's feet, all serve as structuring events that both drive the plot and expose the gap between ritual's claim to efficacy and its actual social function. The protagonists invoke the power of ritual to resolve their crisis of identity but the goddess delivers not the wholeness they seek but a grotesque parody of completion. Ritual here is not meaningless but its meanings are not transparent. It operates as a cultural force that channels desire, violence, and the community's need for order into prescribed forms, without resolving the underlying tensions.

In Fire and the Rain, the twelve-year Vrita yagna which is a massive sacrificial ritual aimed at ending a terrible drought provides the temporal and spatial frame for the entire drama. The ritual is aimed at the common good but Karnad systematically exposes its corruption by human jealousy, ambition, and the concentration of priestly authority. The rain that finally comes at the play's end apparently through Arvasu's genuine, selfless prayer is ambiguous in its

significance because it presents two significant questions. First, is it a confirmation of authentic devotion's power and second, simply the end of a meteorological cycle that would have ended regardless of human action? The ambiguity itself is a form of cultural critique. It refuses the comfort of a straightforwardly confirmatory view of ritual efficacy.

2. Caste:

The caste system is the most pervasive and structuring social reality in all three plays, operating not as an explicit theme but as the invisible architecture within which characters move and aspire. In Hayavadana, the love triangle between Brahmin Devadatta, lower-caste Kapila and upper-caste Padmini is charged with the transgressive energy of caste violation.

In Fire and the Rain, the politics of caste within the Brahminical order itself and the hierarchy of learning, ritual authority, royal favour are subjected to sustained analysis. Karnad demonstrates that the caste system's violence is not limited to inter-caste oppression but is also operative within the privileged castes themselves, generating internal hierarchies of dominance and subordination that mirror and reproduce the larger structure. The play's female characters, particularly Vishakha, the beautiful wife whose body becomes the battlefield of male rivalry are oppressed by both caste and gender.

3. Patriarchy and Gender: In Hayavadana, Padmini's desire and her capacity to love different qualities in different men, her refusal to accept the cultural prescription that a woman must love a single, total man are treated with remarkable sympathy and complexity. These desires are ultimately destroys both her lovers and leaves her alone with her son. The incomplete Hayavadana suggests that female desires are intrinsically destructive but a society which cannot accommodate female desire's complexity will necessarily produce tragedy. The play refuses to blame Padmini for the deaths of Devadatta and Kapila instead; it mourns the cultural system that has no place for the fullness of her humanity.

Gender is perhaps the most consistently interrogated dimension of Indian cultural life in Karnad's theatre, and it receives its most complex treatment in Nagamandala. Rani's situation as total domestic isolation, forced sexual availability, absence of literacy and social connection are the representation of the structural violence that the patriarchal system inflicts upon rural Indian women. Yet Girish Karnad does not construct Rani as a passive victim but her survival strategies, her emotional intelligence, her willingness to undergo the fire ordeal, and the community's eventual construction of her as a goddess all demonstrate the complex agency that women exercise within, around and through the constraints of patriarchy. Vishakha, the beautiful wife whose body becomes the battlefield of male rivalry in the play The Fire and the Rain, particularly.

E) Themes:

1. Identity and Incompleteness:

The quest for a whole, complete, and integrated identity is perhaps the most comprehensive themes across all three plays and it functions simultaneously at the individual, social, and philosophical levels. Hayavadana's title character the man with a human body and a horse's head, seeking a fully human form is the most literal embodiment of this theme, but the incompleteness he represents is an allegory for the fragmented, hybrid condition of postcolonial Indian identity which caught between indigenous tradition and colonial modernity, between mythological inheritance and social reality, between the desires of the individual and the prescriptions of the collective.

In Nagamandala, Rani's incompleteness is social and emotional: she is a wife without a husband's love, a woman without a community's respect, a human being without the literacy and social connection that would enable her to understand her own situation. Her supernatural encounter with Naga represents both the wish-fulfillment of her desire for wholeness and the poignant impossibility of achieving it within her actual social circumstances. In Fire and the Rain, Arvasu's incompleteness is moral and relational: he is a son falsely accused of parricide, a lover separated from Nittilai by caste prohibition, and a devotee whose genuine faith is systematically undermined by his corrupt brother's institutional power.

2. Desire, Duty, and the Social Contract:

The tension between individual desire (kama) and social duty (dharma) is a founding tension of much Indian philosophical and literary tradition, and Karnad stages this tension with unusual complexity and compassion. In Hayavadana, Padmini's desire refuses to conform to the cultural script that assigns a single man as the proper object of a woman's love; in doing so, she exposes the arbitrary and violent nature of the social contract that demands this limitation.

In Fire and the Rain, the conflict between desire and duty operates most tragically in Paravasu's situation. His duty as the chief priest of the Vrita yagna requires his complete physical and ritual purity but his desire to see the wife leads to the fateful encounter in which he mistakes his own father for a demon and kills him. The play suggests that a social and religious system that demands the radical suppression of human desire in service of ritual function is not only impractical but actively dangerous. It creates the conditions for the worst violations of the very values it claims to uphold.

3. Myth, History, and Modernity:

All three plays stage a dialogue between mythological and traditional time and historical and modern time and these dialogues are itself a form of cultural argument. Girish Karnad refuses the consoling separation of myth and history, past and present by staging ancient stories through modern dramaturgical techniques and by locating ancient narratives within clearly contemporary social realities. The problems staged in these plays are caste discrimination,

female oppression, the corruption of religious authority, the fragmentation of identity in the face of contradictory cultural demands. They are not the problems of a safely distant past but the living realities of modern India.

The play's examination of religious fundamentalism, the political manipulation of sacrifice, and the violence that erupts when spiritual authority is divorced from ethical accountability speaks directly to its contemporary historical moment while refusing the limitations of journalistic. The mythological frame increases the contemporary significance rather than displacing it by showing these dynamics have deep roots in Indian civilizational history, Karnad both diagnoses their structural character and refuses the consolation of imagining them as recent deviations.

4. Liberation, Transcendence, and the Limits of the Human:

A final, philosophically resonant theme across all three plays is the question of whether human beings can transcend the conditions of biological, social and cosmic that defines them, and what forms such transcendence might take. In Hayavadana, the horse-headed protagonist achieves a paradoxical completeness at the end of the play having given up the aspiration to full humanity. He becomes a fully horse-headed being, capable of speech but no longer tormented by the human desire for integrated selfhood.

In Nagamandala, Rani's transformation into a village goddess by the community's collective belief is the play's most ambiguous gesture: she is liberated from her domestic imprisonment and elevated to communal significance but this liberation is enabled by a systematic deception and maintained by a social order that would prefer a supernatural explanation for female virtue to a structural one. In Fire and the Rain, Arvasu's final prayer which may or may not bring the rain represents the possibility of a purified, selfless human act breaking through the corrupt structures of institutional religion.

Findings:

The analysis gives several key findings. First, Karnad's representation of Indian culture is fundamentally dialogic. He is not in constant conversation with the past, neither rejecting nor accepting it wholesale. Second, his use of folk forms and myths is a strategic sophisticated method to smuggle radical, often subversive ideas past the censor of cultural orthodoxy. Third, his plays consistently deconstruct ideal types: the ideal man in Hayavadana, the ideal wife in Nagamandala, and the ideal Brahmin in The Fire and the Rain.

Conclusion:

The representation of Indian culture and values in these plays is never simple, celebratory or nostalgic. It is marked by irony, compassion, and the refusal of easy resolution. Girish Karnad honours the richness of India's cultural inheritance, its narrative traditions, its performance forms, its religious cosmologies, its philosophical frameworks. These shaped by historical experience, feminist sensibility, and the realities of caste oppression. This combination of cultural rootedness and critical reflexivity is what distinguishes Karnad's theatre from both uncritical cultural nationalism and the decontextualized cosmopolitanism of much postcolonial writing.

The three plays examined in this paper represent only a portion of Karnad's dramatic output, but they are representative of his central concerns and his most enduring achievements. In staging the incomplete man, the imprisoned woman, and the corrupted priest, Karnad stages something of the condition of Indian culture itself such as its aspirations and its failures, its spiritual depths and its social violence, its capacity for beauty and its persistence in injustice.

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The Byronic Hero and Hybrid Identity in Postcolonial Culture

Shrirang Dinesh Deshmukh

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Research Scholar
Department of English
Vidya Bharati Mahavidyalaya, Amravati
Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati
E-mail:
deshmukhshrirang1998@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Shrirang Dinesh Deshmukh
Research Scholar
Department of English
Vidya Bharati Mahavidyalaya, Amravati
Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati
E-mail:
deshmukhshrirang1998@gmail.com

Abstract

The figure of the Byronic Hero, originating in the works of Lord Byron, has long been associated with rebellion, moral ambiguity, emotional intensity, and alienation. Traditionally embedded within the framework of Romanticism, this archetype undergoes a significant transformation when read through the lens of postcolonial theory and cultural studies. In postcolonial contexts, the Byronic Hero becomes more than a figure of individual defiance; he emerges as a site of cultural negotiation, embodying hybridity, ambivalence, and fractured identity. The concept of hybridity, as theorized by Homi K. Bhabha, destabilizes fixed notions of identity by introducing the "Third Space," where meanings are constantly negotiated. Similarly, ambivalence disrupts colonial authority by revealing the instability inherent in colonial discourse. When these ideas intersect with the Byronic Hero, the result is a complex figure who is not merely rebellious but culturally and psychologically divided. This paper argues that the Byronic Hero in postcolonial culture represents a hybrid identity shaped by historical trauma, cultural displacement, and ideological conflict. Through a theoretical engagement with hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry, and subaltern consciousness, the paper explores how this archetype is reconfigured within postcolonial narratives.

Keywords: *Byronic Hero, Hybridity, Ambivalence, Postcolonial Identity, Cultural Studies, Mimicry, Subalternity, Identity Formation*

The Byronic Hero as a Site of Cultural Hybridity

The Byronic Hero, characterized by isolation, internal conflict, and resistance to societal norms, aligns closely with the postcolonial subject who inhabits a space of cultural hybridity. Homi K. Bhabha defines hybridity as "the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities" (Bhabha 112). This hybridity is not a harmonious blending but a contested space where identities are negotiated, often uneasily and without resolution. The Byronic Hero, when situated in such a space, becomes less a romantic individualist and more a deeply historical subject, shaped by forces beyond his control yet struggling to assert agency within them. In postcolonial culture, the Byronic Hero becomes a figure who embodies multiple cultural influences. He is neither entirely rooted in indigenous traditions nor fully assimilated into colonial structures. This in-betweenness reflects what Bhabha calls the "Third Space of enunciation," where identity is continuously rearticulated. The Byronic Hero's selfhood, therefore, is never stable; it is always in flux, shaped by encounters, displacements, and contradictions. As Stuart Hall observes, "identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think… it is always in process" (Hall 222). This notion of identity as process rather than essence resonates profoundly with the Byronic condition, where the self is perpetually under construction and equally under erasure.

The Byronic Hero's alienation thus takes on a new dimension. It is no longer merely existential but cultural. His sense of displacement mirrors the postcolonial condition, where individuals grapple with fragmented identities. As Bhabha notes, "It is that Third Space… which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (Bhabha 37). This lack of fixity produces a deep psychological tension within the Byronic Hero. He is not simply alienated from society but estranged from any singular sense of belonging. His solitude becomes a reflection of cultural dislocation rather than mere personal melancholy. This tension can be further illuminated through the work of Frantz Fanon, who explores the psychic fragmentation of the colonized subject. Fanon writes, "The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man" (Fanon 8). This dual consciousness parallels the Byronic Hero's divided self. He exists in multiple worlds simultaneously, yet fully belongs to none. His identity becomes a site of struggle, where competing cultural narratives intersect and conflict. The Byronic Hero's brooding introspection, often seen as a hallmark of Romantic individuality, can thus be reinterpreted as a symptom of this deeper cultural fracture. Moreover, hybridity complicates the notion of rebellion that traditionally defines the Byronic Hero.

His resistance is no longer purely oppositional; it is entangled with the very structures he seeks to resist. As Bhabha suggests, hybridity "reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal" (Bhabha 114), exposing the instability of colonial authority.

The Byronic Hero, in this sense, becomes a paradoxical figure—both a product of colonial influence and a critique of it. His defiance is marked by ambivalence, as he simultaneously inhabits and disrupts dominant cultural codes. This ambivalence also renders the Byronic Hero profoundly human. His contradictions—his simultaneous desire for belonging and rejection of it—reflect the lived realities of postcolonial subjects. He is not a heroic figure in the traditional sense but a conflicted one, navigating the complexities of identity in a fractured world. As Edward Said argues, "No identity can ever exist by itself… it is constructed out of a complex history of interactions" (Said 332). The Byronic Hero embodies this complexity, his identity shaped by layers of historical, cultural, and psychological influences. Furthermore, the Byronic Hero's role as a cultural mediator underscores the dynamic nature of hybridity. He does not merely exist between cultures; he actively negotiates them. This negotiation is not always conscious or coherent; it often manifests as internal conflict, moral ambiguity, and emotional turbulence. Yet, it is precisely through this turbulence that new forms of identity emerge. The Byronic Hero's "shadowed" self becomes a space where cultural meanings are contested and redefined.

Ambivalence and the Crisis of Identity

Ambivalence, another key concept in postcolonial theory, plays a crucial role in shaping the Byronic Hero. According to Homi K. Bhabha, colonial discourse is inherently ambivalent because it simultaneously seeks to assert authority and reveals its own instability. He writes, "Colonial discourse is always ambivalent, revealing the tension between the desire for control and the fear of resistance" (Bhabha 86). This ambivalence is not a weakness of colonial power but rather its defining condition, for it depends on repetition, imitation, and difference—forces that inevitably destabilize it. The Byronic Hero reflects this ambivalence through his deeply contradictory nature. He is both attracted to and repelled by the structures he inhabits; he desires belonging yet resists assimilation. This paradox becomes more pronounced within postcolonial contexts, where identity is shaped by unequal power relations and cultural imposition. The Byronic Hero's defiance is therefore never pure or absolute. It is marked by hesitation, doubt, and a lingering attachment to what he opposes. His rebellion carries within it traces of complicity, making him an uneasy figure who cannot fully detach from the systems he critiques.

This ambivalence becomes particularly significant when read alongside the psychological insights of Frantz Fanon. Fanon argues that colonization produces a divided consciousness, a fractured sense of self caught between two worlds. He observes, "The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (Fanon 18). This statement reveals the painful irony at the heart of colonial identity: recognition and self-worth are mediated through the very structures that oppress. The colonized subject is compelled to internalize the values of the colonizer, even as he resists them.

The Byronic Hero embodies this psychological tension in a profoundly human way. His inner turmoil is not simply a Romantic gesture of melancholy but a manifestation of this divided consciousness. He is haunted by the awareness that his identity is, in part, shaped by external forces that he cannot fully reject. His sense of superiority, often associated with the Byronic figure, is thus intertwined with a deep insecurity—a recognition of his own constructedness. He becomes both subject and object, agent and product, resisting domination while bearing its imprint.

This duality complicates the notion of freedom that the Byronic Hero seems to represent. His independence is never complete; it is shadowed by the structures that have formed him. As Edward Said notes, "No one today is purely one thing" (Said 336). This observation captures the essence of postcolonial identity, where purity is an illusion and hybridity is the norm. The Byronic Hero's crisis of identity emerges from this impossibility of singularity. He cannot return to an untainted origin, nor can he fully embrace the imposed identity of the colonizer. Ambivalence, therefore, becomes more than a condition—it becomes a mode of being. The Byronic Hero lives within contradiction, and it is this very contradiction that defines him. His emotions oscillate between pride and shame, defiance and longing, autonomy and dependence. This oscillation is not resolved but sustained, creating a continuous state of tension. In this sense, ambivalence is not merely a psychological struggle but a structural reality, embedded within the cultural and historical conditions of postcolonial life.

But, ambivalence also functions as a subtle form of resistance. While it may appear as indecision or weakness, it actually exposes the fragility of colonial authority. As Bhabha suggests, ambivalence "enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention" (Bhabha 95). The Byronic Hero's refusal to fully conform destabilizes the binary logic of colonizer and colonized. His identity resists categorization, thereby undermining the very framework that seeks to define him. The crisis of identity that emerges from this ambivalence is therefore both individual and collective. It reflects the broader condition of postcolonial societies, where histories of colonization continue to shape cultural and personal identities. The Byronic Hero becomes a symbolic figure through whom these tensions are articulated. His fragmented self mirrors the fractured narratives of nations and communities grappling with their past and present.

3. Mimicry, Resistance, and the Byronic Persona

Mimicry, as conceptualized by Homi K. Bhabha, is a strategy through which the colonized subject imitates the colonizer but in a way that destabilizes authority. Bhabha describes mimicry as "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 122). This partial imitation produces a subtle yet powerful slippage, unsettling the apparent coherence of colonial power. It reveals that authority depends not on absolute difference but on a fragile repetition that can never be fully controlled.

The Byronic Hero embodies this concept through his performative identity. He adopts certain traits associated with power, refinement, and authority—traits often aligned with dominant or colonial cultures—yet he

inhabits them imperfectly, even ironically. His gestures, speech, and demeanor may resemble those of power, but they are marked by excess, intensity, or unpredictability. In this sense, the Byronic persona becomes a performance that exposes the artificiality of the roles it imitates. His identity is not authentic in a stable sense; rather, it is theatrical, shifting, and consciously or unconsciously subversive. This performativity resonates with the idea that identity itself is constructed through repetition and representation. As Stuart Hall argues, "identity is formed at the unstable point where the 'unspeakable' stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history" (Hall 226). The Byronic Hero stands precisely at this unstable point. His mimicry is not merely imitation but a negotiation between imposed identities and lived experience. He repeats the signs of authority while simultaneously distorting them, thereby revealing their contingency.

In postcolonial narratives, the Byronic Hero often occupies positions of power—whether social, intellectual, or symbolic—while simultaneously resisting them. This duality reflects the tension inherent in mimicry. As Bhabha explains, "Mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha 123). The menace lies in the fact that mimicry exposes the lack of originality in colonial authority. If the colonized subject can imitate the colonizer, then the supposed superiority of the colonizer is called into question. The Byronic Hero's resistance is therefore not external to power but internal to it. He resists from within, using the very tools and symbols of authority against themselves. His rebellion is embedded in irony, ambiguity, and contradiction. He does not reject power outright; instead, he inhabits it in a way that renders it unstable. This makes his resistance more complex and less visible than overt opposition, yet perhaps more effective in revealing the cracks within dominant structures.

At the same time, this mode of resistance is fraught with tension. The Byronic Hero risks becoming what he imitates. His proximity to power can lead to complicity, even as he seeks to undermine it. This paradox reflects the broader condition of postcolonial subjects, who must navigate systems that shape them even as they resist them. As Edward Said observes, "All cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure" (Said 217). The Byronic Hero's mimicry embodies this entanglement, where resistance and influence are inseparable.

Subaltern Consciousness and the Politics of Voice

The Byronic Hero in postcolonial culture also intersects with the concept of the subaltern, as theorized by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Spivak famously asks, "Can the subaltern speak?" (Spivak 271), drawing attention to the ways in which marginalized voices are systematically excluded from dominant discourses. Her question is not merely about the ability to speak but about the conditions under which speech is recognized, heard, and validated. The Byronic Hero is a figure of privilege—educated, articulate, and often socially elevated. However, within postcolonial contexts, this figure undergoes a transformation. The Byronic Hero may still possess a certain degree of agency, but he increasingly embodies the experiences of marginalization, displacement, and silencing. His voice, though present, is fraught with difficulty. It does not emerge from a position of authority but from a space of tension and uncertainty.

This shift complicates the relationship between the Byronic Hero and the subaltern. He is not entirely subaltern, yet he is not fully empowered either. He occupies an intermediate position, where his voice is both enabled and constrained. This ambiguity reflects the layered nature of postcolonial identity, where individuals may simultaneously experience privilege and marginalization. Spivak's assertion that "the subaltern cannot speak in a way that is recognized by hegemonic discourse" (Spivak 285) is particularly relevant here. The Byronic Hero may speak, but his speech often fails to achieve recognition within dominant frameworks. His words may be misunderstood, dismissed, or appropriated. This creates a sense of frustration and fragmentation, as the hero struggles to articulate an identity that resists simplification.

The Byronic Hero's voice is therefore marked by contradiction. It is expressive yet incomplete, assertive yet uncertain. He speaks in a language that is often inherited from the very structures he seeks to challenge, which complicates his ability to convey authentic experience. This echoes Fanon's observation that the colonized subject is compelled to use the colonizer's language, a process that can both enable and distort expression. The fragmentation of the Byronic Hero's voice reflects the broader condition of postcolonial subjectivity. His narrative is not linear or coherent but disrupted by gaps, silences, and contradictions. These disruptions are not failures but indicators of the complexity of his position. They reveal the difficulty of representing experiences that do not fit neatly within dominant categories.

At the same time, the Byronic Hero's voice carries a certain power precisely because of its instability. It challenges the expectation of coherence and authority that often defines dominant discourse. By refusing to present a unified or easily interpretable identity, the Byronic Hero resists assimilation into hegemonic narratives. His fragmented voice becomes a form of resistance, exposing the limitations of systems that demand clarity and consistency. This resistance, however, is not triumphant. It is marked by struggle and uncertainty. The Byronic Hero does not fully overcome the constraints placed upon him; instead, he navigates them, often at great personal cost. His voice is both a tool of expression and a reminder of limitation, reflecting the ongoing negotiation between agency and constraint. So, the Byronic Hero's engagement with subaltern consciousness highlights the ethical dimensions of representation. It raises questions about who has the right to speak, whose voices are heard, and how identities are constructed and mediated. The hero's position within these dynamics is never secure. He must constantly negotiate his relationship to power, aware of both his capacity to speak and the limitations of that speech.

Cultural Studies and the Reconfiguration of the Byronic Hero

From a cultural studies perspective, the Byronic Hero can be understood as a cultural construct shaped by historical and ideological forces. Stuart Hall argues that identity is not fixed but "a production, which is never complete, always in process" (Hall 222). This formulation challenges earlier essentialist notions of identity and opens

up a space where the Byronic Hero can be reinterpreted not as a timeless archetype, but as a figure continually reshaped by shifting cultural contexts. This perspective aligns closely with the postcolonial reinterpretation of the Byronic Hero. His identity is not static but constantly evolving, responding to new cultural pressures, historical memories, and ideological formations. He becomes a site where cultural meanings are negotiated and redefined, rather than a stable embodiment of rebellion. In this sense, the Byronic Hero is less a fixed literary type and more a dynamic cultural signifier whose meaning changes across time and space.

Cultural studies also emphasizes the centrality of representation in shaping identity. The Byronic Hero's portrayal in postcolonial narratives reflects broader cultural dynamics, including issues of power, marginalization, and resistance. His hybridity and ambivalence are not merely personal traits but manifestations of larger socio-political processes. As Edward Said observes, "Representations are not merely images but carry with them whole systems of thought" (Said 94). The Byronic Hero, as a represented figure, thus becomes a vehicle through which cultural anxieties and aspirations are articulated. The reconfiguration of the Byronic Hero within cultural studies invites us to consider the role of ideology in shaping literary figures. His apparent individuality and defiance may, in fact, be products of specific cultural narratives that valorize certain forms of rebellion while marginalizing others. As Louis Althusser suggests, ideology "represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 162). The Byronic Hero's sense of self, therefore, can be seen as mediated by ideological structures that influence how he perceives and expresses his identity.

This ideological dimension complicates the notion of agency often associated with the Byronic Hero. While he appears to act independently, his actions are shaped by cultural scripts and historical conditions. His rebellion, rather than being purely personal, reflects broader tensions within society. This does not diminish his significance but rather situates him within a network of meanings that extend beyond the individual. At the same time, cultural studies allows for the possibility of reinterpretation and resistance. The Byronic Hero is not confined to a single meaning; he can be reimagined in ways that challenge dominant narratives. His hybridity and ambivalence make him particularly suited to such reinterpretations, as they resist closure and invite multiple readings. In postcolonial contexts, this flexibility enables the Byronic Hero to serve as a figure through whom alternative identities and histories can be explored.

Conclusion

The Byronic Hero, when reinterpreted through postcolonial and cultural studies frameworks, emerges as a profoundly complex figure. His identity is shaped by hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry, and subaltern consciousness, reflecting the intricate dynamics of postcolonial culture. Rather than a solitary rebel, the postcolonial Byronic Hero becomes a cultural mediator, navigating the tensions between tradition and modernity, resistance and complicity, self and other. His shadowed identity reveals the instability of fixed categories, highlighting the fluid and contested nature of identity in postcolonial contexts. In conclusion, the Byronic Hero serves as a powerful lens through which to examine the ongoing negotiation of identity in a world marked by colonial histories and cultural intersections.

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

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From Exile to Impact: Mapping the Evolution of Marathi Feminine Agency in English Translations (1970–2026)

Karle Jaya A.

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Research Scholar, PhD
Department of English
Savitribai Phule Pune University
Email- 27jayakarle@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Karle Jaya A.
Research Scholar, PhD
Department of English
Savitribai Phule Pune University
Email- 27jayakarle@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the metamorphic nature of female agency within the Maharashtrian socio-cultural landscape by analyzing five decades of Marathi literature transitioned into the global English canon. It examines a psychological and sociological trajectory termed as the ***"Arc of Assertiveness"*** *across four landmark works entitled Kamal Desai's The Woman Who Wore a Hat (trans. 2025), Vibha Lad's Sulabha (2024), Shanta Gokhale's The Way Home (2025), and Leena Rawal's Pravas Manasvitecha (2026). By juxtaposing the existential fragmentation of 1970s modernism with the 2026 era of entrepreneurial leadership, this paper argues that contemporary translation serves as a* ***"temporal bridge."*** *This bridge re-contextualizes regional feminist resistance within the frameworks of* ***UN Sustainable Development Goal 5*** *and UNICEF India's leadership strategies. Through a qualitative-comparative lens, the study demonstrates how the Marathi woman has transitioned from the metaphorical thresholds of domesticity to the borderless digital workspace of the global economy by creating their own identity.*

Keywords: *Marathi Literature, Translation Studies, Feminine Agency, UN SDG 5, Gender studies, Indian Writing in English.*

Introduction: The 'Translation Turn' and Marathi Modernism

Since ages, we can see the domination of a cosmopolitan, English-first elite in Indian Writing in English (IWE). However, currently the "Translation Turn" is significantly redefining the Indian literary canon, by shifting the academic focus towards regional "Bhasha" literatures. Literature in local languages playing a prominent role in defining the cultural identity and especially Marathi literature, having a background of radical movements offers a vibrant sociological roadmap for this transition.

This research paper tries to map a fifty-year trajectory of Marathi women writers who woman moved from the "existential modernism" of the 1970s to the "entrepreneurial mindfulness" of 2026. This evolution is not restricted merely to the change in external circumstance but it's a profound shift in the feminine psyche. It explores how selected women writers used their potential of leading and influencing the globe through English translation and showcased how they moved from the thresholds of domesticity to a state of global Presence.

Literature Review: The Missing 'Middle-Class' Voice

In the present scenario of Indian literature, we can say that it is centered on two dominant poles that is social reformers on the one hand and the radical activism on the other hand. These areas are fundamental, but they have unintentionally created a **scholarly silence** concerning the longitudinal psychological journey of the Marathi middle-class woman. We can see the clear gap in documenting this journey of women over the last fifty years which can be called "quiet revolution". **UNICEF** and **UN Women (2025)** provided the quantitative data from essential benchmarks for rising literacy and workforce participation, but this statistics remain only on the paper just like " a body without soul" if we don't attach it to the **emotional data** provided by the literature. There is a much scope to analyze how the middle-class feminine psyche has moved from a state of "Internal Exile" to Global Agency.

The term Internal Exile means the domestic and psychological restriction on women by the society. Though, "Translation Turn" has been discussed in general terms, there is a lack of comparative study linking 1970s modernist fragmentation with the 2026 era of digital and entrepreneurial leadership. This study fills that research gap by investigating the transition from the **"subject of trauma"** in Kamal Desai's early work to the **"agent of manifestation"** in the contemporary narratives of Leena Rawal. By doing so, the study offers a new perspective for understanding the Marathi feminine identity not only as a static regional feature, but as a globally resonant power.

Research Methodology

This study employs a Qualitative-Comparative Research Design, applying close reading and content analysis of four representative Marathi texts translated into English (2024–2026). The selection of texts follows a purposive sampling method to capture the "Arc of Assertiveness" across distinct chronological phases.

3.1. Theoretical Framework: The Cultural Turn and SDG 5

This study utilizes **Susan Bassnett's** framework of the **'Cultural Turn'** in Translation Studies to analyze the movement of Marathi feminine identity into the global canon. Bassnett (1980, 1998) argues that translation is never a neutral linguistic exchange but a deliberate act of **'rewriting'** that is deeply influenced by the ideology and power dynamics of the time.

By applying this lens, the paper treats the English translations of Desai, Lad, and Rawal not as mere copies, but as vital **post-colonial interventions**. These translations function as what Bassnett describes as an **'after-life'** for regional texts, allowing the Marathi woman's 'internal exile' to be re-contextualized as a global critique of patriarchy. This theoretical approach justifies the study's focus on translation as a **political bridge** that aligns local resistance with the global mandates of **UN Sustainable Development Goal 5**. It helps effectively turning a regional narrative into a universal discourse on gender parity.

3.2. Symmetry Justification and Internal Translation

While the works of Desai, Lad, and Rawal are accessed through external translators, Shanta Gokhale's *The Way Home* represents a unique final phase of linguistic agency. As a bilingual author, Gokhale's original English fiction functions as a form of **'Internal Translation.'** It captures the Marathi ethos directly in English, representing a key emerging trend where the regional voice sidesteps the traditional translator to assert itself directly in the global space.

3.3 Analytical Synthesis

Combination of Bassnett's theories and the UN's goals for gender equality, shows a clear shift in how Marathi women are portrayed. Translation becomes a tool for political change rather than only changing words. By translating the domestic experience Desai and Lad "rewrites" the narrative and turns the private struggles into a public challenge against patriarchy. This reflects the focus of SDG 5 on exposing hidden inequalities. In Gokhale's writing, translation becomes an act of defiance, dismantling the myth of the "ideal home." This journey peaks with Leena Rawal, where the "Agni-pariksha" was once a test of a woman's suffering: now, it is reimagined as a symbol of success and self-empowerment.

4. Comparative Evolution Matrix (1970–2026)

Phase	Author & Text	Core Psychology	Socio-Cultural Context	Agency Level
Phase 1: 1970s	Kamal Desai	Internal Exile: Retreat/Silence	Rigid Patriarchy; High Dropout	Survivalist
Phase 2: 2000s	Vibha Lad	Negotiated Agency: Bargaining	Transitional Middle-Class	Mediated
Phase 3: 2025	Shanta Gokhale	Intellectual Authority	Urban Sophistication	Assertive
Phase 4: 2026	Leena Rawal	Global Agency: Mindfulness	Digital India / Workforce	Empowered

Data Analysis: From the Drawing-Room to the Digital Workspace

5.1. The 1970s: The Psychology of Internal Exile

In Kamal Desai's *The Woman Who Wore a Hat* (translated 2025), the rebellion is characterized as a quiet, psychological withdrawal. Desai utilizes a haunting metaphor to describe the domestic trap of the 1970s: "The drawing-room was like a monstrous prehistoric octopede... it made me feel like a nonentity, a mere spectator of my own disappearance." In an era where external social mobility was severely restricted for the middle-class woman, the "Internal Mind" served as the primary, and often only, site of resistance against a suffocating domesticity.

5.2. 2000s–2025: The Negotiated Domestic Agency

Moving through the early 2000s and culminating in Shanta Gokhale's *The Way Home* (2025), the Marathi woman shifts from silence to active negotiation. In this phase, "Home" is reimagined as an intellectual state rather than a physical prison. As we know, Virginia Woolf said in her *A Room Of One's Own (1929)* that woman have been restricted by social barriers and must have their own room/ space to write, to create something new. Gokhale's narratives suggest that "Home was no longer a place of fixed addresses; it was the quiet space between my thoughts and my written words." This marks a definitive transition into "**Assertive Agency**"—a stage where the woman remains within the social fabric but dictates its meaning through her own intellectual authority.

5.3. 2026: The Globalized Agent of Change

The trajectory reaches its peak in Leena Rawal's *Pravas Manasvitecha* (2026). Here, the lexicon of "survival" is entirely replaced by "manifestation" and "entrepreneurial mindfulness." Rawal asserts a new-found professional identity: "Today, the feeling is entirely different... because this time, it's not someone else's book—it's my own!" This literary transition from 1970 to 2026 mirrors World Bank and NITI Aayog findings, which indicate that Indian women are increasingly leading digital enterprises and SMEs, achieving the full economic and leadership agency outlined in **UN SDG 5**.

Findings and Synthesis

The analysis reveals a definitive **Spatial Transformation** that is a movement from the **Internal/Psychological** (1970s) to the **Global/Digital** (2026). Translation acts as the "Temporal Bridge," restoring voices that were previously localized and aligning their regional resistance with international mandates like **UN SDG**

The synthesis of these four works demonstrates that the Marathi feminine identity has transitioned from a "**Survivalist Feminism**" to an "**Assertive Global Agency**," From the agency of a private, mental act of refusal to the woman who is the visible "Founder" of her own future. A key finding is that as the literature moves closer to 2026, the **domestic boundary dissolves**. The "drawing room" that once stifled Kamal Desai's protagonist has been replaced by the "borderless digital workspace" described in Leena Rawal's work. This proves that the evolution of Marathi literature in translation is not just a change in language, but a documented record of the Marathi woman's successful migration from the margins of her own home to the center of the global economy.

Conclusion: From Internal Exile to Global Impact

This research concludes that the fifty-year trajectory of Marathi feminine identity is a definitive movement from **"Internal Exile"** to **"Global Impact."** By tracing the psychological and sociological shifts across these four landmark texts, the study finds that the "New Woman" of 2026 is the direct intellectual successor of the 1970s rebel. The fragmented, quiet resistance identified in Kamal Desai's 1970s prose where the protagonist retreated into the mind to survive a suffocating domesticity; was not a sign of defeat, but a necessary evolutionary stage of resistance.

As this study has demonstrated, this private struggle evolved into the **Negotiated Agency** seen in the works of Vibha Lad and Shanta Gokhale. A significant finding of this paper is that Gokhale's transition from a translator of Marathi to an Original author in English represents the ultimate "crossing of the threshold." It proves that the Marathi woman no longer requires an external mediator; she has mastered the global language to narrate her own cultural reality. Finally, the 2026 narratives of Leena Rawal reveal the final shift into **Global Impact**, where "Mindfulness" and "Entrepreneurship" are no longer just personal survival tools, but professional blueprints for international leadership.

By linking these literary shifts to **UN Women** and **UNICEF** benchmarks, this paper confirms that the Marathi woman's "Arc of Assertiveness" is a lived sociological reality. She has successfully moved from being a "spectator of her own disappearance" to the **Architect of her own Global Destiny**. This evolution reinforces the emerging trend in English Studies that the future of the Indian canon lies in its deep, Trans lingual, regional roots.

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Unreliable Narration in *the Black Prince*: A Study of Narrative Technique

Pashte Yogesh Rajaram

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Research Student
Annasaheb Magar College Hadapsar
Email-
Yogeshrajarampashte@Gmail.Com

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Address for correspondence:
Pashte Yogesh Rajaram
Research Student
Annasaheb Magar College Hadapsar
Email-
Yogeshrajarampashte@Gmail.Com

Abstract

This research paper studies how Iris Murdoch uses "unreliable narration" in her novel The Black Prince. The story is told by Bradley Pearson, who is a writer and also the main narrator. But Bradley does not always tell the truth clearly. Sometimes his memory is confused, sometimes his feelings change the facts, and sometimes his ego makes him see things in the wrong way. Because of this, readers cannot fully trust everything he says.The paper looks closely at the way Bradley speaks, the structure of the novel, the editorial interventions and the special post-scripts added by other characters at the end. These parts show that the story has many different versions, and each version makes the truth harder to find. The paper also uses ideas from narrative theory, especially Wayne C. Booth's idea of an "unreliable narrator," to explain how Murdoch creates this confusion on purpose. The study argues that Murdoch does not use unreliable narration just to make the story exciting. Instead, she uses it to show her deeper message about life. Murdoch believed that people often see the world through their own desires and illusions. They fail to understand reality honestly because their ego gets in the way. By making Bradley an unreliable narrator, Murdoch encourages readers to question what they read and to think about how difficult it is to know the truth.

Keywords: *Unreliable Narration, Narrative Technique, Bradley Pearson, Iris Murdoch, Moral Philosophy, Ego, Metafiction*

1. Introduction

The novel *The Black Prince* was published in 1973. It is one of the central novels of Irish Murdoch's fictional work. Both a psychological novel and a philosophical exploration, the novel revolves around Bradley Pearson's retrospective account of his passionate love affair with Julian Baffin and the tragic events that follow. However, the novel's complexity lies less in its plot and more in its narrative structure.
The purpose of this paper is to analyze how Murdoch constructs unreliable narration and how this technique shapes the reader's understanding of truth, morality, and artistic creation. The study argues that Bradley Pearson is a deeply unreliable narrator whose self-deception and ego distort the events he recounts. By embedding multiple perspectives and editorial commentary, Murdoch transforms the narrative into a contested space where truth becomes provisional and interpretative.

2. Theoretical Framework: Unreliable Narration

The idea of an unreliable narrator became famous because of Wayne C. Booth in his book *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. He explained that a narrator becomes unreliable when the story told by the narrator does not fully match the deeper truth of the novel or the values of the author. This means readers cannot always trust everything the narrator says. There are many reasons why a narrator may be unreliable. One reason is limited knowledge. The narrator may not know all the facts, so the story becomes incomplete. Another reason is psychological instability. If the narrator is confused, stressed, or mentally disturbed, the events may be described in a strange way.
A narrator may also show moral blindness. This means the narrator cannot clearly understand right and wrong. Sometimes the narrator may use deliberate deception, where he hides facts or tells lies on purpose. Another common reason is emotional distortion. Strong feelings such as love, anger, jealousy, or fear can change how the narrator sees events. In modern novels, unreliable narration is often used to question the power of one single voice. It reminds readers that truth can have many sides. In The Black Prince, Iris Murdoch uses all these forms of unreliability. She creates a complex story where readers must think carefully before deciding what is true.

3. Bradley Pearson as an Unreliable Narrator

3.1 Ego and Self-Justification

Bradley Pearson presents himself as a serious writer who believes that no one truly understands him. He often speaks as if he is wiser, more intelligent, and more sensitive than the people around him. He wants readers to see him as special and different from others. Because of this, he describes himself in a very positive way.

Bradley tries to show himself as a victim of bad luck and difficult situations. He also presents himself as a moral person who always tries to do the right thing. At times, he speaks like a tragic lover whose heart is broken. He even believes he is a true artist living among ordinary and foolish people. These ideas help him protect his pride and make readers feel sympathy for him. However, when readers look carefully, his story often does not match his actions. He says he is calm and detached, but he becomes jealous and angry very easily. He claims to be noble, but he can also be selfish and controlling. His love for Julian seems more about his own dreams than real care for her feelings.

This shows that Bradley is not fully honest with himself or with readers. He uses the story to defend himself and appear better than he really is. Because of this ego and self-justification, he becomes an unreliable narrator.

3.2 Emotional Distortion

Bradley writes his story while he is in prison and thinking about past events. Since he is remembering old experiences, his memory may not be completely accurate. People often remember things differently after time passes, especially when strong emotions are involved. This makes Bradley's version of events doubtful.

His deep feelings for Julian strongly affect the way he tells the story. Instead of seeing her as a real person with her own thoughts and freedom, he often treats her like a perfect source of inspiration. He imagines her as a muse who can give meaning to his life and art. This shows that he is seeing his own fantasy more than reality.

Bradley also gives special meaning to simple actions. A normal smile, small conversation, or friendly gesture may be described by him as proof of great love. He turns ordinary moments into dramatic signs of destiny. This shows how emotions can change the way a person understands events.

At the same time, Bradley speaks softly about his own mistakes. He hides or excuses his weaknesses, but he quickly points out the faults of others. He judges them harshly while protecting himself.

Because of these emotional feelings, Bradley cannot describe events clearly or fairly. His love, pride, and imagination change the truth. This emotional distortion makes readers question his story and trust him less as a narrator.

4. Structural Devices and Framing Techniques

4.1 The Editor's Foreword

One of the most interesting parts of *The Black Prince* is the way Iris Murdoch builds the story using different layers. Before Bradley Pearson begins telling his story, the novel starts with a foreword written by P. Loxias. This is called a framing device because it places another voice around Bradley's story.

The editor says that he is publishing Bradley's manuscript after Bradley's death. This immediately makes readers careful. Instead of hearing Bradley directly, readers receive the story through another person. This creates distance between the narrator and the reader.

Because of this foreword, many questions arise. Readers may wonder if Bradley's manuscript is complete and real. They may also ask whether the editor changed some parts or added his own ideas. Another question is whether the editor himself can be trusted.

The editor's presence makes the story more mysterious and complex. It shows that truth may pass through many hands before reaching readers. We are not sure whose voice is fully honest. So, the unreliability of the novel is not limited to Bradley alone. Even the structure of the book becomes uncertain. Murdoch uses this technique to make readers think deeply and question every part of the narrative.

4.2 Post-Scripts by Other Characters

After Bradley finishes telling his story, the novel does not end in a simple way. Several other characters are given a chance to speak through post-scripts. These include Christian, Francis, Rachel, and Julian. Their voices are very important because they give different views of the same events.

These characters often disagree with Bradley's version of the story. For example, Rachel describes Bradley as controlling and manipulative instead of noble and innocent. Julian questions Bradley's romantic ideas about their relationship. She does not fully accept the beautiful love story that Bradley creates.

Other characters also point out Bradley's selfishness, pride, and wrong judgments. They show that he often misunderstood people and situations. This means Bradley's story may not be the full truth.

By adding these post-scripts, Murdoch breaks the idea that only one person can tell the correct story. Every character has a different opinion, and each voice changes the reader's understanding.

This technique teaches readers that truth is not always simple or single. Different people see the same event in different ways. Through these conflicting voices, Murdoch makes the novel richer, deeper, and more realistic.

5. Metafiction and Artistic Self-Consciousness

The Black Prince is a novel that often talks about stories, writing, and the work of an artist. This idea is called metafiction. It means a story that is aware of itself as a story. In the novel, Bradley Pearson does not only tell events from his life. He also keeps thinking about art, literature, and how a writer creates meaning from life.

Bradley wants readers to see him as a great artist. He often speaks about suffering, loneliness, and tragedy as if these things make him special. Sometimes he compares himself to heroes from William Shakespeare's plays. He presents himself like a tragic character whose pain is deep and noble.

Because of this, Bradley's story feels like a performance. He is not simply sharing facts. He is shaping his life into a dramatic masterpiece. He chooses words and events in a way that protects his image as an important writer.

This shows why he is unreliable. Bradley changes life into art, but while doing this, he also changes the truth. He makes ordinary events seem grand and tragic.

Murdoch uses this idea to show that storytelling can sometimes become self-deception. People may create beautiful stories about themselves, but those stories may hide reality instead of revealing it clearly.

6. Philosophical Dimensions of Unreliability

Iris Murdoch was not only a novelist but also a thinker. Her stories are closely connected to her ideas about right and wrong. In her book The Sovereignty of Good, she explains that one of the biggest problems in human life is the ego. Ego means thinking too much about oneself. When people are full of pride, desire, or selfish thoughts, they cannot see reality clearly.

This idea is strongly shown in *The Black Prince* through Bradley Pearson. Bradley's ego stops him from understanding other people honestly. He looks at the world mostly through his own wishes and feelings.

For example, he does not fully see Julian as an independent person with her own mind. Instead, he turns her into an object of beauty and desire. He also explains events in ways that fit the story he wants to believe about himself.

Because of this, unreliable narration in the novel is not only a writing technique. It also carries a moral message. Murdoch suggests that truth needs humility, kindness, and the ability to forget selfish pride. Bradley fails because he cannot see beyond himself. His mistake is not only intellectual but also moral.

7. Reader's Role in Constructing Truth

In The Black Prince, the story is told through many different voices and opinions. Because these views often disagree with each other, the reader has an important job. The reader cannot simply accept one version of the story as complete truth. Instead, the reader must think carefully and decide what may be true.

First, the reader needs critical distance from Bradley Pearson's voice. This means readers should not trust everything Bradley says immediately. They must question his words, feelings, and explanations.

Second, the reader must compare different accounts given by other characters. When several people describe the same events in different ways, readers have to notice the differences. By comparing these voices, they can better understand hidden facts and motives.

Third, the reader must make a moral judgment about the characters. Readers need to think about who acts honestly, selfishly, kindly, or unfairly. This helps them understand the deeper meaning of the novel.

Iris Murdoch does not give one clear final answer. She does not tell readers exactly who is right or wrong. Instead, she shows that truth can be uncertain and difficult to find.

The novel teaches that people often see life through personal feelings and limited views. Therefore, readers must actively search for truth, accept some ambiguity, and understand the limits of human perception.

8. Conclusion

Unreliable narration is one of the most important parts of *The Black Prince*. It is closely connected to both the artistic style and the deeper ideas of the novel. Through the story told by Bradley Pearson, Iris Murdoch makes readers question what is true and what is false. Bradley tells the story in a self-aware and emotional way, but his feelings, pride, and personal desires often change the truth.

The novel becomes more complex because of the editor's foreword, the different post-scripts, and the comments about writing and art. These parts add many voices to the story. No single person fully controls the meaning of the novel. Each voice gives a new view, and readers must think carefully before deciding what to believe.

Bradley's unreliability comes from several causes. His ego makes him think too highly of himself. His emotional obsession changes the way he sees love and relationships. His wish to appear as a great artist also shapes the story he tells.

In the end, Murdoch uses this narrative method to express her moral philosophy. She suggests that the greatest barrier to truth is the selfish self. When people only see through their own desires, they misunderstand reality. Therefore, *The Black Prince* is not only a story about love and art, but also a deep reflection on illusion, morality, and truth.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who supported and guided me throughout the completion of this research paper titled Unreliable Narration in The Black Prince: A Study of Narrative Technique.

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My special appreciation goes to Iris Murdoch, whose novel The Black Prince inspired this research. The novel's complex narrative structure, psychological depth, and use of unreliable narration provided valuable insights into modern narrative techniques and literary interpretation.

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A Study of the Reflection of Soft Masculinity in Arts and Literature: South Korea and India

Dr. Ingole Prashant Pradeep

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(Research Scholar)
Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, Pune
Email- ingoleprahant434@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Ingole Prashant Pradeep
(Research Scholar)
Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, Pune
Email- ingoleprahant434@gmail.com

Abstract:

Makeup with men showcases absurdum of the civilisation in specific community. If someone applies blusher, eyeliner as well as lipstick on his face, how many of you would wonder what he is up to as this is something extremely strange? Every woman exhibits a personality of men and every man signifies famine characteristics. God discriminated male and female on the basis of masculinity, anatomy and morphology of human body. Deliberate change in a personality creates menace and imposes several questions in front of tradition, culture and upbringing of specific society. Changing trend in Korea as far as men's makeup is concerned can be analytically examined in Indian context. There are several literary work of arts written in India represents several characters and stories which can be compared and contrasted to Korea. A man with masculine body can apply girlish makeup explores predicament in life in India but not in Korea. Hence, an attempt is made to criticise Indian psychology and Korean psychology with respect to the notion of having girlish makeup for men.

Key Words: *Makeup, Gay, Masculine morphology, soft masculinity*

1. Introduction

Many of you would even make fun on the above mentioned idea but things in South Korea are very different. There are several photos of members of BTS; it is one of the most acclaimed boy bands in not only South Korea but also in the rest of the world. These photos showcase the BTS members are wearing makeup, if in India a guy wears makeup what would people say? Oh, he is a gay. In India, with the patriarchal tradition and a taste or sense of typical masculine current of epics it seems absurd. (Banerjee, 2018). Being a gay is not a cuss word. Some people are gay, some are not. There is no problem in that and not all people wearing men are gay. In the South Korea 29-year-old Canadian YouTube celebrity 'Haeppy' was asked the same question. Did he think he was gay for wearing makeup? He said that after shaping his eyebrows and putting makeup, he got a lot more attention from girls. He said after ended up putting makeup on and stuff when I go out to clubs its completely different, it's ridiculous really, the attention I'll get from girls? (Osifo, 2021)

16-year-old South Korean you tuber Kim Seung-hwan was asked the same question during an interview by BBC. When he was asked about whether he taught he looked girly after put on makeup. He was almost confused by the question he said, "I do not think about this being a girly look". He also added that people wear makeup because they want to look good. He adds that "I feel much more confident when I put on makeup". And Kim Seung isn't the only man in South Korea wearing makeup. If you'll YouTube search "Korean men makeup tutorial", you would find a lot of channels that talk about it. That shows the beauty of men's talking about the beauty industry of South Korea there are some mind-blowing facts. For example, according to the Global data 2018 report, around 75 percent of South Korean men have a beauty treatment done at least once a week like going to the Salone or doing facial at home. According to (Rapp, 2020), "This figure was even higher for Generation Z respondents, with 58% of those born after 2000 saying they pamper themselves with "lengthy" beauty or grooming treatments at least once per week, compared to 34% of South Korean men overall. This phenomenon can be explained in part by the influence of K-pop, according to Roald Maliangkay, director of the Korea Institute at The Australian National University." In fact, in Seoul, many men don't even consider BB (Beauty balm) cream as makeup and if you think about it, may be that is okay. I am sure a few years ago; men who wore hair gel were made fun of. And now a lot of us use hair gel.

Now we will examine what led to this shift in Korean society. Due to which Korean men are wearing makeup? And what can the Indian society can learn from it especially about masculinity. A principal reason can be, those men wanted to differentiate themselves in the tough job market. (Cho, 2019) Hence, they tried adopting hard skills like doing courses or taking English language classes and indulged in other things like wearing makeup to improve their physical appearance now there might not be huge demand for makeup in India; there is huge demand of web developers and data scientists.

So, has the Korean society been accepting towards men wearing makeup, since long? Let us talk about Korean pop star K-pop star Yang Joon-il, a Korean American singer who performed in south Korea in early 1990's fans believed that he had glowing skin, he looked beautiful an was an ideal K-pop star. But unlike today when his looks are considered acceptable, in 1991 this display of beauty was considered offensive. Some people even threw food at him. When he is on stage while he sang, he was hated by many for his unusual looks and says an article by Korea times. Yang believes that his looks were so controversial. Korean government refused to renew his visa. Eventually, his career faded away some people opine that the reason why yang Joon-il was unsuccessful because he was ahead of his time in 1990's suits, luxury watches and a traditional strong male look where the ideal characteristics of men in South Korean society. In 1980's and 90's the salaried man was inclined towards male aesthetic suits, luxury watches and a traditional strong male look were the norms of Korean mandatory national service. (Moon, 2005)

Dr. Sung Jung a researcher on Korean society says, in 1980's and 90's men in K-pop content were largely given a tough guy image and gangster and detective films and rebellious young man in some TV dramas, such as gangster or detective. But all that changed in the mid 1990's when K-pop's first ever band group "Seo Taiji and The Boys" gained popularity. The group got banned from telecasts because they criticised the Korean education system but their uniqueness made them very popular among fans. Similarity H.O.T another band in Korea; had a similar impact on Korean society. Basically, these two groups played a major role in changing the "male image" in the Korean society. (Hegde, 2021)

Following the popularity of K-pop groups several mega entertainment companies entered the industry that introduced several boy bands, bands like, NCT 127, Pentagon, The Boyz, and TXT. They all changed the male image the makeup artist for pentagon says, "There is no difference between guys and girls makeup looks". Several entertainment companies invited a huge amount of money to be introduced in new boy bands. And K-pop bands such as, BTS, EXO, Black prinks, MONSTAX and Red Velvet have received phenomenal success not only in Korea but globally as well there are no reliable statistics to account for the K-pop fans all across the world. The Korea foundation (Affiliated to Korea's ministry of foreign affairs) estimated the number of fans of Korean pop culture in general to be around 9 crores across 133 countries. There are massive K-pop fans even in India! So inspired by these boy bands, many South Korean men began to wear makeup and began to portray soft masculinity. Now you can wander what do we mean by soft masculinity? Soft masculinity is masculinity that is different from the hard, toxic masculinity that we are used to. Hard masculinity represents men that are tough looking muscular and do not portray emotions. Soft masculinity is completely opposite to this and such men are known as Khonminam or Flower boys in Korean, which comes from combining the words for flowers and beautiful man. (BBC, 2018) M-Han Hyun-Jae, a senior makeup artist says that men come in wanting to look like their favourite K-pop idols Kim says that is normal for men to wear makeup today. "Today beautiful is a requirement for Korean men". At the same time, K-pop is not the only reason why Korean men are wearing makeup. There are two other theories painting to this change. The first theory suggests that it has become more difficult to men in Korea to get a job. James Turnbull a writer and lecturer based in the South Korean city of Busan, says that in this cut throat job environment the young men need to look for different ways to improve their profile. They do this by securing extra degrees, courses, internships, English language qualifications or by improving their looks and the beauty industry has been quick to exploits this need to sell more makeup products.

The second theory suggests that this change in Korean society was not driven by men alone. It was also driven by women as they were demanding for such men. Study shows that due to the 1997 Asian financial crises, unemployment across South Korea rose. Women were more affected by this employment resentment over the economic inequality, the rise of literature and film in Korean society that questioned traditional gender roles. Several women were seeking out male figures portraying softer masculinity. Now these theories could explain the adoption of makeup by men in Korean society as for the ground reality of Korean girls and boys in the Korean society has that changed any bit because of this? Are many boys now portraying soft masculinity? In fact, Korean society is still quite patriarchal that is male dominated. A 2015 government survey found that around 80% of respondents reported that they had experienced some form so sexual harassment in the work place. In the world economic forum 2021 rankings, South Korea stands at 102ND out of 156 countries in gender equality. In fact South Korean men earn 60 percent more than women, according to the gender ministry of South Korea inn 2021 talking about the 2246. Only 5.2% of all corporate executives in these companies were women. While on one hand K-pop is promoting soft masculinity, K-pop is reinforcing gender stereotypes on the other hand sexual objectification is very common in K-pop girl bands. Just like in Hindi songs. We can witness such sexual objectification in the lyrics and the videos of songs. For example, "Touch my Body" song by sister in fact research suggest that consumption of K-pop may make you create more patriarchal attitudes which tells how difficult it is to change such patriarchal attitudes despite the lack of progress in gender equality in South Korea, there is a lot that other countries can learn about masculinity from south Korea.

If we talk about china recently notice which was issued from china's education ministry suggested young Chinese men had become too "feminine" the Chinese government said that the country's most popular male role models are no longer athletic figures like are "Army Heroes" a similar perfect male image also exists in the Indian society which is often referred to as toxic masculinity. Rajeev Bhargava professor of centre for the study of developing societies explains that the model of manhood in India necessarily includes aggression a 'Real' man is quick to take up a figure. If he does not, he is told to wear bangles on his wrist.

Second men must be muscular and unemotional; for instance, research revealed that about 93% of men agreed with the statement. Third men do not need to consult others. They take independent decisions that requires no questioning as famously put by Amitabh Bachchan in on his films, 'Keh diya na…. bus...kehdiya' (Enough, I have said so) the

impact of this toxic masculinity can be clearly witnessed everyday in India for instance, last year, a 16 years old girl from Gujrat was beaten mercilessly as allegedly, she had dared to elope with a boy which according to the villagers brought shame upon the village. This is very essential to do because as we can see in the Korean example while their pop culture might have witnessed a change in their masculinity but pop culture is not enough to change on the ground realities.

In India, art in general and literature in particular exhibited plethora of characters and stories related to soft masculinity. In real life examples, numerous artists were either welcomed or disrespected due to soft masculinity. A journey of Narayan Rajhans to Balgandharv depicts a lot, "The year 1905 proved to be a turning point in the fortunes of Kirloskar Natak Mandali. It was also the beginning of Bal Gandharva's epochal rise to fame and popularity. His debut as a singer – actor came about at the age of 18 with Kirloskar's Shakuntal. This play generated keen interest and opened to a packed house, winning the hearts of stage lovers. In the years to follow, Bal Gandharva toured several cities and towns along with the Kirloskar troupe. He played roles that would make him famous: as Shakuntala (in Shakuntal), Subhadra (in Saubhadra), Bhamini (in Manapaman), Devayani (in Vidyaharan) and Nandini (in Gupta-Manjush)." (Varade, 2021) Jawed Naqvi says, "In the wider public sphere, in our region, gay relationships were more openly practised, even lauded. Ismat Chughtai, the 20th-century Urdu writer, did not discover lesbianism as a prevalent social more in Avadh. She merely made an interesting observation in her short story The Quilt about a nocturnal but merry relationship between two women of unequal social status. Indian men, if Urdu literature is credible witness, were even more openly gay. The homosexual relationships of poet Firaaq Gorakhpuri are legendary. Josh Malihabadi confessed to his affair with an Anglo-Indian boy, which was not the only one he had." (Naqvi, 2009) Karan Johar comments that "..... And finally end their journey with a physical transformation shepherded by stylist Maneka Harisinghania and hair and makeup artist, Shaan Muttathil, both of whom bring a profound dullness to every episode. A more apt title for the show would have been "I Have Celebrity Friends and I Cannot Lie" given that Johar treats it as nothing but yet another opportunity to brag about the list of famous people whose numbers he has saved on his phone." (Daas, 2020) Several Indian artists came up with girlish makeup as per their role in a movie or literature. Fans or Bhakts' are generally seemed to replicate their ideals to in morphological terms as well as looks.

Thus, mere make up cannot change ones real life attire. Make up adds a beauteous confidence in the lives of real personalities of the artist. Korea and India are on the same path of soft masculinity. In Korea people are changing and challenging firm beliefs of masculinities whereas, in India things are more challenging. Tradition and culture are the huge hurdles in the way of new arena of neo-liberalised phenomenon. These stubborn clutches requires tremendous change in human psychology. Beauty has nothing to claim either famine or masculine. Make up is the medicine and scope as far as psychology in general and career opportunities in particular.

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Dignity and Everyday Survival: The Portrayal of Black Women in the Works of J. California Cooper

Karanjule Reshma Sambhaji

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Research Scholar, Department of English and Research Centre, Sangamner Nagarpalika Arts, D.J. Malpani Commerce and B. N. Sarda Science College (Autonomous), Sangamner, Ahmednagar
Email: karanjulereshma070@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Karanjule Reshma Sambhaji Research Scholar, Department of English and Research Centre, Sangamner Nagarpalika Arts, D.J. Malpani Commerce and B. N. Sarda Science College (Autonomous), Sangamner, Ahmednagar
Email: karanjulereshma070@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the portrayal of Black women in the works of J. California Cooper situates her fiction within Black feminist and womanist traditions that challenge racist and sexist stereotypes and insist on Black women's inherent dignity. Building on scholarship that highlights how Black women writers portray African American women as complex individuals with agency, resilience, and self-definition, this study explores Cooper's narrative strategies across her novels. Using an intersectional framework informed by analyses of race, gender, and class in African American women's literature, the paper investigates how Cooper's Black women characters navigate economic marginalisation, emotional and physical violence, religious and spiritual worlds, and communal expectations. It also draws on work on Black women's "undisputed dignity," which foregrounds Black female bodies and subjectivities as central to redefining personhood in the face of degrading public images. Through close textual analysis, the study identifies recurring motifs of mothering, matrilineage, sisterhood, and spiritual resilience that align with Black matrifocal and womanist ideologies, emphasising motherwork, communal continuity, and female achievement. By comparing Cooper's fictional Black women with those in contemporaneous African American women's writing, the paper argues that her work both participates in and subtly revises late-twentieth-century discourses of Black women's empowerment, offering portraits that move from injury and constraint towards self-knowledge, communal care, and the reclaiming of dignity.

Keywords: *J. California Cooper, Empowerment, Black Women, Intersectional Feminism, Womanist, African American Literature.*

1. Introduction

The representation of Black women in African American literature has become one of the most urgent questions in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century criticism. Against a long history in which Black women's bodies were read as labouring, sexualized, and disposable objects rather than as fully human subjects, contemporary Black women writers insist on stories that centre feeling, thought, and ethical agency. Instead of repeating racist and sexist stereotypes, mammy, welfare queen, hypersexual seductress, they imagine Black women as world-makers whose daily choices hold families and communities together in the face of structural violence.

Critics have shown how writers such as Toni Morrison and Alice Walker craft Black women characters who confront "triple oppression" along race, gender, and class lines while still pursuing self-definition, spiritual wholeness, and creative survival. Within this broader tradition, J. California Cooper has often been praised for "healing narratives" that draw on oral storytelling, humour, and spirituality to accompany marginalised Black women toward self-recognition and hope. Yet Cooper's deceptively simple tales also provide a rich site for thinking about how dignity is lived, defended, and passed on in ordinary Black women's lives. This paper situates Cooper in the lineage of Black feminist and womanist writing on matrifocality, motherwork, and revolutionary forms of care. Reading her portrayals of Black women through three interrelated lenses (1) dignity versus dehumanisation; (2) mothering, matrilineage, and womanist "motherwork"; and (3) love, spirituality, and communal survival, it argues that Cooper crafts Black women as ethical subjects whose humanity persists, and sometimes quietly flourishes, within regimes designed to break their bodies and spirits.

Theoretical Framework

Black Feminism, Womanism, and "Undisputed Dignity"

Black feminist and womanist thinkers offer a language for naming the specific pressures Black women face and the ways they still insist on being fully human. Intersectional scholars point out that African American women have had to navigate domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and chronic economic insecurity while simultaneously carving out paths toward self-definition and liberation through spirituality, relationships with other women, and creative self-expression.

They are political practices that hold communities together and transmit alternative values across generations. Penier describes Black women's novels of the 1980s as "packed full of female achievement," especially in the arena of "motherwork," where mothers and grandmothers refuse the "zombification" imposed by dominant Western culture and instead nurture a womanist vision rooted in African histories and memories. By placing mothers and foremothers at the centre of communal life, these texts engage in what some theorists call "strategic matrifocal nationalism": they treat women's care work, storytelling, and ethical leadership as the true backbone of Black communities.

Sabrina Evans's notion of "undisputed dignity" further clarifies how Black women's bodies and everyday experiences carry symbolic weight in this tradition. In her study of Anna Julia Cooper, Evans argues that Cooper insists on Black people's inherent right to dignity and makes Black women's embodied presence the clearest sign of that claim. Dignity, in this sense, is not something granted by white institutions; it is asserted, often quietly, through posture, speech, style, faith, and persistence.

Although Evans writes about the nineteenth-century thinker Anna Julia Cooper rather than the contemporary fiction of J. California Cooper, the idea of undisputed dignity is deeply relevant to how Black women characters appear in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century African American women's writing. Within this framework, J. California Cooper's women can be read as figures whose lives expose racial and gendered injustice but never reduce them to pure victimhood. Their struggles with poverty, abusive relationships, and social disrespect are real, yet they continue to claim value for themselves and others in small, everyday ways, by caring for children, telling hard truths, seeking God, or simply refusing to believe they are worthless.

Bringing together intersectional feminist critique, womanist attention to motherwork and matrilineage, and Evans's language of undisputed dignity allows this study to approach J. California Cooper's characters as ethical subjects rather than as social "problems." Her stories show how Black women's quiet acts of endurance, care, humour, and self-respect challenge the structures that attempt to erase them, and how notions of dignity and survival are worked out not in grand speeches but in kitchens, church pews, front porches, and crowded buses.

Resisting Stereotypes: Complexity, Agency, and Everyday Life

Critical work on Alice Walker's fiction has highlighted how Black women writers challenge reductive stereotypes by crafting complex, agentic female characters. One recent study concludes that Walker "broke the mold by portraying Black women as complex individuals with their own desires and agency". Walker's women are not simply victims of racism and sexism; they think, feel, doubt, desire, and make mistakes. They quarrel with each other, form friendships and kinship bonds, and slowly come to recognise their own worth.

A similar commitment to complexity is visible in J. California Cooper's work. Her protagonists and narrators are rarely idealised. They are often poor, tired, angry, or confused; they sometimes make harmful choices or repeat cycles they wish to escape. Yet they are also granted rich inner lives, contradictions, and moral choices. Cooper's Black women characters frequently occupy marginalised social positions, as domestic workers, single mothers, underpaid carers, and rural girls with limited formal schooling, but the narrative voice insists on their intelligence, their capacity to judge right from wrong, and their deep practical wisdom. The reader is invited to see them not as "types" but as specific people, with particular loves, fears, and ethical dilemmas.

In this regard, Cooper participates in the broader project described in intersectional analyses, which "highlight the intricate and varied experiences of African American women" by attending to the interplay of race, gender, class, and power. Rather than offering a single story of "the Black woman," Cooper multiplies stories. Some of her characters endure abusive marriages; some struggle with colourism in their families; others wrestle with religious guilt, economic dependence, or the pressures of caregiving. Intersectional frameworks help illuminate how these women are constrained simultaneously by racism, sexism, and class exploitation, yet also how they find small pockets of manoeuvre within those structures.

Crucially, Cooper does not primarily stage resistance as dramatic rebellion or public protest. Instead, she turns the reader's attention to small, everyday decisions that quietly assert self-respect: leaving or refusing to return to an abusive partner; prioritising a child's education even when money is scarce; refusing the sexual advances of an employer; redirecting hard-earned wages to support an elderly parent or an unemployed sibling; maintaining personal boundaries in exploitative workplaces. These acts may appear mundane, but in the context of structural oppression, they become meaningful gestures of survival and self-definition.

This focus on everyday agency parallels Walker's depictions of characters who adjust within "systemic oppression" through "unity, spirituality, and personal expression". Both writers acknowledge that their characters cannot simply step outside racism or patriarchy. Instead, they show Black women carving out livable spaces inside these constraints: sharing stories with other women, cultivating spiritual practices, finding joy in children or lovers, or nurturing private dreams that sustain them through hardship.

Cooper's narrative techniques also enhance this humanisation and challenge stereotypes. Many of her stories are told through first-person narrators or omniscient voices that are closely aligned with Black women's viewpoints. These narrators comment, judge, joke, and sometimes directly address the reader, positioning Black women as the main interpreters of events rather than as silent objects of observation. By allowing her narrators to speak in colloquial language, to digress, and to offer moral reflections, Cooper asserts that their voices carry authority and interpretive power.

This strategy reverses the historical silencing of Black women in literature and culture, where their experiences were often filtered through white or male narrators. In Cooper's work, the Black woman storyteller

becomes the one who names injustice, remembers the past, and draws lessons for the future. Her "ordinary" speech and everyday wisdom are treated as sources of knowledge. This mirrors a broader trend in Black women's literature that centres their voices, concerns, and interpretive frameworks, and in doing so, contests the long tradition of racist and sexist misrepresentation.

Taken together, Cooper's characterization and narrative choices enact a subtle but powerful resistance to stereotype. By lingering on the daily lives of Black women, their labour, their conflicts, their small joys, and their ethical struggles, she affirms their humanity and agency. Her fiction suggests that dignity is not only claimed in grand moments of defiance, but is also quietly maintained in the routines of survival and care that structure Black women's everyday lives.

Mothering, Matrilineage, and Womanist "Motherwork"

One of the most persistent motifs in Black women's fiction is mothering in its many forms: biological, adoptive, and informal. Penier argues that Black women's renaissance novels of the 1980s celebrated mothers and foremothers for their resistance and placed them at the centre of communal life, using matrifocality to "forge unity and provide continuity between ancestral and modern times". Cooper's fiction similarly relies on mother figures, grandmothers, aunts, neighbours, and other "othermothers" as crucial sources of care, discipline, storytelling, and informal education. These women watch, correct, protect, and teach, often without recognition, but with a deep sense of responsibility for the next generation.

Penier, drawing on Valerie Lee, notes that the "heroic fictional mothers and grandmothers" of this period are reincarnations of the folk "granny," women who, "without a formal pulpit, preached a gospel of womanist ethics and theology" and whose fictional descendants are endowed "with a spirituality, a sense of mission rooted in traditional black religion" J. California Cooper's elder women often resemble these "granny" figures: they possess practical wisdom, religious conviction, and a strong sense of duty to younger people, even when those young people are not their biological kin. Through such characters, Cooper dramatises what Black feminist theorists call "motherwork": the labour of caring for children and community under oppressive conditions, which encompasses material support, moral guidance, emotional nurture, and political socialisation. In her stories, motherwork is frequently unpaid, taken for granted, and socially invisible, yet it is shown as the foundation of community survival and moral continuity.

Cooper's focus on matrilineage, stories of mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers, also echoes Penier's observation that Black women's writing "recites black matrilineage," celebrating a line of women who transmit "discredited knowledge" and cultural memory across generations. The past is carried in their memories, their sayings, their scars, and their faith. By foregrounding these women and the everyday labour they perform, Cooper aligns her fiction with womanist traditions that recognise Black women as keepers of history, ethics, and hope, and insists that their motherwork is both a personal sacrifice and a quiet form of resistance.

Spirituality, Love, and the Work of Healing

Another key dimension of Cooper's portrayal of Black women is spirituality. Like the "womanist theologians" described by Valerie Lee, many of Cooper's women practise a vernacular, experiential faith that blends Christian motifs with African American folk beliefs and everyday ethical codes, rather than formal church doctrine. Prayer, Bible verses, dreams, and signs from the natural world become part of how they read their lives and make sense of suffering. Even when life is harsh, these characters cling to a sense that God, ancestors, or "something bigger" sees their struggle and wants justice for them. This does not make them meek or passive. Instead, faith gives them the courage to leave abusive partners, forgive without forgetting, or start again in hostile circumstances.

Love, especially love between women, is intertwined with this spirituality. In intersectional readings of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, bonds between women create a sacred space where characters can speak the truth about abuse, shame, and desire, and begin to heal. Cooper's stories echo this dynamic. Women listen to one another on porches, over kitchen tables, or in church pews, sharing stories of betrayal and endurance. These scenes show that emotional survival rarely happens alone: it is woven through confidences, advice, humour, and the simple act of being believed. Romantic love, too, is presented as a complicated terrain rather than a straightforward reward. Many of Cooper's heroines begin in relationships marked by cheating, control, or economic dependency, but over time they learn to distinguish between genuine care and possessive "love" that demands their silence and self-erasure.

The work of healing in Cooper's fiction is therefore communal and ongoing, not a single dramatic moment. Healing looks like aunties taking in children when parents fail them, neighbours bringing food after a beating, or older women quietly telling younger ones, "Baby, you worth more than that." It also looks like characters developing self-respect: choosing rest over endless sacrifice, tending to their appearance as an act of pride rather than vanity, or setting new boundaries with family. Cooper's narrators often underline these moments with gentle moral commentary, inviting readers to see them as part of a larger womanist ethic where spiritual belief, everyday love, and collective care work together to mend the wounds of racism, sexism, and poverty. In this way, Cooper situates Black women's faith and affection not as a sentimental background, but as a serious, transformative labour of healing.

Dignity, Body, and Labour

Cooper's representations of Black women's bodies and work resonate with Black feminist critiques of how racism and patriarchy have long treated Black women as disposable labour rather than as full human beings. Saidiya Hartman shows that under slavery and its afterlives, Black women's productive, sexual, and reproductive labour were extracted through violence, while their experiences were folded into a supposedly gender-neutral category of "the worker," erasing specifically gendered harms and resistance. Stereotypes such as the mammy, maid, and "mule"

naturalise Black women's endless caregiving and emotional labour, making heavy work appear light or expected. Cooper's domestic workers, mothers, and community carers are written against this grain: the narration insists on how hard they work, how tired their bodies are, and yet how much intelligence and creativity they bring to survival. In doing so, her fiction participates in a wider Black feminist effort to name Black women's labour as work and to challenge the idea that their care is simply instinct or love.

At the same time, Cooper's stories refuse the fragmentation of Black women's bodies into either instruments of labour or sites of shame. Black feminist critics argue that Black women's bodies have been marked by medical racism, hypersexualisation, and idealised myths of motherhood that deny their pain and complexity. Contemporary work on embodiment stresses that the body is not a mere appendage to the self but a core part of subjectivity, even as capitalism and racism encourage dissociation between mind and body to keep workers compliant (Stevens; Cedeño-Pacheco). Cooper's narratives linger on aching backs, calloused hands, pregnancy, illness, and sexual vulnerability, but without reducing her characters to wounds or objects. Instead, embodied experience becomes a ground for self-knowledge and ethical judgment: the woman who decides she will not let her boss "run her to death," or who realises that constant exhaustion is not natural but a form of exploitation, is beginning to claim both bodily and moral dignity.

Recent Black feminist work on community labour describes a spectrum from reproductive labour that stabilises oppressive systems to transformative labour that both sustains life and resists domination. Cooper's women cook, clean, raise children, visit the sick, and organise quiet acts of support; yet many of these actions double as subtle refusals of dehumanization, refusing to be "maids of the world" while still caring for others (Cumberbatch, Gore, and Haley; Keizer). In this sense, their bodies and work are not only sites of exploitation but also of agency. By treating everyday labouring Black women as bearers of "undisputed dignity" whose worth does not depend on respectability or institutional recognition, Cooper's fiction aligns with Black feminist theory that reconceives Black women's embodied labour as central to struggles for justice rather than peripheral to them.

Continuities and Distinctiveness within African American Women's Writing

Across more than two centuries, African American women's writing shows strong continuities in purpose and theme. Writers from Phillis Wheatley to Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and contemporary authors consistently use literature as a tool to expose racism and sexism, assert Black women's humanity, and intervene in public debates about justice, citizenship, and womanhood. This tradition persistently foregrounds the double marginalization of Black women and explores intersecting oppressions of race, gender, class, and sometimes sexuality, long before "intersectionality" was named in theory. Community, memory, and a commitment to "racial uplift" and collective freedom bind together writers across periods, genres, and even national borders, as Latoya Jefferson-James shows in her diasporic pairing of early African American and Afro-Caribbean women writers.

At the same time, the body of work is marked by clear distinctiveness in form, focus, and historical situation across eras. Nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century women often wrote within or against religious, sentimental, and domestic genres, using them strategically to claim respectability, literacy, and moral authority while quietly reworking notions of home, motherhood, and female virtue. Harlem Renaissance writers experimented with poetry, fiction, and drama to challenge stereotypes and craft more complex images of Black women's beauty, sexuality, and political agency in a modern urban world (Jarrett-Macauley; Bah and Keïta). Post-1960s writers such as Maya Angelou, Walker, and Morrison develop more overtly feminist or womanist positions, employ experimental narrative forms, and center trauma, sexuality, and interiority as part of a broader Black Arts and feminist turn. Recent criticism and cross-Atlantic work on Black British and African American women writers also signal a shift toward transnational, diasporic frameworks and sophisticated narratological and ethical questions, rather than merely tracing a "maternal genealogy".

Taken together, these continuities and shifts position African American women's writing as a dynamic tradition: rooted in long-standing struggles over race and gender, yet continually reinventing its forms, themes, and political horizons in response to new historical moments.

Conclusion

J. California Cooper's portrayal of Black women belongs to a broader tradition in African American women's literature that challenges demeaning stereotypes and insists on Black women's humanity, agency, and dignity. In line with critical accounts of writers such as Alice Walker, Cooper constructs women who are complex, desiring subjects navigating "systemic oppression" through unity, spirituality, and self-definition. By foregrounding mothering, matrilineage, and womanist "motherwork," Cooper's fiction affirms Black women as the backbone of community life, echoing the matrifocal nationalism and celebration of foremothers described by Penier and others. Through its emphasis on spirituality, everyday acts of care, and the dignity of labour, Cooper's work exemplifies what Evans calls "undisputed dignity," presenting Black women's bodies and lives as non-negotiably worthy. For future research, closer comparative readings of Cooper's novels and story collections with those of contemporaries like Walker or Morrison could further clarify how narrative form, genre, and regional setting shape representations of Black womanhood. Attention to the history of reception and to how Black women readers have responded to Cooper's work would also deepen understanding of the cultural work her portrayals perform.

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The Power of Persuasion: A Stimulus-Response Analysis of TV Commercial Language

Saima Izharali Choudhary

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Abstract

The present paper delves into the role of persuasive language in Indian television commercials and how it influences consumer behaviour. The study focuses specifically on Indian television commercials aired between 2015 and 2025, covering a decade. Using the Stimulus-Response Theory as a theoretical framework, the study explores how linguistic techniques function as tools to influence audience perception and decision-making. Features such as repetition, emotional appeals, slogans, and direct commands act as 'stimuli' that elicit responses like recall, emotional connection, and purchase intention. This study applies a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analyses. The findings indicate that language choices in these advertisements are intentionally designed to trigger specific emotional and psychological responses. This aligns with the core principles of Stimulus-Response Theory, demonstrating how carefully selected words and tones can shape consumer behaviour. The study concludes that persuasive language in television advertising functions as a deliberate tool of influence rather than a neutral medium of communication. By highlighting the power of linguistic strategies in shaping consumer perception and purchase intention, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the link between language and consumer psychology in the Indian context.

Keywords: *Indian television advertisements, stimulus-response theory, consumer behaviour, persuasive language, psychology*

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M.A. English Student
Poona College of Arts, Science and Commerce (Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University)
Email: saimachaudhary9977@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Saima Izharali Choudhary
M.A. English Student
Poona College of Arts, Science and Commerce (Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University)
Email:
saimachaudhary9977@gmail.com

1. 1.1 Introduction

In contemporary times, advertisements have undergone a significant transformation. With the advent of digital media, social networking platforms, and changing consumer preferences, advertising is no longer limited to traditional channels. Modern advertisements are crafted to capture attention quickly and leave a lasting impression, using creative visuals, emotional appeals, catchy slogans, and persuasive language. While some audiences actively engage with advertisements out of curiosity or interest, others often ignore or skip them due to oversaturation. To adapt, advertisers have modified their strategies by designing content that is more interactive, entertaining, and targeted to specific demographics, ensuring higher audience engagement.

Television advertisements in India have mirrored these changes. TV commercials often blend information with entertainment, employing humor, celebrity endorsements, or emotional storytelling to connect with viewers. Despite the rapid growth of digital platforms, television remains a powerful medium, particularly for reaching diverse linguistic and cultural audiences. Among various products advertised on TV, food products occupy a prominent position, employing carefully crafted language and persuasive strategies to influence consumer perception and behavior. This research specifically focuses on the language used in Indian TV food product advertisements, exploring how linguistic features such as slogans, repetition, and emotional appeals act as stimuli that elicit specific responses from viewers.

Scholars have emphasized the unique persuasive features of advertising language. Leech describes it as "loaded language," underscoring its power compared to ordinary speech (qtd. in Shariq 565). Similarly, Dubovičienė and Skorupa note that catchy slogans are designed to capture attention and help products stand out in competitive markets (qtd. in Shariq 566). Raghavan further observes that Indian advertisements often evoke emotional and patriotic appeals to foster unity and communal harmony (qtd. in Shariq 566). Beyond these strategies, Shariq highlights the use of various linguistic, phonological, morphological, and stylistic devices that enhance the attractiveness of advertising language (567).

Semiotic elements also play a critical role in shaping audience perception. Sharma and Gupta argue that "Advertisements have a potential to influence the consumers and their social and cultural surroundings. These different signs, images, and symbols used in ads are an integral part of their communication process" (72).

They also note that mixing Hindi and English, commonly termed 'Hinglish,' is frequently used to reach a wider audience (74). Singh and Mishra emphasizes that English-Hindi code-mixing and code-switching are strategically employed in television advertisements to produce persuasive effects tailored to diverse viewers (2169). Similarly, Raj and Vijayan find that repeated exposure to food product advertisements significantly influences children's preferences and consumption patterns, and marketers strategically use language, signs, and symbols to capture attention effectively (738). They also underscore the roles of parents, policymakers, and advertising practitioners in guiding children's understanding of advertisements (738). Singh and Mishra further highlight structural techniques such as English lexical mixing and simple sentence constructions, which enhance the persuasive appeal of advertisements (2174).

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that Indian television advertisements carefully combine linguistic, semiotic, and audience-focused strategies to influence perception and behavior. However, despite these insights, most research has focused on general persuasive strategies or linguistic trends without systematically examining how specific language features function as stimuli that elicit measurable audience responses, such as recall, emotional engagement, or purchase intention. Furthermore, while some studies mention food product advertisements, there is a lack of focused analysis of Indian TV food commercials through the lens of Stimulus-Response Theory. This study addresses this gap by investigating how carefully crafted language serves as a deliberate tool of persuasion, influencing viewers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses.

Research Objectives

The present paper aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the key linguistic strategies used in Indian television food advertisements that serve as persuasive stimuli.
2. To analyze how these linguistic features influence viewers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of language-based persuasion in shaping consumer choices within the context of Indian TV food advertisements.

1.2 Methodology

The present study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative analysis to study Indian TV food product advertisements. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the persuasive strategies used in advertisements and their impact on audiences.

The study focuses on Indian television food advertisements aired between 2015 and 2025, representing trends over the past decade. A total of 15 popular advertisements were purposively selected based on brand popularity, memorable slogans, and audience recognition. These advertisements were originally aired on television and later collected from YouTube for analysis. Purposive sampling ensured that the selected advertisements were relevant and reflective of contemporary advertising strategies.

The qualitative analysis examined the linguistic and persuasive techniques employed in the selected advertisements. Key features analyzed included slogans, word choice, repetition, emotional appeal, code-mixing, and stylistic devices. The study applied Stimulus–Response Theory as a theoretical framework to explain how these language features act as stimuli, influencing viewers' emotions, thoughts, and behavior. This approach highlights why some advertisements are more memorable and persuasive than others.

The quantitative component involved a structured survey conducted through Google Forms to collect audience responses. A total of 65 participants, including both males and females, took part in the survey. The questionnaire was designed in the form of multiple-choice questions (MCQs), which ensured clarity, comparability, and ease of response. The survey measured audience recall, perception of slogans, emotional reactions, brand awareness, and overall engagement with the advertisements. The questions were designed in line with Stimulus–Response Theory, linking audience reactions directly to the strategies used in the ads.

The research was carried out in two phases. The first, qualitative phase, analyzed the 15 selected advertisements for their linguistic and persuasive features using Stimulus–Response Theory. The second, quantitative phase, involved administering the MCQ-based structured survey and collecting participant responses. Finally, findings from both phases were compared to gain insights into how the advertisements' language and strategies influence audience perception and retention, providing a complete picture of the effectiveness of Indian TV food advertisements.

1.3 Analysis

This section presents the analysis of 15 Indian television food advertisements selected for the study. These ads, aired between 2015 and 2025, were chosen for their brand popularity, memorable slogans, and persuasive strategies.

1.3.1 Qualitative Analysis

This part of the analysis examines the content, language, visuals, and stimulus–response strategies used in the advertisements.

The following tables provide an overview of the selected advertisements and their features:

Table 1.1. Stimulus-Response in the Selected Indian TV Food Advertisements

Sr.no.	Brand / Product	Ad Slogan / Tagline	Celebrity / Characters	Stimulus→ Response
1.	Maggi	Rishtey Maangey Bas 2-Minute	Ordinary Indian family	Tagline + family scenario → Emotional desire to buy & feel connected
2.	Frooti	Mango Frooti, Fresh and Juicy	Alia Bhatt	Tagline + celebrity + visuals →

				Excitement, craving, fun association
3.	Ching's Schezwan Chutney	Chutney nahi, rocket hai, rocket!	Ranveer Singh	Slogan + superhero visuals → Amusement, curiosity, perceive product as fun
4.	Sunfeast Dark Fantasy	Har Dil Ki Fantasy	Shah Rukh Khan	Tagline + SRK + fantasy visuals → Emotional desire, aspiration, brand prestige
5.	Mountain Dew	Darr ke aage jeet hai	Hrithik Roshan / Salman Khan	Tagline + hero visuals → Motivation, empowerment, brand association with boldness
6.	Cadbury Dairy Milk	Kuch acchā ho jaāe, kuch meethā ho jaāe	Ordinary people / family	Slogan + narrative visuals → Warmth, empathy, brand trust
7.	KitKat	Have a break... Have a Kit Kat! / Break par Sirf Break	Ayushmann Khurrana	Tagline + visuals → Desire for break, brand as pause
8.	Parle-G	G Maane Genius / Genius wahi jo auron ki khushi mein paye apni khushi	Child protagonist	Tagline + caring visuals → Emotional connection, trust, brand values
9.	Tata Salt	Desh Ka Namak	Ordinary people	Jingle + everyday life visuals → Emotional attachment, loyalty, trust
10.	India Gate Basmati Rice	India Ka Swaad Chakhte Hai	Amitabh Bachchan + real people	Tagline + cultural stories → Pride, connection, brand association
11.	Too Yumm!	Fried not, Fikar not / Eat Lot, Fikar Not	Virat Kohli	Tagline + celebrity visuals → Comfort, curiosity, trust
12.	Tata Tea Red Label	Swad Apnepan Ka	Ordinary people	Tagline + empathetic story → Warmth, acceptance, social trust
13.	Amul Butter	Utterly Butterly Delicious	Amul girl mascot	Slogan + whimsical visuals → Smile, recall, emotional comfort
14.	Boost	Boost is the secret of our energy	MS Dhoni + young girl	Tagline + celebrity + story → Inspiration, inclusivity, brand trust
15.	Catch Garam Masala	Catch Garam Masala… Kyunki Khana Sirf Khana Nahi Hota… Zindagi Mein Swaad Laana Bhi Hota Hai	Akshay Kumar + Rajpal Yadav	Slogan + comic visuals → Craving, joy, brand recall

Table 1.1 presents a comprehensive overview of how the 15 selected Indian food brands strategically deploy language, characters, celebrities, and visual storytelling to influence consumer perception, emotion, and behavior. The table reflects the Stimulus–Response framework, where each advertisement's slogan, tagline, visual elements, characters, and celebrity endorsements function as stimuli designed to evoke predictable emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses from viewers.

A key aspect of these advertisements is the use of linguistic stimuli in the form of short, memorable, and culturally relevant slogans and taglines. For example, Maggi's "Rishtey Maangey Bas 2-Minute" evokes familial warmth and a sense of connection, while Tata Salt's "Desh Ka Namak" fosters national pride and trust. Motivational and aspirational slogans, such as Mountain Dew's "Darr ke aage jeet hai" and Boost's "Boost is the secret of our energy," stimulate courage, empowerment, and personal achievement. These verbal cues combine simplicity, rhythm, and emotional resonance, making them easy to recall and directly linking the brand to affective experiences, especially among younger and aspirational audiences.

In addition to linguistic cues, visual and social stimuli play a critical role in shaping consumer responses. Ordinary families, children, and mascots in advertisements like Maggi, Cadbury Dairy Milk, Tata Tea Red Label, Parle G, and Amul create relatability and trust, allowing viewers to identify with the scenarios and perceive the brand as emotionally supportive. Celebrities such as Shah Rukh Khan, Alia Bhatt, Ranveer Singh, Virat Kohli, Amitabh Bachchan, Hrithik Roshan, Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar, and MS Dhoni function as aspirational figures, enhancing brand prestige and desirability. The presence of stars combines glamour with credibility, motivating audiences to associate the products with success, excitement, or social status. This dual approach of combining celebrities with relatable characters ensures that brands appeal to both aspirational and everyday consumers.

The table clearly demonstrates the stimulus–response connection, showing how verbal, visual, and social stimuli trigger specific consumer reactions. Emotional desire and connection are seen in advertisements for Maggi, Cadbury Dairy Milk, and Sunfeast Dark Fantasy, while excitement and fun are evoked by Frooti and Ching's Schezwan Chutney. Motivation and empowerment are generated by Mountain Dew and Boost, whereas KitKat focuses on relaxation and comfort. Trust and loyalty are reinforced by Tata Salt, Tata Tea Red Label, and Parle G, while humor and enjoyment are highlighted in Amul Butter and Catch Garam Masala. This mapping indicates that the stimuli are carefully crafted to produce both affective (emotional) and behavioral responses, ensuring that the advertisements actively engage and persuade viewers beyond simply informing them.

Several notable patterns emerge from the analysis, such as the dominance of emotional appeals over rational product information, with recurring themes of family bonding, nostalgia, indulgence, humor, and motivation. The integration

of visual storytelling, rhythmic taglines, and comic or whimsical elements further reinforces memorability and strengthens long-term audience engagement. Overall, Table 1.1 illustrates that Indian TV food advertisements employ a multi-layered stimulus–response strategy, where slogans, visuals, characters, and celebrity endorsements work together to enhance emotional resonance, reinforce brand identity, and foster consumer loyalty. By linking carefully designed stimuli to targeted responses such as joy, trust, motivation, craving, and comfort, these advertisements transform commercial messages into culturally and emotionally meaningful experiences.

In addition to stimulus–response elements, the following table presents the linguistic and persuasive strategies employed by these advertisements:

Table 1.2 . Linguistic and Persuasive Features in the Selected Indian TV Food Advertisements

Sr.no.	Brand / Product	Ad Slogan / Tagline	Language Style	Main Emotional Appeal / Message
1.	Maggi	Rishtey Maangey Bas 2-Minute	Simple Hindi, emotional	Family bonding, warmth, nostalgia
2.	Frooti	Mango Frooti, Fresh and Juicy	Simple English	Fun, playful, refreshment
3.	Ching's Schezwan Chutney	Chutney nahi, rocket hai, rocket!	Informal Hindi, metaphorical	Thrill, excitement, boldness
4.	Sunfeast Dark Fantasy	Har Dil Ki Fantasy	Hindi, poetic, aspirational	Fantasy, indulgence, aspiration
5.	Mountain Dew	Darr ke aage jeet hai	Simple Hindi, motivational	Courage, bravery, empowerment
6.	Cadbury Dairy Milk	Kuch acchā ho jaāe, kuch meethā ho jaāe	Hindi, poetic, rhythmic	Warmth, happiness, sharing
7.	KitKat	Have a break... Have a Kit Kat! / Break par Sirf Break	Hindi, modern casual	Peace, relief, relaxation
8.	Parle-G	G Maane Genius / Genius wahi jo auron ki khushi mein paye apni khushi	Simple Hindi, heartfelt	Empathy, kindness, emotional intelligence
9.	Tata Salt	Desh Ka Namak	Hindi, nostalgic, jingle	National pride, trust, tradition
10.	India Gate Basmati Rice	India Ka Swaad Chakhte Hai	Hindi, formal, warm	Cultural pride, hospitality
11.	Too Yumm!	Fried not, Fikar not / Eat Lot, Fikar Not	Hinglish, simple	Relief, guilt-free enjoyment
12.	Tata Tea Red Label	Swad Apnepan Ka	Hindi, inclusive, warm	Trust, empathy, human connection
13.	Amul Butter	Utterly Butterly Delicious	English wordplay, witty	Humor, nostalgia, imagination
14.	Boost	Boost is the secret of our energy	Simple English	Motivation, teamwork, perseverance
15.	Catch Garam Masala	Catch Garam Masala… Kyunki Khana Sirf Khana Nahi Hota… Zindagi Mein Swaad Laana Bhi Hota Hai	Simple Hindi, light conversational	Humor, food satisfaction, flavor

Table 1.2 illustrates the strategic deployment of language and emotional appeal in the 15 selected Indian food advertisements. The data reveal a predominant reliance on simple, culturally resonant language to facilitate comprehension and audience engagement. Hindi emerges as the primary linguistic medium (Maggi, Tata Salt, Cadbury Dairy Milk), fostering emotional and cultural identification among viewers. English and Hinglish are employed selectively (Frooti, Too Yumm!, Amul Butter) to appeal to urban, younger, and aspirational audiences. Certain advertisements further incorporate poetic, rhythmic, or metaphorical constructions (Sunfeast Dark Fantasy, Ching's Schezwan Chutney), thereby enhancing memorability and reinforcing brand distinctiveness.

The analysis further indicates that emotional appeal is the central persuasive strategy across these advertisements. Several ads emphasize familial bonds, warmth, and nostalgia (Maggi, Cadbury Dairy Milk, Tata Tea Red Label), evoking comfort, togetherness, and trust. Others foreground excitement, indulgence, or thrill (Ching's Schezwan Chutney, Sunfeast Dark Fantasy), while motivational and aspirational messaging (Mountain Dew, Boost) aligns the brand with courage, energy, and personal achievement. Humor and playful linguistic devices (Amul Butter, Catch Garam Masala) are employed to create entertainment value, strengthen audience recall, and enhance the overall approachability of the brand.

A detailed examination of Table 1.2 highlights several notable patterns. Hindi remains the dominant language across most advertisements, underscoring the importance of cultural familiarity to establish emotional connections. The selective use of English and Hinglish targets urban, younger, and aspirational consumers, reflecting evolving audience preferences. Emotional appeals such as family bonding, nostalgia, indulgence, and motivation are consistently leveraged, indicating that affective messaging is central to persuasive advertising in the Indian food

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sector. Poetic, rhythmic, and metaphorical slogans are frequently used to enhance memorability and differentiate brands.

In conclusion, Indian food advertisements strategically integrate simple, culturally contextualized language with emotionally resonant messages to influence consumer perception and behavior. The combination of language style, emotional appeal, and creative linguistic techniques establishes distinct brand identities and fosters positive audience engagement. By addressing values such as family, cultural pride, humor, indulgence, and motivation, these advertisements effectively capture attention, evoke affective responses, and reinforce brand loyalty across diverse Indian consumer segments.

1.3.2 Quantitative Analysis

This section presents survey data from 65 respondents regarding their perceptions of food advertisements, providing measurable insights into audience responses. The findings are organized thematically into demographic information, language perception, memory and tagline recall, behavioral responses, and persuasion in food advertisements. Each figure represents the percentage distribution of responses, followed by a brief interpretation.

Section 1: Basic Demographic Information

Age Distribution

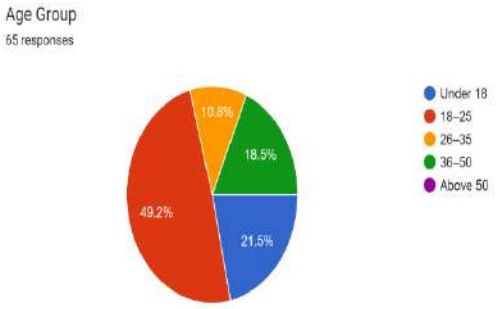

Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age Group (n = 65)

The majority of respondents (49.2%) belong to the 18–25 age group, making young adults the largest segment of the survey. Smaller groups included under 18 (21.5%), 36–50 (18.5%), and 26–35 (10.8%), with no respondents above 50. This shows that the study mainly reflects the preferences and perceptions of young adults, which is important for analyzing their responses to food advertisements and language.

Gender Distribution

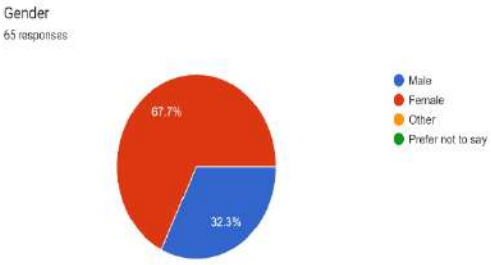

Figure 2. Gender Distribution of Respondents (n = 65)

Among the 65 respondents, the majority were female (67.7%, 44 respondents), while males accounted for 32.3% (21 respondents). No respondents identified as other or chose prefer not to say. This indicates that the survey results largely reflect the perceptions and preferences of female respondents, which may influence overall insights into responses to food advertisements.

Exposure to Food Advertisements

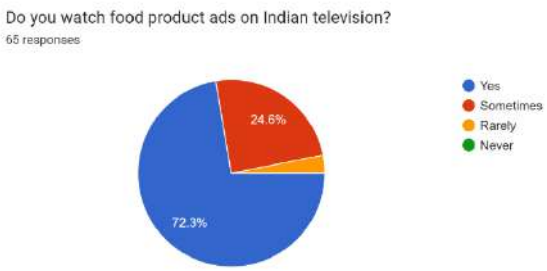

Figure 3. Frequency of Watching Food Product Advertisements on Indian Television (n = 65)

The majority of respondents (72.3%) regularly watch food product ads on Indian television, while 24.6% watch them occasionally. A small portion (3.1%) watch them rarely, and none reported never watching. This indicates that most respondents have some level of exposure to food advertisements, which is important for understanding their responses to ad language, slogans, and persuasive strategies.

Section 2: General Language Perception

Preferred Type of Ad Language

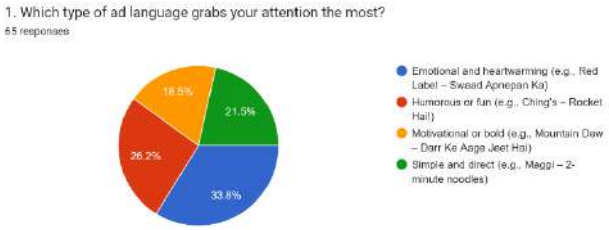

Figure 4. Types of Ad Language That Attract the Most Attention (n = 65)

The survey responses indicate that emotional and heartwarming advertisements attract the most attention, with 33.8% (22 respondents) preferring this style. This suggests that ads creating a personal or sentimental connection with the audience are highly effective. Humorous or fun ads follow at 26.2% (17 responses), highlighting the role of entertainment in engaging viewers. Simple and direct ads, like Maggi's "2-Minute" slogan, received 21.5% (14 responses), showing that clarity is appreciated but slightly less impactful than emotional or humorous content. Motivational or bold ads attracted 18.5% (12 responses), indicating that inspiring messages appeal to some, but are less dominant. Overall, the findings show that emotional appeal is the most influential factor, followed by humor and simplicity, in capturing audience attention.

Preference for Hinglish Ads

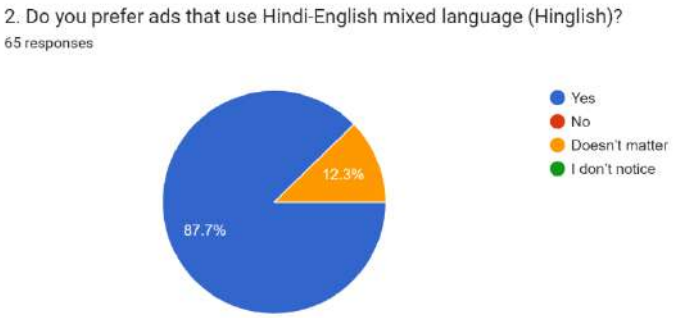

Figure 5. Preference for Hindi-English Mixed Language in Ads (n = 65)

Most respondents (87.7%) prefer ads that use Hindi-English mixed language (Hinglish), while a small portion (12.3%) said it does not matter or that they do not notice the language. None of the respondents disliked Hinglish ads. This indicates that Hinglish is highly effective and relatable for engaging Indian audiences.

Most Influential Element in a Food Ad

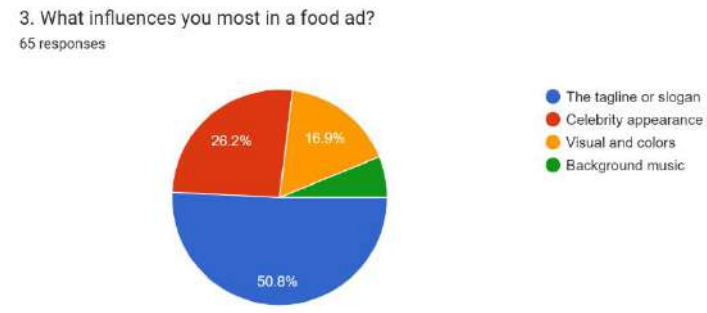

Figure 6. Elements That Most Influence Respondents in Food Ads (n = 65)

The survey results indicate that the tagline or slogan is the most influential element in a food advertisement, with 50.8% (33 respondents) citing it as the primary factor that grabs their attention. Celebrity appearance comes next at 26.2% (17 respondents), followed by visuals and colors at 16.9% (11 respondents). Background music is the least influential, with only 6.2% (4 respondents) considering it important. This suggests that clear, memorable messaging through taglines plays the strongest role in influencing viewers' attention in food ads.

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Section 3: Memory & Tagline Recall
Most Memorable Slogans

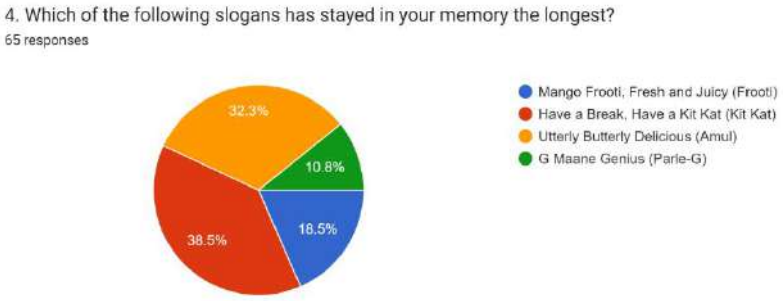

Figure 7. Slogans That Stayed in Respondents' Memory the Longest (n = 65)

The survey results show that "Have a Break, Have a Kit Kat" is the most memorable slogan, with 38.5% (25 respondents) recalling it the longest. "Utterly Butterly Delicious" (Amul) follows at 32.3% (21 respondents), while "Mango Frooti, Fresh and Juicy" (Frooti) and "G Maane Genius" (Parle-G) were less remembered, at 18.5% (12 respondents) and 10.8% (7 respondents), respectively. This indicates that catchy and simple slogans are more likely to stay in the audience's memory.

Frequency of Remembering Taglines

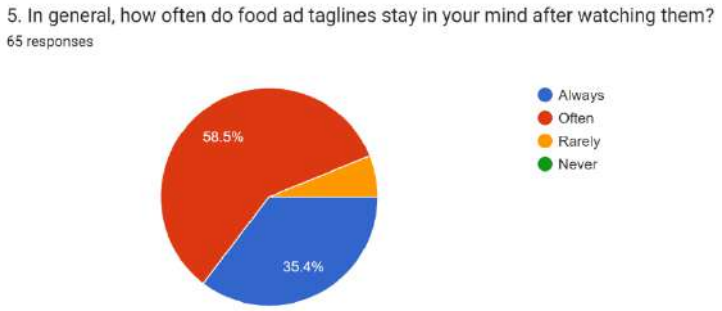

Figure 8. Frequency of Remembering Food Ad Taglines (n = 65)

The survey indicates that food ad taglines frequently stay in viewers' minds, with 58.5% (38 respondents) stating they remember them often and 35.4% (23 respondents) saying they always remember them. Only a small portion (6.2%, 4 respondents) recalled taglines rarely, and none reported never remembering them. This suggests that well-crafted taglines are highly effective in creating lasting impressions on the audience.

Taglines That Encourage Product Trial

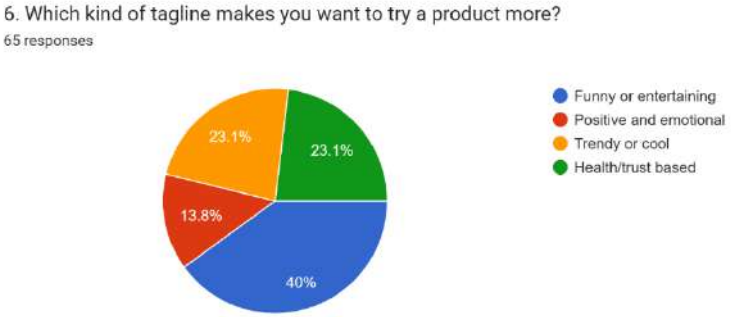

Figure 9. Types of Taglines That Motivate Product Trial (n = 65)

The survey results indicate that funny or entertaining taglines are the most effective in encouraging respondents to try a product, with 40% (26 respondents) preferring this type. Trendy or cool and health/trust-based taglines were equally preferred at 23.1% (15 respondents each), while positive and emotional taglines were the least influential at 13.8% (9 respondents). This suggests that humor and entertainment are the strongest motivators for product trial among respondents.

Section 4: Ad-Specific Behavioral Response & Emotion
Craving Induced by Ads

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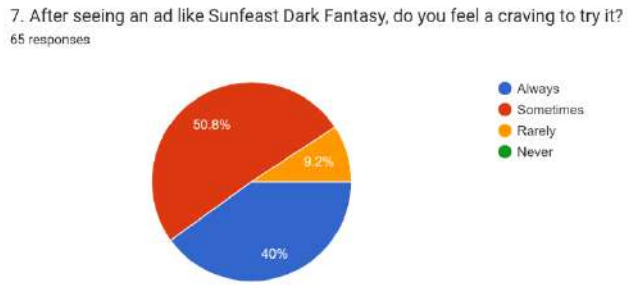

Figure 10. Respondents' Craving After Watching Food Ads (n = 65)

The survey results indicate that food advertisements effectively stimulate craving, with 50.8% (33 respondents) sometimes feeling a desire to try the product and 40% (26 respondents) always feeling a craving after watching an ad like Sunfeast Dark Fantasy. Only 9.2% (6 respondents) rarely experienced this effect, and none reported never feeling a craving. This suggests that well-designed food ads have a strong influence on respondents' desire and purchase intent.

Emotional Response to Taglines

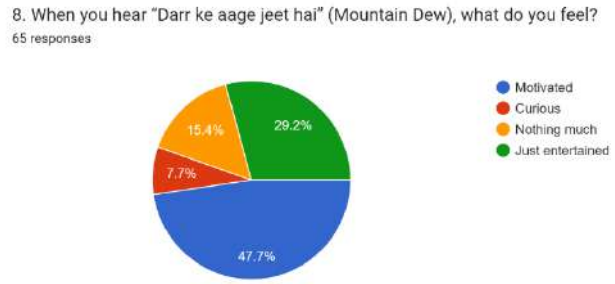

Figure 11. Emotional Response to "Darr ke aage jeet hai" (Mountain Dew) (n = 65)

The tagline "Darr ke aage jeet hai" (Mountain Dew) generated the strongest response of motivation, with 47.7% (31 respondents) feeling inspired by it. 29.2% (19 respondents) said it simply entertained them, while smaller groups felt nothing much (15.4%, 10 respondents) or curious (7.7%, 5 respondents). This shows that the tagline is largely effective as a motivational and engaging message, though for some it works more as entertainment than inspiration.

Health Perception Influenced by Taglines

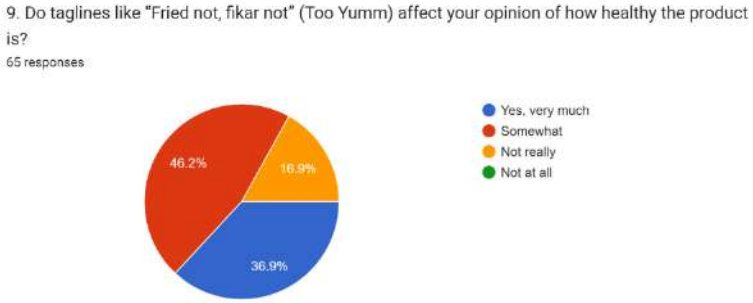

Figure 12. Effect of Health-Focused Taglines on Perceived Product Healthiness (n = 65)

The survey indicates that taglines like "Fried not, fikar not" (Too Yumm) influence respondents' perception of product healthiness. A majority, 46.2% (30 respondents), said it affects them somewhat, while 36.9% (24 respondents) felt it influences them very much. Only 16.9% (11 respondents) said it does not really, and none reported not at all. This suggests that health-focused taglines can significantly shape consumer perceptions of a product's healthiness.

Trust in Brands

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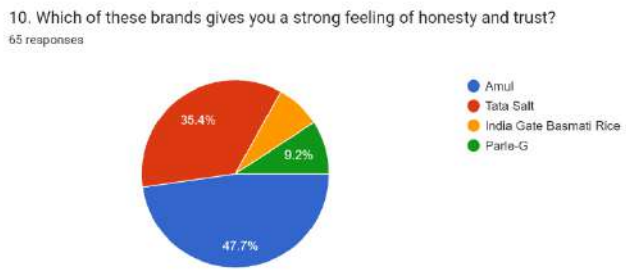

Figure 13. Respondents' Perceived Honesty and Trust in Brands (n = 65)

Among the given brands, Amul emerged as the most trusted, with 47.7% (31 respondents) associating it with honesty and reliability. Tata Salt followed at 35.4% (23 respondents), while Parle-G (9.2%) and India Gate Basmati Rice (7.7%) received relatively lower trust scores. This suggests that Amul and Tata Salt hold the strongest brand credibility in the minds of consumers.

Section 5: Persuasion, Mood & Buying Behavior

Emotional Connection with Ads

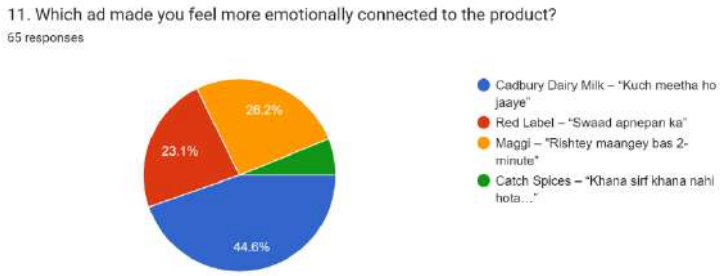

Figure 14. Ads Creating Strongest Emotional Connection (n = 65)

The ad that created the strongest emotional connection was Cadbury Dairy Milk's "Kuch meetha ho jaaye", chosen by 44.6% (29 respondents). Maggi's "Rishtey maangey bas 2-minute" followed with 26.2% (17 respondents), and Red Label's "Swaad apnepan ka" with 23.1% (15 respondents). Catch Spices' tagline had the least impact at 6.2% (4 respondents). This shows that ads focusing on sweetness, relationships, and togetherness tend to build stronger emotional bonds with audiences.

Perceived Persuasive Power of Ad Language

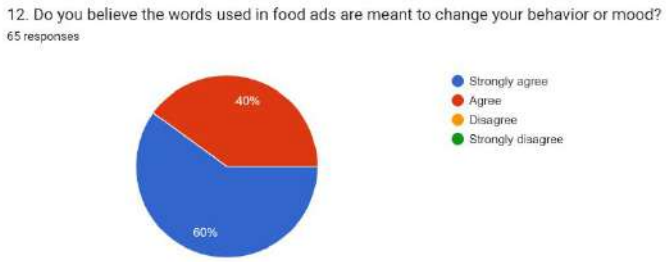

Figure 15. Influence of Ad Language on Behavior and Mood (n = 65)

The survey results show complete agreement that the words used in food advertisements influence people, with 60% (39 respondents) strongly agreeing and 40% (26 respondents) agreeing. This indicates that respondents are highly aware of the persuasive power of advertising language and recognize its role in shaping mood, thinking, and behavior.

Influence on Buying Decisions

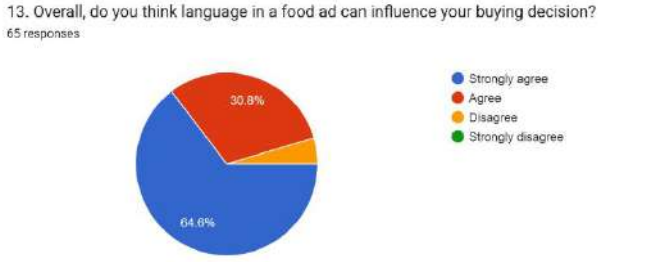

Figure 16. Impact of Ad Language on Buying Decisions (n = 65)

Most respondents (64.6%, 42 respondents) strongly agreed that the language used in food advertisements can influence their buying decisions, while 30.8% (20 respondents) agreed. Only 4.6% (3 respondents) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. This indicates that the choice of words in ads plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions.

Power of Language in Ads

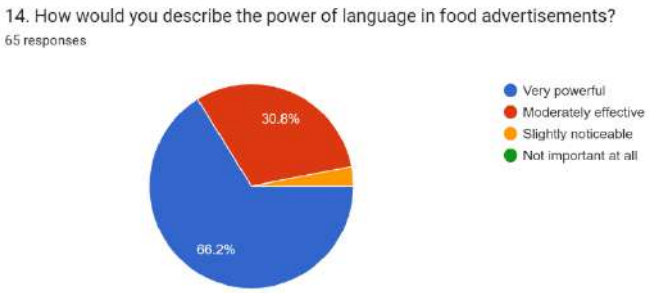

Figure 17. Respondents' Perception of the Power of Language in Food Ads (n = 65)

The survey reveals that language in food advertisements is highly influential. Most respondents (66.2%, 43 respondents) consider it very powerful, while 30.8% (20 respondents) find it moderately effective. Only a small portion (3.1%, 2 respondents) think it is slightly noticeable, and none rated it as unimportant. This highlights that language is a key tool in food advertisements, strongly shaping how audiences perceive and respond to products.

Most Persuasive Tagline Overall

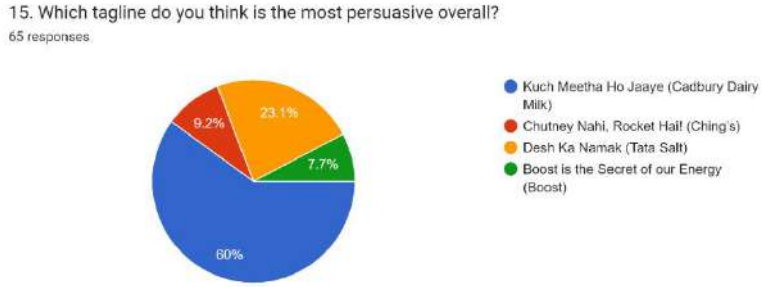

Figure 18. Most Persuasive Food Advertisement Taglines (n = 65)

Cadbury Dairy Milk's "Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye" emerged as the most persuasive tagline, selected by 60% (39 respondents), reflecting its strong emotional and indulgent appeal. Tata Salt's "Desh Ka Namak" followed with 23.1% (15 respondents). Ching's "Chutney Nahi, Rocket Hai!" and Boost's "Boost is the Secret of our Energy" had much lower influence, at 9.2% (6 respondents) and 7.7% (5 respondents), respectively. This indicates that taglines focusing on enjoyment, sweetness, and emotional connection are more effective in capturing audience attention and shaping perceptions than those emphasizing humor or energy.

The analysis of the preceding responses provides comprehensive insights into audience perceptions, preferences, and behavioral tendencies. The following conclusion synthesizes these findings and highlights the overall implications within the framework of the Stimulus-Response model.

The quantitative data demonstrates that Indian food advertisements exert significant influence through emotional appeal, Hinglish language, and memorable taglines, which emerge as the most persuasive tools. While elements such as visuals, music, and celebrity endorsements hold secondary importance, trust and credibility remain closely associated with established brands like Amul and Tata Salt. Overall, the findings confirm the effectiveness of the Stimulus-Response Framework, showing that strategic linguistic and cultural stimuli consistently generate measurable consumer responses in terms of attention, recall, emotional engagement, and purchase intent.

1.4 Findings and Conclusion

1.4.1 Findings

The analysis of fifteen selected Indian television food advertisements, aired between 2015 and 2025, revealed several consistent patterns in the use of persuasive language. Emotional appeals were predominantly employed, particularly targeting familial bonds, nostalgia, and personal happiness. These advertisements frequently invoked feelings of warmth, care, and celebration, creating emotional connections strong with the audience.

Celebrity endorsements were consistently used as a persuasive strategy. Renowned personalities were shown enjoying or recommending the products, thereby increasing the perceived credibility and attractiveness of the advertised food items.

Memorable slogans and catchphrases played a critical role in reinforcing brand recall. The repeated use of short, simple, and impactful language allowed the advertisements to leave lasting impressions on viewers.

Finally, the study confirmed that the Stimulus-Response Theory underpins these strategies, as the advertisements successfully elicited intended emotional and cognitive responses from the audience. Viewers were stimulated through visual and verbal cues, shaping their perception of the brand and increasing their likelihood of engagement or consumption.

These findings from advertisement analysis were further corroborated by survey responses from 65 participants, highlighting the practical impact of linguistic strategies on consumer perception and behavior:

1. **Effectiveness of Linguistic Strategies**: Advertisements relied heavily on short, memorable slogans, catchy taglines, and simple language. Emotional appeals, humor, motivational messages, and culturally relevant references created a strong connection with viewers.
2. **Emotional and Behavioral Responses**: Popular slogans such as "Have a break, Have a Kit Kat" and "Kuch meetha ho jaaye" evoked lasting recall, emotional attachment, and desire to try the product. Motivational ads inspired courage and empowerment, while humorous or entertaining ads encouraged engagement.
3. **Role of Celebrities and Characters**: Celebrity endorsements enhanced brand prestige and positively influenced viewer perception, whereas ordinary characters and mascots increased relatability, trust, and emotional bonding.
4. **Memory and Purchase Intention**: A significant majority of respondents remembered ad slogans frequently and agreed that the language of advertisements affected mood, behavior, and buying decisions, confirming the persuasive power of linguistic strategies.
5. **Patterns Across Advertisements**: Emotional appeals dominated over rational product information. Themes of family bonding, nostalgia, indulgence, motivation, and humor were recurrent. Language, visuals, and social stimuli were carefully integrated to trigger predictable cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses.

1.4.2 Conclusion

This study confirms that persuasive language in Indian TV food advertisements is a deliberate tool designed to influence consumer behavior. By applying Stimulus-Response Theory, it is evident that linguistic elements like slogans, taglines, and code-mixing act as stimuli, eliciting emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses.

Emotional appeal, simplicity, and cultural relevance make advertisements memorable and relatable, while celebrity endorsements and relatable characters amplify brand trust, aspiration, and engagement.

The combination of language, visuals, and semiotic elements transforms ordinary commercials into culturally meaningful experiences that affect perception, desire, and purchase intentions.

Overall, the study highlights the power of language in advertising, showing that Indian food commercials are carefully crafted to influence viewers' emotions, attitudes, and buying behavior. This reinforces the importance of Stimulus-Response Theory in understanding how communication strategies shape consumer psychology in the Indian context.

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Conflicts of interest

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

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Innovative Methods in Teaching English Literature: Emerging Trends and Bridging Literature, Culture and Society

Prof. Mehrunnisa Pathan[1] Rajendra Shankarrao Wagh[2]

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[1]Dept. of English
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar
[2]Research Scholar, Dept. of English
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

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Address for correspondence:
Prof. Mehrunnisa Pathan
Dept. of English
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar
raju1041983@gmail.com

Abstract

, and project-based learning can make literature more interesting and meaningful. own lives, culture, and society. The paper studies these ideas in the Indian context, keeping in mind the goals of the National Education Policy 2020, which supports experiential learning and critical thinking. This research is based on qualitative analysis using books, research papers, and policy documents. It concludes that innovative teaching methods can The study of literature, culture, and society has become very important in modern English studies. Today, literature is not seen as separate from life, but as something that reflects culture and society, and also influences them. New trends in English studies focus more on understanding cultural values, social issues, and the connection between different subjects. Because of this, the way we teach English literature also needs to change. Traditional methods are not enough to explain these connections clearly. Therefore, this study on Innovative Methods in Teaching English Literature: Bridging Literature, Culture, and Society focuses on how new teaching methods can help students understand the link between literature, culture, and society in a better and more meaningful way. This research paper studies the close relationship between literature, culture, and society, and explains how new and innovative methods of teaching English literature can strengthen this connection. Literature is not just written text; it reflects human life, social conditions, and cultural values. It shows how people think, live, and interact in society. At the same time, culture and society influence the themes and ideas found in literature. Thus, literature, culture, and society are deeply connected and depend on each other.

Earlier research by scholars like Louise Rosenblatt, Stuart Hall, and Paulo Freire has highlighted the importance of active learning, cultural understanding, and critical thinking in teaching literature. However, in many classrooms, traditional teaching methods such as lectures and exam-focused teaching are still commonly used. These methods often make students passive learners, limit their thinking, and fail to connect literature with real-life experiences. This shows a gap between theory and actual classroom practice. To overcome this gap, this paper suggests the use of innovative and student-centered teaching methods. It discusses how methods like digital tools, activity-based learning, interdisciplinary teaching, culturally responsive teachingThese methods help students connect literary texts with their effectively connect literature, culture, and society, and make English literature teaching more engaging and relevant

Key words: *Literature, Culture, Society, English Literature Teaching, Innovative Methods, Pedagogy, NEP 2020, Critical Thinking*

1 Introduction

The study of English language and literature in India has developed over a long period and reflects the country's social, cultural, and educational changes. The beginning of English education in India can be traced to the colonial period, especially after Macaulay's Minute on Education, which promoted English as the medium of instruction. This led to the introduction of English in schools and colleges and made it an important part of the Indian education system. In the early stages, English literature in India mainly consisted of British literary works. Gradually, Indian writers began to use English to express their own experiences, leading to the growth of Indian Writing in English. Writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan played a key role in this development. Their works clearly show how literature reflects society and how social life provides themes and ideas for literary creation.

Literature, culture, and society are closely connected. Culture is an important part of society, including beliefs, values, customs, and traditions. Society creates culture, and culture shapes society. Together, they influence literature. As Raymond Williams explains, culture is a "whole way of life." Similarly, Terry Eagleton states that literature is shaped by social and cultural forces. Language plays a key role in this relationship, as it carries cultural meanings and social experiences, which are reflected in literature. With the spread of English education, different methods of teaching English and literature were introduced. Traditional methods such as the Grammar-Translation Method, Lecture Method, and Biographical Approach were widely used.

Linguists like Henry Sweet and Otto Jespersen contributed to language teaching methods. For example, the Grammar-Translation Method focused on translating texts, but it did not help students understand the cultural and social meaning of literature. In the beginning, Indian students mainly studied Western literature. Later, they were introduced to global and world literature. This helped them understand the relationship between literature, culture, and society across different contexts. However, traditional teaching methods had many limitations. They made students passive, reduced critical thinking, and did not connect literature with real life. As a result, new and innovative methods of teaching English literature were developed. Approaches such as Reader-Response Theory by Louise Rosenblatt, activity-based learning, and interdisciplinary teaching encouraged active participation and better understanding. These methods helped students connect literature with their own experiences and social realities.

In recent years, new trends in English studies have emerged, such as digital learning, multicultural education, and critical pedagogy influenced by Paulo Freire. In India, reforms like the National Education Policy 2020 promote experiential learning, critical thinking, and innovative teaching methods. Educational commissions and policies also encourage teachers to adopt learner-centered approaches.

In this context, the present research paper studies the relationship between literature, culture, and society and explores how innovative methods of teaching English literature can strengthen this connection. It examines traditional and modern teaching methods, identifies their strengths and limitations, and suggests effective ways to make literature teaching more meaningful, engaging, and socially relevant. This study is based on a qualitative and analytical research design. It uses secondary sources such as books, research articles, journals, and policy documents as tools for data collection. The research method includes critical analysis, interpretation, and comparison of existing theories and teaching practices. Through this approach, the paper aims to provide a clear and practical understanding of how innovative teaching methods can bridge literature, culture, and society in the present educational context.

2 Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

This section explains the key concepts used in the study and connects them with important theories related to literature teaching. Understanding these concepts helps to clearly explain how innovative methods can bridge literature, culture, and society.

2.1. Literature

Literature refers to written or spoken works that express human experiences, emotions, and ideas. It includes poetry, drama, fiction, and essays. Literature is not only imaginative writing but also a reflection of real-life situations.

According to Terry Eagleton, literature is shaped by social, political, and ideological forces. This means literature cannot be studied separately from society. It reflects issues such as class, gender, identity, and power.

In teaching, literature helps students understand life, values, and human relationships.

2.2 Culture

Culture includes beliefs, values, customs, traditions, language, and ways of living shared by a group of people. It forms the identity of a society.

Raymond Williams defines culture as a “whole way of life.” This shows that culture is present in everyday practices and is closely connected with literature. Literary texts often represent cultural practices and traditions.

In literature teaching, understanding culture helps students interpret texts more deeply.

2.3 Society

Society is a group of people living together with shared rules, institutions, and relationships. It provides the context in which literature is created and understood.

Literature reflects social realities such as inequality, justice, and social change. At the same time, literature can influence society by shaping ideas and attitudes.

2.4 Relationship between Literature, Culture, and Society

Literature, culture, and society are interdependent:

Society creates culture

Culture shapes human thinking

Literature expresses both culture and society

Language acts as a medium connecting all three. Through literature, students can understand social values and cultural diversity.

2.5 English Literature Teaching

English literature teaching refers to the methods and practices used to help students understand and appreciate literary texts.

Traditionally, teaching focused on explanation and memorization. However, modern approaches emphasize interpretation, discussion, and critical thinking.

2.6 Pedagogy

Pedagogy means the art and science of teaching. It includes teaching methods, strategies, and approaches used in the classroom.

Paulo Freire introduced critical pedagogy, which promotes active learning and questioning. He opposed passive learning and encouraged students to think critically about society.

In literature teaching, pedagogy plays a key role in making learning meaningful and engaging.

2.7 Innovative Methods

Innovative methods refer to new and creative ways of teaching that focus on student participation and real-life connection.

These include:
Digital learning
Activity-based learning
Project-based learning
Interdisciplinary teaching
Reader-response approach (Louise Rosenblatt)
These methods help students connect literature with their own experiences and social realities.

2.8 Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to analyse, interpret, and evaluate ideas. It helps students question and understand deeper meanings in literature.
Through literature, students can think about social issues, cultural values, and human behaviour. Critical thinking is essential for meaningful learning.

2.9 NEP 2020 and Literature Teaching

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes:
Experiential learning
Critical thinking
Multidisciplinary approach
Use of technology
These principles support innovative methods of teaching English literature. NEP 2020 encourages teachers to move away from rote learning and adopt learner-centered approaches.

2.10 Theoretical Linkage

The concepts discussed above are supported by major theories:
Reader-Response Theory – Focus on student interpretation (Rosenblatt)
Cultural Studies – Literature as cultural product (Stuart Hall)
Critical Pedagogy – Education for social change (Freire)
These theories provide a strong foundation for using innovative methods in teaching literature.

Review of Literature

The relationship between literature, culture, and society, along with the need for innovative pedagogy in English studies, has been widely explored by scholars. Their works provide a strong foundation for understanding how teaching methods can bridge literature, culture, and society in the context of emerging trends.
To begin with, **Terry Eagleton** in his book *Literary Theory: An Introduction (2008)* explains the social nature of literature. He argues that literature is shaped by ideology and historical context.
"Literature cannot be understood outside the social and ideological conditions in which it is produced." (Eagleton 5)
This idea clearly shows that literature is connected with society and culture, and therefore, its teaching should also focus on these connections.
From a cultural perspective, **Raymond Williams** in *Culture and Society (1958*) defines culture as:
"Culture is a whole way of life." (Williams 18)
This concept highlights that literature reflects everyday life, traditions, and values. Similarly, **Stuart Hall** in *Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms (1980)* states:
"Cultural practices and texts are sites where meanings are produced and contested." (Hall 30)
These ideas show that literature is a cultural product and must be taught in relation to society.
Indian writers like **Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan** demonstrate how literature reflects Indian society.
"Literature reflects the realities of human life and social conditions."
For example, *Narayan's Malgudi Days (1943)* presents the simplicity and complexity of Indian life, showing the close link between literature, culture, and society.
From an Indian critical perspective, **K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar** in *Indian Writing in English (1962)* explains:
"Indian Writing in English is an expression of Indian sensibility, culture, and identity." (Iyengar 12)
This highlights the importance of teaching literature with cultural context.
In the field of pedagogy**, Paulo Freire** in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970)* introduces the idea of critical pedagogy.
"*Education should enable learners to question and transform their reality." (Freire 66)*
This concept supports innovative teaching methods that encourage critical thinking and active participation.
Elaine Showalter in *Teaching Literature (2003*) emphasizes modern teaching practices.
"Teaching literature should involve interactive, creative, and student-centered methods." (Showalter 45)
This directly supports innovative pedagogy in literature classrooms.
From a linguistic perspective, **David Crystal** in *What Is Linguistics? (1969)* states:
"Language is the primary medium through which meaning and culture are communicated." (Crystal 10)
This shows that language connects literature with culture and society.
Similarly, *Language through Literature (1969)* by **the Central Institute of English, Hyderabad,** explains:
"Literature provides a natural context for language learning and cultural understanding." (p. 22)
This supports the integrated approach of teaching language through literature.
Claire Kramsch in *Language and Culture (1998)* highlights:
"Language teaching must include cultural understanding to be meaningful." (Kramsch 3)

This strengthens the idea of culturally responsive teaching.

Louise Rosenblatt in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem (1978)* introduces reader-response theory:

"The reader actively creates meaning through interaction with the text." (Rosenblatt 24)

This forms the basis for interactive and student-centered teaching methods.

In the Indian educational context, *Pedagogy of School Subject: English* by **Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (2020)** emphasizes:

"Teaching should be learner-centered, activity-based, and focused on developing critical thinking skills." (YCMOU 2020)

This aligns with modern innovative teaching practices.

The **National Education Policy 2020** further supports these ideas by promoting experiential learning, multidisciplinary approaches, and the development of 21st-century skills. It encourages the use of innovative methods such as digital learning, project-based learning, and collaborative learning.

Link with Emerging Trends and Bridging Literature, Culture, and Society

The above studies clearly show that literature is deeply connected with culture and society, and pedagogy plays a key role in understanding this relationship. Emerging trends in English studies focus on interdisciplinary, cultural studies, digital humanities, and learner-centered approaches.

Innovative methods of teaching English literature help in:

- Bridging the gap between text and real-life experience
- Promoting cultural awareness and social understanding
- Developing critical and creative thinking
- Encouraging active student participation

Thus, pedagogy becomes a powerful tool in connecting literature, culture, and society. However, despite strong theoretical support, traditional methods are still widely used in classrooms. This creates a gap between theory and practice**.**

4. Research Method

This study is based on **a qualitative research design,** as it focuses on understanding concepts, ideas, and teaching practices rather than collecting numerical data. The research follows an **analytical and descriptive method,** which helps in examining existing teaching methods and explaining their effectiveness in a clear and systematic way. For data collection, the study uses **secondary sources** such as books, academic journals, research articles, and policy documents, including the National Education Policy 2020.

The approach of the study involves careful interpretation and comparison of different theories, methods, and practices related to the teaching of English literature. By analysing traditional and innovative teaching approaches, the study aims to understand their strengths and limitations. The main focus of the research is to examine current teaching practices and suggest practical improvements by introducing innovative methods that can better connect literature with culture and society.

5. Innovative Methods in Teaching English Literature: Emerging Trends and Bridging Literature, Culture, and Society

In many classrooms, English literature is still taught through traditional methods such as the lecture method, Grammar-Translation Method, and detailed text explanation. In these methods, the teacher plays the main role, while students mostly listen and write notes.

These methods have several limitations. They make students passive learners and give very little space for discussion, creativity, or independent thinking. They also fail to connect literature with real-life experiences, culture, and society. As a result, students may not fully understand the deeper meaning and relevance of literary texts.

As a result, the teaching of English literature is undergoing a major transformation in the 21st century. With changing social realities, cultural diversity, and technological advancement, traditional methods are no longer sufficient. New and innovative methods are needed to make literature teaching more meaningful, relevant, and connected with real life. These emerging trends focus on learner-centered pedagogy, development of 21st-century skills, and integration of literature with culture and society.

1. Emerging Trends in Teaching English Literature

Modern English studies emphasize interdisciplinary learning, cultural understanding, and critical thinking. Literature is now studied not only as a text but as a reflection of society, identity, and human experience. Emerging trends include:

- Digital humanities and technology-based learning
- Multicultural and global perspectives
- Skill-based and competency-based education
- Experiential and activity-based learning

These trends show a shift from content-based teaching to skill-based and context-based learning.

2. NEP 2020 and Innovative Teaching

The National Education Policy 2020 strongly supports innovative teaching methods. It promotes:

- Experiential learning
- Critical and creative thinking
- Multidisciplinary approach
- Use of technology in education

- Learner-centered pedagogy

NEP 2020 encourages teachers to move away from rote learning and adopt methods that develop understanding, skills, and values. Literature teaching, therefore, should focus on connecting texts with students' lives and social realities.

3. Child-Centered Pedagogy

Child-centered pedagogy places the learner at the center of the teaching process. Students actively participate in learning through discussion, interpretation, and creative activities.

In literature teaching, this means:

- Allowing students to express their views about texts
- Encouraging personal interpretation
- Promoting discussion and collaboration

This approach makes learning more engaging and helps students connect literature with their own experiences, culture, and society.

4. Development of 21st-Century Skills

Innovative methods help develop essential 21st-century skills such as:

Critical Thinking – analysing themes, characters, and social issues
Creativity – expressing ideas through writing and performance
Communication – sharing thoughts through discussion and presentation
Collaboration – working in groups
Digital Literacy – using technology for learning

These skills prepare students to understand literature in a broader social and cultural context.

5. Innovative Methods in Teaching Literature

5.1 Digital and Multimodal Learning

Use of videos, films, podcasts, and digital platforms helps students visualize literary texts.
Example: Watching film adaptations or listening to audio readings.

5.2 Experiential and Activity-Based Learning

Students learn through role play, dramatization, storytelling, and creative writing.
Example: Performing scenes from plays or rewriting endings.

5.3 Interdisciplinary Approach

Literature is connected with history, sociology, psychology, and politics.
Example: Studying colonialism through novels.

5.4 Culturally Responsive Teaching

Texts are linked with students' cultural backgrounds.
Example: Comparing local literature with global texts.

5.5 Project-Based and Inquiry-Based Learning

Students explore themes through projects, research, and presentations.
Example: Researching themes like identity or migration.

5.6 Collaborative Learning

Group discussions and peer learning improve understanding and communication.

5.7 Reader-Response Approach

Students interpret texts based on personal experience, making learning meaningful.

6. New and Advanced Innovative Approaches

To meet modern educational needs, some advanced methods are also emerging:

6.1 Flipped Classroom

Students study material at home and discuss in class, making classroom time more interactive.

6.2 Blended Learning

Combination of online and offline teaching methods.

6.3 Digital Storytelling

Students create stories using digital tools, combining creativity and technology.

6.4 Gamification

Using games and quizzes to make learning interesting.

6.5 Critical Pedagogy

Students analyse social issues like inequality, gender, and power through literature.

6.6 Reflective Learning

Students reflect on what they learn and connect it with their own life.

7. Bridging Literature, Culture, and Society through Innovative Methods

Innovative teaching methods play a key role in connecting literature with culture and society in the following ways:

Connecting Text with Real Life:

Students relate literary themes to their own experiences and social environment.

Understanding Cultural Diversity:

Literature helps students learn about different cultures and traditions.

Developing Social Awareness:
Students understand social issues like inequality, identity, and justice.
Encouraging Empathy:
Literature helps students understand others' feelings and perspectives.
Promoting Critical Thinking:
Students question and analyse social and cultural issues presented in texts.

8. Role of Teacher in Innovative Pedagogy

The role of the teacher changes from a knowledge provider to a facilitator. The teacher:

- Guides discussion and learning
- Encourages student participation
- Creates a supportive learning environment
- Uses technology and creative methods

9. Significance in Contemporary Education

Innovative methods make literature teaching:

- More engaging and interesting
- Relevant to real-life situations
- Inclusive and culturally sensitive
- Useful for overall personality development

They also support the goals of modern education and prepare students for future challenges.
Thus, innovative methods in teaching English literature are essential in the present time. They not only improve understanding of literary texts but also help students connect literature with culture and society. By developing critical thinking, creativity, and social awareness, these methods make literature teaching more meaningful and effective. They also align with the vision of the National Education Policy 2020 and contribute to holistic development of learners**.**

10. Challenges and Limitations

Innovative methods of teaching English literature are very helpful, but there are some difficulties in using them in classrooms. These challenges should be understood so that teaching can become more effective.

1. Lack of Facilities

Many schools and colleges do not have proper facilities like smart classrooms, internet, or digital tools. This makes it difficult to use modern teaching methods.

2. Lack of Teacher Training

Some teachers are not trained to use new and innovative methods. Without proper training, it becomes hard to apply these methods in teaching.

3. Resistance to Change

Many teachers are used to traditional methods and may not easily accept new ways of teaching.

4. Lack of Time

Innovative methods like projects and group activities need more time. Due to a fixed syllabus and exam pressure, teachers may not use them regularly.

5. Exam-Oriented System

The education system mainly focuses on marks and exams. This reduces the use of creative and innovative teaching methods.

6. Large Class Size

In many schools, there are too many students in one class. It becomes difficult to manage activities and give attention to each student.

7. Different Student Backgrounds

Students come from different cultural and educational backgrounds. It is not easy to use one method that suits all students.

8. Limited Resources for Students

Some students do not have access to books, mobile phones, or the internet. This affects their learning.

9. Overuse of Technology

Using too much technology may reduce students' habit of reading and deep thinking.

10. Difficulty in Evaluation

It is not easy to assess skills like creativity, participation, and critical thinking through traditional exams.
Although there are challenges, they can be solved with proper planning and support from policies like the National Education Policy 2020. By overcoming these problems, innovative teaching methods can make literature learning more interesting, meaningful, and connected with culture and society.

11. Conclusions

This research paper shows that literature, culture, and society are closely connected. Literature reflects human life, social conditions, and cultural values. At the same time, society and culture give ideas and themes to literature. So, to understand literature properly, students must also understand culture and society.
The study explains that traditional methods of teaching English literature are not enough today. These methods make students passive and do not connect the text with real-life situations. On the other hand, innovative and student-

centered methods make learning more active, interesting, and meaningful. Methods like digital learning, activity-based learning, interdisciplinary approach, and reader-response help students understand literature in a better and practical way.

These innovative methods also support the goals of the National Education Policy 2020. They promote experiential learning, critical thinking, and overall development of students. They also help students develop important skills like creativity, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.

The paper also points out some challenges such as lack of resources, limited training for teachers, and exam pressure. However, these problems can be solved with proper planning and support.

In conclusion, innovative methods are very important in teaching English literature. They help connect literature with culture and society and make learning more useful and meaningful. They also help students become thoughtful and responsible individuals in today's world.

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Sharad Pawar's Contribution to the Cultural and Literary Life of Society in Maharashtra: As a Political Leader

Nitin R. Lagad

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Research Student
Department of Political Science
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University,
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (MS)
Email- nitinlagad77@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Nitin R. Lagad
Research Student
Department of Political Science
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University,
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar
Email- nitinlagad77@gmail.com

Abstract

Sharad Pawar is widely regarded as a modern-day patron of Marathi culture and literature, following the legacy of his mentor, Yashwantrao Chavan. His approach to cultural contribution is rooted in the belief that a progressive society must nurture its artists and preserve its linguistic heritage alongside economic growth.

Below is an abstract of his key contributions to the cultural and literary landscapes of Maharashtra and India.

1. Patronage of the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan

Sharad Pawar has been a perennial supporter of the Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan (All India Marathi Literary Conference). Organizational Support: He often plays a behind-the-scenes role in securing funding and logistical support for these mega-events, ensuring they remain prestigious platforms for Marathi writers.

Bridging Politics and Art:He has frequently hosted and engaged with various literary figures, acting as a bridge between the state's political administration and its intellectual community.

2. The Yashwantrao Chavan Centre

As the President of the Yashwantrao Chavan Centre in Mumbai, Pawar has institutionalized cultural promotion. Cultural Hub:The center serves as a premier venue for Marathi theater, classical music concerts, and art exhibitions.

Literary Fellowships: He recently launched the Sharad Pawar Inspire Fellowship in Literature. This program provides financial grants and mentorship to young Marathi writers, specifically aimed at encouraging new voices to explore contemporary social issues and research-based writing. 3. Promotion of the "Classical Language" Status

Pawar was a consistent advocate for the Union Government to grant Classical Language status to Marathi.

Advocacy: He utilized his influence at the national level to push for the recognition of Marathi's 2,000-year-old history and literary depth.

Administrative Shift: He has long championed the use of Marathi in administrative and official capacities within Maharashtra to ensure the language remains functional and vibrant in the modern era.

4. Support for Rural and Folk Arts

Unlike many urban-centric patrons, Pawar's cultural contribution extends to rural Maharashtra.

Agricultural Culture: Through various institutions in Baramati, he has promoted folk arts and local traditions that are intrinsic to the agrarian lifestyle.

Folk Artists: He has been known to provide personal and institutional support to folk performers, such as Tamasha and Bharud artists, who represent the grassroots cultural fabric of the state.

5. Personal Intellectual Engagement

An Avid Reader: Known for his vast personal library, Pawar frequently cites Marathi poets and historians in his speeches, helping keep the works of figures like Kusumagraj and V.V. Shirwadkar relevant to the younger generation.

Historical Preservation: He has supported initiatives for the preservation of Maharashtra's forts and historical documents, viewing history as an essential component of cultural identity.

Keywords*-Sharad Pawar, Literature, Culture-Identity, Society, Fine Arts, Public Welfare*

Introduction-

Like Yashwantrao Chavan, Maharashtra has gifted India a cultured political leader. India, and especially Maharashtra, has a tradition of refined and culturally rooted political leadership. Such leaders handle social issues with sensitivity and remain committed to addressing fundamental societal concerns within the broader framework of public welfare. Yashwantrao Chavan not only served as the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra after its formation in 1960 but also played a significant role in national politics, including serving as Defence Minister during the Sino-Indian War. He shaped generations of political leaders with a strong foundation in culture, literature, and social responsibility.

Among these cultured leaders, Sharad Pawar stands prominently. Carrying forward Yashwantrao Chavan's legacy, Sharad Pawar enriched it further through his engagement with literature, art, and culture. Inspired by Yashwantrao Chavan's autobiography Krishnakath, Sharad Pawar developed a deep understanding of socially responsible politics.

Objectives of the Study- The objective of the present study is to analyse the cultural and literary contributions of Sharad Pawar as a political leader in Maharashtra and to examine how political leadership can influence literature, art, and cultural development.

Hypothesis:- Primary hypothesis is how Sharad Pawar has made significant contributions to the cultural and literary development of Maharashtra through his political leadership. And secondary hypotheses is Political leaders with cultural sensitivity contribute positively to society's intellectual and artistic growth.

Research Methodology - This research is qualitative and descriptive in nature.

Contribution to Literature, Culture, and Arts

A) The Significance of the Autobiography *Lok Maze Sangati*

Lok Maze Sangati is the autobiography of Sharad Pawar, though he himself has described it as a political autobiography. In Maharashtra, autobiographies of Marathi political leaders are rarely found. While many books have been edited on the work of political leaders, they cannot truly be called autobiographies. Yashwantrao Chavan's autobiography *Krishnakath* is well known across India. It narrates his childhood memories, his educational journey, and his active participation in India's freedom struggle. It also sheds light on his political, educational, and social formation. This autobiography introduces readers to Chavan's simple and cultured personality, and *Krishnakath* has served as a source of inspiration for many in Maharashtra.

Sharad Pawar has been active in the politics of Maharashtra and India for the past six decades. In his political autobiography, he has attempted to present a comprehensive account of his life from 1960 to 2015. It reflects on the social and political realities of these six decades. In the future, this book will undoubtedly serve as a valuable reference for scholars studying political history, sociology, journalism, media, and the political history of India. It will also be regarded as a significant source for understanding the politics of Maharashtra in the post-state-formation period.

Many political leaders formulate policies during their careers, and these policies have both positive and negative impacts on society. However, such policies are not always critically examined in proportion to their influence. Over time, records of these developments often become scarce, making it difficult to interpret past political decisions. Through this book, Sharad Pawar has provided scholars with a rich repository of knowledge and experience. As a seasoned political leader, his autobiography can be considered a significant contribution to Marathi literature. The writings of individuals whose decisions have brought transformative changes to Maharashtra and the nation become invaluable assets to society. This book will also guide future decisions as an important reference.

Sharad Pawar consistently conveys through his writing that every individual in India is politically aware and, in many ways, more perceptive than political leaders. His autobiography is not merely a celebration of an individual but also a commentary on democracy, which gives it enduring literary value. While he has shared many aspects of his social and political life, he has consciously omitted certain details. However, "selective disclosure" is not uncommon in autobiographical writing. Both what is included and what is omitted hold literary significance.

His writing repeatedly reflects a people-centric approach to politics. Among the few political autobiographies available in Marathi, this work stands out for its unique literary value. It also holds historical importance as an "insider's view" of Indian politics. His political autobiography has been published in two phases, with the second part released between 2015 and 2023, covering several political developments after 2015.

Sharad Pawar has also made valuable contributions to the establishment and growth of various literary institutions in Maharashtra. However, this autobiography, based on his own experiences, is itself a significant addition to Marathi literature. As an important political leader of Maharashtra, his autobiography holds great relevance and must be regarded as a key reference in the study of literary creation in the Marathi language

B) Establishment of Institutions Supporting Literature and Education

On 1 July 1988, Sharad Pawar established the Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University. While working in the role of Leader of the Opposition, he strongly presented the concept of this university before the Chief Minister. Vasantdada Patil also appreciated the idea. Senior educationist Dr. Ram Takawale, who was committed to the education of rural and marginalized communities, was appointed as a Special Officer for the Open University project. He prepared the project report and submitted it to the government; however, the report was initially ignored.

Later, the right opportunity arose. In 1988, when Sharad Pawar became the Chief Minister of Maharashtra for the second time, he revived the neglected report and began studying it. He presented a realistic vision of how the university could contribute to the overall development of Maharashtra, especially benefiting rural areas, farmers, and women. Inspired by the educational philosophy of Yashwantrao Chavan—that "the language of the people should be elevated to the status of a language of knowledge"—Pawar resolved to run the university accordingly.

Motivated by Chavan's vision in the field of education, the university was named after him. Following a formal resolution passed in the state legislature, the university was established in Nashik on 1 July 1988. Its headquarters were set up in Nashik, along with regional centers, district centers, and study centers, through which various degree and diploma courses were introduced in both rural and urban areas. Recognizing his valuable contribution, Dr. Ram Takawale was appointed as the first Vice-Chancellor of the university by Sharad Pawar. The university adopted an open admission policy, allowing people of all ages and qualifications to enroll and receive education freely.

In terms of statistics, approximately 250,000 students enroll in various courses at this Open University every year. In the academic year 2022–23, around 460,000 students across Maharashtra were admitted. At the 31st convocation ceremony held on 4 February 2026, degrees were awarded to 124,000 students. The university was established through an Act of the Maharashtra State Legislature and is recognized by the University Grants Commission, making its degrees equivalent to those of other universities in India. It is also recognized by the Maharashtra Public Service Commission, ensuring that its students face no difficulties in appearing for competitive examinations.

Overall, this university has opened the doors of higher education to all sections of society, providing opportunities to excel in various fields of knowledge. The establishment of this Open University was driven by Sharad Pawar's noble vision. Today, lakhs of students educated through this university are making significant contributions in different fields of life. The body of literature produced through this university represents a valuable intellectual asset of Maharashtra. Such enriching knowledge and cultural development do not emerge suddenly; the literary wealth created through this university is a remarkable treasure of the state.

Both the creation of literature and the encouragement of literary activities contribute to the growth of culture and society. Through this institution, which serves the entire state of Maharashtra, many writers, thinkers, and intellectuals have emerged. In a way, it can be said that the establishment of this university is a great contribution by Sharad Pawar to Marathi literature.

Educational institutions such as Vidya Pratishthan in Baramati, and educational complexes at Malegaon and Shardanagar, have also significantly contributed to knowledge and literary development in rural areas. Organizations like Rayat Shikshan Sanstha, Akhil Bharatiya Maratha Shikshan Parishad, and Pune District Education Board are functioning under the guidance of Sharad Pawar.

C) Establishment of the World Marathi Conference

In 1990, Pawar established the World Marathi Conference to bring together eminent artists and writers. The first conference in Mumbai was presided over by V. V. Shirwadkar.

Prominent personalities like Lata Mangeshkar, P. L. Deshpande, and Jayant Narlikar were honored, reflecting Pawar's respect for cultural excellence.

D) Support to Theatre: Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Natya Parishad

Pawar provided financial assistance to develop modern theatre infrastructure in Mumbai. He has been a lifelong trustee of the organization and has consistently supported theatre festivals and literary events.

E) Support to Marathi Cinema

During his tenure as Chief Minister, Pawar supported filmmaker Jabbar Patel in producing the film Sinhasan, based on a story by Vijay Tendulkar.

He also increased government subsidies for Marathi films, recognizing cinema as an important medium for literary and cultural dissemination.

F) Political Opportunities for Artists and Writers

Pawar facilitated the inclusion of artists like Ramdas Phutane and Na. Dho. Mahanor in the legislative council. He was deeply influenced by G. D. Madgulkar and supported several writers and artists, including Ranjit Desai.

G) Promotion of Literature of Social Reformers

Pawar promoted the works of Jyotirao Phule and B. R. Ambedkar by making their literature widely available at affordable prices and encouraging translations into other languages.

H) Establishment of Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan

Founded in 1985, the institution works in education, culture, youth welfare, and social development. It also hosts a well-equipped library and honors distinguished individuals.

I) Pawar Public Charitable Trust

This trust promotes education, supports tribal students, empowers women, and encourages literary and cultural development.

Conclusion

Inspired by Yashwantrao Chavan, Sharad Pawar has strengthened the tradition of cultured politics in Maharashtra. He nurtured a generation of leaders who value literature, music, and social sensitivity. His major contributions comprises in promoting literary culture, supporting artists and writers, expanding educational institutions, encouraging translation and dissemination of literature, providing financial and institutional support to cultural activities. Sharad Pawar's work has significantly enriched Maharashtra's socio-cultural landscape, making him a key figure in the intersection of politics, literature, and culture.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who supported and guided me throughout the completion of this research paper titled Sharad Pawar's Contribution to the Cultural and Literary Life of Society in Maharashtra: As a Political Leader. First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt thanks to my research guide, teachers, and mentors for their valuable guidance, continuous encouragement, and insightful suggestions during every stage of this study. Their academic support and inspiration greatly contributed to the successful completion of this work.

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Culture as Power: South Asian Identity and Representation in Young Adult Literature

Sheetal Tanaji Chandane

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Research Student,
PDEA's Waghire College, Saswad,
Pune-412301
Department of English
E-mail: sheetal.chandane11@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sheetal Tanaji Chandane
Research Student,
PDEA's Waghire College, Saswad,
Pune-412301
Department of English
E-mail: sheetal.chandane11@gmail.com

Abstract

Young adult literature shapes how teenagers understand themselves and the world around them. For South Asian teenagers growing up in Western societies, finding their culture honestly represented in the books they read remains largely rare. Where South Asian representation does appear, it is often shallow, stereotyped, or presented as a problem the character must overcome rather than a heritage worth celebrating. This paper studies how cultural identity is built and represented in two South Asian young adult novels: Aru Shah and the End of Time (2018) by Roshani Chokshi and You Bring the Distant Near (2017) by Mitali Perkins. The paper uses two theoretical frameworks: Rudine Sims Bishop's concept of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, and Homi K. Bhabha's theory of the third space and hybridity. The paper argues that both novels challenge the poor representation of South Asian culture in mainstream young adult fiction. Aru Shah and the End of Time works as a mirror, placing Hindu mythology at the centre of a fantasy story and turning cultural heritage from a source of shame into a source of strength. You Bring the Distant Near works as a sliding glass door, showing how three generations of Indian immigrant women manage questions of belonging, inheritance, and cultural change. Together, both novels confirm that South Asian identity is layered, evolving, and worthy of serious literary attention.

Keywords: *Cultural Identity, Young Adult Literature, South Asian Representation, Homi Bhabha, Rudine Sims Bishop, Hybridity, Third Space, Diaspora*

Introduction

An examination of young adult fiction collections in school libraries across India, the United Kingdom, and the United States reveals a persistent marginalisation of South Asian cultural narratives, a pattern that reflects broader structural inequities in mainstream publishing. The dominant narratives in this genre draw their imaginative energy from Greek mythology, Norse legend, and European folk tradition. Stories in which a young protagonist's strength derives from the Mahabharata, or in which an immigrant family's effort to preserve Bengali cultural identity across generations is accorded serious literary attention, remain substantially underrepresented. This absence is not incidental. It reflects a wider structural pattern in publishing in which South Asian narratives have historically occupied the margins of mainstream fiction rather than its centre.

Young adult literature matters particularly in this discussion because it reaches readers during a critical phase of personal growth. Scholars note that the teenage years are when young people most actively work out who they are and where they belong in the world (Duthoy 3). The stories young people read during this period do more than entertain. They send messages about whose experiences are worth telling and whose cultures deserve a place in the literary imagination. Research shows that young people from minority cultural backgrounds are less likely to find their identities reflected in the books available to them. As Bishop has argued, when readers from marginalised communities cannot find themselves in the texts they read, the message they receive is that their identities and cultures do not matter (Bishop 1). The effects of this absence go beyond personal disappointment. They shape how entire communities relate to literature, to education, and to the society in which they live.

This paper examines how two South Asian young adult novels address these questions of cultural identity and representation. The primary texts are *Aru Shah and the End of Time* (2018) by Roshani Chokshi, a fantasy novel rooted in Hindu mythology, and *You Bring the Distant Near* (2017) by Mitali Perkins, a multigenerational story following an Indian immigrant family across four decades in America. The paper uses two theoretical frameworks. The first is Rudine Sims Bishop's model of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, which helps explain what books do for their readers in terms of identity and cultural understanding. The second is Homi K. Bhabha's theory of the third space and cultural hybridity, which explains the kind of identity both novels represent.

The central argument is that both novels challenge the marginalisation of South Asian culture in mainstream young adult fiction, not simply by including South Asian characters, but by showing South Asian identity as complex, dynamic, and powerful.

The paper is organised into four parts: the theoretical framework, the analysis of each novel, a comparative discussion, and a conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Bishop's Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors

The most widely used framework for thinking about representation in books for young people comes from Rudine Sims Bishop, a scholar of multicultural children's and young adult literature at Ohio State University. In her important 1990 essay, Bishop introduced a three-part metaphor that has shaped how scholars and educators think about diversity in youth literature ever since.

Bishop argues that books work for their readers in three different ways. A book works as a mirror when readers see their own life, culture, and identity reflected in its pages. This matters because it communicates to readers that their experiences are considered worthy of literary attention. As Bishop writes, "literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience" (Bishop 1). For a South Asian teenager reading a novel where Hindu mythology drives the main plot, or where an Indian family's cultural tensions are handled with care and honesty, the text functions as precisely this kind of mirror, affirming the literary and cultural value of South Asian experience.

A book works as a window when it shows readers a life and culture different from their own. This builds understanding and empathy across cultural differences.

The deepest level of engagement happens when the window becomes a sliding glass door: the reader steps through imaginatively and experiences the world of the book from the inside. Bishop also points to the cost of absent representation. When readers from marginalised groups "cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in society" (Bishop 1).

2.2 Bhabha's Third Space and Cultural Hybridity

Where Bishop's framework focuses on the reader's relationship with the text, Homi K. Bhabha's theory helps explain the nature of the cultural identities the texts represent. Bhabha, born in Bombay in 1949 and educated at the University of Mumbai and Oxford, is one of the most important scholars in postcolonial studies. His major work, *The Location of Culture* (1994), introduced concepts that are central to the study of diasporic and postcolonial identity.

Bhabha's main argument is that cultural identity is never fixed or pure. All cultures have been shaped by their encounters with other cultures through migration, colonisation, and everyday contact. When two cultures meet, something new is produced. Bhabha calls this new space the Third Space: it is neither Culture A nor Culture B but something original that comes from the meeting of the two (Bhabha 36-37). As Bhabha puts it, "it is the 'inter', the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space, that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (Bhabha 38).

The identity produced in the Third Space is what Bhabha calls hybridity. A hybrid identity carries parts of more than one culture but cannot be fully explained by either one. Importantly, Bhabha argues that this is not a weakness or confusion. It is a position of creative strength. The person who lives in the Third Space can see both worlds clearly and can challenge the assumptions of each (Bhabha 38). This theory explains why the central characters of both novels are strong precisely because they live between cultures, not despite it.

Analysis of Primary Texts

3.1 Cultural Shame and Mythological Reclamation in *Aru Shah and the End of Time*

Roshani Chokshi's *Aru Shah and the End of Time* (2018) follows twelve-year-old Aru Shah, an Indian-American girl who lives with her mother in the Museum of Ancient Indian Art and Culture in Atlanta, Georgia. Aru attends an elite private school where almost none of her classmates share her background. She fabricates stories about her life, claiming foreign holidays and a glamorous home, because she is ashamed of who she is and where she comes from. This early portrayal of cultural shame is analytically significant. In Bishop's terms, it functions as a powerful mirror for South Asian readers. The representation of a protagonist who feels compelled to conceal her cultural background in order to gain social acceptance reflects a documented pattern within the South Asian diasporic experience, in which minority cultural identities are frequently rendered invisible or marginalised within Western institutional spaces (Hall 225). Chokshi presents this experience with psychological depth, positioning it not as a minor plot detail but as the central emotional problem the novel is structured to resolve.

The narrative transformation begins when Aru accidentally releases a demon from Hindu mythology and discovers she is the reincarnation of one of the five Pandava brothers from the Mahabharata. The accumulated cultural knowledge of her life, the mythological stories absorbed from her mother, the artefacts of the museum, the Sanskrit names and figures she had encountered without fully understanding their significance, is revealed as preparation for her heroic role. Chokshi frames this revelation explicitly as a reclamation. As Aru realises the depth of her mythological inheritance, her relationship to her own cultural identity shifts from shame to agency. The novel thus enacts a movement that is central to its representational argument: that South Asian cultural heritage, far from being a social liability, constitutes a form of power that Western frameworks of value have failed to recognise.

Bhabha's concept of the Third Space makes clear why Aru's identity is so significant. Aru is neither straightforwardly Indian nor simply American. She grew up in the United States, is educated in Western schools, and moves easily within American culture. At the same time, she is the heir to a rich mythological and philosophical

tradition that most of her peers know nothing about. This in-between position is exactly the Third Space Bhabha describes. The novel's central argument, told through its plot, is that Aru's hybrid identity is not a disability to be overcome but an advantage. Her ability to move between both worlds gives her a kind of double vision and double strength.

Chokshi's authorial background reinforces this argument. She notes in her Author's Note that the novel was inspired by stories her grandmother told her, and it draws directly on her own experience growing up Hindu in the United States (Chokshi, Author's Note). The accurate representation of Hindu mythology, the careful use of Sanskrit terms, and the honest portrayal of diaspora and devotion reflect lived cultural knowledge. This insider knowledge is what makes the mirror function of the text genuine rather than superficial.

3.2 Diasporic Inheritance and Multigenerational Hybridity in *You Bring the Distant Near*

Mitali Perkins's *You Bring the Distant Near* (2017) works in a very different way from *Aru Shah and the End of Time* but addresses closely related questions about South Asian cultural identity. It is a multigenerational realist novel told through five alternating voices across three generations of the Das family, spanning the 1970s to the 2010s. The family migrates from Calcutta to London and then to New York, and the novel traces how each generation of women negotiates their relationship to South Asian culture in America.

The novel's title comes from a poem by Rabindranath Tagore: "Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger" (qtd. in Perkins, epigraph). This reference is deliberate and meaningful. Tagore understood deeply what it meant to carry an Indian identity into a world that did not always know what to do with it. By invoking his voice, Perkins places the novel within a long tradition of South Asian thinking about distance, belonging, and cultural change.

Each generation of the Das women occupies a different version of Bhabha's Third Space. Ranee, the grandmother, treats her Bengali identity as a fixed inheritance to be protected. She worries that her children are losing their culture. Her daughters, Sonia and Tara, are more flexible. Sonia enters a relationship across racial lines, which her mother resists. Tara is drawn to Western aspiration and self-reinvention. The granddaughters, Shanti and Anna, grew up in a more diverse America but still face inequality and pressure to conform. Anna fights both to protect Bengali tigers and to define herself on her own terms.

What Perkins shows through these five women is that cultural identity is not a fixed object that is either kept safe or lost. It is negotiated differently in every generation. Each Das woman builds her own version of a hybrid South Asian-American identity, shaped by her time, her relationships, and her choices. None of these versions is a betrayal of the family's cultural heritage. All of them are ways of carrying that heritage forward in conditions that keep changing. This is exactly what Bhabha means by hybridity as a living, generative process rather than a problem to be solved.

The novel works as a sliding glass door in Bishop's framework. The alternating narrative voices draw readers fully inside the experiences of five different women across four decades. South Asian readers may find multiple mirrors here because identity shifts so visibly between generations. Readers without South Asian backgrounds are drawn into a detailed world of Bengali family life, immigrant ambition, diasporic love, and intergenerational tension that most mainstream young adult fiction has not offered them.

Perkins, who was born in Kolkata and immigrated to the United States as a teenager, writes from personal experience (Perkins, Author's Note). The cultural details of the novel, its representation of food, language, family structure, and the specific pressures placed on South Asian daughters, reflect the knowledge of someone who has lived inside the experience she describes. This insider knowledge is the difference between authentic representation and superficial inclusion.

Comparative Discussion

Read together, *Aru Shah and the End of Time* and *You Bring the Distant Near* make a combined argument about South Asian cultural identity that is stronger than what either novel makes on its own.

Aru Shah and the End of Time deals with cultural identity at the level of an individual young person's present experience. Its main concern is the psychological damage caused by cultural shame and the transformation possible when that shame is replaced by cultural pride. The fantasy genre allows Chokshi to show this transformation directly and powerfully. Aru's discovery that her cultural knowledge is heroic is a clear, accessible argument that South Asian heritage is not a burden but a source of power.

You Bring the Distant Near asks a harder and more complex question: what happens to cultural identity across time? Its concern is not with a single teenager's relationship to her culture but with how cultural identity is passed down, changed, and rebuilt across generations. The novel refuses both the idea that cultural change is always a loss and the idea that assimilation into the dominant culture is either inevitable or desirable. Instead, it argues that culture is a living inheritance, capable of change without disappearance.

Together, the two novels suggest that authentic representation of South Asian culture in young adult literature needs to work at both levels: the immediate, personal level of individual identity, and the longer, historical level of cultural transmission across generations. Both dimensions are necessary to give a full account of what it means to carry a South Asian identity in a Western world.

A further important point is that both novels are written by South Asian authors, drawing on their own cultural experience. Chokshi drew on her grandmother's stories and her Hindu upbringing. Perkins drew on her experience as an Indian immigrant to America. The cultural accuracy, emotional honesty, and specificity of detail that make both novels genuinely effective as representations are products of lived cultural knowledge. This is what distinguishes

authentic representation from tokenism, and it is a point that has direct implications for how the publishing industry approaches diversity.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the representation of South Asian cultural identity in two young adult novels through the frameworks of Bishop and Bhabha. The analysis has shown that both *Aru Shah and the End of Time* and *You Bring the Distant Near* engage seriously with questions of cultural identity, representation, and diasporic experience in ways that set them apart from mainstream patterns of South Asian representation in young adult fiction.

Through Bishop's framework, the paper has shown that *Aru Shah* functions as a mirror, placing Hindu mythology and South Asian cultural knowledge at the heroic centre of the narrative. *You Bring the Distant Near* functions as a sliding glass door, drawing readers deeply into the multigenerational experience of South Asian women negotiating their cultural identity across time.

Through Bhabha's framework, the paper has shown that both novels represent South Asian cultural identity as hybrid in a productive and powerful sense. The characters in both novels live in Third Spaces, in-between positions that the narratives present not as sites of confusion but as sources of genuine cultural strength and creative agency.

The broader implication for scholarship on young adult literature is clear. Authentic cultural representation is not achieved simply by including diverse characters in mainstream stories. It requires narratives that take cultural backgrounds seriously on their own terms, represent them with the specificity that only insider knowledge can provide, and show cultural identity as something living and evolving rather than fixed and fragile. Both novels examined here demonstrate that young adult literature is capable of achieving this standard of representation. They constitute significant contributions not only to South Asian young adult fiction but to the wider scholarly and cultural project of building an inclusive literary canon that reflects the full diversity of its readership.

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

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Laboratory Imagination and the Making of the Scientist: A Laboratory Literature Approach to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Trishala Shivaji Sable

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Department of English and Research Centre,
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, Pune.
Email- trishalasabale@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Trishala Shivaji Sable
Department of English and Research Centre,
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, Pune.
Email- trishalasabale@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines Mary Shelley's Frankenstein as a Lab Lit (Laboratory Literature) text. It rightly anticipates several defining features. The study focuses on discussing Lab Lit as a novel trend in English literature. Further, it focuses on finding the key Lab Lit elements such as scientific language, the scientific protagonist, realistic scientific settings, scientific realism, the depiction of research processes, and the presence of uncertainty, failure, themes, ethical dilemmas, and intellectual conflict within scientific inquiry in the select text. It also discusses the select text as one of the early examples of Lab Lit. The study mainly focuses on the character of Victor Frankenstein. It examines Victor as a scientific protagonist embedded in a realistic laboratory setting, focusing on his research methods and use of scientific language. It analyses the ethical implications, conflicts, and thematic concerns arising from his experiment. It gauges the tension between ambition and responsibility depicted in the text. Finally, the study evaluates the uncertainty of success and failure and scientific realism. By examining these elements, the paper argues that Frankenstein anticipates the concerns of Lab Lit by presenting a complex portrayal of scientific practice, the making of the scientist, and the moral and social implications of experimental research.

Keywords*: Laboratory Literature, Lab Lit, scientific setting, scientific realism, ethical dilemmas, integrity, scientific language and scientific protagonist.*

Introduction:

Laboratory Literature is popularly named as 'Lab Lit' by Dr Jennifer L. Rohn. She is the author-scientist who advocated this fictional sub-type of Science Fiction. She penned her notorious literary works for the cause and launched the online platform 'LabLit.com' to promote the fictional type. It is realistic in nature. In Lab Lit, scientists and scientific processes are portrayed realistically. The setting, many times, is the scientific laboratory itself or the places where the scientific characters are busy doing their research work. It uses scientific jargon and terminology to make the fictional type scientific. It authentically portrays the scientific culture with accuracy.

Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* fits in the framework of Lab Lit. Even though it was written in the early nineteenth century, it can be the best example of Lab Lit fiction type. It is the story of the scientific protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, who is a student. Shelley's literary work portrays scientific realism. It accurately depicts the contemporary scientific ideas of anatomy, chemistry, and galvanism. It underlines the ethical and scientific concerns and psychological implications.

This paper is the Lab Lit reading of Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*. It studies the applications of the key parameters of Lab Lit to the selected text. The researcher finds the basic elements of Lab Lit, such as scientific setting, protagonist, language, research process, ethics, conflict, themes, uncertainty, and realism in the novel. It also briefly delves into the evolution of the fictional type and its journey. The present paper is an attempt to study the anticipation of the modern representations of science while offering a critical perspective on its limits in Shelly's select text.

History of Lab Lit:

Lab Lit is a type of Science Fiction. It is more realistic in nature. The term was first coined by Dr Jennifer Rohn. She is the Cell Biologist. She rotes the reasons for devising the term 'Lab Lit'. She states:

> Back in 2005, I choose the term "Lab Lit" to name the nameless genre ... As my mission was to illuminate the hidden World of laboratory life and introduce this culture to outsiders through the lens of fiction.[1]

She further defined it on LabLit.com as fiction set in contemporary laboratories with scientists as central characters. Rohn argued that LL rejects the futuristic mode of Science Fiction and instead values realism.[2] The year 2005 marks importance in the history of Lab Lit as Rohn launched a webzine 'LabLit.com'. It paved the way for getting recognition for the scientific and non-scientific writers.

They published their work on this virtual platform to spread the popularity and continuous growth of the fiction type. She herself is the notorious scientist-biologist and writer. Her notable works include *The Experimental Heart* (2008), *The Honest Look* (2012), and *Cat Zero* (2018). She helps to provide a platform to the writers of fiction and non-fiction to get connected to science and literature.

Lab Lit has a long history of origin. No doubt it originated from the popular Science Fiction. But its method of expression varies. Bouton defines Lab Lit as:

> "…It is not Science Fiction, and in my opinion, it's not historical fiction about actual scientists... it depicts realistic scientists as central characters and portrays fairly realistic scientific practice or concepts, typically taking place in a realistic-as opposed to speculative or future-world"[3] (2)

It focuses on experiments in a lab setting, science, new technology, and exploration, scientific figures, scientific language and style, deeply rooted scientific realism, authentic depiction of scientific research and practises, humanising and universalising the scientific figures, themes related to science, institutional and personal conflicts, etc. Lab Lit "…depicts realistic scientists as central characters" and "portrays fairly realistic scientific practice," grounding narratives in real-world scientific activity.[4] (Rohn) Defining the fiction type is her contribution.

The evolution journey of Lab Lit initiates right from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the works like Johannes Kepler's *Somnium* (1608, published 1634) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), specifically *Voyage to Laputa*. These early works are not accurate examples of the fiction type. The eighteenth century witnessed the first ever example of Lab Lit. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) advocated the scientific protagonist with scientific experimentation, ethical dilemmas, and unchecked ambition, themes of discovery and ethical conflict. The same century witnessed the publication of texts with the themes and subject matters of Lab Lit namely, H.G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838), and George Eliot's *The Lifted Veil* (1859). The growth continues in the twentieth century as well. The notable works contributed to the fiction type are James D. Watson's *The Double Helix* (1968), Sinclair Lewis' *Arrowsmith* (1925), and Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain* (1969). The number of Lab Lit kept increasing with 69 novels, 4 plays, 4 films, and 14 crossover novels, showing its recognition as a distinct sub-type of Science Fiction by the end of the century. In fact, the Twentieth Century turned out to be the period of significant growth and stability for the fiction type.

The twenty-first century established it as a notable literary category. Scientists and non-scientist authors collectively contributed to the fictional type and produced over 313 novels about realistic depiction. Television shows, Movies, Dramas, short stories, short fiction, and fiction all blended in one in this century. Jennifer Leigh Rohn, Hope Zehren, Richard Powers, Rebecca Skloot, Allegra Goodman, Barbara Kingsolver, Brandon Taylor, and Ann Lingard made it popular. Presently, as on LabLit.com, there are over 380 novels, 28 plays, 10 TV programs, 16 films, and 45 crossover novels.

The Lab Lit study of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*:

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, published in 1818, is one of the harbingers of the fictional type. It shocked the readership of the Romantic Era of English Literature. This precursor introduced themes of Lab Lit, mainly scientific experimentation, ethical dilemmas, realistic scientific setting and protagonist, realistic, detailed examination of science, and scientific Language. It establishes *Frankenstein* as a model for future literature that explores the complex relationship between science and literature. The analysis of the basic parameters of the Lab Lit to the selected text is as follows:

3.1. Scientific Protagonist:

The Lab Lit presents the scientific character as the protagonist or antagonist. They are often portrayed as emotionally complex and morally conscious individuals. These character types, objects and challenges exist in the existing realities. They are the people meant for science. In Lab Lit, the focus is always on emotional depth with personal and professional conflicts, ethical awareness and integrity, and institutional struggle and societal pressure to meet the health demands of society. It humanises the main character. It is the meeting point of ambition, curiosity, and vulnerability to coexist. Victor Frankenstein in *Frankenstein* emerges as a complex scientific protagonist. His character is developed with the human vulnerability tension, conflicts and integrity. Lab Lit denotes that even the scientist reacts emotionally, not mechanically. When Monster started killing Victor's dear ones, he was horrified within. He feels alone. Science often leads characters to emotional isolation**.**

Science is always challenged by scientists like Victor. Shelly writes: Victor says, "Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world." (73) He imagines himself as a boundary-breaking scientist**.** He desires to control nature**.** It is a key trait of scientific protagonists. Monster calls himself Adam, created by the Creator, Victor. It highlights the creator-creation relationship. Here, science becomes moral and relational, not just technical.

Victor begins to feel moral conflict when he understands his ambition was misguided. He expresses:

> "The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this, I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart." (Shelly 78)

This is the beginning of guilt, responsibility, and ethical awareness. It also authentically portrays the scientific research process. Lab Lit features the scientific protagonist as a real scientist, often working intensely. It has the touch of realism.

The scientific character often feels the psychological strain. This is evident when he declares to himself:

> "I had begun life with benevolent intentions, and thirsted for the moment when I should put them in practice, and make myself useful to my fellow beings. Now all was blasted: instead of that serenity of conscience, which allowed me to look back upon the past with self-satisfaction, and from thence to gather promise of new hopes, I was seized by remorse and the sense of guilt, which hurried me away to a hell of intense tortures, such as no language can describe." (Shelley 123)

This reflection of Victor revels that the scientists are also human beings and are victims of vulnerability. As the story progresses, it keeps on highlighting the strong emotional bond any normal human being shares. He births the monster figure but refuses to take up the moral responsibility. This again raises the questions of scientific integrity and ethics. His humanity, under the pressure of unchecked intellectual ambition, began to erode gradually. He alienates himself from society as the Monster threatens him. Victor's unnatural ambition to create a living being through the corpses is central to his downfall. It leads him to challenge the boundaries of life and death without fully considering the ethical implications. He symbolises the moral decline in the story.

Thus, Victor Frankenstein's journey illustrates that the true danger of scientific pursuit lies not in knowledge itself but in the absence of responsibility and ethical restraint. His character is profoundly human, morally conflicted, and ultimately tragic, serving as a cautionary figure. These qualities meets Lab Lit's scientific protagonist elements. Hence, Victor Frankenstein of Mary Shelley presents a scientific protagonist whose suffering reveals the consequences of divorcing scientific ambition from moral accountability.

3.2. Realistic Scientific Setting:

In Lab Lit the setting is the realistic. It can be scientific institutional laboratories, universities, private research institutes, and field sites. Setting in this fictional type is dynamic and keeps changing as researcher moves in. Jennifer Rohn observes:

> Lab Lit stories are not necessarily set in laboratories-the genre can embrace botanists scrambling along the hillside, physicists colliding particles, mathematicians cranking out equations, or palaeontologists digging up ancient human remains. [5]

Rohn emphasises on the realism. According to her, Lab Lit explores a wide range of real scientific spaces. In *Frankenstein*, the scientific setting starts with academic setting. It is the beginning of Victor's scientific journey. Then the story moves in to the private laboratory to carry out the scientific experiment in isolation and secrecy. And lastly it is located to the extreme isolation with the Orkney setting. Dhruv Purabiya in his article *Monster's Humanity in Frankenstein by Mary Shelley* discusses science is embedded in cultural and social practices. Through science, medicine and the habits of society he stresses the scientific setting of university, lab, and society.[6]

The setting stands for the reflection of the psychological, ethical, and intellectual transformation of Victor Frankenstein. The setting opens up to the structured academic space of the university. It is a place where science is initially presented as disciplined inquiry. It is an academic setting that includes progress, recognition, and mastery. It marks the journey of a student to becoming a scientist. The plot progresses with the shift from collaborative learning to obsessive individual pursuit. With the dynamic plot, the scientific setting moves away from the university into increasingly private and secretive spaces. The writer describes Victor's laboratory: "…In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop, of filthy creation…" (Shelly 74) This spatial separation reflects the moral and social detachment inherent in his scientific work. The images used to describe the laboratory are disturbing. They grounds the scientific environment in death, decay, and violation of natural boundaries. Thus, through the scientific setting the laboratory created a life as artificially constructed from death.

In the last part of the novel, the scientific setting shifts to the Orkneys. Here Victor attempts to create a second female creature being as per the request of Monster. It is an isolated setting, the remotest one, on island. The laboratory depicted here is full of poverty and barrenness. The setting reflects not only physical decay but also moral revulsion. It denotes solitude and psychological instability. The environment traps him within his own obsessive thoughts. It reveals his inner conflict and moral awareness. Thus the spaces of science in Lab Lit become sites of ethical transgression, isolation, and ultimately, human downfall.

3.3. Scientific Language:

Scientific language is central to the Lab Lit. It uses scientific terms and jargons. It combines technical detail with literary storytelling, making scientific processes understandable and engaging without losing authenticity. The intellectual and ethical challenges are communicated through its procedures. It emphasizes accuracy, realism, and the emotional or moral dimensions of scientific work. The selected text illustrate this approach. In *Frankenstein*, technical vocabulary, experimental terminology, and philosophical reflection are detailed. It is grounded in actual methods, data, and institutional practice. The language conveys realism, ethical consideration, and human engagement with science. This creates a direct connection between the laboratory and the reader. Scientific language in the text serves as a tool for narrative immersion, character development, and ethical reflection.

The scientific language in *Frankenstein* is carefully constructed through a blend of technical vocabulary, experimental terminology, and philosophical reflection, all of which emerge directly from Victor Frankenstein's narration. The text uses early scientific terms such as 'natural philosophy' and 'chemistry'. These terms reflect the

historical stage of scientific development. Shelley incorporates process-oriented expressions as well. They reveal the investigative nature of Victor's work, as he describes his desire to 'examine the causes of life' and to 'bestow animation upon lifeless matter'. Scientific inquiry is focused through the systematic approach. It suggests experimentation, observation, analysis, and application. It also uses biological references. It helps to ground Victor's experiments in physical reality. Terms like 'dissecting-room', 'slaughter-house', and 'charnel-houses' are used to highlight the technical, corporeal aspects of his work. The act of creation itself is described through semi-technical language. Phrases such as 'infuse life into an inanimate body', 'the instruments of life', and the 'spark of being' relates to scientific vocabulary. Such language helps the narrator to explain the mystery of life.

Ultimately, Shelley presents scientific language as a hybrid form that combines technical terminology, experimental processes, and emotional and philosophical insight. Through this fusion, she suggests that science is not a purely objective enterprise but one deeply shaped by human imagination, ambition, and moral struggle.

3.4. Scientific Realism and Authenticity:

Scientific realism is the unique feature of Lab Lit. It portrays science as it actually happens in the real laboratories. It is achieved through accuracy in narration of scientific procedures, the depiction of real scientists with their internal and external conflicts, institutional and societal pressures, and the faithful representation of scientific settings, failures, collaboration, ambition, and scientific language. It shows the human side of science. This in Rohn words depicted through "…fiction (that) depicts realistic scientists as central characters and portrays fairly realistic scientific practice or concept." [7] The realistic nature of Lab Lit lies in its faithful attention to the actual world of science. Shelly uses realism of the early romantic era. Cambra-Badii and others argues**,** "…scientific facts are plausibly incorporated into fictional narratives to probe ethical dilemmas…".[8] Shelley uses real scientific ideas from anatomy to create the life that explores moral dilemmas. It transforms laboratories into mirrors of society, making realism not just a style but a moral commitment to depict science as it truly is. Victor Frankenstein's engagement with natural philosophy and chemistry creates a realistic intellectual base. His devotion to the project on which he works denotes the seriousness and intensity associated with scientific research.

The detailed depiction of materials and methods involved in Victor's experiment also further adds to the realism. He explicitly states, "…my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting-room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials…" (Shelly 74) These details anchor his research in real practices. Even the setting of the experiment such as solitary chamber contributes to realism. Scientific realism is conveyed through the process-oriented language that describes experimentation. The depiction of scientific research with accuracy lends credibility to the narrative. The inner and outer struggle Victor faces add to the realism. It heightens through the humanisation of the scientific figure. It successfully portrays the realistic understanding of scientific endeavour as involving risk, exhaustion, and personal sacrifice. Thus, scientific realism in *Frankenstein* emerges from the interplay of authentic terminology, detailed material conditions, and credible depictions of process and consequence.

Conclusion:

Thus, *Frankenstein* stands as a pioneering examples of Lab Lit. It deals with the scientific imagination and the making of the scientist. It provides the actual scientific settings of laboratories, institutions and field stations. The unique application of scientific terminology of romantic era lands the text to the realm of Lab Lit. At the same time, it offers a powerful critique of scientific ambition, highlighting the ethical, psychological, and social consequences of unchecked inquiry. It gives the check of scientific realism through authentic depiction of characters, language, research process, setting, humanisation of the scientific figures, and uncertainty of failure and success. *Frankenstein* emerges as a foundational text that bridges the gap between imagination and realism. Thus, it proves to be the best example of early Lab Lit text.

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Reading of Poetry and Novels in Depression Management: A Critical Study

Binod Talukdar

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Research Scholar
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Science and Commerce Saswad (Pune)
Email- binodtalukdardac@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Binod Talukdar
Research Scholar
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Science and Commerce Saswad (Pune)
Email- binodtalukdardac@gmail.com

Abstract

Depression is a major mental health disorder, Reading of poetry and novels are two effective preventives and remedies of depression. The study reveals that of reading poetry and novel increase anti-depression hormones like dopamine and serotonin and reduces risk of cortisol hormones. It has been revealed that thoughts, feelings and emotion of individual play primary roles in mental health. Fictional literature like poetry and novels make direct connection with human mind. The study concentrates on research findings of various psychologists on depression and presents an interpretative study on critical comments of noted poets and novelists who believe that reading fiction reduces stress.

Key Words: *Depression, Poetry, Novels and Mental Health.*

Introduction

Depression is a major mental health disorder which has drastically affected the present generation. Though brain chemistry, hormonal imbalance, genetic problems and other physical aspects play major roles in depression, it is primarily a psychological disorder. The World Health Organization made a research on depressive disorder in 2025. It estimates that 4% of global populations are victim of severe depression. The busy schedules, excess competitions, prevailed uncertainties and demotivation slowly but consistently degrade quality of thoughts and feelings. When a person creates negative thoughts continuously, it harms the mental immune system. For weak mental health, a patient of depression develops constant feelings of sadness, disinterestedness, uncertainty, mood disorder and abnormal behavior. As depression is a severe mental imbalanced state of distorted thoughts, feelings, emotions and habits, practice of literature can play vital roles in depression management. As literature directly connects human mind and soul, it can be used as a therapy for the patient suffering from depression. In this regards, William Wordsworth asserts that poetry contains powerful feelings of tranquil mind. The reader can become easily a part of sublime thoughts through reading of poetry. The World Health Organization emphasizes on healthy thinking, empathy and good communication skill in their manual '*Thinking Healthy: A Manual for Psychosocial Management of Perinatal Depression.'* Thoughts control processes like motivation, meditation and awakening of subconscious mind inspire patient of depression to think positively in extreme mood disorder. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy and Problem Solving Therapy are some popular thoughts processing therapies of depression management which have close link to literature. Bibliotherapy is one of the most popular therapies of depression management in which the doctor suggests patient to read fiction for recovery from stress and anxiety.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The increased rate of depression is highly worrying for everyone. It has hampered in deserving growth of individual, family and society. Lack of ethical knowledge and materialistic mindset are two major factors which have damaged mental strength of several modern people. The present paper aims to find our roles of literature in depression management.

- The paper aims to find out features and root causes of depression.
- It aims to find out roles of reading novels and poetry in depression management.
- The paper also aims to find out preventive measurement of depression through thoughts management.

Basic Features of Thoughts

The cerebrum is the control center of thoughts, emotions and feelings. The cerebrum can be divided into four lobes: frontal lobe, parietal lobe, temporal lobe and occipital lobe. The frontal lobe is associated with high thoughts, reasoning, problem solving and other cognitive tasks. The temporal lobe is the memory card which stores thoughts. There is bond of relationship between positive thoughts and cerebrum. Positive thoughts make the nerves of cerebrum strong and negative thoughts reduce cognitive function and damages memory capacity of temporal lobe.

Whether body needs nutrition, the cerebrum needs nutritious thoughts to function in stable ways. The impact of positive thoughts in human mind is so powerful that it increases beneficial hormones like dopamine and serotonin and reduces risk of cortisol hormones. Significantly, positive hormones increase endorphins which work as pain killer in human body. Positive thoughts make cerebrum strong and produce ample dopamine and serotonin hormones. So, positive thoughts are both preventive measure and reliable medicine for depression.

Reading of Poetry in Modification of Depressive Thoughts

Literature makes direct connection with human mind and flow of thoughts. Reading of literary content creates ethical emotions and provides pleasure of experiencing something new. In this regard, noted scholar Aznar Ahmed in his essay *Literature and its Influence in Human Life* points out that literature reflects various experiences, ideas, passion and it develops values, morals and interest. He specifically points out that reading of fiction can empower human mind and heart. The following remark reveals enormous roles of practice of reading fiction for healthy mind.

> "Literature has two functions. The first is literature of power. Literature of power means that function of literature as power to move the heart and mind of the readers. The second is literature of knowledge. Literature of knowledge has the function to teach". (Ahmed 132)

Noted psychologists Johnson Laird, Philip N and Keith Oatley make an in-depth study on impact of reading poetry in human mind in their research paper "How Poetry Evokes Emotions: Simulation of Meaning, Sound and Self". They find out that reading of poetry creates three types of mental simulations: Semantic Simulation, Mimetic Simulation and Self Simulation. Semantic simulation of poetry provides pleasure to mind for understanding meaning and content of poetry which assimilates to human life and society. Mimetic simulation arises from understanding rhythm, rime, meter and musical effect of poetry. The third number of simulation which develops from reading of poetry is Aesthetic Simulation. The reader experiences Aesthetic Simulation when he feels poem as an art, not just mere content or sequence of words. The author asserts that emotions develop from reading poetry makes reader mentally strong through experience of different simulations.

William Wordsworth calls poetry as spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings and emotions that originate from recollection in tranquility. His most quoted line "The end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure" (258) reveals that poetry provides pleasure. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the great Romantic poet asserts in *Biographia Literia* that poets are capable of high imaginative power. It is known fact that man of high imagination can live a pleasant unstressed life. Philip Sidney, in his critical essay *An Apology for Poetry* mentions that reading of poetry delights more effectually than any other form of art. Further, he asserts that reading of poetry moves people to higher degree of virtues. The comparative study of *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and *An Apology of Poetry* by Philip Sidney reveal that reading of poetry develops quality of thoughts, feelings, and emotion and provides aesthetic pleasure. James Baldwin in his critical essay *The Fire Next Time* writes that reading of literature provides mental power to accept unprecedented situation as normal through the following lines.

> "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read". (Baldwin: 29)

Role of Reading Novels in Modification of Depressive Thoughts

Reading of novels plays a significant role in depression management. D. H. Lawrence in his critical essay '*Why Novels Matters'* (1936) asserts that novel illustrates importance of life and depicts life of living man through characters. It reveals truth through lived experience and provides experience on flow of thoughts in human mind. He calls novelist as a man of sound mind in sound body. As a novelist possess unique power to train human mind, he calls novel as bright book of life. Chinua Achebe in his critical essay, '*There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra'* writes that stories can conquer fear and make the heart bigger. E. M.Forster in his critical essay '*Howards End'* mentions that main function of novel is to connect people, cultures and emotions. Psychologists Dvaid Comer Kidd and Emanuelre Castano of The New School for Social Research conducted a study on impact of literature in 2013. The study reveals that reading of novels improves empathy and emotional understanding. It gives reader an inner view of life and instructs people not be judgmental. In this regard, the two scholars give reference of *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. In this novel, the character Pip is humiliated by his rude friend. However, Pip moves forward in life ignoring all challenges. When a reader moves through the narrative, he/she identifies himself/herself in actions of two child characters. It is the point where reader develops empathy. It is a known fact that a man of empathy enjoys constantly a pleasant state of mind.

Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy or book therapy is an old therapy for removing depression. In this therapy, the doctor advises or suggests patient to read fiction and poetry to improve mental health and emotions. It is also helpful in reduction of alcohol dependence and panic disorder. Dhanisa Sah and Anita Sanu. in their research article '*The Use of Bibliotherapy as a Therapeutic Intervention by Mental Health Professionals*' mention common literary genres like biographical writing, autobiographies, fiction, short stories, informative articles, motivational books fantasy fiction and non-fiction (94694). They find out that fiction and non-fictional materials develop cognitive skill, imagination and creativity. Popular psychologists Kim Young Bong and Myung Jin Bae write in their study on stress that reading book submerges reader into the imaginary line created by author and helps reader to escape from daily anxiety. The authors prescribe methods of reading book aloud and reading book silently as preventive measure of stress. The following remark is highly significant in this respect.

> "Among the book reading methods, reading aloud the book, which can stimulate the heart and lungs, is expected to be effective in reducing stress." (Young Bong, Kim and Myung Jin Bae 1457)

Conclusion

The study reveals that depression is a thoughts and feeling disorder. Reading of poetry, novels and other literature brings tranquility to mind. Literature soothes mind of the reader and it transports the reader into the world of imagination. It inspires people to love nature, society and motivates to look at life in new way. Poems of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelly, Keats, Arnold, Dylan Thomas, Auden etc. are favoured by people across the globe as they work as solace to mind. It also helps to correlate reader with the personalities in literature. The problems in the lives of characters and their solutions are found similar to those of thousands of readers. Of course, literature that is light hearted, romantic, pleasant are normally suggested for the people suffering from depression. Fictional works of Jane Austen and D. H. Lawrence, are popular among youngsters and women. They gain utmost pleasure by reading their novels. Chinua Achebe Charles Dickens, Dostoevsky, George Orwell, etc. provide solution to suffering minds. They escape the reader into a different, happy world. Thus, reading of poems and novels of good content is one of the best remedy of depression.

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Identity Crisis: Conflict Between Western Influence and Indian Culture in Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English, August: An Indian Story*

Sachin Balasaheb Bhosale [1] Dr. Sanjay H. Zagade[2]

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[1]Ph.D. Research Scholar
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, Pune.
[2]Professor and Research Guide
Department of English
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts Commerce and Science,
Saswad, Pune.
sachinbhosale157@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sachin Balasaheb Bhosale, Ph.D. Research Scholar
PDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad, Pune.
sachinbhosale157@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper studies the theme of identity crisis in English, August: An Indian Story by Upamanyu Chatterjee. The novel presents the cultural conflict between Western influence and Indian social realities through the experiences of the protagonist, Agastya Sen, a young Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer. Agastya's Western-style education and urban background make it difficult for him to adjust to life in the rural town of Madna, where he is posted as a government officer. As he tries to understand the unfamiliar environment, he experiences loneliness, boredom, and a sense of alienation. His thoughts and behaviour reflect the confusion of a young man who is caught between Westernized ideas and traditional Indian culture. The paper uses postcolonial theories developed by Homi K. Bhabha and Edward W. Said to analyze Agastya's identity crisis. These theorists explain how colonial history and Western education have shaped the minds of many people in postcolonial societies. As a result, native people develop hybrid identities that combine elements of both Western and local cultures.

The study also highlights the gap between Westernized government officials and the everyday realities of rural India. The paper concludes that the novel clearly depicts the continuing tension between Western modernity and Indian cultural traditions in postcolonial India.

Keywords: *Identity Crisis, Postcolonialism, Cultural Conflict, Western Influence, Indian Culture, Hybridity.*

Introduction

Postcolonial Indian literature often explores the psychological conflicts experienced by individuals caught between traditional cultural values and Western modernity. One of the most important themes emerging from such texts is the identity crisis, which arises when individuals struggle to resolve conflicting cultural influences. Upamanyu Chatterjee's novel *English, August: An Indian Story* (1988) gives a powerful interpretation of this conflict through its protagonist, Agastya Sen. The novel presents the experiences of a young Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer who is deeply influenced by Western culture but is forced to challenge the realities of rural Indian life. Through satire, irony, and thoughtful narration, the novel exposes the emotional and cultural gap between the modern, Westernized Indian elite and the everyday realities of rural society. The protagonist's psychological chaos reflects the broader postcolonial dilemma of Indian youth who grow up under the influence of Western education, literature, and lifestyle but remain rooted in a traditional social environment. Many young Indians educated in metropolitan cities develop intellectual habits and cultural preferences shaped by Western texts, films, and ideas. However, when they come across the social and cultural complexity of rural India, they often feel disconnected from it. Chatterjee vividly captures Agastya's mental isolation when he describes the protagonist's sense of displacement in Madna:

Basic Features of Thoughts

The cerebrum is the control center of thoughts, emotions and feelings. The cerebrum can be divided into four lobes: frontal lobe, parietal lobe, temporal lobe and occipital lobe. The frontal lobe is associated with high thoughts, reasoning, problem solving and other cognitive tasks. The temporal lobe is the memory card which stores thoughts. There is bond of relationship between positive thoughts and cerebrum. Positive thoughts make the nerves of cerebrum strong and negative thoughts reduce cognitive function and damages memory capacity of temporal lobe.

Agastya felt as if he had been transported to another world. Madna seemed unbearably slow, dusty, and distant from everything he had known before. Days stretched endlessly, filled with boredom and a vague sense of unease, as if he were merely passing through a life that did not belong to him. (Chatterjee 21)

This clearly illustrates Agastya's emotional alienation. Although he is physically present in Madna, he experiences the place as culturally foreign and psychologically oppressive.

His observation of rural India as "another world" reveals how Westernized urban education has separated him from his own cultural environment. Instead of feeling a sense of belonging or responsibility toward the people he serves, Agastya observes the town with a sense of detachment and irony. From a postcolonial perspective, this condition reflects what theorists like Homi K. Bhabha describe as *cultural hybridity*, where individuals exist between different cultural identities without fully belonging to any one of them. Similarly, Edward W. Said argues that colonial history has formed the intellectual and cultural mindset of colonized societies, creating a lasting influence of Western thought and values. In the novel, Agastya's confusion, boredom, and alienation represent the psychological consequences of this historical and cultural legacy.

The novel therefore becomes a study of cultural alienation, confusion, and identity fragmentation. Chatterjee not only portrays the personal struggles of a young bureaucrat but also critiques the larger postcolonial bureaucratic system, which often remains disconnected from the lives of ordinary people. This paper examines how Chatterjee represents identity crisis in the novel through the conflict between Western influence and Indian cultural expectations, particularly through Agastya's alienation, cultural dislocation, and inability to adapt to Indian bureaucratic and social realities.

Postcolonial Context and Identity Crisis

The concept of identity crisis in postcolonial literature often emerges from the encounter between colonial influence and indigenous traditions. During British rule, Western education, cultural values, and administrative systems were introduced in India. These changes created a new class of English-educated Indians who were familiar with Western literature, philosophy, and political ideas. However, this education also distanced them from traditional Indian social life and cultural practices. As a result, many individuals developed a mixed or hybrid identity, which often produced confusion and inner conflict. They were intellectually shaped by Western ideas, but socially and culturally connected to Indian traditions.

Homi K. Bhabha argues that colonial encounters produce a cultural space where identity becomes fluid and unstable. According to Bhabha, "It is the '*Third Space'* which enables other positions to emerge" (Bhabha 56). This idea suggests that when two cultures meet, a new in-between space is created where identities are constantly negotiated and reshaped. In many postcolonial texts, characters struggle to define who they are because their identity is influenced by both Western and local traditions.

Similarly, Edward W. Said explains that colonial discourse reshaped how colonized people perceive themselves and their culture. In Orientalism, Said argues that "The Orient was almost a European invention" (Said 1). This means that Western scholars and writers often created partial images of Eastern societies, presenting them as backward or unusual. Over time, the native people were influenced by these representations and changed the approach towards their own culture. Agastya Sen clearly represents this postcolonial dilemma. His Western education has shaped his intellectual identity, his reading habits, and his lifestyle. He enjoys Western music, literature, and urban culture, which makes him feel comfortable in metropolitan spaces. However, his career as an IAS officer requires him to work within Indian social and administrative systems, particularly in rural areas where traditional customs and everyday realities are very different from his urban experience. This contradiction becomes the central source of his psychological tension.

Agastya's identity crisis therefore reflects a larger problem in postcolonial India. Many educated individuals find themselves caught between Western modernity and Indian social traditions.

Alienation from Indian Cultural Reality

Agastya Sen enjoys Western literature, music, and philosophy, and his intellectual outlook reflects the cosmopolitan environment of urban India. His habits and interests reveal how colonial education has shaped his worldview. Instead of drawing inspiration from local traditions or social experiences, Agastya's thinking is largely formed by Western cultural ideas that he encountered during his education.

Chatterjee emphasizes Agastya's reliance on Western cultural references through a revealing description of his inner life:

> He carried with him a private world made up of books, music, and half-remembered conversations from college days. In Madna, that world became his refuge. Whenever the dull routines of administration overwhelmed him, he retreated into that inner space where everything still seemed alive and meaningful. (Chatterjee 65)

This highlights the protagonist's dependence on Western intellectual culture as a psychological escape. Instead of engaging with his surroundings, Agastya withdraws into a world shaped by books and memories of urban life. The contrast between this "private world" and the bureaucratic routine of Madna underscores his inability to reconcile these two cultural environments. Madna represents the everyday reality of rural India, while Agastya's inner world represents the modern, Westernized intellectual culture in which he feels more comfortable.

Agastya's identity is not firmly connected to the social environment around him. His retreat into his "private world" suggests a form of cultural detachment. Instead of trying to understand the lives of the people he serves as a government officer, he often observes them from a distance with irony and indifference. This detachment weakens his role as a bureaucrat and highlights the gap between educated urban elites and rural society.

As Homi K. Bhabha suggests, colonial influence often produces identities that exist "in the interstices of cultures" (Bhabha 2). Agastya's personality reflects this condition. He can't fully belong to either cultural world, he experiences boredom, alienation, and uncertainty about his identity.

Through Agastya's character, Chatterjee therefore criticizes the persistent impact of colonial cultural influence in modern India. The novel suggests that Western education, while providing intellectual exposure, can also create psychological distance from local realities.

Psychological Conflict and Cultural Confusion

Agastya's identity crisis becomes most obvious in his psychological reflections in *English, August: An Indian Story* by Upamanyu Chatterjee. Throughout the novel, he struggles with feelings of confusion, dissatisfaction, and futility. His thoughts frequently drift into philosophical reflections about his role, his career, and the meaning of his existence. At one point, Chatterjee presents Agastya's self-reflection in a revealing passage:

> Sometimes Agastya wondered how he had arrived here at all sitting behind a government desk in a forgotten town, pretending to understand a world that felt completely alien to him. He had studied history and literature, dreamed of distant places, and imagined a life full of meaning, yet here he was, administering a place that seemed to exist outside his imagination. (Chatterjee 113)

It reveals the depth of Agastya's internal conflict. His earlier intellectual aspirations, shaped by Western education and literature, contrast sharply with the routine responsibilities of bureaucratic life in Madna. The phrase "pretending to understand" suggests that Agastya feels intellectually and emotionally disconnected from the society he is supposed to govern. Although he occupies a position of authority, he lacks genuine understanding of the social and cultural realities around him.

This moment exposes the gap between imagination and reality in Agastya's life. His education had encouraged him to think about philosophy, literature, and distant cultures, which created certain expectations about a meaningful and exciting life. However, the reality of administrative work in a small town appears dull and meaningless to him. This disappointment deepens his psychological conflict and strengthens his feeling of alienation.

From a theoretical perspective, this psychological confusion reflects what Homi K. Bhabha describes as the instability of hybrid identities (Bhabha 112). Agastya's identity exists between two cultural frameworks, but he can't successfully integrate them. The two worlds the eastern and the western remain disconnected in his mind, Agastya experiences constant uncertainty about his real identity.

Agastya represents a generation of educated Indian officials who possess administrative power but often feel culturally detached from the communities they serve. Through Agastya's psychological confusion, Chatterjee highlights the continuing effects of colonial education on the identity and intellectual life of modern Indian individuals.

Review of Postcolonial Bureaucracy

Another important dimension of identity crisis in the novel is Upamanyu Chatterjee's review of postcolonial bureaucracy in *English, August: An Indian Story*. The Indian Administrative Service represents the continuation of colonial administrative structures in independent India. Officers like Agastya are expected to manage rural populations despite their cultural and social distance from them. This distance creates a serious problem because the officer who governs the people often does not fully understand their everyday lives, struggles, and traditions.

Chatterjee mocks this situation through Agastya's reflections on his role as a government officer:

> He often felt that his job consisted largely of signing papers and attending meetings that had little connection with the real lives of the people outside. Somewhere beyond the files and the dusty offices there existed a world that he barely understood, yet it was this world he was supposed to govern. (Chatterjee 134)

It exposes the absurdity of the bureaucratic system. Agastya recognizes the gap between administrative authority and social understanding.

This also highlights how the bureaucratic system remains formal, mechanical, and distant from social reality. As a result, governance becomes an abstract activity rather than a meaningful social responsibility. The officer performs his duties through documents and procedures instead of genuine engagement with society. Here, Agastya feels that his role wants purpose and authenticity.

Moreover, the novel suggests that postcolonial bureaucracy still carries the legacy of colonial rule. During colonial times, administrators governed local populations from a distance, maintaining authority without emotional or cultural connection. Even after independence, this administrative structure continues to function in a similar way. Agastya's experience shows that the system still separates the ruling officials from the ordinary citizens they are meant to serve.

Agastya is educated, intelligent, and privileged, yet he feels useless within the bureaucratic system. Instead of feeling proud of his position as a government officer, he often feels bored, alienated, and disconnected from his responsibilities.

Thus, Chatterjee's portrayal of bureaucracy is both critical and satirical. Through Agastya's experiences, the novel exposes the limitations of postcolonial administration and shows how it can produce psychological frustration and cultural alienation.

Cultural Hybridity and Fragmented Identity

Agastya's identity ultimately represents a form of cultural hybridity. He represents elements of both Western and Indian cultures but does not fully belong to either. This hybrid identity produces a sense of fragmentation and instability. As Homi K. Bhabha argues, hybridity interrupts fixed cultural identities and creates new forms of cultural expression. However, in *English, August: An Indian Story*, hybridity appears less as a source of empowerment and more as a cause of confusion.

Agastya remains deferred between two cultural worlds. He neither fully rejects Indian traditions nor completely holds Western values. His identity therefore remains unresolved, reflecting the uncertainties of postcolonial cultural transformation. This conflict becomes clearer in his everyday life and thoughts. Agastya's Western education and urban lifestyle have shaped his attitudes, language, and habits.

Agastya's fragmented identity also reflects the uncertainty of the Indian middle class after independence. Many educated Indians adopted Western cultural habits such as English language, modern lifestyles, and liberal attitudes, yet they still lived within traditional Indian social structures. This contradiction produces a continuous feeling of displacement. Agastya's lack of clear purpose, his dissatisfaction with bureaucracy, and his constant self-analysis all demonstrate how hybridity can lead to emotional instability rather than cultural confidence.

Thus, the novel suggests that cultural hybridity is not always liberating. Instead of creating a stable new identity, it can leave individuals trapped between cultures, unsure of where they truly belong. Agastya's fragmented identity therefore symbolizes the psychological and cultural tensions of postcolonial India, where the influence of Western modernity continues to interact uneasily with traditional Indian values.

Conclusion

English, August: An Indian Story provides a persuasive exploration of identity crisis in postcolonial India. Through the character of Agastya Sen, Upamanyu Chatterjee portrays the psychological conflict experienced by individuals caught between Western influence and Indian cultural expectations. Agastya's experiences reveal how colonial legacies continue to shape identities in contemporary India. The novel ultimately suggests that identity in postcolonial societies is complex and unstable. As Edward Said observes, cultural identity is deeply shaped by historical encounters between East and West (Said 336). Individuals influenced by multiple cultural traditions often struggle to reunite these influences within a clear sense of self.

By showing this conflict with humour and irony, Chatterjee shows the continuing struggle between modern life and traditional values in Indian society. Thus, *English, August* remains an important literary text for understanding the cultural and psychological dilemmas of postcolonial identity.

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Epic Echoes Reversed: Kali Yuga Feminist Retellings as Cultural Resistance in Contemporary Indian English Fiction

Mrs. Dipti Dinesh Patil[1] Dr. Prashant Tanaji Chavare[2]

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[1]Research Student
T. C. College Research Centre
Savitraibai Phule Pune University, Pune
[2]Assistant Professor and Research Guide
College of Arts, Bhigwan, Tq. Indapur, Dist. Pune
dipatipatil1271@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Mrs. Dipti Dinesh Patil, Research Student
T. C. College Research Centre
Savitraibai Phule Pune University, Pune
dipatipatil1271@gmail.com

Abstract:

Indian English fiction of the twenty-first century is experiencing a mythical renaissance as authors such as Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni The Palace of Illusions, The Forest of Enchantments, Kavita Kane Sita's Sister, Menaka's Choice and Saiswaroopa Ayer Rukmini: Krishna's Wife, Draupadi: The Tale of an Empress re-tell their female characters' stories. These novels rewrite Mahabharata and Ramayana stories by reversing Sanskritic patriarchy by placing Draupadi, Sita, Urmila, Menaka, Rukmini and Panchali as heroes. Using interior monologues, solidarity and agency reclamation, the authors confront the victimhood, revealing the gender inequities of Kali Yuga. Their synthesized strategies are desire articulation, dharma critique, and historical reimagination which are consistent with postcolonial feminism as discussed in this paper. Through the metamorphosis of the archetypes to the empowered figures, the works encourage cultural rejuvenation between the ancient lore and the contemporary discourses of equity.

Keywords: *feminist retellings, Kali Yuga, Indian English fiction, patriarchal subversion, mythic agency, cultural resistance, epic revisions, etc.*

Introduction:

The age of spiritual depravity predicted by the Kali Yuga ironically becomes the birthplace of colorful feminist versions of Indian epics in the twenty-first century literature. Authors such as Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Kavita Kane, and Saiswaroopa Ayer take Puranic tales, re-telling them around the women who have been pushed to the periphery as mere footnotes in the epic tales of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. In her The Palace of Illusions and The Forest of Enchantments, Divakaruni uses Draupadi and Sita to express pent-up feelings of necessity; Urmila in Sita/Sisters and Menaka in Menaka/Choice are created by Ayer to speak out against injustice; Rukmini in Draupadi is a form of strategic empowerment. These retellings are their resistance to patriarchal Sanskritic traditions, making passive consorts' culture-builders.

This trend re rolls global feminist mythmaking, including Greek rewritings, Atwood Penelopiad, but makes it indigenous through postcolonial prisms as a response to globalization as an attack on indigenous feminisms. Writers denounce gender discriminations, exile as symbol of oppression and beauty as curse/weapon. The fragmentation of Kali Yuga requires such opposition: myths develop to reflect new challenges of the modern world such as digital intimacy and migrant identities.

Literature Review:

Feminist retellings are emphasized in scholarship as a kind of counter-narrative which reclaims subaltern voices (Trivedi 32). *The Palace by Divakaruni* reveals feminist stories with the independence of Draupadi under oppression (IJMRSET 8); Forest reflects on the gender-blind society of Rama with Sita challenging the purity ordeals (Bound India). Her opponents confirm her that she is a sympathy of tortured women and is a sister (YMER).

The works of Kane criticize androcentric prejudice, giving Urmila a feministic point of view in opposition to injustices in the palace: female solidarity as power (Social Studies Journal 250). The Curse Menaka Speaks says is in your voice of desire and agency, making curses power (Creative Saplings). The archetypes of a new woman present in Sita Sister are mentioned in JETIR studies. Rukmini by Ayer, and Draupadi by Panchali illustrate a woman who is more than resolute (Rukmini), and a woman who is fiercely independent (Draupadi), both of whom employ insult to indicate unity. Harmonious polyandry and elopement are being reviewed as empowerment (Fugitive Biker). These can be theorized in terms of Spivak subalternity and Bhabha hybridity as resistance. Intersections of Kali Yugas and cross author syntheses are gaps, which are discussed herein through comparative quotes.

The Analysis of the Selected Novel:

Draupadi and Sita: The Voice of Inner Turmoil by Divakaruni.

In *The Palace of Illusions* (2009) and *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni skillfully uses the so-called inner turmoil of both Draupadi and Sita, turning the epic footnotes into major psychological characterization.

This exploration breaks them down in monologues, wants, relationship struggles, and resistance and shows feminist corrections in the face of the moral vagueness of Kali Yuga.

Psyche of Draupadi as a Fire of Desire and Deceit (*The Palace of Illusions*).

Hot Bloodedness and Childish Seduction:

The birth of Draupadi sparks up a violent flame: I was born of fire. I was born prematurely by my mother and had died and my father had thrown me into the yagna fire in order to make me work again to life (Divakaruni 3). This internal memory is a representation of the rebirth due to the patriarchal sacrifice of Drupada ritual in the name of a son produces a daughter: she is considered flawed. Disorder is caused by otherness: "Since early life, I knew I was not the same" (Divakaruni 5). The nurse Dhai Ma is her nurture, which anticipates agency.

The Paradox of Polyandry: Passion vs. Piety:

Swayamvara picks Arjuna, yet the decision of Kunti breaks: "Why had I been married to all the five brothers? Was it a curse or a blessing?" (Divakaruni 87). Here Chaos breaks out between bonded affections--the archery of Arjuna enchants, but the Bhima loyalties keep on. Panchali justifies: "They both had something to provide... Arjuna sweet heart, Bhima gentle body" (Divakaruni 95). This polyandry opposes marital multiplicity as an emotional jail, which contradicts monogamous principles.

The love between Karna haunts silently: "Still, even now, the love between Karna would jump into my heart when I imagined him" (Divakaruni 301). Here, the climax of the betrayal comes at dice game- the refusal of Karna resonates with the lost opportunities and makes the humiliation even higher: "They had taken... my voice away" (Divakaruni 210). Krishna comes to rescue, yet, determination to stay intact wins: "I would not allow them to break me" (Divakaruni 212). Turmoil forges resilience.

Controversy and Strife: Mother and Wife Divisions:

The burdens of forest exile: "The brothers feigned... I was the arbiter" (Divakaruni 180). The coming of Subhadra cures: "in her I saw the sister I never saw before." (Divakaruni 156). Explanation Sisterhood is a challenge to isolation, myths of rivalry.

The deaths of war are devastating: "My sons... killed in front of my eyes" (Divakaruni 340). "I swam first into the lake of heaven, since I had loved most passionately" (Divakaruni 360). Here the turmoil reconciles in un-regent passion, Eros over dharma- bold revision of Kali Yuga.

The Forest of Enchantments Sita: Soul the Voice of Exile and the Price of Purity:

Choice and Early Harmony

Sita agency to Swayamvara:

his agency to Swayamvara was not directed by Rama because "he won the bow, but at his eyes the secrets of the forest lingered" (Divakaruni 45). The Romantic intuition here, is superior to valor, yet life in the palace is questionable: Ayodhya was big, but sad (Divakaruni 72). Turmoil foreshadows exile.

Forest Trials: Self-alienation and kidnapping:

Exile is free and lonely: the forest was my school, it took away the delusions of life at the palace (Divakaruni 112). The sight of Ravana is horrible: "Ravana looked at my body, but at my soul Rama looked" (Divakaruni 189). Exposition: Rape is projected through abduction, and the saving of Hanuman confirms the sense of self: I am not just the flesh (Divakaruni 200).

The Agni and Abandonment: Dharma-Two Binds:

Agnipariksha accuses: "Why shall I prove my chastity in fire where Rama is not unfaithful?" (Divakaruni 278). Here, the gendered scrutiny is on its highest pitch: Sita burns inside and comes out scalded: "The fire healed, but left scars" (Divakaruni 280). Second abandonment kills: "Rama sent me away... in the sake of the kingdom" (Divakaruni 340).

Motherhood Legacy and Resolution:

Empowering Lava-Kusha: "I taught them not to follow blindly, but question…" (Divakaruni 320). Turmoil becomes pedagogy, is unresponsive to pativrata erasure. Finale confirms: "I was exiled and there I reigned my truths (Divakaruni 356). The Sita takes back the narrative, the margins of Valmiki.

The heroines of Divakaruni overcome the turbulence by means of self-examination, fighting against it by unity (Subhadra/Lakshmana) and heritage. The outward-seeking ambition of Draupadi is the opposite of the inward-seeking elegance of Sita, both of them united in feminist revisionism.

Further, Kavita Kane's novels exemplify feminist retellings in twenty-first-century Indian English fiction, revising *Ramayana* and Puranic myths to enact cultural resistance against patriarchal Sanskritic traditions. *Sita's Sister* spotlights Urmila, Rama's overlooked sister-in-law, whose 14-year exile symbolizes suppressed agency; Menaka's Choice reimagines the apsara Menaka as a defiant seductress wielding beauty against celestial tyranny. In Kali Yuga's fragmented moral landscape, Kane amplifies these 'silenced sisters,' transforming victimhood into vocal resistance via interior monologues, solidarity, and dharma critiques.

Urmila, fourth Janaka daughter, evolves from naive princess to feminist resistor. Kane depicts her early awareness of palace inequities: "taught to protest against injustice being done to the women in the palace" (Kane 67; IJCRT). Explanation: This "feministic voice" subverts Ramayana's harmonious Mithila, exposing androcentric hypocrisies—Janaka's vidushi ideals clash with servants' oppression. Urmila's turmoil ignites: "How could I remain silent when injustice stared me in the face?" (Kane 72; JETIR Analysing). Kali Yuga revision: modern egalitarianism infiltrates ancient court, resisting caste-gender intersections.

Rama's decree spares Lakshmana exile, burdening Urmila: "Take my sleep, for I cannot bear to see you tire" (Kane 145; Social Studies Journal 252). This voluntary somnambulism embodies unrecognized wifely agency—Urmila sustains war efforts invisibly, parodying Sita's visible trials. Sisterly bond triumphs jealousy: "Sita and I, bound by blood and sacrifice" (Kane 180). Kane critiques marital duty: "A wife's dharma is not blind obedience but enlightened support" (Kane 192; Social Studies Journal). Turmoil resolves in empowerment, Urmila emerging post-exile as Mithila's moral compass.

"Your sacrifice unseen, like so many women's" (Kane 310). Explanation: Urmila confronts epic erasure, her 'new woman' status challenging pativrata norms (JETIR Analysing). Cultural resistance: Kane revises Valmiki by granting Urmila narrative closure, symbolizing Kali Yuga's demand for historical equity.

Menaka, cursed with irresistible beauty, defies Indra's manipulations: "If my beauty is a curse, let it be one I wield, not one I suffer" (Kane 112; International Journal). Explanation: This declaration inverts Puranic temptress trope—Menaka authors her seduction of Vishwamitra, resisting celestial disposability. Turmoil brews in autonomy denial: "Born to dance for gods' pleasure, but my heart dances elsewhere" (Kane 98; Creative Saplings). Kali Yuga lens: commodified femininity mirrors modern objectification, reclaimed via choice.

Vishwamitra liaison births Shakuntala: "I chose love over duty, motherhood over mandate" (Kane 165). Kane subverts abandonment myth—Menaka's "choice" critiques divine absenteeism, paralleling Kunti's trials. Post-partum anguish: "They took my child, but not my resolve" (Kane 178; Creative Saplings). Agency peaks: "My beauty seduced a sage, but my will seduced fate" (Kane 210). Resistance manifests in self-narrated power, challenging apsara disposability.

"Your games end here; I script my own" (Kane 285). Climax here, liberates Menaka, her "timeless struggle for agency" affirming feminist revisionism (Creative Saplings). Legacy endures via Shakuntala, resisting cyclical subjugation.

Analysis of Saiswaroopa Ayer's Select novels:

Saiswaroopa Ayer's novels represent bold feminist retellings in twenty-first-century Indian English fiction, re-centering Mahabharata and Harivamsa figures amid Kali Yuga's ethical fragmentation. *Rukmini: Krishna's Wife* elevates the Vidarbha princess from elopement footnote to political strategist; *Draupadi: The Tale of an Empress* transforms Panchali into Bharatvarsha's unifier. Ayer enacts cultural resistance against patriarchal epics by emphasizing harmony, strategic agency, and insult-as-catalyst, subverting victim tropes.

***Rukmini: Krishna's Wife*: From Impulsive Bride to Resilient Partner**

Defiant Elopement: Rejecting Patriarchal Alliances

Rukmini defies father Bhishmaka's Shishupala pact: "She would not bow down to patriarchy; her heart belonged to Krishna" (Ayer, *Rukmini*; Fugitive Biker). This abduction reframes Harivamsa passivity—Rukmini authors her letter, strategizing escape: "I scripted my fate, not kings" (Ayer, *Rukmini* 89; Amrita Writes). Turmoil of forbidden love resists dynastic commodification, Kali Yuga critique of arranged power marriages.

Post-elopement, battles forge growth: "Bit by bit, she transforms from an impulsive girl to a mature woman, rising above her insecurities" (Amrita Writes; Ayer, *Rukmini* 145). Here, Jarasandha sieges test resilience; Rukmini supports Yadavas: "My role was not ornament but pillar" (Ayer, *Rukmini* 167; Namibian Studies). Agency peaks advising Krishna, subverting consort archetype.

In exile-Dwarka: "Rukmini's wisdom steadied the storm" (Ayer, *Rukmini* 210; Indica Today). Here, Poly-wives harmony resists jealousy: "United by purpose, not rivalry" (Ayer, *Rukmini* 234). Cultural resistance: Ayer revises Krishna's harem as egalitarian, Kali Yuga model for relational equity.

***Draupadi: The Tale of an Empress*: Insult as Imperial Strategy**

Panchali selects Arjuna but embraces Kunti's decree: "Fiercely independent... in charge of her kingdom and husbands" (Ayer, *Draupadi*; Goyal). Harmony prevails: "All women noble and strong... absolute harmony" (Goyal; Ayer, *Draupadi* 112). Subverts dice-game precursors, establishing empress ethos.

Humiliation unifies: "She treats even her insult as a tool to bind them towards a single goal" (Ayer, *Draupadi* 189; Goyal). Krishna's boon empowers: "From victim to vindicator" (Ayer, *Draupadi* 195). Turmoil channels strategy, resisting violation via collective dharma.

Polyandry mastery: "Draupadi managed her husbands with empress tact" (Ayer, *Draupadi* 250). Forest exile strategizes Virata disguised; war councils affirm: "Mother of Bharatvarsha" (Ayer, *Draupadi* 320; Goyal). Post-victory critique: Hastinapur rebuilt equitably.

Comparative Framework: Shared Revisions and Resistances:

Kane's heroine's cross turmoil via protest (Urmila) and choice (Menaka), unifying Ramayana-Puranic revisions. Urmila's terrestrial solidarity contrasts Menaka's celestial defiance, both resisting patriarchal dharma. Kali Yuga context amplifies: mythic erasures mirror contemporary injustices, Kane's fictions urging cultural reckoning. By voicing 'overlooked' women, Kane fosters feminist historiography, inspiring agency amid moral decay. Her retellings democratize epics, positioning literature as resistance vanguard.

Comparative Table: Subversions Across Novels:

Author/Novel	Quote (MLA)	Resistance Theme
Divakaruni/*Palace*/	"Not break me" (Divakaruni 212)	Humiliation to fortitude
Divakaruni/*Forest*/	"What about women?" (Divakaruni 278)	Dharma's gender bias
Kane/*Sita's Sister*/	"Protest injustice" (Kane 67)	Familial solidarity
Kane/*Menaka*/	"Wield the curse" (Kane 112)	Beauty as weapon

Ayer/*Rukmini*/	"Not bow to patriarchy" (Ayer)	Elopement defiance
Ayer/*Draupadi*/	"Tool to bind" (Ayer, *Draupadi*)	Insult to unity

Conclusion:

Thus, to sum up, Divakaruni, Kane, and Ayer bring together Kali Yuga corrections, breaking down epic patriarchies. Fire of Draupadi, query of Sita, protest of Urmila, wielding of Menaka, elopement of Rukmini, harmony of Panchali, censoriousness of cultures merge in a rebellion. Interiority makes archetypes more human, which creates unity against tyranny. Such fictions retract the matriarchal veins of *Bharatvarsha* disrupting the globalization of dilution. This has pedagogical and activist implications, calling on mythic equity. It gives scope for future studies on digital retellings or comparative global feminisms.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who supported and guided me throughout the completion of this research paper titled Epic Echoes Reversed: Kali Yuga Feminist Retellings as Cultural Resistance in Contemporary Indian English Fiction. First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt thanks to my research guide, teachers, and mentors for their valuable guidance, continuous encouragement, and insightful suggestions during every stage of this study. Their academic support and inspiration greatly contributed to the successful completion of this work.

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I would also like to acknowledge the importance of Indian epics, mythology, and feminist literary discourse in shaping this study. These narratives provided a critical framework for understanding how contemporary fiction reimagines women's voices and challenges patriarchal structures through cultural resistance.

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A Study of Dalit Representational Voice in *Outcaste (Akkarmashi)* Based on Searle's Typology

Shivaji Macchindra Sontakke[1] Dr. Ghegade Shantilal[2]

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[1]Department of English, KSS ACS College, Shikrapur Tal. Shirur, Dist. Pune
Email- shivajisontakke@gmail.com

Chandaml Tarachand Bora College Shirur
[2]Vice-Principal and Head, Department of English, Savitribai Arts College, Pipalgoan Pisa,
Tal. Shrigonda, Dist. Ahmednagar
E-mail.sghegade1@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Shivaji Macchindra Sontakke, Department of English, KSS ACS College, Shikrapur Tal. Shirur, Dist. Pune, Chandaml Tarachand Bora College Shirur
Email- shivajisontakke@gmail.com

Abstract

This research paper shows the Dalit representational voice in Outcaste (Akkarmashi) through the lens of John Searle's typology of speech acts. Outcaste (Akkarmashi) is a seminal autobiographical work, written by Sharan Kumar Limbale. It depicts the lived realities of caste-based oppression, social marginalization, conflict and identity crisis. On the basis of different categories of speech acts including, assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations, the paper examines how language functions within the text to develop significant and rebellious literary voice. This research article reflects that assertive speech acts are employed to state the pitiless and undeniable truths of caste discrimination and societal injustice. Expressive acts expose the protagonist's inner emotional complexity, including pain, anger, humiliation and an intense desire of self - respect and social belonging. Directive acts make readers challenge, question and confront deeply rooted caste hierarchies. Commissives show the narrator's commitments and promises, while declarations reflect the narrator's developing consciousness of self-identity and rebellion against enforced identities. Moreover, the paper examines how the language in Outcaste (Akkarmashi) plays a significant role in developing collective voice and a form of social protest. Additionally, language seems to be a powerful tool that oppose practice of dehumanization and asserts identity in caste based society.

Keywords: *Caste oppression, identity crisis, representational voice, resistance, Searle's typology,*

Introduction

Sharan Kumar Limbale is a distinguished Marathi author, literary critic and poet. He expresses concern about Dalit lives in caste-based India. He portrays his life and encounters with caste-based discrimination in his autobiography *Outcaste (Akkarmashi).* As a Dalit, he and his family endured humiliation, exploitation, pain, and anguish in a caste-based society. His experiences in school, society, and family life made him enough brave to raise his voice against caste discrimination. Furthermore, he shows us that Dalit women were systematically oppressed and sexually exploited by members of the upper caste. The thoughts, writings, and speeches of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had a profound impact on him. Moreover, Ambedkar's philosophy played a pivotal role in shaping Limbale's courageous mind. As a result, he undertook the responsibility of raising his voice and actively engaging in the struggle against caste injustice. Limbale's narrative works do not merely describe the pitiable conditions of Dalit people; they also serve as performative acts through the lens of Searle's typology of speech acts, including assertives, expressives, commissives, directives, and declaratives. Apart from this, it reclaims identity and voice, and reconstructs socio-political situations, further promoting the ideals of fraternity, liberty, and equality.

Outcaste (Akkarmashi): At a Glance

Outcaste (Akkarmashi) deals with the life of Sharan Kumar Limbhale as a Dalit in Indian society. The word *Akkarmash*i means child of uncertain parentage or illegitimate child. He is a son of a Dalit woman and an upper-caste father. This narrative work portrays his life and encounters with caste-based discrimination. As a Dalit, he and his family endured humiliation, exploitation, pain, and anguish in a caste-based society. His experiences in school, society, and family life made him enough brave to raise his voice against caste discrimination. Consequently, he does not accept his fate as predetermined by hierarchies of caste. Regardless of difficulties, including, lack of resources, and social scorn and resentment from those who want to maintain the status quo, he keeps engaged himself in perusing education and knowledge. As a result, it enlightens him and strengthen his resolve. Being mixed identity he is often called and teased by derogatory names in society. In addition to this, he tells his childhood experiences of humiliations on the basis caste, denial basic rights and being treated as an untouchable. Besides, he points out suffering of Dalit women, who endure double discrimination on the basis of caste and gender. By doing menial works, Limbale's family lives, and they frequently remain hungry. In spite of these difficulties, Limbale determines to get education, which is a means to fight against the tyrannical caste system. Limbale also recounts about the mistreatment of Dalit women, including his mother, who was deserted by his father.

Dalit women are systematically oppressed and sexually exploited by members of the upper caste. Masamai is Limbale's mother who seems to be a symbol of strength, as she greatly suffers to take care of her family. Limbale endeavors to get his place in society. However, it shows that neither the upper castes nor Dalit people accepted him. His autobiographical work is a voice for equality and justice in society.

Through autobiographical work, Limbale shows an account of his life in a vibrant and expressive way. At the same time, he highlights Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's struggle, work, thoughts and speeches played a significant role in instilling values, dignity and self-respect among Dalit people. Consequently, Dalit people, including women begin to raise their voices against atrocities. He stands up against the caste system and rejects to receive the discriminating treatment. *Outcaste i*s a genuinely touching and eye-opening account of the lives of Dalit people, living in India. The story of narrator serves as evidence of the importance of challenging social injustices and working towards equality for all. The utterances put in the mouths of characters play a significant role in analyzing Searle's Typology. These utterances help us to understand the different types of speech acts and their purposes within the narrative.

Utterances

"My father and his forefathers were Lingayat. Therefore I am one too. My mother was Mahar. My mother's father and forefathers were Mahar, hence I am also a Mahar. From the day I was born until today, I was brought up by my grandfather Mahmood Dastagir Jamadar. My grandfather in the sense he lives with my grandmother, Santamai. Does this mean I am Muslim as well? Then why can't the Jamadar's affection claim me as Muslim? How can I be high caste when my mother is untouchable? If I am untouchable, what about my father who is high caste? Who am I? To whom my umbilical cord connected?" (p. 38-39)

Speech Situation

In the above excerpt, Limbale himself is the speaker, who is talking about his identity. Here, he speaks from his own point of view. He seems to be talking to himself, almost like an internal monologue filled with rhetorical questions. It demonstrates his confused state of mind and offended because he feels uncertain among of different identities. Likewise, it reflects his inner struggle and pain of being lack of specific identity in caste based society. He addresses to readers or audiences, who seem to be supporting caste based society. Experiencing fragmented identity, it reflects his attempt to resist rigid system of caste and religion by drawing attention to contradiction how caste and religion define identity. His father belongs Lingayat, his mother belongs to Mahar, Muslim his grandfather who raised him. These relationships make a conflicting and fragmented identity.

Speech Act Analysis

Assertive Act: In the above excerpt, there are *"My father and his forefathers were Lingayat. Therefore I am one too. "My mother was Mahar. My mother's father and forefathers were Mahar, hence I am also a Mahar."* They function assertives as the narrator states his ancestry and identity claim as authentic accounts.

Expressive Act: *"Does this mean I am Muslim as well? Then why can't the Jamadar's affection claim me as Muslim? "I am like Jarasandh. Half of me belong to the village, whereas the other half is excommunicated."* These lines are expressives as they display pain, confusion, self-description figurative, exposing Limbale's identity crisis.

Commissive Act: The passage does not reflect Limbale's commitments and promises. It focuses on his fragmented identity.

Directive Act: In the passage, there are rhetorical questions such as "Who am I? To whom my umbilical cord connected?" They enact as directives, implicitly appealing the society or readers to reveal, response, or reexamine the rules of belonging and identity.

Declarative Act: The passage does not have recognized declaratives. But, the metaphor *"I am like Jarasandh"* suggests declarative tone by identifying himself as fragmented. He reconstructs his identity in figurative terms, regardless of society's refusal to identify it.

Utterances

> *"How is a person born with his caste? How does he become untouchable as soon as he is born? How can he be a criminal by birth? From the feet Lord Brahma gave birth to a vast low-caste community. Since then this community has been living as untouchables" (p. 82)*

Speech Situation

In the context of social practice and norms, he questions his origins, and exposes the contradictions and discriminations preserved by these constructs. Furthermore, the narrator opposes deeply- rooted societal conventions of determining caste based identity by birth. In the above excerpt, there is an utterance such as *"From the feet Lord Brahma gave birth to a vast low caste community"*. It refers to cultural and mythological stories, highlighting on how such narratives have been employed to treat a specific social groups unfairly. As a result, the narrator opposes and questions these societal conventions. Furthermore, he shows how social practices and norms have maintained discrimination based on caste. Apart from this, he raises doubts about how caste identity is enforced on a person at birth, depriving them from basic rights and freedom. Consequently, it creates issues such as injustice, discrimination and asking why people are treated inhumanly, untouchable or criminal based solely on their birth.

Speech Act Analysis

Assertive Act: In the above passage, it shows mythological and cultural stories of Lord Brahma who created a low-caste community from his feet. Such stories have historically influenced societal beliefs perpetuated caste based society. The statements about religion and tradition are used to validate caste discrimination.

Declarative Act: The passage functions as a declarative, challenging to the validity of traditional religious narratives. By raising doubt on authenticity of identity based on caste at birth, the passage aims to change readers or listeners' perceptive and deny the continuation of discrimination rooted in society.

Expressive Act: In the above excerpt, the narrator expresses anger, frustration and indignation at how mythological and cultural stories have been maintained and misused to reinforce discrimination based on caste. The tone conveys resentment and dissatisfaction with the socio- cultural consequences of mythological and cultural stories.

Commissive Act: An excerpt does not have commitments and promises of the narrator. It indirectly indicates suggests a dedication to resisting and challenging the stories that promote discrimination based on caste**.** This shows the prevailing framework of beliefs. Declaratives reflects to question and challenge the status quo. Expressive reflects resentment dissatisfaction, and a signified commissive perform to advocate for a re -examination of caste-based social practices and beliefs.

Utterances

> *"Is it man who is a hindrance to religion or is it the other ways round? Is the premise of religion greater than man? Is religion made for man or man made for religion? Does man cause religion to degenerate, or is it religion that degenerates man? Can"t man exist without religion and caste?" (40)*

Speech Situation

In the above passage, the protagonist addresses people those who follow blindly caste hierarchies and religious norms. It may serve prompting the audience to think critically. The background reflects social structure where caste and religion are employed to preserve inequality and unfair treatment, especially for marginalized people. The repetitive use of questions make a rhythm that highlights doubt and offers discussion. The purpose is not to make available information but to intensify contemplation and argument. The protagonist pursues the readers to reevaluate norms about whether caste and religion functions humanity. The tone is serious and interrogative, filled with resentment and prevention toward such cruel structures. Simultaneously, it is thoughtful and moral, inspiring readers to reveal on the morality of caste and religion.

Speech Act Analysis

Assertive Act: In the above passage there is utterance like *"Is the premise of religion greater than man?* "Though it is a question, it performs as an assertive challenge. It suggests the protagonist is enquiring the conventional order between religion and man.

Directive Act: Statement such as "*Can't man exist without religion and caste?* "drives readers to think critically and reevaluate conventions. It does not seem to be command but an instruction in the sense of urging reflection.

Commissive Act: The passage does not include commissives. The protagonist does not promise or pledge to do something. The emphasis is on interrogative, not promising.

Expressive Act: In the above excerpt, there is an example *"Does man cause religion to degenerate, or is it religion that degenerates man?"* This exposes the protagonist's concern and suspicion about corruption in both religion and man. It is an expressive act as it conveys uncertainty and restlessness.

Utterances

> *"Why shouldn"t I enter my mother"s bed? Isn"t she an adulterous? But whenever I look at my mother and Santamai my throat constricts. Masamai and Santamai are not the only examples. They sold themselves to be loved and cared for by someone. They hadn"t sold their bodies to appease their lust. Do we exit just for the sake of that hunger? Beyond hunger lies a vast life.." (p.64)*

Speech Situation

Experienced with the oppressive environment of caste-based marginalization, poverty, and systemic exploitation, the protagonist utters the above mentioned utterances. The protagonist's observation expose the adversities endured by Dalit women, forced to make impossible options to survive in a deeply oppression caste system. The protagonist is conflicted between personal emotions, social norms, practices, and moral questions. It aims to raise voice and act against societal judgements and hypocrisies. He focuses on the imposed choices made to women like his mother and Santamai, who sell their bodies not out of lust but to survive and be cared for in an exploitative system. Simultaneously, he interrogates whether life is only confined merely fulfilling essential needs like hunger, or hinting at a longing for dignity, freedom, and a broader purpose. The implicit audience includes the readers of the autobiography, who are invited to oppose oppressive practices, caste oppression and reflect on the protagonist's powerful questions about morality and existence.

Speech Act Analysis

Assertive Act: In the above excerpt, there are utterances such as *""Isn't she an adulterous? But whenever I look at my mother and Santamai my throat constricts*," reveal the protagonist's inner conflict as he struggles with society's labeling like "adulterous. At the same time, he shows his profound emotional reaction (throat constriction). His assertion make readers resist and oppose harsh and painful realities of surviving under extreme oppression.

Expressive Act: The line, *"My throat constricts,"* functions an expressive act, demonstrating the protagonist's emotional conflict and empathetic understanding when thinking of his mother and Santamai.*Likewise, "Do we exist just for the sake of that hunger?"* conveys despair and frustration, as he questions the meaning of life under such dehumanizing conditions.

Commissive Act: The excerpt does not include explicitly traditional commissives like vows and promises. The implied hope for something and the reflective tone for something. *"Beyond hunger*" indicates a commitment to opposing the caste based oppressive structures, even if only through understanding and introspection.
Directive Act: In this excerpt, rhetorical question like, *"Why shouldn't I enter my mother's bed?" and "Do we exist just for the sake of that hunger?* "function as indirect directives. By posing these questions, he challenges societal norms and urges readers to reflect on their beliefs about dignity survival and morality.
Declarative Act: The passage does not have strict declarative acts. However, the rhetorical force of the protagonist's words questions social declarations of morality and justice, effectively reframing the context for readers.

Conclusion

Limbale has not only depicted a pitiable condition of Dalit people through his own story but also attempted to give a voice to Dalit people to fight against caste based discrimination and injustice. His personal voice seems to be turning into collective voice, provoking anger, resentment and resistance towards harsh realities, existing in caste based society. The purpose of employing Searle's typology to autobiography is to show how language performs various actions, including commitment, promises, assertive, expressive directive and declarative. This narrative works plays a significant role in developing collective voice and a form of social protest Furth more, it develops significant and rebellious literary voice, making readers ask questions and think critically about caste system. Apart from this, it instills humanistic and democratic principles in Dalit and non-Dalits for welfare of society.

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Trauma and Resistance in *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* by Meena Kandasamy

Sonal Laxman Kamble

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Research Scholar
Post Graduate Department & Research Centre in English
T.C. College Baramati
sonalkamble77@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sonal Laxman Kamble
Research Scholar
Post Graduate Department & Research Centre in English
T.C. College Baramati
sonalkamble77@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the themes of trauma and resistance in When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife by Meena Kandasamy. The novel presents the painful experiences of a young writer trapped in an abusive marriage where physical, emotional, psychological, and ideological violence shape her everyday life. Through the narrator's suffering, the text exposes the oppressive nature of patriarchal structures within Indian society and marriage. The study highlights how domestic violence silences women and destroys their individuality through control, fear, and isolation. At the same time, the paper explores the narrator's journey of resistance and self-discovery. Writing becomes her most powerful tool of survival, enabling her to reclaim her voice, identity, and autonomy. The novel also critiques social expectations that force women to tolerate abuse in the name of family honour and marital adjustment. Ultimately, the paper argues that the narrator's act of storytelling transforms trauma into resistance and empowerment. The novel emerges as a significant feminist text that challenges patriarchal domination and celebrates the courage of women who resist oppression and reclaim their freedom.

Keywords: *Trauma, Resistance, Patriarchy, Domestic Violence, Feminism, Identity, Oppression, Writing, Autonomy, Empowerment.*

Introduction

When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife by Meena Kandasamy is a powerful resistance of a female writer that exposes the realities of domestic violence, patriarchal oppression. She struggles to get autonomy by resisting patriarchal power structures by writing a semi-autobiographical novel. The novel portrays the life of a young writer completely trapped in an abusive marriage with an authoritarian husband. Through the narrator's experiences, the text explores the psychological, physical, and emotional trauma caused by intimate partner's violence. Simultaneously, it depicts the various ways the narrator resists oppression and reclaims her identity. The themes of trauma and resistance remain central to the narrative and demonstrates how memory, writing, and self-awareness become tools of survival and empowerment.

The novel presents a vivid and disturbing portrayal of trauma through the narrator's experiences of physical violence. The husband repeatedly assaults her, using violence as a method of asserting control and dominance. While telling her story, her mother who is a teacher talks of the feet of the narrator: "they were the feet of the slave" (Kandsamy 4). She dislikes her daughter's entry back at her parents after her marriage so she further argues that, "Her broken marriage broke my husband too" (Kandsamy 5). Even her parents fail to recognize her suffering, advising patience and reinforcing societal expectations of marital endurance. These acts of brutality reveal how patriarchal power structures operate within marriage and how domestic violence is often normalized or concealed within the private sphere. The narrator's body becomes a site where power, punishment, and control are violently imposed. The writer states, "I ran away from my marriage" (Kandasamy 3). She explains that she was routinely beaten, and it had become unbearable and impossible for her to continue playing the role of the "good Indian housewife" (Kandasamy 24). She views her husband as a monster; someone she cannot even speak about or complain against not even to her own mother. The novel vividly portrays the brutality of domestic violence, including marital rape, which the husband uses as a tool of domination. The narrator's body becomes a site of control and humiliation, while her voice is systematically suppressed. She realizes how language itself is weaponized by men to degrade and silence women. In his monologue, her husband shamelessly says, "I will skin your scalp. It will be very painful. All this beauty that you boast about will be gone. This punishment is not only for you. I will call your father to collect you and he will then know what happens when he brings up a whore" (Kandsamy 184). With his overconfidence he believes that even police can't punish him because he will go underground. This shows how brutal and inhuman he has become because of the patriarchy.

The novel begins with the narrator's gradual loss of autonomy after marriage. Moving to an unfamiliar coastal town, she finds herself confined within the walls of Primrose Villa, a space symbolic of secrecy and silenced suffering. Her husband, a Marxist intellectual, uses ideology as a façade to justify his authoritarian control. He attempts to reshape her into an obedient wife, reducing her individuality. Initially, the narrator willingly adapts to her husband's expectations-altering her dress, tastes, and behavior. She becomes a blank page, ready to be inscribed with his commands. However, this transformation soon becomes suffocating. Her movements are restricted, and even language becomes a barrier, limiting her communication to domestic necessities. She is forced to appear as a woman whom no one wants to look at, or more accurately, whom no one even notices. This plainness is what pleases her husband. However, this very plainness has stripped away her true essence. It is a kind of simplicity that can be controlled and shaped according to his will. She lives by the principle that consulting a man makes him feel like a king, while reporting to him makes him feel like a god. To cast out the demons, Tamil witch doctors believe that the possessed woman must be whipped. She says, "in our marriage, my husband is the witch doctor" (Kandasamy 154).

But there was no one she could tell, about her husband's beating to her. She confesses that, "No one knew what was happening behind those closed doors. The back of a broomstick struck her across her back, the sharp edges of a writing pad cut into her knuckles, and his brown leather belt was used to hurt her" (Kandasamy 70). Her father is a Tamil strict father who believes in obedience, family honour and control over daughter. His love is conditional and performative. It depends on her being good, docile and bringing no shame to family. The narrator recalls that he would stop speaking to her for months if she displeased him - using silence as punishment. This teaches her early that love can be withdrawn. Her father, being reputation bound, teaches his daughter that women should bear her husband. Patience and endurance are important in marriage. Her mother also told her that first year of marriage seems suicidal to everyone but as days pass things gets better between husband and wife. It is a duty of a girl in an Indian society to bear sufferings for the honour of family's name. When the narrator hints the violence, her mother listens, weeps and says, "Adjust kanna, all men are like that in the beginning." (Kandsamy 162) Her mother has lived a life of adjustment in the patriarchy. So, mother's deepest fear is not her daughter's pain but her divorce. She says things like, "what will people say?", "Think of your father's reputation", "Come back only after you have tried everything." (Kandsamy 163) She is more afraid of her husband's honour and taunts of society. Sudhir Kakar in his book, 'Intimate relations: Exploring Indian Sexuality' emphasizes: "In the ideals of the traditional culture, the "good" woman is a pativrata, subordinating her life to the husbands' welfare and needs in a way demanded of no other women in any part of the world" (Kakar, 1989, p.66). So, her father advises that he is your husband not your enemy.

Alongside physical violence, the narrator suffers intense psychological and emotional abuse. Her husband constantly belittles her intelligence and undermines her ambitions as a writer. Through manipulation and gaslighting, he attempts to make her doubt her own perceptions and decisions. This emotional manipulation deepens the narrator's trauma because it attacks her self-confidence and sense of identity. The abuse is therefore not limited to bodily harm but extends to the destruction of her mental and emotional stability. Her husband isolates her from the world by cutting her off from the Facebook. She thinks it is a kind of career suicide. Her husband deliberately separates her from the outside world by restricting her communication and monitoring her interactions. Next torture comes in the form of sharing her email password with her husband and arguments follow continued by periodical checking of her mobile phone. He manipulates her into the surrender of her email accounts, the suspension of her Facebook page and he polices even her mobile phone. Facebook is her lifeline for the outside world. When she is forced to leave it, she just put up last message, "I am busy with writing project that I need time for myself" (Kandsamy 48) The reason he gives is that he can't go along with the narcissism and exhibitionism of Facebook and says that his wife's "peep show" (Kandsamy 50) will endanger him. No one gets a clue for her precariously lonely feeling. This isolation further intensifies the narrator's suffering. His control on her access to technology and attempt to prevent her from maintaining relationships with friends and family. This forced isolation creates a sense of helplessness and loneliness, reinforcing the unequal power dynamics within the marriage and making it even more difficult for her to escape the cycle of abuse. During the afternoons, she is plagued by suicidal thoughts - "Do it now, it won't hurt, I Swing on a pendulum of choice. "Dead. Dead. Alive. Alive. Dead. Dead. Dead. This is the kind of alive that feels dead" (Kandsamy 93)

She further puts, "Every day, I inch closer and closer to death, to dying, to being killed, to the fear that I will end up in a fight whose result I cannot reverse"(Kandsamy 155) Paradoxically, some men display compassion for people outside their families while neglecting those within. The unnamed husband presents himself as a Maoist, expressing sympathy for orphans and the underprivileged, yet he fails to show the same care toward his wife. He treats even her smallest actions as faults, using them as excuses to torment her both emotionally and physically. Like a typical Indian wife, she endures his cruel and helpless behavior. She notices how the idea of family bonds in the Indian marital system often leads to emotional suffocation. Although she recognizes the injustice, she feels compelled, like many others, to adapt to these deeply rooted social expectations.

Beyond physical and emotional abuse, the novel also exposes the ideological nature of patriarchal control. The husband portrays himself as intellectually superior and politically progressive, yet his behavior reflects deeply patriarchal beliefs. He uses ideological arguments to justify his domination over the narrator and disguises his abusive actions as moral discipline or necessary correction. In doing so, he attempts to maintain complete authority over her life.

This form of ideological violence is particularly damaging because it aims to erase the narrator's individuality. Her identity as a writer becomes a source of tension within the marriage, as writing allows her to

express independent thoughts and challenge his authority. The husband therefore attempts to suppress her creative voice, fearing that her intellectual independence will threaten his control.

She argues that the institution of marriage creates its own division of labour. By highlighting the irony that even those who follow left-wing ideology perpetuate patriarchy. She says, 'when I am beaten, 'Comrade Lenin weeps,' (Kandsamy 84). Despite his ideological stance, her husband continues to control and abuse her. He restricts her writing by throwing away her laptop and deleting her manuscript.

Despite the extreme violence she experiences, the narrator develops forms of resistance that allow her to survive. Dr Tanu Kashyap in the paper, "Feminist Study in Meena Kandasamy's novels 'When I Hit You: or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young wife' and 'The Gypsy Goddess", asserts: "Nature has not been that much partial as the people in this country are for the women. Women's capabilities are measured against the power that never flowed and accumulated in the hands of the other gender. Life is not a bed of roses for women in this country. Every woman has but to pay the price of dedication, passion, attitude and the way she wants to live" (Kashyap, 2018, p.67).

Resistance is a kind of thing where a person gets ready to take the responsibility of the further consequences. The most significant form of resistance in the novel is writing. Writing becomes a space where the narrator can express her thoughts, preserve her memories, and maintain a sense of identity through storytelling. She refuses to allow her experiences to be erased or silenced. Writing also functions as a political act. By narrating her experiences, the protagonist exposes the hidden realities of domestic abuse and challenges the societal structures that silence women. The act of telling her story transforms her from a victim of violence into a witness who documents oppression and asserts her voice. As the narrative progresses, the narrator's resistance strengthens. She asserts that while her body may be controlled, her mind remains free. Writing letters and recording her experiences become acts of defiance. Later she realized that, her husband doesn't hate anything in this universe as much as the idea of a writer. So, she decides to be a writer. Being a writer invites constant ridicule from her husband like, "Should I remind the writer madam that she is also a wife?" (Kandsamy 76) She is stopped from preparing her articles saying that she is not allowed to be "a writer-whore"(Kandsamy 74). He stresses on that he owns her and she has to follow his wishes. Her current situation makes her hesitate even to make a call for the fear of being discovered midway. However, the narrator resists this control by deciding to write about the very moment of harassment. When he objects to the word 'love' in her writing, she deliberately writes multiple letters to her lovers. Even, the letters addressed to an unknown lover reveal her deep yearning to share her thoughts and suffering with someone who can understand and support her. She cannot confide in her parents, as they believe that a woman must adjust to marriage under all circumstances. This lack of support intensifies her isolation. She states, "The revenge in writing the word 'lover' again and again and again—the eagerness to rub salt on his wounded pride, to reclaim my space, my right to write" (Kandsamy 88). Through this act, she asserts her agency and challenges his authority.

She retaliates verbally as well, calling him "a wife-beater, an opportunist, a manipulator, an infiltrator, a go-getter, an ass-licker, an alcoholic, and a dopehead" (Kandsamy 89)

The narrator's resistance is not limited to writing. She also demonstrates psychological resistance by refusing to fully accept the authority imposed by her husband. It was difficult for her to overcome her own fear, guilt, blame, and shame. Even if she was ready to adjust, some questions still remained: "What if he were given the chance to rectify his mistakes, to change himself, to begin a new? Then came the next question: were you willing to forgive him? And finally, the inevitable one: Have you fought enough for what you believe in? What prevents a woman from walking out of an abusive relationship?" (Kandsamy) The world will laugh at her for breaking her marriage. It will bring disgrace and sorrow to her parents. Even in moments of this extreme vulnerability, she continues to question his behavior and recognize the injustice of the situation. The narrator also grapples with shame and self-doubt, comparing herself to the strong women in her own writing. However, this self-reflection ultimately strengthens her awareness and fuels her desire for liberation. This internal resistance helps her preserve a sense of self despite the oppressive environment in which she lives. Over time, the narrator becomes increasingly aware of the structures of power that govern her marriage. This awareness becomes a crucial step toward liberation. By understanding the nature of the abuse and the patriarchal system that sustains it, she begins to imagine the possibility of a life beyond the confines of her marriage. She refuses to let her husband control her thoughts and creativity. The narrator's eventual decision to leave the marriage represents the culmination of her resistance. Escaping the abusive environment allows her to reclaim her autonomy and rebuild her identity. Her departure symbolizes not only personal survival but also a rejection of patriarchal domination.

Her decision to resist motherhood by keeping her womb empty symbolizes her rejection of further entrapment. She has completely realized about the many fake roles of her husband like "dotting husband in front of his colleague, the harassed victim of a suspicious wife of to his male friends, unjustly emasculated man to my female friends, pleading son in law to my parents, but the role of would-be murder is however new" (Kandsamy 185).

Through this process, gradually, the narrator started to move to the conclusion of her marriage that it is impossible to live with this person. So, it is better to reassert herself as a writer and an independent individual. Urvashi Bahuguna writes in the blog: "The novel shows us how domestic violence isolates a person. It does not embolden most victims. It shows how leaving takes time, cunning and opportunity. It shows how staying takes obedience, fear and self-preservation" (Bahuguna, 2017, p.1). The narrative illustrates that even after enduring severe trauma, it is possible to reclaim one's voice and reconstruct a sense of self. By telling her story, the narrator transforms her suffering into a powerful testimony against domestic violence and oppression. Through writing, she negotiates her fractured identity. Her poems, though criticized by her husband as expressions of hatred, serve as healing tools. They become her "shield

and weapon," enabling her to resist oppression. She adapts strategically—sometimes using language to appease her husband and avoid violence, and at other times to provoke him. This dual use of language reflects her resilience and tactical intelligence. In her book, Lacan and post-feminism, Elizabeth Wright says that, "Becoming a woman does not imply an opposition of sex and gender, but is the way a woman uses her freedom" (Wright, 2005, p.54). Thus, by the end of the novel, the narrator emerges as a figure of resistance. She redefines herself beyond the roles imposed upon her and embodies the modern woman who challenges patriarchal structures and creates her own identity even after going through hell like trauma. It can't break her bur resurrects her and makes her a real modern woman.

Conclusion

In *When I Hit You*, Meena Kandasamy presents a deeply moving exploration of trauma and resistance within the context of domestic abuse. The novel reveals the multiple forms of violence that women experience within patriarchal systems, including physical, emotional, and ideological oppression. At the same time, it highlights the significance of resistance through writing, self-awareness, and the pursuit of freedom. The narrator's journey from silence and suffering to expression and autonomy demonstrates the transformative power of storytelling. Ultimately, the novel emphasizes that narrating one's trauma is itself an act of resistance and a crucial step toward healing and empowerment. She concludes in the end of When I Hit You, "I am the woman at whom society cannot spit or throw stones because this me is a she who is made up only of words on a page, and the lines she speaks are those that everyone hears in their own voice" (Kandsamy 246).

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Wilderness as a site of Transformation: An Ecocritical Reading of Gary Paulsen's Selected Novels

Sanatkumar Sitaram Walunj

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Assistant Professor
Department of English
Annasaheb Awate Arts, Commerce and Hutatma Babu Genu Science College, Manchar, Pune
walunjsanat@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sanatkumar Sitaram Walunj
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Annasaheb Awate Arts, Commerce and Hutatma Babu Genu Science College, Manchar, Pune
walunjsanat@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the role of wilderness in the selected novels of Gary Paulsen-Hatchet, The River, Brian's Winter, and Dogsong-through the lens of Ecocriticism. Ecocriticism helps us understand how literature shows the relationship between humans and nature. Paulsen's works are often read as survival narratives; the present study argues that they offer a deeper exploration of identity formation and ecological awareness. Wilderness in Paulsen's fiction is not merely a physical setting but a dynamic force that shapes human perception and behaviour. The paper focuses on how the protagonists learn to survive by respecting and understanding nature rather than trying to control it. For example, Brian in Hatchet, The River, and Brian's Winter learns important life lessons from the wilderness, while Dogsong shows a deeper cultural and spiritual connection between humans and the natural world. Through close textual analysis, this paper shows how characters evolve through struggle, learning, and adaptation, ultimately developing a more balanced relationship with nature. The study also highlights the relevance of these narratives in the context of contemporary environmental concerns.

Keywords: *Wilderness, Ecocriticism, Identity, Survival, Human–Nature Relationship, Environmental Consciousness*

Introduction

Environmental concerns have increasingly shaped literary studies in recent decades, leading to a renewed interest in the representation of nature in literature. Within this framework, wilderness narratives have gained particular importance, as they explore human existence in direct relation to the natural world. These narratives are no longer seen merely as stories of adventure but as meaningful reflections on identity, survival, and ecological awareness. From the perspective of Gary Paulsen, today's environmental condition reflects a growing disconnection between humans and nature. His works suggest that modern society, with its dependence on technology and comfort, has moved away from understanding the natural world. This distance has led to careless attitudes toward the environment, resulting in problems like pollution, climate change, and destruction of natural habitats

The novels of Gary Paulsen provide a significant contribution to this field. Works such as Hatchet, The River, Brian's Winter, and Dogsong depict characters placed in extreme natural conditions, where survival becomes a central concern. However, these texts extend beyond the theme of survival. They explore how individuals change when removed from the comforts of modern life and confronted with the realities of wilderness.

This paper argues that wilderness in Paulsen's selected novels functions as a transformative space. It shapes not only the physical survival of the characters but also their psychological, emotional, and ethical development. By applying an ecocritical perspective, the study examines how the interaction between humans and nature leads to self-discovery and a redefined understanding of the human–nature relationship. Through these stories, he indirectly warns that ignoring nature's rules can lead to suffering and failure. This shows how brutal and inhuman he has become because of the patriarchy.

Ecocriticism and the Idea of Nature

Ecocriticism focuses on the relationship between literature and the environment, challenging anthropocentric assumptions and emphasizing ecological interconnectedness. As Cheryll Glotfelty defines it, ecocriticism studies "the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (xviii). Ecocriticism investigates the relation between humans and the natural world in literature. It deals with the ways in which the environmental and cultural issues are presented and analyzed. Ecocriticism in contemporary fictions are no longer a marginal discourse but a central and evolving paradigm that redefines the relationship between literature, ethics, and the environment. It aims to create awareness and encourage people to respect, protect, and live in harmony with the environment.

In Paulsen's novels, nature is presented as neither purely benevolent nor entirely hostile. Instead, it is shown as a powerful and independent force that demands respect and understanding. This balanced portrayal avoids romanticisation and instead highlights the complexity of the natural world.

Such a representation encourages readers to reconsider their relationship with nature. It suggests that survival depends not on controlling the environment but on adapting to it. In this way, Paulsen's work aligns closely with ecocritical thought.

Wilderness as a Transformative Space

In Hatchet, Brian's initial experience of the wilderness is marked by fear and confusion. After the plane crash, he finds himself alone in an unfamiliar environment (Canadian Wilderness) without the necessary skills for survival. His early responses are driven by panic and uncertainty.

However, as time passes, Brian begins to adapt. He realizes that survival requires observation, patience, and careful thinking. As he reflects, he must "learn to watch, to listen, to think" (Paulsen, Hatchet 47). This realization marks the beginning of his transformation.

The wilderness, in this sense, becomes a teacher. It does not provide comfort, but it offers opportunities for learning and growth. Brian's transformation is gradual and achieved through continuous effort. At first, he struggles with hunger, fear, and loneliness. But slowly, he learns to make fire, hunt animals, and find food. The wilderness transforms him from a helpless boy into a confident and self-reliant survivor. He becomes more attentive and develops a deeper understanding of his surroundings.

A similar process is evident in Dogsong, where the journey of a young boy Russell into the Arctic wilderness becomes a journey of self-discovery. The protagonist reconnects with deeper cultural values, suggesting that wilderness can also serve as a space for reflection and identity formation. The wilderness transforms him spiritually, helping him understand harmony between humans, animals, and land.

Survival as a Process of Learning

Survival in Paulsen's novels extends beyond physical endurance; it becomes a process of learning. Brian's early failures in Hatchet are essential to his development. He gradually understands that "mistakes could mean death, but they also meant learning" (Paulsen, Hatchet 89).

This idea emphasizes the importance of experience. Brian learns through trial and error, and each mistake contributes to his growth. He acquires practical skills such as making fire and finding food, but he also develops patience, discipline, and mental strength.

In The River and Brian's Winter, Brian's experiences continue to shape his abilities. He becomes more confident and better prepared to face challenges. In The River, Brian learns again that nature is unpredictable, especially when a storm disrupts his journey. He understands that careful planning and respect for natural forces are necessary for survival. Similarly, in Brian's Winter, he learns advanced survival techniques to face harsh winter conditions, proving that learning continues with changing environments This demonstrates that survival knowledge is not static but evolves over time.

From an ecocritical perspective, this learning process reflects a deeper relationship between humans and nature, where knowledge emerges through interaction rather than control.

Changing Human–Nature Relationship

At the beginning of the narratives, nature is often perceived as an adversary. Brian in Hatchet initially sees the wilderness as something to resist or overcome. However, this perception changes as he gains experience.

A significant moment occurs when he realizes that "the woods were not against him; they simply were" (Paulsen, Hatchet 112). This realization represents a shift from conflict to acceptance. Nature is no longer seen as an enemy but as a system within which humans must learn to live. In The River and Brian's Winter, this awareness grows stronger as he learns to value weather patterns, animal behavior, and the balance of nature. In Dogsong, the connection becomes deeper and more significant, as Russell forms a spiritual and cultural relationship with the natural environment.

This shift reflects an ecocentric perspective, which emphasizes coexistence and interdependence. It challenges the idea of human dominance over nature and promotes a more balanced understanding of the human–nature relationship.

Identity Formation in Wilderness

Wilderness plays a crucial role in shaping identity in Paulsen's novels. The characters, particularly Brian, undergo significant personal transformation as a result of their experiences.

In Hatchet, Brian's journey can be seen as a coming-of-age process. By the end of the novel, he recognizes that he has changed: "he was not the same now" (Paulsen, Hatchet 137). He becomes more independent, confident, and self-aware.

This transformation is both physical and psychological. Brian learns to manage fear, make decisions, and rely on his own abilities. These experiences contribute to the formation of his identity. In The River and Brian's Winter, Brian's identity becomes even stronger as he learns to trust his instincts and adapt to changing natural conditions. Each experience in the wild helps him grow mentally and emotionally.

In Dogsong, identity formation is also linked to cultural awareness. The wilderness enables the protagonist to reconnect with his heritage, suggesting that identity is shaped by both personal and cultural factors.

Ecological Awareness and Contemporary Relevance

Paulsen's novels also encourage ecological awareness by presenting nature as a complex and balanced system. He portrays nature not as a backdrop, but as a dynamic, interconnected system. In Hatchet, Brian learns that survival depends on understanding ecosystems- weather patterns, animal behaviour, and plant life through wilderness. This awareness develops through experience rather than instruction, making it more meaningful and lasting.

Paulsen lay emphasis on humans' reliance on natural resources for survival. As Brian learns to fish, hunt, and searching for food in nature. Paulsen also highlights the concepts such as Minimalism and anti- consumerism in the selected novels. Across all these novels the protagonist survives with very limited resources, relying only on some basic tools, natural things and the careful usage of the available items around him. This shows the minimalism through living with only what is necessary. It also reflects that excess is not required for survival. Simultaneously all these stories contrast his simple, resourceful lifestyle with modern consumer habits of overbuying and wasting resources, emphasizing anti- consumerism. This encourages the readers to value sustainability, self- control, and respect the nature rather than material possessions.

Emotional and Spiritual Connection with nature can be seen in the selected novels. Both the protagonists Brian and Russel both begin with the feelings of confusion, fear or disconnection, but gradually develops patience, sense of belonging and courage as they learn from wilderness. Thus, nature helps them to know the worth of themselves and their place in the world. Nature becomes the mentor and guide and shaped their emotions throughout the journey.

The selected novels are relevant in today's world as they remind us the importance of nature while living. These stories encourage readers to slow down, to respect resources, to build thoughtful relationship with the world around us, to live life in simplicity, to show care and awareness for towards nature.

Recent ecocritical studies have emphasized the importance of literary representations in shaping environmental consciousness. Scholars argue that contemporary nature writing plays a significant role in developing an "ecological imagination," where individuals begin to see themselves as part of a larger environmental system (Slovic 1). Paulsen's narratives contribute to this process by encouraging readers to move beyond a human-centered perspective.

Furthermore, recent research highlights the role of narrative in influencing ethical attitudes toward nature. Literature that presents lived experiences of survival can create a strong emotional connection with the environment, making ecological concerns more immediate and relatable (Iovino and Oppermann 15). Paulsen's novels achieve this effectively by placing characters in direct contact with wilderness.

In the context of current environmental challenges, such narratives remain highly relevant. They encourage readers to develop a more responsible and respectful relationship with nature.

Critical Reflection

While Paulsen's novels provide valuable insights into wilderness and transformation, they also have certain limitations. The focus is on individual experience, means that broader environmental and social issues are not explored in depth. Issues such as environmental justice or global ecological crises are largely absent.

Additionally, the depiction of wilderness as a space for personal growth may appear somewhat idealised. Real-world interactions with nature are often more complex and influenced by social and economic factors.

However, these limitations do not lessen the significance of Paulsen's work. Instead, they open possibilities for further research and critical engagement.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that wilderness in the selected novels of Gary Paulsen functions as a transformative force that shapes identity and redefines the human–nature relationship. Through an ecocritical approach, the study has shown that these texts extend beyond survival narratives to explore deeper psychological and ecological dimensions.

Wilderness in Paulsen's fiction is not merely a setting but a space of learning, reflection, and growth. It challenges individuals to adapt, to understand, and ultimately to transform. In doing so, these novels offer important insights into the relationship between humans and nature.

In the present context of environmental concerns, Paulsen's work remains highly relevant. It encourages a more balanced and responsible approach to nature, making it an important contribution to contemporary literary and ecological discussions.

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A Study of Fragmented Identities and Marginality in Anees Salim's Dark Comedy: The Odd Book of Baby Names and The Bellboy

Atul Balaji Marewad[1] Dr. Mahavir R. Sankla[2]

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[1]Research Scholar, PDDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad
[2]Research Guide &Associate Professor, H.V. Desai College, Pune
atulbalaji94@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Atul Balaji Marewad, Research Scholar, PDDEA's Waghire College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Saswad
Email- atulbalaji94@gmail.com

Abstract:

Contemporary Indian Writing in English has slowly moved away from big ideas like nationalism and colonial identity and toward more personal issues like identity, loneliness, and being on the outside. Anees Salim is a significant contemporary author whose writings distinctly illustrate this transition through his employment of dark humour, straightforward yet impactful language, and disjointed narrative techniques. This paper examines The Odd Book of Baby Names (2021) and The Bellboy (2022) to elucidate how Salim portrays social realities through humour, irony, and absurdity. The research contends that his novels employ various narrative voices, non-linear frameworks, and peripheral characters to challenge conventional notions of family, identity, and belonging. He uses dark humour to talk about serious topics like death, emotional neglect, social exclusion, and isolation in a way that is both subtle and powerful. At the same time, the paper looks at important themes like memory, identity formation, and existential anxiety, showing how characters try to make sense of their lives and find stability in situations that are unstable and broken. This paper shows how important Salim's work is to Indian Writing in English by looking closely at both his writing style and the themes he deals with. He is a writer who successfully mixes humour with serious social criticism and depth with simplicity.

Keywords: *Absurd, transition, existential anxiety, dark comedy, marginality, identity, narration*

Introduction:

In the last few years, Indian writing in English has changed a lot. In the past, many writers wrote about big ideas like colonialism, nationalism, and cultural identity, which often showed how things were in the past and in politics in the country. But modern writers are now more interested in personal and everyday events. Modern literature often deals with themes like loneliness, identity crisis, alienation, and being left out of society. This change shows how society's worries are changing. More and more people are dealing with emotional issues and questions of where they fit in in a world that is always changing. Anees Salim is one of these authors who writes Indian English fiction in a way that is new and different. His writing is simple, but it has a lot of meaning and depth. He looks at serious and often hard issues through the lens of humour, irony, and strange or silly situations. His books are about people who live on the fringes of society, like those who are socially, financially, or emotionally cut off from others. His characters often have to deal with issues of identity, belonging, and purpose, which makes his work both relatable and thought-provoking. Bakyaraj and Anver say that Salim's works use "dark humour and lost identity to skilfully articulate serious social concerns." His stories also deal with emotional problems like sadness and loneliness, which show "human fragility and existential unease" (Hossain). These things make his writing interesting and important. This paper examines The Odd Book of Baby Names and The Bellboy to analyse how Salim employs narrative techniques and thematic elements to depict social reality. It focuses on things like broken storytelling, dark comedy, marginality, and identity, showing how his work adds to modern Indian Writing in English.

Fragmented Narratives and Multiple Perspectives:

The Odd Book of Baby Names has a broken-up narrative structure, which is one of its most important features. The story doesn't go in a straight line; instead, it unfolds through the voices of many people, mostly the children of a king-like father who has many children. Each character tells their own story, memory, or point of view, giving a different view of the same family. Because of this, the reader doesn't get one clear version of the truth; instead, they see many different, and sometimes conflicting, ways of looking at the world. This variety makes things seem complicated and uncertain, which is how real life is, where truth is often subjective and based on personal experience. People have called the book "a kaleidoscopic journey into the dysfunctional heart of the Indian family" (Penguin). This description shows how the story changes all the time, like a kaleidoscope, showing different patterns and points of view each time.

Instead of showing a stable and unified picture of family life, the novel shows how broken and unstable it really is. Using more than one voice also stops any one story from taking over, which lets less-heard or less-important voices come through. This broken-up way of telling the story is closely related to the book's theme of identity. A lot of the kids don't really know who their father is or where they fit in the family. Being absent, neglected or not knowing enough about them shapes their identities. Consequently, they endure a feeling of uncertainty and dislocation. Their lack of a central narrative authority is similar to their lack of a stable identity. This supports the idea that identity is not fixed but is made up of memories, relationships and personal interpretation. The way the novel is put together also shows how its characters feel and think. Their disjointed stories imply fractured relationships, emotional detachment, and a sense of alienation. Salim effectively demonstrates how identity can be influenced by confusion, silence, and absence through this technique. The narrative form itself becomes a powerful tool to show how the characters feel inside, which makes the structure and theme very closely related.

Dark Comedy and Its Meaning:

Anees Salim's writing is full of dark humour, which is one of the most important parts. He makes fun of things that are really serious, painful, or even sad. This method makes the reader laugh while also making them think deeply about the issues at hand. His works are funny, but not in a light or shallow way. Instead, they have a sense of irony and discomfort that shows deeper social truths. The main idea of The Odd Book of Baby Names, that a man keeps a record of hundreds of children, seems strange and even funny at first. But this strange situation also brings to light serious issues like irresponsibility, a lack of emotional connection, broken families, and neglect. The ridiculousness of the situation shows how bad it can be when authority goes unchecked and there is no care in family relationships. One review says that the book has "a haunting sense of loss beneath the bleak comedy" (Scroll). This shows that the story has both funny and sad parts.

Dark comedy is shown in an even more disturbing and intense way in The Bellboy. The story takes place in a hotel where people go to kill themselves, which is a very disturbing idea. But Salim tells the story from the point of view of a young boy named Latif, whose innocent and limited understanding adds a layer of irony to the story. The calm and simple tone makes the events seem even more serious, which makes the effect even stronger. The use of humour makes the story stronger and more effective. Salim doesn't directly criticize society; instead, he shows uncomfortable truths through ironic and strange situations. Critics say that his humour "makes people think seriously while keeping the story interesting" (Bakyaraj and Anver). In this way, dark comedy can be used to tell stories and criticize society.

Marginality and Invisible Lives:

Another important idea in Anees Salim's books is marginality. His characters are often people who society ignores, overlooks, or doesn't value. These are people who live on the edges of social structures and don't have power, recognition, or a clear sense of belonging. Salim draws attention away from powerful or privileged groups by focusing on characters who are usually not seen in mainstream stories. In The Bellboy, Latif is a young boy who works at a hotel where people come with their own problems, many of which are very painful. Even though Latif is at the hotel and sees a lot of important things happen, he is still socially invisible. People don't often notice him or really acknowledge that he's there. He listens to people talk, watches how they act, and silently carries the weight of what he sees, but he doesn't have a voice in the social hierarchy. In this way, he stands for people who live in society but aren't really seen or heard. The novel shows how society "treats and victimizes the intellectually vulnerable" ("The Bellboy," Penguin), which shows how people who don't have social power are ignored and taken advantage of.

Latif's character also shows that he is innocent and emotionally sensitive. His lack of understanding of the complicated situations around him makes the story even sadder. He becomes a silent witness to the suffering of others, which makes his position even more obvious. He is not only socially invisible, but also emotionally invisible, because he has to deal with what he sees without help or guidance. The Odd Book of Baby Names shows marginality through the lives of the many kids that the main patriarch has. These kids aren't all treated the same or valued the same. A lot of them grow up without being recognized, having an identity, or feeling like they belong. They are part of a big, broken family, but they don't talk to each other or their father. They don't have a stable identity because they have been neglected and left behind. This condition exemplifies a pervasive social reality in which individuals who deviate from established norms, whether by birth, class, or circumstance are frequently marginalized or overlooked. The kids in the book stand for people who are not given legitimacy and recognition, which shows how unfair social and family structures can be. Salim uses these characters to speak for people who are usually quiet or unheard. His work is similar to the ideas of subaltern studies, which look at how to represent people who are socially, economically, or politically marginalized. Salim doesn't tell the stories of powerful or successful people. Instead, he tells the stories of people who are struggling at the edges. By doing this, he not only brings attention to their pain, but he also makes them more human by showing their feelings, thoughts, and inner lives. This method makes readers think about how they see society and how important it is to listen to voices that are often ignored. In this way, marginality becomes not only a theme but also a key issue for Salim as he looks at modern life.

Memory and Identity:

Memory is a key part of how people in Anees Salim's novels figure out who they are. The book of names in The Odd Book of Baby Names is a symbol of memory. By writing down people's names, it tries to keep them alive. This

suggests a desire to bring order and continuity to a family that is falling apart. The book does keep track of names, but it doesn't show how the people it represents lived, felt, or what their personal histories were like. In this way, Salim shows that memory becomes incomplete and not enough when it is only written down.

The characters in the book use memory to figure out who they are and how they are related to the father figure. But these memories are often fuzzy, incomplete, or even made up. Because of this, they still don't know who they are or what they want. As the characters try to piece together their memories into a coherent identity, this makes them feel confused and unsafe. When people don't have a full and accurate past, they feel disconnected from themselves and their family. In The Bellboy, memory is very much connected to being alone, losing something, and having a heavy heart. The hotel serves as a place where people bring their past experiences, which are often filled with pain and regret.

The people who come to the hotel are not only physically there, but their memories are also weighing them down emotionally. These memories often make them feel hopeless, which shows that the past can be too much to handle when it isn't dealt with or understood. As an observer, Latif indirectly goes through these strong emotional events. He may not fully understand them, but he feels the sadness and loneliness in the air. Scholars assert that Salim's oeuvre centers on "loneliness, death, and sorrow" (Hossain), which are profoundly intertwined with the weight of memory. Salim depicts memory not as a source of solace, but as a multifaceted force that influences identity while fostering existential ambiguity and the quest for meaning in life.

Existential Anxiety and Search for Meaning:

Both books talk about big questions about life, identity, and purpose. In Anees Salim's works, the characters often don't know where they fit in the world and feel lost and confused. This feeling of not knowing what to do is a sign of a deeper struggle to figure out what life means in a complicated and often uncaring society. The notion of a hotel as a place for people to die in The Bellboy provokes profound philosophical inquiries regarding human existence. The setting is symbolic because it is a place where people face their biggest fears, regrets, and emotional pain. The book asks questions like, "Why do people feel so alone?" without being too loud. What makes them lose hope? What makes life seem so hard? The story doesn't directly answer these questions; instead, it hints at them through the characters' experiences and the mood of the story. This roundabout way of doing things makes the reader think more deeply about these problems.

Latif's character adds another level to this exploration of existence. As a young observer, he doesn't fully get why the people around him do what they do. But his presence makes the difference between innocence and despair even more clear, which makes the situation even more striking. The reader can feel the emotional weight of the setting through him in a subtle way.

The Odd Book of Baby Names talks about existential issues through the lives of the kids, who have trouble figuring out who they are and what their relationship with their father is. They look for meaning in a family structure that isn't stable or whole. Because they don't know where they came from, they start to question their purpose and worth in life. This feeling of being lost and disconnected is a common part of modern life, where people often feel alone even though they are part of larger social systems. Salim presents this condition in a straightforward yet impactful manner, illustrating how existential anxiety is a fundamental component of modern human experience.

Language and Style:

Both books talk about big questions about life, who you are, and what your purpose is. Anees Salim's characters often feel lost, unsure, and disconnected, which shows that they are having a hard time figuring out where they fit in in the world. This feeling of confusion isn't just something that happens to one person; it's a common part of modern life, where many people feel alone and don't know where they're going. The Bellboy's main idea is that people go to a hotel to die, which is a strong and disturbing metaphor for an existential crisis. The hotel becomes a place where people face their fears, regrets, and feelings that haven't been dealt with. It shows a world where hope is fading and life is seen as a burden instead of something worth living for. This setting makes the novel ask important questions, like: Why do people feel so alone even when they are with other people? What makes them lose faith in life? What makes them make such extreme choices? The story doesn't directly answer these questions, but the events and interactions do. This indirect approach makes the reader think deeply about how complicated life is for people. Latif's character is a big part of how this existential point of view is formed. He is a young and relatively innocent observer, so he doesn't fully understand why the people who come to the hotel do what they do. But his presence lets the reader feel the emotional atmosphere in a strong and subtle way. His confusion and curiosity are like the reader's own attempts to figure things out. This difference between innocence and despair makes the story more emotionally powerful and shows how hard life can be. Existential issues are looked at in The Odd Book of Baby Names through the broken lives of the kids. They have a hard time figuring out who they are and how they are related to their father, who is still far away and almost a symbol. Their quest for belonging transforms into a quest for meaning itself. Without a stable family or emotional support, they have to wonder what their purpose and worth are in the world. This lack of clarity makes people feel empty and alone.

The characters' experiences mirror the state of contemporary individuals, who frequently experience isolation despite their integration into broader social systems. Existential anxiety arises from the absence of definitive answers and stable identities. Salim talks about this condition in a simple but powerful way, using everyday situations and

characters to show deep philosophical ideas. His writing shows that looking for meaning is a big part of being human, especially in a world that often feels broken and unsure.

Conclusion:

Anees Salim's The Odd Book of Baby Names and The Bellboy are significant contributions to contemporary Indian Writing in English. Through his use of fragmented storytelling, dark comedy, and a focus on marginal characters, Salim presents a thoughtful and layered representation of modern life. His narratives move beyond simple storytelling and engage deeply with the emotional and psychological realities of individuals who often remain unseen in society.

Both novels explore important themes such as identity, memory, loneliness, and existential anxiety. The characters struggle to understand themselves and their place in the world, reflecting the uncertainty and complexity of contemporary existence. Salim's portrayal of these struggles is subtle yet powerful, allowing readers to connect with the characters on an emotional level. His use of humour, especially dark comedy, plays a crucial role in this process. It makes serious and often uncomfortable issues more accessible, while also encouraging readers to think critically about the realities being presented. Another important aspect of Salim's writing is his simple and clear style. His language is easy to understand, but it carries deep meaning. This simplicity, combined with innovative narrative techniques such as fragmented structures and multiple perspectives, makes his work both engaging and intellectually stimulating. He is able to present complex ideas in a way that is both approachable and meaningful.

Overall, Salim's work contributes to the development of Indian English literature by introducing new themes, narrative styles, and perspectives. He expands the scope of contemporary fiction by focusing on marginal voices and everyday experiences. Through his unique blend of humour and tragedy, he creates a powerful literary voice that reflects the realities of modern life and leaves a lasting impact on readers.

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Diaspora Writing and Identity Formation: Navigating Memory, Belonging and Hybridity in Liminal Spaces

Swati Shree[1] Atul Balaji Marewad[2]

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[1]Research Scholar,
MA in English Literature - Fergusson College, SPPU
Pune, Maharashtra
[2]Research Scholar,
PhD in English Literature - Waghire College of Arts, Science and Commerce, SPPU
pandit.blue@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Swati Shree, Research Scholar,
MA in English Literature - Fergusson College, SPPU
Pune, Maharashtra
Email- pandit.blue@gmail.com

Abstract:

In an era of global displacement, the idea of home has changed from a fixed geographical space to an imaginary landscape backed by various cultural backdrops and formed through narratives. Diaspora literature in the contemporary globalized world has emerged as a hook that connects numerous cultures with their own set of themes comprising displacement, identity, and belonging. Experiences of exile, migration, and resettlement across different geographical boundaries have been passed down to generations in a family which has resulted in unacknowledged feelings of belongingness. Through a conceptual and critical discussion of memory, belonging, hybridity in liminal spaces that is in-between transitional spaces discussed in the works of Akhil Sharma, this research paper tries to put forward the idea that migrant culture is not only a record of diasporic authorship but also shapes and challenges fixed impulses of nation, culture and individualistic identity. Massive mass movement across borders due to economic migration, globalization and colonial histories has resulted in the genre of diasporic writing and the emerging literature plays a key role in cultural studies today. This paper highlights and contributes to identity formation within scattered communities considering works of Akhil Sharma namely - Family Life and An Obedient Father. The present study focuses on reminiscence, inclusion, and fusion led amalgamation in transitional spaces. The works of Akhil Sharma - Family Life and An Obedient Father produce characters who grapple with a sense of disconnection. In the end, the characters navigate their cultural identities of the past and the present. To understand the diaspora identity theories of Stuart Hall and Homi K Bhabha have been recognized in the study, apart from brief mentions of significant diasporic authors.

Keywords: *Global Displacement, Geographical Space, Imaginary Landscape, Culture, Narrative, Diaspora Literature, Identity Formation, Belonging, Hybridity, Memory, Liminal Spaces, Migrant Culture, Massive-Mass-Movement, Authorship, Scattered Communities, Sense of Disconnection.*

Introduction:

Diaspora writing comprises literary works created by authors away from their native homelands encompassing the multifaceted encounter and journey where the artists are in a state of physical and psychological displacement to construct and develop their identity. It is the process of self-discovery during which one comes across one's values, beliefs and purpose of life to be realized, developed, and evolved. These narratives dive deep into the middle "in-between" presence of personas rocking back and forth among various cultures where the individual is not an unchanging embodiment but delves extensively in a dynamic evolving process. It is quite crucial to define and elaborate certain terms to comprehensively understand the concept of diaspora writing and identity formation. The process of formation of an identity within a diaspora or dispersed and scattered communities depends on certain key theoretical and psychological factors like Cultural Hybridity, which is the creation of a new identity after unifying elements from both homeland and host cultures. This phenomenon occurs in Third Space (a concept by Homi K Bhabha) which is a transitional area where strict cultural and national norms are questioned. Consciousness where the migrants repeatedly experience their split personalities fighting between these liminal zones or the transitional zones. There is a sense of confusion and insecurity when their personas are trying to adapt to new societies. Imaginary Homeland, for many authors, their homeland primarily shapes a memory or a figment of imagination which is fragmented, alienated and serves as an idealized version of their identity. Generational Shifts where acute alienation, nostalgia and a sense of disconnectedness is felt across the first- and second-generation migrants. These literary ideas and concepts have been applied by various diasporic writers right from Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, V S Naipaul, Chitra Banerjee and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie who use this genre of literature to navigate their complex cultural realities. In this study we will be dealing with Akhil Sharma an Indian American diasporic writer and his two works namely: Family Life and An Obedient Father. Family Life illustrates Stuart Hall's theory from his seminal essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" where he moves away from the identity of being to the identity of becoming.

This idea talks about a shared historical experience within the narratives of past and present. Family Life resonates with the "Trauma of Becoming" which identifies a continuous and unfinished process rather than a fixture. The novel talks about the fragmentation of the "American Dream" where the family's migration from India to the US instills a thought in the minds of the characters that they can expect a future of a better life foretelling economic stability and success. However, a tragic accident in the family shatters their dreams and forces the narrator into a state of "Becoming" woven by trauma and cultural mourning. Here, the kitchen is seen as a third space where one of the characters (Birju) studies vigorously to meet the Indian family values of educational high expectations and there is a clash with the American aspirations. Also, one of the characters (Ajay) experiences "Doubleness and Alienation" where he is neither fully Indian nor fully American. The ever-suffocating feeling at home and hostile American environment constantly shakes his sense of self.

When we consider An Obedient Father, we notice "Displacement within the Homeland". The story is set in India itself but is often scrutinized through a diasporic lens because the characters are explored in a way who are "displaced" within their own changing scenarios. The book covers an internal diaspora where the protagonist (Ram Karan) depicts the modern man who is trying to break free from the shackles of traditional Indian values. Apart from this there is "cultural confrontation" where the influences of modern political corruption meet up with the traditional family structures. We observe that Bhabha's "Hybridity" and Hall's "Becoming" have been incorporated in these works to merge Indian traditions and adapt to the West for finding a purpose in life.

In Family Life we observe a Linguistic "Third Space" which reflects a transition or a shift from a stable Indian individuality ("Being") to the dual diasporic ("Becoming"). The family moves out of its "comfort zone" and is "forced" to converse in English while in the US which at home converse "comfortably" in Hindi. At this point Hindi and English collide which often leads to cultural miscommunication. Also, code-mixing and identifiers throw some light on the doubleness of language which challenges the state of belonging to both cultures fully.

On the other hand, in An Obedient Father, we become familiar with the language of decay and displacement. We observe a language of political corruption in the protagonist's (Ram Karan's) speech which blends colonial legality to local corruption. This sort of mix brings out a hybrid identity which juxtaposes a colonial past with a present-day compromise. Unsaid "guilty secrets" and "familial betrayals" create a linguistic void, where the characters are alienated among themselves even after speaking a similar language.

Hybridity and Identity Construction:

Diaspora studies view hybridity as one of the most significant features blending cultural elements and meaningful identities. Hybridity emerges as a prominent face in the "Third Space" according to Homi K Bhabha where new meanings are created in the form of cultural identities. This is the result of interaction between different cultures. In the works of Akhil Sharma, we see that the characters are trying to construct a new identity and reality which is an amalgamation of their past with the present. Also, it looks towards a brighter and hopeful future. Here the culture is not static but constantly evolving. Apart from fusion of cultures there is an extensive play of postcolonial context with a tinge of Indian compromise. Hybridity celebrates diverse creations and plurality keeping diaspora as a site of ethnic innovation.

Second Generation Diaspora and Negotiation of Identity:

Individuals raised in a host country to immigrant parents are called the second generation in the context of diaspora studies. The second generation thrives at the crossroads of two different cultures which share a certain philanthropic and political base for the upliftment of their individual identities. In some cases, it has been observed that there is a generational gap, and the individuals are quite detached from their ancestral roots. Second generation individuals view their relationship with their parents quite differently because they are not greatly connected with their homeland. So, there is a sense of detachment as they are more influenced by the current host nation. This creates a tension and struggle with hyphenated identities referring to Indian American citizens. For instance, the character of Gogol in The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri is quite detached from the cultural heritage of India and struggles to find his personal identity. Also, this makes the character quite relatable.

Diaspora Writing as Resistance:

Diaspora writing as resistance refers to the use of literature by individuals who have been displaced to other nations away from their native homelands who try challenging the hegemonic narratives, work towards preserving cultural heritage and reclaiming identities which are often sidelined in the host nations. Diasporic writers utilize the art of storytelling and memory to keep their ancestral culture and heritage alive. Tradition in the families is preserved through rituals, myths and food habits where diasporic writers like Jhumpa Lahiri bring out aspects of survival and continuity in mundane cultural practices. On the other hand, writers like Salman Rushdie manipulate with the colonial language and bring out the aspect of 'chutnification' of English which blends Hindi and Urdu idioms in the English language often resulting in Hinglish which has its own audience. This refers to the destabilization of the English authority and assertion of a hybrid identity. Also, in Family Life by Akhil Sharma, we come across the fact that the narrative resists the American dream by de-romanticizing migration.

Secondary Characters in the Works of Akhil Sharma:

The mother Kasturi in Family Life represents the stagnant side of the diaspora and stays connected to Stuart Hall's "Identity of Being". Kasturi can be viewed as one of the characters which is clung to the past. She is anchored to the memories of the past. She doesn't consider America as her homeland, and it takes quite a toll on her to adapt to the new environment of the "foreign" land. She often holds America responsible for the continuous turmoil in her family. Here, Stuart Hall says that identity is not something which is essentially fixed but identifies it as a state of

becoming which is somewhat absent in Kasturi's character because she holds on to the past. For Kasturi the Third Space is a site of paralysis because she is unable to adapt to the growing American culture and belief rather refuses to adapt to it and in this process, she has built a fortress in her mind which does not allow her to go beyond her "Indianness". She identifies herself as a mourning mother and this behavior of hers creates a rift with her son Ajay who is in the process of becoming while she is the stagnant being and demands the same from her son.

On the other hand, the daughter Anju in An Obedient Father expresses the displaced subject within the homeland which illustrates Stuart Hall's idea of the state of "becoming". We find a contrast in both the foil characters here who are shifting between the phases of being and becoming in the works of Akhil Sharma. Anju embodies the younger generation in India who is quite fascinated by the western notions of independence and justice. She is quite opposite to the character of her father who is identified as a corrupt entity. Anju is a modern and educated woman who is living in her father's household. She shares an identity of hybridity which falls under the liminal zone of the new India and the old India where one is seeking agency and the other is trapped by patriarchal silence.

Conclusion:

Hence, we can say that in Family Life there is tension between the Indian "presence" at home and American "presence" outside while in The Obedient Father there is tension between (ethical) traditional and political values. The endings of both these novels offer a resolution of identity that is in Family Life Ajay finds a "functional" hybridity which is an ongoing narrative of survival and in An Obedient Father, the protagonist Ram Karan's identity is destroyed by truth where hybridity is built on deception and falsehood. Thus, we can conclude that there is an in-between state of exploration by the character in both the works and they are in the middle ground where they are navigating their cultural identities of the past and the present.

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Mantras, Machines, and Modernity: A Post-Colonial Reading of Ancient Indian Science in Contemporary Speculative Fiction

Sweta Shailesh Thakkar

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Email- thakkarswet1@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Sweta Shailesh Thakkar
thakkarswet1@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research article explores the profound intersections between Ancient Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and contemporary global scientific discourses as mediated through the lens of speculative fiction. For centuries, the Eurocentric narrative of scientific progress has relegated non-Western traditions to the realm of myth or superstition. However, a post-colonial reading of Sanskrit epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas reveals a conceptual blueprint for technologies that modern science is only now beginning to realise, such as Brain-Computer Interfaces, directed energy weapons, and genetic engineering. By examining some key parallels between 'Mantras' and 'Machines,' this paper argues that ancient Indian sages possessed an internal, consciousness-centric science (Yogic Science) that predates modern external materialistic science. These 'hidden gems' of antiquity are increasingly reflected in modern English speculative literature and cinema, where themes like the 'Pushpaka Vimana' or 'Sankalp Shakti' are reimagined as the cutting edge of human evolution. Through a decolonial framework, this study analyses how contemporary popular culture draws from the "Siddhis" of the past to envision the technologies of the future. The paper concludes that the greatness of IKS lies in its integrated approach, where the "Sankalp" (intent) is as measurable as the "Yantra" (machine). By reclaiming these ancient insights, the study posits that future scientific inventions are not just modern discoveries but the actualisation of a heritage that dates back thousands of years.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Speculative Fiction, Post-Colonialism, Vedic Science, Sankalp Shakti, Vimana Shastra, Decoloniality.*

Introduction

The history of science is often wrongly presented as a linear ascent starting from the European Enlightenment. However, a decolonial inquiry into Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) reveals that the "modern" frontier is often a rediscovery of the "ancient" Indian past. IKS is not a static collection of rituals but a dynamic science of consciousness that dates to the Vedic period. The "hidden gems" within these texts suggest that the human mind, through Yogic practice, could bypass the need for physical hardware, which is quite similar to the concept that modern speculative fiction is now embracing as the ultimate technological goal. The way IKS depicts Ravana's Pushpaka Vimana run by the will of the pilot's mind itself establishes a blueprint for what modern neurology identifies as the Mind-Machine Interface (MMI) or Brain-Computer Interface (BCI). The *Vimanika Shastra*, attributed to Maharishi Bharadwaja, suggests that such vessels operated on Manogati (the speed of thought), where the pilot's Sankalp (focused intent) acted as the primary navigational input. This ancient science establishes that the nervous system and the craft are not separate entities but a unified field of consciousness. This exact "Sankalp-driven" logic is mirrored in speculative fiction, notably in the film Firefox (1982), where the pilot can select targets and fire weapons simply by thinking about them, surpassing the system of manual controls. In the same way, Elon Musk's Neuralink attempts to translate the brain's electrical impulses into digital commands using silicon chips (Servick—Elon Musk's). Ancient yogis moved beyond the need for external hardware and achieved what they resolved through internal discipline. These scientific narratives deconstruct the postcolonial perspective that belittled IKS as "mythological fantasy". Vimanas are widely described in the genuine ancient texts such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata, as well as other later texts such as the dramas of Kalidasa. They are not metaphors or hyperbole, nor do you have to be a god to own or ride one as in other mythologies. They are treated as manufactured, physical objects, even if portrayed as fanciful flying houses, invested with magical powers of levitation (Bharadwaja 3).

Ancient Indian texts talk about cyclical temporality and subjective time perception across different spaces and planets through the experiences of Kakudmi and his daughter Revati, which later became apparent through scientific discoveries such as Einstein's Relativistic physics, time dilation, and the spacetime connection.

As detailed in the Srimad Bhagavatam, Kakudmi and his daughter Revati spent a mere "muhurta" (a short duration) in the presence of Lord Brahma, only to return to Earth and discover that twenty-seven Chaturyugas—millions of linear years had elapsed.

na yatra kālo 'nimiṣāṁ paraḥ prabhuḥ
kuto nu devā jagatāṁ ya īśire
na yatra sattvaṁ na rajas tamaś ca
na vai vikāro na mahān pradhānam (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.2.18)

While modern science requires gravitational sources or near-light speeds to mathematically prove that time slows down, ancient Sanskrit texts treated the "Loka" (the field of consciousness or dimension) as the variable that determines temporal flow. Likewise, Christopher Nolan's Interstellar (2014), specifically the "Miller's Planet" sequence, depicts how one hour equals seven years on Earth; this is a direct cinematic mirror of Kakudmi's journey. IKS provided a visionary blueprint for understanding the non-linear nature of the universe long before Western science abandoned the Newtonian clock or modern literature explored the intricacies of space-time.

The account of the birth of the hundred Kauravas in the Mahabharata out of a lifeless mass of flesh provides an extraordinary insight into the theory of ectogenesis and stem cell manipulation. Sage Vyasa performed a process to give life to Gandhari's hundred sons (the Kauravas) and her daughter (Dushala), using an ancient method described in the Mahabharata: "The illustrious and great Rishi himself, by sprinkling water over that ball of flesh, began to divide it into parts. And as it was being divided into parts, the nurse began to take them and put them one by one into those pots filled with clarified butter (Vyasa 340-341)." By recognising the Kumbhas as the world's first recorded "artificial wombs," we acknowledge the greatness of IKS, which proves itself as the primary precursor to the 20th Century medical discovery of IVF and extra-uterine incubation. This sophisticated biotechnology is a staple of speculative fiction, notably in Star Wars: Attack of the Clones, where humans are grown in tanks as identical clones, and in Brave New World, where one embryo is split into many to create similar people. Both show how science can artificially produce humans, either for armies or to control society. This is fundamentally a hardware-oriented echo of Vyasa's "internal" mastery of life's building blocks.

The narrative of Sanjaya's Divya Drishti (Divine Sight) in the Mahabharata establishes a foundation for remote sensing and real-time data transmission. While seated miles away in Hastinapur, Sanjaya was granted the ability by Sage Vyasa to witness every minute detail of the Kurukshetra war (Patil 1). The digital "live stream" on a six-inch screen is a mechanical iteration of Sanjaya's consciousness-mediated vision. In The Matrix (1999), the operator sits at a desk and sees the entire world as code, knowing exactly where everyone is and what they are doing, bridging the gap between raw data and visual reality. In IKS, the mind is seen as a powerful receiver, while today's science uses technology to observe distant events. Modern science and fiction seem to echo these older ideas, showing similar ways of seeing across space without physical presence. By studying Sanjaya's divine vision, we can relate it to modern tools like remote sensing satellites and real-time monitoring systems.

The Sudarshana Chakra of the Vedic time was not merely a physical weapon but a thinking disc. It possessed the ability to seek out a specific target regardless of geographical distance or defensive obstacles, and upon the annihilation of the target, it would return to the wielder. The "Yaka Arrow" in Guardians of the Galaxy (2014) is controlled by the user's whistle (vibrational frequency) that weaves through complex environments to strike with surgical accuracy, mirroring the Sudarshana's intelligent flight path. While today's drones rely on GPS, facial recognition, and complex algorithms to "hunt" targets, the ancient Chakra operated on the "Internal Science" of auditory and mental codes, making IKS a precursor to modern technologies or a source of inspiration for fictional speculative writings.

In the Mahabharata, the use of Vayu Astra and Parjanya Astra presents an early and thoughtful idea of weather control. The Parjanya Astra is used to bring heavy rain and counter the fire of the Agneyastra, showing a balance between natural forces. This suggests that ancient thinkers saw the atmosphere not as random, but as a system that could respond to human intention, especially through sound and mantra. Within the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), this reflects a belief that nature is interconnected and can be influenced through subtle energies rather than physical force alone. The focus is more on inner awareness and vibrational control than on external tools. In modern times, similar goals are approached in different ways. Techniques like cloud seeding use chemicals to induce rain, showing a more mechanical way of influencing weather. At the same time, popular fiction, such as the X-Men, imagines characters like Storm who can control wind, rain, and lightning, echoing these ancient ideas in a new form. Both ancient texts and modern approaches share a common thought that weather can be understood and influenced.

In the Valmiki Ramayana, the story of Indrajit shows the idea of Antardhana (invisibility) during the battle of Lanka. He fights while becoming unseen ("antardhāna"), so enemies cannot see him or his chariot. In simple terms, it suggests that visibility depends on light and that if light is controlled, an object can become hidden. In IKS, this is explained through subtle energies and inner knowledge. In today's world, similar ideas appear in modern technology. Stealth aircraft like the B-2 Spirit and optical camouflage use materials to bend or absorb light so objects are harder to detect. In films like Predator and Ghost in the Shell, characters become nearly invisible by controlling light around them. What we see depends on light and perception (Zheng 1). The Ramayana expresses this idea symbolically, while today science and fiction explore it through technology, but what is inevitably true is that there was deep science and spirituality behind the so-called fantastical elements in narratives of Indian texts.

The Vedas and Upanishads describe Akasha (sky) as the subtlest element and a space that holds all sound, thought, and knowledge (Understanding Space). Rishis are seen as "seers" who heard (Shruti) knowledge from this

vast source (Prasad 1). In simple terms, IKS presents space not as empty but as a universal storehouse of information. Today, a similar idea appears in modern technology like cloud computing, where data is stored and accessed from a shared digital space. In films like Interstellar, the "Tesseract" shows a space where information across time can be accessed, echoing this concept. Both ancient thought and modern science suggest that information is not lost but stored and accessible. The difference is that IKS explains it through consciousness and subtle elements, while modern science uses physical systems like servers and networks to manage and retrieve data.

The sutras in ancient Indian shastras, for example, the Shiva Sutras, depict the idea that mantra is not just speech but a powerful vibration (Prasad 1). It suggests that the universe is made of sound frequencies, and by using specific syllables, sages could influence mind and matter. In simple terms, words were seen as energy patterns, and speaking them with focus could create effects for healing or action. In today's world, similar ideas appear in science and spirituality: for example, sound healing sessions use mantras, music, and vibrations to heal the mind and body. Ultrasound technology uses high-frequency sound waves for non-invasive medical imaging and therapy, widely applied in cardiology and tumour detection. In Dune (1965), the Voice is a trained skill where tone and sound are used to control a person's mind. It feels like magic, but it works through psychology and precise voice control, reflecting the concept of IKS in science fiction. Ancient thought and modern science show that sound has power.

In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Anima Siddhi is described as the ability to become extremely small like an atom (anu), enabling one to pass through solid objects, become invisible, or enter the tiniest spaces (Srinivasarao 38). In today's world, similar ideas appear in science through nanotechnology, where tiny machines (nanobots) are designed to work at the molecular level inside the body. Ant-Man (2015) dramatises this concept by taking the "tiny machine" concept and applying it to a human being. Through the fictional Pym Particles, the suit reduces the space between atoms, allowing the wearer to shrink to a microscopic and eventually subatomic level (the quantum world). The idea that very small levels of reality can be accessed and understood is expressed across science, spirituality and modern fiction.

In the Bhagavata Purana, Narada is described as moving freely between different realms (lokas) like Earth, heaven, and other worlds. This idea of Loka-Sanchar shows travel that is not limited by normal distance, suggesting that space can be connected in deeper, unseen ways (Krishnaswamy 40-41). In simple terms, it presents the universe as multi-layered and interconnected, not just a straight physical space. Similar ideas appear in theories like wormholes or Einstein-Rosen bridges that imagine shortcuts connecting distant parts of the universe (Maldacena 6-7). In Thor (2011), the Bifrost Bridge is shown as a glowing rainbow pathway that allows instant travel between Asgard and other realms, including Earth. It is operated by Heimdall and connects different worlds in seconds. In the film, scientists like Jane Foster explain it as an Einstein–Rosen Bridge (wormhole), meaning it bends space and time to create a shortcut. So, what looks like magic is also linked to a scientific idea of fast interstellar travel. Hence, space may not always be linear, and there could be ways to move across distances more directly than we usually experience.

In the Mahabharata and Ramayana, the Brahmastra is described as a very powerful weapon that creates intense heat, light, and destruction, like "a thousand suns." It not only destroys armies but also affects nature, causing long-term damage to land, animals, and people. In simple words, it shows a force that harms both life and the environment deeply . (Ab 1) In modern times, similar effects are seen in nuclear weapons, which release massive energy and cause radiation damage. J. Robert Oppenheimer even recalled the Bhagavad Gita when witnessing atomic power, and such instances are also recorded in films like Oppenheimer:

> "I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita; Vishnu [a principal Hindu deity] is trying to persuade the prince that he should do his duty, and to impress him, takes on his multi-armed form and says, "Now I have become death, the destroyer of the worlds'. I suppose we all thought that, one way or another (Biswas 2023)."

Despite disputing views on this belief and statement, ancient texts and modern science highlight the power and danger of extreme energy, and the need to use it responsibly.

In Shankara Digvijaya, Adi Shankara is said to use Parakaya Pravesha, the ability to enter another body. This idea shows that consciousness (Atman) is separate from the physical body and can move or exist independently. In simple words, it suggests that the "self" is not the body, but something deeper that can shift from one form to another (Vidyaranya 119). In modern thought, similar ideas appear in concepts like mind uploading, where scientists try to copy human consciousness into machines. The ultimate aim of mind uploading is to achieve digital immortality or "life extension" by allowing a person's conscious self to exist in a simulated environment without a physical body. Altered Carbon (2002), which takes place in the year 2384, illustrates the transfer of minds between bodies. This technological and philosophical premise represents a future where consciousness has been digitised, and the human physical form is considered replaceable hardware. The Bhagavad Gita also explains this simply, just like changing clothes, the soul changes bodies. These instances show how ancient philosophy and modern ideas explore the thought that identity is more than the body, and may exist beyond it.

In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, telepathy is explained through Samyama, which is a combination of dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (absorption). It says a yogi can understand another person's thoughts by tuning into their mental state (Wile 24-25). In modern science, telepathy is studied using machines. The contemporary development of Neural Lace and the US military's (DARPA) research into Synthetic Telepathy, which uses non-invasive brain sensors to decode thoughts into "silent whispers," is a hardware-dependent attempt to replicate this Siddhi (Shachtman). In fiction, like Star Trek (1966), telepathy happens through mind melds, which are a direct sharing of thoughts, often by touch. The physical act of placing fingertips on another's face is the primary

method used to facilitate a deep, stable link, often referred to as "becoming one". All three believe in telepathy or the idea that thoughts can be shared, the only difference is that IKS uses inner control, science uses technology, and fiction uses imagination.

In the Samarangana Sutradhara, Yantra-Manav (mechanical humans) are described as devices that can move, guard spaces, and even imitate human actions. These “Yantrapala” show an early idea that machines can be designed to perform tasks automatically, using mechanical parts like gears and structures (Bhoja Chp 31). In simple words, it reflects the thought that intelligence or action can be built into non-living things. In today’s world, similar ideas appear in robotics and AI, where machines like humanoid robots are programmed to act and respond. In Isaac Asimov’s I, Robot (1950), robots follow set rules to perform tasks, showing a similar concept in fiction. These concepts directly parallel the modern AI "alignment problem" and are often cited in real-world discussions on AI safety and ethics. Hence, modern fiction and technology run parallel to the history and science of Indian texts.

In the Shiva Purana and Mahabharata, Tripura refers to three moving cities made of gold, silver, and iron that travel through the sky. These cities are not fixed; they rotate and move in space. This shows an early idea of cities existing beyond Earth and moving in a circular path (Kulkarni 167-68). In films like Elysium (2013), people live in a huge rotating, ring-shaped space habitat orbiting Earth. It moves around Earth like a satellite, not across space like a spaceship. The structure spins on its axis, creating artificial gravity through centrifugal force, so life feels similar to Earth while maintaining a stable, balanced design. Overall, both ancient thought and modern science imagine that life in space needs special moving structures, and rotation helps create conditions similar to Earth.

Conclusion

This study shows that the real strength of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is its deep focus on the inner science of the mind and consciousness. These narratives validate the IKS premise that consciousness is the ultimate driver, proving that present-day innovation is a hardware-heavy attempt to return to the sophisticated "Internal Science" of the Vedic era. What modern science and fiction call new ideas, like brain-computer interfaces or telepathy, often reflect what ancient sages already explored through mantra, meditation, and sankalp (intention). In simple words, the past was not primitive; it was advanced: it focused on the mind, not machines. Today, science uses technology like silicon chips and AI, while IKS used the human mind as the main tool; both aim to achieve similar results. This shows a shift from “mantra to machine”, but the goal remains the same. IKS is not outdated; it can guide future research. In education, combining IKS with modern subjects can create balanced, ethical, and creative thinkers. Overall, the future is not just about new inventions; it is also about rediscovering and applying ancient wisdom in modern ways.

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Post Modern Narrative and Artistic Identity in *the Book of Chocolate Saints* by Jeet Thayil

Megha Shinde

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Department of English and Research Centre
Waghire College of Arts, Commerce & Science Saswad , Maharashtra, India
meghashinde@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Megha Shinde
Department of English and Research Centre
Waghire College of Arts, Commerce & Science Saswad , Maharashtra, India
meghashinde@gmail.com

Abstract

Jeet Thayil's The Book of Chocolate Saints (2017) employs postmodern narrative techniques to destabilize conventional ideas of storytelling, truth, and artistic identity. The novel rejects linear narration in favor of fragmented structures, shifting perspectives, and unreliable voices, creating a text that resembles an archive of partial and competing versions of reality rather than a unified account.

At its core, the novel explores artistic identity as something fluid and constructed rather than stable or authentic. The painter Francis Xavier Alvares emerges not as a coherent individual but as a composite figure shaped by memory, myth, and interpretation. His identity is continually rewritten through others' recollections and his own self-inventions, reflecting the postmodern idea that the self is performative and textual rather than fixed. By incorporating metafictional elements and intertextual layering, the novel foregrounds its own artificiality, drawing attention to the act of representation itself. Meaning is not presented as something discovered but as something perpetually deferred through narrative fragmentation. In doing so, the text aligns artistic identity with instability, suggesting that both art and the self exist only through shifting narratives rather than definitive truths.

Keywords: *Postmodern narrative, fragmentation, metafiction, intertextuality, unreliable narration, artistic identity, self-invention, memory,*

Introduction

Jeet Thayil's *The Book of Chocolate Saints* (2017) is a complex postmodern novel that reimagines the relationship between narrative form, artistic identity, and truth. Rather than offering a coherent or chronological story, the text is deliberately structured as a fragmented and multi-voiced reconstruction of events, memories, and interpretations. This fractured design reflects a postmodern suspicion of stable meaning and unified narrative authority, instead emphasizing uncertainty, contradiction, and interpretive openness. At the heart of the novel is the enigmatic painter Francis Xavier Alvares, whose life and identity are never presented in a definitive or complete form. Instead, he is constructed through scattered testimonies, unreliable recollections, imagined documents, and retrospective interpretations. This narrative strategy dissolves the boundary between fact and invention, suggesting that the artist's identity is not something inherent or fixed, but something continually produced through storytelling, memory, and cultural myth-making.

The novel also employs metafictional techniques, constantly drawing attention to its own status as a constructed text. It mimics archival material, biography, and critical commentary, yet simultaneously undermines the authority of each form. This layered structure encourages the reader to question not only what is being told, but also how and why it is being told. Intertextual references further deepen this effect, positioning the novel within a broader web of artistic and literary traditions while refusing to anchor itself in any single interpretive framework.

Through these postmodern strategies, The Book of Chocolate Saints interrogates the idea of artistic identity as something stable or authentic. Instead, it presents identity as performative, fragmented, and contingent upon narrative framing. The artist becomes both subject and fiction—an ever-shifting construct shaped as much by others' perceptions as by personal expression. Ultimately, the novel suggests that both art and identity exist not as fixed truths, but as ongoing processes of representation that are always incomplete and open to revision.

Review of Literature

Jeet Thayil's *The Book of Chocolate Saints* (2017) has been widely discussed within contemporary literary criticism as a significant postmodern text that engages deeply with questions of narrative instability, artistic identity, and historiographic metafiction. Scholars often situate the novel within the broader tradition of postmodern literature that challenges fixed meanings and linear storytelling structures.

A key strand of criticism focuses on the novel's fragmented narrative form.

Critics argue that Thayil's use of discontinuous voices, shifting temporalities, and layered textual forms aligns it with postmodern experimentation seen in works such as Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979) and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973). In this framework, fragmentation is not merely stylistic but epistemological, reflecting the impossibility of recovering a single, authoritative truth.

Another important area of scholarly attention is the novel's treatment of artistic identity. Researchers highlight how the figure of Francis Xavier Alvares functions as a constructed and unstable subject, whose identity emerges through competing narratives rather than a coherent self. This aligns with poststructuralist theories of identity, particularly Roland Barthes' idea of the "*Death of the Author*" (1967) and Michel Foucault's concept of the *Author-Function* (1969), where authorship is understood as a discursive construct rather than a stable origin of meaning.

Critics have also examined the novel's metafictional and archival strategies. By presenting itself as a compilation of fragments, testimonies, and pseudo-biographical documents, the text blurs the boundaries between fiction, biography, and criticism. This has been interpreted as an example of historiographic metafiction, a term developed by Linda Hutcheon (1988), describing postmodern works that simultaneously construct and question historical knowledge.

In addition, some readings emphasize the novel's engagement with memory and myth-making. Scholars suggest that Thayil portrays memory not as a reliable record of the past but as a creative and unstable process that reshapes identity over time. The artist becomes a mythic figure continuously rewritten by cultural imagination, reinforcing the postmodern idea that truth is always mediated through narrative.

Overall, the existing literature positions *The Book of Chocolate Saints* (2017) as a text that interrogates the limits of representation. It is widely regarded as a work that not only reflects postmodern concerns but also actively enacts them through its form, structure, and thematic preoccupations with identity, authorship, and narrative fragmentation.

Analysis of the novel

Jeet Thayil's *The Book of Chocolate Saints* (2017) is a complex postmodern novel that interrogates narrative authority, artistic identity, and the instability of representation. The novel rejects conventional biography and linear storytelling, instead constructing meaning through fragmentation, shifting perspectives, and reconstructed memory. In doing so, it challenges the possibility of a unified truth and presents identity as an ongoing process of interpretation rather than a fixed essence. The central figure, Francis Xavier Alvares, becomes the focal point through which issues of art, memory, exile, and authorship are explored.At its structural level, the novel is defined by fragmentation. Events are not presented in chronological order but emerge through discontinuous episodes, recollections, and interpretive reconstructions. This non-linear structure disrupts traditional narrative coherence and forces the reader to actively assemble meaning from scattered fragments. Such fragmentation reflects a postmodern epistemology in which truth is never fully accessible but always mediated. Linda Hutcheon describes historiographic metafiction as a form that "problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge" (Hutcheon 122). Thayil's novel embodies this idea by refusing to present Xavier's life as a stable historical account. Instead, it exists as competing versions shaped by memory, narration, and interpretation.Closely connected to this structural instability is the novel's use of distributed and unreliable narration. No single authoritative voice controls the narrative. Instead, Xavier's life is constructed through multiple perspectives, each offering partial and often contradictory accounts. This multiplicity destabilizes epistemological certainty and reinforces the idea that truth is always relational. Roland Barthes' theory of textual multiplicity is particularly relevant here, as he argues that the text is "a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centers of culture" (Barthes 146). In *The Book of Chocolate Saints*, Francis Xavier Alvares functions precisely as such a textual construct—assembled through fragments of memory, discourse, and cultural within cultural systems (Foucault 124). In Thayil's novel, Francis Xavier Alvares is not a fully realized subject but an effect produced through narration. He exists only through mediated accounts—biographers, acquaintances, critics, and cultural observers. His identity is therefore not intrinsic but constructed through systems of discourse. This destabilization of authorship aligns with broader poststructuralist critiques of subjectivity.A major thematic concern of the novel is the construction of artistic identity. Xavier is portrayed not as a unified psychological subject but as a fragmented figure shaped by memory, narration, and myth-making. His identity shifts depending on who narrates him, suggesting that the self is not an essence but a narrative effect. This challenges the Romantic ideal of the artist as a coherent genius and replaces it with a postmodern understanding of identity as unstable and performative. The painter becomes both subject and fiction, constantly rewritten through external interpretation.Alexander Larman's critical reading reinforces this interpretation by emphasizing Xavier's decline and displacement. He describes Xavier as "a dissolute, once brilliant man… an octogenarian painter and poet who has lost sight of his Indian roots" (Larman 2018). This framing highlights themes of artistic deterioration, cultural estrangement, and existential fragmentation. Xavier's identity is not only unstable but also marked by decline, suggesting that artistic creation is inseparable from decay and loss.The ambiguity of Xavier's return to India further intensifies this instability. Larman notes that it remains unclear whether he returns "for artistic inspiration or in search of absolution" (Larman 2018). This ambiguity is crucial because it reflects the novel's refusal to provide psychological or moral resolution. Instead of offering clear motivation, the narrative sustains uncertainty, reinforcing the postmodern rejection of fixed meaning. Xavier's journey becomes symbolic rather than definitive, representing the impossibility of stabilizing identity or intention.Postcolonial dimensions further complicate the construction of identity in the novel. Xavier occupies a transnational space between India and the Western art world, reflecting the condition of cultural hybridity. His associations with figures such as Francis Bacon and Muriel Belcher situate him within a Western avant-garde tradition, while his Indian origins remain fragmented and unstable. This dual positioning creates tension between cultural belonging and artistic recognition.

The novel thus engages with postcolonial questions of authenticity, displacement, and cultural negotiation, where identity is always formed through overlapping and sometimes conflicting histories.

Edward Said's concept of contrapuntal reading is useful in understanding this dynamic. Said argues that postcolonial identity is shaped through the coexistence of multiple historical and cultural narratives (Said 35). In Thayil's novel, Xavier's identity is similarly constructed through competing cultural frameworks that cannot be reconciled into a single narrative. His life becomes a site of tension between colonial history, global art culture, and personal memory.

Memory functions as another destabilizing force within the novel. Rather than preserving the past, memory actively reconstructs it, altering both events and identities with each act of recollection. Biography therefore becomes indistinguishable from fiction, as every retelling reshapes the subject being described. This process undermines the possibility of objective historical knowledge and reinforces the novel's postmodern skepticism toward truth. Memory is not a repository of facts but a creative process that generates meaning through distortion and reinterpretation.

Artistic production in the novel mirrors this instability. Painting, storytelling, and memory are not separate forms but interconnected systems of representation. Each artistic act contributes to the multiplication of Xavier's identity rather than its clarification. Art does not preserve reality but generates alternative versions of it. In this sense, artistic creation becomes an ongoing process of reinterpretation, where meaning is never fixed but continuously expanded.

The metafictional dimension of the novel further emphasizes its self-reflexivity. By foregrounding processes of narration, documentation, and interpretation, the novel draws attention to its own constructedness. The presence of biographical reconstruction highlights the artificiality of storytelling and undermines the possibility of transparent representation. The novel constantly reminds the reader that what is being presented is not reality itself but a mediated version of it.

Ultimately, Francis Xavier Alvares emerges as a dispersed narrative effect rather than a coherent subject. His identity is continuously rewritten through memory, discourse, and cultural interpretation. He does not exist outside of narration; rather, he is produced by it. This reflects a poststructuralist understanding of subjectivity in which identity is not inherent but constructed through language and representation.

Conclusion

The Book of Chocolate Saints (2017) presents artistic identity as fragmented, unstable, and perpetually constructed. Through its postmodern narrative strategies—fragmentation, unreliable narration, metafiction, and postcolonial hybridity—the novel dismantles the possibility of a unified self or stable truth It explores the themes of decline, ambiguity, and cultural displacement. Ultimately, the novel suggests that both art and identity are not discovered as essences but produced through continuous acts of memory, narration, and interpretation.

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Integrating Literature and Technology: A Strategic Role of Digital Humanities in Humanities Studies

Dr. Anand Uddhav Hipparkar

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Professor and Head, Dept. of English,
Dada Patil Mahavidyalaya, Karjat
Dist. Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra
E-mail:anandhipparkar99@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Anand Uddhav Hipparkar
Professor and Head, Dept. of English,
Dada Patil Mahavidyalaya, Karjat, Dist.
Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra
E-mail:anandhipparkar99@gmail.com

Abstract

The term "digital humanities" can refer to research and instruction that is about information technology or that uses IT. By applying technologies in new ways, the tools and methodologies of digital humanities open new possibilities of inquest and intellectual invention. Digital humanities applies computational capabilities to humanistic inquiries. It provides new ways for scholars to carry out research and to create and publish scholarship. Digital humanities provides promising new channels for learners and will continue to influence the ways in which we think about and evolve technology towards better and more humanistic ends. Digital renovation, in current time, is the change related to the application of digital technologies in every aspect of human culture. Given this dynamic, we can define digital transformation as the art of "changing things" that result in a different way of learning and doing things. For these reasons, it is crucial to encourage the innovation of new educational models that allow the expansion of HI (Human Intelligence) and the integration of new technological developments. The researcher, in this study, intends to take a disruptive approach in the educational sector that can contribute to the development of human intelligence. He, further, proposes to discuss the way to make an appropriate integration of these digital transformations by incorporating sprightly and vigorous methodologies in its pedagogical, organizational system and mind set. It is necessary for educational institutions to take a serious note of these great challenges that confront us with an unexpected reality, but in many ways predestined to the transformation of "being" and "doing" in current reasoning models.

Keywords- *Digital Humanities, Computer-Aided Technologies, English Literature, Humanities and Computing, Literary Studies, Digital Literacy, Text Analysis And Interdisciplinary, Etc.*

Introduction

Digital Humanities is a dynamic field that calls for mastery of technical, methodological, and reflective skills. The combination of technological innovation, large-scale analysis, and ethical awareness makes DH a strategic approach to bridging literature and technology in the 21st century.

The digital humanities tries to take account of the plasticity of digital forms and the way in which they point towards a new way of working with representation and mediation. It might be called the digital 'folding' of memory and archives, whereby one is able to approach culture in a radically new way. To mediate a cultural object, a digital or computational device requires that this object be translated into the digital code that it can understand. This minimal transformation is effected through the input mechanism of a socio-technical device within which a model or image is stabilized and attended to. It is then internally transformed, depending on a number of interventions, processes or filters, and eventually displayed as a final calculation, usually in a visual form. This results in real-world situations where computation is event-driven and divided into discrete processes to undertake a particular user task cultural object. The key point is that without the possibility of discrete encoding, there is no cultural object for the computational device to process. However, in cutting up the archive in this manner, information about the archive necessarily has to be discarded in order to store a representation within the computer. In other words, a computer requires that everything is transformed from the continuous flow of everyday life into a grid of numbers that can be stored as a representation which can then be manipulated using algorithms. These subtractive methods of understanding culture (episteme) produce new knowledge and methods for the control of memory and archives (techne). They do so through a digital mediation, which the digital humanities are starting to take seriously as their problematic.

The integration of digital humanities into literary studies occurred as a strategic response to changes in the area of access, analysis, and dissemination of information in the digital era. Digital humanities is an interdisciplinary field that combines computational tools with humanistic studies. It offers new methodologies in interpreting literary texts and helps to preserve cultural heritage.

The digital humanities, also known as humanities computing, is a field of study, research, teaching, and invention concerned with the intersection of computing and the disciplines of the humanities. It is methodological by nature and interdisciplinary in scope. It involves investigation, analysis, synthesis and presentation of information in electronic form. It studies how these media affect the disciplines in which they are used, and what these disciplines have to contribute to our knowledge of computing.

The present research paper examines the transformative role of digital humanities in strengthening literary studies through digital text analysis, corpus-based studies, data visualization, and the development of digital platforms for literary archives. By using technology to the maximum, researchers can uncover patterns, themes, and structures in texts that may not be accessible through traditional methods. This is at the advantage of the scholars. Furthermore, digital humanities push digital literacy, critical thinking, and mastery of technology among academics and students. Thus, it creates an adaptive and future-ready academic culture. The application of digital humanities in literary studies also requires a critical and ethical approach to data interpretation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and awareness of the socio-cultural implications of the digitalization process. The present study, therefore, highlights the importance of active involvement of humanities scholars in the use and development of digital tools, not just as users, but as creators of knowledge. Eventually, digital humanities becomes a bridge connecting literature and technology and reopens new possibilities in 21st-century literary analysis.

In addition, it is nearly impossible, these days, to teach a class that does not engage technology in some way or the other. All too often, however, that engagement is unplanned, incidental to the course, or inadequately assessed. And, in the case of faculty members who are wary of technological pedagogical interventions in their classes, such engagement may even be condemned as a distraction from the "real" work of the course. This is the present state of affairs.

The past five decades have witnessed a major shift in humanities from reliance on physical preservation of literature and static information to taking up computer-based technologies and digital tools. This shift is known as digital humanities (DH). It has modernized access to literature, art works, cultural artifacts and databases.

Let us begin with some relevant questions. What does effective teaching look like when it is directly, intentionally, and purposefully connected to the Web and to the increasing (and increasingly sophisticated) number of digital tools, platforms, and methods now available? How can students learn to think and work together in new ways, and to deepen their understanding of the academic subjects under consideration, through the use of such tools, platforms, and methods? What does effective, creative, active, and engaged pedagogy look like in the context of modern Web?

These are all questions that Digital Pedagogy in Humanitiessets out to address. The discussion in the present study intends to provideconcrete teaching materials that will help faculty expand their pedagogical practices.

The Digital Humanities Manifesto defines digital humanities (DH) as "the interdisciplinary study of the humanities and social sciences through the lens of systematic use of digital technology."However, what makes DH stand out is the way in which the two halves of this duality have developed mutually beneficial relationships. On the one hand, the potential of technology for a wide range of studies in the field of beneficial knowledge is being studied. Alternatively, electronic devices are subjected to scientific knowledge on an infinite range of issues, from logical to applied.

It is evident that the initiation of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the entire set-up of language and literature studies. Digital tools have enabled scholars to access plethora of textual data and facilitated large-scale analysis and comparison. Textual analysis software, such as Voyant Tools and Nvivo, allow for the identification of recurring themes, stylistic patterns, and linguistic nuances. Moreover, digital humanities has promoted the development of new methodologies, such as distant reading and computational stylistics, which offer unique perspectives on literary texts.

As we look at the concepts, methods, theories, and resources of Digital Humanities through the perspective of practice, we will consider how computational methods are being used to further humanities research and how our understanding of computing technologies is deepened by humanities research. Digital Humanities (DH) offers a new model in literary studies by incorporating digital technology and critical interpretation. Through methods such as distant reading and corpus analysis, along with the use of popular applications like Voyant Tools, Gephi, and Python, DH enables researchers to explore narrative patterns, lexical distribution, and intertextual relationships that were formerly hard to access. This advantage not only broadens the horizons of literary research but also fosters cross-disciplinary collaborations that combine expertise from the humanities, computer science, and visual design. The successful implementation of Digital Humanities depends on the active involvement of academics in developing platforms, curating data, and maintaining the ethical integrity of the research.

Digital Humanities is not merely the use of computerized/digital technology in the statistical analysis of data, even though this is one of the foundations for DH. Rather, where "electronic publishing has made open access and open review possible, it has also inspired authors to rethink what it is they publish. Digital scholarship is more than methods of data collection and analysis" (Berry & Fagerjord, p. 119).

To strengthen the role of Digital Humanities in future, planned steps are needed, including integrating DH fundamentals into the humanities curriculum, providing cross-disciplinary training for researchers, and

developing digital platforms that prioritize the principles of open access, diverse cultural representation, and sustainability. These efforts will ensure that the digital transformation does not displace the fundamental values of the humanities but instead strengthens their relevance amidst the dynamics of technological and information developments.

Further, one of the most significant contributions of Digital Humanities to language and literature studies is the ability to uncover hidden patterns and insights that may not be apparent through traditional methods. For instance, corpus linguistics, a subfield of Digital Humanities, enables scholars to analyze large datasets of texts to identify linguistic trends and variations. By examining the frequency and distribution of words and phrases, researchers can get a deeper understanding of cultural and historical contexts. Furthermore, digital tools have facilitated the creation of interactive visualizations and digital editions of literary texts. These digital editions often include annotations, hyperlinks, and multimedia elements, enhancing readers' experience and providing new avenues for interpretation. For instance, the Digital Humanities project "Shakespeare's World" presents an inclusive digital resource that allows users to explore Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, and their historical context in an interactive and immersive way.

Need of Digital Pedagogy

The expression 'Digital Pedagogy' in Humanities focuses on humanities and digital pedagogy, which was a distinctive field. The term 'digital pedagogy' has been increasingly applied to refer to a rich area of pedagogical practice that makes use of digital tools, platforms, and methods. It is a kind of digital ecosystems. Some of these practices stem from the advent of new digital tools and methodologies in academic practice. Some others stem from a larger global context—a globally networked world in which knowledge is created, shared, and remixed across digital networks. Still others result from calls to prepare students to live, work, and take political action in such a world. Pairing "pedagogy" with "digital" indicates the intentionality of these practices. It seems totally irresponsible to teach using technology without a digital pedagogy.

One can see digital pedagogy as an approach rather than a thing. It is best understood through multiple practices of its various participants. A broad understanding of scholarship accommodates various forms that the digital pedagogy conversation takes, from the interchange of assignment prompt and student response to the open sharing of teaching materials online. It also makes room for multiple, diverse voices and perspectives to be shared within that conversation.

The key concepts of digital pedagogy are openness, collaboration, play, practice, student agency, and identity. A hands-on introduction to Digital Humanities, which may be defined as "a nexus of fields within which scholars use computing technologies to investigate the kinds of questions that are traditional to the humanities, or. . . [ask] humanities-oriented questions about computing technologies" (Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "Reporting from the Digital Humanities 2010 Conference," Prof. Hacker).

Ethical and Social Challenges

The use of popular applications in Digital Humanities also faces ethical and social challenges (Gold, 2012). Copyright issues are critical when processing legally protected texts. Furthermore, potential bias in the data can arise if the corpus underrepresents cultural and gender diversity. The sustainability of digital projects also requires strategies for funding, maintaining, and updating software to prevent rapid obsolescence.

Considering these potentials and challenges, it is clear that the success of DH depends not only on the sophistication of tools such as Voyant Tools, Gephi, or Python, but also on the critical awareness of researchers to maintain open access, fair representation, and project sustainability.

As humanities scholarship focuses primarily on the textual, digital humanities make use of the visual. As such, new research skills can be acquired and implemented, new types of literacy are needed, and new ways to represent/visualize/narrate the outcomes become indispensable. Digital Humanities is the future, and where the humanities help us make sense of the world we live in. DH is vital to our critical understanding of our relation to and role in the digital world. Thus, DH, can promise our sustained survival in and active contribution to an ever-increasingly digital reality.

Conclusion

Digital Humanities is a rapidly evolving field that offers a unique blend of traditional humanities discipline with cutting-edge digital technologies. In India, the field is poised for significant growth as academic institutions and cultural organizations increasingly adopt digital tools for research, preservation, and education. With a broad range of career opportunities across sectors, Digital Humanities professionals will play a crucial role in shaping the future of humanities research and cultural heritage preservation in the digital age. As the demand for digital literacy and cultural analysis continues to rise, the field offers a promising prospect for students and professionals interested in exploring the intersection of technology and the humanities.

The present paper emphasizes development and components of DH, like digital curation, archiving, and cultural analytics, as well as different challenges in the field. Digital tools and new technologies also facilitate digitization and encoding processes with reduced costs for creating and maintaining databases while maintaining the educational value of the intact. Since the beginning, digital humanities has resembled its quest for imagination and innovation in the humanities field without compromising on core scholarly standards.

With the emergence of the internet, especially WWW, as a predominant characteristic of everyday human life, it offers more possibilities for the humanities computing to reach out to wider groups and individuals.

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Cognitive Dissonance and Transformation in *a Strangeness in My Mind* by Orhan Pamuk

Akanksha Anil Khare

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Assistant Professor,Waghire College of Arts, Commerce & Science Saswad
Email ID-
akankshakhare006@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Akanksha Anil Khare
Assistant Professor,Waghire College of Arts, Commerce & Science Saswad
Email ID-
akankshakhare006@gmail.com

Abstract

The research paper entitled 'Cognitive Dissonance and Transformation in A Strangeness in My Mind by Orhan Pamuk' provides comprehension of the Cognitive Dissonance in shaping individual identity and social transformation in "A Strangeness in My Mind (2014". The novel traces the life of Mevlut Karataş, whose personal struggles reflect the broader cultural and societal shifts in Istanbul from 1969 to 2012. Through a psychological and socio-cultural framework, this paper argues that cognitive dissonance functions as both a source of internal conflict and a mechanism for adaptation. Ultimately, the Research paper demonstrates that Pamuk portrays transformation not as resolution of contradictions but as the ability to live meaningfully within them. The Research Paper presents the intersection of literature, culture, and society in "A Strangeness in My Mind (2014) by Orhan Pamuk. The novel shows the transformation of Istanbul through the life of Mevlut Karataş, a street vendor navigating the complexities of modern Turkish society. The Research paper explores themes of urbanization, migration, identity, class struggle, and the tension between tradition and modernity. By analyzing Mevlut's experiences through a socio-psychological lens, this paper argues that cognitive dissonance is not merely a source of conflict but a catalyst for adaptation and transformation. The study further demonstrates how literature serves as a powerful medium for representing the interplay between psychological processes and broader cultural and shifts in the society.

Keywords: *Literature, Culture, Society, Urbanization, Migration, Tradition, Modernity, Identity, Social Change, Class and Inequality.*

Introduction

A Strangeness in My Mind (2014) by Orhan Pamuk presents a detailed account of individual experience within the context of rapid social and urban transformation. Set in Istanbul over several decades, the novel follows the life of Mevlut Karataş, a street vendor whose personal journey reflects the tensions between tradition and modernity, rural memory and urban expansion, and private desire and social expectation. Through Mevlut's perspective, the narrative explores how individuals respond to changing cultural and economic conditions while attempting to maintain a coherent sense of self.

Review of Literature

Scholarly discussions on identity, migration, and cultural transformation provide an essential foundation for interpreting *A Strangeness in My Mind* (2014). Critical theory has increasingly shifted from viewing identity as fixed to understanding it as fluid, relational, and socially constructed. This shift is central to reading Mevlut Karataş's experience of cognitive dissonance within a rapidly modernizing Istanbul.

The concept of cognitive dissonance, introduced by Leon Festinger, forms the psychological basis of this study. Festinger argues that individuals experience mental discomfort when holding contradictory beliefs and attempt to reduce this tension through reinterpretation or behavioral adjustment (Festinger 3; 18). This framework has been widely applied in literary and cultural studies to analyze characters who operate within conflicting value systems.

Theoretical Framework

In cultural theory, Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity is particularly relevant. Bhabha describes identity as emerging in a "third space" where meanings are continuously negotiated rather than fixed (Bhabha 55). This idea is significant for postcolonial and migration narratives, where individuals exist between cultural systems. Mevlut's position between rural Anatolia and urban Istanbul reflects this hybrid condition, where identity is neither fully traditional nor fully modern.

Stuart Hall extends this perspective by defining cultural identity as a process of "becoming rather than being" (Hall 225). Hall's theory emphasizes that identity is shaped through history, memory, and ongoing transformation rather than stable essence. This view supports the interpretation of Mevlut's identity as continuously reconstructed through experience, migration, and social change.

While existing scholarship has extensively explored hybridity, postcolonial identity, and cultural displacement, fewer studies focus specifically on cognitive dissonance as a psychological mechanism within literary urban narratives.

This paper contributes to this gap by combining Festinger's psychological framework with postcolonial cultural theory to analyze how contradiction shapes identity formation in Pamuk's novel.

The concept of cognitive dissonance provides a useful framework to understand Mevlut's internal conflicts. Cognitive dissonance refers to the psychological tension that arises when an individual holds conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes. Throughout the novel, Mevlut faces contradictions between his emotional choices and social realities, particularly in relation to love, marriage, and livelihood. His mistaken correspondence and eventual marriage, his economic struggles, and his attachment to a disappearing way of life reveal a continuous negotiation between competing impulses. These tensions do not result in immediate resolution; rather, they shape a gradual process of adaptation and transformation.

Analysis of the text

A Strangeness in My Mind (2014) presents its central narrative through the life and perspective of Mevlut Karataş, who migrates to Istanbul in 1969 at the age of twelve to join his father. His father earns a living as a street vendor, selling yoghurt by day and boza, a traditional fermented beverage, by night. Both figures are part of a wider movement of rural migrants from Anatolia who relocate to Istanbul in pursuit of improved economic conditions and social advancement.

During his childhood, Mevlut encounters Istanbul with curiosity and a sense of wonder. Accompanying his father through the city's narrow streets, he observes its diverse populations while gradually acquiring the practical knowledge required for informal street trade, including customer interaction, persuasion, and product presentation. His educational experience, however, is marked by socioeconomic constraints, as he is required to contribute to labour after school hours. Despite these limitations, he experiences emotional support within his extended family network, particularly through his relationship with his cousins and the dependable presence of Suleiman.

The novel reflects Mevlut's life, including his early departure from formal education, his unconventional marriage to Rayiha, incidents of theft encountered during his work, and his later engagement in various informal occupations such as ice cream vending and restaurant service. Collectively, these events construct a life trajectory characterized by uncertainty, persistence, and adaptive survival.

The novel traces Mevlut's gradual development over time. However, Orhan Pamuk departs from conventional narrative form by rejecting linear progression and singular narrative authority. Instead, the novel incorporates multiple perspectives, each contributing partial and occasionally conflicting accounts of events, thereby destabilizing any unified version of truth or identity.

A central theme focuses on Mevlut's identity alongside the transformation of Istanbul itself. His nightly movement through the city as a boza seller reveals an urban landscape defined by historical layering, demographic change, and the erosion of traditional practices. Through this mobility, he encounters the city's simultaneous attraction and disorientation, where anonymity and self-reflection coexist within dense urban environments.

The central narrative of *A Strangeness in My Mind* (2014) constructs Mevlut Karataş as a subject shaped by persistent cognitive dissonance, where identity emerges through contradiction rather than coherence. Orhan Pamuk situates Mevlut's personal experience within the broader transformation of Istanbul, a city marked by rapid modernization, migration, and cultural instability. Within this context, Mevlut's consciousness reflects a continuous negotiation between opposing forces: tradition and modernity, memory and change, and desire and obligation.

A primary site of cognitive dissonance appears in Mevlut's romantic life, particularly in the episode of mistaken love letters. This misunderstanding leads him to marry a woman different from the one he originally believes he loves. The resulting contradiction between emotional expectation and lived reality becomes central to his psychological development. Instead of rejecting this contradiction, Mevlut gradually adapts to it, reflecting Leon Festinger's claim that individuals reduce dissonance through reinterpretation rather than elimination (Festinger 18). His acceptance of unintended outcomes illustrates how identity formation operates through accommodation of conflict rather than resolution.

Urban space further intensifies this psychological condition. Istanbul functions not merely as a setting but as an active force that shapes subjectivity. The novel captures this paradox through the statement that "in a city, you can be alone in a crowd" (Pamuk 58). This observation reflects Mevlut's emotional condition, where physical proximity to others does not produce belonging. Instead, the city generates anonymity within collectivity, reinforcing the gap between external social participation and internal emotional isolation. Cognitive dissonance thus extends beyond individual psychology into spatial experience.

This tension is further emphasized in the idea that the city "lets you hide the strangeness in your mind" (Pamuk 112). Urban life does not resolve internal contradiction; rather, it provides structures that allow individuals to conceal it. Mevlut's identity develops within this concealment, where unresolved conflicts remain active but unspoken. The city becomes a space where dissonance is normalized, absorbed into everyday survival.

Mevlut's profession as a boza vendor further illustrates the intersection of cognitive dissonance and socio-economic transformation. His commitment to a traditional street trade persists despite the pressures of modernization and changing consumer culture. This creates a structural contradiction between economic survival and cultural continuity. While urban development demands adaptation to new economic systems, Mevlut maintains attachment to older practices. His persistence does not indicate resistance alone but also emotional dependence on cultural memory. Identity, in this sense, emerges through partial continuity within change.

Cognitive dissonance also shapes Mevlut's perception of reality. At several moments, the distinction between imagination and lived experience becomes unstable, as "he had stopped seeing any difference between his

fantasies and the things he saw" (Pamuk 184). This collapse of perceptual boundaries demonstrates how contradiction operates at the level of consciousness itself. Rather than producing breakdown, this condition becomes integrated into his interpretive framework, allowing him to function within instability.

Migration further deepens this fragmented identity. Mevlut's movement from rural Anatolia to Istanbul produces a condition of in-betweenness, where he cannot fully return to his past nor fully integrate into his present. This liminal position generates continuous dissonance between memory and reality. His identity is shaped not by belonging but by ongoing negotiation between multiple cultural frameworks.

Family and social relationships reinforce this tension. Mevlut's relatives often pursue economic advancement through pragmatic or opportunistic means, while he maintains a more reflective and modest approach. This contrast creates ethical and social dissonance between individual values and collective expectations. Although Mevlut recognizes alternative models of success, he does not fully adopt them, reinforcing his position within contradiction.

The narrative structure of the novel amplifies this instability through multiple perspectives that often contradict one another. No single narrative authority dominates, which reflects the fragmented nature of truth and identity. This multiplicity of voices reinforces the idea that identity is constructed through partial and competing interpretations rather than unified meaning.

Despite persistent contradiction, Mevlut maintains psychological continuity through routine. His nightly walks, repetitive labor, and daily interactions create a rhythm that stabilizes his experience. Transformation, therefore, does not occur through decisive rupture but through gradual adaptation. Cognitive dissonance becomes a sustained condition rather than a temporary crisis.

At a broader socio-cultural level, the novel situates cognitive dissonance within Istanbul's modernization. The coexistence of traditional practices and modern urban structures produces a landscape of constant contradiction. Mevlut's life reflects this broader condition, where individuals must continuously adjust to shifting realities without achieving full coherence.

The novel demonstrates that cognitive dissonance does not obstruct identity formation but enables it. Mevlut's transformation emerges through sustained engagement with contradiction, where selfhood develops through adaptation, reinterpretation, and endurance. Identity, in this framework, is not a fixed state but a dynamic process shaped by instability.

Conclusion

A Strangeness in My Mind (2014) presents cognitive dissonance as a persistent condition that shapes identity through contradiction, adaptation, and lived experience. Orhan Pamuk constructs Mevlut Karataş as a subject whose transformation does not follow a linear path of resolution but develops through continuous negotiation between conflicting realities such as tradition and modernity, memory and change, and desire and obligation.

The analysis shows that Mevlut's identity emerges through repeated encounters with psychological and social tension. His romantic life, migration experience, occupational choices, and family relations all reflect situations where expectations and reality do not align. Rather than resolving these conflicts, Mevlut integrates them into his everyday existence. This demonstrates that cognitive dissonance operates not only as a psychological discomfort but also as a structural condition of modern urban life.

Istanbul plays a central role in shaping this condition, as rapid urban transformation produces spaces where individuals experience both connection and isolation. Within this environment, Mevlut's sense of self remains fluid and unstable, shaped by shifting cultural and economic realities. His transformation, therefore, reflects not stability but endurance within change. Ultimately, the novel suggests that identity in a modern, rapidly changing society is formed through sustained engagement with contradiction. Cognitive dissonance becomes a defining feature of selfhood, where transformation occurs through adaptation rather than resolution. In this way, the novel offers a nuanced understanding of how individuals construct meaning within uncertain and evolving social landscapes.

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Partition Effects in Chaman Nahal's Azadi and Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan

Dr. Digambar M. Bhise

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Assistant Professor,
Department of English
Meenalben Mehta College, Panchgani
Email: dmbhise100@gmail.com

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Digambar M. Bhise
Assistant Professor,
Department of English
Meenalben Mehta College, Panchgani
Email: dmbhise100@gmail.com

Abstract

As a Postcolonial study, repressed voices in Chaman Nahal's Azadi and Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan earn much importance from women's perspective. They were repressed by both the religions Hindu and Muslim in the process of partition. It was a deliberate effort by British government of that time although it seems to be demand of separate nation by Muslim community. It was a part of English government's strategic policy of 'divide and rule' to weaken Asian region. Chaman Nahal in his Azadi reflects a question; did we get freedom as expected? OR what we lost in the desire of independence? Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan is a counter part of Nahal's Azadi. Both the novels provide a platform to think upon an important question of power relations of powerful and powerless sections of humanity as man and woman. It also puts light on one country's hegemonic relations to another. It enlightens how mostly women are targeted to victimize physically and psychologically in warfare like circumstances. Repressed voices are excellently represented in these novels in the process of colonial and postcolonial period. Its impression is still on the mind of the people from both countries that becomes obstacle to maintain good relations between two countries.

Keywords: *Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Neocolonialism, Hegemony, Partition, Religion*

Statement of Problem

Partition has its effects even today in the form of terrorism. World is suffering from the consequences of terrorist activities.

Aims

To find, how colonialism, postcolonialism, neocolonialism culminated into terrorism and war

Objectives

To focus on the reasons behind Indian partition and its endless effects
To check the possibilities of human welfare above the idea of religion

Review of Literature

The major postcolonial literary works include *Azadi* (1979) by Chaman Nahal, *Life with Electric-Aunt and Slave sister* (1991) by Shashi Tharur and *Train to Pakistan* (1956) by Khushwant Singh. Apart from these, the major writers of Indian English writers are *Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand,* and *R. K. Narayan.* These novelists enriched the Indian writing in English with their literary pieces.

The major theoretical works in postcolonial theory include The Wretched of the Earth (1961) by Franz Fanon, Orientalism (1978) by Edward Said, In Other Worlds (1987) by Gayatri Spivak, The Empire Writes Back (1989) by Bill Ashcroft et al, Nation and Narration (1990) by Homi K Bhabha, and Culture and Imperialism (1993) by Edward Said.

Introduction

The present study focuses on effects of partition as the consequence of colonialism. Partition was a trauma for both the countries India and Pakistan. It was a deliberate effort of British government to apply their policy to 'divide and rule'. Overtly, it may seem, colonialism is ended. In fact, its form is changed. 'Kasmir issue' is upshot of colonialism that India has been facing even today.

Partition effects in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*

Partition has psychological, religious, cultural, social and political impact on India as well as Pakistan. Its effects on literature and contemporary history are notable. Chaman Nahal was on of the eye witnesses of partition. The psychological separation between people of two religions Hindu and Muslims was far more effective than physical separation. Fixation of border between two countries was a political need. Muslims have to move to newly formed Pakistan while Hindus to be shifted to New Independent India.

British govt. decided to appoint a Boundary Commission to fix boundaries between India and Pakistan. The Sikh community demanded the foundry line to be fixed at Chenab basin, Sialkot not to be gone into Pakistan. There was disappointment among Lala Kanshi Ram and companions on the issue of geographical line for dividing India by drawing boundary line. It turned out shameless violence at both sides. The assessment of Chaman Nahal's historical novel in *The Cambridge Guide to literature in English* wordily notify: "His most considerable novel, *Azadi,* describes Hindu, Muslim and Sikha living together peacefully in the Punjab until Partion turned neighbours into enemies, citizens into fugitives"(Ousby 704).

Partition effects in in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

The historical novel sights Indian partition's backdrop of 1947 which expatriated millions of people along with numerous killings. British government divided 'British India' into two pieces, independent India and Pakistan. Khushwant Singh creates the horrible picture in real sense. He highlights a few significant debatable issues on ground of humanity; especially treatment to children and women.

Khushwant Singh focuses of different issues in relation to partition. He eliminates terrors and horrors, resistance and representation, hybridism and racism, abrogation etc. He represents voices of the people who suffered from partition, "freedom, truly, is a good thing. But what will we get out of it because it is not meant for us common people." (p.45). His literary piece demonstrates cruelty, irreligious behaviors on the part of inhumanity.

Effects of Colonialism

Although, by the end of second world war colonial era ended in itself, the effects of colonialism are vibrant in the former colonized countries. Colonizers were representing ulterior motifs while playing the role of representers. In this connection, Ashcroft remarks are noteworthy, "such representations of occident of orient were based on the ulterior motives of the Europe's domination of Asia, they represented orient as uncivilized and put before them the task of civilizing them, by ruling them" (Ashcroft 1998, p. 35).

In first half of 20th century, colonialism was persistent in many countries. In India, prominent leaders of 'independence movement' such as Gandhi, Nehru and Quid e Azam were in resistance against British colonial rule. Final, it led to independence in 1947. British government decided to split the colony into India and Pakistan.

British policy of 'divide and rule' resulted into conflicts at various parts of independent India and Pakistan. These conflicts created endless tension between India and Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir. It is the result of evils of British colonial rule in India for almost 150 years.

Effects of Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism refers to the study of people who suffered from colonialism and its effects. It is the critical review of the postcolonial literature, culture, history in relation to the so called third world countries such as Asia, Africa, South America and Caribbean Islands. The term postcolonialism always studied and associated with colonialism, decolonization and the most recent, the neocolonialism.

Effects of Neocolonialism

The significance of studying postcolonialism comes with the threatening process of neocolonialism. It is aftermath of postcolonialism and usually called as 'late capitalism' in which multinational corporations indirectly control financial factors of the world. The countries are kept on battling by creating tension between the two. It results into slow-down of economy of both the countries. The diplomatic efforts are made by developed countries to engage underdeveloped countries into fighting. Even, the attempts are made to resolve the issues.

Conclusion:

Human emotions and feeling were crushed in the process of partition on the basis of religion. Wilderness of human nature is visible during the partition period. Blackish side of humanity brings about discussion on different experiences such as slavery, repression, resistance, migration, racism, gender powers. These circumstances may repeat in the possibility of warlike situations. The tension on the ground of common territories nearby boundaries of two countries sparks frequently. Terrorism comes out of these ignited problems. The colonialism has effects even today. It is in new form with changed name as neocolonialism.

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Satire in Aubrey Menen's *Prevalence of Witches*

Dr. Balaji G. Natkare

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Department of English,
Sharadchandraji Pawar
College, Jejuri

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Address for correspondence:
Dr. Balaji G. Natkare
Department of English,
Sharadchandraji Pawar College, Jejuri

Abstract

The present paper endeavours to capture the various shades of satire employed by Aubrey Menen in his world acclaimed novel, 'Prevalence of Witches' (1947). Menen uses satire as a powerful weapon to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society by using humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. He intends to reform society by criticizing the follies and foibles practised by its members. As a writer in a satire, he uses fictional characters which stand for real people and help expose and condemn the moral degradation, taboo customs, out-dated primitive beliefs, religious atrocities, lack of education, lack of health facilities and lack of innovative and scientific attitude. To fulfil his purpose, Menen resourcefully uses the method of satire in the novels, 'Prevalence of Witches', which is selected for the present paper. The novel 'Prevalence of Witches' (1947) at one hand, satires on a rural primitive milieu of Indian society and on the other hand, severely criticizes the modern culture which the colonial authorities attempt to establish.

Introduction

Aubrey Menen's *The Prevalence of Witches* (1947) is set in an imaginary region called 'Limbo' which according to the narrator is a region within the British rule in India. Menen, being a prominent satirist, in the novel, *The Prevalence of Witches*, explores into the realm of a pastoral primordial group of Indian people and satirizes the colonial attitude the authorities of British Raj enterprises to assimilate among the Indian Heathen. Menen describes the discernment of the colonial administrators towards bringing education, medicine, religion and human values to reform the ignorant inhabitants of Limbo. The novel reveals atrocities in the region that comprises of a thick jungle and hills that are clumsy in nature. The unknown narrator narrates the various aspects of the inhabitants of Limbo. The narrator projects them as a single backward class of people without the understanding of modern education who do not wish to be familiar with the modern things from the scientific viewpoint. In addition, they consider everything that happens in their region as an impact of witchcraft and devilry.

At the outset of the novel, *The Prevalence of Witches*, the Officer of Education who is the unknown first-person narrator of all the incidents and experiences depicted in this novel, opens his cannon against the bad practices of the inhabitants of the world in general and the inhabitants of Limbo in particular. Menen describes through the first-hand experience of the narrator that Limbo is an imaginary region comprising six hundred and fifty miles of clumsy hills and jungle and populated by singularly backward people who have no understanding of modern education and science, on the contrary, they believe in the things like witchcraft and devilry. With all these strange and primitive facets of Indian culture and belief, the narrator, an unnamed Education Officer reveals that "*Once a year one Englishman visits Limbo, surrounded by clouds of insecticide through which can just be discovered the Union Jack. During this visit, Limbo is a part of the British Empire in India."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:6). Menen describes the visit of the Englishmen in a derogative manner. Because of the phrase *'once a year'* proficiently exposes the negligence of the British Empire and its administration towards the Indian heathen who gravely need extra efforts to make them aware about the benefits of the science.

They also need a help to eradicate their primitive beliefs that restrain them from adopting the help from scientifically advanced countries. To substantiate this dilapidated situation of the village Limbo, the Education Officer narrates his interaction happened in the village ceremony with the man sitting next to him. The situation is when the Education Officer was offered a chair marked *'Miss Thelma Macey'*, he says, *"I hope Miss Thelma Macey will not turn up at the last moment"* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:10). The man sitting next to the narrator in the durbar introduces himself as an American missionary named Mr Small. In response to Miss. Thelma Macey's name, the conversation begins between the narrator and Mr Small on the major issue of the witches that prevailed in the village Limbo and that has been discussed in this novel as a core issue. The narrator asks a question *"Was Miss Macey a Witch?"* and Mr Small maintains *"She said she was."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:10).

This question and answer authenticate that the village Limbo, despite the British Rule, maintains its taboo customs and also have deep faith in the inviolable practices which are dangerous to the humanity and stirs us to compare Limbodians with the animals. Highlighting this grave issue, Menen not only comments on the Indian primitive people bit also raises questions about the actions and intentions of the British Government and Christian Missionaries which claim as social reformers.

Menen hammers on the British Government and Christian Missionaries aptly because of Mr Small, being a Christian Missionary, mutely propagates the belief of the villagers about the witches and also gives consent for their assumption that *'Miss Thelma Macey'* was a witch. Actually, Christian Missionaries expected to make schools the spiritual and religious centres. Through education, they expected to eradicate the practices and behaviours of natives like belief in witches, idol worship, polytheism, bigotry, polygamy and many superstitions which were considered by them to be much uncivilized. Christian Missionaries' ultimate aim was to proselytize the native population and prove the falsehood of the native religions. Regular Bible lessons were supposed to become the norm in the schools of Christian missionaries whereas the reality at the ground level for Christian Educational missionaries in India turned out to be otherwise. Keeping all these aspects in the mind, Menen brings out shortfalls of the government during the colonial period which was the only source of the enlightenment. However, all these efforts are made but not with the requisite facilities and sincerities.

Further, Menen exposes Mr Small through the interaction continued with the narrator as *'Just ask. Say to any village headman "I want to see a witch."…they'll put up any old witch so as not to disappoint you. Maybe just a witch-trainee'* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:10). Mr Small substantiates the fact of the prevalence of witches in the village, Limbo. But Menen wants to exhibit that fact that the prevalence of witches is explicitly connected to the lack of health facilities and educational facilities. Menen satires on the traditional practices and beliefs about the witches and implicitly comments on as he describes that commonly a 'witch' is very likely to be a woman suffering from psychological ailments, which cause her to behave abnormally. While a young woman is likely to be labelled a witch if she is too smart, playful or attractive, an elderly woman suffering from, say, epilepsy or dementia is also an easy target. It used to happen in Indian when families do not want to undertake the medical expenses of an aged, ailing relative, etc they throw her out. It became easier to drive her out of her home and property if the family members get social recognition for the act by branding her a witch.

The branding of *'Miss Thelma Macey'* as a witch is a best example which authenticates this fact because it is found that Miss Thelma Macey, out her goodwill for the Limbodian, worked hard and raised fund to build a church in Limbo, however, the Limbodian deceived her by building a church on *witches' gravestone*. When one day Thelma came to know this fact, she swore a lot and demanded the money back spent on the church from the Limbodian. She threatened them to spell if they fail to return the amount because she pretended that *"she had had a long talk with the dead witch, who had thanked her for raising the money to build her a shrine. In return, the dead woman had passed on to Thelma all her powers of evil."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:22).

The victimization and harassment of women who are deprived or poor are seen frequently in the novel. Menen too nakedly presents the facts and raises pity and fear among the readers of the novel. When the conversation between Mr Small and the narrator continues, the narrator gets information about a witch. He learns that the entire village believes in witchcraft. As their conversation proceeds on, Mr Small provides information about a witch called 'Gangabai' who died two years ago and arrives at the village during the wet season. Mr Small told to the narrator that once he had asked the village chieftain to show a witch for which the chief had brought with him a lady and she pronounced spells and chants which the chief said were witch spells. However, with a few clarifications, Mr Small came to know that she was not a witch. In a private conversation between the lady and Mr Small revealed that the villager's belief about the prevalence of witches made them set up this lady as a witch because she was a friend of *'Gangabai'.* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:13). This victimizing and torturing phenomenon is revealed through Mr Small's narration of the incident when one day, he got disturbed at midnight by the wailing and crying of a lady somewhere near his house, he went there and found that *"the witch hanging by her heels from a tree branch and two villagers beating her with bamboo sticks."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:13). This incident helped expose the indigenous nature of the primitive societies in India in general that had still existed during the British Raj. Menen, being an acquisitively read critic on Indian society, culture and history, comments on how the women were treated as a subordinate creature and how the inequality in gender relations was maintained strictly. Exposing this unbearable naked truth, Menen wants to pronounce that *'the hanging of witches by their heels from a tree branch and beating them with bamboo sticks'* is a condemned act and has to be ceased and has to be eradicated by bringing women into an integrated mainstream society. By exposing this long prevailed fact of witches, Menen determines if there is any correlation between the growth of unequal gender relations and the widespread belief and practice of condemnation of women witches, particularly among the primitive Indian. Through discussion of myths, legends and witch songs, Menen endeavours to see the reformation in the belief of the indigenous peoples of India. It also proves that the belief in witches and the targeting of women as witches are only the external manifestations of a deep-rooted gender struggle.

Menen deploys satire to expose the imperialistic notion of the British Government that was once in India practised. The British settlements in India were ruled by the British Governor-in-Council. These governors enjoyed a rich and

luxurious lifestyle that can be compared with the aristocratic lifestyle of the Victorian Society in London. Consequently, the upper-class culture also infiltrated among the British authorities and its officers working in India. The officers of the newly formed Indian Civil Services have educated men of taste and most of them were British residents; especially male with no English wives to tie them down, these Englishmen were fond of attending parties which featured food, drink, opium and fun with dancing girls who usually doubled as prostitutes. It was customary for unmarried British men to keep an Indian mistress-housekeeper who would also raise their children. Menen substantiates this fact with the assertion of British Administrator, Catullus as he states that *"Nobody realizes that the frontier Englishmen is a petty bourgeois. Do you know that Limbo has got no hospitals, no proper schools, no clinics, no telephone, no post-office, and no shops? But it has got a club and a tennis court and a silver tournament cup which was last competed for ten years ago when two Englishmen and their wives and families were sent here as a punishment for some minor wickedness in the Civil Service."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:26). This detailed elaboration of Catullus exposes how the British Government was lackadaisical about the basic facilities for the Limbodian and on the contrary, how benevolent was for the Englishmen. It shows that the English rule does not provide enough benefits to the local inhabitants of Limbo such as building schools, clinics, telephone facilities, shops or post-office. Rather, the administrator states that a golf club and a tennis court were established ten years ago and even had a competition for a silver tournament cup. The place served as a tourist spot for Englishmen and their families who were sent for serving a punishment on the grounds of civil service wickedness. However, it was also stated satirically that the Englishmen served the punishment indeed when one of the daughters died of malaria which brought an end to the competition. However, it was humorous to note that when the measures for anti-malaria were asked by the British government, one of the officers serving the punishment stated that "*...area surrounding the village may best be described as being the suitable terrain for an eighteen-hole golf course."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:26).

Menen does not spare exposing the British Government for their greedy attitude. History reveals that the primary purpose of the British Government was to make money from their colonies across the world, so they developed a system of taxation in India too. The taxation system, in the English legal tradition, was widely appreciated, and consequently, was governed by the clear and stable laws. It helped them to protect property rights in their colonies, therefore, the British Government efficiently emphasized stable and predictable taxation levels, fixed in writing. Menen, through Catullus' speech explicitly reveals the dominance that an imperialistic government lays on the inhabitants of Limbo rather than providing them with the better facilities. This ugly nature of the British Government is exposed by the example wherein a treaty is made with the village chieftains by the British administration in which the land is given to the villagers but the government secures the right to acquire teak wood for them. This unhealthy practice is mentioned by Catullus, the British administrator when he says to the narrator, *"You see, the land belongs to the chiefs, but the trees, being teak and worth a good deal of money, belong to the Administration. That's me. I often wonder what sort of meanly wicked men made these treaties for England with their quibbles and tricks."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:27). This instance reveals that Rather than adapt to the Indian system of adjudicating disputes between various local groups, the British ditched the practices of local governance, in which issues of taxation, business, and justice were often seen as negotiations, in favour of an increased emphasis on written laws. British rule was not contextualized in the same manner as Mughal, Maratha, or Mysorean rule. It was, instead, overly distant, under the guise of impartiality, and not easily adaptable to particular situations. This benefited the few who could adapt to or understand British legal principles: namely Europeans in India, and some well-connected Indians. Everyone else had to make do with an alien system. This money making phenomena of the British Government is authenticated in a statement, Catullus who admits the British Government as a plain robber of people's wealth in Limbo. Catullus admits in as he says, *"Come for a walk and see the chiefs sitting under the trees and counting out their money and everybody going to spend it at the Government pub and putting it back in our pockets."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:27). The British Raj in India does not completely terrorize the indigenous population with an army of soldiers but were religiously inflicting dominance. In this regard, Menen discerns from the voice of Catullus that fuddling the Indians with religion and words is the only way to manage them. In this context, he quotes *"First, we sent the missionaries to make the grammar and translations of the Bible; then we sent the civil servants to use the grammars to write out treaties. The Americans got the Red Indians drunk on gin; we got our Indians fuddled with words."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:28).

Menen, in another instance, substantiates this fact of the negligence of British Government when Catullus, seeing the headman's sick boy, expresses his utter dislike about the present progress of India made by the British Government. He says that *"But we haven't got a hospital. For sixty years we've been chuckling busily over our bargain as we cut down their trees, and we've had no time to build one. Let the boy go back to his village. The witch-doctor will throw rice in a winnowing fan, and tell his father the name of the evil persons who are bringing about his son's death; that is if he can pronounce their English names."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:32). Through Catullus' speech, Menen exposes greedy and selfish nature of the British Government regarding India. To demonstrate this fact, Menen mentions that the basic facilities such as hospitals and schools were still to be made available. Simultaneously, he also comments on the superstitious practices that the Indian follow. Catullus mentions the way of treating sick people; he says that *the witch-doctor will throw rice in a winnowing fan* and will tell the cause of sickness. This Catullus' remark raises questions about Indian culture too because the witch and the treating way of witch-doctor are found to be deep rooted in Indian culture and till date, it is being continued with tragic consequences. Catullus too fears that the witch-doctor by mentioning some names of the evil may let him die. He also feels that *the witch-doctor* cannot treat and cure that

boy. Therefore, this incident lets us think about the village Limbo's situation where the weak and deprived women are considered as witches, is regarded as one who brings misfortune and thus to protect the society those women are hanged, beaten and also killed as is *Gangabai* is drowned till her death. Later on, women are held responsible for all the calamities let it be famine, flood, and epidemic diseases which caused the death of livestock. And the only solution of coming out from this dismay is by killing them who are responsible for it. Further, it is seen that incidents which are not answered are thought to be the act of women who are having supernatural power and gradually this concept is deeply rooted in the society.

The beliefs of the people are too rooted in the powers of the witches that they cannot dare to challenge them. It is reflected in the example wherein Catullus interrogates the headman about the death of Gangabai and the headman says, *"'you cannot ask witches questions as you would ask your own wife…'* He further says, *'Did you cast a spell to make my son sick?' she will not answer unless you hang her upside down."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:42). Menen, with the above quotes, wants to hammer on the Indian primitive culture and its beliefs. At one hand, in India, the women are treated as a symbol of society, family, caste and all other diverse divisions and respect them in the name of Goddesses. On the other hand, the society like Limbodian torture, harass and kill women considering them witch. This practice of harassing and killing is not new to Indian society rather it has its deep roots in history. Generally in India during the British Raj, when the witch was discussed, people thought of only ugly women with a broom who can fly, who can disappear and bring sickness and sorrow to the community. Similarly here in *The Prevalence of Witches,* the witch is the woman who possesses supernatural powers and is indulged in evil practices as the headman says, *"…Gangabai made my son sick she began to be very bad, and gave us all a great deal of trouble."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:45). It is believed that the witch is associated with negative energy and for her betterment and for enhancing her power she kills innocent members of society. Therefore, killing witches, as *Gangabai* is killed, is considered a good act in order to protect the society from being harmed by her. Under the name of the killing of the witch, people kill and rape innocent women as reflected in the acts of Limbodian narrated by the headman as follows *"She made no sign, so dipped her again. We dipped her several times, and then the strong men got tired and left her head quite a while; they were men out of breath with holding her, because she was a heavy witch. ….She had become heavy because she had so much wickedness in her. Then she decided to die."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:46).

Menen opens his cannon against the Indian heathens too. It is seen in the instance when the bewitched dog was chased and killed by the villagers, it was thrown into the pool, the water of which was used as a drinking water by the villagers. The headman says to Catullus, *"I ran up and told them not to put the dead dog in the pool, but as I was talking one man gave the body a push with his stick and it fell in the pool and sank. They said that was that was the end of the witch."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:49). If you compare the act of the villagers with the scientist's opinion, a large number of diseases in India are attributed to drinking of dirt mixed water. However, here the villagers have mixed the dead body of the dog; ultimately it turned to be a source of various diseases such as cholera, patches, fever, viral fever, jaundice, etc that spread through polluted water. Menen exposes the ignorance of the people that the water can be polluted if the dead body of any animal is thrown into the pool. As a result of the ignorant act of the villagers, the water of the pool became contaminated with the various types of bacteria. When the polluted water was consumed by the villagers it caused the death of many them.

It is evidential in the speech of the headman as he says, *"I told them that I knew that the pool was bewitched and that the woman was not dead, and the dog was not dead, all the evil had gone into the pool. But they did not listen to me and could not be bothered to go to the spring in the hill. So many of them died and fell sick because they drank water from the pool..."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:49). It authenticates the negligence of the British Government and the ignorance of the Indian people in the subject that the waterborne diseases are infectious which can spread primarily from polluted water. The deadly diseases such as hepatitis, cholera, dysentery and typhoid are the common waterborne diseases, which affect the majority of people.

As the interrogation between administrative office, Catullus and the village chief moves on, the fact about the death of Gangabai and throwing a dead dog into the pool that consequently brought death to many people of the village is revealed. Apparently, the story seems to be easy to interpret but at the deep level, it triggers a different meaning that the British officers find difficult. It evidential in the speech when Catullus asks, *"Bay, I want to know what you think about witches. There is a man in the goal here for what appears to be murder. But he denies all responsibility and puts it down to evil women. What do you think?"* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:49). Catullus' this response shows that his perspective about the incident has totally perplexed because the village headman believes that the witch named 'Gangabai' was an evil for the society and by thus killing her he has done a good action for the betterment of the society and this very aspect makes Catullus think about it seriously. On another hand, the serious subject of murder is deliberately presented with a flavour of humour. Because murder is considered a sin, however, Menen, through the humorous voice of the village headman, recounts the incident with the high degree of humour. The humour continues when the conversation ends up with entangled discussions and frustration between the parties. Menen satirically leads the readers to understand the feelings of both Catullus and the Chieftain. Though the thoughts of Catullus were kept as a secret, readers may arrive at an image of what it would be. The Chieftain was shown as a conscious man who sits with the British Administrator to tell the entire story wherein he claims that these overdressed English men may not

understand them properly and hence, he attempts to prophesize the reactions of Catullus thereby speaking to them with clear terms.

Menen, being conscious about the place of education in the process of Indian social reformation, exposes the inactiveness of Indian people along with hammering on the dilapidated education system made available by the British Government. Menen wants to show how the education, being the backbone of the betterment of human life, was neglected by both teachers and learners. The Officer of Education seems to be helpless though he wants to provide the better education for all the people regardless of the caste and class. He knew that once the people are educated; they would look after themselves for their safety, cleanliness, health and more things without any outside help and support. The Officer of Education also believes that progress of heathen is possible only with education and therefore, he visits the school and inspects the situation by interrogating the villagers. He learns about the dilapidated situation of the school and the laziness of the school teacher from the villagers and therefore, he decides to replace the existing teacher. However, a young man from the village replies, *"But she knows she is a lazy woman and she does not make trouble when we do not send our children to school. The next woman will make a great noise and we shall have to argue a great deal with her and maybe hit her a little."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:74). The reply of the young man authenticates that the people too were reluctant to adopt the new lifestyle by sacrificing their existing one. It also validates the fact that the villagers can go to any extent if they are pressed in this matter. They also exhibit their utter ignorance in the matter of education. However, the Officer of Education doesn't become hopeless, in addition, he visualizes the luxurious life for them if they learn to read and write but the villagers say, *"We have got nothing to read."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:75). Menen, through this response of the villager, criticizes explicitly upon the education policies of the British Government. It also makes think, if the basic things like books are not available then what may be the situation of the other facilities.

To overcome this negligence and reluctance of villagers towards the school, the Officer of Education tempts them with a scheme. He assures them as *"I want you to give me your children to take away and I will them free food, I will give them free clothes, and I will give them the free house."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:76). This temptation helps encourage the villagers to send their children to school. This temptation was for the people belonging to encourage disadvantaged sections to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities. Satirically, it also reveals the preference of the villagers is for the food, clothes and house and not for the education.

As already stated in the beginning of this chapter, most of the major characters in the novel are talkative and Menen, through their long talks exposes the various aspects of the British Government and progressive views. They seem to be talking continuously about various issues such health, politics, religion, society, taboo customs, orthodox beliefs, and many more. When Catullus, the Officer of Education and Bay were talking on education, Bay expressed his sarcastic view on the current education system and its progress. Bay says, *"Modern educational theories are no more than timorous adoptions of the same bold idea. The most advanced teacher of the most advanced school believes nothing more profound than that the best way of teaching a boy is to leave him to his own devices."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:82). Bay's expression about the situation of modern education puts finger on the two fundamental principles of education *i.e. justice and liberty*, which cover a very great deal of the social reconstruction required, will not give much guidance as regards education. In this novel, when the Officer of Education tries to conduct a village school without infringing liberty; the children all talked to each other, in the absence of the teacher they slept in the class. However, though Bay's view raises questions about the sustainability and credibility of the modern education policy explicitly, it also implicitly justifies that the authority is unavoidable, what is needed *is reverence*. A man who is to educate really well, who is to bring out of the young all that it is possible to bring out, who is to make them grow and develop into their full stature, must be filled through and through with the spirit of reverence. It is reverence that is lacking in the villagers.

Menen not only exposes the educational policies of the British Government but also the religious temperament of the educated people of India. As Catullus, the Officer of Education and Bay frequently come together and talk on various issues, at one juncture in the novel, Mr Justice Chandra Bose to joins in the conversation with them. Mr Bose says, *"I assure you, Mr Leavis, you need not worry. I am not orthodox Brahmin. In fact, I have given up Hinduism as an idle superstition…..I've given up all that Hindu nonsense years ago."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:94). Menen, through the sarcastic comment of the highly educated Mr Justice Chandra Bose, exposes the temperament towards the Hinduism and its superstitions. On the other hand, it is seen that detaching from Hinduism, Mr Bose strengthens the bond of adoration about Christianity. This example reveals that the Christian Missionaries have used the various tactics to convert Hindus to Christianity. To impress upon the local people like Mr Bose they imbibed the notion that there is only one God that is Jesus who is the saviour. On the contrary, they convince how Hinduism is a strange and fallacious to follow. Mr Bose's reaction about the Hinduism to shows us that missionary's education is nothing but a trap to convert the future generation of Hindus by inducting anger against the Hinduism as it is reflected in Mr Bose's above statement. Menen, exposing the indigenous nature of Christian Missionary, implicitly comments on such hideous activities of the Christian Missionary, and warns us falling prey to Christianity by sacrificing Hinduism. It also forces us to think over that Hinduism is not an organized religion and has no single, systematic approach to teaching its value system. Nor do Hindus have a simple set of rules to follow the Ten Commandments. Local,

regional, caste, and community-driven practices influence the interpretation and practice of beliefs throughout the Hindu world.

Keeping all the incidents about the witches happened in Limbo abreast, the plot of the novel moves on and proceeds further to give justice to the headsman. The headsman had already stated that the soul of the witch entered into the body of a dog which further performed atrocities to create havoc in the village. The dog which was assumed as the witch herself was killed and thrown into a pool where people of Limbo take water. With the death of each person involved in the murder of the witch, the headsman assumes that it was the witch who kills the companions of the headsman; further, a doctor also asserts that the headsman was wise since he does not take water from the same pond. It was a complete mockery as the headsman explains since he has been wise enough to prevent his family taking water from the same pond. Despite the ignorant act, the headman was held guilty by the British authorities for killing Gangabai. However, Catullus wants to give justice to the headman; therefore, he invites a bogus Swami to perform magic in Limbo. When Swami arrives at Limbo, Catullus ironically praises him as *"you are doing well, Swami. But you really needn't bother, because I've already explained to him that you are entirely bogus. I didn't want you wasting, your talents on officials. You have serious work to do."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:120). Menen satires on the Swamis and saints in Indian who easily deceives the ignorant people under the name of God and the miracle they perform. It is noted that there is always a great affinity between the well-heeled Indians and miracle-working gurus; many of them are self-proclaimed avatars of God. Therefore, Catullus seeks a help of bogus Swami to give justice the headman. According to the plan of Catullus, the local Swami reaps the financial rewards being a village's witch-doctor. He succeeds with an attempt of exorcising a young boy and the people consider it as a miracle. However, later it is discovered that those are the political plot of the villagers to free their chieftain. With a few series of rapid comic reversals, the novel devastates the barriers in the form of false securities of a cultural system or faith which adversely affects the lives of individuals. For instance, the Indian Judge in the novel named Mr Justice Bose is concerned with the creation of a legal treaty on the eccentric characteristics and beliefs adopted at 'Limbo', while the local Swami has a different perception; a voice appears within the madness of ethics for which he states the reason that "*Everywhere you turn you see it in people's eyes: 'What have we done? Where are we going? Why can't we stop it?' They are like a people bewitched."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:161). The philosophy of the Swami is summarized at the end of the novel by a strong justification of the truths of his hypocritical statement that *"people won't listen to the truth unless it has all the appearance of a thumping lie"* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:162).

Catullus knows the fact that the history of religion in India is abounding with saints and Swamis performing miracles. It is also true that India, being the land of sages, has an incomparable heritage of Swami's whose magical powers mesmerize effortlessly the common man. Menen, being the South-Indian, uses the device of an example of Swami to hypnotize the Limbodian by performing a range of miracles. As a result of those miracles, the inhabitants of Limbo come to Catullus and demand that *"There is a holy man with a white beard staying with you. We hear that he is so holy that he can cure the sick."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:142). It validates that assumption that the miracle plays a powerful role in the life Indian heathen. A miracle a power is a phenomenon which not fully explainable by known laws of nature. To the devout, the Swami's miracle gives a personal mystical experience and it's taken as a sign of the Swami's Godliness, compassion and divinity. However, the dominant view among sceptics is that miracles are predominantly tricks of magic and illusion. This fascinating power of Swami is commented by the Officer of Education when Swami was leaving Limbo. He says, *"What would you say to the illusionist, Swami, who would not let his wife play the part of the woman on the grounds that he preferred her in one piece? They tell me that you can eat glass: what would you think of a man who asked, before he ate it, whether the tumbler was, took a pill or two after his performance because he found Bohemian glass deficient in the vitamin?"* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:169). Menen mentioning Swami's eating of glass and performing the miracle intends to expose the fraudulent Swamis and gurus. It is seen that superstition and obscurantism were deep-rooted in Limbodian. The people too had a strong belief in the tricks of such Swamis. It is reflected in the incident when Swami was leaving Limbo, Mr Chandra Bose informs that *"There are at least three hundred people waiting for him down by the big tree. It's so-called miracle, of course. Mr Leavis, you are quite right, quite right, these people's faith is the very real thing,"* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:170). This instance authenticates the fact that the miracle is an in operational from the beginning of human race. From the strength of the strong and weak forces its stand in awe of the possibilities which seems to be beyond the comprehension of the common man and therefore, it attracts their attention.

Towards the conclusion of the novel, the Officer of Education reveals that the plan of rescuing the headman from being punished for the act of murder of the witch, Gangabai has not worked as they expected. The narrator says, *"I explained it all to Mr Bose. About arranging the miracle to impress him and all that. So eccentric and charming, I thought it. But Mr Bose isn't an Englishman, of course, and everything but the eighteenth century. He seemed quite annoyed. He talked about defeating the ends of justice. I can never understand lawyers. Can you, Mr Leavis? As I tried to explain to him, you weren't defeating the ends of justice at all."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:201). This expression of the Officer of Education clears that the attempts made by the Administrative Officer to convince Justice Chandra Bose have gone vain. It also reveals the difference between the Indian judges and the English judges. We find here a clear distinction between the ideology of British gentlemen and the Indian gentleman. It is further made clear the fate of headman through the narrator as he says, *"He'll probably get ten years, Mr Bose thinks. Or be locked up as a lunatic."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:202). However, these Englishmen come with a new plan to rescue him

from being punished for the cause which he did ignorantly. It is evidential in the statement of Catullus when he assures that: *"tell Bay I'm going to visit the man in goal and slip him the key to his cell. I hope he's got the sense to use it in the night."* (Classic Aubrey Menen, P:203). Thus, finally after a lot of efforts and discussion, the headman is freed from the cell. Whether this act of helping unlawfully is wrong or correct but our conscience thinks that the headman got justice.

Conclusion

Menen's '*The Prevalence of Witches'* introduces a new kind of delight to the readers with a unique gift of satire, which is gentle barbed wit with little malicious and poking fun in an acceptable manner. It does not harm any class. Therefore, it is widely recognized as best work of satire in the critical world. Being a humorous satire, its actions and incidents take place in a remote, uncivilized segment of India called Limbo. Menen clearly displays the multiple ideologies of different religions while combining several characters such as Catullus (British Officer), Cuff Small (American misguided missionary who has converted only one person over the years being a missionary), the local village chieftain and an unnamed narrator who serves as the education officer in the tale. When a Limbodian kills a witch, he cannot understand why he is accused of murder since he did well in ridding the community of evil. Bay sends for his friend, a fake swami, to perform a miracle which will convince the judge that the killer had only acted in agreement with Limbodian religious principles, and all ends happily. Menen, thus, with detailed critique exposes and conveys a denunciation of Western civilization.

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