# International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)

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# FOREWORD

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We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our authors for their dedication and contributions, our reviewers for their insightful feedback, and our readers for their continued support. As we strive to expand the horizons of knowledge, we invite you to engage with the content of this issue and participate in the ongoing dialogue that shapes our understanding of literature and social sciences.

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# Science and Romance: Philology's Marginalization under the Trend of Structural Linguistics in the 20th Century—The Case of J. R. R. Tolkien

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*Abstract— J. R. R. Tolkien, the author of The Lord of the Rings, made his unique concept of language as the cornerstone of his academic thought and literary creation. He created an immortal epic legend, brought readers a sense of reality and created an awesome mythological system for Britain. However, he was often criticized for his lack of academic contributions. Combining the development and reasons of linguistics in the 20th century, this paper discusses Tolkien's linguistic aesthetics, making a brief analysis of their academic significance, and demonstrates Tolkien's efforts to save philology under the backdrop of structuralism.*

*Keywords— J. R. R. Tolkien; linguistic aesthetics; historical and comparative linguistics; philology; structural linguistics*

## I. INTRODUCTION

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892 – 1973), a professor of philology at University of Leeds and Oxford University successively, mainly researched and taught English and Germanic philology, including the history of English, Old and Middle English philology, introductory Germanic philology and so on (Tolkien, 2013). As a world-famous fantasy literature writer, people know Tolkien mostly because of his *The Lord of the Rings* (1954 – 1955) which was consistently voted as one of the greatest books of the 20th century by the English-reading world. However, because of the dual identity as philology and author, Tolkien was adamant that science and roman were compatible. Precisely because of this, after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien was censured for using too much linguistic knowledge by the mainstream literary field, and was criticized for paying too much attention to the literariness of language by mainstream linguistics school.

Due to the late introduction of Western linguistics into China, Chinese scholars accept modern linguistics as a thoroughly scientific discipline which is based on the theory of Saussure and Chomsky. As for comparative linguistics or philology, which developed before structuralist linguistics in modern times, foreign linguistics textbooks in China almost unanimously agree that structuralist theory pioneered modern linguistics, so the attention on philology in China is not high enough. Hence, Tolkien studies in China are mainly in literature and Chinese translation. As for Tolkien's linguistic ideas and academic career in the trend of structural linguistics in the 20th century, there is not even too much attention in China. Except for those who are interested in his dedicated usage of language, J. R. R. Tolkien is an almost unknown linguist to most Chinese probably.

## II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LINGUISTICS IN THE 20TH CENTURY: FROM PHILOLOGY TO STRUCTURALISM

Philology is the study of the history of language. When the emphasis is on the comparison of the historical states of different languages, it is also called comparative philology or comparative linguistics. In the 19th century, comparative

and historical linguistics occupied a dominant position in Western linguistic schools together. The previous relative research of philology can be traced back to the comparison between European languages and non-European languages in the late 18th century and the early 19th century. The preliminary task of philologists includes recovering and establishing the documents themselves, determining the orthography, grammar, and lexicon of their language, and reconstructing their history and context, then interpreting the texts and the entire culture that underlies them (Aronoff, 2002).

In 1786, William Jones (1746 - 1794) found the historical kinship among Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and Germanic, which thereout began the study of modern linguistics and marked a new era in linguistic history. In the 19th century, German scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767 - 1835) pointed out that language is a creative ability in the human brain, pushing the speaker to create unlimited linguistic performances with limited linguistic means (Liu Runqing, 1995). In addition, Humboldt also proposed sound symbolism, a form of linguistic iconicity mentioned the resemblance between sound and meaning. Based on the influence of Germany in humanities, language education in Britain also accepted the achievements from Germany; being a student at Oxford University in the early 20th century, Tolkien was no exception to inherited German philology and was influenced by Humboldt. In the late 19th century, Neogrammarians emerged at the University of Leipzig in Germany. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913) 's linguistic ideas were greatly influenced by W. D. Whitney (1827 – 1894) who conducted linguistic study basically in the tradition of Neogrammarians. Hence, there is no doubt that the rise and prosperity of philology created advantages for the subsequent emergence and development of structuralism and descriptive linguistics in the 20th century (Liu, 1995).

However, the First World War saw a fundamental change in the methods and contents of modern language study in Britain. Take Cambridge University, for example. Philology was a compulsory aspect of the Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos（the final honours examination for a degree of Bachelor of Arts at Cambridge University）in 1884, by 1917 it had been reduced to be an optional part (Derer, 2022). The continual wars in Europe produced the following three factors that led to the reform of linguistics in Britain.

First, the role of philology receded due to anti-German sentiment. The study of historical and comparative linguistics according to a "German model" made some argue that Cambridge University proposed Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos would be "unpatriotic" (Derer, 2022).

Second, the change of Britain's role in global politics asked for the adjustment of the Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos in the educational field. After the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, "the Empire on which the Sun never sets" faced the inevitable sunset. The ongoing war engendered the British a profound re-assessment of their international status and cosmopolitan connectedness. As matters of national security, it is essential for the British to adjust to the Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos because of their necessity to learn more about foreign peoples, cultures and histories. These insights then allowed for a new sort of modern education to emerge which perceived philology was an impediment to the aim of modern language study (Derer, 2022).

Third, mechanized warfare warned people about the importance of scientization, industrialization and mechanization. This can also be considered as one of the reasons that linguistic research changed from literariness to rational science. Also, there were some voices complaining that the educated British did not do a good performance on the battlefield.

Therefore, as the Western entered the mid-20th century, the golden time of philology, or comparative and historical linguistics, gone with the increasing emphasis on structural linguistics. Saussure indicated that philology did not establish real scientific research for linguistics because it did not specify the nature of its research object (Liu Runqing, 1995). Other criticism of philologists also indicated that they had a strong attachment to the written language, thus they failed to draw a clear distinction between literature and linguistics. Furthermore, in the late 20th century, A. N. Chomsky (1928 - )'s Transformational-Generative Grammar further reinforced Saussure's theory, which made linguistics completely scientific.

### III.    J. R. R. TOLKIEN: A PHILOLOGICAL DEFENDER IN THE STRUCTURALIST TREND

J. R. R. Tolkien made up imaginary languages since he could write, then explored his own linguistic aesthetic in language-composition since his undergraduate period and never stopped in his remaining years. From his linguistic perspective, science and romance are not two divergent interests, even two opposite poles, but integrally related. Hence, more than once he explained himself as a professional philologist by nature and trade, or more prone to an old-fashioned one, who was primarily interested in linguistic aesthetics rather than the functional language. Based on etymology, sound symbolism and ancient semantic unity, Tolkien showed great passion for linguistic

aesthetics. He often used the term linguistic aesthetics to refer to the fickleness of the relationship between sounds and words, as well as to lexical meaning and people's emotional response to them. By creating a variety of constructed languages, Tolkien explored the abstract and complex issue of language aesthetics, especially the interrelationship between the sounds and meanings of words.

For Tolkien, names, stories and languages supplement each other. Words based on linguistic theories can serve as the foundation of stories that embody linguistic aesthetics, thus promoting the spread of a language. Tolkien found that Greek mythology depends far more on the marvellous aesthetic of its language and so of its nomenclature of persons and places, rather than the story content; by contrast, Esperanto is not widely spoken because of lack of its own legends. What is more, the mythology of the ancient Britons was never written down; and most of the tales of the Anglo-Saxons were lost with the Norman Conquest, even *Beowulf* despite being written in Old English. Out of anxiety about the spread of English, Tolkien began writing stories to comprise a "mythology for England" during World War I. He focused on the original and reborn old English vocabulary as a foundation and connection for a grand and complete mythological world. For instance, Ent, Orc, Hobbits, etc., all come from old English. Therefore, it is obvious to find that the main inspiration behind the creation of Middle Earth, including its history, geography and people, had always been a linguistic one.

Tolkien's idea on vocabulary was also influenced and supported by Owen Barfield (1898 – 1997)'s theory of ancient semantic unity. "Ancient semantic unity" is the core substance of Owen Barfield's linguistic philosophy work *Poetic Diction* (1928), referring that languages are derivatives from an ancient unity in which reality, words, and meaning were one but the same thing. Ancient or primitive people did not distinguish among these three realms because they experience a profound participation in reality as meaning or vice versa (Maddalena, 2012). However, with the developing anthropic consciousness about surrounding phenomena, the fragmentation of vocabulary then leads to further perceptual fragmentation; circularly, more and more new words are produced. Hence, vocabulary are indices and instruments of anthropic developing consciousness (Flieger, 2002). When it comes to vocabulary, Tolkien's conlangs also obey the rule of one-to-one correspondence among phonology, words and semantics, which can be supported by his "phonetic fitness" or Humboldt's sound symbolism. Based on the preferences in the individual for certain phonetic elements or combinations, phonetic fitness is naturally most evident in private invented languages, since it is one of their main

objects, recognized or unconscious, to give effect to these likings. An old-fashioned philologist like Tolkien will be aware of "possible kinship" (Tolkien, 2013) both in the word's phonology and sense, then point out the etymological history, and settle down the changeable semantics.

One consequence of Barfield's ancient semantic unity is to formulate the historical linguistic part of a theory of creativity (Flieger, 2002), which can extend to Tolkien's passion for constructed language. An example can be shown in Elvish, a kind of constructed language belonging to the Elves in Tolkien's fantastic literature works. Based on Tolkien's linguistic taste, Elvish has two nearly completed branches, Quenya and Sindarin, and both two conlangs are deduced scientifically from a common origin with history and forms. Out of these languages are made nearly all the names of certain characters, which brings a cohesion, a consistency of linguistic style, and an illusion of historicity in Tolkien's legends (Tolkien, 2013). In short, Tolkien thought vocabulary, or name, comes first, being the root of the story or legend; then the legends will hold the vitality of languages. Also, Tolkien showed his comprehensive agreement with Barfield's theory in *The Hobbit*'s Chapter 12 with a philological remark: "To say that Bilbo's breath was taken away is no description at all. There are no words left to express his staggerment[sic], since Men changed the language that they learned of elves in the days when all the world was wonderful." (Tolkien, 1937), reflecting linguistic philosophy which includes semantic unity and historical linguistic creativity in a mythological way.

When Tolkien retired from Oxford University in 1959, Saussure and Chomsky's theory was on the rise in Western linguistic schools. Over time, language has become more and more symbolic with the effort of structuralists and generativists. Probably, there was nobody who could shake the status of Saussure and Chomsky. It is difficult for Tolkien to reduce his passion for philology, change his research method and accept the theory that language is a system of signs. For Tolkien, if language is regarded as signs, it has neither beauty nor vitality. Tolkien explored linguistic aesthetics by pointing out the relationship between phonetics of the words and the meanings in his constructed languages. In line with this metalinguistic ideal, Tolkien also seemed to regard language as being rooted in, and inseparable from, the environment in which it develops. In this he may be said to be following a current that began with the American linguists Benjamin Whorf (1897 - 1941) and Edward Sapir (1884 - 1939) who were linguistic anthropologists living with indigenous communities (Smith, 2007).

Indeed, Tolkien sometimes worried that his ideas on linguistic aesthetics and phono-semantics, which were

intimately tied up with his passion for inventing languages, would not be taken seriously and might even cause derision. In his *A Secret Vice* (Tolkien, 2016), a paper on his hobby of creating invented languages, he referred to his own essay as "this absurd paper", and among other pleas for understanding, entreated the reader to "be kindly". Elsewhere, in an exchange of letter with the publisher, Tolkien expressed his concern about constructed languages that not all people would feel this as important as he did, because he thought he was cursed by an acute sensibility in such matters. Further on he even said: "It is, I feel, only too likely that I am deluded, lost in a web of vain imaginings of not much value to others." He found it awkward to talk about these supposedly unconventional matters. His passion of philology was so immense that he was prepared to risk ridicule in order to communicate his enthusiasm to others (Smith, 2007).

## IV.    CONCLUSION

According to the search of phonetic symbolism and linguistic aesthetic, Tolkien found the era he lived praised highly an analytic and scientific mechanical research method brought by the industrialized involution. Furthermore, Tolkien noticed this method has a lot of disadvantages and the issues ignored by mainstream scholars. By analysing the relationship between sound, meaning and emotion, Tolkien revealed the effect of relationship between human and nature in language evolution process, and embodied the linguistic theory in his masterpieces. It is the usage of phonetic aesthetic that Tolkien implied the nature of various creatures in his mythological system.

Although Tolkien believed that science and romance could be considered together in the study of linguistics, and there are still some philologists who continue to work outside a structural linguistics frame, contemporary philologists are unable to contend with Saussure and Chomsky's structuralism. Due to the different views held by comparative linguistics and structural linguistics, the former favours literature and philosophy while the latter favours rational science.

Finally, philology, or comparative linguistics, was on the wane in the 20th century gradually, being replaced by structural linguistics. Tolkien transmitted his dream of language aesthetics through his fiction and his linguistic inventions. Although Tolkien was criticized by both literary and linguistic circles at the beginning of his work's publication, his masterpieces whip up a global phenomenon and bring an immeasurable value in the decades after.

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# The Cult of True Womanhood in Harriet Jacobs' Narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

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*Abstract— In a time where women were expected to abide all the rules that been put by men (the cult of true womanhood, a model was constructed by the white male patriarch), such model during the 19ᵗʰ century, it shaped and made women considerable. So, many women fought for their rights. Jacobs account challenges the cult of true womanhood qualities of purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness. Even though Incidents in the Life of a Slave girl is considered to be as an account of the brutalities and the atrocities that happened to slaves, especially women; however, the account reveals the opposite. It shows that such atrocities are in the favor of the slaves. These atrocities made the main character powerful and maintained her identity against all the odds. Also, because of the brutality that happened to her; it made her escape for her freedom. In this research paper, I will attempt to show how oppressing women lead them to agency and make them powerful by defying the patriarchal society they live in. Also, I will show how they challenge the cult of true womanhood, a term that was described by Barbara Welter in 1966 which consisted of four ideals, namely, piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. According to Welter, "put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife—woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes" (152). These ideals were not just objectives to aim for; however, they are elements of womanhood. Being a true woman was a serious responsibility, it was planted in young girls' minds since their upbringing. I other words, I will show that none of the women mentioned in the narrative, white or black, have met the standards of the true cult of womanhood and how Jacobs' memoir is used as a tool for her to express her voice and feelings.*

*Keywords— Slavery, Feminism, Womanhood, Patriarchy, Ideals.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Slaves had a terrible life during the antebellum period of America. During the 19ᵗʰ century, black men and women were born into slavery. Both sexes were put into subjugation automatically. However, the treatment of both sexes was different, women were treated very differently from men; they were sexually abused, beaten, tortured, and they had to endure the inequality and the oppression. Women of the mid-nineteenth century found themselves in a position that society had changed for them. These changes gave chances to men to work outside their home and earn more money to be the supporters of their house. Also, these changes made women stay in their house and stick to their roles as women. In a time where women were expected to abide by all the rules that had been put by men (the cult of true womanhood, a model that was constructed by the white male patriarch), such model during the 19ᵗʰ century, shaped and made women considerable.

Some women believed in the model and some rebelled against it. Many women fought for their rights. Jacobs' account challenges the cult of true womanhood qualities of piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness. Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was written to show that none of the women included in the narrative meets the idealized image that was put by men in nineteenth century. By this ideal, women who helped Linda escape slavery are not true women in spite of them trying to be so. Jacobs also shows that it is impossible to

practice the four ideals altogether, there has to be at least one ideal missing. Even though *Incidents in the Life of a Slave girl* is an account of the brutalities and the atrocities that happened to slaves, especially women, the account reveals the opposite. It shows that such atrocities are in the favor of the slaves. These atrocities made the main character powerful and maintained her identity against all odds. Also, because of the brutality that happened to her; it made her escape for her freedom. In this research paper, I will attempt to use feminism to show how oppressing women will lead to agency and make them powerful by defying the patriarchal society they live in. Also, I will show how Jacob challenges the cult of true womanhood. In other words, I will show that none of the women mentioned in the narrative, white or black, have met the standards of the cult of true womanhood.

## II.    HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the 19th century, America was developing faster than it was imagined. The industrial revolution created so many jobs and opportunities for the American family. Laurie Bonventre's The Cult of True Womanhood: Women of the Mid-nineteenth Century and their Assigned Roles as Reflected in Contemporary Writing states that "For a country less than fifty years old, these swift changes brought instability and uncertainty. American society had to find balance and a center upon which to base itself" (7). In other words, many families had to leave the countryside and move to the city where new businesses of factories started to develop gradually. Since these factories produced the same things that families used to make in the countryside, families during the industrial revolution had to stop producing many things that they used to, such as food and clothes. Bonventre states that these jobs created "a new middle class" that "began to emerge consisting of lawyers, teachers, factory managers, doctors and other, along with their families, different from the middle class that had been prevalent during pre-industrial retimes" (9).

The emergence of middle class made men have the upper hand; they were considered to be the superiors, protectors, and the providers. Men during the industrial revolution were capable of earning more money than before to support their families. On the other hand, since women were considered to be inferiors (mentally and physically) and domestic, they were told to stop working and to stay home. Catherine J. Lavender in her Notes on the Cult of Domesticity and True Womanhood states that women's inferiority was based on many observations, such as, "women were generally physically smaller than men", "women had less physical stamina than men because they seemed to faint so much more", "women menstruated…It

was believed that menstruation could bring on temporary insanity in women", and " women were deemed more delicate and weak than men because the female nervous system was finer, more irritable, and more prone to overstimulation and fatigue than the male nervous system" (4). However, that did not seem to happen in the women's world of the lower middle class. These working women were either poor, African-American (slaves), or immigrants, says Bonventre. Unlike white women who could find jobs in the city, poor, slaves, and immigrants' women were not able to find jobs in the city. So, they had to stay in the countryside serving the ladies of the house. Bonentre states that "some women lived as domestic assistants to the ladies of the house for the years between their education and their marriage. These women were often seen as surrogate daughters and used the time spent in employment as a time of training for the lives they would lead after they married and obtained families of their own" (11). This image gave men the opportunity to be the superiors, protectors, and providers of their homes. With this image, a new ideal for women emerged that is called "the cult of true womanhood".

Moreover, this image was "presented by the women's magazines, gift annuals and religious literature of the nineteenth century" and woman "was the hostage in the home" (151), says Barbara Welter in an article called The Cult of true Womanhood: 1820-1860. During the 19th century, women were inferiors and victims of their society. They were limited to marriage and motherhood. Susan M. Cruea's Changing Ideals of Womanhood During the Nineteenth-Century Woman Movement states that marriage and motherhood "resulted in domestic dependency. While they could find jobs as shop girls or factory workers, women were discouraged from being wage earners by the belief that women who earned wages were 'unnatural.'" (187). So, "Women were forced, for a variety of reasons, to be dependent upon their husbands for financial support" (187).

Even though this ideal of the true womanhood was especially made for the upper and middle-class woman, lower class women could obtain this ideal. Only slaves could not be taken into consideration to obtain the ideal image of the true womanhood. Linda M. Perkins in her article, The Impact of the "Cult of True Womanhood" on the Education of Black Women, states that "since most blacks had been enslaved prior to the Civil War and the debate as to whether they were human beings was a popular topic, black women were not perceived as women in the same sense as women of the larger (i.e., white) society" (18). Bonventre also says,

It is important to note that, though this was encouraged as the ideal for all women, this was

only a realistic expectation for free middle and upper-class women. Enslaved women and women of the poorer classes were unable to follow the ideals of true womanhood as they were required by their social standing to toil outside of their homes. This was especially true for enslaved women who had no choice in the way that they lived their lives. Unfortunately, these women were not generally considered as being part of polite society and were overlooked as though they did not play a role in society (18).

Finally, Laurie Kaiser in her article, The Black Madonna: Notions of True Womanhood from Jacobs to Hurston, states that "this view of the ideal extend to black women, who insatiable sexual appetites. Many blacks felt they had to combat this notion" (98). However, according to Welter, "one thing at least remained the same—a true woman was a true woman, wherever she was found" (152).

## III.    LITEARATURE REVIEW

The cult of true womanhood is a term that was described by Barbara Welter in 1966. It consists of four ideals, namely, piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. According to Welter, "put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife—woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes" (152). These ideals were not just objectives to aim for; however, they are elements of womanhood. Being a true woman was a serious responsibility, it was planted in young girls' minds since their upbringing. They were taught to be obedient and chaste for their husbands. They were also taught the important skills of how to manage a house and raise kids. Any woman who pursues education was discouraged. Cruea states that "a True Woman was expected to fulfill herself in the 'instinctive' arts of child rearing, domestic pursuits, and spiritual comfort" (189). A woman was encouraged to raise her daughter to be pious, pure, submissive, and domestic, not to be an intellectual.  These ideals were sent to women through magazines, editorials, and speeches. If any man tries to mess with one of the ideals of true womanhood, "he was damned immediately as an enemy of God, of civilization and of the Republic. It was a fearful obligation, a solemn responsibility, which the nineteenth- century American woman had to uphold the pillars of the temple with her frail white hand" (152). Moreover, women who hold the four ideals are "promised with happiness and power" (152). Women (white) were judged based on their commitment to these four ideals.

Poor and black women were struggling to meet these ideals because they were considered as imperfect women.

One of the ideals that Welter discussed in her article is piety. Welter states that it "was the core of women's virtue, the source of her strength. Young men looking for a mate were cautioned to search first for piety, for if that were there, all else would follow. Religion belonged to woman by divine right, a gift of god and nature" (152). A true woman ushered her husband and kids in the issues of morality. Unlike men, immorality was something terrible for women. Just like irreligion "almost too awful to contemplate" (154). Women also were cautioned not to pursue intellectual education because it will take them away from religion and God. Welter gives an example about Margaret Fuller, an intellectual woman who pursued education and forgot about her religion and God. She (Welter) states that "the greater the intellectual force, the greater and more fatal the errors into which women fall who wander from the Rock of Salvation, Christ the Saviour...." (154). A woman being irreligious is considered to be a no woman because "irreligion is the most revolting feature in human character" (154). In other words, religion is the answer for the troubled mind and considered to be one of the most traits that women should obtain.

The second ideal is purity. Welter claims that purity "was as essential as piety to a young woman, its absence as un- natural and unfeminine. Without it she was, in fact, no woman at all, but a member of some lower order. A "fallen woman" was a "fallen angel," unworthy of the celestial company of her sex" (154). Purity is the greatest virtue that a woman can hold. Women were supposed to protect their virginity before getting married. If a woman was not pure or lost her virginity, Bonventre states that "she was inexorably led to madness or death" (22). Thus, women were encouraged to preserve their virtue. Unlike men, preserving their virtue was not a problem for them, because they could not help it. However, women must not give her virginity to any man except her husband. If a woman manages to resist any man's assaults, this means that she "demonstrated her superiority and her power over him" (156). Purity was not only concerned with preserving woman's virginity, woman's purity was questioned in any social change. For example, the development of the sense of fashion during the 19th century, if a woman wears shorter skirts, people would attack her virtue.

The third ideal is submissiveness. According to Welter, submissiveness "was perhaps the most feminine virtue expected of women. Men were supposed to be religious, although they rarely had time for it, and supposed to be pure, although it came awfully hard to

them, but men were the movers, the doers, the actors. Women were the passive, submissive responders" (158-159). In other words, men could never be submissive to their mothers or wives. Before marriage, women were supposed to be submissive to their fathers and brothers. After marriage, she was encouraged to be submissive to her husband's needs to find happiness. Moreover, they "were to be passive bystanders, submitting to fate, to duty, to God, and to men", says Lavender (3). Women were supposed to be weak and willingly submit to powerlessness of their lives. "Woman understood her position if she was the right kind of woman, a true woman. She feels herself weak and timid. She needs a protector" claims Welter, (159). Women also believed in working in silence, even if their husbands were abusive to them, women should "never retort" (161).

Finally, domesticity is considered to be the last of the ideals. It was believed that the woman's place is in her house. Welter states that "the true dignity and beauty of the female character seem to consist in a right understanding and faithful and cheerful performance of social and family duties" (162). Women's role was to keep the house comfortable and cheerful for their husbands and sons, so that they could relax when they come back from work. To put it in a different way, "women were expected to uphold the values of stability, morality, and democracy by making the home a special place, a refuge from the world where her husband could escape from the highly competitive, unstable, immoral world of business and industry" (Lavender, 4). Nursing was one of the domestic activities that women had to learn. She was concerned with her husbands' and sons' sickness. She had to study from books to find remedies to cure her loved ones. Another activity that was encouraged is needle-work. This activity promised women to maintain their piety and purity.

Welter concludes her article by saying that it was hard for real women to meet the expectations of the cult of true womanhood. "Some of them blamed themselves, some challenged the standard, some tried to keep the virtues and enlarge the scope of womanhood" (174). And to manipulate women and keep the order to make them believe that they have power and happiness, they (men) found a way to convince women that they "had the best of both worlds—power and virtue and that a stable order of society depended upon her maintaining her traditional place in it" (174).

Lower-class women who had to work for little salary to support themselves could not fulfill the ideal of domesticity of the cult because they worked for other people, not in their homes. Thus, many of these women believed that the ideal image of true womanhood was made to give a better life of middle and upper-class women. A. H. Forss and Peg A. Lamphier in their review of Cult of True Womanhood state that "As a result, many working-class women consciously rejected notions of submissiveness, moral superiority and passionlessness" (1). They continue their review by saying that even middle and upper-class women had many difficulties in fulfilling the ideal, because not all women found a supportive-none violent husbands. They state that "Wives whose husbands who drank away the family income or beat them had little recourse in a society that often refused to recognize problems and often blamed for wives husbands' failings" (2). In other words, women were to be blamed for everything, even if it was their husbands' mistakes.

Black women had a similar case, but it was slightly different from lower, middle, and upper-class white women. They were exploited and sexually abused by the nineteenth century's man. It was almost impossible to have houses of their own to fulfill one of the ideals, domesticity. For black women during the 19th century, Venetria K. Patton in her book *Women in Chains: The Legacy of Slavery in Black Women's Fiction* states that,

The nineteenth-century black women writers were faced with a similar situation when they sought to find a way around a cult of motherhood and womanhood, which implicitly excluded the experience of black females, yet still presented their definitions of motherhood and womanhood as desires for all women. This is not to say that the definition of womanhood was inclusive for all white women, but rather that its very tenets excluded black females. These early writers, therefore, sought a means of negotiating the cult of true womanhood in such a way that black females could be recognized as mother, and therefore women. In other words, their writing in many respects was an attempt to engender themselves the eyes of dominant society (38).

In other words, these black women were familiar with the ideals and images of the cult of true womanhood, so, they tried to include themselves in this ideal, but the society refused them. Furthermore, these black women challenged the standard and the idealized image of true womanhood.

## IV.    THE CULT OF TRUE WOMANHOOD

Jacobs' narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, talks about the life and the experiences that Harriet Jacobs (Linda) had to endure. It also talks about her fights to win her freedom from slavery during the 19th century. Her narrative shows that it is impossible for women to achieve

the idealized image of true womanhood in a patriarchal society. Not only was it impossible for black women to meet the standard, but also white women had difficulty to live up to the idealized image. As mentioned above, Welter claims that "Some of them blamed themselves, some challenged the standard, some tried to keep the virtues and enlarge the scope of womanhood" (174). Jacobs, her grandmother, and the white women in the narrative chose to challenge the idealized image of true womanhood.

Linda Brent, the main character of the narrative, is being stressed to be Dr. Flint's mistress; however, she refused to let her modesty be taken away from her and be submissive. Moreover, she takes Mr. Sands as her lover. Glen McClish and Jacqueline Bacon in their article, "Telling the Story Her Own Way": The Role of Feminist Standpoint Theory in Rhetorical Studies, state that Linda fails "to adhere to the sexual patterns she had been taught to endorse but also questions the adequacy of this standard and tentatively reaches toward an alternative moral code" (42). This moral code that Linda took was to defy the white male's patriarchy. If Linda agrees to be Dr. Flint's mistress, then, she agrees to be submissive and her purity would be taken away from her. But instead, she refuses to submit to her master. By taking Mr. Sands as her lover, Patton states that "Linda is violating one of the cardinal rules of the cult of true womanhood−purity. The ideal woman was passionless, yet Linda has not only engaged in sexual relations, but also encouraged and perhaps even initiated them" (67).

Being involved in sexual relations by taking Mr. Sands as her lover was not something she is really proud of, but, the reason was to be fully in charge of her body and make her own decisions. In other words, Brooke Logan in her essay, Feminism and Slavery: Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, states that Linda "exercises the limited power available to her by conducting an affair with Mr. Sands" (no. pg). In an attempt from Mr. Flint to disintegrate Linda's acceptance to have a sexual relationship, Linda says that Mr. Flint,

Told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the mean tyranny. But where could I turn for protection? […] In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death […] The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage. The degradation, the wrongs, the vices, that grow out of slavery, are more than I can describe. They are greater than you would willingly believe. Surely, if you credited one half the truths that are told you

concerning the helpless millions suffering in this cruel bondage, you at the north would not help to tighten the yoke. (26-27)

It shows that Linda has been insulted, beaten, and tortured because as a black-slave woman, the law will not protect her, not even Mr. Flint's wife, Mrs. Flint. However, Linda succeeds in resisting her master's attempts. Even when Mr. Flint verbally abuses her, McClish and Bacon state that Linda is "defiant and verbally resourceful" (45). Mr. Flint uses methods to scare and threat Linda, such as doing whatever he wants with her or even killing her. However, she challenges him and does not comply to his orders.

In a conversation between Linda and Mr. Flint, he says, "Do you know that I have a right to do as I like with you, -that I can kill you, if I please?", Linda replies by saying "You have tried to kill me, and I wish you had; but you have no right to do as you like with me" (36). To save face and sustain his powerful existence; he tries to silence her. Linda says that "I know I have been disrespectful, sir, […] but you drove me to it; I couldn't help it. As for the jail, there would be more peace for me there than there is here" (36). In this conversation, Linda tries to assert herself by challenging Mr. Flint's power. McClish and Bacon state that "Jacobs creates a new standard by which to judge a woman based on will, defiance, and verbal power" (45). Moreover, Patton claims that "According to Joanne Braxton, Linda's backtalk, or sass, is a form of self-defense[…] Linda employs verbal warfare and defensive verbal postures as tools of liberation" (65). Rather than giving her virginity to her master, she sacrifices her purity to another white man. Sarah Cleveland in her thesis, Revealing *Incidents*: Harriet Jacobs and the New Black Female Virtue, states that Linda,

Offers her defiance of Dr. Flint's sexual advances as the moment in which a slave becomes not only a woman, but a virtuous woman. She gives away what might be regarded as woman's most precious gift, the ultimate sacrifice of her virginity, to take away the power of her master to rob her of what is only hers to give. Both symbolic and literal, this sacrificial act raises Jacobs from an unchaste and defiled object to a virtuous mother (1).

Even though Linda defies her master's sexual advances and takes another white man as her lover, she expresses her sexual history with shame and hesitation. Linda says,

And now, reader, I come to a period in my unhappy life, which I would gladly forget if I

could. The remembrance fills me with sorrow and shame. It pains me to tell you of it; but I have promised to tell you the truth, and I will do it honestly, let it cost me what it may [...] my master had done his utmost to pollute my mind with foul images, and to destroy the pure principles inculcated by my grandmother and the good mistress of my childhood. (47)

Linda expresses a feeling of guilt because of having sex and children before marriage; however, Patton states that "Wallace describes Linda's guilt as unnecessary agony, the agony of measuring herself against a standard which was not designed to fit her circumstances, and which could only work to destroy her image of herself" (59-60).

Regardless of the sorrow and shame Linda feels, she knows that there is no other way around because "the condition of a slave confuses all principles of morality, and, in fact, renders the practice of them impossible" (48). By failing to meet the standards of true womanhood, Patton states, Linda "suggests that people should be judged within their context and not by rigid expectations and definitions" (60). In other words, female slaves should have a different judgment from people, because black-female-slave women had to experience the hardest things, such as sexual and verbal abuse. Patton continues by saying that "While Jacobs may not have been a true woman based on the standards of her day, she questions the justification of those standards and suggests that a woman be judged by more than her sexual purity" (60). This sexual purity is not something that Jacobs can elevate; however, her sexual purity comes from not being in a relationship with Mr. Flint since she is not allowed to own her body as a slave during the nineteenth century. According to Welter, "If, however, a woman managed to withstand man's assaults on her virtue, she demonstrated her superiority and her power over him" (156).

Linda's grandmother, Aunt Martha, is pious, pure, domestic but not submissive. She has her own house and she sells goods to her neighbors which show that she is indeed a domestic woman. Her purity, according to DoVeanna S. Fulton in her *Speaking Power: Black Feminist Orality in Women's Narratives of Slavery*, states that "For the grandmother, the value of purity becomes unquestioned and undiscussed" (31) because Jacobs does not mention the grandmother's purity, whether she had a relationship or not. However, her purity is seen and felt when Linda confesses her pregnancy. The grandmother says

O Linda! has it come to this? I had rather see you dead than to see you as you now are. You are a disgrace to your dead mother. She tore

from my fingers my mother's wedding ring and her silver thimble. "Go away!" she exclaimed, and never come to my house again. (50)

Linda's grandmother refuses the idea that her granddaughter is to become pregnant from a man before marriage. To show how frustrated she is, the grandmother takes Linda's mother ring. What the grandmother wants to demonstrate is that Linda should have lived the hard reality of slavery instead of getting pregnant and commits this horrible sin. Sarah Way Sherman in her article, Moral Experience in Harriet Jacobs's "*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*", states that "Sexual purity [...] a value for that ideal world whose future possibility Linda is unwilling to give up-at the same time she must live with the reality of slavery in this one" (174). And as a punishment to Linda of doing such act, Fulton states that,

Even when Brent explains her situation and choice of a sexual relationship with Mr. Sands, the grandmother sympathizes and understands but does not forgive her. Therefore, we have a grandmother who believes in chastity and purity without particularly revealing her own sexual experiences. (32)

In other words, Aunt Martha's reprimand to her granddaughter shows that Aunt Martha is a devout Christian, chaste, and pure.

Another ideal Aunt Martha loses to maintain true womanhood is submissiveness. Through the whole narrative, Aunt Martha does not show any kind of submission to anyone. Even Mr. Flint is scared of the grandmother. In a scene in the narrative where Mr. Flint went to Aunt Martha's house to despise Linda, both characters argued and their voices could be heard by the people outside. Aunt Martha heard their screaming, when she arrived to her house, she made Mr. Flint leave the house by saying "Get out of my house!" and continues by saying "Go home, and take care of your wife and children, and you will have enough to do, without watching my family" (70). In return, Mr. Flint left the house without doing anything to Aunt Martha. This indicates that the grandmother has power bestowed to her by her mistress which Jacobs explains at the beginning of her narrative. Jacobs says that her grandmother "evinced so much intelligence, and was so faithful, that her master and mistress could not help seeing it was for their interest to take care of such a valuable piece of property [...] She was much praised by for her cooking; and her nice crackers became famous in the neighborhood" (9). All these traits that Aunt Martha gained through her life as a slave helped her gain respect from the white society as she grew older.

Mrs. Flint is a white female character in the narrative who does not represent the four cardinals of the cult of true womanhood. When she learns that Mr. Flint is sexually harassing Linda, Mrs. Flint makes it even worse for Linda, she starts to harass her. Linda Says,

"[…] for she spent many a sleepless night to watch over me. Sometimes I woke up, and found her bending over me. At other times she whispered in my ear, as though it was her husband who was speaking to me […] I began to be fearful for my life. It had been often threatened; and you can imagine, better than I can describe, what an unpleasant sensation it must produce to wake up in the dead of night and find a jealous woman bending over you. Terrible as this experience was, I had fears that it would give place to one more terrible" (31).

This quotation shows that Mrs. Flint makes it difficult for Linda; she does not aid her in any situation, she only makes it worse. Even when Linda tells Mrs. Flint of Mr. Flint's attempts, Mrs. Flint

Felt that her marriage vows were desecrated, her dignity insulted; but she had no compassion for the poor victim of her husband's perfidy. She pitied herself as a martyr; but she was incapable of feeling for the condition of shame and misery in which her unfortunate, helpless slave was placed (31).

Even though Mrs. Flint is a white woman who should meet the four ideals, as Mr. Flint's wife, she is supposed to stop her husband from harassing Linda. She is afraid that her pride and dignity would be at stake. Also, living in a man's world will not help her sustain or maintain any kind of power. Patton states that Mrs. Flint […] is represented as an antiwoman Rather than forging a sisterly bond with her slave, Mrs. Flint views Linda with antagonism and antipathy […] Mrs. Flint does not recognizes Linda as a sister, but as a competitor […] Mrs. Flint should not only be a maternal figure for the young Jacobs, but also a protectress. She should seek to show her husband the error ways, since as a woman she should be his moral superior. However, Mrs. Flint is not only powerless before her husband, she does not even realize that she and Linda are both victims of Flint's patriarchal power. (62-63)

Zafar and Khan state that "In this manner white women are depicted as both the sinning and the sinned against; victims as well as accomplices in their husbands' sexual exploitation of the enslaved black women" (2). Since that Mrs. Flint has sinned and submitted to her husband's power, she is excluded from two of the four ideals, piety and submissiveness.

Also, since Mrs. Flint is a jealous woman, she does not maintain domesticity or the home sphere because she makes the environment (her home) distrustful, negative, and mischievous. Cleveland states that "Mrs. Flint further fractures the cult's call to domesticity because" Mrs. Flint "had not strength to superintend her household affairs; but her nerves were so strong, that she could sit in her easy chair and see a woman whipped, till the blood trickled from every stroke of the lash" (14). This quote shows that Mrs. Flint lacks both piety and domesticity.

Not only Linda and Aunt Martha defy the patriarchal society, there is also a white woman who speaks for herself and challenges the male patriarchy like the second Mrs. Bruce. She is a true woman; she is pious, pure, domestic but not submissive. Linda compliments her; she says "For the system of slavery, she had a most hearty dislike of it. No sophistry of Southerners would blind her to its enormity. She was a person of excellent principles and a noble heart. To me, from that hour to the present, she has been a true and sympathizing friend" (155). It shows that the second Mrs. Bruce hates slavery and dislikes it, Linda's relationship with her becomes powerful. Through the narrative, Mrs. Bruce hides Linda from Mr. Flint to keep her safe, even though she risks her life. Shahila Zafar and Zaved Ahmed Khan in their article, The Images of White Womanhood in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, state that Mrs. Bruce is "in all aspects, a true woman except for the fact that she is not submissive" (3). In other words, Mrs. Bruce challenges the people who wanted to hunt Linda down by not telling them where Linda's place is. Since Mrs. Bruce lacks one of the four ideals of true womanhood, according to the white society during the 19th century, Mrs. Bruce is not considered a woman. To maintain the image of true womanhood, Mrs. Bruce should have told the hunters where Linda is. As mentioned above, Welter states that women were "the hostage in the home" (151). To put it in a different way, Mrs. Bruce knows the dangers that could harm her very well. In a conversation with her "wealthy relative" (158), he told her that she is breaking the country's rules by hiding a fugitive slave; she says "I am very well aware of it. It is imprisonment and one thousand dollars fine. Shame on my country that it is so! I am ready to incur the penalty. I will go to the state's prison, rather than have any poor victim torn from my house, to be carried back to slavery" (158). In other words, White women should never help a slave (especially a fugitive) and defy men, because white women's place was in the home where they make sure that the house is comfy and relaxing.

## V.    CONCLUSION

Throughout the narrative, none of the women mentioned above have met the idealized image of true womanhood. Linda defies the male patriarchy by not submitting to Mr. Flint's sexual and verbal assaults, which gives a sense of agency in the narrative. She declines any identity imposed on her from both, white males and females. She also criticizes the cult of true womanhood by expressing that it impossible for women to meet the four cardinals. Her grandmother, Aunt Martha, has a similar case; she is pious, pure and domestic, but not submissive. She is pious and pure because she scolds Linda for getting pregnant before marriage; she is domestic because she sells crackers to her neighbors, but she is definitely not submissive because she also challenges Mr. Flint and kicks him out of her house. Mrs. Flint loses two of the four cardinals, piety and domesticity. She loses piety for not aiding Linda to gain freedom and for making Linda's life worse when Mrs. Flint knows that her husband is sexually harassing Linda. She loses domesticity for making her house mischievous and negative, not comfy and relaxing as she is supposed to do according to the cult of true womanhood. Finally, the second Mrs. Bruce, a white female character, does not meet the four cardinals either. She is not submissive for defying the country's law and the hunters who wanted Linda. Even though she is white and supposed to help white males, she refuses that because she despises slavery. For that reason, she is not considered a true woman.

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# Feminism Through a Marxist Lens: Intersections and Insights

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*Abstract*— *This paper delves into the intricate relationship between feminism and Marxism, exploring how Marxist theory provides a critical lens to understand and address gender oppression. By examining key intersections between feminist and Marxist ideologies, the study highlights the ways in which class struggle and gender inequality are intertwined. Historical and contemporary feminist movements are analyzed through a Marxist perspective, revealing how economic structures and capitalist exploitation contribute to the subjugation of women. The analysis includes a review of seminal works by Marxist feminists, discussions on the role of labor and reproductive work, and critiques of capitalism's impact on gender roles. Additionally, the paper considers the contributions of notable feminist theorists who have incorporated Marxist principles into their advocacy for women's rights. The findings underscore the importance of a unified struggle against both class and gender oppression, advocating for a holistic approach to achieving social justice and gender equality. Through this exploration, the paper aims to provide insights into the potential for a synergistic relationship between feminist and Marxist theories in the pursuit of a more equitable society.*

*Keywords*— *feminism, Marxism, gender oppression, capitalist, exploitation*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The discourse on feminism and Marxism[1], two of the most influential social theories of the modern era[2], has generated profound insights into the nature of oppression and the dynamics of liberation[3]. While feminism primarily focuses on the systemic subjugation of women and the pursuit of gender equality[4], Marxism addresses the broader context of class struggle and the exploitation inherent in capitalist systems[5]. This paper aims to explore the intersections between these two ideologies[6], revealing how a Marxist lens can enrich feminist analysis and vice versa[7].

Understanding the ways in which economic structures shape and reinforce gender inequalities is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of women's oppression[8]. Marxist feminism[9], which emerged from the fusion of feminist and Marxist thought[10], posits that the liberation of women is intrinsically linked to the overthrow of capitalist exploitation[11]. By examining the historical development of both movements, this study seeks to highlight the contributions of key theorists who have bridged the gap between feminism and Marxism, such as Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai, and more contemporary figures[12]. Moreover, this paper will investigate how the capitalist mode of production influences gender roles and relations[13]. It will discuss the division of labor, particularly reproductive labor, and its implications for women's economic independence and social status. The commodification of women's bodies and labor under capitalism will also be examined, providing a critical perspective on issues such as wage gaps, unpaid domestic work, and the feminization of poverty.

Through a Marxist lens, feminist critiques of patriarchy gain additional depth, emphasizing the need for systemic change

rather than mere policy adjustments. This holistic approach advocates for a united struggle against both gender and class oppression, suggesting that true emancipation can only be achieved through the dismantling of capitalist structures. In summary, this paper will explore the synergies between feminism and Marxism, offering insights into how these intertwined ideologies can collaboratively address the complex layers of oppression faced by women. By integrating Marxist analysis with feminist theory, we can develop a more robust framework for understanding and combating the multifaceted nature of women's subjugation in contemporary society.

## Summary:

"Feminism Through a Marxist Lens: Intersections and Insights" explores the convergence of feminist and Marxist theories, demonstrating how these frameworks can mutually enhance the understanding and resolution of gender oppression. The paper highlights the importance of examining gender inequality within the context of economic structures and capitalist exploitation, as posited by Marxist feminism.

The study begins by tracing the historical evolution of both feminist and Marxist movements, spotlighting the contributions of key theorists who have bridged these ideologies, such as Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai. It delves into the critical role of labor, particularly reproductive labor, in perpetuating women's economic and social subjugation. The commodification of women's bodies and labor under capitalism is scrutinized, revealing how wage disparities, unpaid domestic work, and the feminization of poverty are structurally embedded in capitalist societies.

By applying a Marxist lens to feminist critiques, the paper underscores the necessity of systemic change to address both gender and class oppression. It argues that mere policy adjustments are insufficient, advocating instead for a holistic approach that seeks the dismantling of capitalist structures to achieve true gender equality.

In conclusion, the paper asserts that the integration of Marxist analysis with feminist theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and combating the multifaceted nature of women's oppression. This synergistic relationship between feminism and Marxism provides deeper insights and more effective strategies for achieving social justice and gender equality.

## II.    MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a multi-faceted approach to examine the intersections between feminism and Marxism, utilizing both primary and secondary sources to construct a comprehensive analysis. The materials and methods are structured as follows:

### Materials

1. **Primary Texts:**
   o Key writings of foundational Marxist theorists, including Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
   o Seminal works by Marxist feminists such as Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai, and more contemporary authors like Silvia Federici.
   o Classic and contemporary feminist texts, including "The Second Sex" by Simone de Beauvoir and writings by bell hooks and Judith Butler.

2. **Secondary Sources:**
   o Scholarly articles, books, and journals that discuss the intersections of Marxism and feminism.
   o Historical accounts of feminist and Marxist movements, focusing on their development, key events, and ideological shifts.
   o Analyses of economic data and sociological studies that illustrate the impact of capitalist structures on gender roles and relations.

### Methods

1. **Literature Review:**
   o A comprehensive review of both Marxist and feminist literature to identify common themes, areas of intersection, and theoretical synergies.
   o Critical analysis of how Marxist theory has been applied to feminist issues, with a focus on labor, economic exploitation, and the social reproduction of gender roles.

2. **Historical Analysis:**
   o Examination of the historical development of Marxist feminism, including the contributions of key figures and movements.
   o Contextualization of feminist struggles within broader socio-economic transformations influenced by capitalism.

3. **Theoretical Framework Analysis:**
   o Application of Marxist concepts such as class struggle, commodification, and exploitation to feminist critiques of patriarchy.
   o Analysis of the division of labor, particularly reproductive labor, and its implications for women's economic and social status.

4. **Case Studies:**
   o In-depth case studies of specific historical and contemporary examples where feminist and Marxist theories intersect, such as women's roles in socialist movements and labor unions.
   o Analysis of contemporary issues like the gender wage gap, unpaid domestic labor, and the feminization of poverty through a Marxist feminist lens.

5. **Comparative Analysis:**
   o Comparative analysis of different feminist and Marxist perspectives on key issues to highlight areas of agreement and divergence.
   o Evaluation of policy implications and potential strategies for integrating feminist and Marxist approaches to achieve gender equality.

By utilizing these materials and methods, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the intersections between feminism and Marxism. It seeks to illustrate how these combined perspectives can offer deeper insights into gender oppression and inform more effective strategies for achieving social justice.

## III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

**Results**

1. **Theoretical Synergies:**
   o **Common Ground:** Both feminism and Marxism identify systemic structures of power and oppression. Feminist theory critiques patriarchy, while Marxism critiques capitalism. The integration of these critiques reveals how capitalist systems reinforce and are reinforced by patriarchal structures.
   o **Role of Labor:** Marxist feminism highlights the critical role of labor, particularly reproductive labor, in sustaining both capitalist economies and gender hierarchies. This perspective broadens the feminist understanding of economic exploitation to include unpaid domestic work and caregiving.

2. **Historical Intersections:**
   o **Early Marxist Feminists:** Figures like Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai demonstrated how Marxist principles could be applied to feminist struggles, emphasizing that women's liberation is inseparable from class struggle.
   o **Contemporary Movements:** Modern examples, such as the role of women in labor unions and socialist movements, show ongoing intersections where feminist goals align with broader anti-capitalist agendas.

3. **Economic Implications:**
   o **Wage Gaps and Employment Disparities:** Analysis of economic data shows that capitalist economies often exploit women's labor more intensely, leading to persistent wage gaps and higher rates of poverty among women.
   o **Unpaid Labor:** The study underscores the economic value of unpaid domestic labor, which is disproportionately carried out by women. This labor is essential for the functioning of capitalist economies but remains largely invisible and undervalued.

4. **Critique of Capitalism:**
   o **Commodification:** The commodification of women's bodies and labor is a central theme in Marxist feminist critiques. This includes not only wage labor but also the ways in which women's reproductive capacities are commercialized and controlled.
   o **Structural Inequality:** Capitalist structures perpetuate gender inequalities by maintaining a division of labor that relegates women to lower-paying and less secure jobs, thereby reinforcing both economic and gender hierarchies.

**Discussions**

1. **Implications for Feminist Theory:**
   o **Broadening the Scope:** Integrating Marxist analysis into feminist theory broadens the understanding of oppression to include economic dimensions. This intersectional approach is essential for addressing the root causes of gender inequality.
   o **Systemic Change:** The findings suggest that achieving gender equality requires systemic change rather than incremental reforms. This means addressing both capitalist exploitation and patriarchal norms simultaneously.

2. **Policy Recommendations:**
   o **Economic Reforms:** Policies should focus on valuing and compensating reproductive labor, implementing living wages, and ensuring equal pay for equal work. Social safety nets should be strengthened to support unpaid caregivers.
   o **Workplace Equality:** Legislation should enforce gender equality in the workplace, including measures against discrimination, support for

working mothers, and promotion of women's leadership roles.

3. **Future Research Directions:**

   o **Intersectional Studies:** Further research is needed to explore how different forms of oppression (e.g., race, class, gender) intersect and how Marxist feminism can address these complexities.

   o **Global Perspectives:** Comparative studies across different cultural and economic contexts can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how capitalist and patriarchal systems interact globally.

4. **Challenges and Limitations:**

   o **Ideological Resistance:** Both feminist and Marxist theories face resistance from mainstream political and economic institutions. Promoting a unified approach may require overcoming significant ideological and practical barriers.

   o **Diverse Feminist Voices:** It is crucial to incorporate diverse feminist perspectives, especially from marginalized groups, to ensure that the analysis and proposed solutions are inclusive and equitable.

In conclusion, the integration of feminist and Marxist theories offers a powerful framework for understanding and combating the multifaceted nature of gender oppression. By addressing both economic and gender inequalities, this approach provides a holistic strategy for achieving social justice and gender equality.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that integrating feminist and Marxist theories provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing gender oppression. By examining feminism through a Marxist lens, we gain deeper insights into how capitalist structures perpetuate gender inequalities and how these inequalities are inherently tied to economic exploitation.

**Key Findings**

1. **Interconnected Oppressions:**

   o The analysis underscores that gender oppression cannot be fully understood or addressed in isolation from economic structures. Capitalism and patriarchy are intertwined systems of power that mutually reinforce each other.

2. **Role of Labor:**

   o The emphasis on labor, particularly reproductive labor, highlights how women's unpaid and undervalued work is crucial to the functioning of capitalist economies. Recognizing and valuing this labor is essential for achieving gender equality.

3. **Historical and Contemporary Synergies:**

   o Historical figures like Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai, as well as contemporary feminist movements, illustrate the ongoing relevance of Marxist feminism. These examples show the potential for collaborative struggles against both class and gender oppression.

4. **Economic Critiques:**

   o The study's critique of capitalist commodification and structural inequalities provides a robust framework for understanding the persistent economic disparities faced by women. Addressing these issues requires systemic changes rather than incremental reforms.

**Implications**

1. **Theoretical Integration:**

   o The findings suggest that feminist theory benefits from incorporating Marxist analysis to address the root causes of gender oppression. This intersectional approach is vital for developing effective strategies for social justice.

2. **Policy Recommendations:**

   o Policies should aim at systemic economic reforms, including valuing reproductive labor, ensuring workplace equality, and implementing comprehensive social safety nets. These measures can help dismantle both capitalist and patriarchal structures.

3. **Future Research:**

   o Further research should explore the intersections of various forms of oppression, including race, class, and gender, within a Marxist feminist framework. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts will also enhance our understanding of global inequalities.

**Final Thoughts**

In conclusion, "Feminism Through a Marxist Lens: Intersections and Insights" has highlighted the profound interconnectedness of economic and gender inequalities. By embracing a Marxist feminist perspective, we can develop a more holistic and effective approach to combating oppression and achieving true gender equality. This integrated framework not only enriches feminist theory but also provides practical pathways for creating a more just and equitable society.

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# Translation of English vernacular into Russian

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*Abstract*— *The issue considered in this article is the problem of translating English vernacular into Russian, using examples of the works of English writers, particularly Jerome David Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye". Even in the recent past, vernacular very often remained unreproduced in a literary text. However, scientists - linguists and translators have begun to attach great importance to this aspect of translation, therefore, over the past few years, there has been a clear shift in this regard in the translation of fiction.*

*Keywords*— *vernacular, jargon, vulgarism, colloquial, occasionalisms, genre, swear words*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writers use various linguistic and compositional methods to create original imagery. Translation transformations, both lexico-semantic and structural-syntactic in the transfer of linguistic means, directly affect the degree of adequacy of the translation, affecting the level of expressiveness of the text, neutralizing or enhancing its impact. Colloquial vocabulary, especially such units as vulgarisms, is the most effective element that gives a special flavor to the work.

The method used in identifying ways to transfer English vernacular into Russian is a translation comparative analysis. The peculiarity of this method is that the confrontation and comparison of the translation unit, in this case, vernacular, of the source language with the same unit in the target language. Therefore, the translator is required to be able to fully convey the semantic element, as well as emotions, which constitute the figurativeness of the work.

When translating any text, whether written or oral, the translator must take into account its genre and stylistic features, its correlation with the functional style of the language, and strictly follow the norms of the target language. Language norms are a standard set of grammatical and lexical rules that make up the paradigm of compatibility of a certain correspondence with other words in a phrase or sentence. Changing even one word in the translation, of course, entails a change or replacement of the translation invariants of all words associated with the given word, and other statements.

The most necessary condition is that it is necessary to take into account not only the semantic, but also the expressive and stylistic features of the translated text. Works of fiction are, first of all, art; this genre has a wide range of means, combining various, both book-written and oral-speech styles, which leads to the use of a wide variety of lexical elements. In other words, fiction is characterized by intertextuality. This phenomenon is characterized by the fact that the characters in the work can speak in an understated colloquial style and use poetic words and expressions. The narrative may be interrupted by extracts from documents, speeches, extracts from newspapers, magazines, etc.

When translating texts related to the genre of fiction, the translator is faced with the problem of reproducing the individual specificity of the original, while maintaining the nominal meaning of individual statements. To achieve an adequate translation, it is necessary to take into account all the expressive and stylistic features of the original language, making a deep stylistic analysis of the text, which allows revealing the individual originality of a work of art. At the same time, such a characteristic feature of a literary text as figurativeness, as well as a high degree of semantic capacity, is revealed.

In addition to problems of a semantic, grammatical and stylistic nature, problems may arise during translation related to the cultural and moral aspects of the original language, with the translation of dialect vocabulary, proper

names, as well as in connection with the author's peculiarities of speech. Of particular difficulty are stylistically marked lexical units, which also include words that are part of the colloquially degraded genre of speech, namely, slang, vulgarism and jargon.

It should be noted that language, being a social phenomenon, belongs to a certain group of people - a people, a nation, as well as individual representatives of these language groups. However, each writer, as well as a separate person, an individual, has his own speech habits, his own individual characteristics, which constitute the so-called idiolect. The presence of individual features in oral and written speech is summarized in the concept of "idiolect" - an individual version of the language. Scientists - linguists explore the idiolects of individuals, in particular, great writers, whose work makes an important contribution to the treasury of the national language.

In this sense, the striking style of Jerome David Salinger's novella "The Catcher in the Rye" is of great interest. The language of this work is interesting from a historical and linguistic point of view, as a new embodiment of the traditions of colloquial speech and slang, traced in the stories of Mark Twain, and as an essential element of the psychological characteristics of the protagonist of the story. The individual style of any writer uses certain speech styles of the common language, which, for the most part, is the standard language.

Adequate transmission of a work implies that the translator must be clearly aware of his role in the translation process, bearing in mind the concept of translation equivalence, and also this is one of the most important aspects of the translation of fiction, of the cultural differences between the readers of the original and the translation. One of the most difficult aspects of the translation of fiction is the pragmatic aspect, and knowledge of extralinguistic factors and cultural realities is a necessary condition for achieving equivalence in translation. The cultural aspect of translation must be fully reflected, therefore, linguistic knowledge is not enough for the translator; in addition to knowing two languages, it is extremely necessary to have the ability to convey a literary text.

A literary text, adequately translated, must comply with the standard norms of the style of fiction. When translating a literary text, the translator conveys the information of the original text in a creative way, keeping in mind the pragmatics of the text and using his skills, abilities and experience. The main feature of the genre of fiction is its expressiveness and emotionality, therefore, in the selection of expressive means in translation, it is necessary to carefully select adequate stylistic devices and stylistically marked lexemes. Along with the pragmatic aspect, the

problems that make it difficult to achieve adequacy include the uniqueness of the writer's style, lexical, phraseological and syntactic features, borrowings, as well as non-standard vocabulary, vulgarisms and slang among them. The difficulties facing the translator explain the fact that absolute adequacy in translation is impossible, however, the translation must describe the spiritual atmosphere and imagery of the original. It is well known that the text can be oral and written, belong to the neutral layer, literary and colloquial.

The conversational layer, just like the literary one, is divided into certain layers, which are characterized by specific features. Thus, the literary language is bookish in nature, which gives the literary style relative stability. The colloquial layer, on the contrary, is characterized by reduced vocabulary, non-standard grammatical constructions, and this makes the spoken language a rather unstable, changeable category.

The literary language layer includes the following subgroups: general literary, terms and scientific words, poetic vocabulary, archaisms, foreign borrowings and literary occasionalisms. The spoken language includes the following subgroups: general colloquial vocabulary, slang, vulgarisms, jargon, professional words, colloquial occasionalisms. The neutral lexical layer is universal in nature. It is unlimited in use, as it can be found in all language and speech styles. The neutral language layer is the most stable lexical layer. General colloquial, general literary and neutral vocabulary is combined into the so-called standard language layer.

Some general literary lexical units border on general colloquial and special colloquial words, as well as non-standard lexemes.

In general, the colloquial layer is replete with expressions of a colloquial nature. Vulgarisms are non-standard words that make up a layer of non-standard vocabulary, but are constituent of the English language. Vulgarisms are divided into swear words and vocabularities that are offensive in nature, for example: 'damn' 'bloody', 'to hell', 'goddam', which are used today as exclamations.

Vulgarisms can also be in the nature of obscene words, the use of which is considered indecent in society. Vulgarisms are often used in colloquial speech, which happens out of habit, in the form of imitation or a tribute to fashion. At the same time, the speaker does not think about the fact that speech can be coarsened by vulgarisms. Unfortunately, in the modern world, vulgar words are increasingly penetrating the pages of works of art, the print press, TV screens and Internet sites. Such a speech deviation pollutes speech, and therefore vulgarisms will forever remain on the margins of standard English, they will not enter the standard

language layer. The function of cursing and vulgar exclamations is to express the strong emotions of the speaker, such as anger, irritation, annoyance, etc. Such words are found mainly in the speech of characters in fiction and in oral colloquial speech. However, vulgarisms should be distinguished directly from other coarse words and expressions.

The story "The Catcher in the Rye" is Jerome David Salinger's most famous work, which brought him worldwide fame in the United States, as well as around the world. The book was extremely timely for the capitalist society of those years, so readers perceived the story as a kind of revelation. The language of the story "The Catcher in the Rye", written on behalf of the protagonist - a teenager Holden Caulfield, is a reproduction of the colloquial speech of an American teenager. Holden's "school" dialect has special features that help to perceive the hero of the story as an individual. His language is filled with words that reflect the specifics of his rebellious, and, at the same time, lonely personality. So, he constantly repeats the expressions "It really is" or "I really do", as if he wants to convince the reader that, although there are lies and pretense all around, he can be trusted, he speaks only the truth. (He was the only boy that could really handle the job.) One of the characteristic features of the school "dialect" in the hero's speech is vulgarity, the use of the word "damn" and its slang version "darn" - "curse", for example, I don't give a darn. Despite the fact that these deviations from the linguistic norm are characteristic features of the speech of the protagonist of the story, when translating them into Russian, the correct grammatical and lexical structures are used. When translating purely lexical units, especially vulgarisms and slang expressions, one should try to find a suitable Russian equivalent in order to convey the character's speech flavor.

Stylistic devices and stylistically colored lexical units, selected to reflect the characteristics of a teenager's speech, present great difficulties for the translator, due to the lack of direct equivalents in the Russian language.

One of the most common stylistic devices is an epithet, and throughout the story the reader is faced with such evaluative epithets as: phony - "fake, forged" (phony slob; phony smile; phony bastard; phony handshake); lousy - "lousy, filthy" (lousy teeth; lousy movie; lousy manners); e.g. I'm in a lousy shape.; terrific - with a positive meaning - "beautiful, wonderful" - terrific guy; territorial friend; she looked terrific; with a negative meaning - "terrible, disgusting" - a terrific liar; terrifically tired. In addition to epithets, such evaluative adjectives acquire a special, emotional sound, such as: grippy ; (grippy smell); corny - old-fashioned (corny shoes); crumby - lousy (crumby old

razor); dopy - stupid, idiotic (dopy bastard). For the reader, of course, one cannot help but pay attention to the huge amount of slang expressions that are full of Holden's speech; for example: to horse around - fool around, mess around; strictly for the birds - all this is a lie; I'm not kidding ; to chew the fat (rag), to shoot the bull (crap, breeze) - chat, wag your tongue; to give a buzz - call; to hit the ceiling - explode, etc.

J. Salinger's story is replete with non-standard words and expressions, which attracts close attention of both readers and researchers. The frequent use of vulgarisms by the main character gives his speech a special emotionality and authenticity.

## II.     CONCLUSION

In this regard, we can conclude that in translation in many cases the translator had to resort to the translation technique of omission. In cases where vulgarisms were omitted, compensation was made in the translation, which led to the overall adequacy of the translated text. In sentences with omitted vulgarisms, synonymous slang or vulgar words and expressions were added. In many cases, the same English vulgar words and expressions of the original were transmitted by various vulgarisms into Russian, giving the translated text liveliness, naturalness and additional colors.

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# Assessment through 5A's of Tourism in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija: A Basis for Tourism Development Plan

Rachel Jennifer Z. Velasquez, Mark Alvin Abad, Curleen Leign C. Balagtas, Mary Ann Corpuz, Abigail Fernando, Dominick Flores, Nelaine Antonette D. Manabat, Aicie V. Pacheco

*Abstract*— *This study uses a quantitative research method, data will be collected via survey questionnaire to gain insights into current tourist satisfaction levels. Surveys will provide quantitative data on the level of satisfaction of tourists in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. To analyze, the researchers used the percentage, frequency, and mean to determine the Assessment through 5A's of Tourism in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija: A Basis for Tourism Development Plan, to analyze the survey answers. In this instance, the population is interpreted as all the tourists from Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. The researcher uses a simple random sampling method that limits the huge population for the process. Regarding its findings in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija, in terms of attractions, activities, amenities, accessibilities, and accommodation, to ensure the good satisfaction of respondents, they are "very satisfied" about their experience as a tourist in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. Amenities ranked number one among the 5A's of tourism wherein Activity were the lowest in ranking. Based on the findings, when it comes to the attractions, it is well-maintained, clean, and appealing. While when it comes to amenities, the availability of Wi-Fi and other technological amenities met their needs. In addition, when it comes to accommodation, most of the respondents answered that the accommodation met their expectations in terms of cleanliness and comfort and the staff in the accommodation were friendly and helpful. While in activities, most of the respondents answered that the range of activities available met their interests and expectations, the quality of the activities was high and provided a good experience with the activities that were offered. Furthermore, when it comes to accessibility, most of the respondents answered that the directions and signage to and within the destination were clear, helpful and transportation options available made it easy to get to and around the destination. In general, Cuyapo has something as a tourist attraction, with its quiet boasts of hills and mountains that offer stunning views for locals and tourists. Nevertheless, the tourist destination might need to enhance its facilities to attract more tourists while promoting environmentally friendly tourism.*

*Keywords* – *Tourism Satisfaction, Accessibility, Attraction, Amenities, Accommodation, Activity*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourist satisfaction is a main issue in the context of tourism. According to Oxford dictionaries definition, satisfaction is defined as "fulfilling one's wishes, expectations, or needs, with tourism satisfaction being influenced by service quality, product features, and price. Tourist satisfaction is a key measure, as expectations create a frame of reference and are used as a comparative judgment during a visit."

In reality, guaranteeing visitor happiness is not only an objective but also a basic requirement in the tourism industry. Tourism isn't merely a leisure activity; it's an economic powerhouse, fueling growth, creating jobs, and fostering cultural exchange. According to Yehia (2019), tourism is an important source of success of many economies around the world; as it has the power to boosts the revenue of the economy, create thousands of jobs, community development, and cultural exchange.

Furthermore, CAEDC (2023) stated that attracting tourists from over the world gives a lot of advantages: when people visit a community, they bring opportunities to both workers, business, and its owners. Indeed, it is certain that tourism opens positive progress and improvements to the community.

As the economy evolves, local tourism's potential to strengthen communities and promote regional prosperity grow along with the economy as well. With the involvement of local community in tourism development, it will not only result in sustainable tourism, but as well as in economic, environmental, and cultural benefits (Dolma Eco-Tourism 2018). Therefore, tourism development will serve as a process of creating strategies and plans that will help to promote tourism in a particular destination (IGI Global).

In Nueva Ecija, Cuyapo possesses a rich tapestry of natural beauty, historical significance, and cultural heritage. Officially the Municipality of Cuyapo is a 1st class municipality in the province of Nueva Ecija, Philippines. According to the 2020 census, it has a population of 68,066 people (Wikepedia). Numerous tourist attractions have opened and are running in the Municipality of Cuyapo in Nueva Ecija, which influences tourism in the area. It has a tourist destination that help the city attract visitors to go to a place that is worth going to; to experience its unique cultural sights, natural wonders, and recreational facilities. Yet, attempts to improve tourism might not reach their full potential if the present situation is not well understood.

The degree of fulfillment and contentment that travelers feel both during and after their travels is referred to as tourism satisfaction. It is a purely subjective metric that is impacted by a number of variables, such as the standard of amenities, activities, infrastructure, and overall travel experience.

Through looking at the five A's of tourism—attractions, accessibility, accommodations, activities, and amenities—this study aims to examine Cuyapo's tourism industry. By examining these fundamental aspects, this study aim to provide an understanding the tourism satisfaction experience in Cuyapo, identify opportunities, and align development efforts with Sustainable Development Goal 9 which focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive industrialization, and fostering innovation that can enhance the long-term success of Cuyapo's tourism sector for development for its sustainable growth and prosperity.

**Statement of the Problem**

The researchers aim to investigate the influence of 5a's on local tourist satisfaction in Cuyapo Nueva Ecija. This study sought the answer to the following questions:

1. How may the demographic profile be described in terms of:

1.1. Age

1.2. Sex

1.3. Civil Status

1.4. Monthly Income

2. How may the level of satisfaction of the respondents be assessed using 5a's of Tourism in the terms of:

2.1 Attraction

2.2 Accommodation

2.3 Amenities

2.4 Activities

2.5 Accessibility

3. What tourism development plan may be proposed to improve the tourism industry of Cuyapo Nueva Ecija?

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework describes how the relevant objectives of the research technique fit together to provide logical findings and demonstrates how the study's variables should connect to one another.

Figure 1 presents the research paradigm of this study. It consists of an input, process, and output . Input consists of how may the demographic profile be described in terms of age, sex, civil status, and monthly income followed on how may the  level of satisfaction affect the attraction, accommodation, amenities, activities and accessibility and lastly what are the tourism development plan may be proposed to improve the tourism industry of Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. Process consists of the tools and methodologies that the researchers will apply to their study, which are interview and questionnaires that will be given to the tourist of Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. The output consists of a tourism development plan.

**Input**

1. How may the demographic profile be described in terms of:

1.1 Age

1.2 Sex

1.3 Civil Status

1.4 Monthly Income

2. How may the level of satisfaction of the respondents be assessed using 5a's of Tourism in the terms of:

2.1 Attraction

2.2 Accommodation

2.3 Amenities

2.4 Activities

2.5 Accessibility

3. What tourism development plan may be proposed to improve the tourism industry of Cuyapo Nueva Ecija?

**Process**

- Questionnaires
- Interpretation of Data

**Output**

- Tourism Development Plan

*Fig.1: Research Paradigm*

## II.     RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
### 1.  Profile of the Respondents
### 1.1  Profile of the respondents in terms of Age

*Table 3. The table presents the distribution of respondents according to Age*

| Age | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **17 years old and below** | 5 | 5.56% |
| **18 – 24 years old** | 11 | 12.22% |
| **25 – 31 years old** | 30 | 33.33% |
| **32 – 39 years old** | 36 | 40% |
| **40 years old and above** | 8 | 8.89% |
| **Total:** | 90 | 100% |

The table 3 shows us the percentage of respondents by age. According to the result, there are five age groups: "17 years old and below," "18 – 24 years old," "25 – 31 years old," "32 – 39 years old," and "40 years old and above." Most of the people surveyed are between 32 and 39 years old, making up 40% of the total. The next biggest group is people aged 25-31, who make up 33.33%. The smallest groups are those under 17, who make up 5.56%, and those over 40, who make up 8.89%. This suggests that the majority of responders are millennials, as evidenced by their contentment with Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija's tourism sector.

According to Baguisi, Karissa, et al. "A study of tourist level of satisfaction and its effects on Thailand's tourism.", adolescence has lower level of satisfaction on this matter as compare to young adults and middle-aged adult. Since adolescence tourists were aged 19 and below, most of them are likely to experience fear being in new surroundings.

## 1.2 Profile of the respondents in terms of Sex

*Table 4. The table presents the distribution of respondents according to Sex*

| Sex | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Female** | **56** | **62.22%** |
| **Male** | **34** | **37.78%** |
| **Total:** | **90** | **100%** |

Table 4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by sex in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. Based on the result, among the 90 respondents surveyed, 56 were female, accounting for 62.22% of the total respondents. Meanwhile, 34 respondents identified as male, making up 37.78% of the total. This indicates that the majority of women have delighted in spending time with their families in the Cuyapo tourist destinations. The responders state that they arrive at, Nueva Ecija to appreciate the municipality's natural beauty and have a good time with their family.

Women in the Philippines tend to show greater enthusiasm for visiting sites compared to men. This is attributed to women attaching significance to these locations. While men may not be as keen on these attractions, believing them to be uninteresting, the research by Mindanao et al. (2020) suggests that there's minimal difference in interests between genders.

## 1.3 Profile of the respondents in terms of Civil Status

*Table 5. The table presents the distribution of respondents according to Civil Status*

| Civil Status | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Single** | 40 | 44.44% |
| **Married** | 46 | 51.11% |
| **Widowed** | 1 | 1.11% |
| **Separated** | 3 | 3.33% |
| **Total:** | 90 | 100% |

Table 3 illustrates the diverse civil status distribution among respondents from Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. According to the result, out of the total 90 respondents surveyed, 38 individuals (42.22%) were classified as single, while 43 respondents (47.78%) reported being married. Additionally, there were 3 widowed respondents, accounting for 3.33% of the total, and 6 respondents (6.67%) reported being separated.

This outcome demonstrates how fulfilling it is for their family to travel to the the tourism sites in Cuyapo. The respondents stated that they preferred to travel to Cuyapo in groups or in pairs. In addition, the visit to the mentioned municipality is meant to be a family-bonding group activity.

## 1.4 Profile of the respondents in terms of Monthly Income

*Table 6. The table presents the distribution of respondents according to Monthly Income*

| Monthly Income | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Below 15,000** | 25 | 27.78% |
| **15,000 – 25,000** | 36 | 40% |
| **25,000 – 30,000** | 18 | 20% |
| **Above 30,000** | 11 | 12.22% |
| **Total:** | 90 | 100% |

Table 4 show the monthly income distribution among tourists in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. Based on the result, of the total 90 respondents surveyed, 25 tourists (27.78%) reported a monthly income below 15,000 pesos, while 36 tourists (40%) fell within the income bracket of 15,000 to 25,000 pesos. Additionally, 18 tourists (20%) indicated a monthly income ranging from 25,000 to 30,000 pesos, with the remaining 11 tourists (12.22%) reporting an income exceeding 30,000 pesos. This outcome demonstrates that most respondents get paid well for their vacation time spent in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. Respondents claim that visiting the aforementioned municipality without any funds within their pocked.

## 2. Assessment of tourism satisfaction in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija using the 5 A's of tourism

## 2.1 Activities

*Table 7. Assessment of tourism satisfaction in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija using 5A's of tourism in terms of Activities*

| Statements | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Satisfaction level of the activities offered to tourists at Armando's Garden Resort and Villas, Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 3.03 | Satisfied | 2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Satisfied with the organization and management of tourist activities at Armando's Garden Resort and Villas. | 2.93 | Satisfied | 4 |
| 3. The activities at Armando's Garden Resort and Villas, Cuyapo, are entertaining and well-planned. | 3.10 | Satisfied | 1 |
| 4. Satisfied with the variety of activities (e.g., tours, sports, entertainment). | 3.01 | Satisfied | 3 |
| 5. The tourist spot is safe to do the activities. | 2.93 | Satisfied | 4 |
| **Average Weighted Mean** | 3.00 | Satisfied | |

According to the result, the statement that got the highest weighted mean of

$\bar{x}$ = 3.10 are entertaining and well- planned. This indicates that the management's effort in planning these activities has successfully accommodated visitors' interests and concerns, enhancing their overall satisfaction and enjoyment of the experience.

At the same time, two statement have received the least weighted mean of

$\bar{x}$ = 2.93, indicating that the tourists noted that the activities were safe to do and they were satisfied with the organizations and management of activities. This suggest that, despite the fact that the activities were pleasurable in and of themselves, there were some perceived about the safety of the tourists when they are doing the activity. For instance, providing a playground or other activity more safety for the children could enhance the overall experience for families.

According to Buhalis, Wu, &Zhang (2018), when a place's safety meets or beyond expectations, visitors are more inclined to come back, recommend it to others, and tell prospective travelers about their positive experience.

**2.2 Accommodation**

*Table 8. Assessment of tourism satisfaction in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija using 5A's of tourism in terms of Accommodation*

| Statements | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Satisfied with the quality and comfort of accommodation options in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 3.33 | Very Satisfied | 1 |
| 2. Satisfied with the availability and affordability of accommodation at Armando's Garden Resort and Villas, Nueva Ecija. | 3.19 | Satisfied | 2 |
| 3. Pleased with the local's hospitality and attitude towards visitors. | 3.1 | Satisfied | 5 |
| 4. Cleanliness of the rooms. | 3.17 | Satisfied | 3 |
| 5. The check in process was timely and efficient. | 3.11 | Satisfied | 4 |
| Average Weighted Mean | 3.18 | Satisfied | |

According to the result, the highest weighted mean of $\bar{x}$ = 3.33 stated that the tourist found that the accommodation options were satisfactory in terms of quality and comfort options in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. This implies that the tourists met their expectations in terms of quality and comfort. This suggests that the accommodations provided amenities and services that were adequate for the tourist's needs and preferences. They likely found the rooms to be clean, well-maintained, and equipped with necessary facilities.

Despite the lowest weighted mean of $\bar{x}$ = 3.1, it was noted that tourists were still pleased with the locals' hospitality and attitude towards visitors, finding them satisfactory. This indicates that while this certain aspects may have scored lower in the evaluation, the warmth and friendliness of the locals positively influenced the tourists' overall experience. It suggests that the hospitality and welcoming nature of the community played a significant role in mitigating any potential shortcomings in other areas, contributing to the tourists' overall satisfaction with their visit.

According to the study of Chawla and Sengupta (2017), attending the guests for specific needs and problems, some additional facilities like offering a room service in a pleasant manner add to the satisfaction of the customer. The study's findings suggest that hotels can

improve customer satisfaction and loyalty by focusing on both basic services and facilities and premium services. Basic services, such as cleanliness, comfort, safety, and affordability are essential for a positive customer experience, while premium services can differentiate the

hotel from competitors and create a memorable experience for the customer. Overall, the study found that tourists' satisfaction is primarily driven by the availability of high-quality facilities and reasonably priced services.

**2.3 Attractions**

*Table 9. Assessment of tourism satisfaction in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija using 5A's of tourism in terms of Attractions*

| Statements | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Satisfied with the variety and quality of tourist attraction at Armando's Garden Resort and Villas, Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 3.22 | Satisfied | 3 |
| 2. Satisfied with the cleanliness of tourist attraction in Armando's Garden Resort and Villas, Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 3.26 | Very Satisfied | 2 |
| 3. The tourist spot preserved its natural beauty. | 3.22 | Satisfied | 4 |
| 4. The tourist destination has a unique image. | 3.01 | Satisfied | 5 |
| 5. The tourist spot respect the natural environment. | 3.27 | Very Satisfied | 4 |
| Average Weighted Mean | 3.20 | Satisfied | |

Accordance with the result, the highest weighted mean of x̄ = 3.27 stated that the tourist spot respect the natural environment. This high level of satisfaction indicates that tourists appreciate and value efforts made by the management to preserve and protect the natural surroundings. It reflects positively on the destination's sustainability practices and can contribute to its attractiveness to eco-conscious travelers who prioritize environmentally responsible tourism experiences.

On the contrary, the lowest rank description got the lowest weighted mean of

x̄ = 3.01 stated that despite it being the lowest, the tourists still found that they were still satisfied with the tourists destinations unique image. This indicates that while the destination may have some shortcomings or areas for improvement, such as infrastructure or facilities, its distinctiveness and appeal were still appreciated by visitors.

The unique characteristics, cultural heritage, or natural beauty of the destination likely contributed to its attractiveness despite any drawbacks. This suggests that the destination's identity and charm played a significant role in maintaining tourists' satisfaction levels, even if it didn't score as highly in certain aspects compared to other statements.

The study from Stefănica and Butnaru (2015) stated that the environment and tourism interact, with the natural, cultural, historical, and social climate potential driving visitors' travel, and maintaining a clean and natural environment is crucial. Furthermore, the process of image exploration involves identifying visually distinctive features and describing the unique elements present within that uniqueness (Habibullah & Ekomadyo 2021).

**2.4 Accessibility**

*Table 10. Assessment of tourism satisfaction in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija using 5A's of tourism in terms of Accessibility*

| Statements | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Satisfied with the availability of parking facility for tourist at Armando's Garden Resort and Villas, Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 3.07 | Satisfied | 2 |
| 2. Satisfied with the road condition of Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 2.97 | Satisfied | 5 |
| 3. Easy to get information about getting to and go around Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 3.08 | Satisfied | 1 |
| 4. Satisfied with the signage and directions. | 2.98 | Satisfied | 4 |
| 5. Any difficulties in finding the place. | 2.99 | Satisfied | 3 |
| Average Weighted Mean | 3.02 | Satisfied | |

In accordance with the result, the highest statement got the weighted mean of

x̄ = 3.08 stated that the tourists found that going to the destinations in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija were easy and satisfactory. This implies that tourists found it easy to obtain information about the various destinations they wanted to visit. The availability of clear and accessible information likely facilitated their travel planning and navigation within the area. This suggests that there were effective communication channels, signage, maps, or local resources that helped tourists make informed decisions and navigate the destinations smoothly.

On the other hand, the lowest weighted mean x̄ = 2.97 stated that tourists were still satisfied with the road condition of Cuyapo, Nyeva Ecija. This implies that even though the road's condition might not have been ideal or up to standards, it still met travelers' standards. It suggests that the roads were probably usable and navigable, even they might have had some flaws like rough surfaces, road imperfections, or no signage. Despite these shortcomings, travelers considered the roads in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija, were in good enough shape to get them where they needed to go. This suggests that the condition of the roads did not strongly affect the tourists' entire travel experience, which added to their contentment.

Kusumawardhani & Bogor's (2022) study used a quantitative approach to collect data, with 100 visitors to the Gunung Pancar Nature Tourism Park serving as respondents. The authors used the opportunity to conduct a study about tourist satisfaction with accessibility. The findings demonstrate that since accessibility has been demonstrated, it may be used to evaluate visitor pleasure.

**2.5 Amenities**

*Table 11. Assessment of tourism satisfaction in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija using 5A's of tourism in terms of Amenities*

| Statements | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Satisfied with the availability and quality of amenities (e.g restroom, parking, information center) for tourist at Armando's Garden Resort and Villas, Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 3.14 | Satisfied | 3 |
| 2. The tourist spot offered an internet connection. | 3.15 | Satisfied | 2 |
| 3. The tourist spot offered sufficient parking provision. | 3.05 | Satisfied | 5 |
| 4. Satisfied with the accessibility and convenience of amenities for tourist at Armando's Garden Resort and Villas, Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. | 3.10 | Satisfied | 4 |
| 5. The tourist spot offered toiletries. | 3.22 | Satisfied | 1 |
| Average Weighted Mean | 3.22 | Satisfied | |

Based on the result, the highest statement got the weighted mean of x̄ = 3.22 which suggested that tourists found the tourist spot satisfactory because it offered enough toiletries. This indicates that the availability of toiletries, such as soap, shampoo, towels, and other essentials, contributed positively to the tourists' experience. Having access to these amenities likely enhanced their comfort and convenience during their visit. It implies that the tourist spot paid attention to the needs of visitors and provided essential facilities to ensure a pleasant stay.

However, the lowest rank got the weighted mean of x̄ = 3.05 stated the tourist spot offered sufficient parking provision, suggesting that while there may have been some room for improvement, tourists still found adequate parking facilities available at the tourist spot. The provision of sufficient parking likely contributed to the convenience and ease of access for visitors arriving by car, ensuring they had a place to park without significant difficulty. Although it may not have been exceptional, the availability of parking was evidently satisfactory to the tourists, contributing positively to their overall experience at the tourist spot.

According to the study of Minh, Rahman, and Thi (2023), travelers should describe their expectations in context because this is essential to knowing what they anticipate from a location. This study sheds light on the behaviors of tourists, particularly on their expectations, experiences, and level of satisfaction. Thus, this information can be utilized by stakeholders in tourist management and help to create marketing strategies and initiatives that work.

**3. Proposal for a Tourism Development Plan**

*Table. 12. Tourism Development Plan*

| 5 A'S OF TOURISM | PROBLEMS IN 5 A'S OF TOURISM | POSSIBLE SOLUTION | OBJECTIVES/ PUR- POSE | TIME FRAME | ESTI- MATED COST (in Peso) | CON- CERNED UNIT | TARGET OUTPUT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Activities** | Quality Assurance | Ensure that all activities are well-planned, safe, and conducted by knowledge-able guides or instructors to guarantee a positive experience. | 1. Ultimately, the goal is to create memorable experiences for tourists while supporting the local economy and community development. 2. Aim to attract more visitors, encourage longer stays, and generate positive word-of-mouth recommend-dations. | Within 1-2 months | 200,000 | Local govern-ment, tourism office, and enforcement agencies | Generating additional income for the comm-unity through tourism activities, such as guided tours, homestays, or the sale of local crafts and products. |
| **Accommo-dation** | 1.Quality Standards  2.Personalized Welcome | 1. Regular inspections and maintenance checks should be conducted to address any issues promptly.  2. Train staff to provide a warm and personalized welcome to guests upon arrival, addressing them by name and offering assistance | To meet and exceed guest expectations, leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately, business success in the tourism industry. | Within 1-2 months | 300,000–400,000  (Requires policy, monitoring, and staffing) | Manage-ment team | Accommodation facilities can develop guest satisfaction, operational efficiency, and financial performance, ultimately positioning themselves as preferred destinations for travelers and gaining a competitive edge in the hospitality industry. |
| **Attraction** | Collaboration | Partnering with local businesses, communities, and authorities to create unique experiences and promote lesser-known attractions. | Aim to meet the diverse interests and preferences of travelers, ultimately increasing visitor satisfaction, length of stay, and likelihood of return visits. | Within a year | (Varies depending on specific projects) | Tourism management and Government tourism board | Increased visitor numbers, longer average stays, positive feedback, and reviews, and repeat visits. |

| Accessi-bility | Community Engagement | Involve local communities and businesses in the planning and management of parking facilities and signage to ensure that solutions are tailored to the needs and preferences of both tourists and residents. | By providing clear signage, ample parking facilities, and easy-to-follow directions, destinations can create a more enjoyable and stress-free experience for tourists. | Within 1-3 months | 500,000 (Vary depending on factors such as the size of the comm-unity) | Local authorities, Tourism management, and Construc-tion profession-als | 1. Improved economic outcomes, such as increased tourism revenue and local business activity. 2.Sustaina-ble and inclusive tourism practices that benefit the community in the long term. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Amenities** | Infrastructure | 1. Invest in the construction and maintenance of high-quality amenities such as restrooms, picnic areas, seating areas, and playgrounds to cater to the needs of visitors. 2. As well as access to amenities such as water, first aid, and Wi-Fi. | To create a tourism environment that meets the needs and expectations of visitors while also benefiting the destination's economy, society, and environment in the long term. | Within 6 months | 300,00 – 600,000 | Government tourism board, Destination marketing organization | Contribute to a positive visitor experience, economic prosperity, and the long-term sustain-ability of the tourism destination. |

The researchers used the data gathered in formulating the Tourism Development Plan from 90 respondents. The researchers used the data gathered in formulating the Tourism Development Plan for the respondents. Table 12 is the proposed tourism development plan to raise the level of tourist satisfaction utilizing the 5A's of tourism, based on the findings of the evaluation of the satisfaction experienced by tourists in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija.

It contains different columns. The 1st column addressing the concern for quality assurance of satisfaction with the level of activities offered to tourists, well-planned and entertaining that shows the result of the survey from the respondents; 2nd column addressing the quality standards and personalizing welcome to tourists with the quality and comfort of accommodation offered and check in process; 3rd column contains the collaboration with local communities to satisfied the tourist with the variety and quality of tourist attraction offered; 4th column addressing community engagement with signage and directions, and availability of parking facility for tourist; lastly, the 5th column refers to infrastructure development in amenities offering with internet connection that will answer the items on the column 2nd, addressing facilities to become more efficient.

## III. CONCLUSION

1. The researchers employed surveys to gather quantitative data from tourists in Cuyapo, focusing on the "5 A's of Tourism" framework: attractions, activities, amenities, accessibility, and accommodation. To analyze the collected data, the researchers utilized statistical measures such of weighted mean. The population under study was defined as all tourists visiting Cuyapo, with a simple random sampling method employed to select survey participants.

2. Findings from the study indicate that tourists generally express high levels of satisfaction with their experiences in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija. Amenities were ranked the highest among the 5 A's, suggesting that tourists found the local attractions were satisfied with the quality of amenities, internet connection, ample parking, accessibility, and toiletries provided.

3. Activities, however, were ranked the lowest, indicating potential areas for improvement such as the organization and management of these activities, and the safety of the tourist spot. The attractions were diverse, well-built, clean, and knowledgeable, providing a memorable and enjoyable experience for visitors of all ages.

4. The accommodation were deemed satisfactory in terms of quality, comfort, availability, affordability, local hospitality, room cleanliness, and efficient check-in process. In terms of accessibility, respondents reported clear directions and signage, along with convenient transportation options, making it easy to navigate around the destination.

5. Despite these positive findings, the study suggests that there is room for improvement in Cuyapo's tourism facilities to attract more tourists. Therefore, the research consists of helpful knowledge concerning the state of tourism in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, as well as suggestions for future improvements that can bring in more potential visitors.

## IV. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Tourists should not only focus on their satisfaction but also prioritize caring for the natural environment by practicing sustainable travel behaviors and supporting conservation efforts. This dual approach ensures a positive impact on the destination's ecosystems and fosters responsible tourism practices for future generations to enjoy.

2. Based on the study's insights, business owners in the tourism sector should prioritize optimizing their offerings to align with tourist preferences. This includes maintaining high standards of accommodation quality, affordability, and hospitality. Owners can also consider incorporating eco-friendly practices to appeal to environmentally conscious tourists and differentiate their businesses in the market.

3. Workers should be equipped with training programs that focus on enhancing their skills in providing exceptional accommodation services and cultivating a welcoming and friendly atmosphere for tourists. By emphasizing the significance of customer satisfaction, cultural sensitivity, and effective communication. Workers can create memorable experiences for visitors, leading to increased patronage, positive reviews, and ultimately, a thriving tourism industry in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija.

4. To further contribute to community development, it is essential to focus on sustainable tourism practices that benefit residents. This could involve investing in infrastructure development, promoting cultural exchanges, and supporting local businesses that align with the community's values. Engaging residents in tourism initiatives can foster a sense of ownership and pride in their town.

5. The Department of Tourism should set standards, enforce regulations, and driving promotional activities. In order to enhance the tourism experience in the region, showcasing its cultural heritage and natural beauty to visitors. This strategic role contributes to the economic development and preservation of Cuyapo's identity as a top tourist destination.

6. To ensure a sustainable tourism environment for future generations, it is crucial to encourage youth involvement in tourism initiatives and education programs can help instill a sense of responsibility towards maintaining the town's unique identity and resources.

7. The study lays the groundwork for future research by highlighting the importance of understanding tourist satisfaction and the 5A's in tourism development. Future researchers can delve deeper into specific aspects such as the impact of cultural events, community engagement strategies, and sustainable tourism practices to further enrich the knowledge base in the field.

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# Using TED Talks as Authentic Materials to Enhance High School Students' English Listening Skills

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*Abstract— Previous studies have demonstrated that educational media delivered via TED Talks effectively stimulates students' interest and improves English listening skills. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the effects of incorporating TED Talks as authentic materials on English listening skills of eleventh-grade students at a high school in Ho Chi Minh City. The study also explores students' perceptions of the use of TED Talks to improve listening skills. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, including pre-and post-tests, the questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews with the participation of 80 eleventh-grade students divided into experimental and control groups. The findings revealed that TED Talks improve students' English listening skills, and that most students perceived TED Talks as beneficial for enhancing listening skills. However, challenges associated with learning listening from TED Talks were also acknowledged. Based on the findings, pedagogical implications and recommendations are offered for teachers and students to optimize the integration of TED Talks in English listening practice.*

*Keywords— Authentic materials, EFL students, Listening skills, High school context, TED Talks*

## I.    INTRODUCTION

Listening is crucial in language development as a comprehensible input for second language acquisition. According to Nunan and Carter (2001), listening is consistently interrelated and intervenes with other language skills. Therefore, teaching listening is an essential part of any language learning curriculum (Richards, 2008). Even though it is essential in EFL contexts, listening comprehension is still perceived as a "Cinderella skill" in foreign language education (Nunan, 1997). In the Vietnamese context, several studies reveal that listening is the most challenging for EFL students (Ngo, 2016; Tran & Duong, 2020; Vu & Shah, 2016). Compared to other skill areas, teaching and learning EFL listening is often reported to be "lagging behind" (Vu & Shah, 2016).

Despite the availability of English teaching materials, teachers must carefully consider the materials in use to facilitate learning effectively (Dat, 2008).

Importantly, learners should be provided with various alternative materials rather than just textbooks to improve listening comprehension. The advent of technology and the Internet have revolutionized learning through audio-visual media. TED, a non-profit organization established in 1984, provides in-depth presentations in more than 40 languages on more than 300 studies under six themes: Technology, Business, Design, Education, Global Issues, Science, and Technology. Gallo (2014) claimed that TED Talks have transformed how individuals learn and interact with new information. These presentations are particularly beneficial for language learners and teachers. Using TED Talks as authentic materials has proved to be a game-changer. According to Park and Cha (2013), TED Talks are authentic and inspiring due to their diverse topics. Tatyana et al. (2021) praised TED Talks for their authenticity, accessibility, diversity, utility, and user-friendliness. Furthermore, Tilwani et al. (2022) noted that combining speech, texts, and pictures makes understanding more

accessible, as learners with low-level listening skills find it easier to grasp audio-visual materials than audio-only materials.

Despite its proven benefits in English language teaching, particularly for listening, TED Talks are a relatively new concept in the Vietnamese EFL context. This study examines the effects of TED Talks as authentic materials on listening skills for EFL students at high schools. The study also addresses students' perceptions regarding the benefits and challenges of practising listening via TED Talks. The study attempted to address two research questions as follows:

1. What are the effects of TED Talks on English listening skills for high school students?

2. What are high school students' perceptions of using TED Talks as authentic materials to learn English listening skills?

## II.          A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Teaching and Learning English Listening Skills

Richards (2009) defined listening skills as the capacity to receive and interpret messages accurately within the communication process. Moreover, listening is widely recognized as the initial step in acquiring a new language. Krashen's Input Hypothesis posits that comprehensible input is crucial for language acquisition, with listening being the primary channel through which learners receive this input (Krashen, 1992). This process highlights the pivotal role of listening in understanding language and fostering proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing skills within the EFL context.

In the pursuit of enhancing their English listening skills, EFL students often confront numerous challenges. Drawing insights from multiple scholarly sources, Brown (2000) identified eight distinctive features of spoken language that pose obstacles to effective listening: clustering of information, redundancy, use of reduced forms, variability in performance, colloquial expressions, speech rate, stress patterns, rhythm, intonation, and interactive elements. In another aspect, Baker and Westrup (2000) discovered that students struggle with listening to cassettes or speaking due to a lack of visual cues.

With regard to teaching listening in the classroom, EFL teachers face challenges in teaching English listening skills due to variances in learners' listening skills and learning styles, requiring diverse approaches (Ngo, 2016; Tran & Duong, 2020; Vu & Shah, 2016). Another challenge is the scarcity of access to authentic English recording materials (Ngo & Ha, 2022; Nguyen, 2016). Many teachers find it challenging to source appropriate

listening materials that authentically mirror real-life language use. This difficulty is compounded by the scarcity of interactive and engaging activities designed to enhance listening skills, making it harder for teachers to captivate and motivate their students effectively (Ngo & Ha, 2022; Nguyen, 2016). Additionally, listening skills assessment often remains skewed towards grammar, lacking a balanced approach, despite recent reforms in high school examinations (Tran & Duong, 2020).

### 2.2 TED Talks as Authentic Materials for Learning English Listening Skills

Initially designed for a global audience, TED Talks offer real-life examples of spoken English, including diverse accents, styles, and vocabularies, making them ideal for language-learning contexts. TED Talks provide young learners with early exposure to authentic speech, familiarity with false starts, pauses, and fillers, and offer a model for incorporating TED Talks into EFL listening practice. Maria et al. (2018) highlighted that TED, an accessible online platform and application, allows students to view videos featuring English speakers from diverse global backgrounds. These speakers engage audiences in an engaging and accessible manner, discussing various topics that cater to various interests. Given that every TED Talk includes a distinctive feature known as an "interactive transcript", the combination of reading and watching audiovisual materials is a highly beneficial experience for learners (Duong & Nguyen, 2022).

Previous studies have shown that TED Talks can significantly improve English learners' listening skills. A study by Rashtchi and Mazraehno (2019) found that TED Talks were more beneficial than textbooks for listening development in Iranian EFL learners. Gavenila et al. (2021) also found that integrating TED Talks into English classes can lead to better listening comprehension. Concerning the Vietnamese ELT context, Nguyen (2016) conducted action research at a university, finding that TED lectures improved listening comprehension and vocabulary and accustomed students to various English accents.

## III.          METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research site and participants

The current study was conducted at Tran Van Giau High School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It is a public school founded in 2012 with three grades from 10 to 12 and administered by the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Education and Training. The school curriculum, including English, is governed by the national general education curriculum. The eleventh grade English curriculum follows the General Education Program guidelines of

Ministry of Education and Training, covering 105 academic periods during the academic year. The English textbook for eleventh grade EFL students is English 11 Friends Global.

Convenience sampling was used in this study as these learners are readily and easily available to the researcher (Creswell, 2012). The study involved 80 eleventh grade EFL students from Tran Van Giau High School in the academic year 2023-2024, divided into experimental and control groups. 62 students (77.5%) have learned English for 8–12 years and 18 (22.5%) for 4–7 years. Their English proficiency level is expected to be at Level 2 based on the Vietnam 6-level Language Proficiency Framework.

**3.2 Research instruments**

A diverse array of instruments was offered to gather data related to the research problems. Quantitative instruments included listening pre- and post-tests, questionnaires, while qualitative instrument was semi-structured interviews.

The study utilized pre-and post-tests for both control and experimental groups to assess the effect of TED Talks on the enhancement of EFL students' listening skills. The pre-test was a self-constructed test administered by the instructor (researcher) to assess different skill groups related to listening skills. The post-test was similar in format, types of tasks, and number of tasks, but different in content. The test consisted of three parts with 20 items. The format, including multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions, was chosen due to their familiarity with participants' understanding of academic listening material.

A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to explore the EFL students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of learning English listening skills through TED Talks. The questionnaire adapted from Wu (2020), Puspita and Amelia (2020), and Gavenila et al. (2021), consists of three parts: Part 1 (4 items) provides personal information, Part 2 (10 items) discusses the benefits of learning English listening skills through TED Talks, including vocabulary enhancement, cultural awareness, and motivation, and Part 3 (6 items) addresses challenges such as language complexity, speech, and accents.

Finally, semi-structured interviews consisting of eight open-ended questions were conducted with eight participants to collect qualitative data to gain a deeper understanding and support quantitative data collected from the questionnaire. Semi-structured interview protocols were aligned with the questionnaire domains.

The Cronbach's Alpha Indexes of test items and questionnaire items were acceptable as displayed as

follows: the pre-test of the control and experimental group = .905 and = .877, respectively; the post-test of the control and experimental group = .847 and = .939, respectively; the questionnaire items measuring participants' perceptions of practising listening via TED Talks regarding the benefits (10 items) = .833, and challenges (6 items) = .878.

**3.3 Procedures for data collection and analysis**

The process of collecting data was organized into three stages. Before the study, two groups participated in a pre-test. The Sig (2-tailed) value was greater than .05 (.930 > .05), indicating that the differences in the pre-test were not statistically significant. This result confirmed that the two groups were homogeneous before the treatment. During the treatment, the experimental group received eight TED Talks lessons and scaffolding activities over eight weeks, while the control group received traditional sessions. Both groups underwent a post-test after the treatment to examine the effect of TED Talks on the enhancement of listening skills for EFL students. After treatment, participants received questionnaires and were informed of their purpose and confidentiality. It took the participants around 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Eight experimental group members volunteered to join the semi-structured interviews a week later.

For data analysis, the pre-and post-tests were calculated and compared using The Descriptive Statistics and Paired-Samples t-test to examine the students' listening skills of the two groups before and after the treatment. For the questionnaire, the SPSS Descriptive Analysis was used to determine high school EFL students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using TED Talks to practice listening skills. The meaning of the means scores (M) for EFL students' perceptions of the use of TED Talks to learn listening was interpreted based on the five-point Linkert scale criteria as follows: strongly disagree (1.00 -1.80); disagree (1.81 - 2.60); neutral (2.61-3.40); agree (3.41 - 4.20); strongly agree (4.21 - 5.00). Qualitative data analysis involved content analysis of semi-structured interviews, with responses coded as S1, S2, ... to S8.

# IV.    RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**4.1 Results**

**4.1.1 The Effect of TED Talks on EFL Students' Listening Skills**

The Descriptive Statistics and Paired-Samples t-test were utilized to compare the mean scores of the listening skills within the control group and the experimental group

in the pre-test and post-test. The results are depicted in the tables below:

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the mean scores within the control group and the experimental group before and after the treatment*

| Tests | Group | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test | Control | 40 | 3 | 12 | 6.55 | 2.087 |
| | Experimental | 40 | 0 | 13 | 6.50 | 2.891 |
| Post-test | Control | 40 | 2 | 14 | 7.35 | 2.896 |
| | Experimental | 40 | 4 | 15 | 8.63 | 2.733 |

*Table 2. Paired Sample t-Test Results within each Group*

| Pre-test and Post-test | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Control | -.800 | 3.048 | .482 | -1.775 | .175 | -1.660 | 39 | .105 |
| Experimental | -2.125 | 3.804 | .601 | -3.342 | -.908 | -3.533 | 39 | .001 |

Considering the mean scores of the participants' listening skills within each group before and after the treatment, as presented in Table 1 and Table 2, the total mean score of listening skills of both groups increased from the pre-test to the post-test. Regarding the control group, the mean score increased from the pre-test (M = 6.55) to the post-test (M= 7.35). However, the Sig (2-tailed) value was greater than .05 (.105 > .05), which claimed that there was no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group. The experimental group experienced an increase in the mean score from the pre-test (M = 6.50) to the post-test (M = 8.63). Moreover, the Sig (2-tailed) value less than .05 (.001<.05) indicated that the differences between the experimental group's pre-test and post-test were significant. Furthermore, the mean difference of the experimental group (MD = 2.125) was much greater than that of the control group (MD = 800) after the treatment.

The comparative performance of two groups regarding listening skills is illustrated as in Figure 1 below.
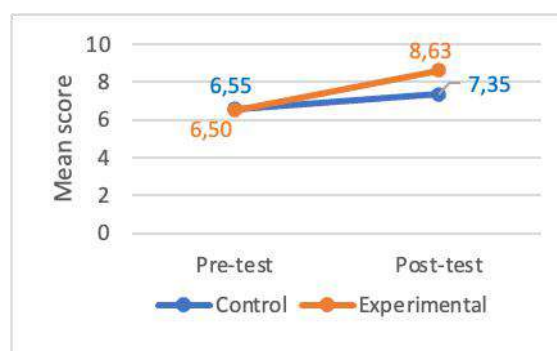


*Fig.1 Listening performance of the control group and experimental group in the pre-test and post-test*

Initially, both groups demonstrated nearly equivalent proficiency levels in the pre-test. However, the post-test scores were notably higher than those recorded in the pre-test, indicating significant progress in listening skills for both groups.

In conclusion, the findings indicated that both groups had an improvement on their post-test, but the experimental group outflanked the control group on the listening post-test. It proved that using TED Talks contributed to enhancing students' listening skills.

**4.1.2. EFL Students' Perceptions of the Benefits and Challenges of Listening through TED Talks**

**Benefits of Using TED Talks to Learn English Listening Skills**

The benefits of acquiring listening skills through TED Talks were categorized by considering several variables, such as listening skills, vocabulary enhancement, cultural awareness, and motivation in learning listening skills. As displayed in Table 3, the total mean scores of students' perceptions of the benefits of learning listening skills through TED Talks were generally high (M= 3.76; SD=.496). The results suggested that most students supported the view that incorporating TED Talks into listening was beneficial.

*Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Benefits of Learning Listening Skills through TED Talks*

| Items | Content | M | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | TED Talks develop my listening comprehension. | 4.02 | .698 | Agree |
| **2** | TED Talks develop my note-taking skill. | 2.88 | .992 | Neutral |
| **3** | TED Talks develop my predictive skill. | 3.25 | .981 | Neutral |
| **4** | TED Talks develop my critical listening skill. | 3.48 | .816 | Agree |
| **5** | TED Talks enhance my vocabulary. | 4.00 | .716 | Agree |
| **6** | TED Talks help me get familiar with the use of English language in daily life. | 4.05 | .552 | Agree |
| **7** | TED Talks raise my cultural awareness. | 3.83 | .781 | Agree |
| **8** | Using TED Talks makes listening lessons more interesting than textbooks do. | 4.15 | .533 | Agree |
| **9** | I eagerly participate in class activities when teachers use TED Talks. | 4.20 | .464 | Agree |
| **10** | I actively practice listening after class by watching additional TED Talks videos. | 3.73 | 1.062 | Agree |
| **Total** | | **3.76** | **0.496** | **Agree** |

Regarding students' perceptions of the benefits of acquiring listening skills via TED Talks, the majority of students proved that TED Talks enhanced their listening comprehension (M=4.02, SD=.698). Students generally agreed that TED Talks enhance their critical listening (M=3.48, SD=.816) and prediction skills (M=3.25, SD=.891). However, some students maintain a neutral stance on the benefits for note-taking (M=2.88; SD= .992). During the interview, students highlighted that their listening skills had enhanced as a result of their exposure to TED lectures. Here are some obvious opinions of the participants: *"By listening to TED Talks, I learn how to take notes of key ideas, examples, and important information from the speech, which will help you learn how to summarize and organize information systematically." (S2); "TED Talks have helped me learn more new words by taking notes and finding the meaning of new words after listening to a lesson. At the same time, it also helps me improve my listening skills by anticipating the answer in advance so I can get the most accurate answer." (S7)*

In terms of vocabulary enhancement, the data analysis showed that most participants strongly agreed that TED Talks enhanced their vocabulary (M=4.00, SD=.716) as well as helped them get familiar with the use of English language in daily life (M=4.05, SD=.552). They also discovered that strengthening their listening skills by viewing TED Talks benefited them in several ways, including broadening their vocabulary to include academic, colloquial, and slang terms. For example, some students gave their comments as follows: *"TED Talks helped me access real language and improve my vocabulary. Furthermore, each listening lesson has a clear, easy-to-understand topic." (S4); "TED Talks are really effective in providing a real-world context for language learning, because the content will give the audience with a specific view and also somewhat make it easier for them to visualize." (S5); "TED Talks have provided me with a lot of vocabulary on many areas within each topic, so it has increased my vocabulary and improved my skills the times I listened to the topics." (S8)*

Furthermore, participants acknowledged that TED lectures not only improved their listening skills but also increased their cultural awareness (M=3.83, SD=.781). This figure was consistent with the following student perspectives: *"TED Talks open up cultures around the world through many people living in different regions, so the way they communicate, the way they view problems, and the way they communicate depends on each culture, region, country." (S1); "Additionally, TED Talks frequently address global issues, social movements, and cultural phenomena, further contributing to viewers' understanding of the interconnectedness of the world and*

*fostering empathy and appreciation for diverse cultures."* (S3)

Considering learning motivation, the results indicated that most students strongly believed that incorporating TED Talks into listening lessons was more interesting than using textbooks (M=4.15, SD=.533). As a result, this enhanced their motivation to actively participate in class activities (M=4.02, SD=.698). The majority of students claimed to engage in active listening practice by watching extra TED Talks videos after class (M=3.73, SD=1.062). This figure aligned with the following thoughts given by the participants in question: *"There are many favorite topics that I find on TED Talks. These contents help me both learn a foreign language and also provide me with a lot of interesting knowledge about the fields I'm interested in." (S3); "TED Talks motivate*

*my language learning by giving topics a real-world context that really engages the audience; In addition, TED Talks speakers know how to convey content and they also make use of their language." (S6)*

**Challenges in Using TED Talks to Learn Listening Skills**

The challenges in acquiring listening skills through TED Talks were explored by considering several variables relating to TED Talks' language complexity, speech rate and varied accents. The data presented in Table 4 signified that the total mean scores of students' perceptions of the challenges in learning listening skills through TED Talks were high (M=3.47; SD=.719). The study found that EFL students face challenges in learning listening skills through TED Talks, including language complexity, rapid pace, and diverse accents.

*Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Challenges in Learning Listening Skills through TED Talks*

| Items | Content | M | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | The language used in TED Talks is challenging for me to comprehend. | 2.88 | .939 | Neutral |
| 12 | I struggle with identifying key points and main ideas while listening to TED Talks. | 2.93 | 1.023 | Neutral |
| 13 | The technical vocabulary used in TED Talks poses a challenge for my understanding. | 4.08 | .730 | Agree |
| 14 | The grammatical structures in TED Talks are complex. | 3.60 | 1.057 | Agree |
| 15 | The speed at which TED Talk speakers talk makes it challenging for me to follow and understand the content. | 3.30 | .966 | Neutral |
| 16 | I find it difficult to focus on the content of TED Talks due to the diverse accents of the speakers. | 4.02 | .698 | Agree |
| **Total** | | **3.47** | **0.719** | **Agree** |

The data analysis revealed that the majority of participants agreed that the technical terms (M=4.08; SD= .730) and specific complex grammatical structures (M=3.60; SD= 1.057) employed in TED Talks posed a challenge for their comprehension when learning listening skills. During the interview, some students provided their thoughts as follows: *"I have difficulty in listening TED Talks because some topics in TED Talks may use specialized terms, complex vocabulary or quite technical language." (S2); "TED Talks often cover complex topics and use advanced vocabulary, which can be challenging, especially those at lower proficiency levels." (S3)* However, a few respondents maintained a neutral viewpoint on the level of difficulty of the language utilized in TED Talks for their understanding (M=2.88; SD= .939). Similarly, some students reported their problems with identifying key points and main ideas when listening to TED Talks (M=2.93; SD= 1.023). These findings implied

that the use of language generally did not pose a barrier for EFL listeners.

Several learners found it challenging to follow and understand the content of TED Talks speakers due to their rapid pace (M=3.30; SD=.966). Accordingly, the diverse accents of TED Talks presenters were perceived as a hindrance for EFL learners, making it difficult for them to focus on the content. During the interview, a number of students expressed the following views regarding this issue: *"Speaking quite fast and sentences are often very long to fully understand the meaning, each person's accent will be different so when listening you also need to grasp their pronunciation." (S1); "TED Talks speakers may come from various regions, and this diversity in accents can sometimes pose a challenge for learners." (S3)*

Semi-structured interviews further revealed that despite challenges in learning listening skills from TED Talks, interviewees believe these issues can be found in other materials and still consider TED Talks helpful for

enhancing knowledge. *"Compared to other authentic materials, I still find TED Talks to be a worthy application to improve my knowledge and my listening." (S5)* Interviewees also expressed the need for TED Talks support to enhance their listening skills, suggesting strategies like segmented listening, subtitles, dictionary app use, and script writing.

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1. The Effects of TED Talks on Listening Skills for EFL Students

The results revealed that using TED Talks has proven to have positive effects on improving the listening skills of EFL learners. It is supported by the result of the study of Rashtchi and Mazraehno (2019) in which there was a statistically significant difference in student's listening post-test scores between the experimental group and the control group. Similarly, the positive responses from 8 participants demonstrated the effectiveness of TED Talks as a medium for improving their listening skills. The present finding supports prior studies that demonstrated that students who were taught using TED Talks achieved higher levels of listening skills compared to those who did not receive this type of instruction (Damayanti & Sumarningsih, 2022; Tilwani et al., 2022). In addition, the current study's results align with Wu (2020)'s, which showed that most students improved their listening comprehension after learning the TED Talks by recalling their background knowledge and analyzing content in the TED Talks. Particularly, in the Vietnamese ELT context, the results are supported by the quantitative and qualitative study conducted by Nguyen (2016) to explore the impact of TED Talks on English-majored students' listening comprehension.

### 4.2.2. Benefits of Learning Listening Skills through TED Talks

Regarding students' perceptions of the benefits of acquiring listening skills via TED Talks, most students strongly agreed that TED Talks improved their listening skills. Considering students' perceptions of the advantages of learning listening skills via TED Talks in terms of vocabulary enhancement, the data analysis showed that most participants strongly agreed that TED Talks enhanced their vocabulary and helped them get familiar with English in daily life. Tatyana et al. (2021) demonstrated that TED Talks provided a richer context for guessing word meanings through the animations. This corresponds to the study of Nguyen and Boers (2019) which showed how vocabulary intake from a TED Talk might be influenced by content retelling.

Considering other skills, it was anticipated that through the use of TED Talks in their listening sessions, it was expected that experimental group participants would enhance predictive skill, critical listening, and note-taking skill. The results are supported by Al Badi (2020) who confirmed learners' interest in TED Talks, indicating a higher level of engagement throughout the listening lesson especially with their predictive activities. These findings are consistent with the previous research performed by Baker and Westrup (2000), who indicated that using TED Talks could develop EFL learners' note-taking skill.

According to the findings, participants acknowledged that TED lectures improved their listening skills and increased their cultural awareness. The gained results in this study are supported by Maria et al. (2018), who examined the influences of TED Talks on raising cultural awareness. The research findings align with the claims made by Tatyana et al. (2021) that TED Talks triggered students' participation, as well as enhanced their motivation in listening activities due to their diverse and captivating topics.

It could be seen that integrating TED Talk videos into the Vietnamese EFL context may produce beneficial results for EFL learners. Therefore, TED Talks are highly suggested for incorporation into foreign language education due to authentic, informative, and inspirational speeches for instructional purposes.

### 4.2.3. Challenges in Learning Listening Skills through TED Talks

The findings implied that EFL students encountered challenges while practicing listening skills via TED Talks. The results indicated that the total mean scores of student's perceptions of the challenges in learning listening skills through TED Talks were high. The research findings are also in accordance with Astika and Kurniawan (2010) and Gavenila et al. (2021), who confirmed various challenges encountered by the students, including unfamiliar accents, fast speed of speech, and new vocabulary. Regarding language complexity, the data analysis revealed that most participants found TED Talks' technical terms and grammatical structures challenging for their comprehension. TED Talks require a minimum of 5,000 word families to support their listening skills, as reported by Coxhead and Walls (2012). Considering the speech rate, several students attested that they needed help to follow and comprehend the material because of the TED Talk speakers' speedy delivery. The current finding agrees with Takaesu (2013) who explained that TED Talks frequently involve fast-paced and rapid speech, making it even more challenging for non-native speakers to follow the speaker's flow of thought. Accordingly, the diverse accents of TED Talks presenters pose a challenge for English learners, as research by Astika and Kurniawan

(2010) confirmed that the diversity of accents and pronunciations among TED Talk speakers presents a challenge for English learners who use TED Talks to enhance their listening skills.

To sum up, TED Talks' complex vocabulary, varied accents, and rapid pace can potentially overwhelm beginner or intermediate students, hindering their learning progress. Hence, teachers should offer sufficient assistance by choosing and assessing authentic videos as well as simplifying and designing listening tasks (Al-Jarf, 2021; Nguyen, 2016).

## V.        CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study investigated the use of TED Talks as authentic materials to enhance students' English listening skills at Tran Van Giau High School, along with their perceptions of the advantages and difficulties encountered while practicing listening with TED Talks. Findings suggest that TED Talks significantly enhance students' listening skills. As for the perceived benefits of watching TED Talks, the majority of students regarded TED Talks as advantageous for improving listening skills, vocabulary acquisition, cultural understanding, and learning motivation. Nevertheless, the study also recognized the challenges faced by students, such as the complexity of the language, the rapid pace of speech, and the diverse accents of the speakers.

The study provides pedagogical implications and recommendations for teachers and students to optimize integrating TED Talks into EFL listening practice. It suggests that teachers should consider language proficiency and interests when selecting TED Talks for Vietnamese EFL learners. As mentioned earlier, supportive materials like transcripts, subtitles, scaffolding activities, and active listening strategies can help students cope with the challenges. Students should also set specific learning goals, use supportive resources, and practice pronunciation, intonation, and speaking skills to make use of TED Talks in listening practice.

Though the study employed a mixed method for triangulating the validity and reliability of the data, limitations related to time constraints, the small sample, and research site cannot be avoided. Therefore, future research should include more participants of different competence levels, and replication at other schools to generalize findings to similar EFL contexts. More extensive studies could enhance the validity of the current study and offer a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon from various perspectives.

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# Pantabangan Nueva Ecija Tourism Destination: An Analysis

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*Abstract*— *The quantitative research, titled 'Pantabangan Nueva Ecija Tourism Destination: An Analysis,' provides a precise analysis of Pantabangan as a tourism destination. This study focused on attractions, facilities, and the role of the local community, informing strategic planning and policies for sustainable tourism practices. Data were obtained from 405 individuals, tourists who visited Pantabangan in 2019 and 2023, using the Purposive Sampling Technique. A Likert scale was employed to understand tourism destination attitudes, perceptions, and views in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija. Most respondents were young adults (18–24 years old) and single. They appreciated Pantabangan's facilities, accommodations, and cleanliness. However, improved transport and accessibility were identified as needed enhancements for the tourist experience. Resolving such challenges might increase opportunities for Pantabangan tourism and encourage repeat visits. Visitors used social media to learn about Pantabangan's natural beauty. Family-friendly tourism was essential, as tourists often traveled together. Short-term stays required quick access to sights and activities. Pantabangan's atmosphere, warmth, navigation, amenities, and unexpected activities delighted tourists. Despite transportation and accessibility challenges, Pantabangan attracted most tourists, demonstrating its sustainability. Age influenced travel choices, and occupation impacted tourist destination knowledge.*

*Keywords*— *Pantabangan, Tourism, Attractions, Facilities, Visitors*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism serves as a crucial driver of economic growth and community development, prompting destinations to continually seek enhancements to attract visitors. This study focuses on Pantabangan in Nueva Ecija, Philippines, with the aim of analyzing its tourism landscape, specifically focusing on attractions, facilities, and the role of the local community.

Located strategically in Nueva Ecija, Pantabangan holds untapped potential as a tourism destination. The research delves into the specific attractions that draw visitors to Pantabangan, whether natural, historical, or cultural. Understanding these key factors aids in paving the way for targeted tourism development in the region.

The availability and quality of tourism facilities significantly influence the overall visitor experience. This research assesses the existing facilities in Pantabangan, including accommodations and transportation infrastructure, to determine their adequacy in meeting the needs of tourists. Through this analysis, insights into areas for improvement for sustainable tourism development are gained.

Local communities play a vital role in shaping the overall tourism experience. This study explores the attitudes, cultural practices, and interactions of the people of Pantabangan with tourists. By identifying predictors that impact visitor satisfaction, the aim is to enhance the relationship between tourists and the local community, thus

contributing to the long-term sustainability of the destination.

The research provides a precise analysis of Pantabangan as a tourism destination, with a focus on attractions, facilities, and the role of the local community. The outcomes of this analysis inform strategic planning and policies aimed at fostering sustainable tourism practices that benefit both Pantabangan and its residents.

## Objective of the Study

The objective of the study titled "Pantabangan Nueva Ecija Tourism Destination: An Analysis" is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the tourism dynamics in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija. The study aims to evaluate the existing tourism infrastructure and explore the significance of various tourist attractions within the region. Additionally, it seeks to analyze visitor demographics and preferences to better understand the factors that draw tourists to Pantabangan. Ultimately, the study aims to devise sustainable development strategies that can enhance Pantabangan as a tourist destination, ensuring its long-term viability and appeal.

## Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to identify and describe the tourist destination, Pantabangan from the perspective of selected tourists. Ultimately, the study hoped to develop a context-specific analysis of the Tourism Destination to better contribute to the Tourism benefits of Pantabangan. Specifically, the following questions were answered:

1. How may the socio-demographic profile of the selected tourists of Pantabangan be described in terms of:
    1.1. age;
    1.2. sex;
    1.3. civil status;
    1.4. employment status;
    1.5. income;
    1.6. nationality;
    1.7. highest educational attainment?

2. How may the tourist attraction in Pantabangan be describe in terms of:
    2.1. Infrastructure;
    2.2. Transportation facilities;
    2.3. Accommodation;
    2.4. Accessibility;
    2.5. Cleanliness?

3. How may the respondents travel experience be described in terms of:
    3.1. Places visited;
    3.2. Reasons in visiting tourist destinations;
    3.3. Source of information about tourism destination;
    3.4. Companions in visiting tourism destination;
    3.5. Length of stay in tourism destination;
    3.6. Transportation used in visiting destination;
    3.7. Rate of satisfaction;
    3.8. Revisiting?

4. How may the level of satisfaction of the respondents be described in terms of:
    4.1. Place;
    4.2. People;
    4.3. Accessibility;
    4.4. Facilities;
    4.5. Experience?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the personal characteristics and experiences of tourists of Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija?

6. Proposed Tourism Promotional Plan for the Local Unit Government of Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija.

## II.     METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative and descriptive research design. Quantitative research methods, as defined by Sreekumar (2024), are used to observe events that affect a particular group of individuals, which is the sample population. In this type of research, diverse numerical data are collected through various methods and then statistically analyzed to aggregate the data, compare them, or show relationships among the data. Quantitative research methods broadly include questionnaires, structured observations, and experiments. Also, Descriptive research, as defined by Singh (2023), is a methodological approach that aims to depict the characteristics of a phenomenon or subject under investigation. It serves as a foundational tool for observing, recording, and analyzing the intricate details of a particular topic. This method provides a rich and detailed account that aids in understanding, categorizing, and interpreting the subject matter. Widely employed across diverse fields, its primary objective is to systematically observe and document all variables and conditions influencing the phenomenon.

This research design allowed for the systematic observation and description of the key components of Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija, as a tourism destination.

**Population and Sample of the Study**

The population of the study consists of tourists who visited Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija between the years 2019 and 2023. The sample size for the study is 405 respondents, selected using convenience sampling. This method involves selecting participants who are conveniently accessible to the researchers, ensuring a diverse range of respondents who can provide valuable insights into the tourism dynamics of Pantabangan. The study focuses on capturing the experiences and perceptions of these tourists to inform sustainable tourism development strategies for the region.

**Instrumentation**

The study's instrumentation consists of a properly constructed survey questionnaire used to collect quantitative data from respondents. The study uses a Likert scale to assess travelers' attitudes, opinions, and perspectives of Pantabangan as a tourism destination. The questionnaire is divided into sections that address demographics, satisfaction levels, and detailed feedback on Pantabangan's amenities and attractions.

To achieve a thorough examination, the acquired data were examined statistically. The key statistical treatment utilized was the frequency counts and percentage to determine the The demographic profile, travel experience, and level of satisfaction of the respondents. Moreover, the used weighted mean calculation, which quantified the central tendency of respondents' ratings on various aspects of their travel experience. Then, the correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationships between various variables, such as demographic features and satisfaction levels.

The weighted mean was verbally described using the following scale:

| Verbal Interpretation | Weighted Mean | Descriptive Interpretation | Impact Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4.21 – 5.00 | Certain | Severe Impact |
| Agree | 3.41 – 4.20 | Likely | Major Impact |
| Neutral | 2.61 – 3.40 | Undecided | Moderate Impact |
| Disagree | 1.81 – 2.60 | Unlikely | Minor Impact |
| Strongly Disagree | 1.00 – 1.80 | Never | Insignificant |

This comprehensive approach enables the researchers to systematically collect and analyze data, providing valuable insights that inform strategic planning

and policies aimed at fostering sustainable tourism development in the region.

**Hypothesis of the Study**

This study examines the tourism landscape of Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija, Philippines. To rigorously investigate this objective, the research posits the hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between the personal characteristics and experiences of tourists in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija.

### III.    RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This comprehends the respondents' demographic profile, Tourist Attraction Assessment, Travel experiences, Satisfaction Levels, The Correlation Between the Personal Characteristics and Experiences, and the investigators' Proposed Tourism Promotional Plan.
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

*Table 1.1 Age Profile*

| Age | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Under 18 | 25 | 6.173 |
| 18 – 24 | 237 | 58.519 |
| 25 – 34 | 82 | 20.247 |
| 35 – 44 | 33 | 8.148 |
| 45 – 54 | 20 | 4.938 |
| 55 – 64 | 7 | 1.728 |
| 65 and older | 1 | 0.247 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

The age distribution of respondents shows a large proportion of young adults aged 18-24, which comprise 58.52% of the sample. The age group of 25-34 comes in second, resulting in 20.25%. The large number of young people indicates that Pantabangan is an attraction for them, most likely due to their adventurous spirit and desire to explore natural beauties.

*Table 1.2 Sex*

| Sex | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 168 | 41.48 |
| Female | 231 | 57.04 |
| Prefer not to say | 6 | 1.48 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

Females participate at a somewhat higher rate than males, comprising 57.04% of respondents. This could reflect broader social trends in which women are becoming more involved in travel and tourist activities.

*Table 1.3 Civil Status*

| Civil Status | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Single | 328 | 80.99 |
| Married | 73 | 18.02 |
| Widowed | 4 | 0.99 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

The majority of respondents, comprising 80.99% of the total, are single, with married individuals being the next largest group. This suggests that younger persons, especially those who are single, may have greater autonomy and adaptability to engage in travel, which in turn leads to their increased presence.

*Table 1.4 Employment Status*

| Employment | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Employed | 139 | 34.32 |
| Unemployed | 31 | 7.65 |
| Student | 192 | 47.41 |
| Self-employed | 40 | 9.88 |
| Others | 3 | 0.74 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

The student population constitutes the majority of respondents, comprising 47.41%, while employed folks make up 34.32%. The substantial proportion of students indicates that educational breaks or holidays are being employed for the purpose of traveling.

*Table 1.5 Income*

| Income | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 20,000 | 137 | 33.827 |
| 20,001 – 40,000 | 49 | 12.099 |
| 40,001 – 60,000 | 13 | 3.210 |
| 60,001 – 80,000 | 9 | 2.222 |
| 80,001 – 100,000 | 1 | 0.247 |
| More than 100,000 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Prefer not to say | 196 | 48.395 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

Approximately 48.40% of the participants chose to withhold their income information. Of those that participated, most earned less than 20,000 units. This suggests that Pantabangan appeals to a wide variety of people, regardless of their income levels.

*Table 1.6 Nationality*

| Nationality | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Filipino | 404 | 99.75 |
| Others | 1 | 0.25 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

Almost all respondents were Filipino (99.75%), highlighting Pantabangan's primary appeal to domestic tourists.

*Table 1.7 Educational Attainment*

| Educational Attainment | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Postgraduate | 18 | 4.43 |
| College | 260 | 64.20 |
| High School | 96 | 23.70 |
| Elementary | 5 | 1.23 |
| Prefer not to say | 26 | 6.42 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

The 64.20% of the respondents had attained a college education. This implies that those with higher levels of education are more likely to possess a heightened awareness and enthusiasm for travel.

1.   Tourist Attraction Assessment for Pantabangan

*Table 2.1 Infrastructure*

| INDICATORS | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Descriptive Interpretation | Impact Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The Infrastructure in Pantabangan is well-maintained. | 4.15 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 2. The facilities and amenities provided are sufficient for tourists. | 4.11 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 3. Signage and information boards are clear and helpful. | 4.10 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 4. Public restrooms are clean and well-maintained. | 3.74 | A | Likely | |
| 5. Recreational areas and parks are accessible and well-designed. | 4.13 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| GRAND MEAN | 4.05 | A | Likely | Major Impact |

Infrastructure in Pantabangan received a positive mean score of 4.05, indicating satisfaction with facilities and signage. Good infrastructure is crucial for enhancing tourist experiences and satisfaction.

*Table 2.2 Transportation Facilities*

| INDICATORS | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Descriptive Interpretation | Impact Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Transportation facilities in Pantabangan are convenient for tourists. | 3.48 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 2. Information about transportation options is readily available. | 3.36 | N | Undecided | Moderate Impact |
| 3. The availability of public transportation options is satisfactory. | 3.40 | N | Undecided | Moderate Impact |
| 4. Parking facilities are ample and well-maintained. | 3.77 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 5. Ease of access to transportation hubs (bus stations, airports, etc.). | 3.33 | N | Undecided | Moderate Impact |
| GRAND MEAN | 3.47 | A | Likely | Major Impact |

Table 2.2 assesses the transportation facilities of Pantabangan, yielding a grand mean of 3.47. This value falls inside the "Agree" range, suggesting a potentially significant positive influence. The rating with the highest value was given to the statement "Parking facilities are abundant and well-maintained," with an average score of 3.77. In contrast, the category "Ease of access to transportation hubs" had the lowest average score of 3.33, indicating a certain level of neutrality in the comments. The findings suggest that although transportation facilities are generally well-regarded, there are specific aspects such as information availability and convenience of access that may need to be enhanced in order to further increase tourist satisfaction.

*Table 2.3 Accommodation*

| INDICATORS | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Descriptive Interpretation | Impact Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Accommodation options in Pantabangan meet my expectations. | 4.06 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 2. Cleanliness and comfort of accommodation are satisfactory. | 4.03 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 3. A variety of accommodation choices caters to different preferences. | 3.97 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 4. Availability of budget-friendly accommodation options. | 3.73 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 5. Access to essential amenities (Wi-Fi, breakfast, etc.) in accommodations. | 3.68 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| *GRAND MEAN* | *3.89* | *A* | *Likely* | *Major Impact* |

Table 2.3 presents a summary of the opinions of the participants on the available accommodation choices in Pantabangan. The overall average rating, also known as the grand mean, is 3.89. This suggests that the available accommodations typically fulfill expectations, as all aspects receive ratings within the "Agree" category. "Accommodation options in Pantabangan meet my expectations" had the highest mean of 4.06, while "Access to essential amenities (Wi-Fi, breakfast, etc.) in accommodations" had the lowest mean of 3.68. Tourists generally express pleasure with the cleanliness, diversity, and affordability of accommodations. However, they also emphasize the need for improvements in important amenities.

*Table 2.4 Accessibility*

| INDICATORS | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Descriptive Interpretation | Impact Descripiton |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Pantabangan is easily accessible from major transportation hubs. | 3.50 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 2. Navigation around Pantabangan is straightforward. | 3.67 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 3. Availability of local transportation options for exploring nearby attractions. | 3.52 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 4. Adequate information on tourist routes and attractions. | 3.78 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 5. Accessibility for differently-abled individuals. | 3.69 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| *GRAND MEAN* | *3.63* | *A* | *Likely* | *Major Impact* |

Table 2.4 assesses the accessibility of Pantabangan, with a grand mean of 3.63, indicating that respondents generally agree that accessibility has a major positive impact. The highest score was for "Adequate information on tourist routes and attractions" with a mean of 3.78, reflecting satisfaction with the information provided. The lowest rating was for "Availability of local transportation options for exploring nearby attractions" with a mean of 3.52, suggesting slight room for improvement. These findings underscore the overall positive perception of accessibility, with particular strength in the availability of information about tourist routes and attractions.

*Table 2.5 Cleanliness*

| INDICATORS | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Descriptive Interpretation | Impact Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Overall cleanliness of Pantabangan is commendable. | 4.17 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 2. Public spaces and attractions are well-maintained and litter-free. | 4.03 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 3. Waste disposal facilities are readily available and accessible. | 4.02 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 4. Efforts are in place for environmental conservation and sustainability. | 4.12 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| 5. Adequate hygiene measures in public spaces (sanitization, etc.). | 3.95 | A | Likely | Major Impact |
| **GRAND MEAN** | **4.06** | **A** | **Likely** | **Major Impact** |

Table 2.5 evaluates the cleanliness of Pantabangan, showing a grand mean of 4.06, indicating strong agreement and a major positive impact. The highest rated item was "Overall cleanliness of Pantabangan is commendable" with a mean of 4.17, while "Adequate hygiene measures in public spaces (sanitization etc.)" had the lowest mean of 3.95. The high scores across all items suggest that cleanliness is a significant strength of Pantabangan, contributing positively to the tourist experience.

2. Travel Experience of Tourist for Pantabangan

*Table 3.1 Places Visited*

| Places Visited | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Pantabangan Dam | 301 | 74.32 |
| Pantabangan Dam View Deck | 220 | 54.32 |
| Pantabangan Lake | 208 | 51.36 |
| Forest Garden | 67 | 16.54 |
| Mount Kaanducian | 21 | 5.18 |
| Farm Ridge by Desmond Farm | 65 | 16.04 |
| Highland Bali Villas | 131 | 32.35 |
| Lake Farm Dela Marre Park | 179 | 44.20 |
| Montana Del Sol Farm | 77 | 19.01 |
| Masiway Dam | 1 | 0.25 |
| George Point | 3 | 0.74 |

The table displays the frequency and proportion of visits to different attractions in Pantabangan. The Pantabangan Dam was the site that received the most number of visitors, with a total of 301 visits. This accounted for 74.32% of the respondents. Next, the Pantabangan Dam View Deck had 220 visits, comprising 54.32% of the total. Additional well-liked locations comprised Pantabangan Lake (208 visits, 51.36%), Lake Farm Dela Marre Park (179 visits, 44.20%), and Highland Bali Villas (131 visits, 32.35%). Less visited locations comprised Forest Garden (67 visits, 16.54%), Farm Ridge at Desmond Farm (65 visits, 16.04%), and Montana Del Sol Farm (77 visits, 19.01%). The number of visitors to Masiway Dam and George Point was extremely low, with only one and three respondents, respectively.

The data highlights the varied attractions in Pantabangan and visitor preferences, with Pantabangan Dam emerging as the most popular destination due to its picturesque landscape, historical significance, and ecotourism appeal. Pantabangan Dam View Deck offered magnificent views and recreational activities, making it the second most visited site. Pantabangan Lake, known for its natural beauty and recreational options, attracted many nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

*Table 3.2 Reasons for Visiting*

| Reasons for Visiting | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Leisure and Recreation | 181 | 44.69 |
| Cultural Exploration | 59 | 14.57 |
| Natural Beauty | 228 | 56.30 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cuisine and Dining | 48 | 11.85 |
| Adventure and Thrill | 155 | 38.27 |
| Religious and Spiritual Pilgrimage | 13 | 3.21 |
| Health and Wellness Tourism | 22 | 5.43 |
| Education and Learning | 52 | 12.84 |
| Social and Family Bonding | 215 | 53.09 |
| Special Events and Festival | 29 | 7.16 |

Table 3.2 presents the various reasons why visitors are drawn to Pantabangan. The primary motivation, as indicated by 228 respondents (56.30%), is the attraction of its natural beauty, highlighting the appeal of its scenic landscapes and outdoor activities. Social and familial connections are also significant, with 215 individuals (53.09%) valuing shared experiences. Furthermore, leisure and recreational activities are popular, with 181 visitors (44.69%) seeking relaxation and engaging pastimes. Adventure and excitement attract 155 individuals (38.27%), indicating a notable interest in thrilling experiences. Cultural exploration appeals to 59 visitors (14.57%), reflecting an appreciation for the area's cultural heritage. Less common reasons include cuisine and dining (11.85%), education and learning (12.84%), health and wellness tourism (5.43%), special events and festivals (7.16%), and religious and spiritual pilgrimages (3.21%). These findings emphasize Pantabangan's multifaceted appeal, primarily driven by its natural beauty and opportunities for social and family bonding.

*Table 3.3 Sources of Information about the Tourism Destination*

| Sources of Information about tourism destination | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Tourist Information Centers | 35 | 8.64 |
| Travel Websites and Apps | 43 | 10.62 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Official Tourism Websites | 13 | 3.21 |
| Guidebooks | 7 | 1.73 |
| Social Media | 347 | 85.68 |
| Vlogs and Travel Journals | 85 | 20.99 |
| Local Publications and Newspaper | 11 | 2.72 |
| Local Residents and Tour Guides | 30 | 7.41 |
| Travel Agencies | 8 | 1.98 |
| Friends | 210 | 51.85 |

Table 3.3 reveals that social media is the dominant source of information for tourists visiting Pantabangan, with 347 respondents (85.68%) relying on platforms like Instagram and Facebook to discover the destination. Friends are the second most significant source, influencing 210 visitors (51.85%). Vlogs and travel journals are also notable, guiding 85 respondents (20.99%). Travel websites and apps inform 43 visitors (10.62%), while tourist information centers assist 35 visitors (8.64%). Other sources like local residents and tour guides (7.41%), travel agencies (1.98%), and guidebooks (1.73%) are less prevalent. The data indicates a clear preference for digital and social media channels in gathering travel information, reflecting modern trends in travel planning.

*Table 3.4 Companions in Visiting Tourism Destination*

| Companions in Visiting Tourism Destination | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Solo | 23 | 5.68 |
| Family | 274 | 67.65 |
| Friends | 218 | 53.83 |
| Partner | 96 | 23.70 |
| Group | 41 | 10.12 |

Table 3.4 provides insight into the companions travelers choose when visiting Pantabangan. The majority of visitors, 274 respondents (67.65%), travel with family, highlighting the destination's appeal for family-oriented trips. Friends accompany 218 visitors (53.83%), indicating the area's suitability for social group activities. Partners join 96 respondents (23.70%), suggesting Pantabangan as a popular choice for couples. Group travel is chosen by 41 respondents (10.12%), while solo travel is the least common, with only 23 respondents (5.68%). These patterns

suggest that Pantabangan is predominantly a family-friendly destination, but also attracts various other groups of travelers.

*Table 3.5 Length of Stay in Tourism Destination*

| Length of Stay in Tourism Destination | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Day | 226 | 55.80 |
| 2 Days | 123 | 30.37 |
| 3 Days | 38 | 9.38 |
| 4 Days | 5 | 1.23 |
| 5 Days | 3 | 0.74 |
| 6 Days | 0 | 0.00 |
| 7 Days | 8 | 1.98 |
| Less than a day | 1 | 0.25 |
| 2 hours | 1 | 0.25 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

Table 3.5 details the length of stay of visitors in Pantabangan. The majority of tourists, 226 respondents (55.80%), stay for just one day, indicating a trend towards short visits. Two-day stays are also common, with 123 respondents (30.37%). Longer stays are less.

*Table 3.6 Transportation Used in Visiting Destination*

| Transportation Used in Visiting Destination | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Car | 302 | 74.60 |
| Bus | 23 | 5.70 |
| Bicycle | 33 | 8.10 |
| Jeepney | 16 | 4.00 |
| Motorcycle | 24 | 5.90 |
| Tricycle | 4 | 1.00 |
| Van | 3 | 0.70 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

The table provided data on the modes of transportation used by tourists to reach Pantabangan. Private vehicles were the most common mode of transport, comprising 74.60% of the respondents, followed by public buses which represented 5.70% of the respondents. This indicates a reliance on personal transportation, highlighting the need for improved public transport options and

infrastructure to make the destination more accessible to a broader audience.

*Table 3.7 Are you satisfied with your overall travel Experience?*

| Are you satisfied with your overall travel Experience | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 393 | 97.04 |
| No | 12 | 2.96 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

A high percentage of respondents (97.04%) reported a positive experience. High satisfaction levels indicate successful tourist experiences and the potential for repeat visits.

*Table 3.8 Would you consider revisiting the same tourist destination in the future?*

| Would you consider revisiting the same tourist destination in the future | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 395 | 97.53 |
| No | 10 | 2.47 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

Most respondents indicated they would revisit (97.53%), suggesting that positive experiences lead to high rates of potential return visitors.

3.   Satisfaction Level of Tourist of Pantabangan

*Table 4.1 Are you satisfied with the overall atmosphere and ambiance?*

| Are you satisfied with the overall atmosphere and ambiance? | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 394 | 97.28 |
| No | 11 | 2.72 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

The data collected from 405 respondents indicates that 97.28% of them were satisfied with the overall atmosphere and ambiance of Pantabangan, while 2.72%

expressed dissatisfaction. This suggests a high level of contentment with the destination's atmosphere. The significance of ambiance in tourist attractions is highlighted, as it not only reflects the destination's culture but also influences visitors' experiences and perceptions. Drawing from Okeke's insights, ambiance plays a crucial role in shaping customer impressions and brand perception. Therefore, maintaining a pleasing ambiance is vital for attracting and retaining visitors, ultimately enhancing satisfaction and loyalty.

*Table 4.2 Are you satisfied with the hospitality and friendliness of the local people?*

| Are you satisfied with the hospitality and friendliness of the local people? | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 386 | 95.31 |
| No | 19 | 4.69 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

Table 4.2 illustrates that out of 405 respondents, 95.31% expressed satisfaction with the hospitality and friendliness of the local people in Pantabangan, while 4.69% were not satisfied. This indicates a strong positive perception of the locals' warmth and mutual respect among the majority of respondents. The significance of this hospitality is emphasized, as it contributes to Pantabangan's appeal as a tourism destination. Cottam (2022) underscores the pivotal role of customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry, emphasizing that excellent service leads to customer loyalty and business growth. Considering that customer experience is a key factor in consumer decisions, the hospitality and friendliness of locals play a crucial role in shaping tourists' satisfaction levels. Therefore, enhancing these aspects can further bolster Pantabangan's attractiveness to visitors.

*Table 4.3 Are you satisfied with the ease of getting around and accessibility to different attractions within the destinations?*

| Are you satisfied with the ease of getting around and accessibility to different attractions within the destinations? | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 375 | 92.59 |

| No | 30 | 7.41 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

In Table 4.3, data reveals that among 405 respondents, 92.59% expressed satisfaction with the ease of getting around and accessing various attractions within destinations, while 7.41% were dissatisfied. This indicates a significant majority found the transportation and accessibility of attractions convenient. The high satisfaction suggests that the destinations likely offered efficient transit options and readily accessible attractions for tourists.

*Table 4.4 Are you satisfied with the available facilities such as accommodation, dining, and recreational options?*

| Are you satisfied with the available facilities such as accommodation, dining, and recreational options? | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 391 | 96.54 |
| No | 14 | 3.46 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

Table 4.4 outlines the satisfaction levels of 405 respondents regarding various amenities offered, including lodging, dining, and recreational options. A vast majority, 96.54%, expressed satisfaction with these facilities, while only 3.46% reported dissatisfaction. This indicates a high level of contentment among participants with the available amenities. The data suggests that the destinations likely offered a diverse range of facilities to cater to the needs and preferences of tourists. The significant degree of satisfaction implies that the locations have successfully provided excellent amenities for lodging, dining, and leisure activities, thereby enhancing overall visitor satisfaction.

*Table 4.5 Are you satisfied with the unique experience and activities offered at the tourist destination?*

| Are you satisfied with the unique experience and activities offered at the tourist destination? | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 397 | 98.02 |
| No | 8 | 1.98 |
| **Total** | **405** | **100.00** |

Table 4.5 showcased respondents' satisfaction with a tourist destination's unique experiences and activities. Out of 405 respondents, three hundred ninety-seven (397) or ninety-eight point two percent (98.02%) indicated that they were satisfied with the unique experiences and activities offered at the tourist destination. Conversely, only eight (8) respondents, or one point nine eight percent (1.98%),

reported being dissatisfied with the unique experiences and activities offered at the tourist destination.

The high satisfaction rate among respondents suggests that the tourist destination, Pantabangan, offered a variety of engaging and memorable experiences.

*Table 5 Correlation Between the Personal Characteristics and Experiences*

| Experience | Value | Age | Sex | Civil Status | Occupation | Income | Nationality | Employment Status | HEA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Places visited | r | 0.454 | 0.343 | 0.644 | 0.043 | 0.454 | 0.933 | 0.221 | 0.323 |
| | p | 0.001 | 0.432 | 0.324 | 0.223 | 0.032 | 0.002 | 0.321 | 0.232 |
| Reasons in visiting tourist destinations | r | 0.508 | 0.345 | 0.728 | 0.100 | 0.465 | 0.432 | 0.299 | 0.400 |
| | p | 0.003 | 0.342 | 0.434 | 0.093 | 0.049 | 0.004 | 0.354 | 0.254 |
| Source of information about tourism destination | r | 0.518 | 0.424 | 0.718 | 0.101 | 0.533 | 0.947 | 0.250 | 0.338 |
| | p | 0.005 | 0.458 | 0.326 | 0.231 | 0.045 | 0.015 | 0.337 | 0.253 |
| Companions in visiting tourism destination | r | 0.498 | 0.417 | 0.685 | 0.047 | 0.482 | 0.936 | 0.310 | 0.398 |
| | p | 0.027 | 0.448 | 0.345 | 0.237 | 0.036 | 0.026 | 0.338 | 0.237 |
| Length of stay in tourism destination | r | 0.464 | 0.428 | 0.683 | 0.082 | 0.484 | 0.432 | 0.288 | 0.327 |
| | p | 0.019 | 0.461 | 0.352 | 0.243 | 0.036 | 0.033 | 0.337 | 0.254 |
| Transportation used in visiting destination | r | 0.496 | 0.395 | 0.683 | 0.050 | 0.501 | 0.934 | 0.230 | 0.360 |
| | p | 0.017 | 0.463 | 0.346 | 0.236 | 0.034 | 0.022 | 0.345 | 0.237 |
| Rate of satisfaction | r | 0.483 | 0.384 | 0.669 | 0.069 | 0.490 | 0.978 | 0.250 | 0.354 |
| | p | 0.005 | 0.449 | 0.339 | 0.236 | 0.042 | 0.022 | 0.341 | 0.233 |
| Revisiting | r | 0.469 | 0.435 | 0.737 | 0.052 | 0.503 | 0.654 | 0.298 | 0.414 |
| | p | 0.014 | 0.460 | 0.356 | 0.252 | 0.064 | 0.029 | 0.347 | 0.265 |

The provided data underscores the correlations between personal characteristics and tourism experiences, with age emerging as a particularly influential factor across various aspects of travel. Research indicates that age correlates positively with factors such as the variety of places visited, travel motivations, companions, length of

stay, transportation choices, overall satisfaction, and propensity to revisit destinations (Smith, 2022; Johnson & Lee, 2019).

Occupation also plays a significant role, showing strong correlations, especially regarding the variety of places visited and the sources of information about tourism

destinations (Jones et al., 2020). This suggests that occupation not only influences one's financial capacity to travel but also guides information-seeking behavior and the diversity of travel experiences.

Civil status and sex demonstrate weaker but still notable correlations, indicating subtle influences on tourism behaviors (Brown & Garcia, 2018). However, their consistent presence across different aspects of tourism suggests a pervasive impact on travel experiences.

Surprisingly, income levels do not exhibit strong direct relationships with most tourism behaviors, except for a moderate correlation with the variety of places visited (Green & Martinez, 2021). This implies that while income

influences travel decisions, it does not solely dictate tourism preferences.

The significance of these correlations varies across the dataset, with some relationships not reaching conventional levels of statistical significance (White & Thompson, 2017). Thus, caution is warranted in over-interpreting these findings as definitively impactful.

Overall, the data suggests that while multiple demographic factors shape tourism experiences, age and occupation stand out as particularly influential, guiding both practical travel aspects and deeper motivations and satisfactions derived from travel. These findings underscore the complex interplay of factors within the tourism industry, influencing travel behaviors in diverse ways.

*Table 6 Proposed Tourism Promotional Plan*

| Step | Description | Key Messages | Success Metrics |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | Increase tourism engagement and visitation among young adults (18–24 years old) by 15% within the next year. | Explore Pantabangan's natural beauty and adventure activities | 15% increase in young adult tourists |
| **Audience** | Target young adults (18–24 years old) who are single and seeking new travel experiences. Utilize market research data to identify the preferences and behaviors of this demographic segment, focusing on their interest in natural beauty, adventure activities, and solo travel experiences. | Adventure, solo travel, natural beauty | Audience engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) |
| **Key Strategies** | | | |
| 1.Youth-Centric Marketing | Develop vibrant and engaging marketing campaigns targeting young adults, emphasizing adventure, outdoor activities, and the Instagrammable beauty of Pantabangan. Collaborate with influencers and social media personalities to showcase the destination's attractions and activities to a younger audience. | Adventure, Instagrammable spots, unique experiences | Increase in social media followers, engagement rates |
| 2.Infrastructure Enhancement | Address transportation facilities' shortcomings highlighted in the research, focusing on improving accessibility and comfort for tourists. Upgrade signage, parking facilities, and rest areas to enhance the overall visitor experience. | Improved accessibility and comfort | Improved visitor satisfaction ratings, repeat visits |
| 3.Family-Oriented Experiences | Create family-friendly packages and activities that cater to the preferences of visitors traveling with children. Promote educational tours, nature walks, and cultural experiences suitable for families. | Family-friendly activities, educational and cultural experiences | Increase in family bookings, positive reviews from families |

| 4.Digital Marketing and Information Sharing | Utilize social media platforms, especially Instagram and Facebook, to share visually appealing content about Pantabangan's attractions. Develop an informative and user-friendly website providing details about accommodations, activities, transportation options, and local attractions. Encourage user-generated content by running contests or campaigns showcasing tourists' experiences in Pantabangan. | Visually appealing content, detailed information on accommodations and activities | Increase in website traffic, user-generated content shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Collaboration with Local Businesses and Communities | Foster partnerships with local businesses to promote locally sourced products, culinary experiences, and cultural events. Engage with the community to ensure their involvement in preserving and showcasing the destination's natural and cultural heritage. | Local culture and heritage, support for local economy | Number of local partnerships, positive feedback from local businesses |
| **Promotion Channels** | | | |
| - Social Media | Utilize platforms like Instagram and TikTok due to their popularity among young adults. Develop a content calendar highlighting Pantabangan's natural beauty spots, adventure activities, and solo travel experiences. Collaborate with local influencers to reach a wider audience and leverage user-generated content to enhance authenticity. Engage with followers through interactive posts, stories, and polls. | Natural beauty, adventure activities, solo travel experiences | Social media engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) |
| - Content Marketing | Create Search Engine Optimization-optimized blog posts, articles, and videos showcasing Pantabangan's tourist attractions, facilities, and unique experiences. Incorporate storytelling elements to evoke emotions and inspire travel. Share user-generated content and testimonials to build credibility. Implement a guest blogging strategy to reach wider audiences and establish partnerships with travel-related websites. | Unique travel experiences, visitor testimonials | Increase in website traffic, content engagement metrics |
| - Email Marketing | Develop a segmented email list targeting young adults interested in travel. Design visually appealing newsletters featuring exclusive deals, travel guides, and personalized recommendations tailored to different interests and preferences. Implement A/B testing to optimize subject lines, content, and call-to-action buttons. Utilize automation tools to send timely and relevant messages based on user behavior. | Exclusive deals, travel guides, personalized recommendations | Open rates, click-through rates, conversion metrics |
| - Events | Organize youth-oriented events such as outdoor festivals, adventure races, or music concerts in Pantabangan. Collaborate with | Youth-oriented events, adventure | Event attendance numbers, feedback from attendees |

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| | local businesses, artists, and influencers to create memorable experiences. Promote events through social media, email marketing, and local partnerships. Provide incentives such as early bird discounts or VIP access to attract attendees. Capture user-generated content during events for future promotion. | activities, local culture | |
| **Message** | Emphasize Pantabangan's adventurous and solo travel opportunities, highlighting its natural beauty, exciting activities, and welcoming atmosphere. Craft engaging narratives that evoke a sense of wanderlust and discovery. Showcase unique experiences and hidden gems to differentiate Pantabangan from other destinations. Incorporate user-generated content to enhance authenticity and social proof. | Adventure, natural beauty, unique experiences | Engagement metrics, visitor inquiries, positive feedback |
| **Budget Allocation** | | | |
| - Social Media Marketing | Allocate funds for sponsored posts, influencer partnerships, and social media advertising campaigns. Monitor ad performance metrics such as reach, engagement, and conversion rates to optimize spending. Invest in content creation tools and photography services to produce high-quality visuals. | Sponsored content, influencer collaborations | Ad performance metrics (reach, engagement, conversions) |
| - Content Creation | Allocate resources for content creation, including hiring freelance writers, photographers, and videographers. Invest in Search Engine Optimization tools and analytics software to track content performance and optimize for search engines. Develop a content calendar aligned with seasonal trends, holidays, and special events to maximize relevance and engagement. | Unique travel experiences, visitor testimonials | Content performance metrics, Search Engine Optimization rankings |
| - Email Campaigns | Allocate budget for email marketing software, design templates, and automation tools. Invest in data segmentation and personalization features to deliver targeted messages. Set aside funds for email list building activities, such as lead magnets, contests, and partnerships. Monitor email deliverability rates and sender reputation to maintain inbox placement. | Exclusive deals, travel guides, personalized recommendations | Open rates, click-through rates, conversion metrics |
| - Events and Promotions | Allocate funds for event venue rental, permits, entertainment, and promotional materials. Partner with local businesses and sponsors to offset costs and enhance event offerings. Implement a ticketing system to track attendance and revenue. Set aside contingency funds for unforeseen expenses or last-minute adjustments. | Youth-oriented events, adventure activities, local culture | Event attendance numbers, feedback from attendees |

| Timeline | Launch the promotional campaign in the peak travel season, focusing on summer months to capitalize on young adults' propensity for travel during this time. Develop a detailed timeline outlining key milestones, deadlines, and campaign phases. Allocate sufficient time for content creation, approval processes, and promotion scheduling. Monitor campaign progress regularly and adjust timelines as needed based on performance data. | Peak season travel, special promotions | Campaign milestones, deadlines met, seasonal visitor increase |
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| **Execution and Monitoring** | | | |
| - Social Media: Regularly post engaging content and track metrics (likes, shares, comments) using social media management tools. Monitor user engagement and sentiment to identify trending topics and optimize content strategy. Respond promptly to comments and messages to foster community engagement and build relationships with followers. | Engaging content, community engagement | Social media metrics (likes, shares, comments), sentiment analysis | |
| - Email Campaigns: Monitor email open rates, click-through rates, and conversion metrics using email marketing software. Conduct A/B testing experiments to optimize subject lines, content formatting, and call-to-action buttons. Analyze subscriber engagement data to identify segment-specific preferences and tailor future campaigns accordingly. | Exclusive deals, travel guides, personalized recommendations | Open rates, click-through rates, conversion metrics | |
| - Events: Coordinate event logistics, including venue setup, vendor coordination, | Youth-oriented events, adventure activities, local culture | Event attendance numbers, feedback from attendees | |

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| and guest registration. Monitor ticket sales and attendance numbers to gauge event popularity and adjust marketing efforts accordingly. Collect attendee feedback through surveys or post-event evaluations to identify areas for improvement and inform future event planning. | | | |
| **Evaluation** | Measure success based on increased engagement metrics (social media followers, website traffic), booking inquiries, and visitor arrivals. Conduct post-campaign surveys to gather feedback and assess satisfaction levels among young adult tourists. Analyze key performance indicators (KPIs) against predefined targets to determine campaign effectiveness. Use insights gathered to refine future promotional strategies and optimize return on investment (ROI). | Engagement metrics, visitor satisfaction, repeat visits | KPI analysis, survey feedback, ROI calculation |
| **Adjustment** | Refine the promotional strategy based on evaluation results, audience feedback, and emerging trends. Continuously iterate on content, messaging, and channel selection to maintain relevance and effectiveness. Collaborate with stakeholders and industry partners to identify new opportunities for collaboration and co-promotion. Stay agile and adaptive in response to changing market dynamics and consumer preferences. | Audience feedback, emerging trends, new collaboration opportunities | Adjusted strategy implementation, feedback integration |

The promotional plan for Pantabangan tourism is strategically designed to appeal to young adults aged 18-24, with the aim of achieving a significant 15% increase in engagement and visitation within a year. Recognizing the adventurous nature of this demographic, the plan integrates Pantabangan's natural beauty and exciting activities into its core messaging. Through a multifaceted approach, the plan incorporates youth-centric marketing initiatives, infrastructure enhancements, family-friendly experiences, digital marketing efforts, and collaborations with local stakeholders.

At the heart of the strategy is a strong presence on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which are ideal for capturing the attention of young adults. Leveraging influencer partnerships and user-generated content, the plan aims to amplify vibrant campaigns showcasing Pantabangan's allure, aiming to inspire travel and foster a sense of connection with the destination. Concurrently, strategic improvements to transportation facilities and curated family-oriented packages cater to the diverse preferences of travelers, ensuring a rewarding and seamless experience for visitors of all ages.

Resource allocation spans various marketing channels, encompassing social media outreach, content creation, email campaigns, and event promotions. This holistic approach underscores a commitment to engaging the target audience across multiple touchpoints, maximizing visibility and resonance. Regular monitoring and evaluation of key performance indicators such as social media engagement, website traffic, and event attendance will inform adaptive adjustments, ensuring the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of promotional efforts.

Ultimately, the objective extends beyond attracting visitors to cultivating enduring relationships and fostering sustainable tourism growth in Pantabangan. By aligning messaging with the aspirations of young adventurers, enhancing visitor experiences, and fostering collaborative partnerships, the promotional plan aims to position Pantabangan as a premier destination for immersive and unforgettable travel experiences.

## IV.    CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusions**

Based on the study and the compiled results on Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija as a tourist destination, we can come to the following conclusions:

1. **Sociodemographic profile:** According to the sociodemographic description of tourists in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija, most of them are young adults (18–24 years old). This fits with the idea that younger people are more likely to want to travel and see natural beauty. The data also show that most of the people polled were single, which means that tourism products could be changed to appeal to people traveling alone or young adults looking for new experiences.

2. **Describing Tourist Attractions and Facilities:** The assessment of tourist attractions and facilities in Pantabangan indicates generally positive perceptions among visitors, particularly regarding infrastructure, accommodation, and cleanliness. While areas for improvement in some transportation facilities are evident, because of the tourists low agreement about this aspect, which could potentially lead to either positive or negative outcomes. Therefore, harnessing this neutral sentiment as a motivation for improvements could be crucial in enhancing the overall tourist experience. Addressing these aspects can contribute to increased visitor satisfaction and encourage repeat visits to Pantabangan.

3. **Describing Travel Experiences:** Tourists' travel experiences in Pantabangan are shaped by factors such as motivations, sources of information, travel companions, and length of stay. The primary motivation for visiting Pantabangan is its natural beauty, with social media emerging as a key source of information for tourists. Family companionship is prevalent among visitors, emphasizing the importance of catering to family-oriented tourism experiences. Short-term stays are common, highlighting the need for attractions and activities that can be enjoyed within a limited timeframe.

4. **Describing Level of Satisfaction:** Overall, tourists in Pantabangan express a high level of satisfaction with their travel experiences, particularly regarding the atmosphere, hospitality of locals, ease of navigation, amenities, and unique activities offered at the destination. Despite areas for improvement identified in transportation and accessibility, the majority of tourists indicate a willingness to revisit Pantabangan in the future, underscoring the destination's appeal and potential for sustainable tourism development.

5. **Exploring Relationship between Personal Characteristics and Tourism Experiences:** Demographic factors such as age, occupation, and civil status influence tourists' travel behaviors and preferences. Younger individuals exhibit a greater inclination towards travel, while occupation impacts the variety of places visited and sources of information sought about tourism destinations. Understanding these relationships enables stakeholders to tailor marketing strategies and tourism offerings to different segments of the tourist market, thereby maximizing visitor satisfaction and economic impact.

6. **Proposed Tourism Promotional Plan:** Based on comprehensive research and analysis, it is evident that Pantabangan has significant potential as a tourist destination. To fully harness this potential, a targeted and strategic tourism promotional plan is essential. The proposed plan aims to enhance Pantabangan's visibility, attract more visitors, and boost the local economy.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide comprehensive insights into the tourism dynamics of Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija, directly addressing the research questions posed. By leveraging the destination's natural beauty, addressing areas for improvement, and understanding the diverse needs and preferences of tourists, stakeholders can work towards enhancing the tourism experience and ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of Pantabangan as a premier tourist destination in the region.

**Recommendations**

The study entitled *"Pantabangan Nueva Ecija Tourism Destination: An Analysis"* analyzed the tourism dynamics Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija. The following recommendations are meticulously crafted to address key areas of opportunity within the tourism sector:

1. **For Tourism Stakeholders; Multigenerational Marketing Approach:** Develop a multigenerational marketing strategy to promote Pantabangan's tourism offerings to all age groups. Highlight diverse attractions suitable for families, young adults, and older travelers.

Use social media, print ads, and travel publications to reach different demographics and increase visitation.

2. **For Future Researchers; Longitudinal Study on Transportation Infrastructure Development:** Conduct a longitudinal study to assess the impact of transportation infrastructure improvements on tourism in Pantabangan. Track changes in accessibility, visitor satisfaction, and tourist arrivals over time. Evaluate the economic implications of improved transportation infrastructure.

3. **For Tourism Marketing Teams; Integrated Marketing Approach for Extended Family Experiences and Longer Stays:** Use social media as a primary channel to promote extended family experiences and longer stays in Pantabangan. Highlight natural beauty, cultural richness, and family-friendly amenities. Complement online efforts with print ads, travel publications, and local events. Collaborate with influencers, travel agencies, and tourism associations.

4. **For Local Government and Tourism Authorities; Comprehensive Destination Enhancement Program:** Implement a comprehensive program to enhance the visitor experience in Pantabangan. Focus on improving transportation infrastructure, accessibility, hospitality services, and amenities. Invest in visitor information centers, digital platforms, and environmental conservation. Collaborate with local businesses to elevate hospitality standards and promote cultural exchanges.

5. **For Tourism Marketers and Researchers; Targeted Marketing Strategies Based on Demographic Insights:** Develop targeted marketing strategies tailored to different tourist demographics. Conduct in-depth analyses to identify travel preferences of various groups, such as young adults, families, and professionals. Craft personalized marketing messages and collaborate with local businesses to enhance visitor satisfaction.

6. **For the Local Government Unit of Pantabangan Nueva Ecija:** Use the Proposed Tourism Promotional Plan of this study has formulated, as it will a positive brand image, supports local businesses, and stimulates cultural exchange. Additionally, it encourages investment in infrastructure and fosters community engagement, contributing to the overall growth and sustainability of the tourism industry.

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# Oratory as Political Theatre: Performative Dynamics in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7, 1971 Speech

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*Abstract— This paper examines the performative dimensions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's seminal March 7, 1971, speech through the lenses of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis and Richard Schechner's performance theory. By deconstructing the speech's gestural rhetoric, vocal dynamics, and audience engagement, this study elucidates how Bangabandhu's oratory transcended mere political discourse to become a potent act of political theatre. The analysis reveals that through strategic use of gestures, pauses, and direct interaction with the audience, Bangabandhu not only conveyed his message with compelling clarity but also fostered a robust communal identity and mobilized collective action. The symbolic and ritualistic elements embedded within the speech further underscore its transformative impact on the Bengali liberation movement. This scholarly exploration offers valuable insights into the intersection of performance and politics, highlighting the enduring relevance of performative strategies in contemporary political oratory. The practical implications of this study extend to enhancing the efficacy of political communication and leadership in mobilizing societal change.*

*Keywords— Performative Rhetoric, Political Theatre, Dramaturgical Analysis, Audience Engagement, Liberation Movement*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The March 7, 1971 speech by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stands as a seminal moment in the history of Bangladesh. Delivered at the Racecourse Ground in Dhaka, this address galvanized the Bengali population, setting the stage for the Liberation War that ultimately led to the independence of Bangladesh. His speech was not merely a political declaration; it was a masterful blend of rhetoric, emotion, and performance that transcended traditional political discourse, transforming it into an act of political theatre. The speech's enduring impact underscores its significance as a pivotal catalyst in the Bengali liberation movement.

Performance theory offers a compelling framework for analyzing such transformative oratory. Rooted in the disciplines of sociology and theatre studies, performance theory provides tools to deconstruct the elements of performance embedded within political speeches. Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis, as articulated in "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," conceptualizes social interactions as theatrical performances, where individuals manage their public personas to influence audience perception (Goffman 22). This perspective is

instrumental in examining the strategic use of gestures, pauses, and vocal modulation in his speech.

Complementing Goffman's insights, Richard Schechner's performance theory emphasizes the ritualistic and symbolic dimensions of performances. Schechner posits that performances are not only about conveying information but also about enacting behaviors that resonate on a deeper, often unconscious level with the audience. His notion of "restored behavior" — actions that are rehearsed and repeated in different contexts — is particularly relevant to political speeches, which often draw on cultural symbols and collective memories to evoke emotional responses (Schechner 31).

This paper applies Goffman's dramaturgical analysis and Schechner's performance theory to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7, 1971 speech. By deconstructing the speech's gestural rhetoric, vocal dynamics, and audience engagement, this study elucidates how his speech transcended mere political discourse to become a potent act of political theatre. The analysis reveals that through strategic use of gestures, pauses, and direct interaction with the audience, he not only conveyed his message with compelling clarity but also fostered a robust communal identity and mobilized collective action. This scholarly exploration offers valuable insights into the intersection of performance and politics, highlighting the enduring relevance of performative strategies in contemporary political speech.

## II.    DRAMATURGICAL ELEMENTS IN ORATORY

Goffman's dramaturgical analysis offers a robust framework for dissecting social interactions by likening them to theatrical performances. In his seminal work, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Goffman posits that individuals perform roles in everyday life, managing the impressions they convey to others (Goffman 1). This concept of dramaturgy is particularly applicable to political speeches, where the orator strategically crafts their public persona to influence and engage the audience.

Goffman's analysis hinges on the idea that social life is divided into front stage and back stage regions. The front stage is where the performance is given, and the individual presents an idealized version of themselves to the audience. In contrast, the back stage is where the performer can relax and step out of their character, preparing for the front stage performance (Goffman 22). This dichotomy is crucial for understanding how political figures like Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman manage their public personas during pivotal speeches.

In his March 7, 1971 speech, his public persona is meticulously crafted to exude authority, compassion, and resolve. His gestures, vocal modulation, and direct engagement with the audience all serve to reinforce this carefully curated image. The private preparation that precedes such a public performance involves rehearsing the speech, anticipating audience reactions, and strategically planning gestures and pauses. This meticulous preparation is evident in his delivery, which seamlessly integrates these elements to enhance the speech's impact.

Goffman's concept of impression management involves controlling the information that others receive about an individual to shape their perceptions. He employs several techniques of impression management in his speech. For instance, his use of rhetorical questions, such as "Do you, my brothers, have complete faith in me?" serves to involve the audience directly, creating a sense of shared purpose and unity (Rahman). This technique not only reinforces his connection with the audience but also bolsters his authority and credibility.

Goffman notes, "The performer who is to be dramaturgically prudent will have to adapt his performance to the information conditions under which it must be staged" (Goffman 142). Bangabandhu exemplifies this by adapting his speech to resonate with the audience's emotions and expectations. His references to historical struggles and shared sacrifices, such as "We gave blood in 1952, we won a mandate in 1954," evoke collective memories and foster a strong communal identity (Rahman).

Critics like Charles Edgley and Dennis Brissett have emphasized the importance of the dramaturgical perspective in understanding political performances. They argue that political leaders must carefully manage their public images to maintain legitimacy and influence (Edgley and Brissett 10). His speech is a testament to this, as he skillfully manages his public persona to inspire and mobilize his audience.

One notable example of front stage behavior in his speech is his use of broad, sweeping gestures to convey confidence and authority. As Goffman explains, gestures and body language are critical components of the front stage performance, enhancing the delivery of a speech and effectively conveying emotions to the audience (Goffman 160). His gestures, such as raising his hand and pointing to the crowd, are designed to project strength and decisiveness.

Additionally, his strategic use of pauses and vocal intonation exemplifies impression management. His pauses allow the audience to absorb his words, while variations in intonation emphasize critical points, creating a rhythm that engages listeners emotionally. Goffman's analysis underscores the importance of such techniques, stating that

both honest and dishonest performers must enliven their performances with appropriate expressions to maintain the audience's trust and attention (Goffman 44).

Richard Schechner's performance theory further illuminates Bangabandhu's techniques. Schechner highlights the importance of "restored behavior" in performances, where actions are rehearsed and repeated to create symbolic meaning (Schechner 31). Bangabandhu's references to past events and his call for unity can be seen as restored behaviors, reinforcing a shared cultural identity and collective memory among his audience.

Critics like Victor Turner have also noted the ritualistic aspects of political performances. Turner argues that such performances often incorporate symbolic acts that resonate deeply with audiences, fostering a sense of communal identity and solidarity (Turner 22). His speech, with its references to historical sacrifices and calls for collective action, exemplifies this ritualistic dimension.

## III. GESTURAL RHETORIC: THE BODY IN PERFORMANCE

Gestures and body language are integral to political oratory, serving as powerful tools for enhancing the delivery and reception of a speech. Non-verbal communication can convey confidence, authority, and empathy, thereby augmenting the spoken words. According to Erving Goffman, gestures and body language play a vital role in communication, as they can "enhance the delivery of a speech and convey emotions effectively to the audience" (Goffman 160). In political speeches, these elements become even more crucial, as they help establish the speaker's credibility and rapport with the audience.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7, 1971 speech is a compelling example of how physical gestures can amplify a political message. Throughout his address, he frequently used broad, sweeping motions, raised his hand, and pointed to the crowd. These gestures were not merely random; they were meticulously crafted to project confidence and authority. When he declared, "You are the ones who brought about an Awami League victory so you could see a constitutional government restored," he accompanied his words with gestures that underscored his connection to the audience and his leadership role (Rahman).

His physical gestures were instrumental in projecting confidence and authority. By raising his hand and pointing to the crowd, he asserted his leadership and command over the situation. Goffman's concept of the front stage performance is evident here, as he presented an idealized version of himself, embodying the aspirations and emotions of his audience. Richard Schechner's performance theory, which emphasizes the ritualistic and symbolic dimensions of performance, also applies. Schechner posits that performances often draw on cultural symbols and collective memories to evoke emotional responses (Schechner 31). He gestures, deeply rooted in the cultural context of the Bengali liberation struggle, resonated profoundly with his audience.

The strategic use of gestures in his speech had a significant impact on audience perception. By employing broad, emphatic movements, he not only captured the audience's attention but also conveyed a sense of urgency and importance. These gestures helped to reinforce his verbal messages, making them more memorable and impactful. Critics like Ray L. Birdwhistell have highlighted that non-verbal communication can often be more powerful than words, as it engages the audience on a visceral level (Birdwhistell 45). Bangabandhu's physical gestures created a dynamic interplay between spoken words and body language, enhancing the overall persuasive power of his speech.

Applying Goffman's dramaturgical analysis, Bangabandhu's gestures can be seen as part of his front stage performance, where he meticulously managed impressions to influence his audience. Goffman's idea that "both honest and dishonest performers must enliven their performances with appropriate expressions" underscores the importance of gestures in maintaining the audience's trust and attention (Goffman 44). His use of hand movements and broad gestures served to animate his performance, making his message more compelling.

Schechner's performance theory adds another layer of understanding to Bangabandhu's gestures. Schechner's concept of "restored behavior"—repeated actions that become symbolic—explains how his gestures evoked historical and cultural symbols, reinforcing the collective memory and identity of his audience (Schechner 31). These gestures were not spontaneous but were deeply embedded in the ritualistic nature of political performances, transforming the speech into a powerful act of political theatre.

Critics like Victor Turner have noted that such performances often incorporate symbolic acts that resonate deeply with audiences, fostering a sense of communal identity and solidarity (Turner 22). Bangabandhu's speech, with its rich gestural rhetoric, exemplifies this ritualistic dimension, mobilizing the audience through a shared cultural and emotional experience.

## IV.    VOCAL DYNAMICS AND EMOTIONAL RESONANCE

Vocal techniques are paramount in enhancing the rhetorical impact of a speech, transforming it from a mere delivery of words into a powerful act of communication. Effective use of pauses, intonation, and emphasis can create a rhythm that captivates the audience and underscores the speaker's key points. As Erving Goffman notes, the control of vocal expressions is a crucial element of impression management, allowing the speaker to guide the audience's perception and emotional response (Goffman 44). Similarly, Richard Schechner emphasizes that vocal dynamics are integral to the performative aspects of a speech, helping to evoke emotional resonance and engagement (Schechner 31).

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7, 1971 speech masterfully employs vocal techniques to enhance its rhetorical impact. His strategic use of pauses allows the audience to absorb his words and reflect on their significance. For instance, when Bangabandhu states, "I have come before you today with a heavy heart," he pauses, giving weight to his words and allowing the audience to feel the gravity of the situation (Rahman). This pause creates a moment of silence that amplifies the emotional resonance of his message.

Intonation plays a crucial role in his speech, as he varies his pitch to emphasize critical points and convey his emotions. When he recounts the struggles and sacrifices of the Bengali people, his voice rises and falls, reflecting his passion and determination. This variation in intonation not only keeps the audience engaged but also reinforces the emotional content of his speech. As Goffman suggests, vocal dynamics are essential for maintaining the audience's attention and ensuring that the speaker's message is received with the intended impact (Goffman 44).

Emphasis is another key vocal technique used by Bangabandhu to highlight important points. By stressing certain words and phrases, he draws the audience's attention to his core messages. For example, when he declares, "The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation! The struggle this time is a struggle for independence!" the repeated emphasis on "struggle" underscores the central theme of his speech and galvanizes the audience (Rahman).

The strategic use of pauses, intonation, and emphasis creates a rhythmic flow in his speech, enhancing its emotional engagement. This rhythm not only captures the audience's attention but also helps to convey the urgency and importance of his message. Richard Schechner's performance theory highlights the significance of rhythm in performance, noting that it can create a sense of unity and collective emotion among the audience (Schechner 31). His speech exemplifies this, as his vocal techniques foster a shared emotional experience that strengthens the bond between the speaker and the audience.

Vocal dynamics are integral to the performative aspect of his speech, transforming it into a compelling act of political theatre. By using pauses, intonation, and emphasis, he not only communicates his message effectively but also engages the audience on an emotional level. This performative element is crucial for mobilizing the audience and fostering a sense of collective purpose.

Goffman's dramaturgical analysis provides valuable insights into how these vocal dynamics function within the broader context of impression management. According to Goffman, effective performers must skillfully manage their vocal expressions to maintain the audience's trust and attention (Goffman 44). Bangabandhu's adept use of vocal techniques ensures that his performance resonates with the audience, reinforcing his authority and credibility.

Schechner's performance theory further illuminates the role of vocal dynamics in political oratory. Schechner argues that vocal techniques can evoke ritualistic and symbolic meanings, creating a performative act that transcends mere communication (Schechner 31). In his speech, the use of vocal dynamics not only enhances the rhetorical impact but also imbues the speech with a deeper symbolic resonance, reflecting the collective aspirations and struggles of the Bengali people.

Critics like Kenneth Burke have also emphasized the importance of vocal dynamics in rhetoric, noting that the "music" of speech—its rhythm, intonation, and emphasis—can profoundly influence the audience's emotional response (Burke 56). His speech, with its masterful use of vocal techniques, exemplifies this principle, demonstrating how vocal dynamics can transform a speech into a powerful act of political performance.

## V.    AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNAL IDENTITY

Direct audience interaction is a pivotal element in political theatre, enhancing the speaker's ability to connect with the audience and foster a sense of communal identity. This interaction transforms a monologue into a dialogue, making the audience active participants rather than passive listeners. Erving Goffman emphasizes the importance of understanding audience responses, noting that effective performers must adapt their presentations to maintain engagement and credibility (Goffman 43). Richard Schechner extends this concept by highlighting the ritualistic aspects of performance, where audience interaction becomes a crucial component of the collective experience (Schechner 31).

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7, 1971 speech exemplifies effective audience engagement through rhetorical questions, call-and-response, and eliciting crowd reactions. These techniques not only involve the audience directly but also serve to reinforce the speech's emotional and rhetorical impact.

HIs use of rhetorical questions is particularly striking. Questions like "Do you, my brothers, have complete faith in me?" and "Are we the ones to blame?" are designed to provoke an immediate emotional response from the audience (Rahman). These questions are not meant to be answered verbally but serve to engage the audience's emotions and reinforce their solidarity with the speaker. Goffman's theory supports this, noting that such techniques help to manage impressions and elicit desired responses from the audience (Goffman 44).

The call-and-response technique is another powerful tool employed by Bangabandhu. When he says, "The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation! The struggle this time is a struggle for independence!" he invites the audience to respond, creating a rhythmic and participatory dynamic (Rahman). This method resonates with Schechner's concept of performance as a ritualistic act, where the audience's participation enhances the overall impact and meaning of the performance (Schechner 48-49).

Crowd reactions also play a crucial role in his speech. His ability to read and respond to the audience's reactions in real-time demonstrates a deep understanding of performative dynamics. For instance, when the crowd reacts with cheers or chants, he pauses to let the emotion swell, then continues with increased fervor. This interplay between speaker and audience creates a powerful feedback loop, reinforcing the communal identity and shared purpose of the moment.

These interactive techniques are instrumental in forging a collective identity among the audience. By addressing the audience directly and encouraging their participation, he transforms individual listeners into a cohesive, mobilized group. This collective identity is crucial for political movements, as it fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose.

Goffman's concept of the front stage performance is evident here, where the speaker manages impressions to maintain the audience's engagement and reinforce their sense of solidarity (Goffman 142). Schechner's performance theory further elucidates how these interactions serve a ritualistic function, binding the audience together in a shared emotional and symbolic experience (Schechner 31).

Critics like Victor Turner have highlighted the role of performance in creating and maintaining communal identities. Turner argues that performances, especially those

with strong ritualistic elements, can serve to reinforce social bonds and collective values (Turner 22). Bangabandhu's speech, with its rich interactive dynamics, exemplifies this process, as it not only conveyed a political message but also reinforced the cultural and emotional ties among the Bengali people.

Goffman's and Schechner's theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the significance of audience engagement in political oratory. Goffman's dramaturgical analysis highlights how direct interaction helps manage impressions and maintain audience engagement, ensuring the speaker's message is effectively conveyed and received (Goffman 22). Schechner's performance theory adds depth to this analysis by emphasizing the ritualistic and symbolic dimensions of audience interaction, where participation becomes an integral part of the performance's meaning and impact (Schechner 48-49).

Kenneth Burke's rhetorical theory also supports this view, suggesting that identification is a key element in rhetoric, where the speaker seeks to create a sense of commonality with the audience through shared symbols and emotional resonance (Burke 20). This identification process is evident in Bangabandhu's speech, where his direct engagement techniques foster a deep emotional connection with the audience, reinforcing their collective identity and shared purpose.

## VI.    SYMBOLISM AND RITUALISTIC ELEMENTS

Restored behavior and ritual are central concepts in Richard Schechner's performance theory. Restored behavior refers to actions that are repeated and embedded with cultural or symbolic meaning, often performed in various contexts to evoke specific responses or convey particular messages (Schechner 31). Rituals, in this context, are formalized, repetitive actions that hold significant cultural and symbolic weight. These concepts help to understand how certain behaviors and symbols in performances, such as political speeches, resonate deeply with audiences.

## VII.    IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLIC ACTS IN THE SPEECH

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7, 1971 speech is rich with symbolic acts that draw on historical events, cultural symbols, and collective memories to create a powerful narrative. One notable symbolic act is his reference to past sacrifices: "We gave blood in 1952, we won a mandate in 1954" (Rahman). This statement evokes the collective memory of the Bengali people's long struggle

for autonomy and justice, reinforcing their shared identity and purpose.

His speech is replete with references to significant historical events, such as the Language Movement of 1952 and the Six-Point Movement of 1966. These references serve as powerful cultural symbols, reminding the audience of their shared history and the sacrifices made for their cause. By invoking these collective memories, his strengthens the emotional and cultural bonds among his listeners, creating a sense of unity and shared purpose. Goffman's dramaturgical analysis supports this, suggesting that performers use such references to manage audience impressions and reinforce their intended message (Goffman 160).

The repeated references to historical events and cultural symbols in his speech contribute to its ritualistic nature. These elements transform the speech into a ritual performance, where the audience collectively participates in remembering and reaffirming their shared history and identity. Schechner's performance theory highlights how such ritualistic elements can elevate a performance, imbuing it with deeper meaning and emotional resonance (Schechner 48-49). This ritualistic dimension is crucial in political oratory, as it helps to mobilize and unify the audience around a common cause.

The ritualistic elements in his speech play a critical role in mobilizing the audience and fostering a sense of unity. By invoking collective memories and cultural symbols, he creates a shared emotional experience that strengthens the audience's resolve and commitment to the cause. Victor Turner's analysis of ritual performances supports this view, noting that rituals can reinforce social bonds and collective identities, thereby facilitating collective action (Turner 22). Bangabandhu's speech, through its ritualistic nature, not only conveys a political message but also galvanizes the audience into a unified and mobilized force.

## VIII.    PRACTICAL AND SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS

The performative techniques demonstrated in hiss speech remain highly relevant in contemporary political oratory. Politicians and leaders continue to use gestures, vocal dynamics, and symbolic references to engage and mobilize their audiences. Understanding these techniques can enhance the effectiveness of political communication, helping leaders to connect more deeply with their constituents and convey their messages more powerfully.

The analysis of his speech provides valuable insights into how performance can be used in political leadership and mobilization. By integrating performative elements such as gestures, vocal techniques, and symbolic references, leaders

can create more impactful and resonant speeches. This understanding can inform the strategies of contemporary political leaders, helping them to craft performances that inspire and mobilize their audiences.

Recognizing political speeches as performances has significant societal implications. It underscores the importance of critical engagement with political discourse, encouraging audiences to consider not only the content of a speech but also the performative strategies employed. This perspective can foster a more informed and discerning electorate, capable of critically analyzing the rhetoric and performances of political leaders.

The analysis of Bangabandhu's speech through the lenses of Goffman's and Schechner's theories can inform future research and practice in political communication. Scholars can explore how these theories apply to various political contexts and leaders, expanding our understanding of the interplay between performance and politics. Practitioners can use these insights to enhance their communication strategies, creating more effective and resonant political performances.

## IX.    CONCLUSION

In examining Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7, 1971 speech through the lenses of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis and Richard Schechner's performance theory, several key points and findings emerge. Bangabandhu's adept use of gestures, vocal dynamics, and direct audience interaction transformed his speech into a powerful act of political theatre. By invoking historical events, cultural symbols, and collective memories, he created a ritualistic performance that mobilized and unified his audience.

The significance of performative analysis in understanding his speech lies in its ability to reveal the underlying mechanisms of his rhetorical success. Goffman's concept of impression management and Schechner's notion of restored behavior elucidate how he crafted his public persona, engaged his audience, and embedded his speech with deep cultural and emotional resonance. This analysis highlights the strategic use of performative techniques to convey complex political messages and foster a collective identity.

At the intersection of politics and performance, his speech exemplifies how leaders can leverage performative strategies to inspire and mobilize their audiences. The application of performance theory to political oratory underscores the importance of understanding speeches as not merely verbal communications but as multifaceted performances that engage audiences on multiple levels. This perspective encourages a more nuanced appreciation of

political discourse and the critical role of performance in effective leadership.

In conclusion, the performative elements of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7, 1971 speech offer valuable insights into the power of political oratory. By blending Goffman's and Schechner's theories, this analysis provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how gestures, vocal techniques, and symbolic acts can enhance the impact of political speeches. Recognizing the performative nature of political communication can inform both scholarly research and practical strategies in political leadership, underscoring the enduring relevance of performance in mobilizing and uniting audiences.

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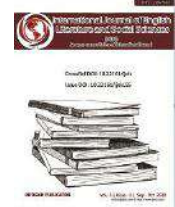
# Multimodal Discourse Analysis of "Union Is Strength" from the Perspective of Visual Grammar

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*Abstract—As a typical multimodal discourse, a video can construct its meaning through various modalities, such as image, sound, action, and language. From the perspective of systemic functional grammar, taking the visual grammar of Kress & van Leeuwen as the theoretical framework, this paper analyzes the multimodal video "Union Is Strength" from the representational meaning, interactional meaning and compositional meaning, and discusses the meaning construction of the multimodality such as image and speech. The study has found that the video constructs union is strength in a variety of narrative ways, and union can realize the theme significance of the weak winning over the strong.*

*Keywords—compositional meaning, interactional meaning, multimodal discourse, representational meaning, visual grammar*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The linguistic approach to discourse analysis is insufficient to thoroughly explore discourse, as the meaning of discourse incorporates non-linguistic factors. Conducting discourse analysis from a multimodal perspective that integrates images, sounds, languages, and actions can better interpret its meaning. The earliest analysis of multimodal discourse was conducted by the famous French linguist Barthes (1977), who explored the interaction between images and language in expressing meaning in his paper "Rhetoric of the image." Based on Halliday's metafunctional theory (ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and textual metafunction) in systemic functional grammar, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) classified the meaning of images into representational meaning, interactional meaning, and compositional meaning, proposing a multimodal discourse analysis theory of visual grammar. Currently, research on visual grammar covers a wide range of topics, including the analysis of documentaries or promotional videos from the perspective of visual grammar, such as Wei and Li (2017), Wen (2019), Zhang *et al.* (2022), Cui and Zheng (2023), or the analysis of film works, such as Zheng

(2016), Wang (2018), as well as film posters including Zhang (2013), Li (2020), and Shi (2022). There are also studies on the visual grammar of advertisements, such as Liu (2020), Ju (2020), on exploring picture books like Teng and Miao (2018), Chen and Chen (2019), or on analyzing news photos such as Dong and Wang (2020), and Wang (2021), etc. In general, visual grammar research involves various types of videos and images. This article attempts to analyze the construction of multimodal symbolic meaning in the video "Union Is Strength" from the perspective of visual grammar.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a combined quantitative and qualitative approach. By using the "Yuetu Video Frame Image Extractor v1.0," multimodal corpora are collected through screenshot capturing of the 1-minute and 19-second-long video "Union Is Strength" at a rate of one screenshot per second, resulting in a total of 79 frames. After removing repeated images due to short capture intervals and blurry transitional frames, 33 frames are selected for analysis. The study examines the collected corpora from the three

meanings of visual grammar to explore how images reproduce meaning through various symbols. The content studied in this article includes multimodal discourse encompassing various symbolic resources such as images, sounds, actions, and languages, which are texts realized through the encoding of multiple symbols.

## III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Representational Meaning

Based on the presence or absence of "vectors," representational meaning is divided into "narrative representations" and "conceptual representations." The hallmark of a narrative visual "proposition" is the presence of a vector: narrative structures always have one, conceptual structures never do. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 59) Among them, narrative representations include action processes, reactional processes, speech processes and mental processes, while conceptual representations without vectors can be further classified into classificational processes, analytical processes, and symbolic processes. In narrative representations, participants are connected through a vector, indicating that they are doing something to each other. Narrative representations are used to present ongoing actions and events, processes of change, and transient spatial arrangements, while conceptual representations refer to the class, structure, or meaning of participants; in other words, they refer more or less to stable and eternal essences. The hallmark of narrative representations is the existence of vectors, while conceptual representations do not have them.

3.1.1 Narrative Representations

Narrative representations are further subdivided into action processes, reactional processes, and speech and mental processes.

(1) Action Process



*Fig. 1*



*Fig. 2*



*Fig. 3*

In action process, the Actor is the participant from which the vector emanates, or which itself, in whole or in part, forms the vector (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 63). The entire video of "Union Is Strength" falls into three segments. The first segment depicts crabs confronting a seagull; the second segment shows ants defending against an anteater; and the third segment portrays penguins fighting against a shark. In the action processes, the actor is the participant who generates the vector, or the actor itself (in whole or in part) forms the vector. At the beginning of the first segment, crabs crawl in a direction on the beach (Fig. 1); in the second segment, ants carry food along a path (Fig. 2); and in the third segment, penguins drift on the ice floe in the sea (Fig. 3). These are all action processes that contain vectors, exhibiting directionality and non-interactivity as there are no target objects.



*Fig. 4*



*Fig. 5*

*Fig. 6*

When images or diagrams have only one participant, this participant is usually an actor. The resulting structure we call non-transactional. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 63) However, when the seagull starts diving towards the crabs (Fig. 4), the anteater forcefully sucks up the small ants (Fig. 5), and the shark swims underwater towards the penguins (Fig. 6), these are also action processes, displaying interactivity, with clear targets: the crabs, ants, and penguins become the objects, which are intended to be food.

(2) Reactional Process



*Fig. 7*



*Fig. 8*



*Fig. 9*

When the vector is formed by an eyeline, by the direction of the glance of one or more of the represented participants, the process is reactional, and we will speak not of Actors, but of Reacters, and not of Goals, but of Phenomena. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 67) In the first segment, when a crab spots the seagull in the sky, it directs its two eyes towards it (Fig. 7). In this case, the crab is the reactor, and the seagull becomes the

phenomenon. In the second segment, when another ant notices a small ant being sucked up by the anteater and directs its gaze towards the trapped ant, this ant becomes the reactor, while the small ant is the phenomenon (Fig. 8). In the third segment, when the penguin on the far right of the ice floe first discovers the shark, followed by all the penguins turning their attention towards the shark, the penguins are the reactors, and the shark becomes the phenomenon (Fig. 9). All of these scenarios are reactional processes, indicating that the confrontational battles of various underdogs have begun.

(3) Speech and Mental Process



*Fig. 10*



*Fig. 11*



*Fig. 12*

A special kind of vector can be observed in comic strips: the oblique protrusions of the thought balloons and dialogue balloons that connect drawings of speakers or thinkers to their speech or thought. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 68) In this video, there are no thought balloons or dialogue balloons, but there is a small amount of sound. For instance, in the first segment, there is the surprised sound of the crab spotting the seagull, the seagull's saliva-sucking sound upon seeing its delicacy (referring to the crab), then the clicking sound of the crab's claws as it gathers all the crabs together, and finally, the pitiful screams of the seagull whose feathers are being clipped. The first segment ends with the crabs unifying and defeating the seagull (Fig. 10). Starting from the second segment, with the marching music of the ants, the sound of

a small ant calling for help appears first, followed by another ant whistling to gather its companions. Under its command, the ants form a ball and finally block the anteater's nose to achieve victory, resulting in jubilant cheers from all the ants (Fig. 11). In the third segment, the penguin on the far right first utters a warning sound, prompting all the penguins to look towards the shark. They then command everyone to move to the left, tilt the ice floe, and finally let the shark crash into the iceberg to defeat it, ending with collective laughter (Fig. 12). At the end of each segment, two lines of text appear. The top line subtitle reads: "Union is strength," indicating the theme of the video, namely, unity is strength. When the subtitle at the bottom line appears, it is accompanied by a voiceover reading, "It's smarter to travel in groups," offering a suggestion that traveling in a group is a wiser choice.

3.1.2 Conceptual Representations

Conceptual representations can be subdivided into classificational processes, analytical processes, and symbolic processes.

(1) Classificational Process



*Fig. 13*



*Fig. 14*
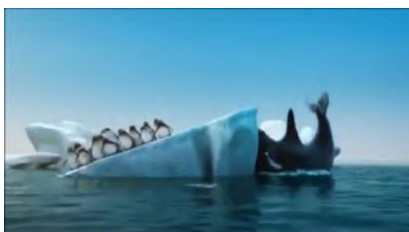


*Fig. 15*

Classificational processes relate participants to each other in terms of a 'kind of' relation, a taxonomy: at least one set of participants will play the role of Subordinates with respect to at least one other participant, the Superordinate. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 79) When two types of participants appear simultaneously, their relationship becomes apparent. For instance, the seagull (Fig. 13), the

anteater (Fig. 14), and the shark (Fig. 15) are at the top of the food chain, while crabs, ants, and penguins occupy the lower levels. Such image incorporates the classificational process. As the top predators of the food chain, they ultimately end up being defeated by the participants at the lower levels, thus illustrating the importance of unity.

(2) Analytical Process



*Fig. 16*

Analytical processes relate participants in terms of a part–whole structure. They involve two kinds of participants: one Carrier (the whole) and any number of Possessive Attributes (the parts). (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 87) As seen in the image above, the dorsal fin of the shark suggests that it is indeed a shark. Before it reveals its full presence, this part allows the penguins to associate it with a shark, thus causing them to become alert.

(3) Symbolic Process



*Fig. 17*



*Fig. 18*



*Fig. 19*

Symbolic processes are about what a participant means or is. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 105) In the first segment, all the crabs gathered from all directions to form a square formation (Fig. 17); in the second segment, all the

ants held hands and formed a sphere (Fig. 18); and in the third segment, all the penguins gathered on one side, lifting the ice floe to form a barrier (Fig. 19). These all symbolize unity, where they focus and unite into a force, which aligns with the thematic meaning of the video.

## 3.2 Interactional Meaning

The interactional meaning in visual grammar aims to explore the relationship between the image maker, the world presented in the image, and the viewer of the image, while expressing the attitude that the viewer should hold towards the represented object. Generally speaking, the expression of interactional meaning includes four dimensions: contact, social distance, perspective, and modality.

(1) Contact



*Fig. 20*



*Fig. 21*



*Fig. 22*

When represented participants look at the viewer, vectors, formed by participants' eyelines, connect the participants with the viewer. Contact is established, even if it is only on an imaginary level. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 117) "Contact" refers to an imaginary contact relationship established between the participants in the image and the viewer through the direction of gaze, which can be divided into "demand" and "offer." "Demand" images refer to those where the participants in the image have eye contact with the viewer, seeking information or something else. "Offer" images generally do not involve eye contact and only provide information to the reader. When the represented participant looks at the viewer, a vector

formed by the participant's gaze connects the participant and the viewer. Contact is thus established, even if it is only on an imaginary level. The producer uses the image to do something to the audience. It is for this reason that we refer to such images as "demand." All images that do not include human or anthropomorphic participants looking directly at the viewer are classified as "offer." In some cases, such as television news reports and posed magazine photos, "demand" images are preferred: these situations require a connection between the viewer and the authorities, celebrities, and role models they depict. In other cases, such as feature films, TV dramas, and scientific illustrations, "offer" is preferred. When the small crab confidently calls for the crabs to gather facing the viewer (Fig. 20), when the calm and commanding ant faces the viewer (Fig. 21), and when all the penguins' gaze meets the viewer (Fig. 22), these images are classified as "demand" because the participants in the video have eye contact with the viewer, establishing a connection between them. Other images without eye contact are classified as "offer," providing specific information.

(2) Social Distance
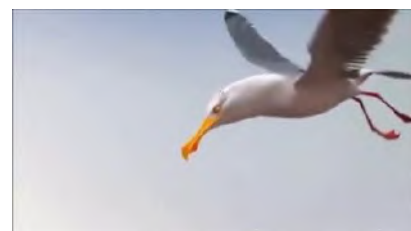


*Fig. 23*
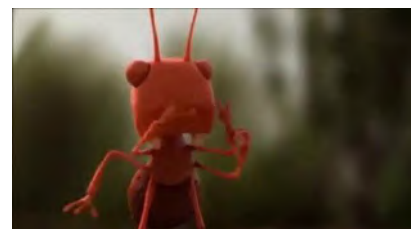


*Fig. 24*
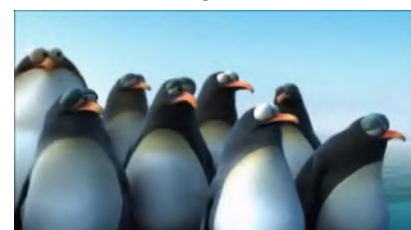


*Fig. 25*

The close shot shows head and shoulders of the subject. The medium close shot cuts off the subject approximately at the waist. In the long shot the human figure occupies about half the height of the frame. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 124) The content of the three clips is primarily shot in long shots. In the first clip, there is a medium shot

only when the seagull dives down (Fig. 23). In the second clip, there is a medium shot only when the commanding ant is filmed (Fig. 24). In the third clip, there is a medium shot when filming the penguins (Fig. 25), and the rest are long shots. In real life, social relations determine the distance that should be maintained between people. Kress & van Leeuwen believe that the framing size of an image can also reflect the closeness or distance between the viewer and the participants in the image. For example, a close-up shot represents an intimate distance, a full-body shot of a person in the frame represents a social close distance, a full-body shot of a person in the frame with space surrounding it represents a social long distance, and a distance of no less than 3 to 4 people is referred to as a public distance.

(3) Perspective



*Fig. 26*



*Fig. 27*



*Fig. 28*

Producing an image involves not only the choice between "offer" and "demand" and the selection of a certain size of frame, but also the selection of an angle, a "point of view." (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 129) Making images is not only a choice between "offer" and "demand," but also requires a certain size of the frame, and also requires a choice of angles and perspective, which means it can express subjective attitudes towards the participants being reproduced, whether they are human or other things. Most shots in the whole video are eye-level. Compared with the seagull and the crabs, the anteater and the ants, the shark and the penguins, the former are relatively large in size or

volume, and in a strong position. In the first segment, the perspective is overlooking from the seagull's perspective (Fig. 26), so the seagull is in a strong position. In the second segment, the ants face the larger anteater, facing it from a perspective of looking up (Fig. 27), so the ant is in a weak position. In terms of size, the shark is large and in a dominant position (Fig. 28).

(4) Modality

Modality refers to the credibility or authenticity of people's statements about the world they are concerned about, and its manifestation of resources is relatively rich in images. Similar to systemic functional linguistics, modality is categorized into three levels: high, medium, and low. This involves three scales, discussing the role of color as a naturalistic modal marker: (1) Color saturation, ranging from full color saturation to achromatic, i.e., becoming black and white. (2) Color differentiation, ranging from a maximum range of diverse colors to a monochromatic range. (3) Colour modulation, a scale running from fully modulated colour, with, for example, the use of many different shades of red, to plain, unmodulated colour. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 160) As an animated image, this video has maximum color saturation, making it appear "hyperrealistic."

### 3.3 Compositional Meaning

Compositional meaning corresponds to the textual meaning in functional grammar, referring to how an image integrates its representational meaning and interactional meaning to form a meaningful whole. Compositional meaning comprises three resources: information value, salience, and framing.

(1) Information Value



*Fig. 29*



*Fig. 30*
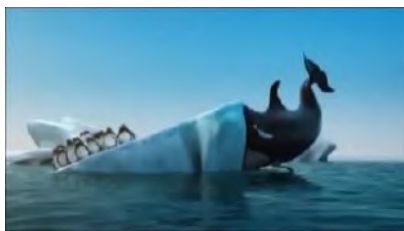
*Fig. 31*

The placement of elements endows them with the specific informational values attached to the various 'zones' of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177) Elements placed on the left represent old information, while elements placed on the right represent new information. Things placed at the top are considered ideal, while those at the bottom are seen as reality. For example, in the case of top and bottom, the seagull is diving down from the sky, resulting in the seagull being clipped (Fig. 29). As for left and right, the ants are on the left and the anteater is on the right (Fig. 30); the penguins are on the left and the shark is on the right (Fig. 31). The new information appearing on the right, which seems to represent the stronger party, ends in failure.

(2) Salience

The elements are made to attract the viewer's attention to different degrees, as realized by such factors as placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or colour), differences in sharpness, etc. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177) As seen in the three images mentioned above, there are differences in size and contrasts in strength, but the outcomes are all failures: one has its feathers clipped, one is blocked by a nostril, and the other crashes into an iceberg. These three endings indicate that the power of unity can enable the weak to defeat the strong.

(3) Framing



*Fig. 32*



*Fig. 33*

The presence or absence of framing devices disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177) There is no dedicated frame in the video, but in fact, in the first segment, the crabs' claws reach up to the sky, confronting the diving seagull, with the ground and the sky forming a dividing line (Fig. 32). Similarly, in the third segment, the penguins stand on an ice floe above the sea, with the ice floe and the sea forming a line, creating a contrast between the penguin on the sea surface and the shark in the sea (Fig. 33).

## IV.    CONCLUSION

This article uses visual grammar by Kress and van Leeuwen as a theoretical framework to analyze the representational meaning, interactional meaning, and compositional meaning of multimodal symbols in the video "Union Is Strength" from various modalities such as images, sounds, languages, and actions. Its purpose is to reveal the interaction between image symbols and linguistic symbols in constructing video meaning. The research shows that the video constructs the power of unity through multiple narrative methods, demonstrating that the weak can defeat the strong when united. This study can expand the application range of visual grammar theory and verify its operability and practicability. However, as the study mainly uses qualitative research methods, the research results inevitably suffer from personal subjective speculation and possess a certain degree of subjectivity. It is hoped that future research on multimodal discourse will tend to be more quantitative.

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# Unveiling the Scapegoat: An Analysis of the Hero Archetype in Akhil Sharma's 'Family Life'

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*Abstract*— *This paper employs a literary analysis framework, drawing upon archetypal criticism, psychoanalytic theory, and cultural studies, to explore the portrayal of the scapegoat hero archetype in Akhil Sharma's novel 'Family Life'. The qualitative research approach of this work, examines the protagonist's interactions within the family dynamics, themes of guilt and redemption, and the influence of cultural and societal factors. Further the research also explores the parallels between traditional scapegoat figures in literature and the portrayal of scapegoat hero of contemporary individuals in Akhil Sharma's 'Family Life'. This paper illuminates Sharma's nuanced portrayal of guilt, sacrifice, and the quest for identity within the immigrant family. Furthermore, by contextualizing the novel within the present era, this study underscores the enduring relevance of Sharma's exploration of these themes. And ultimately contributes to our understanding by offering insights into the complexities of portrayal of the scapegoat hero archetype influenced by immigrant experiences and the dynamics of family life.*

*Keywords*— *Archetypal Criticism, Cultural Studies, Family Dynamics, Hero Archetype, Immigration Experience, Pschyoanalytical theory*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Akhil Sharma's novel 'Family Life' intricately weaves together themes of immigrant experience, cultural identity, and familial relationships within the context of the Indian-American diaspora. The story revolves around the Mishra family, who immigrate to the United States from India in search of a better life. The protagonist, Ajay, narrates the family's journey as they grapple with the challenges of adapting to a new culture while striving to achieve the American Dream.

However, their aspirations are shattered when tragedy strikes, leaving Ajay's older brother, Birju, severely brain-damaged after a swimming pool accident. The Mishras are thrust into a world of uncertainty and hardship as they navigate the emotional and financial burdens of caring for Birju, whose condition strains their relationships and tests their resilience.

Within this rich tapestry, Sharma presents readers with a protagonist whose journey embodies the complexities of the scapegoat hero archetype. This concept, deeply rooted in literary tradition, offers a lens through which we can examine Ajay's role within the familial and cultural dynamics depicted in Sharma's novel.

Archetypal criticism, psychoanalytic theory, and cultural studies provide the theoretical backbone for this analysis. Archetypal criticism examines universal symbols and motifs in literature, psychoanalytic theory explores the psychological underpinnings of characters and narratives, and cultural studies contextualize these elements within broader societal frameworks. These approaches are particularly relevant for dissecting the multi-layered experiences of Ajay and his family.

Existing literature on 'Family Life' has primarily focused on its depiction of the immigrant experience and

familial relationships. For instance, scholars have explored how Sharma's narrative addresses themes of cultural assimilation (Smith, 2018), the psychological impact of immigration (Jones, 2019), and the dynamics of immigrant family life (Chen, 2020). However, there is a notable gap in examining the protagonist through the lens of the scapegoat hero archetype. This study aims to fill that gap, offering new insights into the novel's thematic complexity and its reflection of immigrant realities.

The primary objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. To explore the portrayal of the scapegoat hero in 'Family Life'.

2. To analyze the convergence of cultural, psychological, and narrative factors in shaping Ajay's identity and narrative trajectory.

3. To examine Ajay's experiences of guilt, redemption, and cultural displacement within the context of his family's immigrant experience.

4. To draw parallels between traditional literary figures and contemporary individuals through a contextualized examination of 'Family Life'.

By addressing these objectives, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the scapegoat hero archetype and its relevance in contemporary literature, particularly in the context of immigrant experiences.

## II.  FACETS OF SCAPEGOAT: THEORIES AND THEMES

Archetypal criticism, psychoanalytic theory, and cultural studies are resourceful in analysing themes in 'Family Life'. These theoretical frameworks enrich our interpretation of the text, illuminating diverse facets of archetype scapegoat hero and the complexities of Ajay's journey specifically in 'Family Life'.

2.1 Archetypal Criticism: Guilt and Redemption

The critical approach of Archetypal criticism interprets texts by focusing on recurring myths, symbols, and character types that appear across different cultures and literary works. These universal patterns, or archetypes, arise from the collective unconscious, a concept developed by psychologist Carl Jung. Archetypal criticism seeks to uncover these timeless elements and explore how they shape narratives and resonate with readers on a deep, often subconscious level.

In Akhil Sharma's *Family Life*, archetypal criticism allows us to delve deeply into the protagonist Ajay's experiences and uncover the underlying archetypal patterns that inform his journey.

Ajay embodies the archetype of the scapegoat hero, a figure who typically carries the burden of guilt or responsibility for the sake of the community or family, this becomes clear in the words of Ajay:

I had encouraged Birju to jump into the pool,

and now my brother was lying in a hospital bed,

brain-dead. I felt as though I had committed a crime

for which there could be no forgiveness. (Sharma, 45)

In Akhil Sharma's 'Family Life', Ajay's overwhelming guilt over his brother Birju's accident becomes a central motif that shapes his actions and relationships. Ajay's guilt, a repressed emotion, significantly influences his actions and decisions, as he feels responsible for Birju's condition. Ajay felt as though he had committed a crime for which there could be no forgiveness, this illustrates the depth of his repressed guilt. This guilt drives Ajay to adopt a sacrificial role within the family, embodying the archetype of the scapegoat hero who bears the burden of collective guilt and responsibility.

Constantly grappling with feelings of culpability for Birju's condition, Ajay symbolizes the sacrificial role of the scapegoat hero. His personal ambitions and aspirations became secondary in the light of his duty towards the family. Ajay himself verbalizes it, "I decided to become a doctor not because I wanted to help people, but because I thought it was the least I could do for my family, to bring them some relief and stability".(Sharma,54)

This aligns with the archetypal narrative of the scapegoat hero seeking redemption through sacrifice. Ajay's narrative trajectory mirrors traditional heroic narratives, where the protagonist undergoes trials and sacrifices to achieve redemption or resolution.

Ajay's quest for identity involves navigating between his Indian cultural heritage and the pressures of assimilating into American society. Ajay says: At school, I tried to hide my Indian accent and mannerisms, wanting desperately to fit in with my American classmates. At home, I clung to the rituals and traditions my parents upheld, feeling torn between two worlds" (Sharma 89). His struggles with cultural assimilation, language barriers, and societal expectations reflect the hero's journey archetype, where he undergoes transformation and growth. Archetypal criticism highlights the universal nature of Ajay's quest for identity, resonating with readers:

Over time, I realized that I didn't have to choose between

being Indian or American. I could be both,

embracing my heritage

while also making my own path in this new world (Sharma 150).

By examining Ajay's character through the lens of archetypal criticism, two prominent themes of guilt and redemption, and the quest for identity emerge as facets of the protagonist Ajay as a scapegoat.

2.2 Psychoanalytic Theory: Family Dynamics and Psychological Motivations

Psychoanalytic theory, particularly Freudian and Jungian perspectives, delves into the unconscious motivations and conflicts that shape human behavior. Sigmund Freud famously stated, "The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" (Freud 1), underscoring the central role of the unconscious in influencing actions and relationships. Carl Jung expanded on this by introducing the concept of the collective unconscious, asserting, "The collective unconscious is a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition" (Jung 3). This theoretical approach offers profound insights into characters' psychological states, examining how repressed emotions, internal conflicts, and subconscious drives influence their actions and relationships. Psychoanalytic theory uncovers the deeper layers of meaning embedded within characters' psychological experiences and familial interactions.

In Akhil Sharma's 'Family Life', psychoanalytic theory provides a valuable framework for understanding Ajay's psychological motivations and conflicts within his family dynamics. Ajay's overwhelming guilt and anxiety, stemming from his brother Birju's accident, can be explored through Freud's theory of the unconscious mind. Freud posits that repressed emotions and unresolved conflicts manifest in one's behavior and relationships, often operating outside conscious awareness.

Moreover, Ajay's behavior demonstrates classic Freudian defense mechanisms. He often resorts to denial and repression to cope with the overwhelming reality of Birju's condition and its impact on his family. For example, Ajay describes a moment when he tries to ignore the gravity of the situation: "I pretended that everything was normal, even as my world was falling apart" (Sharma 67). This denial allows Ajay to function in his daily life, but it also perpetuates his internal conflict and emotional turmoil.

Ajay's identity crisis can also be examined through psychoanalytic concepts such as ego development and cultural identity formation. According to Jungian theory, the ego struggles to integrate conflicting aspects of the self, which can lead to internal tension and crisis. Ajay's negotiation between his Indian traditions and the pressures to assimilate into American society reflects this struggle.

Ajay's attempt to fit in at school while adhering to his family's cultural expectations at home is a poignant example: "At school, I tried to hide my Indian accent and mannerisms, wanting desperately to fit in with my American classmates. At home, I clung to the rituals and traditions my parents upheld, feeling torn between two worlds" (Sharma 89). This dual existence creates a fragmented sense of self, where Ajay experiences an ongoing conflict between his heritage and the new cultural environment.

Additionally, Ajay's relationship with his parents reveals deeper psychological dynamics, particularly the tension between his desire for independence and his need for familial approval. Ajay's father's stern expectations and his mother's emotional vulnerability create a complex environment where Ajay feels both suffocated and responsible. He recounts a moment of intense pressure: "My father expected me to excel in everything, as if my success could somehow make up for Birju's condition. My mother's tears were a constant reminder of the family's suffering" (Sharma 112). This familial pressure exacerbates Ajay's identity crisis and his struggle to find a balance between competing cultural and personal demands.

Ultimately, Ajay's psychological journey involves integrating these conflicting identities to form a cohesive sense of self. His realization that "Over time, I realized that I didn't have to choose between being Indian or American. I could be both, embracing my heritage while also making my own path in this new world" (Sharma 150) signifies a resolution of his identity crisis. This journey reflects the psychoanalytic process of ego integration, where Ajay reconciles the diverse aspects of his identity, achieving a sense of wholeness.

Ajay's inner struggles and the complex dynamics of his family are mirror reflections of the psychological motivations behind Ajay's actions and his journey toward self-discovery and cultural assimilation.

2.3 Cultural Studies: Immigration Experience and Cultural Adaptation

Cultural studies offer a lens through which we can analyze literature by examining how texts reflect and critique societal norms, power structures, and cultural identities. This interdisciplinary approach explores how cultural

practices, beliefs, and values shape individual experiences and collective identities within specific contexts. In the study of literature, cultural studies provide insights into how narratives negotiate and challenge cultural boundaries, offering nuanced perspectives on characters' roles and interactions within their social milieu.

In Akhil Sharma's novel 'Family Life', cultural studies illuminate the complexities of Ajay's character as he navigates the intersection of Indian and American cultures. Ajay embodies the archetype of the scapegoat hero, a figure burdened with guilt and responsibility for the sake of the family or community. His narrative unfolds against the backdrop of immigrant experiences, exploring themes of displacement, assimilation, and identity formation.

Cultural studies highlight the broader societal expectations that shape Ajay's experiences. His father's relentless pursuit of academic success as a form of redemption for Birju's condition reflects cultural pressures within the Indian diaspora community. Ajay reflects on this, noting, "My father expected me to excel in everything, as if my success could somehow make up for Birju's condition" (Sharma 112). This expectation exacerbates Ajay's sense of responsibility and reinforces his role as the scapegoat hero striving to fulfill familial obligations.

Cultural studies offers a poignant exploration of Ajay's resilience and identity quest within the complex framework of immigrant life. His journey mirrors the broader experiences of individuals navigating cultural assimilation and societal pressures, shedding light on the transformative power of cultural identity and the enduring significance of familial bonds.

Ajay's experiences as a scapegoat intersect with themes of cultural identity and assimilation, highlighting the challenges faced by immigrants in navigating the tensions between tradition and modernity, loyalty to family and individual autonomy. As an Indian-American immigrant, Ajay straddles multiple worlds, grappling with questions of belonging, heritage, and cultural assimilation. His status as the scapegoat within the family dynamic further complicates his sense of identity, as he struggles to reconcile his Indian heritage with his American upbringing.

In another scene, Ajay reflects on his sense of cultural displacement, stating, "I felt like I didn't belong anywhere. Not in India, not in America." This excerpt underscores Ajay's struggle to reconcile the conflicting expectations and stereotypes imposed upon him by society. Despite his efforts to assimilate and adapt to his new environment, Ajay remains acutely aware of his otherness

and alienation, highlighting the profound impact of his scapegoat status on his sense of cultural identity.

Moreover, Ajay's experiences as a scapegoat have far-reaching consequences for his relationships and sense of belonging within the wider community. He is often subjected to ridicule, bullying, and isolation by his peers, who perceive him as different or inferior due to his family's circumstances. Ajay's status as the scapegoat further exacerbates his feelings of alienation and estrangement from both his Indian heritage and American identity.

The protagonist's scapegoat status is deeply influenced by cultural and societal norms that dictate familial roles and responsibilities within the Indian-American community. From the outset, Ajay finds himself burdened by the weight of familial expectations and obligations, as he grapples with the aftermath of his brother Birju's tragic accident. The cultural expectation of filial piety and duty compels Ajay to prioritize his brother's care and well-being above his own needs and desires, exacerbating his sense of guilt and self-blame. Moreover, societal attitudes towards disability and difference further compound Ajay's scapegoat status, as he navigates the stigma and prejudice surrounding his brother's condition within both Indian and American contexts.

Ajay's immigrant experiences and cultural expectations significantly contribute to his role as the scapegoat within the family dynamic. As an Indian-American immigrant, Ajay grapples with the challenge of reconciling his Indian heritage with his American identity, navigating the complexities of cultural assimilation and societal pressures. The tension between cultural expectations and individual autonomy is palpable throughout the novel, as Ajay struggles to assert his own agency and identity within the confines of familial and cultural norms. His scapegoat status becomes a poignant reflection of the immigrant experience, highlighting the complexities of identity, belonging, and cultural adaptation in a foreign land.

The protagonist's scapegoat identity intersects with broader cultural themes in "Family Life," shedding light on the complexities of immigrant life and familial dynamics within the Indian-American diaspora. Ajay's negotiation of multiple identities—Indian, American, immigrant, scapegoat—underscores the fluidity of identity within diverse cultural contexts, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions through his lived experiences and personal journey of self-discovery. Moreover, his scapegoat status serves as a potent metaphor for the struggles faced by immigrant families and individuals in navigating the complexities of cultural adaptation and assimilation, highlighting the enduring influence of

culture, tradition, and societal attitudes on individual identity and belonging.

By examining the cultural and societal factors shaping the protagonist's scapegoat status a deeper understanding of the complexities of immigrant life and familial dynamics within "Family Life" by Akhil Sharma has been understood. Ajay's journey serves as a powerful exploration of identity, belonging, and acceptance within the Indian-American diaspora, offering insights into the challenges and triumphs of immigrant families and individuals in contemporary society.

## III.   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Akhil Sharma's novel "Family Life" offers a compelling exploration of Ajay Mishra as a scapegoat hero within the Indian-American diaspora, addressing key objectives of this study. Through detailed analysis, we have examined how Ajay embodies the scapegoat archetype, navigating complex familial obligations and cultural assimilation.

The convergence of cultural, psychological, and narrative factors in Ajay's journey underscores his quest for identity and belonging amidst the immigrant experience. His experiences of guilt, redemption, and cultural displacement are intricately woven into the narrative, revealing profound insights into the challenges faced by immigrant families in reconciling tradition with modernity.

The portrayal of Ajay Mishra as a modern scapegoat hero in "Family Life" not only resonates with traditional heroic narratives of adversity and redemption but also enriches contemporary literature by exploring the enduring themes of sacrifice, guilt, and cultural identity amidst the complexities of immigrant life in the Indian-American diaspora.

Drawing parallels between Ajay's journey and traditional literary figures highlights the universal themes of adversity and transformation. By contextualizing "Family Life" within broader cultural frameworks, this study enriches our understanding of the scapegoat hero archetype in contemporary literature.

Moving forward, comparative analyses with other immigrant narratives, exploration of reader responses, and investigation into Sharma's motivations promise further insights into the novel's thematic depth. These avenues will continue to illuminate how literature reflects and shapes our understanding of identity, resilience, and the human condition in diverse cultural contexts.

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# Analysing Speech in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* based on Gender

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*Abstract— Pride and Prejudice, a classic novel by Jane Austen, portrays the social and linguistic differences in the speech of men and women in 19th Century England. This paper attempts to explore how language is used as a tool for representation of gender identity, social standing and power dynamics within the characters in the novel. This exploration is done by closely examining conversations and interactions among characters. It studies the differences between the ways the male and female characters use language to navigate their relationships, assert power and deal with social expectations. The syntactic structures, the choice of words, politeness strategies and speech acts are examined to study the interplay between language and gender that Austen brings out in her famed novel. The speech patterns are also involved in studying the gendered expectations and the societal norms, and how they are affected by speech. The paper contributes to the deeper understanding of the use of language based on gender differences and sheds light on the complexities of gender performance and expressions within the Regency-era English society. It gives the readers an insight into the way the author's portrayal of speech reflects the gender dynamics throughout the novel.*

*Keywords— Pride and Prejudice, language, gender, speech analysis*

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the word choices of men and women differ considerably. The manner in which men and women verbally express themselves have been a fascinating subject of research in the fabric of human interaction. The speech patterns, which range from pitch and intonation to word selections and conversational approaches of the two genders, have been the focus of serious study and investigation. Examination of these patterns provides some noticeable insights into the cultural norms and expectations as well as the complexities of the language. We learn more about human interactions, communication between men and women, and how language reflects as well as influences our perspectives, relationships, and identities.

Through the perspective of gender analysis in literature, one may study the intricacies of society, power relationships, and identity as they are depicted in literary works. Literature from all genres and eras of history portrays gender norms, expectations, and experiences. The intricacies of gender presentation and communication can be observed and analysed through the insightful lens of speech patterns. Moreover, gender-based speech analysis emphasizes the diversity and flexibility of gendered language practices thereby recognizing a broad range of linguistic identities and expressions that go beyond the conventional binary concepts.

## II. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

One book where the speech patterns of men and women are obviously different is Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Published in 1813, the novel stands as one of the great works of English literature. The work, which takes place in Regency England in the early 1800s, addresses social class, marriage, and the intricacies of interpersonal relationships. It chronicles Elizabeth Bennet's journey through the sexual relationships and social standards of her times.

Austen's examination of conversation in the book offers a complex mirror of the expectations, customs, and hierarchies of contemporary English society. In a world where speech serves as a tool for both communication and conflict, the novelist creates a scenario where the personalities, ideals, and motives of the characters are revealed through dialogue. This research looks at the subtleties of language, tone, and conversation structure in order to explore the complexities of speech in Austen's work. The conflict between propriety and authenticity, societal aspiration and personal identity is highlighted in almost every discussion throughout *Pride and Prejudice*. The author expresses the underlying realities of conversation through the use of speech as a tool for character development, societal critique, and narrative propulsion.

## III.      GENDERED SPEECH PATTERNS

### i)      Female Speech Patterns

The depiction of female speech patterns in *Pride and Prejudice* paints a clear picture of gender dynamics and the expectations of the 19th-century English society. With the limitations of the social environment in mind, Austen depicts the subtleties of female communications through the conversations and interactions of some of the characters such as Elizabeth Bennet, Mrs. Bennet, and Jane Bennet.

The female characters in the book often conduct themselves politely in accordance with the standards set by their social standing. Their speech has a certain decorum and sophistication that is indicative of their education and upbringing. Given below are some instances to bolster the researchers' argument:

● Politeness strategies and decorum:

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forgot that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than to decline them." (Austen 121)

The above lines are uttered by Elizabeth Bennet to Mr. Collins wherein Elizabeth starts off by thanking Mr. Collins for putting her out to marriage. She graciously refuses Mr.

Collins's proposal, even though she appreciates the sincerity behind it. She doesn't criticize or disparage Mr. Collins in her response; instead, she concentrates on her incapacity to accept his offer. All of them demonstrate her understanding of the social norm around showing thanks and her dedication to upholding her own morals and beliefs while also preserving Mr. Collins' and her own dignity.

● Wit and Assertiveness:

"I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine." (Austen 25)

Elizabeth is expressing her displeasure and irritation with Mr. Darcy's actions in the statement above. She admits that if he hadn't hurt her dignity, she could have forgiven him. Elizabeth finds herself drawn to Mr. Darcy, but she wouldn't accept his disrespecting behaviour. She demands that everyone treat her with respect and recognize her value as a person, regardless of social standing or financial background, and she declares her independence.

● Expressions of Societal Constraints:

"A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!" (Austen 3)

Mrs. Bennet says the aforementioned remarks at the start of the book. They convey the social norm that women- particularly those from middle-class or lower-class backgrounds- should marry primarily in order to secure their financial future. Without marriage, women had few alternatives for safeguarding their futures, especially if they were poor or had no powerful ties. For many women, getting married was the only way to raise their social status or secure their financial future.

### ii)      Male Speech Patterns:

The male characters in *Pride and Prejudice* represent the expectations and social mores prevalent in Regency-era England. Men's discourse often reflects their responsibilities as the main providers and decision-makers in society by projecting authority, confidence, and social status. Their speech provides insight about their social status, personalities, and perspectives on romance and marriage.

● Assertiveness and Directness:

"In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you." (Austen 204)

The above quote is a pivotal point in Austen's novel. It takes place during Elizabeth Bennet's initial proposal from Mr. Darcy. Despite his haughty and arrogant demeanour at first, Mr. Darcy begins to feel drawn to Elizabeth. This desire and adoration intensify throughout the book. His honesty and

the intensity of his feelings are reflected in his directness and aggressiveness. When he says, "It will not do," he is admitting that he can't push his feelings for Elizabeth to the side.

- Authority and Dominance

    "My reasons for marrying me are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish." (Austen 119)

The aforementioned lines are uttered by Mr. Collins to Elizabeth Bennet. His sense of power and authority is reflected in the statement, but in an arrogant and foolish manner. Mr. Collins states that he feels that it is his responsibility as a priest to lead by example when it comes to matrimony within his community. In his society, he aims to assert his influence not just as a cleric but also as a moral leader. When he refers to "easy circumstances," it also suggests that he believes that he is better than Elizabeth and her family socially. He tries to establish the social hierarchy that controls their interactions and demonstrates his power by presenting himself as Elizabeth's ideal match.

- Masculinity:

    "I have been used to consider poetry as the food for love." (Austen 53)

This is what Mr. Darcy says in a discussion with Elizabeth Bennet regarding the function of poetry in love. His remark implies that he has been exposed to literature and culture, which demonstrates the level of sophistication that was typical of upper-class men during the Regency era. His declaration also conveys his idealistic and aspirational romanticism. His yearning for meaningful relationships and profound emotional connections is evident. This remark is consistent with Mr. Darcy's development as a character, which shows us how he changes from a proud and reticent person to someone who can truly love and be intimate with others.

## IV.    CONCLUSION

Jane Austen expertly illustrates the linguistic distinctions between the male and female characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, mirroring the gender roles and social mores prevalent in Regency England. Male characters such as Mr. Collins and Mr. Darcy demonstrate their power, confidence, and authority in their dealings with others through their discourse. Their discourse, which frequently takes the form of overt suggestions and declarations of social superiority, is a reflection of their social privilege and entitlement expectations. Female protagonists like Jane and Elizabeth Bennet, on the contrary, deftly negotiate social mores with

a careful balance of decorum, charm, and intellect. They are seen to make their voices heard within the confines of their social positions by using cunning and diplomacy to get around patriarchal restrictions. In conclusion, the investigation of gender dynamics in Jane Austen's popular fiction *Pride and Prejudice* is compounded by the linguistic distinctions between its major characters- both male and female. The author creates conversation that highlights the manner in which individuals manoeuvre identity, agency, and power within the limitations of their social context while also reflecting the intricacies of gendered communication.

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# EFL Digital Literacy Skills and Autonomy among Normal School Students in China

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*Abstract*— *This study investigated the digital literacy skills and autonomy among EFL students at normal schools in China. Using adapted questionnaires distributed to 405 participants, data were analyzed via Weighted Mean, Ranking, Regression Analysis, and ANOVA. The study revealed that students exhibited strong digital literacy, information sourcing, and analysis skills, with high autonomy in language learning. However, they struggled with proficiency analysis and synthesizing learning strategies, indicating a need for interventions. The findings underscore the importance of programmatic interventions tailored to student profiles. Autonomy is crucial in enhancing digital literacy, suggesting an integrated curriculum to bolster these skills among normal school students in China.*

*Keywords*— *EFL Digital Literacy Skills, Autonomy, Normal School Students*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The global trend of digitalization impacts all aspects of life, including English language learning. Digital literacy is crucial for teachers in this context, highlighted by China's National Industry Standard "Digital Literacy of Teachers" issued in 2022. Proficiency in L2 digital literacy skills is now essential for effective EFL learning. Critical digital literacy involves understanding and assessing digital technologies and media.

In English education, proficiency in digital technologies and materials is vital. For EFL learners, developing these skills enhances language learning and proficiency. Kim, Park, and Baek (2018) show that digitally literate teachers better guide students in digital environments. However, little attention has been given to the intersection of digital literacy with autonomy in EFL studies. Autonomy is central to EFL research. Autonomy involves learners managing, guiding, and assessing their

learning, fostering adaptability and efficiency. Integrating English language studies with psychology deepens understanding of the cognitive processes involved in language acquisition and learning.

This study investigates digital literacy and autonomy among EFL students in China, aiming to provide theoretical and practical insights. It examines how digital literacy affects autonomy, demonstrating its impact on teaching effectiveness and student achievement. The research highlights the importance of digital literacy in promoting autonomy and suggests avenues for future investigation.

The study's significance lies in its potential to enhance teacher education and foreign language teaching, inform educational policies, and promote equity and modernization. By integrating digital literacy and autonomy into teacher training, the research aims to reduce education disparities and ensure quality education for all. Well-prepared,

confident teachers can better face digital age challenges, contributing to a fair and effective educational system.

## II.    METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

Descriptive research was employed in this setting to collect specific data regarding the autonomy and digital literacy skills in EFL students attending Chinese Normal Schools.

Questionnaire data were collected and analyzed using the Social Science Statistics Software Package (SPSS, 26.0). This approach allowed the researchers to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, measure their digital literacy skills and autonomy in language learning and examine the correlations between two variables. Specifically, weighted means, rankings, regression analysis, and ANOVA were employed to analyze the data and identify patterns and relationships within the population studied.

### Participants

This study was conducted at two teacher-training schools in China. A total of 450 was determined using appropriate sampling methods to ensure representativeness and accuracy with a 95% confidence level, and a 5% margin of error.

### Instruments

This study used two modified questionnaires to collect respondents' demographic information (gender, age, and major) and specific data on digital literacy and autonomous English learning. The first questionnaire, adapted from Seghayer (2020), assessed digital literacy skills in three dimensions: information-searching skills (5 statements), critical evaluation of online information (7 statements), and synthesizing digital resources (4 statements). The second questionnaire, developed by Lin Lilan (2013), measured autonomous English learning with 28 items across three factors: self-management learning ability (7 items), autonomous learning psychology (9 items), and autonomous learning behavior (12 items). Responses were also on a 4-point Likert scale. The questionnaires underwent content validation by experts and a pilot study with 30 respondents to ensure reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each scale meeting the minimum standard of 0.70 as per George et al. (2003).

## III.    RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**3.1** Digital Literacy Skill

*Table 1 Summary Table on Digital Literacy*

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.    Information-Searching Skills and Strategies Scale (ISSS) | 2.74 | Agree | 3 |
| 2.    Evaluating Online Information Critically (EOIC) Scale | 2.90 | Agree | 2 |
| 3.    Synthesizing Digital Resources Strategy Scale (SDRS) | 2.93 | Agree | 1 |
| **Composite Mean** | **2.86** | **Agree** | |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 1 presents a summary of the respondents' digital literacy skills across three indicators: information-searching skills and strategies (ISSS), evaluating online information critically (EOIC), and synthesizing digital resources strategy (SDRS). The composite mean of 2.86 indicates that respondents generally agreed with the statements across these scales.

Respondents' agreement across the three indicators suggests they believe they have a reasonable level of ability in their technology literacy. The highest ranking of the SDRS scale shows their ability to synthesize and integrate

information from other digital sources is strong; something that is necessary for effective learning in an online environment. Second was the EOIC scale. This scale illustrated the importance of critically evaluating the reliability and credibility of information online. Lastly, the ISSS scale, which respondents still agreed that they were competent in, ranked third. This may show that respondents felt competent when searching for information, but synthesizing and critically evaluating that information may be what they find more challenging but valuable.

The first-rated indicator, synthesizing digital resources strategy scale (SDRS), is indicative of the respondent's high level of skill in integrating information from multiple digital sources. These skills are critical for advancing a thorough understanding of complex topics and for effective problem-solving. Kinzer et. al. (2017) label skills such as synthesizing information as a fundamental component of digital literacy as they are crucial for allowing a person to build relationships between pieces of information to construct coherently organized knowledge. Similarly, Coiro (2021) specified skills such as summarizing and contrasting information as fundamental components for effective online reading comprehension. Even more importantly, this suggests those who can effectively synthesize information are equipped to move and make sense of the digital information landscape.

The evaluation of online information is equally critical as the second construct, primarily focused on the evaluating online information critically (EOIC) scale, tapped respondents' ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of online information. This skill is particularly important in the digital age due to the widespread presence of misinformation. Flanagin and Metzger (2000) were the first to stress the importance of evaluating source credibility, examining author expertise, and verifying consistency. Wineburg and McGrew (2017) also underscored the value of being able to differentiate between facts and opinion. The last skill, differentiating factual information from opinions, was especially important for navigating the complex landscape of internet information effectively.

To sum up, from the summary table, it is evident that the respondents generally feel confident in their digital literacy skills, in particular in the areas of being able to synthesize information across various digital sources and critically evaluate the information they find online. The higher ratings for the SDRS and EOIC indicators suggest that these skills are seen as the most significant for effective learning and decision-making in the digital world. The slight drop in confidence in information-searching skills suggests that the development of these skills would further foster learners' digital literacy, enabling them to interact more successfully with digital resources in their academic and everyday lives.

3.2 Autonomy in EFL

*Table 2 Summary Table on Autonomy in EFL*

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  Self-management Learning Ability | 2.96 | Agree | 2 |
| 2.  Autonomous Learning Psychology | 3.09 | Agree | 1 |
| 3.  Autonomous Learning Behavior | 2.87 | Agree | 3 |
| **Composite Mean** | **2.97** | **Agree** | |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree*

Table 2 presents an overview of autonomy in English as a Foreign Language based on various items. The composite mean score of 2.97 indicates an overall agreement among respondents regarding autonomy in EFL.

Among the indicators, indicator 2, autonomous learning psychology rated the highest with a mean of 3.09, which implies that the level of agreement was strong. Respondents generally view themselves as an autonomous learner of the English language and feel proactive in this area. There are several reasons why the respondents rated this item so highly. Research on the topic of autonomy-supportive environments by Deci and Ryan (2012) shows that intrinsic motivation and engagement can be promoted by autonomy-supportive environments. This attitude may also contribute to the high rate of agreement among respondents about Autonomous Learning Psychology.

Ranked at a mean score of 2.96, is indicator 1, self-regulation learning ability, implying that respondents have a good level of self-regulated skills in their learning of a language. The capacity to target their learning, monitor progress, and reflect on these experiences are factors that would have likely contributed to this score. Recent research articles by Cabugsa (2022) discussed the role of self-regulated learning skills like goal setting and self-monitoring in raising levels of learners' accomplishment and motivation in language learning.

Indicator 3, autonomous learning behavior, obtained a mean score of 2.87, which was rated as agree. This indicates that respondents show a proactive attitude in their language learning as demonstrated by the slightly lower-rated Autonomous Learning Behavior than the other two constructs. It would suggest that despite demonstrating proactive behavior in their language-learning process, there are possible ways in which learners could better integrate autonomous learning strategies into their process. The lower rating may also be in part determined by variable access to resources or constraints in terms of their ability to learn autonomously.

Deci and Ryan (2012) stated that the autonomous approach to the learning environment can have an impact on intrinsic motivation and engagement, which in turn will improve learning outcomes. This theory is consistent with the high ranking of autonomous learning psychology in the summary table, indicating that every respondent strongly believed they were autonomous learners.

Dewaele et al. (2019) highlighted the significant role of learner beliefs and attitudes in influencing autonomous language learning behaviors. This is particularly evident in the summary table, where autonomous learning psychology is listed at the top. The respondents' acknowledgment of their proactive role in their learning journey aligns with

their commitment to autonomous learning psychology. The drive and importance of learners developing positive frames of mind also run parallel in the data that the Respondents shared about how they are setting themselves to language learning in an autonomous way by agreeing with statements relating to autonomous psychology.

Additionally, Benson (2013) illustrated the importance of the learner taking more of a unilateral active role within the language learning episode. Although indicator 3, *Autonomous Learning Behavior*, was ranked lower in the summary table, some indications in the ranked boxes demonstrate proactive, constructive undertakings from the Respondents. The idea of being learner-centered from Benson prompts the relevance and importance of creating autonomy for learners in language education; to foster a shift towards being independent and having a say in your learning.

Together, across the categories, the high levels of agreement suggest a strongly positive view of autonomy, particularly autonomous learning in EFL among the Respondents. The theoretical frameworks of autonomy-supportive settings and self-regulation of learning provide some enlightenment in figuring out what impacted the respondents' attitudes and behavior toward autonomous learning in context.

*Table 3 Difference of Responses on Digital Literacy When Grouped According to Profile*

| Sex | F-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Information-Searching Skills and Strategies Scale (ISSS) | 3.030 | 0.082 | Not Significant |
| Evaluating Online Information Critically (EOIC) Scale | 0.035 | 0.851 | Not Significant |
| Synthesizing Digital Resources Strategy Scale (SDRS) | 0.001 | 0.978 | Not Significant |
| **Age** | | | |
| Information-Searching Skills and Strategies Scale (ISSS) | 0.764 | 0.466 | Not Significant |
| Evaluating Online Information Critically (EOIC) Scale | 2.294 | 0.102 | Not Significant |
| Synthesizing Digital Resources Strategy Scale (SDRS) | 2.728 | 0.066 | Not Significant |
| **Major** | | | |
| Information-Searching Skills and Strategies Scale (ISSS) | 0.097 | 0.756 | Not Significant |
| Evaluating Online Information Critically (EOIC) Scale | 1.997 | 0.158 | Not Significant |
| Synthesizing Digital Resources Strategy Scale (SDRS) | 3.745 | 0.054 | Not Significant |

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05*

Table 3 presents the differences in responses on digital literacy skills when grouped according to profile characteristics, including sex, age, and major. The analysis is based on three indicators: information-searching skills

and strategies scale (ISSS), evaluating online information critically scale (EOIC), and synthesizing digital resources strategy scale (SDRS). The F-values and p-values are provided to determine the statistical significance of

differences between groups. A p-value less than 0.05 is considered statistically significant. The table shows that there are no significant differences in digital literacy skills based on sex, age, or major, as all p-values are greater than 0.05.

The results established that there is no significant difference between the two groups concerning sex. The F-value for the Information-searching skills and strategies scale (ISSS) is 3.030, and the corresponding p-value is 0.082, indicating no significance in the difference between the male and female respondents regarding their information-searching skills. Also, for the EOIC scale, the F-value is 0.035, and the p-value is found to be 0.851, and for the SDRS Scale, the F-value is 0.001 with a p-value of 0.978. From these test statistics, it can be inferred that the variability existing between male and female respondents is not significant in terms of their digital literacy skills. This was also affirmed by recent studies reported by Abrosimova (2020) and Alakrash et. al. (2021), where findings revealed that digital literacy skills generally do not vary by gender when considering other factors such as access to technology and educational opportunities.

The analysis further revealed that age did not have statistically significant differences in the digital literacy skills of the sample. The p-value for the F-ratio for ISSS was 0.466 (0.764), indicating no significant difference in information-searching skills from an age factor. For the EOIC scale, the F-value is 2.294, and the p-value is 0.102; the F-value is 2.728 for the synthesizing digital resources strategy scale, with a p-value of 0.066. The findings of this study, therefore mean that digital literacy skills are not significantly different concerning age. Again, the research from Polizzi (2020) and Feerrar (2019) support this observation, as according to them, the variation in digital literacy due to age is rife only when access and educational

interventions to improve digital skills happen at varied paces across age-groups.

Further, digital literacy does not significantly differ. The result from the ISSS shows an F-value of 0.097 with a 0.756 p-value; it states that there is no significant difference between information-searching skills and major. The critical online information evaluating ability scale (EOIC) has an F-value of 1.997 with a p-value of 0.158, while the SDRS attains an F-value of 3.745 with a 0.054 p-value. In this case, the p-value for SDRS by major is close to the significance value; however, at 0.05, it does not reach significance and may suggest some kind of trend that would be worth re-exploring with greater depth, such as more subjects or other independent variables. Significant meaning in the development of particular digital literacy skills has been given about disciplinary context, a point by studies by Milliner and Dimoski (2024) and Reddy et al. (2020). While there may be differences based on primary, these would not be highly significant in this study.

No significant difference was found among recent studies supporting digital literacy skills based on demographic factors. Equitable access to technology and education in digital literacy is also something Abrosimova (2020) called for, which will help reduce the differences that exist along demographic lines. Alakrash and Razak (2021) and Milliner and Dimoski (2024) emphasized the need for broad-based training or digital literacy programs that would enhance equity in skills between different groups due to inclusive educational practices. Generally, there was no significant variance in the level of digital literacy skills attributed to differences in responses concerning sex, age, or significance. These findings would suggest a relatively equal distribution of digital literacy capabilities among these classifications of demographics. In general, this effect is likely to be supported due to equal access to digital literacy resources and student training.

*Table 4 Difference of Responses on Autonomy in EFL When Grouped According to Profile*

| Sex | F-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-management Learning Ability | 1.758 | 0.186 | Not Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Psychology | 0.098 | 0.754 | Not Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Behavior | 0.313 | 0.576 | Not Significant |
| **Age** | | | |
| Self-management Learning Ability | 0.742 | 0.477 | Not Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Psychology | 0.342 | 0.710 | Not Significant |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Autonomous Learning Behavior | 2.637 | 0.073 | Not Significant |
| **Major** | | | |
| Self-management Learning Ability | 9.387 | 0.002 | Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Psychology | 7.446 | 0.007 | Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Behavior | 1.574 | 0.210 | Not Significant |

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05*

Table 4 presents the differences in responses on autonomy in English as a Foreign Language when grouped according to profile characteristics such as sex, age, and major. The analysis includes three indicators: self-management learning ability, autonomous learning psychology, and autonomous learning behavior; f-values and p-values are provided to determine the statistical significance of differences between groups, with a p-value less than 0.05 considered statistically significant.

The analysis reveals no significant differences in autonomy in EFL based on sex. For self-management learning ability, the F-value is 1.758 with a p-value of 0.186. For autonomous learning psychology, the F-value is 0.098 with a p-value of 0.754, and for autonomous learning behavior, the F-value is 0.313 with a p-value of 0.576. The results show that there exist no statistically significant differences between male and female independence levels in EFL. Little (2019) also agreed by stating that gender does not affect the degree of learner autonomy significantly if factors with concern to the educational environment and support are held constant.

Results reveal no significant difference in autonomy in EFL about age—self-management learning ability F-value 0.742 p-value 0.477. The F is equal to 0.342, with a p-value of 0.710 in autonomous learning psychology, while for autonomous learning behavior, the F is 2.637, with a p-value of 0.073. These results reflect that respondents' autonomy in EFL has no remarkable difference when considering age as a factor. This finding is supported by the research of Gao and Zhang (2020), indicating that sufficient learning strategies and guidance could neutralize age-related differences in autonomy.

The values are followed by significant test statistics on differences in autonomy in EFL by different majors: the F-value is 9.387 in the ability to learn by self-management, with a p-value of 0.002, which is significant; for

autonomous learning psychology, the F-value is 7.446 and p=0.007, which is substantial, but concerning autonomous learning behavior, the F-value is 1.574, p=0.210, not substantial. This sort of finding shows that majors are going to influence self-management learning ability and autonomous learning psychology significantly. It has been pointed out from the works of Guay (2022) and Benson (2007) that the role of academic discipline in fostering learner autonomy can be very diverse, with different possible supports and opportunities for autonomous learning.

Recent research has found some significant differences in autonomy among academic majors. Guay (2022) has shown that autonomy-supportive environments facilitate intrinsic motivation and engagement, both of which are vital to developing skills in self-regulating learning. Williams (2001) focused on strategies for developing autonomous learning behaviors and attitudes in learner-centered approaches. Gao and Zhang (2020) also found that, while age and gender were not statistically significantly related to autonomy, providing varying degrees of autonomy and support is beneficial for all students. From the findings in these studies, interventions can be targeted at institutions that want to encourage autonomy in all learners and can be used to support autonomy relative to academic majors.

In summary, data show that it is not the case that we are seeing significant differences in EFL learners' levels of autonomy based on sex or age, but there are statistically significant differences based on major concerning self-regulating learning and autonomous learning psychology. This makes it clear that the discipline of study plays a substantial role in shaping autonomy in learners. By providing support designed to encourage autonomous learning and more unbounded constraints, educators can encourage autonomy in EFL across various majors.

*Table 5 Relationship Between Digital Literacy and Autonomy in EFL*

| Information-Searching Skills and Strategies Scale (ISSS) | r-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-management Learning Ability | .269** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Psychology | .229** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Behavior | .217** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| **Information Critically (EOIC) Scale** | | | |
| Self-management Learning Ability | .510** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Psychology | .360** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Behavior | .550** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| **Synthesizing Digital Resources Strategy Scale (SDRS)** | | | |
| Self-management Learning Ability | .547** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Psychology | .309** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Autonomous Learning Behavior | .559** | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01*

Table 5 presents the association between Digital Literacy and Autonomy in EFL. The computed r-values indicate a strong direct correlation and the resulting p-values were less than the alpha level. This means that there was a significant relationship exists and implies that the better the digital literacy is, the better digital autonomy is.

There are strong associations between the r-values for the ISSS and the three facets of autonomy for EFL in which the association of Self-management Learning Ability is fully significant at .269**, p=0.000; Autonomous Learning Psychology at .229**, p=0.000; and Autonomous Learning Behavior at .217**, p=0.000. Students who can perform information searching is more likely to manage their own learning. They are more likely to have the motivation or a psychological state supporting autonomous learning (meaning they have positive thoughts related to learning). They are more likely to use a wider range of language activities and platforms. These results agree with the findings from Ebersold, Rahm, and Heise (2019), Hsieh and Hsieh (2019), who also identify information searching as critical to autonomous learning.

The r-values for the EOIC scale give stronger results for the autonomy facets. The association with self-management learning ability is .510**, p=0.000; autonomous learning psychology is .360**, p=0.000 and autonomous learning behavior is .550**, p=0.000. These results underscore the role of evaluation in affecting autonomous language learning. Both Hockly and Dudeney (2018) indicated a need to move from traditional searches and evaluation to the critical evaluation of online information and the empowering of students to have control of their English learning and to make up their minds.

The r-values for the SDRS also present significant associations with autonomy in EFL. The association with Self-management Learning Ability is .547**, with a p-value of 0.000. The correlation with autonomous learning psychology is .309**, p = .000, and with autonomous learning behavior the correlation is .559**, p = .000. These findings indicate it is crucial for autonomous learning to be able to synthesize digital resources. According to Deursen and Dijk (2014), synthesizing skills allow students to integrate information gathered from many resources. This aspect is being seen as key to self-directed learning and knowledge consolidation.

The relationship between autonomy and digital literacy in EFL has been confirmed by recent research. As Ebersold, Rahm and Heise (2019) highlighted, digital literacy underpins the importance of learner autonomy. Similarly, Hockly and Dudeney (2018) support the critical evaluation of information, decision-making, and self-management in learning. Deursen and Dijk (2014) argued for an emphasis on synthesizing information from different sources to enable autonomous learning. Integrated with the above, the significance of these findings means that there is potential

to design digital literacy programs that will enhance learner autonomy and overall language proficiency. To conclude, the data indicates a significant positive relationship between digital literacy and autonomy in EFL for the three constructs (ISSS, EOIC, and SDRS). This suggests that by improving digital literacy, student autonomy in language learning may be significantly enhanced. Therefore, educators should pay attention to developing students' information searching, critical evaluation, and synthesizing skills to promote greater autonomy. This will enable learners to be more independent and effective at managing their learning which is vital in the current digital age.

## IV.    CONCLUSIONS

With the results obtained from the data gathered, the following conclusions were produced. The assessment of students' digital literacy skills indicated a generally positive perception across key areas, including information-searching skills and strategies, critical evaluation of online information, and strategy for synthesizing digital resources. Respondents exhibited a high level of autonomy in managing their language learning. However, challenges were noted in evaluating language proficiency and synthesizing learning methods. Digital literacy skills and autonomy in EFL revealed strong positive correlations. Higher levels of digital literacy skills were associated with greater autonomy.

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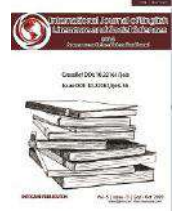
# Significance of Vachanas

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*Abstract— Vachana literature has a very special place in Kannada literary heritage. Unique literature consisting of verse prose, verse. The scriptures contain all the things needed for a pure life like religion, ethics, philosophy, spirituality, society, science, psychology, politics. What is not in the verses may seem more meaningful than what is there. It is no exaggeration that more ideas are contained here than the principles in the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and other religious texts.The words of the 12th century sharanare about the greatness of vachanas are a mirror of reality. A verse of Adaya may be seen first:*

*Hindaṇa katheya munde pēḷuva kāvyavalla.*

*Mundaṇa katheyanindu hēḷuva nāṭakavalla.*

*Banda śabdava sandilladusuruvenemba abhyāsiyalla.*

*Chanda vicchandayemba sandēhiyalla.*

*Saurāṣṭra sōmēśvarā*

*nim'ma śaraṇara svayānubhāvada pari bēre.*


*It is not poetry that is placed in front of the back story.*

*It is not a play that tells from the next story.*

*He is not a practitioner who says that the sound that has come has no sound.*

*Chhanda is not suspicious of divorce.*

*Saurashtra Someshwara*

*The definition of your surrendered self is different.*

*Keywords— Literature, Transformation, Vachana Literature, Bhakthi Movement, 12th Century, Importance of vachanas*

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are various genres in literature such as story, poetry, drama, comedy. According to Adaiya, vachanas are neither poetry that recounts the events of the past, nor dramas that recount what may happen in the future. There are those who recite the mantras of the Vedapanishads without mistake according to the signs like Hrasva, Dhirgha, Purnavirama, Alpavirama, Parshana, Prasnarthaka, Udghara. But they may or may not know what it means. They may or may not follow the wise words of those mantras in their lives. Even some can memorize Veda mantras and recite them melodiously and cleanly so that everyone nods. The same is not important. In a sense it can be like a parrot's song, a string song, a peacock's dance. But vows are not like that. Grammar, punctuation, poetry, story bond are not important for Vachankars. His words are a recipe of personal experience. There is a confluence of

experience and intuition. Basavadi Sivasharan is responsible for the new literary tradition of saying what needs to be said in a few lines like holding an elephant in a mirror. It is not an exaggeration that such literature did not exist in the world literature before that. The Saranas did not compose literature for the display of their scholarship, for awarding prizes or for royal recognition. Basavanna's vachana may be noted in this regard.

Tāḷamāna sarisamanariye,

ōje bajāvaṇeya lekkavanariye,

amṛtagaṇa dēvagaṇavanariye,

 kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā,ninage kēḍillavāgi

ānu olidante hāḍuve.


**If the rhythm is equal,**

Accountant of OJ Bajanga,

Amritgana Devganavanaria,

Koodalasangamadeva, may you not be harmed

I will sing as I like.

It is important to say that *ānu olidante hāḍuve.* ``**I will sing as I please without harming you."** To you is Vishwachaitanya to Shiva. The tune, tala and rhythm of the music are not important for Sharana. No need to worry about the rules of prosody. Instead, he said, "Shiva, I will sing as I know, so as not to offend the personality of your universal spirit." Vachanas are like hymns in a sense. Thus, through their pure life, Sharans are revolutionaries who have given a new zest to literature and made a rare revolution in all fields including literature. It was Basavadi Shivsharan who removed the feeling that religion and spirituality are only for sadhus and saints, swamis and special people and showed that even common people can walk on that path. His words testify to that. He did not revolutionize only through literary creation. It was through the adjustment of their actions and words that they made the revolution. Vachana literature used for it has also gained special recognition. Vows are the seeds of revolution. No matter how many wonderful religious and social transformational literatures have appeared in the world literature, we cannot ignore the Vachana literature. The reason is that they are elixirs of heart, worthy of all time and all people. It is in this context that Siddharameshwar's words about the boasting of verses are thought-provoking.

Em'ma vacanadondu pārāyaṇakke

 vyāsanadondu purāṇa sama bāradayyā.

Em'ma vacanada nūreṇṭaradhyayanakke

 śatarudrayāga sama bāradayyā.

Em'ma vacanada sāsira pārāyaṇakke

gāyatri lakṣa japa sama bāradayyā.

Kapilasid'dhamallikārjuna


For the recitation of one of my vows

Is Vyasana equal to Purana?

For the one hundred and eightyth meditation of Mma vachana

Shatarudraya Sam Baradayaya.

For Sasira Parayanam of Mma Vachana

Gayatri Laksha Japa Sam Baradaiya.

Kapilasiddhamallikarjuna

There is no exaggeration in these words of Siddharameshwar. The greatness of eighteen Puranas of Vyasa is told. But one vachana of Sharana is not equal to one Purana of Vyasa. There is only one verse greater than that myth. We see the importance of sacrifices being said and celebrated every day. But Shatrudra is not equal to the one hundred and eighty study of sharana's vow. Many people have special respect and faith in chanting Gayatri Mantra. There is a feeling that those who chant Gayatri are great. But a thousand recitations of Sharan's vows are not equal to chanting lakhs of Gayatri. By saying this, Siddharameshwar has done the task of opening the eyes of people's awareness. Vachana Sahitya is indeed a priceless treasure. *[Nam'malli `paruṣa muṭṭida lōhadante' ennuva rūpakavannu āgāga koḍuvaru. Ādare śaraṇaradu innū ondu hejje munde. Avaradu `paruṣa muṭṭida lōhadante' alla; `jyōti muṭṭida jyōtiyante]* We are often given the metaphor of ``like metal touched by a man". But Saran's is one step further. They are not 'like rough metal'; ``Like a flame touched by a flame". Parushmani is a fairy crystal. It is believed that whatever metal it touches, that metal will turn into gold. Surprisingly, the metal touched by Parusha becomes gold, but when the gold touches another metal, it does not become gold. Not so with Saranara Pari. He is the torch that touched the torch. Touched by one Jyoti, another Jyoti gives light and if it touches another Jyoti, it also gives light. If that Jyoti touches another Jyoti, the touched Jyoti will also shine as a Jyoti. There is no Jyoti, no less, no greater. All jyotis have equal respect. Parushamani is not like that. A metal which is golden by the touch of a pearl cannot turn it into gold if it touches another metal. In this direction, Parushamani, which keeps itself separate from other metals and gold, is considered to be superior.

In the 12th century all those who came in contact with Basavadi Shiv Sharan became Sharan. Kayakajeevis from lower caste also became experienced like Basavanna, Allama, Akka, Chennabasavanna. Such a transformation

cannot be seen in any religious heritage of the world. Similar to Basavanna, there was special recognition for Dhulaiya, the shoemaker. Akkamahadevi had the same respect as Chennabasavanna. A harlot Sankavve had the same place as Shivayogi Siddharameshwar. Thus the personality of Sharan cannot be compared to any other saint. That is why Basavanna said that the mortal world is the destiny of God. He did not say such a thing in mere words; He achieved and showed that this world is the mint of God. That's why not only welfare people; Devotees from different states and countries came there. Thousands of people became experienced at the same time. Men were not the only ones among them; Women are also special. In a sense, the hall of experience in Kalyana was the throne of God. That kammata was complementary to the development of personality. A person would develop the self-confidence and fortitude needed to change himself. Surrenders are those who make the mortal world a place where a person transforms himself. Vachanas are the results of that transformation. According to Chennabasavanna, [`**Martyara manada mailigeya kaḷeyalendu gītamātemba jyōtiya beḷagi koṭṭaru kūḍalacennasaṅgana śaraṇaru'.]**`Kudalachennasang's surrender gave light to the flame of Geetama for the burning of the hearts of mortals".

Basavanna said about the vows, [`**Hāla torege bellada kesaru sakkareya maḷalu, tavarājada noretereyante ādyara vacanaviralu, bēre bāviya tōḍi uppanīranumbuvana vidhiyantāyittenna mati]** ``The mud of jaggery in the stream of sugar, the vow of Adya like the foam of Tavaraja, the fate of one who drinks salt water from another well" is said by Basavanna. Not only the words of Basavanna; If you look at the vachanas of Jedara Dasimayya, who is famous as Adya Vachanakara, they are like a stream of milk. If jaggery sediment is added to it, the milk will have a special taste. If sugar is dissolved in it, the taste of milk is resonant. In such a situation, no one should be forced to dig another well and drink salt water. That is, digging another well and drinking salt water when the nectar of Vachana Sahitya is in front of us means wandering behind other literature. The question is whether it is needed. Most of the devotees have given a warning that when all the philosophy, essence, philosophy, ritual, spirituality, worldly and otherworldly ideas are hidden in the Vachana literature, do not get into a situation of searching elsewhere. Siddharameshwar has expressed the wish that [`**smr̥tigaḷu samudrada pālāgali, śrutigaḷu vaikuṇṭhava sērali, purāṇagaḷu agniya sērali, āgamagaḷu vāyuva hondali' ]**'Smritis become part of the sea, Srutis join Vaikunthava, Puranas join Agni, Agamas have Vayuva' and the words of the sages have more place than Smriti, Sruti, Puranas and Agamas, and they wish to be contained in the

heart. Dasimaiya said, [**dāsimayyanavaru `kaḍudarpavērida oḍalemba baṇḍige mr̥ḍaśaraṇara nuḍigaḍaṇavē kaḍegīlu']**``The car called Kadudarpaverida Odalema is the only song of the Mridasharan". If the cart of life is to run properly, then the Vachan literature should be neglected. See what he himself says in another verse:

Kariyanittaḍe olle

siriyanittaḍe olle

hiridappa rājyavanittaḍe olle

nim'ma śaraṇara sūḷnuḍiya ondareghaḷigeyittaḍe

nim'manitte kāṇā rāmanātha


Black oven

Syria

Hiridappa Rajyavanittade Olle

An hour and a half after your surrender

Miss you Ramnath

The symbol of power is the elephant. Even if such authority is given, they say no. Today, there is so much competition and scheming to get power. Even if the thrones are thrown in the air, the desire to get various positions of power such as Gram Panchayat, Zilla Panchayat, MLA, Minister etc. is too much. But Dasimaiya said no even if he gave the authority. Who does not long for wealth? There are people everywhere who say that wealth comes from any path. Dasimaiah said that he should not give such wealth. I do not agree that I will give only one state. It is said that if words like the kiss of Basavadi Sharana fall on the ear for a moment, I will give up on God. Vedya has given a higher position than power, wealth, state and God to the vachana literature. Causal clauses are the movement of the gender, symbols of the words. Chennabasavan's speech is significant in this direction

Jñānadīptiya beḷaguva tailavāvudendare:

Sadumān'yara nuḍigaḍaṇadindosaruva osaru

adu tānemba arivina niścayava tōruvudu.

Hīna jaḍateya musukida gandike tiḷidu

bhānu bandare jagada bhrame harivante harivudu.

Budharoḷu nīniralu karmaharivudu,

kūḍalacennasaṅgamadēvā.


The illuminating oil of Jnanadeepti is:

The ooze of Sadumanyara's music

It is self-awareness.

Knowing the veiled mess of abject inertia

If Bhanu comes, the illusion of the world willflow.

Karmahari will be you, Mercury.

Koodalchenna Sangamedeva.

It should be noted that oil vachanas that illuminate the light of knowledge. They make you aware of who you are. Relieves inertia and invigorates the spirit. He explained the power of sharans and their vows by saying that if you are in contact with sharans, all the karmas will be washed away so that the darkness of the world will melt away as the sun rises.

Hāvinahāḷa kallayyanavara vacana nōḍi:

Kēḷire kēḷire śivavacana, guruvacana

purātara vacanānubhava kēḷi badukirayyā.

Kēḷida sadbhaktarellaru kṛtārtharapparu

 tanu karagi, mana koragi, bhāva beccado!

Ahaṅkāravaḷidu, śaraṇara anubhāvava kēḷidaḍe,

adē mukti nōḍire.

 Intallade manōvyākulanāgi, tanumuṭṭi kēḷidaḍe,

 upadēśaventu saluvudayyā?

Entaḷavaḍuvudayyā?

 Mahāliṅga kallēśvarā, guruvacana parāṅmukhaṅge

endendū bhava hiṅgadu nōḍā.

See Havinhala Kallaiya's vachana:

If you hear Shiva vachana, Guru vachana

Listen to the words of the ancients and live.

All the devotees who heard were grateful

Tanu Karagi, Mana Koragi, Bhav Bechado!

Arrogant, surrendered, unheard of,

If you see the same Mukti.

Moreover, distracted, he asked,

Do you want to preach?

What do you think?

Mahalinga Kalleswara, Guruvachana Paramukhanga

Don't look back forever

Shiva vachana and Guru vachana are helpful in getting rid of bhavbandhan. Shivavachana and Guruvachana are the words of Sharan's Anubhavamrita. They should be heard again and again. By asking like that, you can get gratitude. It melts the body. Mental pollution will be removed. Bhava will become good. Not only that, the ego disappears. The same path of liberation is that if a man is distracted and listens to Shiva and Guru, then that teaching cannot bring about change. Those who stay away from them without asking Guruvachana cannot escape from Bhavamala. By saying this, the vachanas have been honored as Shivavachana and Guruvachana by Havinhala Kallaiya. Allama Prabhudeva should wake up early in the morning and perform linga puja and see the face of Shiva devotees at the base of Sharana's Vow. That which is born in this human birth is called Sarthakya. By listening to the words of Sharan, the body was disturbed, and he said to Molige that he saw the man of Prasada.

Kaṅge śṛṅgāra guruhiriyara nōḍuvudu.

Karṇakke śṛṅgāra purātanara sugītaṅgaḷa kēḷuvudu.

Vacanakke śṛṅgāra satyava nuḍivudu.

Sambhāṣaṇege śṛṅgāra sadbhaktara nuḍigaḍaṇa.

Karakke śṛṅgāra satpātrakkīvudu.

Jīvisuva jīvanakke śṛṅgāra gaṇamēḷāpa.

Ivillada jīviya bāḷuve ētakke bāteyayyā

cennamallikārjunā

*Seeing eye makeup guruhirira.*

*Listening to Sringara Puratana's sugeethams for Karna.*

*The beauty of a word is to speak the truth.*

*Sringara Sadbhakta's music for the conversation.*

*Garnishing the neck is good.*

*Sringara Ganamelapa for living life.*

*What is the survival of a non-existent creature?*

*Chennamallikarjuna*

*It is natural that the concept of beauty varies from person to person. See what Sharan's concept of make-up looks like: Make-up for the eyes is not to be applied to the forest. Instead, the guru looks at the elders. Listening to the verses of the ancients is a treat for the ears. The embellishment of words is to play with the truth. Amrita Nudis of good devotees who are beautiful to each other conversation. Giving adornment to the hands in the form of dasoha for good deeds. Shringara Ganamelapa for life means living with the surrendered. Without these, life is wasted, Mahadeviakka's. It cannot be said that there will be transformation in a person just by reading and listening to scriptures. Today, many people quote the verses of Saran word for word. But their life is not pure. It is as if the word is different, their life is different. Seeing such a thing, Madiwala Machideva warned him through a vow.*

Vacanada racaneya nuḍiva bayalurañjakarella

bhaktarappare ayyā?

Vacana tannantiradu, tānu vacanadantira.

Adentendaḍe:

Tanumanadhanavanella hindiṭṭukoṇḍu,

mātina baṇaveya mundiṭṭukoṇḍu,

oḍeyana kaṇḍu nāyi bālava baḍidukombante,

ā teranāyitenda kalidēvaradēvayya.


*They are all open-air entertainers who play word structure*

*Bhaktarappare Ayya?*

*A promise is not like itself, it is like a promise.*

*Step by step:*

*Having overtaken all Tanumandhana,*

*In front of the stack of words,*

*Like a dog barking at its master,*

*Kalidevaradevayya from that Teranai.*

*Those who only swear are called open mouths. They cannot become devotees. If you want to become a devotee, you have to change your life according to the wishes of the vow. But the promise is not like his life. His life is not as promised. Word is different, life is different. He will give an example of how it is. The vow says that a devotee must have lost love for self, mind and wealth. Instead, Tanu has criticized those who build a house by increasing their love for money, saying that it is like a dog wagging its tail when it finds its owner. The creation and reading of vows comes at a price when life itself becomes a vow. Today there are those who compose vachanas like Sharan. But it is very rare that his speech is a display of intellect and not self-reflection or reflection of an ideal life. In this case, that sentence structure is open-air. Molige Marayya is also of the same opinion.*

Ādyara vacanava nōḍi, ōdi hēḷidalli phalavēni bhō?

Tannante vacanavilla, vacanadante tānilla.

 Nuḍiyalli advaitava nuḍidu, naḍeyalli adhamārādaḍe,

śivaśaraṇaru meccuvare?

 Idu kāraṇa, avara naḍe nuḍi śud'dhavillavāgi.

Avarige guru liṅga jaṅgama pañcākṣaravilla.

Intivillade bariya mātinalli bom'mava nuḍiva

brahmētikārara mecca, niḥkaḷaṅka mallikārjuna

*If you read and read Adya's vachana, what will be the result?*

*There is no word like himself, there is no self like word.*

*Advaitava in speech, while walking adhamara,*

*Will Shivsharan appreciate it?*

*This is because their actions and words are impure.*

*He does not have Guru Linga Jangama Panchakshara.*

*Bommava speaks in plain language without stopping*

*Mallikarjuna, the favorite of the brahmins, is untainted*

## II.    CONCLUSION

Reciting the vachanas of the ancients or Basavadi sharana/reciting them to someone else will not yield results. The reason for that is that it is not happening as promised. Sharans appreciate if they say Advaita philosophy in words and do the opposite evil in actions. Those whose actions and speech are not pure have no Guru, Linga, Jangama, Panchakshara. Shiva will not appreciate such people if they talk about Parabraham in mere words. About the importance of Sharan and his vows, Molige Mahadevi said that after hearing Adya's vows, Ennanga was disturbed. By reciting, hearing and reading the vows, personal defects should be removed and inner and outer purity should be achieved. Then what you read and said will be worthwhile. Vachanas are the divine light of surrender. With that light, the darkness of personal life should be lost and filled with light. As mentioned in the beginning, there are philosophies for the upliftment of mankind in the scriptures. There is a message of comfort for the afflicted. All problems in life have solutions. It contains all the principles required for Atmoddhara and Lokodhara. No other literature can be compared to Vachan literature. As the Himalayas are equal to the Himalayas.

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# The Human - Nature Relationship in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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*Abstract*— *The aim of the study is to critically examine the human-nature relationship in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things so as to elicit a new awareness from the readers regarding the significance of the relationship. The primary source of information is the text The God of Small Things. Internet is the source for secondary sources and scholarly articles. The current literature forms the basis for qualitative research. The examination of the relationship between people and environment in this paper raises readers' awareness of the need of fostering that relationship in order to improve the environment and promote harmonious coexistence of humans and nature.*

*Keywords*— *Human, Nature, Relationship, Roy, The God of Small Things.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

A very imaginative book, *The God of Small Things,* explores a wide range of topics, including inter-caste love, misogyny, chauvinism, and social boundaries. We see that the novel subtly criticizes these issues of the society that are being practiced yet have gone unreported in our culture until this point. The story of each character is depicted in some way that they remain etched in the memories of the readers, making them ponder over their lives, assessing the injustice meted out to them by the society.

*The God of Small Things*, written by Suzanna Arundhati Roy, is a book by an author who is not an expat and received the 1997 Booker Prize for fiction. Roy is an author of India best known for this work. Roy has painted Nature in all of its beauty and brutality. There is a portrayal of the fury of the natural world and the frailty of humanity at its mercy. As a result, the natural world has been portrayed as having both catastrophic force due to human cruelty and beauty providing a genuine link with humans.

In the plot that runs parallel to nature, there is a relationship between human and nature. Throughout the course of the narrative, man and nature are compared on several occasions. The significance of nature in human life has been skilfully and persuasive ly conveyed by Roy to the readers. As Ammu assumes the role of the river and the twins the role of frogs, the twins' relationship with their mother and the river functions in the story on a parallel plane. The river is a strong, erratic, and occasionally hazardous force of nature. It can bring about harm (floods) or provide life (by supplying water). Ammu is a strong, passionate woman who can experience both intense love and anger outbursts. Just as the twins rely on their mother for protection and affection, frogs need water to survive. Given that frogs are known to make a lot of noise, the twins' boisterous nature and craving for attention could be represented by this. The twins' interactions with the river are a reflection of their bond with Ammu. In the same way that they relish their carefree and playful moments with their mother, they could act playful around it. However, when the river gets hazardous, people feel scared and have to respect its strength, which is similar to when Ammu is angry or unpredictable. The story's use of nature as a

parallel plane enhances the emotional resonance of the fiction and gives the characters more depth [1].

The interaction between humans and nature is deeply woven within Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things*, and nature has a big impact on how the characters' lives turn out as well as the overall subject matter of the novel. The novel takes place in Kerala, and the book explores complex human-nature relationships against the context of Kerala's beautiful, tropical setting. Even if a person is not interested in protecting the environment, nature nonetheless embraces the person as its mother [2].

## II.    RELATED WORKS

In Roy's opinion, patriarchal dualism defines and intertwines the two oppressions that women (humans) and non-humans (nature) experience. The interiorization of nature and women is likewise governed by this dualism. In her opinion, the naturalization/animalization of woman and the dualistic patriarchal ideology that underpins it are structurally linked. If the dualistic thinking of the civilised mind is masculine? then the ruin of the environment and the denigration of women are signs of the need for subjugating both women and nature. The oppressed representations of nature, outcasts, and women are found at the bottom of the social scale in [3].

Roy justifies the novel's title by humanising nature in a way that also speaks to our emotions and effectively presents an ecocritical viewpoint. In addition to serving as a stylistic device that mirrors the theme, the attempt to blur the lines betwee n nature and the human world appeals to the readers' sensitivities and emotions [ 4].

In the paper, "Interconnectedness of Man and Nature in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things"*, the author uses eco-criticism as the theoretical approach, this research attempts to analyse Arundhati Roy's account of the nature of Kerala, God's own nation ?, and the function of characters like Ammu , Velutha, and Ammu's children; and how nature has influenced their lives [5].

According to Helen De Burgh-Woodmen in the paper "Sustainability and the human/ nature connection: a critical discourse analysis of being "symbolically" sustainable" suggests that this uncertainty lies in the urge for sustainability itself, implying that, according to conventional wisdom, our care for the environment is motivated by an ingrained, historical sense of human/nature connection rather than a fear of future devastation [6].

In the article, "Extinction of experience: the loss of human–nature interactions", by Masashi Soga & Kevin J Gaston, a lack of engagement with nature not only reduces a host of health and well-being advantages, but also inhibits positive feelings, attitudes, and behaviour related to the environment, suggesting a vicious cycle of disenchantment with nature. These grave consequences underscore the significance of re-establishing human connections with the natural world and directing research and policy towards solving and raising public awareness of experience extinction? [7].

## III.    OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To comprehend the human - nature relationship as portrayed in *The God of Small Things.*

- To emphasize the significance of cultivating empathy towards nature.

- To investigate the link between human and nature which can be better understood in order to assert that both can support and coexist in harmony.

- To provide readers with a new perspective regarding the significance of the human - nature relationship through a critical examination of the representation of this theme in the novel.

## IV.    METHODOLOGY

- The main source of information is the text The God of small Things.

- The backup sources are scholarly articles taken from internet resources.

- Majority of the existing literature serves as a basis for qualitative research.

## V.    HUMAN NATURE RELATIONS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS.

### 5.1  Rahel and Estha

From an early age, twins Rahel and Estha have shared a strong bond with the natural world. They are greatly impacted by and frequently find peace and solace in the natural environment. They can feel free in nature, free from the constraints placed on them by society and their family.

A key component of their relationship with nature is the Meenachal River. It represents both peril and freedom. They are lured to the river because it seems like a safe haven, but it also hosts a terrible incident, the death of their cousin in that same river that has an enduring effect on their lives. The river starts to represent resiliency. The twins are resilient and can still find beauty in the little things, like the sound of running water, the play of light on the surfac e, or even the

act of skipping stones, despite having experienced sorrow. They seek something in their interaction with nature, what the locals refer to as the "God of Small Things" , the little, ordinary moments of enjoyment and beauty in life [8].

## 5.2 Ammu

Mother of Rahel and Estha, Ammu, likewise has a complicated bond with the natural world. She is an unorthodox, free-spirited woman who finds comfort in the beauty of nature.

Similar to how nature surpasses bounds set by humans, her love with Velutha, an untouchable and social outcast, is symbolic of transcending social conventions and boundaries.In the calm surrounding of the pickle plant, where they find refuge from the constraints of a rigorously ordered society, Ammu's love for Velutha blooms. Their forbidden love finds refuge in this environment [9].

## 5.3 Velutha

Through his trade as a carpenter, Velutha—an untouchable—has developed a close relationship with his environment. His fondness for the natural environment and his proficiency with wood reflect his empathy for the wild and unrestrained parts of existence. Velutha's existence and untimely demise serve as a metaphor for the larger conflict between the natural world, which does not follow social hierarchies, an d the caste system that humans created [10].

## 5.4 The Ayemenem House

Surrounded by a garden and the river is the Ayemenem mansion, the setting for most of the novel. The characters are greatly influenced by the house and its surroundings. The story's portrayal of the surroundings as both lovely and terrifying reflects the story's dual focus on human connections.

In addition to representing the family's complicated history and the passage of time, the house and its surrounds also act as a symbol of the past and the present [11].

## 5.5 The Landscape

In rich, beautiful language, the work frequently depicts the countryside of Kerala. It is reported that its a nurturing yet unpredictable environment, with its vibrant, tropical foliage, animals, and monsoons.

The inner turmoil of the characters and the turbulent turns of their lives are reflected in it. The novel's protagonists are constantly linked to nature, demonstrating their connection to it and their inability to survive without it. When they need solace, nature is like a mother who never leaves their side.

When we walk bare feet in the nature, the electrical charges from the earth neutralise free radicals in our bodies, our bare feet come in contact with it, enhancing our health. This technique is known as "earthing" or "grounding," and people

have been using it to lessen stress in recent years [12]. Because of the heightened stress that is prevalent, we are witnessing a rise in the practice of grounding. Our mental and external difficulties are alleviated when we return to nature. This demonstrates how nature is essential to man's ability to survive. Hence, it is in our best interests to preserve nature.

## VI.    FINDINGS

- The novel appeals to the emotions and sensitivity of the readers.

- The characters' interactions with nature bring to light the larger themes of struggle, grief, and love for independence within a society that enforces rigid norms and regulations.

- The exploration of human-nature bond undertaken in this paper creates in the readers a new awareness about the significance of strengthening this connection so as to work towards a better environment that would contribute to the peaceful co-existence of man and nature.

## VII.    SUGGESTION

The study leads to the recommendation that the policy makers should target the importance of the protection of environment, further the need to inculcate in people love for nature and desire for safeguarding it.

## VIII.    CONCLUSION

The link between nature and humans in *The God of Small Things* is intricate and varied. In the existence of the characters, nature is more than just a setting; it is an active player. It gives them comfort, independence, and a way to question accepted social norms. It can, however, also be cruel and harmful, reflecting the intricacies of the human conditions in the book *The God of Small Things*. The relationships between the characters and the natural world highlight the greater themes of love, grief, and the struggle for liberation in a culture that upholds strict rules and restrictions.

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# Mirabai: The Renunciation, the Rebellion and the Sainthood

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*Abstract— Mirabai is a household name for all the devotees of Lord Krishna across Bharat. Her name has become synonymous with devotion and rebellion. Mira transcends time as a pivotal figure in Indian history and spirituality. This research paper delves into the life of this enigmatic saint-poet, exploring the key events that shaped her legacy. After discussing Mirabai's renunciation this paper will examine her unwavering dedication to Lord Krishna, a love that defied societal expectations placed upon a Rajput princess. This absolute devotion to Lord Krishna led her to embrace a life of piety and austerity in great contrast to the royal life she had inherited, being born a princess. The paper will also shed light on Mirabai's meeting with the revered saint Raidas. This meeting is believed to have significantly influenced her bhakti (devotional) path and challenged the rigid caste system of the times. This paper also aims to explore Mirabai's rebellious nature. Her unconventional expressions of devotion, including singing and dancing in public, clashed with the conservative Rajput court. This defiance will be analyzed in the context of the prevailing social norms and her unwavering commitment to Krishna. The research paper will not shy away from discussing the persecution Mirabai faced. We will delve into the conflicts that arose due to her unconventional practices and beliefs. This section will explore the challenges she endured and how she navigated them. Finally, the paper will culminate in examining Mirabai's ultimate triumph. Despite persecution, Mirabai's devotion remained unshakeable. We will explore how she is revered as one of the greatest devotees of Lord Krishna (Shyam) and how her legacy continues to inspire generations through her powerful poetry and unwavering faith.*

*Keywords— Krishna, Mirabai, Sainthood, Rebellion, Renunciatiom, Rana.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Mira, popularly known as Sant Mirabai, was a charismatic figure who was born during a dynamic period in Indian history, a period known for the continuous tussle between the Rajputs and the Mughals. Unknown to most of her family, this child Mira, born a princess, would bring renown to her parents, not as a great warrior but as one of greatest of poet saints that the country Bharat has ever witnessed. Kings of Rajputana warred against the Mughals but Mira was one who would wage the greatest war against oppression, inequality, casteism and intolerance. She was born to be a revolutionary who would shake at the roots of blind beliefs and practices and make society realize that devotion to God is not to be confined only to temples but that it could be practised in all and sundry places. Through her tumultuous life, she taught that each human had a direct link to God and that no intermediary was required to communicate one's feelings towards God.

Being born a princess, Mira was naturally privileged but she hardly took any undue advantage of it.On the other hand, she had a free mind that was unwilling to be bound by societal norms and therefore most of the times she would be rebellious and this non-conformity to society continued even to the very end of her mortal existence. Of course, being a princess, the most beloved of her grandfather Dudaji, she was educated in music, the arts,

dance and literary expression. But Mira's sole passion, since her very childhood, remained the one pointed devotion to Lord Krishna whom she took to be her husband since the time her mother had jovially told her so.

When Mira came of age, she was married off, as is usual in a hindu household, to Bhojraj the crown prince of Mewar. Mira was ever defiant, even towards her mother-in-law. During the initial days, when her mother-in-law asked her to worship Gauri, During one of the battles against the Mughals, Prince Bhojraj succumbed to grievous injuries and breathed his last in the year 1526. Mira thus lost a husband who had been a friend to her. The renunciation of Mira multiplied with the loss of her husband and at the same time she did not give into societal norms and pressures. In those days, particularly in Rajasthan, it was a practice that the wife would immolate herself in the burning pyre of her husband and thus would be declared Sati. Mira, by this time, already had her firm roots in Krishna - to whom she had devoted her life till then. For Mira, her husband in reality was Shyam Sundara himself and therefore she was defiant towards society and hence did not jump in the funeral pyre of her husband. For this she became, for a long time, the object of major criticism from the elders of the court and also became a talk of the nearby villages. Mira,devoted now only to the worship of Krishna, knew that as long as she was devoted to her Shyam, He would always save her from all calamities and therefore, despite societal pressures, Mira remained calm and unmoved by various provocations from different quarters.

Mira's devotion to her beloved Shyam expressed itself through her soulful poetry that was in the form of padas. All her compositions are replete with intense longing and passionate devotion towards her Beloved Lord Krishna. These verses of Mira often challenged social norms and the discipline of courtly life in the contemporary Rajputana. These mellifluous compositions of Mira reverberate, even today, in the hearts of millions of Krishna devotees across Bharat and make Mira the beloved saint of every seeker of Shyam Sundara.

Mira's life may be partially shrouded in some mystery on account of the absence of strict historical documentation of the contemporary period. At the same time, a few of her verses, mentioned in this paper later, throw some light on the persecution she faced from her in-laws and the attempts to poison her are clearly indicated by Mira herself in some of her own verse compositions.

Most of the study done on Mira points to the fact that she left the kingdom and embarked on pilgrimages, going to Kashi and Vrindavan, where she spent many years in austerity, satsang, serving the poor and composing her

verses drenched in the eulogy of her Beloved Shyam. Mira's life and work have left an indelible mark on the Indian way of thinking and worship. She is celebrated as a courageous mystic, a powerful poet, and a symbol of unwavering devotion.

This is what the celebrated author Bankey Behari observes in his introductory lines about Mirabai, "To me Mira is the moth that burnt itself in the candle of love for Girdhar and for all times filled the Temple of Devotion with fragrance. Undaunted by fire or frown, unperturbed by persecutions, this devotee of Sri Krsna sang her songs of princely renunciation and self-surrender, that shall infuse courage in the aspirant on the Path of Love." (Behari 5)

## II.       RENUNCIATION, THE SOUL SONG

Mirabai's renunciation represents the most significant event in the life of a princess who , leaving aside all palatial luxury and comfort, sets out on a spiritual quest severing all royal ties with a boldness never before observed in history (except in the case of Gautam Buddha). She breaks the bondage of her royal upbringing and embraces the path of austerity seeking nearness and dearness to her Beloved Shyam. This act of hers is not mere relinquishment of body comforts but a profound act of self-discovery and an announcement of her unwavering love towards Krishna.

Mira, born a Rajput Princess, was expected to conform to the norms laid down at the Royal Court. Once the spark of devotion for Krishna ignited in her heart, it took the form of a great conflagration in the years to come. These flames of devotion burnt so bright and brilliant that they inspired devotion in the hearts of millions of devotees seeking the love of Lord Krishna.

Every act of Mira was considered an act of defiance from the point of view of the right conduct for a princess in her position. Her marriage, which was supposed to strengthen the alliance with the Mewar family, did nothing of the sort. On the other hand, this marriage with Raja Bhoj, resulted only in Mira's expression of unconventional faith, not in her husband but in Lord Krishna whom she had adored since her childhood. The royal environs echoed with her soul-stirring compositions - songs that expressed her pure and unsullied love for Krishna. Mira's public displays of ecstatic dancing always challenged the social order but these expressions of her devotion, more than being defiance, were outpourings of her soul that was thirsting for her Beloved Shyam. Mirabai's renunciation was not an immediate reaction to calamities or a sudden withdrawal from the world around. It was a gradual process, a slow but sure awakening of the soul to the reality of the transience of worldly ties and the pain associated with it.

This renunciation would have had its beginnings, perhaps, from a stolen glance at Krishna's idol, a verse that she might have read from a holy text, or even on hearing of an intoxicating melody of a devotional song that brought tears to her eyes.The spark of love thus ignited for Krishna burnt away even the least of worldly desires that might have left their traces in her pure mind.

Mira's renunciation wasn't a shirking of her responsibilities as the member of a great Rajput clan but it was a conscious choice to pursue a higher calling which led her gradually to the path of mysticism. This act of renunciation was not just about severing worldly ties; it was about becoming a new person altogether by giving up royal garments for simple clothing, abandoning the luxury of a royal couch for the hard ground; and finally it was the deliberate act of stripping away all distractions and concentrating on her Beloved Shyam.

The renunciation of Mirabai was significant on account of the personal transformation it resulted in and the message it gave out to those looking up to her. It challenged not just the rigid social hierarchy and the limitations placed upon women; it also inspired fellow travelers on the path to attaining God the way Mira was doing. By placing her spiritual journey over societal pressures and norms, Mira became a guiding light to those who were in search of an authentic path to God realization. Her renunciation wasn't just a personal act; it was a silent rebellion that resonated with countless souls. Mirabai's renunciation is captured beautifully by Basu Ananth Nath in his book where he says, "And, at length, Mira left the palace in quest of her Lord, wandering alone in the wide world, among the lowly and the poor. It is said that after leaving the palace she went to Merta and then to the banks of the Banas river where she spent some time in meditation. But where was her Lord for whose sake she had left the palace, renounced her royal state, given up her kith and kin, - where was He to be found?

For thee, have I forsaken all pleasures, —

Why dost thou now keep me waiting?" (Basu 13)

Mira, therefore, waits with agony in her heart to meet her Shyam for whom she has renounced everything.

## III.    MEETING WITH RAIDAS: A BRIDGE ACROSS DIVIDES

Mirabai's life  took a decisive turn when she met Raidas, a saint-poet known for his great wisdom and unconventional approach to spirituality. A cobbler by profession, Raidas belonged to the Chamar caste, considered "untouchable" by the rigid caste system of the time. This very meeting

transcended social limits, becoming a proof to the universality of true devotion.

This meeting, hidden in some historical ambiguity, is believed to have taken place in one of two ways. Mira herself, having heard of the piety of this saint, might have ventured out to meet the cobbler saint in his own humble abode.Or Raidas himself, hearing of the devotion of Mira, who danced in the streets in ecstasy of her beloved, might have crossed the boundaries of societal norms to come and see his future disciple, who was already so full of devotion to her beloved Shyam.

Regardless of the setting, the meeting itself was a powerful symbol. Here was a princess, defying the constraints of her caste and upbringing, seeking spiritual guidance from a man deemed "impure" by social standards. This act of humility on Mirabai's part shattered the illusion of superiority and underlined the core principle of Bhakti – that true devotion transcends social constructs.

Raidas, observing the fire of devotion burning within Mirabai, became her guru, her spiritual guide. He didn't attempt to mold her into a conventional devotee, but rather nurtured the unique expression of her love for Krishna. He is likely to have imparted to Mira the wisdom from the rich tapestry of the Bhakti movement, emphasizing the importance of personal connection with the divine.

This meeting had a profound influence on Mirabai's life and compositions. Her bhajans, already suffused with fervent devotion, began to reflect a deeper understanding of love and longing. Raidas' teachings may have inspired in her a sense of inclusivity, a belief that caste or social standing had no bearing on the path to bhakti.

Mirabai's poetry started to be populated with imagery that transcended the literal. Krishna, who was initially depicted as a playful and mischievous deity, began to represent the ultimate reality, the divine beloved. Her yearning for Krishna became a metaphor for the soul's longing for the divine essence.

The influence of Raidas' teachings extended beyond the realm of spirituality. Their meeting served as a powerful social commentary. By choosing a guru from a marginalized caste, Mirabai challenged the very foundation of the hierarchical system. Her act of defiance resonated with those yearning for a more equitable society, where devotion, not birth, determined one's spiritual standing. This is what Mirabai has to say about her initial meeting with her Guru Raidas:

नहि मै पीहर सासरे , नहि पीयाजी री साथ ।मीरा ने गोविन्द मिल्या जी, गुरु मिलिया रैदास ॥

( Sethi 19)

In conclusion, Mirabai's meeting with Raidas was more than just a chance encounter. It was a bridge across

societal divides, a testament to the power of true devotion, and a catalyst for Mirabai's spiritual transformation. The lessons learned from Raidas found voice in her powerful bhajans, inspiring generations and serving as a beacon of hope for those seeking a more authentic path to the divine.

## IV.    REBELLIOUS NATURE: A DANCE DEFYING NORMS

Mirabai's life was a vibrant tapestry woven with threads of unwavering devotion and an audacious spirit that challenged the rigid norms of her time. Unlike the stereotypical image of a docile princess, Mirabai embodied rebellion in its purest form. Her defiance wasn't fueled by anger or a desire for power; it stemmed from a love for Krishna that burned so brightly that it consumed any desire to conform.

The very essence of her rebellion lay in her public displays of devotion. Temples, meant for quiet contemplation, became stages for her ecstatic dances. The air vibrated with the soulful melodies of her bhajans, sung with a fervor that captivated hearts across the land. These weren't performances; they were expressions of a love that transcended the confines of propriety expected by society.

Mirabai's defiance extended beyond the walls of temples. She shattered social barriers by associating freely with people from all walks of life. Instead of cloistering herself within the confines of the royal court, she sought the company of mendicants, musicians, and even those deemed "untouchable" by the caste system prevalent in Bharat. Even her Guru Raidas was an untouchable by birth and a cobbler by profession. In all of them, Mira saw, not low caste people, but fellow pilgrims - all brothers and sisters, bound on a journey to the Lotus Feet of Lord Krishna.

This blatant disregard for social norms naturally irked the ruler of Mewar and compelled him to take such steps that would curb Mira's free ways. Perhaps it was the fear of scandal, the discomfort with her unconventional practices, or simply the clash between tradition and a burgeoning spiritual movement. Whatever the reason, attempts were made to suppress Mirabai's expressions of devotion. Threats, isolation, and even attempts to poison her – the ruler employed various tactics to silence this rebellious princess.

But Mirabai remained undeterred. Her spirit, like the flame of a devotional diya, burned brighter with each attempt to extinguish it. She saw these persecutions not as setbacks, but as tests of her faith. Her bhajans, infused with a newfound resilience, spoke of her unwavering devotion to Shyam in the face of adversity.

The significance of Mirabai's rebellious nature lies not just in her defiance of social norms, but in the message it conveyed to people at large. She became a symbol of hope for those yearning for a more authentic spiritual experience which other gurus had promised them but had failed to fulfil. Through her intensity of yearning for Krishna resulting in her blissful outpourings of bhajans, she inspired millions wherever she went. Her life challenged the notion that devotion could only be practiced within the confines of tradition. She showed that true love for the divine could blossom even in the most unexpected places, defying societal beliefs and practices of her times.

The awakening and spiritual rebellion that Mirabai inspired, resonated not just in her time, but continues to inspire generations to this day. She serves as a reminder that the path to the divine is not paved with conformity, but with the courage to express one's love in a way that feels most authentic. Mira says, "I care not for societal norms; my heart belongs to Krishna."

## V.    PERSECUTION: A CRUCIBLE OF FAITH FORGED IN FIRE

Mirabai's life, once a vibrant tapestry of devotion and rebellion, became a battleground as the ruler of Mewar intensified his persecution. Fear, perhaps of scandal, or perhaps of the burgeoning Bhakti movement challenging traditional power structures, fueled his attempts to silence this audacious princess. The opulent palace that once echoed with her soulful melodies now reverberated with the tension of escalating conflict.

The tactics employed were calculated to break her spirit. A chalice of poison, disguised as holy water, arrived as an offering – a chilling attempt to extinguish the very flame of devotion that burned within her. But Mirabai, with a heart fortified by unwavering faith, saw through the deception. Legends whisper of her offering the poisoned chalice to an idol of Krishna. Upon drinking the offering, she remained unharmed.

This is what Mira herself observes:

मीरा मगन भई हरि के गुण गाय । सांप पिटारा राणा भेज्या, मीरा हाथ वदयो जाय । न्हाय धोय जब देखन लागी, सालिगराम गई पाय ॥ 1॥ जहर का प्याला राणा भेज्या, अमृत दीन्ह बनाय । न्हाय धोय जब पिन लागी, हो गई अमर पचाय ॥ 2 ॥ (Brahmachari 103,104)

The foregoing verses could be translated as follows:

Mira was ever immersed in singing the glory of Lord Krishna. In the meanwhile, the King sent a basket enclosing a venomous snake to Mira which she took in her hands and when, after her bath, as she opened it before her worship she found in the basket the sacred Salagrama

stone (which is used for worship of Vishnu). This trick of killing her having failed, another day, the king sent her a cup of poison which the Lord turned into ambrosia. After bath when Mira drank it, it assimilated into her and made her immortal.

Whether this was a miraculous intervention or a testament to her resolute spirit that rendered the poison inert, the event solidified her image as a divinely protected devotee.

The ruler's attempts continued, relentless and ever-escalating. Threats of exile loomed, the palace walls became a gilded cage, and a constant undercurrent of fear threatened to suffocate her spirit. Yet, Mirabai remained undeterred. Her bhajans, once filled with joyous yearning, now resonated with a profound depth, reflecting the crucible of faith she endured. They echoed with the unwavering resolve of a soul tested by fire, yet clinging to its devotion. They spoke of the unshakeable belief that true love for Krishna transcended earthly tribulations.

The significance of Mirabai's persecution extends far beyond her personal suffering. It serves as a beacon of hope for those facing trials on their spiritual path. Her unwavering faith in the face of adversity reminds us that true devotion is not a fragile flower, but a mighty tree with roots that burrow deep into the bedrock of belief. The attempts to silence her only amplified her voice, making her message of love and longing for Krishna resonate far and wide.

Mirabai's story transcends the boundaries of history and geography. She embodies the enduring human spirit, the wellspring of strength that emerges when faith is tested. Her experience reminds us that the path to the divine is rarely smooth, paved with thorns and trials. Yet, it is in these crucibles that faith is forged into something even more potent, a radiant flame that cannot be extinguished. The persecutions she faced did not break her; they refined her devotion, transforming her into a legend whose bhajans continue to inspire generations to seek the divine with unwavering faith. "The poison could not harm me; my Beloved protects me."

## VI. VISIT TO VRINDAVAN

Driven by her desire to be closer to Krishna, Mirabai Mirabai arrived in Vrindavan around 1524. This was a pivotal point in her life, a time when she had chosen the path of a devotee over the confines of her royal life. Vrindavan, with its rich history and atmosphere steeped in Krishna lore, offered the perfect sanctuary.

Here, Mirabai immersed herself in the world of Krishna. She spent her days composing beautiful bhajans (devotional songs) expressing her love for Krishna. These songs, characterized by their passionate imagery and lyrical beauty, transcended the boundaries of social norms. Mirabai saw Krishna not just as a god, but as her beloved. This unconventional approach to devotion often brought her into conflict with the conservative society of the time.

However, Vrindavan embraced Mirabai. She found solace and acceptance among the saints and devotees who resided there. It is believed that she spent around fifteen years in Vrindavan, composing some of her most famous works during this period. The land of Vrindavan served as a muse, its sights and sounds weaving themselves into the tapestry of her poetry.

The legacy of Mirabai's stay in Vrindavan lives on. A temple dedicated to her stands as a testament to her time there. Even today, devotees flock to this temple to feel a connection with the mystic poet and immerse themselves in the devotional atmosphere she cultivated.

Mirabai's journey to Vrindavan was not merely a geographical move; it was a spiritual pilgrimage. In the land of Krishna, she found not just a place to reside, but a place to belong, a place where her love for Krishna could resonate and find its truest expression.

Mirabai was so impressed by Vrindavan that she wrote the following verse:

आली म्हाँनै लागे बृन्दावन नीकौ।

घर घर तुलसी ठाकुर पूजा, दरसण गोविन्द जी को ॥

निर्मल नीर बहत जमुना में, भोजन दूध दही को।

रतनसिंघासन आप विराजै, मुकट धर्यों तुलसी को॥

कुंजन कुंजन फिरत राधिका ,सबद सुणत मुरली को।

मीरा के प्रभु गिरधर नागर, भजन बिना नर फीको॥

(Lahoti 15)

## VII. ULTIMATE TRIUMPH: A DANCE BEYOND TIME

Mirabai's story doesn't culminate in the bleakness of persecution. Her true triumph lies in the enduring legacy she carved, a testament to the power of unwavering devotion. Her bhajans, infused with the essence of love and longing, transcend the limitations of time and geography. They continue to resonate with listeners across centuries, serving as a bridge between the human heart and the divine.

Mirabai's triumph wasn't a victory over the ruler of Mewar or a societal validation of her unconventional practices. Her true victory lay in the complete merging of her soul with Krishna. Through her unwavering devotion, she blurred the lines between the devotee and the beloved. Her

bhajans aren't mere songs of love; they are a tapestry woven with the threads of her own yearning, reflecting the experience of a soul consumed by divine love.

This merging with Krishna wasn't a literal event, but a metaphorical one. Through her complete surrender to devotion, she transcended the limitations of the physical world. The opulent palace walls, the threats of exile, the poisoned chalice – none of it held power over her spirit. Her focus remained fixed on Krishna, and in that unwavering focus, she found a liberation that transcended earthly boundaries.

Mirabai's triumph is a testament to the transformative power of bhakti. Through her passionate outpourings of love, she not only transformed herself but also inspired countless others. Her bhajans became a rallying cry for the Bhakti movement, a beacon of hope for those yearning for a more direct and personal connection with the divine.

Perhaps the most potent symbol of Mirabai's triumph is the image of her dancing in ecstatic devotion. This isn't a mere physical act, but a representation of her soul in constant communion with Krishna. The rhythmic steps, the whirling dervish of her emotions, all represent the joyous surrender of her being to the divine.

This dance doesn't end with her earthly existence. Mirabai's legacy ensures that her dance continues, albeit in a different form. Every time a bhajan is sung, every time a listener connects with the depth of her emotions, the dance is rekindled. Her words become the bridge, transporting listeners to a realm where love for the divine transcends all limitations.

Mirabai's ultimate triumph lies not in worldly success but in the eternal union she achieved with her Beloved Shyam. She became more than just a princess; she became a symbol of unwavering devotion, a testament to the transformative power of love, and a voice that continues to inspire generations to seek the divine with an open heart and a relentless spirit. In the tapestry of Indian history and spirituality, Mirabai's name is forever etched, a vibrant thread woven with the colors of love, rebellion, and the eternal dance of the soul.

## VIII. CONCLUSION: A SYMPHONY OF DEVOTION

Mirabai's life wasn't a neatly composed ballad, but a symphony – a complex and powerful composition that resonates even centuries later. It's a story woven with threads of unwavering devotion, unwavering resilience in the face of persecution, and a rebellious spirit that challenged societal norms. As we delve deeper into her journey, we find ourselves not just studying a historical figure, but encountering a timeless embodiment of the human spirit's yearning for the divine.

### The Song of Devotion

At the heart of Mirabai's symphony lies the powerful melody of devotion. Her love for Krishna wasn't a fleeting infatuation, but a consuming fire that burned with unwavering intensity. It transcended the confines of social expectations and religious rituals, blossoming into a vibrant expression of the Bhakti movement. Her bhajans, imbued with raw emotion and profound longing, became a testament to the transformative power of true devotion.

### The Rhythm of Resilience

The symphony doesn't shy away from the harsh notes of adversity. Mirabai's life was a constant battle against societal disapproval, the constraints of her royal lineage, and even attempts to silence her voice. Yet, she faced these challenges with unwavering resilience. Her spirit, like a sturdy oak weathered by storms, remained rooted in her devotion. The persecutions she endured only served to refine her faith, adding a depth and resonance to her bhajans that continues to inspire generations.

### The Rebellious Chords

A distinct counterpoint in Mirabai's symphony is the rebellious spirit that challenged the status quo. She defied the rigid expectations placed upon a Rajput princess, refusing to be confined by the walls of the palace or the limitations of societal norms. Her public displays of devotion, her association with people from all walks of life, and her unwavering focus on Krishna were all acts of rebellion against a system that prioritized social standing over spiritual connection. This defiance became a beacon of hope for those yearning for a more authentic spiritual path.

### The Everlasting Harmony

As the final notes fade, the true essence of Mirabai's life story emerges – a harmonious blend of devotion, resilience, and rebellion. These elements, seemingly disparate, come together to create a powerful testament to the human spirit's capacity for love, perseverance, and the pursuit of the divine. Her legacy transcends the boundaries of time and geography, inspiring generations of seekers, artists, and devotees.

### Honoring the Greatest Devotee

By exploring Mirabai's journey, we don't merely pay homage to a historical figure; we honor the very essence of bhakti. We celebrate the transformative power of love, the unwavering strength found in faith, and the courage to challenge societal norms in pursuit of a deeper connection with the divine. Mirabai's story reminds us that true love

knows no bounds, that devotion can blossom even in the most unexpected places, and that the path to the divine is often paved with challenges and triumphs in equal measure.

As long as there are those who yearn for a deeper connection with the divine, as long as there are those who find solace in the power of music and poetry, Mirabai's legacy will endure. Her voice, echoing through the ages in her soul-stirring bhajans, will continue to inspire us to dance to the rhythm of our own devotion, to face adversity with unwavering resilience, and to chase after the divine with the relentless spirit of a true rebel.

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# Effectiveness of Asset-Based Teaching Approach in Enhancing the Reading Proficiency of Senior High Learners

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*Abstract*— *This research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Asset-based teaching approach in increasing the reading comprehension of graduating senior high students from TVL and HUMSS strands during the School's District Reading Remediation Reading(SDRRP) at Bulacao National High School, to find out whether, after the intervention program given to them,they were able to apply any of these Asset-based strategies to their reading processes. The data were collected from questionnaires and reading tasks. The statistical techniques used were the mean value and standard deviation. The analysis of quantitative data were lifted from the results of Pre-test and Post-test assessments of the participants and the Teacher-Made Feedback tool adapting the 3-Likert Scale. The findings were that Asset-based teaching approach had a positive effect on the students' reading proficiency. The students had favorable responses toward the Asset-based reading strategies utilized in skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning and they could apply these strategies to their reading processes and they helped them to comprehend the text better.*

*Keywords*— *Asset-based teaching, Reading Proficiency, Phil-IRI*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Based on research, the literacy skills of the 21st century learners were deeply linked to proficient demands of reading and comprehension abilities, which led to their ability to read information critically, analytically, and creatively. The findings employed the concept of selecting the most effective teaching strategy that could result to an increased academic achievement rate (Banditvilai, 2020).

In view thereof, the selection of a teaching method known as the Asset-based approach had been adapted during the School Reading Remediation program to cater the learning needs and to provide varied reading experiences to graduating students with comprehension gaps in Technical-Vocational and Academic Tracks.

Further, this Asset-based approach to teaching is also known as the "strength-based teaching," a type of teaching approach that is in contrast with deficit style of teaching.This Asset-based of teaching intends to unlock the students' potentials by focusing on their talents or strengths, respecting learners' diversity and building connections (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2018).

To strengthen the effectiveness of an Asset-based approach in increasing the reading proficiency of several dependent and frustration readers in Senior High school, the researcher scrutinized the participants' demographic factors such as the indicators of students' reading proficiency in terms of its comprehension and vocabulary, with the hoped that the findings of the study could generate further research studies and practices in the fields of education and policy development since there had been fewer empirical studies about Asset-based Approach in leveraging educational system in marginalized communities (United Nations).

Indeed, this study became significant to explore variables in the current time to provide data to educators by focusing their attention on improving the reading proficiency of Senior High School education in the

Philippines. Likewise, educators can get guidelines from the results of the study to focus groups that need more attention in the educational process to avoid low academic achievement.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Asset-based Approach**. This is a kind of teaching approach that highlights the knowledge, capabilities, and resources in which learners possessed or can access, which may stem from formal or informal experiences and networks among family, friends, communities, jobs, and more. Asset-based frameworks focus on the ways that learners succeed and thrive within their unique environments instead of how they "fail" or "struggle" within constrained contexts that overlook their strengths (Greenberg, 1989).

The proponents of this approach such as Rodriguez (1998) and Gutiérrez (2008) have encouraged educators to reframe learning and achievement "gaps" as "opportunity gaps" and to re-characterize learners based on strengths rather than weaknesses since asset-based models adopt an expansive and encompassing view of learners and how they can experience success.

**Asset-based Strategic Intervention.** In the course of the remediation, a three-step Asset-based Instructional Model (AIM) was conceptualized in accordance with Lalor's theoretical perspective that was grounded on a simplified three key stages by applying the growth mindset instruction.



## THE ASSET-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL (AIM)

**KEY STAGE 1**
Give diagnostic assessments which focus on student's previous, knowledge, s and talent

**Key Stages of Asset-based Teaching and Learning**

**KEY STAGE 2**
Provide varied learning pathways diverse learners they can have opportunity to meet high expectations.

**KEY STAGE 3**
Send feedback to students on how they can use their strengths in coping their areas of learning needs.

Figure 1. Three-Step Asset-based Instructional Framework

## III. METHODOLOGY

This section includes the purpose of the study, the participants, the material, the instruments, and an elaborate discussion of how the method and procedures of the study was conducted by the researcher in a quantitative nature.

### A. Research Questions

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Asset-based teaching approach in enhancing the reading proficiency of Technical-Vocational Livelihood and Humanities and Social Sciences graduating students in Bulacao National High School.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the comprehension level of the Senior High students before and after

the intervention program was implemented?

2. Is there a significant difference between the comprehension level of the Senior High students before and after the intervention was implemented?

3. Does Asset-based approach have a significant relationship in enhancing the

student's reading proficiency?

### B. Environment

The study was conducted in Bulacao National High School since the researcher is presently connected to the school. The school is situated in Abores Street, Bulacao, Talisay City, Cebu, a sub-urban type of community where majority of the residents are well-exposed in establishments that require a massive use of technology and majority of the students' socio-economic standing is below the average household.

Bulacao National High School is known in the locality as a thriving school among the schools in Talisay City Division where its main goal is to provide quality basic education in a nurturing and child-friendly environment. Its vision is to fully equipped every learner with excellence and core values of honesty, respect, love of country, and God-fearing individuals.

The school recorded 643 in numbers as its overall population, comprising 498 junior high school and 145 senior high school students. Due to its limited number, the school is categorized as a small secondary public school.

Previously, the school was notoriously remarked as the only Senior High school in Talisay City Division with the least number of students, approximately a start-up number of 15 graduates since the opening of K to 12 curriculum and the only school that received a recognition for its straight 100 percent NC II produced graduates even up to the pre-COVID time. Remarkably, this current year transits to an increased rate of more than fifty

percent of the previous year's total population tallied in the Learners' Information System (LIS) database.

## C. Participants

The participants involved in this study were twenty (28) males and fifteen (12) females from the graduating class in Technical-Vocational Livelihood track and Humanities and Social Sciences track, with a total of thirty-five (40) population. The participants' level of reading comprehension is being classified under the Frustration level based on the Phil-IRI descriptors, who scored 20 points and below in a 30-item assessment conducted in a thirty-minute time limit.

In terms of its age, all of these participants were approximately 17 to 22 years old, belonging to similar socio-economic background. These participants granted informed consent to undertake the study.

## D. Instrument

To quantify the effectiveness of the Asset-based Teaching Approach in enhancing the reading proficiency of Grade 12 students in Bulacao National High School, the researcher applies the main data-gathering instruments, namely: (1) the contextualized Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test questionnaires that underwent pilot testing and content validation conducted by the DepEd Supervisors in Talisay City division during the re-orientation of the competency-based reading tools prior to the conduct of the study.

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is a project initiated by the Department of Education's Bureau of Learning Delivery that incorporates DepEd's mission to make every Filipino child a reader under the flagship of the bureau's program, "Every Child A Reader Program (E-CARP) which seeks every child a reader and a writer at his or her grade level.

Phil-IRI is a standardized reading tool that is built in a complete reading package with guidelines on its proper administration. All graded passages in the reading kit is composed of four sets (A, B, C, and D) of texts with readability levels ranging from Grades 2 until Grades 10.

Since Phil-IRI does not cover reading materials intended for senior high school, the Curriculum and Development team, in collaboration with the Language Supervisors and Reading Coordinators of Talisay City Division conducted a contextualized reading passages exclusive for Senior High students. This contextualized 30-item test questionnaire is based on a set of leveled passages for Grade 12 in English medium which examines the reading proficiency of the students according to the learning competencies essential for the K12 students.

## E. Data Gathering Procedures

Initially, the researchers asked permission and support from various authorities in varying agencies that remarkably contributed in the implementation of the study. A letter was sent out to the school head of Bulacao National High School seeking an approval to conduct a digital survey intended for the participants and to use the available DepEd tablets for the intervention program.

Next, a letter of invitation was given to DepEd-Talisay LRMDS Supervisor for the collaboration in the enhancement of the locally-developed learning packets that can pass the quality assurance team for reproduction and utilization. After being approved, the researchers called for student orientation on the purpose of the survey before sending out the web-based questionnaire to them.

Then, results of the survey were sorted out, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted. The findings were recorded and brought out to be the basis in the crafting for future actions and recommendations for the strategy to be implemented during the intervention program.

Lastly, the program matrix and the action plan for the intervention program were furnished at the Principal's Office. After such, the permission was secured, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the target participants of the study with the help of the reading teachers that is also included in the executions of the intervention that will be conducted later. The questionnaire on a preferred and approved schedule will be 100 % retrieved and secured. Following data collection, data analysis and statistical treatment was performed.

## F. Data Analysis Plans

**Strategic Intervention Scheme.** The intervention for reading comprehension skill of Grade 12 students in the English was implemented for fifteen (16) weeks from late October 2023 to early February excluding the vacation and holidays. The intervention used the Asset-based strategies in enhancing reading proficiency.

In the course of the remediation, a three-step Asset-based Instructional Model (AIM) was conceptualized in accordance with Lalor's Theoretical Perspective that was grounded on an Asset-based or growth mindset instruction to provide an intervention to students who received failing scores during the Group Screening Test of Philippine Informal Reading Inventory. This model sought to enhance the students' abilities by looking at what they can do great rather than on what they cannot do well.

Meanwhile, this teaching strategy was selected by the researcher because it tailored fit on a competency-based curriculum and it became relevance nowadays. Strategically, the remediation program that was designed through the Asset-based Instructional Model had been simplified and modeled on three key stages: Key Stage 1 (Give Diagnostic Assessment); (2) Key Stage 2 (Provide Reading Pathways); and Key Stage 3 (Sending Feedback).

This was done by trained reading teachers in alignment with the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory tool, but the level of judgement was minimized to maximize the reliability of the measure undertaken. Hence, the following stages were observed:

Stage 1: Initial Screening Using the Phil-IRI Group Screening Test

Stage 2: Administration of the Phil-IRI Graded Passages (Pre-test)

Stage 3: Intervention for Frustration readers

Stage 4: Administration of the Phil-IRI (Graded Passages and Post Test)

**G. Ethical Considerations**

This study guaranteed that ethical standards and considerations were properly observed throughout the data collection. The considerations included the informed consent, data privacy and confidentiality of the participants. The researchers ensured the authenticity and validity of the participants' consent by informing them that their participation of the study served as voluntary basis and its sole purpose was for academic use only. Also, the participants were assured that any declaration of personal information in encompassing the data-gathering procedure, all was held confidential and shall not be disclosed for public use by any means and it was made clear that the participants' contribution and interest in this study had been protected by Republic Act 10173 also known as Data Privacy Act of 2012, which states that any pertinent information of the involved participants shall not be accessed, transported, cited, or copied without their approved consent.

Methodically, a letter of request was given to the Public-School District Supervisor and Principal of Bulacao National High School permitting the researcher to conduct the study. Next, parental consent from respondents involved in the study through letters was sent out and participants names were held anonymously to preserve its confidentiality, including the following measures: (1)

Assigning codes for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents; (2) Keeping the questionnaires and any other personal identifiers in locked and out of reach for public access; (3) After signing the consent form, participants are still free to withdraw anytime without any warrant for valid justifications. During the withdrawal process from the study, the participant's data will be shred off due to the research commitment for a highly confidential treatment to all data drawn in this study.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Asset-based teaching approach in enhancing the reading proficiency of Technical-Vocational Livelihood and Humanities and Social Sciences graduating students in Bulacao National High School adapting the context of PHIL-IRI administration during the three-months reading intervention.

Specifically, the study focused on determining the the comprehension level of the students before and after the intervention program was implemented, the significant difference on the comprehension level of the students before and after the pretest and posttest, and the establishment of the relationship of the teaching strategy and reading proficiency of the students.

In this study, the comprehension level of the participants were the test result of their pre-test and post-test in which the participants have taken using the contextualized Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assessment for reading skills for the students in Senior High School level. The the following descriptions of comprehension level: Independent with the grade of 80-100%, Instructional from 59-79% and 58% and below for the Frustration level.

**Comparison of the Comprehension Level of the Respondents Before and After the Program Intervention**

*Table 1. Comprehension Level of Students' Performance Before and After the Intervention Program*

| Scores | Descriptive Equivalent | Before the Intervention Program (Pre-test) | | | After the Intervention Program (Post-test) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No of Students | | | No of Students | | |
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Male | Total |
| 22-30 | Independent | - | - | - | 21 | 4 | 25 |
| 15-21 | Instructional | - | - | - | 6 | 4 | 10 |

*Table 1. Comprehension Level of Students' Performance Before and After the Intervention Program*

| Scores | Descriptive Equivalent | Before the Intervention Program (Pre-test) | | | After the Intervention Program (Post-test) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No of Students | | | No of Students | | |
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Male | Total |
| 0-14 | Frustration | 28 | 12 | 40 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | | 28 | 12 | 40 | 27 | 13 | 40 |

Table 1 illustrated the Students' Reading Comprehension Level Before and After the Intervention Program. Before the intervention was given, all the participants where in the "Frustration Level". After the given intervention nine (21) of the participants which fifty-three percent (53%) of the population were promoted to "Instructional Reading level" which participants benefited most from Asset-based-directed training in reading. Also, the table shows that male participants with sixty-eight percent (68%) got the most increased value of reading performance from the total population improved. Considerably, neither male nor female before the intervention program got a descriptive equivalent of Independent. However, after the intervention was implemented, both males and females reached the Independent level already. Also, no male or female got a descriptive equivalent of Instructional before the intervention program, but 6 males and 4 females got a descriptive equivalent of Instructional after the intervention program. Lastly, 28 male and 12 female participants got a descriptive evaluation of Frustration before the intervention program and 0 male and 5 female participants got a descriptive equivalent of Frustration after the intervention program.

*Table 2. Significant Difference Before and After the Intervention*

*Paired Samples Test*

| | | Paired Differences | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Lower | Upper | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Pair 1 | Posttest - Pretest | 5.35000 | 5.82457 | .92095 | 3.48721 | 7.21279 | 5.809 | 39 | .000 |

Table 2 showed the paired samples t-test results show a statistically significant difference (p-value = 0.000) between the post-test and pre-test scores. The average score increased by 5.35 points from pretest to post-test. We can also be 95% confident that the true population mean difference falls between 3.49 and 7.21 points.

This is the t-statistic, a value used to assess the significance of the difference between the means. A higher absolute value of t suggests a stronger difference between the means. Here, t is 5.809. In simpler terms, there is strong evidence that the scores on the post-test were, on average, significantly higher than the scores on the pretest. A p-value less than 0.05 (common threshold) suggests that the null hypothesis can be rejected (that there's no difference) and conclude a statistically significant difference. Here, the p-value is very low (0.000), indicating strong evidence against the null hypothesis.

This result affirms that the intervention conduction has place a significant difference between the pretest and post-test of the test result of the participants. After the intervention (post-test), the majority of students' reading abilities improved significantly. At the pre-test, all of the students had a reading comprehension level of "Frustration," but by the post-test, this percentage had dropped to 27%.

Comprehension is a very complicated process that involves several cognitive activities such as summarizing, predicting, evaluating, and synthesizing the information that has been read (Woolley,2011). Similar to Woolley, Hermosa (2006) mentioned that comprehension implies

thought and just as there are various degrees in the hierarchy of thought, there are many levels of comprehension. Thus, in regards to the levels of comprehension, the Department of Education (DepEd) necessitate all Filipino learners to be accessed on their reading proficiency as it would also determined their readiness for the next grade level.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The scope of the conclusions enumerated in this study is limited to the context and data collected by the researcher in Bulacao National High School. Thus, the inclusion parameter does not cover situations in other schools and might yield different assumptions. However, the conclusions provided in here are still applicable to the intervention conducted in this study.

The findings of this study attested that Asset-based teaching approach is effective in increasing the reading comprehension of the graduating senior high students that underwent the remediation program. The result of this study affirmed that the conduct of the Asset-based intervention program had placed a significant difference between the pretest and post-test of the test result of the participants. After the intervention (post-test), it was found out that majority of the students' reading abilities improved significantly.

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations were strongly raised: first, the Asset-based teaching must be implemented across all grade levels in both Junior and Senior High to ease the reading gap of these low academic performers and to avoid the increasing rate of school drop-outs annually; second, the school should develop learning plans, assessment tools, and learning resources conceptualizing the Asset-based pedagogy; and lastly, the DepEd Talisay should give free seminars focusing on current pedagogical approaches, crafting of competency-based assessment tools, and curriculum designing to all teachers for their professional growth development.

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# The Visibility of Racism: A Critical Exploration of Marginalization and Identity in Ralph Ellison's 'Invisible Man'

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*Abstract*— *Ralph Ellison's highly acclaimed novel, 'Invisible Man', is a compelling narrative that explores the themes of identity and marginalisation within a deeply polarised society. This literary research paper delves into the intricacies of identity development using postcolonial theory and examines the socio-political consequences of invisibility by conducting a thorough analysis of the protagonist's journey. Through an analysis of the novel's socio-cultural perspectives, I explore the process of identity formation as the protagonist, known as the 'Invisible Man,' navigates a society that is divided along racial and political lines. The Protagonist's encounters with deceitful figures of authority, along with his disillusionment within the Brotherhood, expose the manipulation and exploitation that marginalised individuals endure in power structures. This study investigates the mechanisms through which African-Americans experience the dehumanisation of Negroes, which is perpetuated by stereotypes, structural racism, and segregation. Ultimately, this study affirms the significance of 'Invisible Man' in ongoing conversations regarding race, identity, and marginalisation.*

*Keywords*— *Invisible Man, Race, Identity, Marginalization, power dynamics.*

## I.  INTRODUCTION

Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man*, which was published in 1952, is widely considered to be an important contribution to the literary canon of the United States. It investigates the complex nuances of identity as well as the experiences of marginalisation that the African American protagonist faced throughout the course of the story. The work focuses primarily on the experiences of African Americans living in the United States; however, it is essential to also take into consideration the wider implications of these issues by employing the perspective of postcolonial theory while doing so. When viewed through the prism of postcolonial theory, the primary purpose of this academic research article is to conduct a critical analysis of the novel "Invisible Man" written by Ralph Ellison. This is done with the intention of demonstrating how the experiences of the protagonist can be interpreted as being representative of the difficulties that people from colonised regions face in a variety of different global contexts.

It is possible to attribute the emergence of postcolonial theory to the fact that it is an interdisciplinary perspective. This is because the theory seeks to conduct an all-encompassing analysis and evaluation of the power dynamics, oppressive systems, and identity formation that occur within nations that have been influenced by colonialism. The colonised are shown to be subordinate and marginalised as a result of this phenomenon, which highlights the mechanisms through which colonisers exercise dominance over the colonised. This results in a process known as "othering." In addition, the theory sheds light on the complex process of negotiating one's identity as well as the various methods of resistance that were employed by the colonial population in order to challenge their subordination. The 'Invisible Man' novel depicts the

protagonist's progression from a state of invisibility to one of self-awareness and resistance. This progression is a parallel to the challenges that colonised individuals face when they are attempting to resist oppressive colonial powers. Through the application of postcolonial theory, the purpose of this study is to investigate the novel's potential to function as a significant critique. This critique will not only cover the issue of racial oppression in the United States, but will also cover broader topics. These topics include colonisation, identity, and resistance.

Within the context of a society that is segregated along racial lines and fails to recognise his humanity, this novel depicts the narrative of a young African American male who has received academic training and is struggling with the challenges of surviving and achieving success. The journey that the protagonist takes in the book "Invisible Man" is told from the first-person perspective within the narrative. The unnamed narrator is the protagonist of this story, which follows him as he goes through a transformational process, both physically and psychologically, moving from a state of profound ignorance to one of enlightened awareness. According to the author, this progression can be described as a movement that goes "from Purpose to Passion to Perception." This development is communicated through a series of flashbacks that are presented in the form of dreams and memories simultaneously. A time period that was characterised by the implementation of segregation laws that denied black Americans the equal enjoyment of fundamental human rights in comparison to their white counterparts is depicted in the novel, which takes place in the United States during the pre-Civil Rights era. However, the majority of the action takes place in the northern region of Harlem, New York, despite the fact that the story begins in the southern region of Greenwood, South Carolina.

## II.    OTHERING AND INVISIBILITY

The idea of "othering" is a fundamental component of postcolonial theory, which is centred on the investigation of the manner in which dominant groups construct and define the colonised as being fundamentally distinct, inferior, and frequently dehumanised. The aforementioned phenomenon is a strategy that is utilised by individuals who are in positions of authority in order to establish and strengthen their dominance, while simultaneously marginalising and subjugating others who are perceived to be different or outside the norm. The impact of this particular practice extends beyond the scope of this particular historical phenomenon, influencing a variety of manifestations of discrimination and prejudice based on identity. This particular practice plays a significant role within the context of colonialism.

In the novel, the narrative commences with the recollection of the protagonist's high school commencement address, which garnered the interest of the Caucasian school administrator, afterwards extending an invitation for the orator to deliver the same speech at a prominent local hotel, before an audience including the town's prominent white populace. In the event that the narrator arrives at the hotel, he is compelled to take part in a vicious blindfolded boxing match, which is commonly known as the "battle royal," along with nine of his fellow classmates. He eventually comes to the realisation that this event is an essential component of the evening's entertainment during the "smoker," which is a social gathering that is comparable to a stag party. The entertainment programme also includes a performance of a provocative dance by a woman who is not wearing any clothes and has fair hair. The male individuals are compelled to watch the dance. Following the boxing match, a degrading incident takes place when the young people are compelled to hastily gather what at first appears to be valuable gold coins scattered around an electrified carpet. However, they eventually come to realise that these objects are ultimately devoid of any substantial worth and are instead nothing more than brass tokens. After that, the narrator, who is currently suffering from bruises and bleeding, is eventually given the opportunity to deliver his oration in front of an audience that is primarily comprised of individuals of Caucasian descent who are under the influence of alcohol. Regrettably, his discourse fails to capture the attention of the listeners until he inadvertently substitutes the term "social equality" for "social responsibility" when characterising the position of African Americans inside the United States. After enduring a terrible and humiliating experience, the narrator confidently accepts the reward that was bestowed upon him at the conclusion of his discourse. The reward is a calfskin briefcase that contains a scholarship to attend the state college that is designated for those of African descent.

## III.    DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS AND IDENTITY

In the seminal work of Ralph Ellison, "Invisible Man," the concept of "double consciousness," as defined by W.E.B. Du Bois, plays a significant role in gaining an understanding of the protagonist's arduous journey of self-identification. The idea, which was initially presented by Du Bois in his seminal publication titled "The Souls of Black Folk" (1903), refers to the psychological strain that people of African descent experience when living in a society that is characterised by racial hierarchy. In his novel "Invisible Man," Ellison investigates the aforementioned idea by depicting the main character's complex and frequently

contradictory self-awareness. This is done through the eyes of the main character. The concept of double consciousness refers to the simultaneous recognition of two identities that are in direct opposition to one another within a single person. As a result of their simultaneous participation in African American society and their exposure to the perceptions and evaluations of the white, dominant culture, African Americans are subjected to a duality that they experience. When individuals maintain a constant awareness of how they are perceived by others, particularly by the dominant racial group, the concept sheds light on the internal discord that results from this awareness.

"Invisible Man," a novel written by Ralph Ellison, features a protagonist who, throughout the course of the story, grapples with the idea of having a dual consciousness. The individual possesses an awareness of their self-conception, acknowledging their distinct experiences, desires, and objectives. He does, however, have a heightened awareness of the way in which he is perceived within the culture of white people that surrounds him. In the process of attempting to bring together two identities that are very different from one another, the presence of this dual awareness creates a state of tension in the individual. The narrator's grandfather, who had been a slave during his lifetime, appears to him in a dream one day and gives him instructions to open the bag and look inside it. The narrator's grandfather had been a slave during his lifetime. It is not the scholarship that is contained within the briefcase; rather, it is a message that reads "Keep This Nigger Boy Running." The dream provides the context for the situation. The narrator spends the next twenty years of his life bumbling through life, never pausing to wonder why he is always kept running by individuals — both black and white — who claim to guide and direct him, but who eventually exploit him and violate his trust. This happens throughout the entirety of his life. The narrator will continue to experience this throughout the rest of his life.

The fact that he, depending on the circumstances, takes on a different persona is another factor that contributes to the confusion surrounding his dual identity. In order to satisfy the expectations that are placed upon him by the people in his environment, he adopts a variety of personas. For example, he may assume the persona of the submissive and docile "Sambo" or the persona of the charismatic and articulate speaker. A person who lives in a world that does not accept them for who they truly are can use these masks as a means of survival in order to survive. As a result of the friction that exists between how he sees himself and how others see him, there are times when he experiences internal turmoil and self-doubt. This is because of the fact that he differs from how others see him. He is unsure as to whether the prejudices that have been implanted upon him or his

own personal goals are more responsible for defining who he is at his core. This internal conflict is illustrative of the larger African American experience, in which individuals are required to permanently manage a complicated interplay between their own self-identity and the demands of society. This conflict is a representation of the larger African American experience.

## IV.  RESISTANCE AND REBELLION

The journey of the protagonist begins in a historically black college, where he enrols in classes with the goal of advancing his social standing through the pursuit of education. His early act of defiance against the limited opportunities that were available to African Americans was his desire to increase the breadth and depth of his knowledge-based experiences. The statements that he makes are as follows: "I desired the liberty to cultivate my capabilities, to acquire knowledge, and to comprehend" (Ellison). Before turning his attention to the events that transpired on a day that would forever change his life, the narrator engages in some introspection regarding his time spent in college. The task of providing transportation for a prominent white visiting trustee named Mr. Norton around the campus was assigned to the narrator after he was given the responsibility. In accordance with Mr. Norton's instructions, the narrator took Mr. Norton to two locations in a nearby black neighbourhood. The first location was the cabin of Jim Trueblood, a local sharecropper. The second location was the Golden Day, a disreputable pub that served as a halfway house for shell-shocked World War I veterans. On the other hand, Mr. Norton was expelled from his cherished college and sent to New York with seven letters from his dean, Dr. Bledsoe, because the narrator gave him permission to visit these places. He was under the impression that the letters were letters of recommendation; however, contrary to his expectations, they are letters confirming that he will be expelled from the school.

As soon as he arrived in New York, he became a member of Brotherhood, a political organisation that declares its dedication to working towards the objective of achieving equality for all individuals. With the assistance of the Brotherhood and Brother Jack, who is the leader of the Brotherhood, the narrator develops into an exceptional public speaker and a leader of the Harlem District. Brother Jack also serves as the leader of the Brotherhood. However, after the tragic death of his companion Tod Clifton, a charismatic young black "Brother" who was shot by a white police officer, the narrator becomes disillusioned with the disparity between what the organisation preaches and what its leaders actually do at the organisation. When Tod Clifton, the friend of the narrator, is accidentally shot by the

white police officer, this takes place. As a result of this, he comes to the conclusion that he should leave the Brotherhood, which is headquartered in a wealthy neighbourhood of Manhattan. He then goes back to Harlem, where he is greeted by Ras the Exhorter, who is now known as Ras the Destroyer. An accusation of betrayal against the black community is made by Ras.

The protagonist, who goes from being invisible to asserting themselves, is a representation of a fundamental type of resistance against the dehumanising effects of racism. This resistance is represented by the path that the protagonist takes. In the beginning, he employs his invisibility as a means of survival, fooling himself into thinking that it enables him to move through a perilous world without being noticed by anyone. On the other hand, as he grows in self-awareness, he comes to the realisation that the only way to truly resist is to establish his individuality and voice. This is the only way he can truly resist. The moment that he makes the proclamation that will live long in the memory is when he says, "I'm not ashamed of being invisible... What I can't stand is being seen" (Ellison). His comprehension of the idea of resistance undergoes a change as a result of this declaration. His choice is to define himself according to his own standards and to reject the roles that are expected of him by society. He makes the conscious decision not to run away from the outside world but rather to define himself according to his own standards.

## V.    CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has conducted an in-depth analysis of Ralph Ellison's novel "Invisible Man" by employing the framework of postcolonial theory. The results of this analysis have revealed significant revelations regarding the protagonist's experiences with marginalisation and the formation of his identity. The analysis of the concept of 'othering' and the theme of invisibility demonstrated the protagonist's attempt to achieve visibility, which can be understood as being comparable to the dehumanisation that individuals who were living under colonial authorities went through. The examination of double consciousness brought to light the internal conflict that exists between an individual's personal identity and the way in which society perceives them within themselves.

Furthermore, the discourse on resistance illustrated the progression of the protagonist from being invisible to actively asserting themselves, which would serve as an effective mode of resistance. Through an analysis of the novel's thematic connections to historical postcolonial contexts, this research sheds light on the novel's continuing significance. In this study, the author draws parallels between the themes of the novel and these contexts in order to highlight the novel's continued relevance in broader conversations concerning power dynamics and identity conflicts. The reaffirmation of the value of employing postcolonial theory as an analytical framework for the examination of Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man" highlights the ability of this theory to provide a more profound understanding of the realities that are experienced by individuals who are disadvantaged. Through highlighting the pervasive presence of themes pertaining to the marginalisation of others, the construction of identity, and acts of defiance, this study makes a significant contribution to the larger academic conversation that is taking place around postcolonial literature.

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# Parallels of Inequity: Analyzing Systemic Discrimination in Virginia Woolf's Work and Contemporary Racial Disparities in America

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*Abstract— This paper explores the enduring impacts of systemic discrimination, drawing parallels between Virginia Woolf's portrayal of sexism and the pervasive racism affecting African American communities in the United States. Despite the emancipation of slaves and the awarding of citizenship to African Americans post-Civil War, institutionalized racism through Jim Crow laws has perpetuated significant socioeconomic barriers. This discrimination parallels Woolf's analysis of sexism in "A Room of One's Own," where she asserts that financial and educational exclusion hinders women's intellectual and creative potential. Woolf's critique of the systemic impoverishment of women is mirrored in the racial wealth gap experienced by African Americans, which severely limits their access to higher education and economic advancement. Historical and contemporary examples illustrate how entrenched biases in policy and society maintain these disparities. The paper argues for addressing the root causes of these inequities by ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities, akin to Woolf's metaphorical "room of one's own," to enable true socioeconomic progress for African Americans.*

*Keywords— English, history, race, slavery, feminism*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Slavery is an antiquated idea. After all, all slaves were emancipated in the Civil War and African Americans were rightfully awarded citizenship. However, equality in the eyes of the law did not translate to the necessary equity African Americans required to overcome the socioeconomic barriers inflicted upon them in society. As a result of institutionalized discrimination through Jim Crow laws, racism perpetuates as a systemic issue of equity. The pervasiveness of racism parallels Virginia Woolf's portrayal of sexism in her many literary works, where she discusses the potential of women of genius. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf argues that women are often excluded from education due to affordability, setting the foundation for systematic discrimination, which remains relevant today as African Americans are empirically denied access to higher education as a result of poverty, fostering the racial wealth gap in America.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a multidisciplinary approach, integrating historical analysis, literary criticism, and socioeconomic research to explore the parallels between systemic sexism as depicted by Virginia Woolf and the ongoing racial inequities faced by African Americans. The methodology is structured as follows, beginning with literary analysis. The analysis will focus on Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own," examining key passages that discuss the exclusion of women from educational and economic opportunities. Specific attention will be given to Woolf's arguments about the necessity of financial independence and educational access for women's intellectual and creative development. Thereafter, formalist

analysis will be employed to examine Woolf's use of language and literary devices, including metaphors, hyperboles, and repetition, to convey the systemic nature of gender-based discrimination. Utilizing a feminist critique, the study will explore how Woolf's arguments reflect broader societal attitudes towards women and the impact of these attitudes on women's opportunities and autonomy. The literary analysis will be further corroborated by comparative historical analysis. This aspect will involve a thorough review of historical documents, including government policies, labor market reports, and contemporary commentaries. These documents will help contextualize the economic conditions and societal attitudes that influenced women's roles and opportunities during Woolf's time. The historical analysis will extend to comparing the socioeconomic conditions of women during Woolf's era with those of African Americans during and after the Jim Crow era. This comparison will highlight similarities in the systemic barriers faced by both groups, such as exclusion from certain jobs, lack of access to quality education, and discriminatory policies that perpetuated economic disparities. Historical analysis will then be supplemented by socioeconomic analysis. Studies and reports on educational disparities will be examined, with a particular focus on the funding and resource allocation in predominantly African American school districts compared to predominantly white districts. Given these analyses, the final step will be synthesizing conclusions. The synthesis will involve integrating insights from the literary analysis of Woolf's work with historical and socioeconomic data. This integration will aim to draw clear parallels between the systemic discrimination faced by women in Woolf's era and the racial inequities affecting African Americans today. A critical analysis will be conducted to examine how historical and contemporary policies and societal biases have perpetuated these disparities. This analysis will explore the root causes of these inequities and emphasize the importance of addressing systemic issues to achieve true socioeconomic equality. These conclusions will ultimately help develop public policy solutions to the issue of systemic racism, if there are any tangible efforts that could be accomplished.

Key systemic issues contributing to the racial wealth gap and educational disparities will be identified, informed by interdisciplinary analysis. These issues will include discriminatory policies, unequal access to resources, and societal biases that perpetuate inequality. Based on the findings, policy interventions and societal changes will be proposed to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for African Americans. These interventions will draw on the metaphor of Woolf's "room of one's own" as a framework for empowerment and success.

Recommendations may include policies aimed at increasing funding for schools in underprivileged areas, measures to address the racial wealth gap through economic reforms, and initiatives to promote equal opportunities in education and employment. This expanded methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of gender and racial discrimination, using Woolf's literary critique as a lens to examine and address contemporary socioeconomic challenges.

## III.     RESULTS & DISCUSSION

First, Woolf argues that wealth is a prerequisite to education, which is historically corroborated by the impact of the Great Depression on female autonomy. When discussing the poetic geniuses of Woolf's time, Woolf remarks that "women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time," ensuring that "women, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry.[1]" From a formalist perspective, the hyperbole of "from the beginning of time" suggests that this disparity is a systemic issue because women continuously are put down in comparison to men. While there have always been wealthy women, women are poor not in wealth but in tangible freedoms to adequately express their ideas and creativity. "A dog's chance" is utilized as a metaphor to emphasizing how improbable female advancement is through the dehumanizing implication of comparing a woman to a dog. Woolf's language, from a feminist critique, conveys the idea that the level of impoverishment that women have experienced serves as a barrier to their intellectual and financial success, systematically placing women at a disadvantage compared to men. Woolf's claims are historically substantiated by the socioeconomic disparities between women and men that were exacerbated by the Great Depression. The New York Historical Society articulates that during the Great Depression, "local, state, and federal government policies favored men and discouraged married women from entering the workforce," while "New Deal programs for women relied on … traditional forms of women's work.[2]" In the aftermath of World War 1, women were shut out of the factory, or the traditionally 'male' roles that they were forced to take after the draft. As a result, the Great Depression forced women back into domestic roles and lacked the autonomy to pursue more significant careers in society. Furthemore, although President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs provided an abundance of jobs to address the unemployment crisis, these efforts only reemphasized existing gender preconceptions about the roles women could fulfill, taking away any opportunities women had for better jobs. This disparity in opportunity is reflected in

Woolf's argument as due to societal barriers of wealth, women cannot access the necessary opportunities to advance in society. Because employment is a critical factor in accumulating wealth, women during Woolf's time continually could not access the opportunities necessary to thrive because they could not pursue better careers due to traditional gender roles.

Woolf's argument parallels to the impact of structural poverty on opportunities for African American communities. This is corroborated by the Harvard Gazette, which examined the impact of the racial wealth gap on other disparities, ultimately establishing that "the typical white American family has roughly 10 times as much wealth as the typical African American family.[3]" Due to the legacy of institutionalized racism, African American families lack the wealth to develop a generational standing of being able to access the opportunities necessary to close this gap. As a result of generations of discrimination and an inability to acquire property as a result of redlining, African Americans could not gain access to the many opportunities that came alongside the accumulation of wealth. Even if African Americans attempted to bridge this generational gap, wealth continued to serve as a barrier towards better opportunity. This is corroborated by the US Department of the Treasury's findings that "the value of student loan debt was 30% higher for the typical Black household than for the typical white household in 2019.[4]" Even though African Americans now have access to higher education, due to the distinct racial wealth gap, they often remained in debt. As a result of this financial imbalance, debt conventionally impacts one's credit score, one's ability to purchase a home, which is a form of wealth, and one's ability to invest. These aspects of one's financial security are functionally key to accumulating wealth, and African Americans are often systematically pushed towards financial insecurity. As Woolf argues that women are systematically impoverished, African Americans suffer from a striking wealth gap that amplifies the impact of financial insecurity.

Ultimately, Woolf argues that a systematic lack of equity decreases opportunities due to the vitality of education in *A Room Of One's Own*. When Woolf discusses a substandard meal given to female students and the quality of the women's college dining hall, she remarks that "one cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.[5]" Examining the language from a formalist perspective, the repetition of "well" emphasizes the impact of "dining" well on a variety of functional aspects in one's life. "Dining" serves as a symbol for the fundamental resources women require to thrive academically, including access to higher education, support from a young age, and opportunities that are given to men instead of women, like academic research or higher paying jobs. From a feminist lens, the women's college lacks the fundamental resources a woman needs to creatively thrive, while the men's college is well funded with all the necessary resources, highlighting a fatal opportunity gap between men and women. The phenomenon of unfair treatment for women was fueled by the historical push towards female dependence on males, despite the fact that women could enter the workforce. Dartmouth University articulates that in the early 20th century, "the minimum wage for women was defined in relation to the amount of money needed to support a family, termed the 'family wage.[6]'" Instead of providing women with the living wages they rightfully deserved, due to the preconception that women belonged in the home in the role of the caretaker, these wages were decreased upon the assumption that women were provided for by their 'husbands' or male figures in their lives, making women more reliant on their male counterparts. As a result, women who did not have a male counterpart continuously suffered from lower wages and as a result, less wealth, which was necessary to gaining economic equality and accessing better societal opportunities. The 1920s wage gap founded upon sexist beliefs distinctly parallels to Woolf's argument as if societal conditions are not ideal for success and accumulation of wealth, women cannot function adequately in society and achieve the level of autonomy men are often gifted.

Woolf's argument is further corroborated by the empirical denial of access to quality education for African American students. The Harvard Political Review articulates that because "black students are increasingly concentrated in separate school districts from White students in the same state, total revenue shifts in a way that disfavors the typical Black student's district.[7]" Because of unintentional or hidden forms of political discrimination, access to a properly funded school system is often lacking, setting up a generational cycle of access to lower quality education. Education helps close the wealth gap as it enables students to become qualified for higher-paying jobs. Without access to even this, African American students and families fall further behind, setting up African American families for failure as they can never catch up to their white counterparts. Furthermore, the UCLA Civil Rights Project articulates that "over the last 30 years the proportion of schools that were intensely segregated has nearly tripled, rising from 7.4% to 20%.[8]" Although Brown vs. Board of Education ruled against segregation, as a result of a lack of support for school integration due to the nature of school funding systems, African American students cannot attain success and close the wealth gap by accumulating wealth. Because schools are funded by local property taxes, the legacy of redlining set the foundation for educational disparities based on location. This closely

parallels Woolf's argument as she contends that a legacy of discrimination of women and denial to access of opportunities prevents women from seeking future opportunity as intellectual freedom is inextricably intertwined with wealth. The racial wealth gap exacerbates this issue as African American students are often denied opportunity they could otherwise obtain because of the systematic perpetuation of the wealth gap as they were not set up for success, unlike students in inherently wealthier school districts.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the enduring impacts of systemic discrimination through a multidisciplinary lens, drawing parallels between Virginia Woolf's portrayal of gender-based inequities in "A Room of One's Own" and the racial disparities affecting African Americans today. By integrating literary analysis, historical contextualization, and socioeconomic research, the study has illuminated how deeply entrenched biases continue to limit opportunities for marginalized groups. Woolf's arguments about the necessity of financial independence and educational access for women's intellectual and creative development resonate strongly with contemporary issues faced by African Americans. Both groups have historically been excluded from economic and educational opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and discrimination. Woolf's use of metaphors and hyperboles effectively illustrates the systemic nature of gender-based discrimination, while historical and contemporary data highlight similar patterns of racial inequity. The stark racial wealth gap, rooted in historical injustices like redlining and discriminatory lending practices, continues to limit the financial stability and opportunities for African American families. Educational disparities, exacerbated by segregation and inequitable resource allocation, further entrench these inequalities by restricting access to quality education and higher-paying jobs. The synthesis of these findings underscores the systemic nature of both gender and racial discrimination, revealing that historical and contemporary policies and societal biases are deeply intertwined in perpetuating these disparities. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive solutions that tackle the root causes of inequality, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for all.

Policy interventions should focus on increasing funding for schools in underprivileged areas, implementing economic reforms to address the racial wealth gap, and promoting equal opportunities in education and employment. By doing so, society can move towards a future where individuals, regardless of gender or race, have

the resources and opportunities necessary for success, embodying Woolf's vision of a "room of one's own" for everyone. In conclusion, the parallels between Woolf's critique of systemic sexism and the ongoing racial inequities affecting African Americans highlight the persistent nature of these issues. To achieve true socioeconomic equality, it is imperative to address the systemic biases that underlie these disparities and create an environment where all individuals can thrive.

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# A Hybrid World: Genetic Engineering in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

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*Abstract— Oryx and Crake is Margaret Atwood's most influential work, focusing on the current trends and extrapolates them to explore what the future might look like. I consider the heavy use of science in the novel, as a clear genre marker of science fiction. The speculative fiction deals with transgenic biotechnology and scientific innovations that run amuck throughout the novel. The representation of genetically engineered animals as a commodity for human consumption, or a creation of a whole human race genetically modified for a better future, altogether challenges the existing dichotomies. The understanding of genetically engineered animals and human requires the redefinition of humans and animals. Along the line, the paper will analyse the capitalistic agenda behind growing technology and the way it is perceived.*

*Keywords— animal labour, biotechnology, genetic engineering, human, and hybrid.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

*Oryx and Crake*, written by Margaret Atwood, urges readers to delve into the narrative of Jimmy, also referred to as Snowman, who was forsaken by his community and confronted with the consequences of uncontrolled biotechnology experimentation. The book intricately weaves together Jimmy's memories before and after the horrific event. Jimmy, wearing a bed sheet, lived like a prehistoric man on a tree, exposed to sunlight, eating food, and safeguarding Crakers—genetically modified hominids designed to replace humans—while reminiscing about a pre-disaster world where unrestricted biotechnology created hybrid animal workers for the ultimate goal. However, everything ended when Crake, a genetically altered human, created an incurable virus to eradicate the human population and make way for the Crakers to take over. Atwood's book highlights the contemporary advancements in biotechnology and cautions readers about the irreversible consequences that could pose a threat to human survival. According to Atwood, this novel is a combination of fact and fiction, and it follows a route that is already apparent to us. She describes it as speculative fiction that delves into the ongoing discussion surrounding genetic advancements and presents a vivid portrayal of the imminent catastrophic downfall of civilization as a consequence.

Literature has consistently endeavoured to anticipate and portray the potentialities of future scientific advancements even before they materialise in written form. Warwick asserts that science fiction has the ability to provide inspiration to scientists and properly depict possible future situations. Hybrid creatures have been a recurring theme in literature for a considerable period of time, starting with the publishing of H. G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau* in 1896. This book presents the concept of hybrid creatures in a manner that is exceptionally credible and true to life. This is a dystopian narrative set in the near future, where a Biotechnology Corporation governs the world until it is completely annihilated. Oryx and Crake introduces the reader to a range of hybrid creatures, including rakunks (a mix of raccoons and skunks), wolvogs (combining the aggression of wolves with the appearance and behaviour of dogs), pigoons (organisms that generate human organs), and Crakers (a genetically

modified species of humans). When humans do not intervene, these animals eventually become uncontrollable as the deadly virus spreads and kills everyone, constantly endangering Jimmy. Like Atwood, hybrid animals have traditionally been depicted in literature as peculiar, uncanny, alarming, and a fusion of human and animal, as well as human and machine. These hybrid creations challenge the existing societal divisions between the natural and artificial (man-made) and between animals and humans. A child born through surrogacy or in vitro fertilisation is currently facing a dilemma between artificial and natural birth, or a combination of both, which is causing significant worry. This amalgamation challenges the commonly recognised concept of human identity. According to the Oxford Dictionary, a human is defined as a person, distinct from both animals and machines. In the era of biotechnology, humans have started to surpass their natural limitations by integrating artificial organs from animals (known as xenoplantation) and mechanical support (cyborgs) into their bodies. This has led to the emergence of the posthuman era, when humans are no longer separate from machines. As Francis Fukuyama writes:

> "[T]he most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a 'posthuman' stage of history. (7)

The idea of the human body has undergone a substantial change, moving from its natural state to one that is artificial or man-made. This makes a new posthuman perspective on the human body necessary. In the 20th century, scientific methods and technological advancements made substantial contributions to the field of posthumanism. Humans and robots have been in a partnership for ages. In the past, machines were employed to distinguish between non-human animals and people. But in the posthumanist era of today, there is a debate about how the lines separating the human body from technology are becoming hazier. As Donna J. Haraway writes:

> Late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert. (152)

Genetic engineering has been around since the early 1980s, when scientists developed an oncomouse specifically for studying cancer. Over the course of the past twenty years, scientists have successfully developed various genetically modified animal species that possess advantageous characteristics. These include goats that produce anti-clotting protein, fish with accelerated growth, and pigs that are environmentally friendly. Genetic engineering is driven by a strong desire for its potential benefits, such as providing a source for human organ transplants, studying diseases like cancer and heart disease, producing substances for pharmaceuticals, and even creating pets. Genetic engineering thrives not only on its mentioned benefits, but on the comprehensive network that supports it. While I won't be able to cover every single one, I can provide some insight into a selected few. I will explore the topic of hybrid animals in relation to their role in labour, the influence of biotechnology on society, the capitalist agenda, the commercialization of these animals, and the absence of effective policies to regulate them.

## II. GENETICALLY ENGINEERED ANIMAL LABOUR

Throughout the history of humanity, animals have served as a source of sustenance and as a means of labour. From studying the interactions between humans and animals, it is evident that animals have often been viewed as passive beings, exploited for human gain. In today's technologically advanced world, the significance of various aspects has been diminished, including human labour. However, animals continue to play a prominent role in the workforce. Animals have experienced a significant increase in their responsibilities. In the past, they were primarily utilised for farming, carting, and food consumption. However, they now also bear the weight of being subjected to experiments, used to develop human organs, tissues, and cells, and serve as a source of protein that can be altered or created to fulfil human desires. As Steven Best and Douglas Kellner call attention to the transformative power of biotechnology which created:

> …a surreal zoo of mutations that includes tobacco plants with firefly genes, mice and pigs with human genes, potatoes with chicken genes, fish and tomatoes with antifreeze genes, and dozens of different genetically modified foods spliced with bacteria, viruses, antibiotic-resistant marker genes, and insect genes. (Atwood 134)

The earliest pages of the novel opens with young Jimmy memories of a "bonfire was an enormous pile of cows and sheep and pigs"(Atwood 18). Devastated by the virus that was intentionally injected, the animals suffered a tragic fate, leading to their mass extermination in order to safeguard human lives. In Britain during the 1980s and again in the mid-1990s, there was a significant incident involving the disposal of cows due to concerns about the

spread of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), a human disease.

Through experimentation, the utilisation of animal labour transitioned from being a natural process to being situated on the periphery of human intervention. Oryx and Crake extensively examine the topic of hybrid, genetically modified creatures. Pigoons, a pig created to grow an "assortment of foolproof human-tissue organs in transgenic knockout pig host-organ" (Atwood 25) that would defend against the attack of viruses. These organisms were designed to grow quickly, allowing human organs to be available for transplantation as soon as possible. There is currently a strong interest in the scientific community to develop a method for growing and preserving multiple kidneys at once, with the goal of customising them for individual patients. These pigs were deliberately bred to be larger and more robust to better accommodate extra organs. At first sight, they may seem a bit intimidating with their pink eyes, nimble movements, and a tendency to bite into humans rather swiftly. The Pigoon is involved in the production of human organs, which are later sold as commodities for consumption by buyers. In the past, animal research focused on draining the animal's energy, but unfortunately, it ended up taking the animal's life for the sake of human gain.

Along with long life, human emphasises on the idea of beauty, and youthfulness. This project under Nooskins design Pigoons to replace the older epidermis with a newer one, "a genuine start-over thing that would be wrinkle and blemish-free" (Atwood 62). This project is centred around the intriguing phenomenon observed in algae, where younger skin cells ingest older cells and produce duplicates to take their place. The progress in biotechnology has generated distinct beauty criteria that value perfect skin as the ultimate gauge of attractiveness. Regrettably, this has resulted in sentiments of insufficiency and apprehension, which subsequently have bolstered the expansion of this sector. One additional remarkable hybrid creature is the wolvog, which merges the traits of a canine and a lupine. Wolvogs originated as a result of escalating competition among firms and their intrusion into one other's domains. These creatures are specifically engineered to protect and secure business goods. While describing Crake says that:

> They aren't dogs, they just look like dogs. They're wolvogs- they're bred to deceive. Reach out to pat them, they'll take your hand off. There's a large pit-bull component….Yeah better than an alarm system-no way of disarming them, not like real dogs. (Atwood 241)

These creatures were beneficial and manageable even though they were kept in a cage and under constant observation. But when the humans went extinct, they were set free and started attacking Jimmy. As a result of their hostility, Jimmy is now compelled to seek safety in a tree. While genetically changing animals has undoubtedly been greatly influenced by technology, they organically evolved into different creatures after they were left to fend for themselves without human intervention or care. They started acting in ways that went against their innate tendencies as:

> Pigoons were supposed to be tusk-free, but may they were reverting to type now they'd gone feral, a fast forward process considering their rapid-maturity genes. (Atwood 43)

**Conception of meat**

Everything that was once deemed an unrealistic and satirical concept ten years ago is now within the realm of possibility. The notion of flesh has undergone a transformation in the universe of *Oryx and Crake*. Chickienobs, a genetically modified breed of chicken, is specifically bred and cultivated for human consumption. The portrayal of chickienobs in the book is not completely fictional; laboratory-cultivated, in vitro meat has indeed been created for both industrial and therapeutic purposes. Furthermore, this synthetic method of production not only holds significant financial significance but also acts as a means to appease environmental and animal welfare organisations who strongly object to the cruel and harmful activities of the animal industry. As Crake says "animal welfare freaks won't be able to say a word, because this thing feels no pain"(Atwood 238). The lack of pain is because of neurological alteration, and the physical alterations are to such extent the onlooker feels disgusted and pity at the same time. While describing them:

> There's a mouth opening at the top, they (workers) dump the nutrients in there. No eyes or bleak or anything, they don't need those….they'd removed all the brain function that had nothing to do with digestion, assimilation and growth….You get chicken breast in two weeks. (Atwood 238)

Humans have demonstrated a significant level of freedom when it comes to creating genetically engineered species. Limiting animal options to match human preferences through neurological and physical alterations. All of them have been designed to mimic chickens, but they are missing crucial functionalities. They have no limbs, no head, and can be described as a "meat tube" - a living, walking mass of flesh that is specifically adapted for human consumption. As the project advances, the

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expensive traditional method of factory farming for "genuine" chicken is slowly being phased out in the market.

*Oryx and Crake* has emphasised the notable inclination towards meat intake and the raising of cattle. The characters in the narrative yearned for a world where actual flesh existed, which served as a reminder of a time when life held greater complexity and importance. Access to genuine meat is limited to individuals who possess privilege and wealth. Jimmy is astonished when he witnesses the genuine presentation of meat at the prestigious Watson-Crick Institute. When Jimmy joins Crake for dinner, he is astounded by Crake's selection of authentic Japanese beef, a rare delicacy comparable in scarcity to diamonds, at this Jimmy thinks that "It must have cost him a fortune" (Atwood 289). In the world of the story, eating real meat is only permitted for the wealthiest members of society. This demonstrates the persistent social taboos surrounding food access, especially in the setting of industrialization, when women and children were frequently excluded from meat consumption while the male head of the family indulged in it. Even though beef created artificially is widely available, the product nevertheless has to live up to the stigma of being unnatural. When Jimmy returned home with a pail of deep-fried chickienobs, his roommates were not amused and they didn't talk for a week.

All the aforementioned genetically modified animals are expressly designed for human consumption. Humans have beyond the limitations of basic work and have entered the domain of designing and producing work. The human brain is humanity's most valuable resource, a wonderful wellspring of limitless potential. Due to the swift progress of technological developments, people have exceeded their inherent constraints and are presently exerting deliberate control over nature.

## III.    CRAKERS: GENETICALLY ENGINEERED HUMAN RACE

Scientific ambitions know no bounds, as researchers shift their focus from experimenting on animals to studying humans. Crake's narrative involves the creation of a significant portion of the human population as a replacement for humans after the deadly virus spreads. Crake skillfully combined various traits from different species, giving rise to a remarkable hybrid organism. Crackers, similar to cats, possess the remarkable ability to heal themselves by purring, a skill that Cracker has diligently honed over the years. Just like rabbits, crackers have the ability to survive in food-scarce conditions by practicing coprophagy. The reproductive behaviour of

crackers is structured to resemble that of baboons in order to address issues related to racism, hierarchy, and territoriality. The female's abdomen changes colour to a vibrant blue, emitting pheromones that naturally draw the attention of males. A ceremonial dance is performed, during which the female chooses a group of males to engage in sexual intercourse with, taking turns until the blue colour fades. There is a lack of clarity surrounding the parentage of the offspring. The crackers have an impeccable design, complete with UV-resistant skin and a built-in insect repellant, making them visually appealing.

> They're (crakers) every known colour from the deepest black to whitest white, they're various heights, but each one of them is admirably proportioned. Each is sound of tooth, smooth of skin. No ripples of fat around their waists, no bulges, no dimples orange-skin cellulite on their thighs. No body hair, no bushiness. They look like retouched fashion photos, or ads for high-priced workout programs. (Atwood 115)

Because of their adaptability, they choose not to build homes or use tools, which would later develop into kingdoms, clans, and materialistic desires. Crake posits that God is merely a cluster of neurons that he has extracted from the minds of Crakers, referred to as the G-spot in the brain. Crake's main objective is to eliminate art due to his belief that any type of symbolic cognition has the potential to bring about the downfall of humanity. With art "next they'd be inventing idols, and funerals, and grave goods, and the afterlife, and sin, and Linear B, and kings, and then slavery and war" (Atwood 361). After all his efforts they still do dream and sing, and they are only introduced to plain and simple language.

Upon leaving their protected human habitat and encountering the wild environment, the Crakers initiated a process of evolutionary change. At first, Crake effectively eradicated their questioning about where they came from. Crakers have started to doubt their origins and the entity responsible for their creation. Furthermore, crackers are deliberately engineered to possess a harmonious framework, devoid of any individuals taking on leadership positions or blindly conforming to others. This has the ability to cultivate a strong desire for power and control. Nevertheless, Jimmy notices that one of the crackers, dubbed Abraham Lincoln, is gradually acquiring the characteristics of a leader. They hold the firm conviction that there is no higher entity and do not engage in idol worship. Nevertheless, once Jimmy did not come back from his adventure within a short period of time, the crackers created an idol and started participating in religious rituals and reciting prayers. Although Crake

made significant attempts to enhance the human species, they nevertheless have an inherent propensity to acquire knowledge and adjust as necessary.

Crake explains to Jimmy that the crakers are simply prototypes, allowing humans to choose the desired traits for their future generations. It is about designing babies, as per the parent requirement, "They'd be able to create totally chosen babies that would incorporate any feature, physical or mental or spiritual, that the buyer might wish to select" (Atwood 357). I have concerns about three specific problems. Initially, major advancements in scientific knowledge typically entail a significant financial burden that is accessible only to individuals with substantial resources and influence. This society is enabling the affluent to enhance the mental and physical capabilities of their offspring, so making them stronger and more intelligent. This is exacerbating the already subpar educational experience and further extending the socioeconomic disparities. My second concern is that over time, as these changes become widespread and accessible to everyone, individuals will become indistinguishable from one another, as they would all possess qualities such as intelligence, youthfulness, attractiveness, and intelligence. This will erode the distinctiveness that makes each person unique and render it impossible to maintain individuality. Lastly, my concern pertains to power dynamics: what if those in authority clandestinely manipulate individuals, rendering them intellectually impaired, compliant, and subservient, in order to form sizable cohorts? As Crake says:

> Whole population could be created that would have pre-selected characteristics. Beauty, of course; that would be high in demand. And docility: several world leaders has expressed interest in that. (Atwood 358)

## IV.    BIOTECH IMPERIALISM: POWER, AUTHORITY AND CAPITALISM

The thirst for power has been a constant fight throughout human history. Power has transitioned from clans to corporations. The advent of biotechnology has significantly transformed the realm of mass regulation. As Haraway says "The social goal of new life sciences was clearly statically control of the masses" (46). Initially, humanity has always harboured a desire to possess god-like abilities, particularly in the realm of creation. This aspiration is now being realised through the advancements in biotechnology. Using it, each individual within a community can be modified according to one's wishes. As Jimmy recalls:

> There'd been a lot of fooling around these days: create-an-animal was much fun, said the guys doing it; it made you feel like a god. A number of the experiments were destroyed because they were too dangerous to have around… (Atwood 57)

The second aspect of the novel focuses on the power of surveillance. In this universe, a bio-firm governs and controls the population through collaboration and regular monitoring. There are strict security measures in place, which involve regular monitoring of online activities. Power frequently encounters resistance, while cooperation encounters obstacles when its opponent infiltrates its territory and threatens its researchers.

*Oryx and Crake* portrays the lasting schism in society, with a unique and noticeable deviation. In this context, individuals are separated according to their degree of technical advancement. The proponents and contributors of technological advancement in corporations reside in a secure and meticulously kept community, where they enjoy the advantages of legal protection, robust security measures, and a health-conscious way of life. Conversely, individuals who are not employed within these enclosed areas and primarily function as customers for companies sometimes reside in the outskirts, which are occasionally described as less advanced or uncultivated. Atwood underscores the internal difference among the working class by portraying Jimmy and Crake as representative characters. In this context, the crucial determinant of one's position is whether they choose to work for the business or not, rather than the conventional distinction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Technological improvements have had a huge impact on the market and its ways of progress and transactions. The primary and noteworthy change is the replacement of manual labour with mental labour. In Atwood's novel Oryx and Crake, the corporation views Crake, a character with exceptional cognitive abilities, as a valuable asset. The firm will exploit its ability for invention (intellectual value) for its own gain, while Jimmy, a character lacking any tendency towards creativity, gets marginalised. The cognitive labour in the text is being exploited based on the ownership of their innovation. In the novel *Oryx and Crake*, the Watson-Crick Institute claims ownership of the creation made by the students by patenting it under their own name, thus replacing the students' ownership. Corporations often obtain patents for their employees' creations, leading to a race among financiers to acquire as many patents as they can, in order to become the exclusive producers of a particular product. This greediness results

in the creation of several inventions that are completely superfluous.

The story successfully illustrates how technology and the desire for power directly led to the Crake action. He has established his power through the use of technology, both by eradicating particular populations that previous rulers have always desired but were unable to accomplish, and by producing bio-engineered organisms. This is how he envisions the perfect world.

> All it takes . . . is the elimination of one generation. One generationof anything. . . . Break the link in time between one generation and thenext, and it's game over forever. (Atwood 223)

He is responsible for creating the Blysspluss Pill, a highly sought-after medication that aims to decrease population levels by increasing sexual desire, providing protection against sexually transmitted diseases, and prolonging youthfulness. Additionally, he orchestrates an act of bioterrorism. In addition, the pill includes a hemorrhagic virus that was specifically created to eradicate the human population, but this information is not revealed. Unregulated biotechnology has the potential to enable a single person to ingest a pill and eradicate the whole human population without detection. Biotechnology is deceptive to those who are easily fooled; it makes false promises and achieves results it cannot legitimately assert.

The proliferation of genetically engineered animals can be attributed to the influence of corporate dominance. Not only does a colossal corporation have power over the market, but it also exercises dominion over every facet of the general population's existence. This includes their access to food, clothes, security, and education, as well as their social control and even the manipulation of genetics to shape the desired sort of consumer for the capitalist. This signified the commencement of the epoch of colonising existence on Earth.The collaboration's profit is derived from the exploitation of both human beings and the environment. HelthWyzer, OrganInc, and RejoovenEssence flourish by capitalising on the anxieties of the general population, specifically fears related to ageing, facial wrinkles, physical disabilities, and mortality. These corporations effectively instill these fears in the public solely through social media advertisements. In modern times, individuals conveniently display adverts on their mobile phones and laptops due to technological advancements. The theoretical discourse surrounding the correlation between capitalism and living organisms has persisted for an extended period of time. In her book *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era*, Melinda Cooper argues that the

economy's expansion beyond natural limits has led to its excess state. The devaluation of humanity has occurred as a result of excessive monetary influence. As she writes:

> As long as life science production is subject to the imperatives of capitalistaccumulation, the promise of a surplus of life will be predicated on a corresponding move to devaluate life. (Atwood 45)

This commercialization can only be implemented in a society that opposes public and governmental interference and advocates for the neoliberal market. The whole human population was eradicated due to the commercialization of life. Consumption is the primary force behind the market, encompassing the deliberate production of goods and services for the purpose of consumption. Atwood's work specifically questions the principle of scarcity in the economy, focusing on the disease market. In this market, corporations deliberately create the illness and then introduce a more costly and limited solution. This phenomenon generates an inclination towards collaboration and consumption. "Lingering illnesses" are considered the most advantageous type of ailment from a commercial perspective (Atwood 248). The commercialization clearly demonstrates the paternalism exhibited by companies.

The novel delves into a series of political assassinations, strange occurrences, and unexplained vanishings that can be attributed to the power held by the Cooperation. These events clearly illustrate that those who are against cooperation are swiftly silenced, discredited, or made to disappear. Jimmy's mother, a microbiologist, consistently voices her disagreement before leaving the facility to pursue activism. She is pursued relentlessly by a corporation for several years until they finally track her down and eliminate her. The ineffectiveness of these forms of action is evident in the Happicuppa coffee protest. The creation of Happicuppa coffee was a result of Healthwyzer's desire to simplify the process of collecting fully grown coffee beans on a large-scale farm. The genetically modified bean presented a substantial threat to a humble coffee farmer. The demonstration lasted for several days, with riots and multiple fatalities, but no tangible outcomes were achieved. As Uncle Pete said:

> They'll get tired of it, they'll settle down. Everybody wants a cheaper cup of coffee—youcan't fight that. (Atwood 212)

## V.      CONCLUSION

Upon completing the novel *Oryx and Crake*, it becomes evident that technology has the potential to bestow bliss,

albeit with certain restrictions. Unrestrained experimentation possesses the capacity to precipitate the collapse of humanity. Crake was able to execute his nefarious scheme because there were no ethical norms or regulations in place. The inquiry that requires a response is; what is the maximum extent or boundary? What is the threshold for being considered excessive, and what is the limit for going beyond acceptable boundaries? It is crucial for them to establish clear limits that must not be violated. Atwood warns readers about the inherent risks of biotechnology and its profound influence on the human race. Considering the present level of technical progress, it is crucial to pause and contemplate whether this is genuinely essential at this juncture. Is this truly essential for the well-being of human beings? The correlation between wealth and influence fuels the quick progress in diverse sectors. Atwood expresses apprehension on the possibility of a disastrous future characterised by genetic manipulation and biological control in the advancing era. She emphasises the perils of scientists assuming the role of a deity by manipulating the fundamental components of life, while the rest of us, like Jimmy, remain oblivious to the possible repercussions we might encounter.

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# The Psychoanalytic study of traumatic psyches of Tomas of *"The Unbearable lightness of being"* and Blanche Du Bois of *"A Streetcar named Desire"*

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*Abstract*— *T. S. Eliot in his most acclaimed work 'The Hollow Men' very rightly mentioned that "This is the way the world ends, Not with the bang but with the whimper" , the slow and gradual crumbling of the universe is what the characters covered within the ambit of this paper experiences. The two characters i.e Tomas from Milan Kundera's chef d' oeuvre, 'The Unbearable lightness of being' and Blanche Du Bois from Tennessee Williams masterpiece 'A streetcar named Desire' have one thing in common that both of them were challenging the existing normative behavioral pattern and was trying to make things seem content in the disillusioned universe. Both Tomas and Blanche can be seen as portraying the image of the disillusioned modern men/women lost in the realm of something in between the unstable private or personal and the hostile Public realms. Amidst the upheavals and turmoil Kundera's protagonist was searching for the meaning of the 'self' and on the other side Blanche was assertive towards her feminine sensibility. This research work will attempt a psychoanalytic study of the progression of the characters and will attempt an analysis that how their assertive 'self' suffered a tragic end. This paper will further discuss the 'Oedipus' like fate of Tomas arising due to his ill judgments and the development of Masculinity complex in Blanche Du Bois while highlighting the interplay of Animus leading to her tragic fate.*

*Keywords*— *Self, Oedipus, Animus, public v/s private, Trauma, modern men/women, existence*

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the multiple discourses within the literary arena 'self' has occupied a major center position. The conceiving up of notion of 'self' determines the course of action that particular being will take and this is what Milan Kundera through his characters in 'The Unbearable being of Lightness' and Tennessee Williams in his characterization of Blanche Du Bois is trying to represent. The plight of modern men is significantly evident in characterization of Tomas and Blanche where both of them has taken the path of fragmentation, a path which is invigorating, liberating indicative of escape from the oppressive clutch of the conventional fixed system of beliefs. The two characters i.e Tomas from Milan Kundera's chef d' oeuvre 'The Unbearable being of lightness' and Blanche Du Bois from Tennessee Williams masterpiece 'A streetcar named Desire' have one thing in common that both of them were challenging the existing normative behavioral pattern and was trying to make things seem content in the disillusioned universe.

Milan Kundera's magnum opus "The Unbearable lightness of being" can be seen as the author's quest to explore the nature of complex dichotomous relationships that shapes human existence. It traces the underlying internal conflicts caused due to the constant anxiety of making things seem content in the disillusioned universe. Milan Kundera has created a set of characters portraying the image of the disillusioned modern men lost in the realm of something in between the unstable private or personal and the hostile Public realms. Kundera in his

masterpiece "The Unbearable lightness of being" highlights the existential crisis of the characters due to the lack of balanced personal life and the contemporary political scenario, where the totalitarian conformist communist regime was at peak. The grand narrative of Kundera's masterpiece is both discursive and philosophical; one can witness a tonal shift in the tones of character or the underlying thematic tone shift of the novel from the light "Diderotan" tone of the exploration of ethical dilemma of defining something as right or wrong to the more submissive and devoted "Tolstoyan" tone serving dual purpose of expressing resentment against the authority and the presentation of moral or philosophical beliefs. Kundera through the metaphorical depiction of Sophocles' Oedipus is highlighting the plight of characters amidst unstable dynamic scenario.

On the other hand earlier decades of twentieth century is often known for its development of new consciousness and progressiveness. The progressive era witnessed the rise of progressive consciousness amongst the feminine sensibility or the rise of the image of new women. The new women were no more docile, fragile, demure rather she was the transformation of the stereotypical image of femininity of the late Victorian era. According to the noted critic Sarah Jane Deutsche the women of the new era is often represented as "women with short hair and short skirts … kicking up their legs and kicking off a century of social restrictions." The women of 1920s were the prototype of "flappers" flouting the conventional normative order of behaviorism. Tennessee Williams through his chef d' oeuvre "A Streetcar named Desire" is representing the image of new women via the character of Blanche Du Bois. This paper will highlight that how within the ambit of conventional patriarchal society Blanche Du bois was representing the image of neo-feminine sensibility and how her asserting femininity as well as sexuality doesn't seems to work well with the authoritarian regime of the patriarchal masculine social order hence developing the traumatic psyche. This paper will discuss the development of Masculinity complex in Blanche Du Bois and the interplay of Animus leading to her tragic fate.

This research work will attempt a psychoanalytic study of the progression of the characters and will attempt an analysis that how their assertive 'self' suffered a tragic end. This paper will further discuss the 'Oedipus' like fate of Tomas arising due to his ill judgments and the development of Masculinity complex in Blanche Du Bois while highlighting the interplay of Animus leading to her tragic fate. Further it will through the study of 'self' will argue that how it has abandoned the search for 'reality' and 'center' and had opted for the path of fragmentation

i.e. invigorating, liberating indicative of escape from the oppressive clutch of the conventional fixed system of beliefs.

## The *'spectres'* of Oedipus: The journey of self-deception to self –realization

Milan Kundera through inter-textual theatrical representation of Sophocles' 'Oedipus' is trying to showcase the tragic events that unfolds in the novel. The very first intertexual reference of 'Oedipus' was when Tomas compared Tereza with "child put in a pitch- daubed bulrush basket and sent downstream"(Kundera 10 ) , later Tomas argued that "How many ancient myths begin with the rescue of an abandoned child! If Polybus hadn't taken in the young Oedipus, Sophocles wouldn't have written his most beautiful tragedy!"(Kundera 10 ), readers can get the allusion from above excerpt about the tragedy that is going to unfold in the life of Tomas. Tereza's entry into Tomas's life created a very ambiguous situation, his life was oscillating between the two extremes of "lightness" and "heaviness", her love has created a very threatening situation for Tomas. Tomas by accepting Tereza's love got trapped into the realm of heaviness caused due to the conformist relationship based on fidelity. The heaviness of the trap frustrated Tomas, and he wrote his famous Oedipus article against the totalitarian communist regime in which he wrote that "Oedipus did not know he was sleeping with his own mother, yet when he realized what had happened, he did not feel innocent…..he put out his eyes and wandered blind away from Thebes" (Kundera 171), later Tomas condemned the communist regime for their shouting in their defense of inner purity. Tomas commented on the Czech communist regime that there is lack of sensitivity, self- realization and introspection amongst the authorities and argued that authoritarians should learn from Oedipus, acknowledge their guilt and try to resolve things. This article led to the major turn of events in due course of development of novel, Tomas became the victim of constant surveillance. Hanah Pichova, one of the noted critic claimed that the Oedipus article is the major tragic flaw in Tomas's judgment as its ramifications can be seen in course of events that happened after the publication of article i.e. interrogation of Tomas by police, Tereza's fall due to seduction and Tomas's awkward meeting with his son Simon. Sophocles' Oedipus is the metaphorical theatrical prop that helped in staging Tomas's interrogation by secret police and his entrapping in the traps laid by the verbal interrogation. Secondly, it functioned as the stage prop in the pre-mediated seduction of Tereza and Tereza also went with that engineer to take sexual revenge from Tomas but the presence of Sophocles' Oedipus continuously reminded Tereza of Tomas hence creating a very

confusing situation for her, Hanah Pichova puts this as a conflict between "hazardous terrain" and "intimate world of Tomas's thought". The third and final interplay of Oedipal prop was when Tomas met his son Simon, Simon himself can be seen as alluding to the figure of Oedipus as he was also abandoned by his father as his father thought that he is the bridge that links him to his mundane past. Tomas was earlier said to retract the Oedipus article now Simon is compelling him to sign in favor of article, Simon's praise for Oedipus article is definitely a result of misreading of Oedipus metaphor. Kundera believe that Oedipus is a dangerous metaphor causing downfall of Tomas, but for Simon it has the power to assassinate and interrogate the hegemonic authorities.

The tonal shift in the narrative from Diderotan to Tolstoyan narration establishes the parallel between Kundera's magnum opus "The Unbearable lightness of being" and Sophocles' 'Oedipus'. Kundera's protagonist Tomas has the same fate as that of Sophocles' Oedipus, Oedipus established himself as the king of Thebes after defeating Sphinx and in the same manner the earlier image of Tomas was like a king or God or some authority. Like God he has the power to slit open human body; he commands both his patients and his mistresses and everyone submits to his authority. Tomas often commands his mistresses as well as his wife to "strip" and both obey him without questioning. Oedipus had the error of judgment while reading the oracular prophecy and misinterpretation led to his fall, Tomas's tragic flaw was his writing of the Oedipal article questioning the totalitarian communist regime, and Tereza's insecurity acted as the precursor to the tragic development. Tomas's writing of article without thinking of the political ramifications trapped him, and ultimately he lost his job as surgeon thus losing the God like position and submitted himself fully to Tereza. He broke all his liaisons with the past and completely devoted himself to Tereza. This was his moment of self- realization; he tied himself to the "heaviness" from which he eventually gets liberated after his death.

### The co-mingling of Neo-femininity with "Masculinity complex": The transition from assertive neo-feminine 'self' to deceptive masculine 'self':

The noted psychoanalyst Clara Thompson in her seminal work "Cultural Pressures in the Psychology of Women" argued that the behavioral pattern or the personality of any women is primarily observed to be developed by the socio-cultural factors that are mainly formed by the authoritarian members of patriarchal society. Clara further argued that though the new women got some say in the socio-economic setup via the medium of education, jobs etc.

"this is essentially a patriarchal culture and although many values are changing and these changes in the whole are working to the advantage of women, the patriarchal situation still presents limitations to a woman's free development of her interests. Also, the newer situations have their hazards in that they usually throw women into unequal competition with men. By unequal, the reference is not to biologic inequality, but an inequality resulting from prejudice and the greater advantages offered the male" (Thompson, 233). This sort of situation leads to the development of the masculinity complex within the psyches of women and they start aspiring for the exclusive rights that the men enjoy. Blanche Du Bois has seemed to develop this masculinity complex, being from the American South she had the chance to get proper education and since her childhood her privileged social, economic status inculcated the notion of freedom and intellectuality. Her intellectual responsiveness as the out-product of her up-bringing made her freedom seeker that eventually developed into the complex leading to the search of complete freedom in social, economic and sexual realm thus leading to the collision with the masculine patriarchal society. Also, Blanche's character can be seen embodying the character of Animus, the animus is the unconscious masculine element in the feminine sensibility. The behavioral pattern of Blanche depicts that she desires love and pity, a sort of care and projection which she believes she will get from her sister's household. Blanche also embodies that universal characterization of women being dependent on men, who is also aware of her dwindling physical appeal, scared of her longing extinction. She developed the habit of drinking in order to make her world lusterless, desires and attempts to forget her meaningless and lonely existence and when she encounters the real world, "she retreats into the all-out fantasy of madness" (Donhue, 1964:83). The Animus is one of the ambiguous figures of the psyche; the animus plays both positive as well as negative role in women's life. According to Carl Jung the animus within the feminine psyche can only be discerned through the presence of a partner of the opposite sex. The unconscious suppressed and repressed desires of Blanche overpowered her and she started relying on strangers for the gratification of those needs. The presence of the desiring femininity also leads to the development of masculinity complex. The traumatic psyche of Blanche gets developed due to her unconscious projection of her animus onto strange men. As a consequence of this projection she remained under the control of her animus further destroying her life. She lost the balance between conscious and sub-conscious thus failing to distinguish between the world of men and the animus image that she has developed. She developed the

unstable personality. Tennessee Williams very intelligently characterized Blanche Du bois character as the victim of fate as it can be said that it was her "fate to fail to recognize the need to come to terms with her animus until it is too late"(Mojgan,151). Jungian psychoanalysis believes that the "the unpleasant power complex of the female animus is encountered only when a woman does not allow her feeling to express itself naturally" (Walker, 54).

Tennessee Williams framed the story to depict the uniqueness in the behavioral pattern of his protagonist Blanche as in New Orleans, Blanche confronted one of the most terrible situation; "Her expression is one of shocked disbelief. Her appearance is incongruous to this setting" (Williams, 15). The other women character in the play like Stella seems conforming to the patriarchal order but Blanche was ahead of her time, she was the embodiment of new women in the old order thus she does not conform to the demands of the patriarchal social order. Her inherent ego or "masculinity complex" often seems to prevent her from accepting the various grounds of discriminations between men and women. Blanche does not consider Stanley someone above human or like king rather she calls "something- sub-human- something not quite to the stage of humanity, yet!"(Williams,72). Blanche considers Stanley epitomizing the manhood or masculine sensibility of traditional old social order lacking the potentiality for accepting the feminine sensibility and strength of new women. At Stella's house, the co-mingling of neo-feminine sensibility and masculinity complex became evident as she asserts her femininity as well anticipates similar kind of liberty and freedom that Stanley enjoys. She consumes alcoholic drinks, wants to assert her dominance over the people around her, similarly she has expressed the desire to play poker like Stanley and his friends. As mentioned earlier Stella without any resistance conforms to the patriarchal social norms hence Blanche was shocked by her sister's attitude towards her bleak. Blanche believed that the Stella's condition is even worse than her, "only she is not being sensible about it. She wants to find a way for both herself and Stella out of this situation. She tells Stella; "I'm going to do something. Get hold of myself and make myself a new life!" (Williams, 73). Stanley was the representation of the rigid masculine patriarchal orders hence Stella became the means to assert his masculinity whereas "Blanche is a threat in the way of asserting his masculinity" (Vaughn, 61).

## CONCLUSION

Milan Kundera employed the metaphoric image of Sophocles' Oedipus as a trope to highlight the intricacies of human existence amidst the personal conflicts as well as the conflict in public life due to the rising conformism. It acted as the prop to depict the journey from self-deception to self- realization. Whereas Blanche Du Bois was definitely the women ahead of the time, her behavioral pattern, her assertion of feminine sensibility echoes the neo-feminine sensibility. Together-with that her zeal to transcend the gender normative boundary depicts Williams's craftsmanship in creating the character that represents the transformed image of womanhood. But the climactic scene of the play depicts the anxiety of male chauvinistic repressive social order, who in order to assert their hegemony employed rape as tool to emasculate the masculinity complex of the desiring femininity. Later Blanche's madness seems to be echoing the voice of madwomen in the attic whose sensibility and identity is being suppressed, repressed and oppressed by the fearing male sensibility. Thus it became evident from the above analysis that how they have abandoned the search for 'reality' and 'center' and had opted for the path of fragmentation i.e. invigorating, liberating indicative of escape from the oppressive clutch of the conventional fixed system of beliefs. But the most unfortunate thing that one can witness from the above discussion is that both of their aspirations has been castrated by the socio-political discourses thus forming an 'uncanny', disillusioned tragic self.

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# Literary Responses to the Civil Rights Movement: A Comparative Study

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*Abstract— This research paper explores the literary responses to the Civil Rights Movement, focusing on both African American and white American literature. It begins by providing a historical context, highlighting key events and figures, and the socio-political climate of the era that influenced literary production. Prominent African American works, such as Richard Wright's "Native Son" and James Baldwin's "The Fire Next Time," are analysed for their thematic focus on identity, racism, and empowerment. These works are contrasted with white American literature, including Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" and Alex Haley's "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," which often address themes of guilt, complicity, and allyship. A comparative analysis reveals distinct thematic and narrative approaches between the two literary traditions. African American literature tends to foreground direct experiences of racial oppression and the quest for justice, while white American literature frequently explores the moral responsibilities and roles of white individuals in combating racism. The paper also examines the enduring relevance of these literary works, their influence on subsequent generations of writers and activists, and their reflections on the progress and ongoing challenges in the fight for racial equality. It underscores the importance of literature as a tool for social change and a means of documenting and understanding the complexities of the Civil Rights Movement.*

*Keywords— Civil Rights Movement, African American literature, White American literature, Racial injustice, Literary analysis, social justice, Historical context*

## INTRODUCTION

The Civil Rights Movement, which gained momentum in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s, was a pivotal era in American history aimed at ending racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans. This movement sought to secure legal recognition and federal protection of the citizenship rights enumerated in the Constitution and federal law. Key figures like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, and many others played significant roles in advocating for equality and justice through various means, including nonviolent protests, civil disobedience, and legal challenges. Landmark events such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the March on Washington, and the Selma to Montgomery marches highlighted the struggle and the resolve of those

involved in the fight for civil rights. Literature has always been a powerful tool in social movements, serving as a means of expression, communication, and education. During the Civil Rights Movement, literature played a crucial role in documenting the experiences and sentiments of African Americans, spreading awareness, and garnering support for the cause. Authors, poets, and playwrights used their works to reflect the harsh realities of racial injustice and to inspire change. For instance, works such as "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee, "Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison, and the speeches and writings of Martin Luther King Jr., including "Letter from Birmingham Jail," provided profound insights into the African American experience and the injustices they faced. These literary works not only informed the public but also motivated people to join the movement and advocate for change. The

purpose of this essay is to explore the significant role that literature played in the Civil Rights Movement and how it contributed to the advancement of social justice. The essay will examine specific works of literature that were influential during the movement, analysing their impact on public opinion and their role in shaping the course of the struggle for civil rights. By doing so, the essay aims to underscore the power of literature as a catalyst for social change and to highlight the enduring importance of literary works in advocating for justice and equality. Through this examination, the essay will also provide a broader understanding of how literature serves as a reflective medium of society's values and conflicts. It will discuss how authors from the Civil Rights era used their narratives to challenge the status quo, document personal and collective experiences, and inspire a generation to fight for their rights. By focusing on the interconnection between literature and the Civil Rights Movement, the essay will contribute to a deeper appreciation of the role that written works play in shaping and influencing social movements.

## Historical Context of the Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was marked by numerous significant events and influential figures who played crucial roles in the struggle for racial equality in the United States. One of the earliest and most impactful events was the Brown. Board of Education Supreme Court decision in 1954, which declared state laws establishing separate public schools for black and white students unconstitutional. This landmark ruling challenged the legality of racial segregation and provided a legal foundation for further civil rights activism. Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery bus in 1955 ignited the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a pivotal protest led by Martin Luther King Jr. This boycott lasted for over a year and resulted in the desegregation of the city's public transportation system. King, emerging as a prominent leader, advocated for nonviolent resistance, drawing inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi. In 1961, the Freedom Rides were organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to challenge segregation in interstate bus terminals. Integrated groups of black and white activists faced violent opposition but persisted, drawing national attention to the civil rights struggle. The Birmingham Campaign in 1963, also led by King, aimed to desegregate public facilities in Birmingham, Alabama. The campaign's violent suppression by local authorities, particularly the use of fire hoses and police dogs against peaceful protesters, shocked the nation and garnered widespread support for the movement. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963 was another monumental event, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech. This gathering of over 250,000 people at the Lincoln Memorial was a powerful demonstration of unity and the demand for civil rights legislation. The following year, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, outlawing discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin. In 1965, the Selma to Montgomery marches highlighted the struggle for voting rights. Protesters, including John Lewis, faced brutal attacks from law enforcement on "Bloody Sunday," which prompted a national outcry and led to the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Malcolm X, another influential figure, advocated for black empowerment and self-defence, providing an alternative perspective to King's nonviolent approach.

The socio-political climate of the 1950s and 1960s in the United States was characterized by deep-seated racial tensions and systemic discrimination. Despite the abolition of slavery nearly a century earlier, African Americans continued to face segregation and disenfranchisement, particularly in the South. Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation in public facilities, schools, and transportation, perpetuating economic and social disparities. The Great Migration, during which millions of African Americans moved from the rural South to urban areas in the North and West, highlighted the quest for better opportunities and escape from racial oppression. they often encountered de facto segregation and racial prejudice in these new environments. The Cold War era also played a role, as the U.S. sought to project an image of democracy and freedom to counter Soviet propaganda. The stark contrast between these ideals and the reality of racial injustice at home became increasingly apparent. The media played a significant role in shaping public perception of the Civil Rights Movement. Television broadcasts and newspaper reports brought the brutal realities of segregation and violence into American living rooms. Images of peaceful protesters being attacked by police with dogs and fire hoses, such as those during the Birmingham Campaign, elicited national and international outrage, putting pressure on the government to act. The political landscape was also shifting. The Democratic Party, traditionally supported by Southern segregationists, began to embrace civil rights under leaders like Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 marked significant legislative victories, although resistance and backlash persisted.

The turbulent socio-political climate and the profound injustices faced by African Americans provided fertile ground for literary responses. Writers and intellectuals used literature to document the struggles, highlight the humanity of African Americans, and challenge the status

quo. The pervasive racism and the courageous efforts of activists inspired a wave of creative expression that sought to expose the harsh realities of segregation and discrimination while envisioning a more just society. James Baldwin, one of the era's most influential writers, used his works to explore the complexities of race, identity, and social justice. In his essay collection "Notes of a Native Son," Baldwin offered a poignant critique of American racism and its impact on both black and white communities. His novel "Go Tell It on the Mountain" deals the personal and collective experiences of African Americans, drawing attention to their struggles and resilience. Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird," published in 1960, provided a powerful narrative on racial injustice through the eyes of a young girl in the Deep South. The book's portrayal of the wrongful conviction of a black man, Tom Robinson, and the moral courage of the protagonist's father, Atticus Finch, resonated with readers and underscored the need for empathy and justice. Poets like Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou also contributed significantly to the literary landscape of the Civil Rights Movement. Hughes' poem "Harlem" questioned the fate of a deferred dream, symbolizing the unfulfilled promises of equality and justice for African Americans. Angelou's autobiography "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" depicted her own experiences with racism and resilience, inspiring readers to reflect on the broader societal issues at play. Martin Luther King Jr.'s writings and speeches, particularly "Letter from Birmingham Jail," articulated the philosophical and moral foundations of the movement. In this letter, King defended the strategy of nonviolent resistance and emphasized the urgency of confronting injustice, arguing that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." The intersection of literature and activism during the Civil Rights Movement demonstrated the power of words to inspire action and foster change. Authors, poets, and activists used their works to bear witness to the struggles and triumphs of the movement, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to inform and inspire contemporary discussions on race and justice.

## Literary Responses in African American Literature

"Native Son," published in 1940, is a seminal work by Richard Wright that provides a powerful critique of the systemic racism and social injustices faced by African Americans. The novel tells the story of Bigger Thomas, a young black man living in the South Side of Chicago who inadvertently kills a white woman, Mary Dalton. This act sets off a series of events that highlight the oppressive and dehumanizing conditions imposed on African Americans. Wright's portrayal of Bigger Thomas is both sympathetic and unflinching. He depicts Bigger as a product of his environment, shaped by poverty, lack of opportunity, and

pervasive racial prejudice. The novel explores the psychological impact of racism on African Americans, illustrating how systemic oppression can lead to violence and despair. Wright uses "Native Son" to challenge the stereotypes of black criminality and to argue that the true crime lies in the societal structures that perpetuate inequality. The book was groundbreaking in its raw and honest depiction of race relations in America. It forced readers to confront the harsh realities of segregation and the systemic injustices that African Americans endured. Wright's work not only garnered critical acclaim but also played a crucial role in influencing later literary works and discussions on race and justice. James Baldwin's "The Fire Next Time," published in 1963, is a profound and influential collection of essays that delves into the complexities of race, religion, and identity in America. The book consists of two essays: "My Dungeon Shook Letter to my nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation" and "Down at the Cross — Letter from a Region in My Mind." In "My Dungeon Shook," Baldwin writes a poignant letter to his nephew, James, reflecting on the struggles and hopes of African Americans. He emphasizes the importance of love and understanding in overcoming racial hatred and urges his nephew to transcend the limitations imposed by a racist society. "Down at the Cross" examines Baldwin's own experiences with religion and his evolving views on race relations. He critiques both Christianity and the Nation of Islam, highlighting the need for a new understanding of spirituality that embraces all humanity. Baldwin argues that genuine social change requires a fundamental transformation in how individuals perceive and treat each other.

"The Fire Next Time" is celebrated for its eloquent prose and insightful analysis of race in America. Baldwin's powerful and personal reflections offer a compelling call for racial justice and social transformation. His work continues to resonate, providing valuable insights into the ongoing struggle for equality. Identity is a central theme in African American literature, especially during the Civil Rights Movement. Authors explored the complexities of black identity in a society that systematically devalued and marginalized African Americans. Works like Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man" delve into the quest for self-discovery and the struggle to assert one's identity in a world that often refuses to acknowledge it. Ellison's protagonist grapples with his invisibility, symbolizing the broader experience of African Americans being unseen and unheard in society. James Baldwin's exploration of identity in "Go Tell It on the Mountain" and his other works reflects the intersection of race, religion, and personal history. Baldwin's characters often navigate the

tensions between their individual identities and the societal expectations placed upon them. Racism and discrimination are pervasive themes in African American literature, reflecting the harsh realities of segregation and systemic injustice. Richard Wright's "Native Son" vividly depicts the impact of institutionalized racism on the lives of African Americans. The novel portrays the systemic barriers that constrain Bigger Thomas's life, ultimately leading to his tragic fate. Lorraine Hansberry's play "A Raisin in the Sun" also addresses the effects of racism and discrimination. The story revolves around the Younger family as they struggle to improve their lives in a society that continually marginalizes them. Hansberry's work highlights the economic and social challenges faced by African Americans and the resilience required to overcome them. The themes of freedom and empowerment are integral to African American literature during the Civil Rights Movement. These works often depict the struggle for liberation from both physical and psychological oppression. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" is a powerful articulation of the desire for freedom and justice. In this letter, King defends the necessity of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience in the fight for civil rights, emphasizing the moral imperative to confront injustice. Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is another important work that explores the theme of empowerment. Angelou's autobiography recounts her early life experiences with racism and trauma, and her journey toward self-acceptance and strength. Her story is a testament to the resilience and empowerment of African Americans in the face of adversity.

## Literary Responses in White American Literature

Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird," published in 1960, is a classic novel that addresses themes of racial injustice and moral growth in the American South during the 1930s. The story is narrated by Scout Finch, a young girl who observes her father, Atticus Finch, defend Tom Robinson, a black man falsely accused of raping a white woman. The novel exposes the deep-rooted racism and prejudice prevalent in the Southern society of Maycomb, Alabama. Through Atticus Finch's defence of Tom Robinson, Lee highlights the inherent injustices of the legal system and the moral imperative to stand up against racial discrimination. "To Kill a Mockingbird" portrays the challenges and complexities of racial injustice from a white perspective, offering readers a compelling narrative that encourages empathy and understanding. "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," co-written by Alex Haley and Malcolm X himself, offers a unique perspective on the Civil Rights Movement from the viewpoint of a black activist. While Alex Haley, a white author, played a significant role in shaping the narrative, the autobiography

reflects Malcolm X's experiences, beliefs, and evolution as a civil rights leader. Malcolm X's story provides insight into the struggles faced by African Americans in the face of systemic racism and oppression. His journey from a troubled youth involved in criminal activities to a prominent figure in the Nation of Islam and later in the broader civil rights movement sheds light on the complexities of racial identity and activism.

White American literature often explores themes of guilt and complicity in the perpetuation of racial injustice. In "To Kill a Mockingbird," characters like Atticus Finch confront their own complicity in a racist society. Atticus's decision to defend Tom Robinson, despite knowing the odds are against him, reflects a sense of moral responsibility and a desire to challenge racial prejudice. In "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," Alex Haley's role as a white author collaborating with Malcolm X raises questions about the complicity of white individuals in perpetuating racial inequality. Through Haley's interactions with Malcolm X and his portrayal of their collaboration, the autobiography explores the complexities of racial dynamics and the potential for allyship across racial lines. White American literature also examines the concepts of allyship and solidarity in the fight against racial injustice. In "To Kill a Mockingbird," characters like Atticus Finch represent allies who use their privilege and influence to advocate for justice and equality. Atticus's defence of Tom Robinson symbolizes his commitment to standing in solidarity with African Americans against racial discrimination. "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" portrays the evolution of Malcolm X's views on white allies. Initially sceptical of white involvement in the civil rights movement, Malcolm X later acknowledges the importance of interracial solidarity in achieving meaningful change. His interactions with white activists and allies, including Alex Haley, reflect the potential for unity in the struggle for racial justice. Through these works, white American authors engage with themes of racial injustice, guilt, complicity, allyship, and solidarity. By examining the complexities of race relations from a white perspective, these authors contribute to a deeper understanding of the Civil Rights Movement and the ongoing struggle for racial equality.

## Comparative Analysis of Literary Responses

African American and white American literature offer contrasting themes, perspectives, and approaches in their portrayal of the Civil Rights Movement. In African American literature, themes often revolve around the direct experiences of racial oppression, identity, and the quest for empowerment. Works like Richard Wright's "Native Son" and James Baldwin's "The Fire Next Time" explore the

psychological impact of racism on African Americans and advocate for self-determination and justice. These works tend to provide a critical perspective on systemic racism and the struggle for equality. In contrast, white American literature, as seen in Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" and Alex Haley's "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," often focuses on themes of guilt, complicity, and allyship. White authors frequently examine their own roles in perpetuating or challenging racial injustice, portraying characters who grapple with moral dilemmas and societal expectations. These works tend to offer a perspective of empathy and solidarity with the struggles of African Americans. Both African American and white American literature portray the Civil Rights Movement as a pivotal moment in American history, but they do so from different angles. African American literature tends to foreground the experiences of African Americans directly affected by racial discrimination and violence. Authors like Richard Wright, Maya Angelou, and Toni Morrison provide vivid accounts of the struggles faced by African Americans and the resilience required to confront systemic oppression. These works often emphasize the urgency of the fight for civil rights and the ongoing challenges of achieving racial equality.

White American literature, on the other hand, often focuses on the role of white allies and the moral imperative to challenge racial prejudice. Books like "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee and "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" by Alex Haley explore the complexities of race relations from a white perspective, highlighting themes of guilt, complicity, and the potential for solidarity. These works underscore the importance of empathy and understanding in the fight against racism. While both African American and white American literature contribute to the portrayal of the Civil Rights Movement, they differ in their emphasis and perspective. African American literature tends to center the experiences and struggles of African Americans themselves, while white American literature often examines the role of white individuals in the fight for racial justice. Race and identity play a significant role in shaping literary expression and reception in both African American and white American literature. In African American literature, race and identity are central themes that inform the experiences and perspectives of the characters. Authors draw from their own lived experiences and cultural heritage to create narratives that reflect the complexities of African American life. These works often challenge mainstream narratives and provide alternative perspectives on race, identity, and history. In white American literature, race and identity are often explored through the lens of guilt, complicity, and allyship. White authors grapple with their

own racial identity and the privileges afforded to them by society. Their works often confront the moral dilemmas of confronting racial injustice and the challenges of understanding experiences outside their own. The reception of literature is also influenced by race and identity. African American literature has historically been marginalized within the literary canon, but it has gained recognition for its unique insights and contributions to American literature. White American literature, while more mainstream, is increasingly scrutinized for its portrayal of race and its engagement with racial themes.

## Legacy and Influence of Literature from the Civil Rights Movement

Literary works from the Civil Rights Movement continue to hold enduring relevance in contemporary society, shedding light on the ongoing struggles for racial equality and social justice. Books like "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee and "The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin remain poignant reflections of the racial injustices and moral dilemmas faced by individuals and communities. These works serve as powerful reminders of the struggles and sacrifices made by those who fought for civil rights. They provide valuable insights into the systemic racism and oppression that continue to impact marginalized communities today. By examining the past, these literary works offer lessons for the present and inspire conversations about the ongoing quest for equality. The literature of the Civil Rights Movement has had a profound influence on subsequent generations of writers, activists, and scholars. Authors like Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, and Ta-Nehisi Coates have been inspired by the narratives and themes explored during this era, shaping their own works in response to the ongoing struggle for racial justice. These literary works have also influenced activism, providing a foundation for social movements and advocacy efforts. The writings of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and other civil rights leaders continue to inspire activists around the world to confront injustice and work towards positive social change. Literature from the Civil Rights Movement prompts reflections on the progress made and the ongoing challenges faced in the fight for racial equality. While significant strides have been made since the 1960s, systemic racism and inequality persist in various forms. Works like "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" and "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King Jr. challenge readers to consider how far society has come and how much further there is to go. These writings highlight the importance of continued activism and solidarity in addressing issues of racial injustice.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this exploration, we have delved into the multifaceted world of literary responses to the Civil Rights Movement. We began by examining the historical context, understanding the pivotal events, figures, and socio-political climate that shaped this era. From there, we explored the diverse voices and perspectives within African American literature, highlighting works such as "Native Son" by Richard Wright and "The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin. We then contrasted these with representations in white American literature, analysing texts like "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee and "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" by Alex Haley. Through this comparative analysis, we uncovered the contrasting themes, perspectives, and approaches employed by authors from different racial backgrounds. The significance of literary responses to the Civil Rights Movement cannot be overstated. These works serve as invaluable artifacts that document the struggles, triumphs, and complexities of this transformative period in American history. They provide windows into the lived experiences of individuals and communities affected by racial injustice, offering insights that resonate across generations. Literature from this era serves as both a mirror and a lens, reflecting society's attitudes and values while also challenging them. Through powerful narratives and poignant prose, authors have illuminated the human cost of systemic racism and the enduring resilience of those who fought for justice. As we conclude our exploration, let us heed the call to continue exploring and engaging with this rich literary tradition. The voices and stories of the Civil Rights Movement remind us of the ongoing struggle for racial equality and the importance of bearing witness to history. By immersing ourselves in these narratives, we honour the sacrifices of those who came before us and draw inspiration for the work that lies ahead. Let us continue to read, discuss, and learn from these literary works, recognizing their power to educate, inspire, and provoke change. As we navigate the complexities of our own time, may we draw strength from the lessons of the past and commit ourselves to building a more just and equitable future for all.

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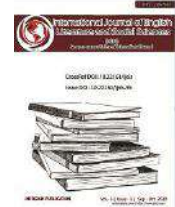
# Peasantry and Ecology in Fakir Mohan Senapati's *Six Acres and a Third*

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*Abstract*— *Fakir Mohan Senapati's novel "Six Acres and a Third" intricately weaves together themes of peasantry and ecology, offering a profound exploration of the complex relationship between rural livelihoods and environmental sustainability. Set in colonial India, the novel delves into the plight of peasant communities grappling with land dispossession, exploitation, and environmental degradation. Through vivid character portrayals and compelling narratives, Senapati sheds light on the multifaceted challenges faced by peasants as they navigate the ecological complexities of agrarian life. Central to the novel is the concept of "Six Acres and a Third," symbolizing the meagre landholding of the protagonist, Ramachandra, and by extension, the broader struggles of rural peasants. Senapati skilfully intertwines themes of land rights, agrarian reform, and ecological stewardship, emphasizing the inseparable link between peasant empowerment and environmental justice. The novel underscores the invaluable role of peasants as custodians of the land, drawing attention to their traditional knowledge and sustainable farming practices. Through its depiction of peasant resistance and resilience, "Six Acres and a Third" challenges dominant narratives of progress and development, highlighting the destructive consequences of exploitative land policies and industrialization. Senapati's narrative serves as a poignant critique of colonialism and capitalist expansion, while also offering insights into the enduring struggles for land rights and environmental sustainability in contemporary contexts.,*

*Keywords*— *Colonialism, Ecology, intricately weaves, Peasantry, Stewardship.*

Fakir Mohan Senapati's "Six Acres and a Third" stands as a seminal work in Indian literature, exploring the intricate relationship between peasantry and ecology in colonial Odisha. Through vivid storytelling and keen observation, Senapati delves into the lives of peasants, their struggles, aspirations, and the ecological backdrop against which their lives unfold. In this article, we'll delve into the multifaceted interplay between peasantry and ecology as portrayed in Senapati's work, examining how the socio-economic dynamics of the time influenced ecological realities and vice versa. To understand the dynamics of peasantry and ecology in "Six Acres and a Third," it's

crucial to contextualize the narrative within the broader historical framework of colonialism. British colonial policies profoundly impacted agrarian societies, transforming traditional land tenure systems and disrupting ecological balances. Senapati's narrative unfolds against this backdrop of colonial exploitation and peasant resistance, where the struggle for landownership intertwines with ecological concerns. British colonialism in India was characterized by exploitative economic policies aimed at maximizing profits for the colonial administration and British capitalists. The British East India Company's conquest of Indian territories led to the imposition of new

land tenure systems that favoured colonial interests at the expense of indigenous landholders. The Permanent Settlement of 1793 in Bengal Presidency and subsequent land revenue policies introduced by the colonial government led to widespread land alienation and impoverishment of peasants. The imposition of colonial land policies disrupted traditional agrarian systems that had been in place for centuries. In "Six Acres and a Third," Senapati vividly portrays the upheaval caused by colonial interventions, as traditional landowners lose their ancestral lands due to exorbitant taxes and arbitrary regulations. The Zamindari system, introduced by the British, further entrenched social inequalities and exploitative landlord-tenant relations, exacerbating agrarian distress and peasant indebtedness.

The oppressive nature of colonial land policies sparked numerous peasant uprisings and rebellions across India, including in Odisha. "Six Acres and a Third" captures the spirit of peasant resistance against colonial oppression, as depicted through the protagonist Gour Harihara and his fellow villagers. Senapati portrays peasants' collective action as a response to unjust land acquisitions, exploitative taxation, and arbitrary eviction by colonial officials and local landlords. The Kondh uprising in the novel symbolizes the broader struggle for land rights and social justice in colonial Odisha. Colonialism marginalized peasants economically and socially, pushing them into cycles of poverty and exploitation. Senapati vividly portrays the socio-economic hardships faced by peasants in "Six Acres and a Third," as they struggle to make ends meet under oppressive colonial regimes. The loss of landownership and traditional livelihoods leads to widespread destitution and social dislocation within agrarian communities, fuelling resentment and resistance against colonial authorities.

The ecological ramifications of colonialism are intricately woven into the narrative of "Six Acres and a Third." Colonial land policies and commercial agriculture practices led to environmental degradation, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity in Odisha. Senapati highlights the intimate relationship between peasants and their natural environment, portraying how colonial exploitation disrupted ecological balances and threatened peasant livelihoods dependent on agriculture, fishing, and forest resources. In Fakir Mohan Senapati's "Six Acres and a Third," the land occupies a central position both literally and symbolically. Beyond being a mere backdrop for the narrative, the land embodies deep ecological imprints that resonate throughout the novel. Senapati masterfully weaves the ecological fabric into the story, using the land as a canvas to explore themes of ownership, identity, sustenance, and ecological interconnectedness. In this essay, we delve into the symbolism of land in "Six Acres

and a Third" and its ecological implications. The titular "Six Acres and a Third" serves as a potent symbol of identity and ownership for the protagonist, Gour Harihara, and his fellow villagers. The land represents not just a parcel of earth but a tangible manifestation of their ancestral heritage and cultural identity. Senapati portrays the peasants' deep emotional attachment to the land, depicting it as a source of pride, security, and belonging in a world marked by uncertainty and exploitation. Through vivid descriptions and evocative imagery, Senapati paints a rich tapestry of peasant life intimately intertwined with the land. From the rhythmic cycles of sowing and harvesting to the seasonal rhythms of nature, the peasants' existence is intricately bound with the ecological rhythms of their surroundings. The land sustains not only their physical needs but also their spiritual and cultural well-being, fostering a sense of ecological embeddedness that transcends mere economic value.

Senapati's narrative is replete with descriptions of the ecological bounty bestowed upon the peasants by the land. The fertile soil yields abundant crops, sustains lush vegetation, and provides nourishment for humans and animals alike. Agricultural rituals, such as the worship of the earth goddess and the observance of seasonal festivals, underscore the peasants' reverence for the land and their recognition of its vital role in their sustenance and survival. Despite its fecundity, the land in "Six Acres and a Third" is also a site of struggle and resistance against colonial oppression and social injustices. The peasants' quest for landownership symbolizes their defiance against exploitative land systems and their determination to reclaim their rights over the land. Senapati portrays the land as a battleground where peasants wage a relentless struggle for autonomy, dignity, and social justice, challenging the hegemony of colonial authorities and oppressive landlords.

However, the land in "Six Acres and a Third" is not immune to the ravages of colonial exploitation and environmental degradation. Senapati vividly depicts the ecological consequences of deforestation, soil erosion, and water pollution caused by unsustainable agricultural practices and commercial exploitation. The degradation of the land mirrors the decline of peasant livelihoods and the erosion of traditional ecological knowledge, underscoring the interconnectedness between human societies and the natural environment.

Senapati vividly portrays the agrarian life in colonial Odisha, depicting the peasants' farming practices and their symbiotic relationship with nature. Through vivid descriptions of agricultural rituals, seasonal cycles, and ecological rhythms, Senapati highlights the peasants' deep-rooted ecological knowledge and their reliance on natural

resources for survival. However, colonial policies and exploitative land systems disrupt these ecological balances, leading to ecological degradation and agrarian distress. Senapati vividly captures the seasonal rhythms that govern agricultural labour in "Six Acres and a Third." From the onset of the monsoon to the harvesting of crops, the peasants' lives are intricately intertwined with the cyclical changes of nature. Through evocative descriptions, Senapati portrays the peasants' arduous labour in ploughing fields, sowing seeds, and tending to crops with reverence and diligence. These seasonal activities reflect the peasants' deep ecological knowledge and their adaptation to local climatic conditions.

Central to Senapati's narrative is the depiction of traditional farming techniques rooted in ecological wisdom. The peasants in "Six Acres and a Third" rely on age-old practices such as mixed cropping, crop rotation, and organic fertilization to maintain soil fertility and enhance crop yields. Senapati highlights the peasants' respect for the land and their recognition of the importance of biodiversity in sustaining agricultural productivity. These sustainable farming practices embody an ethos of ecological stewardship that contrasts with the extractive agriculture promoted by colonial authorities. In "Six Acres and a Third," Senapati portrays the symbiotic relationships between peasants, their livestock, and the surrounding wildlife. Cattle are valued not only for their labour but also for their role in enriching the soil through manure. Peasants coexist harmoniously with wildlife, recognizing the ecological services provided by birds, insects, and other fauna in controlling pests and pollinating crops. Senapati's portrayal highlights the interconnectedness of human communities with the broader ecosystem and the importance of biodiversity in sustaining agricultural resilience.

Agricultural rituals and ceremonies play a significant role in "Six Acres and a Third," serving as expressions of gratitude and reverence for nature's bounty. Senapati depicts festivals such as Nuakhai, the rice-harvesting festival, as occasions for communal celebration and spiritual renewal. These rituals symbolize the peasants' deep-seated connection with the land and their acknowledgment of the cyclical rhythms of nature. Through these ceremonies, Senapati underscores the importance of cultural practices in fostering ecological consciousness and social cohesion within agrarian communities. Despite the peasants' adherence to sustainable farming practices, their way of life in "Six Acres and a Third" is threatened by ecological disruptions and environmental challenges. Colonial interventions, such as deforestation, land alienation, and water pollution, disrupt the delicate ecological balance upon which peasant livelihoods depend.

Senapati portrays the peasants' struggles against these environmental injustices as they confront the forces of modernization and capitalist exploitation that prioritize profit over ecological sustainability.

In "Six Acres and a Third," Fakir Mohan Senapati intricately intertwines themes of peasant resistance and ecological consciousness, portraying a nuanced narrative of struggle against colonial oppression and environmental degradation. Senapati's depiction of peasant resistance goes beyond mere acts of rebellion; it encompasses a deep-rooted ecological consciousness that underscores the peasants' intimate connection with their natural surroundings. In this essay, we delve into the portrayal of peasant resistance and ecological consciousness in "Six Acres and a Third," examining how these themes shape the narrative and illuminate broader socio-environmental dynamics. At the heart of "Six Acres and a Third" lies the peasants' defiance against colonial exploitation and social injustices. Senapati portrays peasants' resistance as a response to arbitrary land acquisitions, oppressive taxation, and exploitative landlord-tenant relations imposed by colonial authorities. The protagonist, Gour Harihara, emerges as a symbol of peasant resistance, challenging the hegemony of colonial powers and asserting his rights to land and livelihood. Through acts of defiance and solidarity, the peasants in "Six Acres and a Third" assert their agency and demand justice in the face of systemic oppression.

Central to peasant resistance in "Six Acres and a Third" is the reclamation of land as a symbol of identity and autonomy. The peasants' quest for landownership represents not only a struggle for economic survival but also a reclaiming of their cultural heritage and ancestral rights. Senapati portrays the peasants' attachment to the land as deeply intertwined with their sense of self-worth and dignity, fuelling their determination to resist colonial encroachments and assert their place in society. Through their collective action, the peasants in "Six Acres and a Third" challenge the erasure of their identity and assert their right to self-determination. In parallel with their resistance against colonial oppression, the peasants in "Six Acres and a Third" exhibit a profound ecological consciousness rooted in traditional knowledge and sustainable practices. Senapati portrays peasants' reverence for the land and their recognition of the ecological interdependencies that sustain their livelihoods. Traditional farming techniques such as mixed cropping, crop rotation, and organic fertilization reflect the peasants' respect for the land and their commitment to preserving its fertility for future generations. Through their stewardship of the land, the peasants in "Six Acres and a Third" embody an ethos of ecological sustainability that stands in stark contrast to the extractive practices promoted by colonial authorities.

Peasant resistance in "Six Acres and a Third" is characterized by solidarity and collective action, as villagers unite to confront common challenges and assert their rights. Senapati portrays the strength of community ties and mutual support networks that sustain peasants in their struggle against colonial oppression. Through collective mobilization and grassroots organizing, the peasants in "Six Acres and a Third" amplify their voices and challenge entrenched power structures, paving the way for social change and environmental justice.

Gendered ecologies constitute a significant aspect of Senapati's narrative, with women playing pivotal roles in agricultural labour and environmental stewardship. Senapati highlights women's intimate knowledge of local ecosystems and their contributions to agricultural production. However, gendered divisions of labour and patriarchal norms often marginalize women's voices in ecological decision-making, exacerbating environmental degradation and social inequalities. Senapati vividly portrays women's integral role in agricultural labour within the peasant households of "Six Acres and a Third." Despite societal norms that dictate gendered divisions of labour, women actively participate in farming activities such as sowing seeds, transplanting seedlings, weeding, and harvesting crops. Through their tireless labour, women contribute significantly to the productivity and sustenance of peasant agriculture, often shouldering the burden of ensuring food security for their families. (4782).

In addition to their contributions to agricultural labour, women in "Six Acres and a Third" possess invaluable ecological knowledge and skills essential for resource management and environmental stewardship. Senapati highlights women's intimate understanding of local ecosystems, including plant diversity, soil fertility, and water management techniques. Women play a central role in preserving indigenous agricultural practices, passing down traditional knowledge from one generation to the next, and ensuring the sustainability of agricultural production. Senapati portrays women as guardians of biodiversity, responsible for the conservation and propagation of plant varieties essential for household food security and community resilience. Women actively engage in seed selection, saving, and exchange practices, preserving heirloom seeds adapted to local agro-climatic conditions. Through their role in seed saving and crop diversification, women in "Six Acres and a Third" contribute to the maintenance of agricultural biodiversity, safeguarding against crop failures and environmental degradation. (Mohapatra62).

Beyond their immediate contributions to agricultural production, women in "Six Acres and a Third"

embody principles of environmental stewardship and community well-being. Senapati portrays women as caretakers of the natural environment, instilling values of respect and reverence for the land in future generations. Women actively participate in community-based conservation efforts, including the protection of water sources, forests, and grazing lands essential for sustaining peasant livelihoods and ecological resilience.

However, Senapati also highlights the gendered inequalities that shape women's experiences within peasant communities in colonial Odisha. Women often face constraints in accessing resources, decision-making processes, and opportunities for education and economic empowerment. Patriarchal norms and social hierarchies marginalize women's voices in ecological decision-making, perpetuating cycles of environmental degradation and social injustice. Nevertheless, Senapati's narrative also portrays moments of women's agency and resistance, as they challenge traditional gender roles and assert their rights to land, education, and participation in community affairs.

In "Six Acres and a Third," Fakir Mohan Senapati paints a vivid portrait of rural life in colonial Odisha, highlighting the ecological resilience and community cohesion that sustain peasant communities amidst socio-economic hardships and environmental challenges. Senapati's narrative celebrates the resilience of peasants in the face of adversity, underscoring the importance of collective action and solidarity in navigating ecological uncertainties. In this essay, we delve into the themes of ecological resilience and community cohesion as depicted in "Six Acres and a Third," examining how peasants adapt to environmental changes and forge bonds of solidarity to withstand socio-economic pressures. Senapati portrays peasants in "Six Acres and a Third" as adept at adapting to ecological changes and implementing sustainable practices to enhance agricultural resilience. Despite facing environmental uncertainties such as erratic rainfall and soil degradation, peasants employ traditional farming techniques such as mixed cropping, crop rotation, and organic fertilization to mitigate risks and maintain soil fertility. Through their innovative approaches to resource management, peasants demonstrate resilience rooted in ecological knowledge and community-based adaptation strategies. (80)

Central to the narrative of "Six Acres and a Third" is the theme of community cohesion and mutual support among peasants facing common challenges. Senapati portrays peasants as bound together by shared experiences of exploitation and oppression, fostering bonds of solidarity that transcend individual interests. In times of crisis, such as crop failures or land disputes, villagers come together to

provide assistance, share resources, and offer emotional support to those in need. These mutual support networks serve as a source of strength and resilience, enabling peasants to withstand external pressures and maintain social cohesion.

Cultural resilience is also a prominent theme in "Six Acres and a Third," as peasants draw strength from traditional rituals, ceremonies, and belief systems that reinforce social cohesion and identity. Festivals such as Nuakhai, the rice-harvesting festival, serve as occasions for communal celebration and spiritual renewal, reaffirming the peasants' connection to the land and their cultural heritage. Through their participation in cultural practices, peasants in "Six Acres and a Third" reaffirm their resilience in the face of external pressures and assert their agency in shaping their own destiny. "Six Acres and a Third" by Fakir Mohan Senapati offers valuable insights into the themes of ecological resilience and community cohesion within rural peasant societies. Senapati's narrative underscores the importance of adaptive strategies, mutual support networks, and collective action in building resilient communities capable of confronting environmental challenges and social injustices. As we reflect on Senapati's depiction of ecological resilience and community cohesion, we are reminded of the enduring relevance of these themes in fostering sustainable development and promoting social equity in contemporary times.

## CONCLUSION

The pursuit of ecological justice and peasant empowerment in "Six Acres and a Third" is both urgent and essential. Through the lens of environmental sustainability and social equity, it becomes evident that the empowerment of peasants and the promotion of ecological justice are deeply interconnected objectives. Firstly, addressing ecological justice entails recognizing and rectifying the historical and on-going environmental injustices perpetrated against peasant communities. These injustices include land dispossession, resource extraction, pollution, and climate change impacts, which disproportionately affect peasants and indigenous peoples worldwide. By acknowledging these injustices, we can begin to dismantle systems of oppression and work towards a more equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. Secondly, peasant empowerment is crucial for achieving ecological justice. Peasants, who often have deep knowledge of and connection to their land, play a vital role in sustainable land stewardship and biodiversity conservation. Empowering peasants involves ensuring their rights to land, water, seeds, and traditional knowledge, as well as supporting their efforts to practice agro ecology and

other sustainable farming methods. Additionally, empowering peasant communities to participate in decision-making processes regarding land use and natural resource management is essential for fostering environmental democracy and resilience. In "Six Acres and a Third," the author underscores the interconnectedness of land, livelihoods, and ecological sustainability. Through the narrative of peasant struggles for land rights and environmental justice, the book highlights the importance of recognizing and respecting the agency and expertise of peasant communities in shaping sustainable futures. By cantering peasant voices and experiences, we can work towards a more just and ecologically sustainable society for all**.**

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# Power of Insurgency: Effect on Women and Children

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*Abstract— Militancy or insurgency affects all age groups- the old and the young in the same manner. In fact, violence associated with militancy can wreck the young psyche a lot. One can say that the younger generation is more vulnerable to the violence and terrors associated with wars and terrorism than the experienced. In certain parts of the world there are regions which are notorious for insurgency which takes place there. In India, Kashmir- hailed as 'Paradise on Earth' is one such region where war has been waged throughout history. Most often people speak of the lost beauty of Kashmir and the effects of the war on the people of Kashmir at large. But one tends to overlook the harmful impact of wars on young minds and the women. Paro Anand has given vent to the agony and fright in the minds of the children in the Kashmir valley, especially during the time of the recent Kargil war. The young minds are least bothered about the political and social ideology behind a war or a terrorist attack. This paper is an attempt to investigate Paro Anand's works, coming under the genre of children's fiction, especially her novels No Guns At My Son's Funeral and Weed to analyse the plight of the young generations of Kashmir. It would also explore how the power structures within the family shifts once the man in the family leaves home to join terrorist outfits. It is also an attempt to study about the militant power; how it lures the youth with its ideologies, and the power wielded by the armed forces, and the way in which it affects the common people residing in the valley.*

*Keywords— Militancy, violence, psyche, terrorism, ideology, power structure*

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the prominent themes in the literature of the post-colonial nations is the subjugation of the natives by power structures and exploitation of their resources. Some self-centered men, of both the colonised countries and the colony are so greedy as to inflate their individual capital by hook or by crook. The intensity and methods of oppression of the weak have undergone changes in recent times, thanks to advances in technology. The leap in technological advances, the widening economic gap between the haves and have-nots in society and the deepening socio-economic-political crisis has contributed a new vice to our world- the rise of terrorism. In a patriarchal society like India, 'father' is a powerful figure. He is vested with the responsibility of looking after the family. The patriarch dictates terms and conditions to the rest of the family as to how to live and behave in a society and his words are to be obeyed by the family members without questioning them.

## II. ANALYSIS OF WEED

*Weed* by Paro Anand gives a poignant picture of a family bearing the brunt of terrorism, since the patriarch has chosen to live the life of a 'jihadi'. The novel begins with the status of 'weed' in social life- they are 'wild, unwanted children' suffering in the war-torn areas of the Kashmir valley, simply for no fault of theirs. They have a fragmented identity and are often ostracized by members of the community, irrespective of their age.

Umer's mother, contrary to her usual nature, had tried strongly to dissuade her husband from joining the terrorist outfit-

"I hate what you've become- can't you see that? Don't you even care that your wife can't     stand you? Does it not matter that you can't look your sons in the eye? You can't answer their innocent questions - you hide behind lies and deceit…" (6)

The women and the children are the worst sufferers in this tumultuous situation. As a child, Umer is treated socially as a weed because his father joined the 'jehadis'. He protests, though not publicly, against this unmerited social treatment, "But why? I didn't do anything!" (1) He is fearfully curious about the whereabouts of his father- the worried child asks to himself, "I wonder where he sleeps at night? Does he have a place to take a refreshing bath, a place to eat a meal served with chilled water and hot pickle on the side?' (2) He follows his father unnoticed as the father leaves his home finally in the dark night because it is one of the customs in a patriarchal society for the sons of the family: "And aren't sons forever following in their father's footsteps? Even if those footsteps are blighted? So, this weed, filled with bitter bad blood, was cast out." (3) This curiosity and his disobedience of his father is a sort of resistance that the child inherits from his father, who is also breaking the law but for a different purpose. And in the process, the construction of his identity has also begun. The child is taken aback when he finds his own father breaking the law- the same father who advises 'us to be good, always to listen to our teachers, obey our parents". (7).

Now with the departure of the father from home and his joining the 'jihadis', there occurs a shift of roles at home- the mother has taken charge of the family: "He was the commander of our ship. But the power structure had suddenly changed. She had taken over. And she had only wrath… The mother's, the wife's heart had died in her." (11) This cultural shift leaves Umer bewildered. He searches for meanings to such a conduct from his mother. Shouldering all the responsibilities of the family, she wants to set a new family culture. So "she has wiped out every trace that he ever existed, that he was ever a husband and father here" (29). She is also adamant that they will never receive the money sent by her husband, because it is acquired through illegal means. Although Umer and his younger brother wish to tread the path of their father, since it is a step to make plenty of money easily and live a life of comforts their mother strongly objects to it. Thus, the mother who was a shadow successfully manages to hold the reigns at home.

At one point of time, the child Umer too wants to take over the charge of the family and wants to make decisions of his own: "So, suddenly, in a space of a few hours of one night, my childhood was gone. Gobbled up by the departing back of my father. And I was man of the house. Ready or not, here I come." (23). He also protects his brother when their playmates bully him, calling him a terrorist's son. But again, his mother wields supreme power in the family and she gives the final word and she expects her sons to follow it: "You'll not drop out of school, son. We'll find a way. I want you to study, to get ahead…" (23) The mother also protects her children when the army forcefully enters the house, by weaving a story that her husband has left his family for another woman.

With the departure of their father, the attitude of the society towards the family undergoes a marked change. The relatives try to inculcate a beggarly culture upon the beleaguered family. They are provided with old clothes and previous day's food from Khalla's family, which Umer hated. He felt it to be abuses heaped upon the crestfallen family. Umer also feels shocked and agitated to find his mother forced to work as a servant for their livelihood. Thus there is a persistent attempt from the hostile society to demean the family's social status from a bourgeoisie to a lower class family. The mother is forced to work as a servant of a rich family, so as to maintain the family, and provide for their education. Umer hates the thought of his mother working as a servant, he asks: "You mean you're going to work in some one's house? Clean someone's dirty dishes? Be- - - be a servant?' …. This was impossible." (32) The son is also concerned if his mother gets her due honour from her employers: "[- - -] Did they set aside food for her before they ate, or did they give her leftovers, or did they not feed her at all? - - - but even in my mind's eye I couldn't bear the images and shut down on it." (37). Umer expresses his hatred towards his father and the society at large as the once housewife was demoted to the rank of a housemaid with the departure of the father-figure from the house.

Umer's mother is apprehensive that "there are plenty of vultures who'll smell a person's hunger, sense his wanting, his longing. And they will consume him. Like vultures on a carcass, they'll strip him down to nothingness". (35) So, his mother advises him and his younger brother to abandon their father's path. But Umer makes a desperate and passionate appeal to his father who is away in a 'jehadi' camp:
"Abbuhelpmoneyabbuhelpmoneyabbuhelpmoneyabbuhelp money. . ." (35). The appeal is repeated four times and the phrases are closely set to resemble a word. This is a technique for the child to raise engrossingly his demands without any hiatus lest a pause in between may subside the force of passion and his intensity may not be communicated properly.

Both their social as well as emotional standing worsens when Umer and his mother together go to an NGO whose job is to provide assistance to the half-orphans and

half-widows. Their identity is transformed into mere numbers. The social patriarchs effectively prove that both the mother and the son are liars. The dream of the mother for Umer to carry on with his schooling thus comes to an end. Thus, the power structures within the society too prove to be of no help to the family.

Soon after, financial assistance comes from Umer's father from his terrorist camp through a young boy, Hameed but it is rejected outrightly by the mother who "looked at it with contempt, her mouth down turning in such disgust". (59) This action of their mother makes both the sons upset. The younger one, Umed, impressed by the money wants to go to his father along with Hameed who has come from the camp of Umer's father. But, the mother in a strict tone warns firmly that she will not allow him to come back. But the adamant child leaves his home along with Hameed for his father. Soon after, the family receives the body of their father killed in a clash.

After the leaving of Umed from home, mother tightens her security for her only child, which, for Umer, seems to be a noose. He wants to escape her grip which was suffocating him. At one point of time, his mother realizes this suffocation, because he is always under the watchful eyes of his mother and the owner of the shop. He practically got no opportunity to mingle with anyone else and it was as if he had become invisible, ceased to exist, but reduced to "only a pair of hands, folding cloth..". (86) So, one day, she advises that both of them skip their duties and takes Umer to Nishad Bagh for a day's outing from the uncomfortable environment of the cloth shop for one whole day, to the world of flowers with his mother playing a different role – it appears he is transported to the world of fairies where his mother herself is a fairy-personified. This is the world that Umer longs for- a world of freedom where he is not controlled and his actions keenly observed.

But this world too is interrupted with fear. A member of the extremist group to which his father belongs, comes down to Umer eluding his mother's eyes and gives him an envelope containing money and a letter providing him with directions to meet the extremists. Umer realises that even in this land of flowers, they are under constant vigil by the extremists who has assured his meeting with his younger brother. The presence of extremists is juxtaposed with the flowers that symbolise innocence, purity and brightness. It's incredible that any fiendish activity can take place in such a divine ambience. But all these developments are kept secret by Umer as he considers his mother to be an impediment to realize his dream of meeting his brother and enjoy unrestrained freedom. Their presence is marked by a blast in that area of which the extremists have already informed Umer, but he is also injured. He has to lie down in a

hospital-bed unconscious for fourteen days. This blast, his injuries and his lying down in a hospital bed makes his mother more and more worried and his freedom is further curtailed. He feels he won't be able to meet his brother in the rebel camp. Still, one evening he manages to escape her eyes. He has taken care of his movement and walks for a long time until he reaches Dal Lake, another icon of fairy-land. There he encounters a friendly old man who assures him a job as a tourist guide in a house boat. Thus the novel ends in a happy way for Umer who finally is able to enjoy the liberty he yearns for.

## III. ANALYSIS OF *NO GUNS AT MY SON'S FUNERAL*

But this may not be the case of most Kashmiri children who lives a strangled life owing to curfew and war as is the case of Aftab in *No Guns At My Son's Funeral*. Most of them, like Aftab, although they belong to middle class educated families, fall easily into the trap of terrorist outfits that use them to execute their diabolic plans. Just like Umer's father, Aftab is lured by better prospectus and a better life. Once they fall into the trap there is no getting out and people who escape from these terrorist outfits are mercilessly murdered as in the case of Hameed.

Aftab, the young protagonist of No *Guns At My Son's Funeral*, is lured with the promise of money, instant 'fame', and training in martial arts and weapons by the terrorist outfit. He always sneaks out at night, without his parents being aware of it to be with his terrorist friends in order to discuss plans with them for future operation. He hero worships and adores Akram, his mentor and leader of the group. Akram is successful in manipulating the young boy's thought that for Aftab Akram Bhai becomes more important than his family and friends. He leads a dual life- during the day he lives in the world of normalcy with his family and friends but in the night, he secretly sneaks into the world of violence and bloodshed to prove his loyalty towards his hero whom he worships "like the older brother he didn't have, but longed for. Akram, so handsome, so tall, so sure of himself…who wore his battle scars like medals. (3) Aftab is like any young teenager who wants to have a name for himself and to prove himself as bold and adventurous. In a hurry to prove his devotion towards Akram and his mission, what Aftab fails to realise is the dangers involved in the path he has chosen; the irreparable losses it can bring to his family and his friends. He is also too young and naive to discover the true colours of Akram and it is this very innocence that Akram exploits to fulfil his militant mission. His aim was to utilize the services of young adolescents like Aftab who has filled their minds with misconceptions which they got from the popular media. Akram knows about these

wrong notions and wants to use Aftab and kids of his age "while their dreams are bigger than their knowledge." (P 9)

Aftab is filled with fascination for Akram, idealises him and draws comparison between Akram and his on- screen hero:

> " Like Hrithik Roshan in Fiza. He could easily picture Akram in that role. Cloaked in black, green eyes blazing out at those who hurt him. AK-47 in his powerful arms. Muscles rippling, jaws clenched, he could mow down a platoon of soldiers all by himself."

Aftab, throughout the novel lives under the illusion that Akram and himself are 'freedom fighters' and liberators fighting for a noble cause. His faith in Akram is so blind that he doesn't even mind considering his Ammi or his Appa an enemy for they are not supporting the cause. He lives in an illusory world where he visualises himself as 'hero' or 'the anonymous militant reported in the national dailies' who is responsible for the death of thousands of innocent people. Aftab's sister also is allured by Akram's secret mission and is infatuated by him - she takes him as her husband and provides him with vital information when he goes into hiding. She also provides him with medicines, takes care of him and nurses him back to health. Although she claims himself as Akram's wife her very identity is put at stake when Akram demands her to make use of her feminine sexuality to get into prison in order to meet Feroze, his aid. She obeys him without haste or questioning although she herself did not like the idea of using her body as per his suggestions.  Both Aftab and Shazia are mere scapegoats in the hands of Akram who uses them to get these evil designs worked out. He is fully aware of the risks he is asking Aftab and Shazia to shoulder, but he is least bothered about them and sees them only as agents to get his work done.

Paro Anand tries to draw our attention to the fact as to how absence of proper guidance and direction can deviate teenagers from right path. Aftab, Akram and Shazia are directionless youth who are too young to handle the situation that they themselves have created. Akram's sudden death is unbearable for Aftab. He acts instantly and hurries to avenge his death by blasting the market place. The bomb kills not only Aftab but also many more children and people around him. The shocks are too much especially for Shazia with both brother and her lover Akram meeting violent deaths. As Aftab's body is lifted to be buried and the military men draw their own weapons, Aftab's Ammi cries out, "No! There will be no Guns. There will be no Guns at my Son's Funeral. ( 169)" Paro Anand dedicates the Afterword for the description of Shazia's mindset after the birth of her son from Akram. She has now realised the cost

of blind faith in a wrong ideology. She sums ruthlessly an eternal question haunting her about her son "will he follow his father's footsteps?" She cries out a big "No", "Her son, her precious son..will not ever hold a gun in his tender hands. His feet will never walk the killer's path. His father's path. Never…There will be no guns at my son's funeral." (p 172) Paro Anand ends her novel with an anonymous girl's prayer from Baramullah, "Whatever else happens let there be peace." *No Guns at my Son's Funeral* gives a vivid picture of the harsh realities of many youngsters being drawn into the dark dungeons of bloodshed and vicious circles of violence from which there is no escape. The novel is an eye opener for it portrays painfully the angst and anxieties, false ideologies and fantasies, media influences and peer pressures that haunt a teenager's life.

## IV.   CONCLUSION

In her novels, Paro Anand observes how terrorism, being one of the vilest sorts of corruption, ruins the life of the children in the affected regions of the Kashmir valley. There is a callous indifference from the elders to the distress of these kinds in the post colonial society, in which the young minds are left terrified and panic stricken. Its volume is so much but the elders do not dither to accept this to be a part of their civilization to be corrupt, to be violent with the children and misbehave with them, which restricts their freedom and creativity. They are so much hardened by the socio-economic pressures that they cannot even differentiate right from the wrong. The children are perturbed by the plight and try out some devices so as to get out of these iniquities which further put them in trouble.

Jihadi- The term originates from 'Jihad' meaning struggle. This is an Islamic term. Kashmiri rebels consider it as a religious obligation to fight against the Indian force to establish an independent Kashmir.

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# Absurdity of Law and Order: An existentialist reading of Franz Kafka's *The Trial*

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*Abstract*— *This paper aims to posit the absurdity with which Franz Kafka has treated the element of Law and Justice in The Trial. It is through the character of Josef K., the protagonist, that one comes across the fragility of a citizen's fundamental human rights and how one tragically succumbs to the inevitable trial and execution implemented by the bizarre judicial system. This paper piles up instances from the novel to validate its argument questioning the dysfunctionality of the jurisprudence: the baselessness of the arrest of Josef K., the unprofessional conduct of the court, the adulterous approach of the worker-lady in the court and, the ultimate execution of the accused. Josef K. being trapped in a labyrinthine network of bureaucratic traps, a Kafkaesque representation; this paper aims at exploring the totalitarian state of the novel's setting and parodies the dark legal system that navigates throughout the novel leading to the transformation of the trials into a judgement. The existential misfortune to which all humans are destined, the inescapable suffering, brings out the absurd element of the novel.*

*Keywords*— *Absurdity, Law, labyrinthine, bureaucratic, Kafkaesque, totalitarian.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The literature of absurd is the term applied to a number of works in drama and prose fiction which have in common the view that the human condition is essentially absurd, and that this condition can be adequately represented only in works of literature that are themselves absurd. Both the mood and dramaturgy of absurdity was anticipated as early as 1896 in Alfred Jarry's French play *Ubu Roi* (Ubu the King). The literature has its roots also in the movements of expressionism and surrealism, as well as in the fiction, written in the 1920s, of Franz Kafka (*The Trial*, *Metamorphosis*). The current movement, however, emerged in France after the horrors of World War II (1939-45) as a rebellion against basic beliefs and values in traditional culture and literature. This tradition had included the assumptions that human beings are fairly rational creatures who live in an at least partially intelligible universe, that they are part of an ordered social structure, and that they may be capable of heroism and dignity even in defeat. After the 1940s, however, there was a widespread tendency, especially prominent in the existential philosophy of men of letters such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, to view a human being as an isolate existent who is cast into an alien universe; to conceive the human world as possessing no inherent truth, value, or meaning; and to represent human life—in its fruitless search for purpose and significance as it moves from the nothingness whence it came toward the nothingness where it must end-as an existence which is both anguished and absurd.

Samuel Beckett (1906–89), the most eminent and influential writer in this mode, both in drama and in prose fiction, was an Irishman living in Paris who often wrote in French and then translated his works into English. His plays, such as *Waiting for Godot* (1954) and *Endgame* (1958), project the irrationalism, helplessness, and absurdity of life in dramatic forms that reject realistic settings, logical reasoning, or a coherently evolving plot.

The term 'Kafkaesque' has come to be used to describe what are perceived as typically or even uniquely modern traumas: existential alienation, isolation insecurity the labyrinth of state bureaucracy, the corrupt or whimsical abuse of totalitarian power, the impenetrable tangle of legal systems, the knock on the door in the middle of the night or, in Joseph K.'s case, just before breakfast. *The Trial* is the popular absurdist and existentialist novel by him.

Jean-Paul Sartre defines absurdity as that which is meaningless. Man's existence is absurd because his contingency finds no eternal justification. There is no reason for either the world or himself to exist. He chooses his values, gives foundation to values by recognising them as such, but there is no proof of the validity of the values he chooses. This also renders all our projects meaningless. Sartre is not saying that reason is unimportant but he is pointing out that There is only intuitive knowledge and that our life is guided by subjective passion rather than by rationalism. But it is Albert Camus who emphasized the primacy of absurdity most. He too agrees that there is no reason for either the world or the individual to exist. This makes the very existence of world itself a source of dead. We can feel the world, yet all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine. Absurdity therefore, is the only bond between the world and man. Existence defies this awareness of absurdity. Camus says that it is not a question of rational or irrational; the world is merely unreasonable and reason sets man against the world. Man needs clarity, but the world has none to offer. This is exactly the situation in Kafka's *The Trial*.

In *The Trial*, the theory and practice of jurisprudence is all funny and inexplicable. There lies a list of absurd law elements in the novel. First, the arrest of the protagonist Josef K. out of nowhere; second, there is no evidence of the crime; third, someone might have been telling lies about K.; fourth, the unethical approach of the two police-constables; fifth, the probability of Josef's name been mistaken for someone else's; sixth, the lawlessness of the courtroom and the judge-in-charge; seventh, the ambience of the court; eighth, illicit engagement of K. with Leni. The most unjust totalitarian ramification of this indescribable and unjustified crime is the execution of K. on his thirty-first birthday.

"Someone must have been telling lies about Josef K., he knew he had done nothing wrong but, one morning, he was arrested". (5) A trial is the process of ascertaining the truth of an offence committed by an accused person based on the facts and evidences of the case. The process usually takes place after an investigation is done and the accused person is arrested or taken into custody. Every trial is expected to be carried out in a manner that is fair as well as legally and morally justifiable. In order to ensure this, it is necessary for the authorities to carry out the investigation, arrest and final trial in a manner that keeps the person's rights and basic dignity intact. It is also necessary to inform the person of these rights as well as the grounds on which they have been arrested and tried. The arrest too should follow certain basic protocols including restrictions on movement and continuous supervision while not violating the basic rights and duties.

*The Trial* is a novel that follows the story of the protagonist, Josef K, a chief clerk at a bank with a good reputation. The novel discusses the absurd series of events he had to face after he was suddenly "arrested" one morning. Kafka brings to the forefront, the theme of frustration and helplessness while dealing with a corrupt, incomprehensible and unjust justice system that seemed to be highly stifling to those who seek justice. Justice was never served as a result of a court system and the police that were driven by corruption. Ironically, until the end, he was completely powerless and trapped by the baffling system of authorities and laws in what he referred to as a "Free Country".

The aspects of a justifiable trial in contrast to an incomprehensible legal system will be discussed in reference to the novel. In addition, there is an attempt to study the ideological contrasts provided by Kafka between his presentation of a totalitarian world with bleak law and Aristotle's discourse on State and Law. It also highlights the Marxist way of a superior class or community offending the rights of a lower class or community. In the novel, metaphorically, the authoritative power(bourgeoisie) is held by the Law and its retinues over the naive K.(proletariat). He suffers for his lack of engaging in defence for his rights, his disinterest in freeing himself from this false allegation and custody as soon as possible. His procrastination to free himself rather leads to a build-up series of proceedings and his loss of life.

This paper argues that the absurd law is at play in Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, where law confines and deprives one of his/her rights and hegemonically controls one's life to such an extent that it leads to complete loss of meaning and purpose.

## II.    THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The surreal Kafkaesque depiction of the events in the novel, *The Trial*, reveals the oppressive and disoriented performance of law which leads to Josef K's trial for a crime not committed. This paper utilizes the theories of Aristotelian ideology of State and Marxist ideologies of

Marxism and Capitalism to substantiate the prime theory of Absurdism. It reflects on the idea of how humans are meant to undergo several experiences because of the bleak functioning of certain powerful institutions and how totalitarianism paralyzes the citizens to exercise their basic human and legal rights.

Firstly, this paper uses the theory of Aristotelian ideology of the state and challenges it. According to Aristotle, the state is a necessary condition for all humans. Like Plato, he doesn't differentiate between state or society and, in a similar fashion, considers it to be essential for a good life. Thus, in his view, the 'State is a necessary condition of a good life'. Aristotle believes that 'Man is a political animal'. It is important to understand why he perceived the state as natural for humans. According to him, there is no difference between an animal or a human being, other than the fact that a human being has the desire and a sense of living a good life. What it means is that human beings become different from animals only if they exist in a state. It is the same desire to lead a good life that makes the formation of a state a natural thing to occur.

Aristotle is known for his dictum: 'State is prior to man'. Chronologically, it is a man who appears before the state. Still, since it is the state that makes human beings capable of completing their needs and fulfilling the objective of a good life, the state is given priority over the man. This idea of a good life with the existence of state and government is challenged by Kafka in *The Trial*. It is the disoriented functioning of state and government which flips the protagonist's world upside down and ends up in a whirlpool of clueless accusations and illegal proceedings.

The Kafkaesque representation of the novel contradicts Aristotle's claim of State being necessary condition for a good life. A Kafkaesque element in a text indicates the presence of meaningless, surreal, unpleasant and nightmarish qualities of a fictional world. The essence of Kafkaesque in the novel is brought by the defective law of the state which leads to Josef K's suffering and execution. Hence, in this way state; government and law altogether does not provide the essential condition for a good life. It rather uproots K. from his daily well-to-do life and leaves him in a series of turbulent mishaps.

Secondly, today's society is run by and thrives off capitalism, ruled by our government. Many things are kept surreptitious from us. The government feeds us lies to silence us and to force us conform to society's customs, this is evident in the novel *The Trial*. It depicts the way in which society is ruled by an autocratic hierarchy, which is kept secret from the working class. This is a metaphor for the Marxist ideology of the bourgeoisie exploiting the proletariat in a capitalist society. *The Trial* by Franz Kafka

was published in 1945 and follows the injustice of the main character Josef, who is arrested by two wardens, and prosecuted on unnamed charges. "Without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning". The nature of his crime is kept confined from him and the reader. Throughout the novel, Josef struggles ineffectively against an oppressive and autocratic court system, only to be abruptly executed, at the end of the novel.

The origins of Absurdism took shape in the 20th century with the help of philosopher Albert Camus (also known in the realms of nihilism and existentialism, two similar philosophies). The philosophy of the Absurd arises from the fundamental disharmony between the human tendency to seek meaning and the idea that no true meaning really exists.

All these theories interweave with each other to induce the fabricated arrest and trial of K. in the novel. The possible ways in which the established forms of judicial institutions can intrude on one's basic rights and lead to an unjustifiable retribution are what that makes the entire procedural of jurisprudence absurd, funny and inexplicable in *The Trial*.

## III.    METHODOLOGY

The research method used in the completion of the paper is done through the use of Primary source, that is, the novel itself and, the Secondary sources such as the research materials of different writers. The theoretical frame of reference is that this paper uses the theories of Aristotle's ideology of State, Law and Government; theories of Marxism and Capitalism; and the Absurd theory to study and claim the false structure and performance of Law in *The Trial*. The process of trial and justice has been completely altered by Franz Kafka to foreground his pivotal trait: the gloomy and doomed delineation of a totalitarian world.

This paper has used several instances and quotations from the primary source to substantiate its sole argument- the absurdity of law and order in *The Trial*. The process of gathering information from secondary sources is done through a keen reading of the resource e-materials available on the internet related to the particular selected argument, the theories used in this paper, and other related materials.

### Literature Review

Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* explores the theme of absurd law, its corrupt nature and also how it is inexplicable. It is empirically ungrounded and lacks the proper structure of proceedings.

Disha Mondal in her research paper "*The Trial* by Kafka: in the light of absurdism and existentialism" depicts the follies of this society, entire system of law and order and the helpless condition of man. In this article she has tried to explore the novel in the light of absurdism and existentialism.

Trisha Prasad in her research work "Irrational Law and 'Injustice': A Study of Kafka's *The Trial*" presents a descriptive analysis of the novel *The Trial* by Franz Kafka in terms of the unfair trial, unconventional arrest and an incomprehensible legal system which form the core aspects of the story.

In "Treatment of Law in Franz Kafka's *The Trial*", Debarati Chanda show how the complex and ambivalent nature of the legal system very often try to victimize the fate of an innocent individual who even falls prey to the danger of unending prosecution without allowing him to enquire about the nature of his guilt.

Fatemeh Azizmohammadi, Hamedreza Kohzadi and Seyed Abolfazl Makki in "A Study of Franz Kafka's *The Trial*" attempts to examine Kafka's famous work especially in terms of humanistic issues such as guilt, freedom, alienation, etc.

This paper entitled, "Absurdity of Law and Order: An existentialist reading of Franz Kafka's *The Trial*" attempts to provide an addition to the existing literature research materials on the themes of absurdity, existentialism and dysfunctionality of law, state and government. It not only evaluates the inappropriate functioning of superior authorities in the fictional world, but also underscores the corrupt nature of jurisdiction which paralyzes the normal living and existence of its citizens.

## IV.  ANALYSIS

With the title itself, *The Trial* catches one's attention to the pivotal theme of the novel- the trial of Josef K., the protagonist. Franz Kafka, popular for his Kafkaesque representation of the fictional world, adequately deals with the absurd theory to draw a befitting contrast between the procedure of trial carried on in his novel and the trial procedure in real world. A trial, in simple words, is a process of arresting and trying a person for a crime committed with appropriate and quality evidence provided for verification. A person is first presented the arrest warrant upon which he/she is summoned. The evidence is provided in the court to prove someone as guilty or innocent. If guilty, he/she is reprimanded; if innocent, released. This is the structure which a judicial trial follows in a normal world. However,

it is Kafka's way of dealing with law in an absurd manner; to make it an important factor in leading K's life towards meaninglessness.

The correlation of literature and law has been visualized down the ages from the period of ancient Greek tragedy to the modern age. There are ample evidences that clearly provide the proof of the vast impact of many literary works done in the field of law. Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Franz Kafka, Garcia Marques, Dostoevsky and many other well-known authors have left their signature marks by framing literary works utilizing law as the foundational pillar of their creative writings. Their works often highlight the ongoing socio-political systems of the contemporary age as well as the judicial systems of their times. Their ardent insight and critical analytical power help them to discover loopholes and narrowness of the judicial system, inadequacy of the proper right to self-defence, lack of proper knowledge of the common people regarding the legal procedure, injustice done by lawyers and other foibles and follies of the legal system. *The Trial* is about the complicating legal system, its flaws, concept of justice, role of lawyers – in short, it is about law itself. In her research work "Treatment of Law in Franz Kafka's *The Trial*", Debarati Chanda mentions how "Kafka referred to "the narrow keyhole of one's own personal experience while providing the image at the supreme omnipotence of law in the society". (187)

Franz Kafka in *The Trial* has tried to highlight the ambivalence prevailing in the legal procedure. He shows how the complex and ambivalent nature of the legal system very often try to victimize the fate of an innocent individual who even falls prey to the danger of unending prosecution without allowing him to enquire about the nature of his guilt. The story of *The Trial* revolves around a man, Josef K., a respectable high-ranking banker waking up on his thirtieth birthday to a surreal situation that highlights the irrationality and Bureaucracy of law. He was caught in the web of irrational and incomprehensible "Justice" and law. The situation is one that is unexpected and extremely troublesome. He was arrested but it was arrest which was completely out of the ordinary as K was allowed to live in an almost free manner, at home and going to work as before while undergoing an unjustifiable trial. It was also unfair as K was never informed about the reason for his arrest, he didn't know what offence he was charged for. The story ends with him being executed. He died without knowing the reason for his arrest. He didn't even have a chance to have a fair and justifiable hearing. Although a few minor rules of a fair trial and arrest were followed, a majority of the features of a justifiable trial and the very essence of a fair trial were blatantly ignored.

The central themes of the novel revolve around and are related to the frustration caused due to the incomplete nature of information regarding the offence and the judicial process that followed.

K. experiences a mysterious and unexpected series of events since the very beginning of the novel when men who claimed to be guards (police) walked into his room while he was still in bed and claimed that he was under arrest. This arrest is extremely peculiar on a couple of grounds. Apart from that fact that the guards did not have any warrant for the arrest or proof of identification to validate the arrest, the guards themselves had no information about the reason for the arrest except for the fact that someone had accused K. of committing an offense.

In "The Arrest" chapter, the two guards Franz and Willem act as clueless puppets at the hands of law. They do not know why K. is arrested, but simply follow the commands of their supervisor. "It has to be a black jacket." (11): the unreasonable demand of putting on a black jacket to meet the supervisor for his trial is what makes K's helplessness more vivid to the readers, as he cannot undo it. The moment when K. wishes to know the grounds on which he has been arrested, the guards are unable to fill him in with the appropriate information as they do not have any access to higher level of jurisdiction. Their sole duty was to arrest K. without knowing or daring to know the cause behind it. Furthermore, they ridicule K. when he wants to exercise his basic rights stating, "Look, Willem, he admits he doesn't know the law and at the same time claims he's innocent". (9)

"These gentlemen here and myself are of minor importance as far as your case is concerned, indeed, we know almost nothing about it. We could be wearing the most proper of uniforms and your situation would be no worse. I cannot inform you that you have been charged with anything or, rather, I do not know whether you have been or not. You have been arrested, that is a fact, and that is all I know" (12).

The dysfunctionality of law-structure is witnessed again when one comes to know that the supervisor himself has no idea about K's crime. He cannot answer to K's inquiries and cannot even say firmly whether it is K. who is to be arrested.

The very fact that K. is offered breakfast before he is taken to the supervisor by Franz and Willem, or the fact that he is allowed to go to his work like a regular person reflects the loose-ends of the trial. Unlike those charged with a case, K. is set free to carry on his life like a normal person. K parodies the 'custody' as being 'stupid' because if he is to be left free as a bird having committed

an offence, then why was he even arrested in the first place. The arrest-episode is all funny as it is out of order and still shows how the police officials act to be in-order of this falsely structured law. Here lies the absurd element as both K. and the officials are drawn towards their inability to act against injustice. They move purposelessly towards the direction showed to them by the bizarre law where none knows the reason of the trial.

The Courthouse, a troublesome setting, is another addition to the absurdity of law and order. The street was lined on both sides with almost identical houses, tall, grey tenements where poor people lived. Inside the building, K. is not even helped by the people around to locate the room in which the hearing is to be held. Furthermore, he gets in the way of a lot of children who are playing on the stairs and are giving him angry looks as he passes through their line. The courthouse seemed like a rent house with "rooms where the beds were still being used, occupied by people who were sick, or sleeping, or lying on them fully clothed". (30) Their construction is ramshackle and absurdly inconvenient. Even in the cathedral, the prison chaplain addresses K. from a small pulpit that stands beside the main pulpit, and seems so badly designed that a preacher cannot stand upright in it. The lumber-room scene especially implies that the court exists in spaces that people have locked up and forgotten about, and invites a psychoanalytic interpretation in which the court occupies the space of the unconscious.

He has the first hearing in a narrow room with people sitting there and gossiping, ignoring K. Basically, judges do not give hearing date on Sundays. However, in Kafka's fictional world, this is a possibility. If apprehending someone without evidence works alright in Kafka's fictional world, then a hearing on Sunday is usual as well. Moreover, K. is rebuked for being late for his hearing, the judge completely ignoring the tangled structure of the building.

Inventing a false identity, K. searches for the courtroom in the building. In a genuine trial, the suspect is taken to and presented before the court by the police guards. However, in this case, K. is freely and falsely searching for someone (Lanz) as he does not want to present himself as the suspect before the workers of the courthouse. From the point of view of criminal law on this case nowadays, it was obviously not due process of law. Due process of law, means that law should rule the whole procedure. The procedure should be fair and reasonable. The political system is limited by this standard. In this way, the fact finding and dignity of individual could be maintained. The punishment should be conducted in a just way. The litigation rights which are protected by the

constitution could be put into practice when the procurator and advocate would be on the fair stage.

"In the first interrogation, K said, there can be no doubt that behind all the actions of this court of justice, that is to say in my case, behind my arrest and today's interrogation, there is a great organization at work. An organization which not only employs corrupt wardens, stupid Inspectors, and Examining Magistrates of whom the best that can be said is that they recognize their own limitations, but also has at its disposal a judicial hierarchy of high, indeed of the highest rank, with an indispensable and numerous retinue of servants, clerks, police, and other assistants, perhaps even hangmen, I do not shrink from that word. And the significance of this great organization, gentlemen? It consists in this, that innocent persons are accused of guilt, and senseless proceedings are put in motion against them, mostly without effect, it is true, as in my own case" (37).

This quotation reflects the fallacy with which the Law works in the novel. K. vividly points out the defects of the entire judicial process. He shows how such organisations abuse their powers against the innocent ones. Through this statement Kafka attempts to highlight the corrupt nature of Law and order. Corruption not only exercises itself in the fictional world created by Kafka in the novel, but also in the real one. In a way, Kafka throws light on the corruption relevant in the contemporary world. False accusation, bribery, tampering with the evidence, bail-release on high demand, execution or murder are some of the tributaries of corruption. This is the absurd reality which people cannot escape from in either of the worlds.

Likewise, corruption is reflected through the symbol of 'sex'. The adulterous approach of the usher's wife in the courthouse building is totally inappropriate. She throws herself at K. She offers to help K., although it isn't clear whether she's actually helpful. she appears to sleep with a lot of men in the court system. The only real help the court usher's wife seems to provide K. is to let K. take a peek at the examining magistrate's books, which are actually pornographic novels. The association of the court usher's wife with prostitution contributes to the general portrayal of the court system as corrupt. "The court too is full of surreptitious sexuality. The examining magistrate is reported to be an inveterate womanizer." (49) The examining magistrate conducts K.'s initial court inquiry. K.'s discovery that the examining magistrate's law books are actually pornographic novels confirms K.'s suspicion that his trial is a terrible joke.

The term "court" may as well be interchangeable with "sex" here. Fraülein Bürstner's attempt in becoming a

secretary in a law firm is doubly ironic because, as we learn throughout the novel, all the women associated with the courts have a tendency to sleep with anyone remotely associated with the courts.

Lawyer, an important part of court and order, yet adds on to this absurdity. If one's defence lawyer always meets in his bedroom, chances are he's probably not the man you want defending you from imminent execution. Sadly, K. is so wrapped up in Leni's charms that it takes him some time to wriggle out of Huld's control.

Huld's power over his clients can partly be attributed to the fact that he's able to convince them that common sense is incompatible with the world of the courts. Common sense says a bedridden lawyer is not the best man for the job; Huld says no, actually, he *is* the best man for the job because he's got personal connections in the court, and presto change-o – out of a dark corner of his bedroom pops out the supposedly influential Chief Clerk. Common sense says a good lawyer helps the defendant work toward a prompt acquittal; Huld explains to K. that trials are a long, drawn-out process. Certainly, Huld has yet to complete the first petition – another red flag – but a lawyer's true function is to work outside the courts, influencing judges and other court officials by chatting them up when the opportunity arises.

Perhaps it is because K. continues to be sceptical of Huld's worth that Huld's treatment of K. is markedly different from his treatment of Block, his other client. While Huld flatters K. and humours K.'s questions with an almost fatherly condescension, Huld is frankly abusive toward Block. Huld's very words make Block quake and shudder as if Huld were actually physically threatening him, which is doubly ludicrous given that Huld is bedridden. K.'s insight into Huld's duplicity doesn't really do much for his case, however, because, shady as Huld is, Huld *is* truthful about the way the court works in all of its illogicality.

"But the hands of one of the men were placed on K.'s throat, whilst the other plunged the knife into his heart and turned it round twice. As his sight faded, K. saw the two men leaning cheek to cheek close to his face as they observed the final verdict. 'Like a dog!' he said. It seemed as if his shame would live on after him" (165).

Finally, it with K.'s execution that this ludicrous trial comes to an end. The entire proceedings of *The Trial* do not culminate in a final judgement, rather ends up in 'nothingness'. Without adequate proof, the overall matter is understood to be null and void. However, in a world where one is taken into custody without any base, executed without proven guilty is also a possibility. Two gentlemen arrive in the last chapter of the novel to escort

K. to his execution. Their appearance parallels the two guards who arrest K. in the first chapter of the novel. The executioners' extreme courtesy toward K. oddly makes his execution even more terrifying because of the creepy contrast between their polite demeanour and their gruesome task. What's more is that such an execution gives the impression of some sort of personal rift and revenge. It gives the idea that someone might have fabricated the entire case and falsely accused K. and when does not get the desired outcome, hires men to kill him.

Kafka has efficaciously presented a world of absurd law and order, one which strikingly challenges the Aristotelian notion of state, law and government. According to Aristotle, a state "is composite, like any other whole made up of many parts; these are citizens, who compose it". (*Politics Book III*, 52.) He then argues that "[h]e who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state is said by us to be a citizen of that state; and, speaking generally, a state is a body of citizens sufficing for the purposes of life." (*Politics Book III*, 53.) From an Aristotelian standpoint, state; law and government work altogether for the progress of the nation and its citizens. It provides a supporting atmosphere for the flourishment of the people and state is a 'necessary condition' for good life.

This notion of 'state is a necessary condition for good life' is what which is absent in K.'s world. Kafka attempts to present a contrasting state which exists to make its citizens suffer. In the novel, there is no sign found which can prove the upliftment of the characters. The protagonist suffers the most, unreasonably indeed. Law functions all absurdly. A man is taken into judicial custody without any warrant or evidence. He is not allowed to know his crime. Different levels of corruption are witnessed by him. He is stabbed in the end. The whole process follows no rule, but feigns to do such. State and government lead K. towards an end most unanticipated by him. He even understands how people like him are forcefully made guilty by the authorities. Even the lawyer admits the lack of truth or 'common-sense' in the courts. Had the state been 'conditioned good', K. could have met a proper end in the most appropriate legal trial. The entirety of the case is based on a lie, there being no evidence available at hand to prove K.'s offence. Thus, state and law add no 'purpose' to K.'s life.

Additionally, Kafka uses Marxism and Capitalism; metaphorically, to corroborate the absurdity of law in this novel. The higher authorities in the novel act as the upper class of society which dominates K., the lower class of the society. French Marxist theoretician Louis Althusser points us the significant distinction between

state power and state control. State power is maintained by using two types of apparatus, which are the ideological state apparatuses and the repressive state apparatuses. The repressive state apparatuses include law courts, the police force, the army and prisons. These things try to maintain hegemonic control of the state over the citizens. The proceedings take place in such a manner that is bounds one to perceive it as natural. Hegemonically, right from Franz and Willem arresting K. in his bedroom to his final execution, the law tries to maintain its clutches over the protagonist in a repressive manner. The administration acts in a capitalistic manner where the court and its rules are maintained and exploited according to the convenience of the superior section of society- the magistrate, lawyers, and retinues of court. Nevertheless, the concept of justice generally is connected with mercy and humanity, not with force, violence and victory. But, the very mingling of the figure of the Goddess of the Hunt with the Goddess of Justice indicates that the concept of justice is driven on by force and victory.

These theories have undoubtedly helped Kafka to highlight the prime aspect, absurdism, which makes his works gloomy-doomy. The events in the bleak ominous world of *The Trial* are carried out in such a way that it leads to a loss of purpose and meaning of life. The protagonist is placed in a loony world where administration works in a preposterous manner. The unethical arrest of K. in his apartment, his repetitive trials for a crime not committed- all makes him yield before the harassments of the empirically and theoretically ungrounded law. It does not lead to any productive outcome such as the accused proven innocent, but rather uses violence and wraps up into a 'nothingness'. The entire fate of the protagonist, tracing between his thirtieth and thirty-first birthdays, mirrors the meaninglessness of his life when viewed from the lens of the law functioning in *The Trial*.

The only offence committed by K. is that he does not try to make an attempt in rescuing himself from this grotesque law. He gives in to the process by attending the proceedings, interrogates the supervisor and magistrate but lacks firmness as he is too busy in engaging with the women characters in the novel. "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" (*Waiting for Godot*, 56). Similar to *Waiting for Godot*, there is a paucity of action or purpose in this novel. There is a suffering deeply rooted in the course of the novel. A world where an individual who is not allowed to know what he/she did to get arrested; one who is not shown his/her arrest warrant; one who walks into an attic-sized courtroom where law-books are actually pornographic books; where one has court trials on a Sunday; a trial where the magistrate is unaware of the

exact identity of the culprit; a judicial system where lawyers know the drawback of the system itself, a corrupt structure where all are related through a sexual act, is one which is definitely preparing solid grounds for the individual to suffer. A young man with a wholesome job is robbed off his peace and is thrown to the clutches of dark misery. Throughout the novel, K. suffers for something purposelessly. A sort of stagnancy comes to his normal life where he is removed from a world which adds meaning to his life and is stranded in an absurd world. His life ultimately meets a tragic end when he is executed by two men without any apparent reason. Hence, nothing is proven and nothing solved.

Everything boils down to one thing- 'nothingness'. Thus, in this way, Kafka's attempt appears to be a successful one as he leaves his readers in a pickle as one cannot find out the reason behind the entire series of events. The readers are allowed to make their own interpretations. However, one thing which Kafka makes prominent in this novel is that a corruptly structured law can leave anyone in a dilemma, be it in a real world or fictional.

## V.    CONCLUSION

Summarily, this paper not only points out the improper functioning of the judiciary in *The Trial*, but also highlights how the state presented in the novel challenges the Aristotelian ideology of state, man and government and relies on Karl Marx's ideology of Marxism and Capitalism.

*The Trial* enquires into the field of locating the correct nature of guilt whether a person should be considered guilty without any legitimate charge against him or not. Kafka in this novel is trying to point out the loopholes in the system of law. Throughout the story K. is unable to discover his actual crime: "I deduce that from the fact that I have been accused but cannot find the least thing I am guilty of with which I could be charged". (12) K. is actually fighting an ever-ending battle to solve a fruitless puzzle of law.

Kafka has used multiple symbols to amplify the mysterious nature of the entire system of law including location and atmosphere of the court room, arbitrariness of the legal procedure and nature of the lawyers in the contemporary society. Symbols have the power to delve deep into the inner nature of a particular subject providing critical analytical perspective of various issues related to that thing. Kafka very skilfully adopts the technique of employing various symbols like darkness, light, dust to throw light on the complex nature of law. The very atmosphere of the Court is covered under the veil of darkness, dust and suffocation. Lack of air clearly points in adequacy of proper justice which a person is longing for. The darkness, dust and especially the fog surrounding the court give the clear vision of complex, ambiguous and puzzling nature of the judicial system.

To sum up, it is hence evident through the analysis of the novel and the paper that there is indeed an absurd presentation of law in the novel which leads to the existential crisis of Josef K.

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# The Commodification of Pilgrimage Tradition: An Ethnographic Study of Sunan Bonang Tomb Tuban

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*Abstract— Over time, pilgrimage is perceived to be a part of tourism and recreational activities. Besides facilitating people to commemorate and pray for the ones inside the tomb, this tradition also opens up the local economic circulation. This study aimed to examine the idea of commodification of Sunan Bonang Tomb from sacred space to religious tourism. It is grounded on a series of field studies from September 2022 to January 2023 in which researchers observed pilgrimage ritual activities at Sunan Bonang Tomb, Tuban, Indonesia interviewed 17 pilgrims and 9 key informants - the administrators of the Sunan Bonang Mabarrot Foundation, religious and community leaders, artists or cultural observers, and representatives of the Tuban Regency government- and reviewed old archives, published articles, and books. It employed an ethnographic study. The study found that the commodification of Sunan Bonang Tomb reflected changes in people's views and attitudes towards pilgrimage traditions. The pilgrimage used to be performed for respect and devotion to the ancestors and holy places, yet now it has become a religious tourist attraction for commercial purposes and public tourism. Commodification does not necessarily happen the way it is but is supported by some stakeholders, such as foundations, governments, religious leaders, investors, and local communities. Although the commodification promises economic benefits to the local area, it is necessary to preserve the sacred and cultural values attached to the tomb.*

*Keywords— Commodification, Sunan Bonang tomb, religious tourism, pilgrimage.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

A tomb of a distinguished figure is one of the prominent sacred loci in the Islamic tradition of the archipelago (Syam, 2005). It becomes a place for ritual activities to God, so it has a very strategic position in the life of the Javanese Muslim community (Marwoto, 2018). Besides a place of ritual, the tomb is also a place where people gather to remember the merit of the ancestors, scholars, religious leaders, and the close families who have

died (Anam, 2015). In the tradition of Javanese Muslim society, it is perceived as a place for rituals to God, such as *shalah*, pilgrimage, and prayer. The tomb has spiritual and social significance for the community, a place to attain blessings and build friendship. The tomb is also a part of a fundamental cultural and historical heritage for the Javanese Muslim community (Laksana, 2016).

Pilgrimage traditions is an activity performed by the community by visiting tombs or places considered sacred.

It has been performed since ancient times by many communities and religions. The tradition dates back to pre-Islamic times, when Pagan Arabs visited the graves of their ancestors as a form of respect and reverence (Anam, 2015). After Islam entered Arab, this tradition evolved into pilgrimages to the tombs of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and to holy cities, such as Mecca and Medina. To date, the tradition of pilgrimage is practiced by people in many religions, including Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism, as an expression of respect and reminder of the majesty of the past (Chambert-Loir & Guillot, 2007).

The shift in the purpose of pilgrimage to religious tourism shows a change in the views and attitudes of the community towards pilgrimage (Abdurrahman, 2010). In early traditions, pilgrimages aimed to extend respect and reverence for religious heroes or holy places (Nugroho, 2011). However, over time, there has been a shift in the purpose of pilgrimage, viewed more as religious tourism, that visiting the holy places is a part of tourist and recreational activities (Arifin, 2020). It shows a change in people's views and attitudes towards pilgrimage traditions, and often leads to commodification, and mass tourism in holy places, such as mosques, has become an industry and tourist attraction (Mansor et al., 2015). In this process, the tomb is believed as a product that offers a market value. The commodification of tombs often occurs along with their commercialization. It brings about a negative impact on pilgrimage traditions and the perception towards the tombs as sacred places (Komariyah, 2015).

The pilgrimage tradition not only serves as a way to commemorate and pray for the people in the tomb but also opens up the local economic circulation (Latif & Usman, 2021). Pilgrimage can help boost the economy up through the pilgrims' purchase of food, beverages, and souvenirs around the area. The practice of pilgrimage is also often one of the sources of income for local communities, and it depicts how spiritual activities can exert a positive impact on the economy of a region (Rodli, 2013).

This article aimed to examine the idea of the commodification of Sunan Bonang Tomb from sacred space to religious tourism, the tradition of Sunan Bonang Tomb pilgrimage, the involvement of actors in the commodification process, and the agreement on the Tomb of Sunan Bonang commodification. It is expected to provide an idea of how culture and religion affect people's habits and how they maintain traditions around the area.

To date, the study of Wali Songo about the spread of Islam in the archipelago that specifically discusses Maulana Makdum Ibrahim, Sunan Bonang Tuban is scarcely found. Makdum Ibrahim Sunan Bonang is one of the most popular guardians in the Islamic history around Java Island. He was a prominent figure involved in popularizing and disseminating Islamic teachings in the region. Sunan Bonang was known as a great scholar and spiritual leader who had great influence in Javanese society in his time (Darban, 2010). The policies he enforced successfully united the people and strengthened the position of Islam in the region. That is one of the reasons why Sunan Bonang is remembered and respected as a prominent figure in the history of the spread of Islam in Java (Sunyoto, 2020).

## II.    METHOD

This research employed ethnographic study, one of the methods of social research that focuses on the study of society and culture (Yusanto, 2020). Ethnography can also refer to a tool, a method for researchers of different academic disciplines to understand certain parts of social life (Gullion, 2021). This ethnographic study at the Tomb of Sunan Bonang aimed to investigate how the local people understand and respect Makdum Ibrahim Sunan Bonang as the guardian of God and also the cultural practitioner. The researchers conducted direct field observations and interviews with pilgrims, local communities, and religious leaders to gather information about the traditions, beliefs, and practices associated with ritual traditions at the tomb.

This is descriptive research with a qualitative approach to explore the idea of commodification of the pilgrimage tradition of Sunan Bonang Tomb from sacred space to religious tourism. In this case, the researchers investigated a cultural group in a sufficient period of time according to the conditions in the field (Creswell, 2016). This study also adopted a direct method to obtain naturally occurring activities in the field. In the data collection process, the researchers were actively involved in activities and mingled with pilgrims, local communities, and selected informants who had the capacity according to their roles to provide comprehensive information.

The study was based on a series of field studies from September 2022 to January 2023 in which the researchers observed pilgrimage ritual activities at the Sunan Bonang Tomb Tuban, interviewed visitors, administrators of the Mabarrot Sunan Bonang Foundation, community, and religious leaders. Artists and cultural observers also reviewed old archives, articles, and books that have been published and 20 pilgrims, 3 administrators of the Mabarrot Sunan Bonang Foundation have been interviewed. The selection of the pilgrim informants from various regions and deputy treasurer of the foundation board in this study methodologically served as a triangulation data to check the accuracy of the research results.

This research was conducted at the Tomb of Sunan Bonang located on Jl. KH. Mustain Kutorejo Tuban, Tuban Regency East Java 62311, Indonesia. The Data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. The data sources of this study were (1) informants, (2) places and events, (3) documents. The informants were selected through purposive sampling as it is appropriate for qualitative research. The inclusion criteria is that they are well informed about the Tomb of Sunan Bonang.

The data were collected with (1) in-depth interview, (2) participation and observation, and (3) document study. Interviews were conducted to obtain information through dialogue with the research informants. The key informants in this study are (1) religious leaders; (2) management of the Sunan Bonang Mabarrot Foundation; (3) Abdi Dalem (officer) of Sunan Bonang tomb in Tuban, East Java; (4) Cultural Heritage Management Agency (Badan Pengelola Cagar Budaya/BPCB) and the Tuban Regency tourism office; (5) pilgrims or visitors; and (6) culturalists and artists. The observation in this study focused on the participants' activities. The researchers were actively involved in the communities (Pratiwi et al., 2018). The researchers also acted as instruments by collecting data themselves through documentation, behavioral observation, or interviews with participants (Creswell, 2016). The language and behavioral patterns of the community were studied all the time (Fetterman, 2019).

The research instruments were in the form of (1) researchers, (2) interview guide, (3) field notes, and (4) recording tool (Sugiyono, 2010). The interview guidelines were based on indicators: 1) portrait of pilgrimage practices at Sunan Bonang Tomb; 2) forms of commodification added to facilities for visitors; 3) management of Sunan Bonang Tomb; 4) government budget allocation for Sunan Bonang Tomb; 5) origin or idea of commodification; 6) involvement of investors in the commodification process; 7) actors involved in the commodification process (power relations); and 8) opinions of the government, community, religious leaders, artists and culturists towards the changes that occurred at Sunan Bonang Tomb (positive and negative). The data were validated by re-comparing them with other data from the other sources, such as managers (Mabarrot Sunan Bonang Foundation), pilgrims, government, religious leaders, cultural practitioners, and artists. The data analysis was performed in six stages: (1) processing and preparing the data, (2) reading the entire data, (3) analyzing in more detail by coding, (4) applying the coding process to describe the setting, (5) demonstrating how the description and themes will be restated in a narrative or qualitative report, (6) interpreting the data.

## III.    RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The Initial Idea of Religious Tourism Commodification**

The term commodification in the era of globalization is currently an issue that is highly compelling (Maulida & Witro, 2022). Commodification in cultural products, such as tombs into religious tourism, has also been going on for a long time (Pramestisari et al., 2023). It is a process of changing goods or services that previously followed non-market social rules into subjects that follow market rules, and it is one of global capitalism that accumulates capital and has successfully transformed use values into commercial exchange values (Irianto, 2016).

The large number of pilgrims to the tombs of the guardians have been going since the distant past. Cultural resistance of the spiritual area has its own appeal compared to the formal structural areas, such as the region Masyhad (The Tomb of Hazrat Ali in Afghanistan) that has managed to surpass Balkh, which is the center of the government. The crowd also happens at the Tomb of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, in which every day is never empty of visitors compared to the heroes of Surabaya monument. The tomb of Sunan Bonang is also more crowded compared to Tuban City Square (Wahid, 2010). This phenomenon is justified by Endraswara (2003) that the tradition of pilgrimage or visiting sacred places in Javanese society stems from the belief in *kejawen* mystics (Javanese local cultures), that believes in visiting their graves as a form of devotion to their ancestors.

In the beginning, pilgrimage was an activity that was sacred and only oriented to things that were religious rituals (Rosmalia et al., 2017). Along with the changes of times, some facilities for the pilgrims are provided by business owners, such as travel agencies which then encourage the interest and enthusiasm of the public to visit the tombs. The tourism bureau provides transportation, accommodation, skilled and experienced tour guides making it easier for people to organize their pilgrimage trips and provide a sense of comfort during the trip (Wahid, 2010), so the pilgrims to the tombs of the guardians increase in number from year to year.

The rapid development of Islam in countries around the world with population growth in 200 countries through emigration and migration also affects the increase in the number of travel levels of Muslim communities in traveling, domestically and internationally. This trend is welcomed by tourism operators in each country as the potential to generate economic (Muhamad et al., 2019).

The idea of commodification of the Sunan Bonang Tomb pilgrimage ritual in its development allegedly began in the 1990s along with the New Order government program with the Minister of Tourism for posts and

telecommunications, Soesilo Sudarman, assisted by Director General of Tourism, Joop Ave, in improving tourism performance in Indonesia. Along with the concept of Sapta Pesona that encouraged the widespread until the tomb of the whole guardians became crowded with visitors. In addition to the government, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) as a religious figure is also considered to pose an influence on the development of interest in the pilgrimage of the guardians' tomb in Indonesia. After the Nahdlatul Ulama Congress in Situbondo in 1984, Wahid was also diligent in visiting the tombs of not only Wali Songo but also the graves of wali who most ordinary people did not know. He gave an example and was widely followed by the public at large, such as the pilgrimage to the Pandanaran tomb in Mount Jabalkat Bayat, Klaten (M. Ilham, February 4, 2023).

The increasing trend of pilgrimage to the guardians' tombs affects the shift in meaning and mindset of the community towards the meaning of religious tourism and tourism in general. In the past, the public interpreted tourism synonymous with recreation, which was for pleasure only, but now it has turned into religious tourism, spiritual tourism, even lately followed by the term healing.

Sunan Bonang tomb was affected by a transformation from a religious pilgrimage to religious (pilgrimage) tourism. Lexically, the commodification in the tradition of pilgrimage at the Tomb of Sunan Bonang has long been made by Makdum Ibrahim Sunan Bonang. Not only all that has been converted into commodities can be interpreted as commodification but changing a tradition that is considered inappropriate can also be categorized as commodification, in terms of meaning.

## The Pilgrimage Tradition to Sunan Bonang Tomb

Hindu-Buddhist civilization, which was initially embraced by the people of Java along with their fanaticism to the ancestors' teachings of animism and dynamism, slowed down the mission of the merchants from Gujarat that belonged to Shafi'i sect to spread Islam (Masduki, 2015). Besides their prominent role in the world economy, Tuban in 1292 became a stopover for Tartar soldiers who would invade the Singosari Kingdom.

Makdum Ibrahim Sunan Bonang utilized certain traditional relics as a medium to introduce Islam to the Javanese, including festivities. The tradition was the teaching of Tantrayana from the Bairawa sect of the tantric school that worshiped Goddess Durga with its rituals, *Panca Makra*, conducted on the land while they were naked (*Ksetra*) with dishes from meat (*Mamsa*), fish (*Matsya*), liquor (*Madya*), free sex (*Maithuna*) and Samadhi (*Mudra*). The ceremony and rituals were adjusted and refined by Sunan Bonang according to the guidance of

Islamic teachings with an event similar to the *Panca Makra* ritual (Sunyoto, 2011). The ceremony was successfully modified by Sunan Bonang without removing its fundamental elements in a circular manner; the dishes were replaced with rice cone, *ingkung* chicken meat, fish, regular drinks, then verses of the Qur'an and prayers (*kalimah thayyibah*) to replace the spells. The ceremony was later known as *selametan* or *kenduri* which is, to date, still preserved by the community as a result of Sunan Bonang teachings (Sunyoto, 2020). It is one of the attractions of the community to remember the history and recognize the guardianship of Sunan Bonang, leading to a continuous stream of pilgrims to his grave.

The commodification pattern by Sunan Bonang is similar to that by Sunan Ampel, replacing the ritual substance manifested into the composition of the ritual core of *mo-limo* into five ethical human behavior: by leaving all forms of *moh-main* deeds (no gambling), *moh-drink* (no drinking liquor), *moh-maling* (no stealing), *moh-addict* (no drunk or addicted), and *moh-madon* (no flirting). The commodification pattern made by Sunan Bonang represents the ethical-universal tendency of Islam. In addition to the transformation of Islamic teachings with non-violence, there is a fundamental inherent ethic. Sunan Bonang does not shift the local cultures that have already grown and developed. They are commodified through accommodation so that they become new religious traditions that correspond to the Islamic teachings (Mukaffa, 2017).

The transformation process from the tradition of sacred pilgrimage to religious tourism did not necessarily happen. It had undergone a long process and involved several actors behind it. The government represented by the Center for Cultural Heritage Preservation (BPCB) also played a leading role in the commodification process, also religious leaders who supervised and provided knowledge related to sacred and profane boundaries. The commodification process in the Tomb of Sunan Bonang was unstructurally supported by the district government. The support was provided through, for example, the construction of access roads and traffic flow to the Sunan Bonang Tomb, the construction of canopies around the area outside the Sunan Bonang tomb for pilgrims and local people to trade, and parking areas for pilgrims.

## Involvement of Parties in the Commodification

The long series of commodification processes of Sunan Bonang Tomb could never run without the involvement of several parties. The mabarrot Sunan Bonang Foundation fully authorizes the management of Sunan Bonang Tomb, yet the foundation cannot run alone

without contributions from other parties, such as the government, religious leaders, and the community.

The government, represented by the Cultural Heritage Preservation Board (BPCB), acts as a supervisor to ensure that the changes around the area meet the legal standards and requirements, legislation, and regulations. Scholars provide religious views and understanding related to the transformation limits from the sacred to religious tourism while maintaining the values of the sacred cultural products.

Specifically, the additional facilities around the area of Sunan Bonang Tomb were made on purpose. The commodification was supported by the district government. The support was provided through, for example, the construction of access roads and traffic flow to the Sunan Bonang Tomb, canopies around the area outside the Sunan Bonang tomb for pilgrims and local people to trade, and parking areas for pilgrims.

*"Eeeee, it obviously exists. We cannot organize this without the help of others. And, we are still requested or else there is intervention from other parties, from either local governments or tourism sectors, e.g. travel agents, or from visitors"* (M. Ilham, February 4, 2023).

From the above statement, we can conclude that the long series of commodification processes in the Tomb of Sunan Bonang cannot be made independently. Although Sunan Bonang Mabarrot Foundation has full authority over the management of the tomb, the commodification processes cannot run alone without the contribution of external parties.

The commodification process is also supported by the involvement of investors. The increasing number of visitors is an opportunity that can be converted into economic value by developing businesses around the tomb site. They can build hotels or inns for visitors, open shops, stalls, or even shopping centers to attract the pilgrims.

Obviously, their involvement in the existing businesses around the tomb must be strictly regulated and consider the ethics, cultural heritage preservation laws, and rules of cultural values by the local community. Investors should pay attention to the social and environmental impact of their business, as well as ensure that the business profits do not harm the surrounding community.

Investors should also follow the government regulations and policies related to the management of historical and religious tourist attractions, including the management of Sunan Bonang Tomb. Good and regular management help the preservation of the tomb and ensure the pilgrims feel comfortable and safe. This opportunity is,

of course, not only a profit-oriented opportunity but also a medium for spreading awareness of cultural treasures (Munajim et al., 2021).

The commodification process, according to the previous chapter, tends to occur naturally because of the circumstantial demand. The urgency is grounded to the government programs from the 1990s to increase tourism potential nationally. The additional large cupola in the Tomb of Sunan Bonang is a need to accommodate the increasing pilgrims, as one of the supporting reasons of commodification, and it is purely on the initiation of the foundation board, involving no investors or other parties in the construction.

*"No, nothing ... So, it is purely from the pilgrims. If there is a small donation, it is directly submitted into the charity box ... for example, when we are reconstructing the back Cupola building, the rich come to help, not investors ... and this building is all backed up by a single entrepreneur" ....* (M. Ilham, February 4, 2023).

Similar opinion regarding the commodification and transformation from the sacred to religious tourism was delivered by Riyadh Tsauri, that community brings about a strong influence on these changes. The term religious tourism is widely heard when the tomb becomes a part of the tourist attraction. People no longer visit the natural attractions, such as beaches, parks, but they come to certain tombs while they used to be sacred places.

*"In the past, the tomb used to be a sacred place only, right? How can it be a tourist commodity ... yes, maybe the community themselves make it a tourist commodity ... so, the term becomes pilgrimage tourism ... the tour is not visiting the beach, garden park, but to the tomb"* (R. Tsauri, February 5, 2023).

In the early history, from the 1980s, or around 1982, the Tomb of Sunan Bonang charged for retribution to the pilgrims who came in groups. The policy was managed by the district government, the Department of Tourism and Culture. The retribution was used to pay for the cleanliness of the tomb because the idea of installing the charity and *infaq* box was not found yet. It happened because the foundation management did not work optimally.

After the foundation was led by Kia Moertadji, continued by K.H. Kholilurrohman, and up to Ahmad Mundzir, management of the Mabarrot Foundation was rearranged and several facilities were constructed. The development process did not run smoothly because there was a dispute between the manager of Sunan Bonang Tomb and the district government regarding the authority of the tomb.

*"The foundation at that time, in the 1980s, had been established. At that time, the holding was authorized to Yai Moertadji himself, Haji Maksum. During the years, he was leading the management, and then submitted to Mr. Kholil, down to Mr. Mundzir, ... the modernization process was made during his leadership when the management was complete... yes, even though the construction process took a very long process to start due to a dispute with the district government. The government wanted control over us, and we didn't want it to happen."*…. (R. Tsauri, February 5, 2023).

It means that the changes in the Tomb of Sunan Bonang began from the period of Ahmad Mundzir as the chairman of the foundation. The change was carried out by the Mabarrot Foundation itself without any intervention from other parties, either government or private organization. There were indications from the district government to intervene in the management but there was a rejection from the foundation. The management of the tomb around 1982 was completely separated from the district government, so the government of Tuban Regency took off the responsibility to participate in the management.

*"Yes, it used to be managed by the government, but now it is authorized by the foundation. In 1982, the government took no more authority in the management of Sunan Bonang. It had been fully restored to the foundation because the foundation received a decree from Trowulan BPCB"* (R. Tsauri, February 5, 2023).

Riyald also confirmed that there is no party from outside or even investors who participate directly in the process of commodification around the Tomb of Sunan Bonang, and the one who is involved in the commodification process is Ahmad Mundzir.

*"No, no, no.... There has been no transaction of land in Sunan Bonang.... and the foundation supports the process (commodification from sacred to religious tourism). Mr. Mundzir should have been well informed about it. I am new to structural administration. Since the leadership of Mr. Kholil, I have been involved in the management of this tomb, but as the subordinate. At that time, I was in charge of the spiritual division, accompanying the pilgrims"* (R. Tsauri, February 5, 2023).

**Commodification Agreement at Sunan Bonang Tomb**

Religion is vital for human life as it serves as a fundamental medium for fostering bonds and strengthening social cohesion. Once we find ourselves amidst a religious community that happens to share a similar faith, the interconnectedness and commonality of the religion can serve as a source of social cohesion, fostering not only formal interactions but also generating strong emotional bonds among its members. Therefore, religion becomes a reinforcement variable of social life that offers benefits for each community (Kamiruddin, 2011).

Sunan Bonang tomb is a cultural product that most Muslims believe as a vital locus for meeting diverse interests, not only ritual but also economic matters. Grounded from one of non-material social facts, collective representation, which means 'being' or expression that represents collective beliefs, norms, values, such as "grave pilgrimage" that encourages adaptation to the common ground. The tradition of Sunan Bonang Tomb pilgrimage is the cause of non-material social facts; collective representation unintentionally forms an agreement to make the tradition of pilgrimage as a commodity (Wirawan, 2012).

The board of the Mabarrot Foundation as the manager, community or pilgrims, religious leaders, community leaders, government, artists, and cultural practitioners agree with the commodification of pilgrimage traditions in the Tomb of Sunan Bonang. The commodification of Sunan Bonang Tomb, Sunan Bonang pilgrimage tradition, is legitimate as long as it maintains the sacredness, spiritual values, the ancestors have preserved along the times. The phenomenon that occurs today in the tradition of pilgrimage to the tombs of the guardians is undeniable. The economic and spiritual interests are like children in one lap, which are equally noteworthy (F. H. Panatapraja, 2023).

Some spiritual pilgrims feel that there has been a shift and even predict to lose the quiet space in the future. On the other hand, the blow of economic interests that almost all support the commodification of the pilgrimage tradition makes connoisseurs of the silence and sacredness of the pilgrimage tradition unable to maintain the situation.

The researchers indicated an agreement on the commodification of pilgrimage traditions in the Tomb of Sunan Bonang with some key considerations: being careful in managing and preserving the traditions that have existed for a long time, which basically become a selling point so that a lot of people are interested in visiting the site.

## IV.    CONCLUSION

The commodification of Sunan Bonang Tomb is a phenomenon that reflects the evolving views and attitudes of society towards pilgrimage traditions. Initially, the

pilgrimage was made as an expression of respect and devotion to the ancestors and sacred places. However, as time progresses, the pilgrimage practice undergoes significant transformations. Pilgrimage now tends to be a religious tourism site directed at commercial purposes. Upon the commodification process, the government, religious leaders, and investors play a significant role. Although it offers economic benefits to the local area, ensure that the sacred and cultural values attached to the Sunan Bonang tomb are well preserved.

Sunan Bonang Tomb became one of the popular pilgrimage destinations in the history of the spread of Islam in Java. The commodification process of the tomb corresponds to the changes and religious developments in the community, as well as the values brought by the figure, Sunan Bonang. The commodification exerts complex impacts and potentially sparks debates among stakeholders. On the one hand, the development of religious tourism can help introduce cultural and historical heritage to more people and promote the local economy. On the other hand, however, it is vital to maintain a balance between the commercial aspect and the sustainability of the spiritual and religious values represented by the tomb.

The commodification of Sunan Bonang Tomb illustrates the paradigm change and dynamics in the practice of pilgrimage and religious tourism. This process reflects social and economic changes in society. Also, it raises responsibility to preserve the integrity and authenticity of the sacred place and consider the underlying spiritual values. It is essential to involve relevant stakeholders and ensure that the preservation of cultural and spiritual values inherent in Sunan Bonang tombs outweighs the potential economic advantages.

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# The Power of Feminist Postcolonial through Colonial Space: An Analysis of Western Women's Works

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*Abstract*— *This article explores the influence of Feminist postcolonial perspectives within the framework of colonial space, particularly in regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia influenced by British and American colonization. The concept of "colonial space" in this context refers to establishing Western feminist colonies among Saudi women within the narrative of space exploration in novels. The study reveals that this notion is scrutinized in speculative works, where authors exercise creative freedom in placing characters within fictional settings. Postcolonial feminists argue that women in the Saudi palace experience oppressive and unequal treatment compared to men, experiencing both personal and institutional discrimination. They assert that the structure of this space predominantly favors men over women. The research findings suggest that Western postcolonial feminist works intentionally feature palace family figures to persuade and engage readers globally, influencing their perspectives.*

*Keywords*— *The Power, Feminist Post-colonial, Colonial Space, Saudi Arabia*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In this article, we aim to delve into the portrayals of Saudi Arabian women, particularly princesses, by Sasson and Carmen bin Laden. These depictions, shaped by oriental clichés in the eyes of Western feminists, provide a comprehensive representation. We focus on exploring the intersections of feminist post-colonialism by examining themes related to hijab, education, and violence against women. Given Saudi Arabia's significance in U.S./British foreign policy, we acknowledge its role as a strategic ally in the Middle East due to longstanding cooperation and its status as the world's largest oil producer.

Cook (1988) highlights the implicit influence of Western feminism, seeking a 'global sisterhood,' emphasizing European rule. The article analyses the gendered nature of colonial space, drawing on theoretical frameworks developed by feminist geographers and anthropologists. Rather than relying solely on psychoanalytical models, we

aim to fuse spatial relations within postcolonial literary and cultural theory, fostering a more feminist postcolonial theory/practice.

Examining the confinement of women within spatial frameworks, we consider Joseph's assertion that violating family space risks accusations of disloyalty. Autobiographical accounts often provide profound insights into Arab family life. The gendered nature of colonial space is crucial, and we explore spatial relations at both ideal and experiential levels, particularly in Mary Louise Pratt's 'contact zone' where disparate cultures interact in asymmetrical relations.

Mikhail (2004) contends that women's issues in the Arab world extend beyond education, equal opportunity, and reproductive freedom. This work aims to amplify the voices of Arab women as agents in history, literature producers, and cultural contributors. The relationships between Sultana, Sasson, Carmen, and Yeslam reflect

Western and Eastern representations. As the Saudi princess, Sultana embodies colonization through issues depicted by Sasson/Carmen, revealing the ongoing impact of colonialism.

Carmen, experiencing similar constraints, exposes the strict rules in the palace, illustrating how she, as a 'colonizer,' shapes space within her household and the Bin Laden extended family. The Arab Women Writers series seeks to unveil alternative stories, breaking the silence around Arab women's experiences of being treated as second-class citizens.

Sultana and Carmen's efforts for reform, representing the "colonizer," have influenced Saudi Arabia's domestic policy. Traditionally, gendered power hierarchies rooted in patriarchy have been challenged. Socialization and connectivity contribute to gender hierarchies, but the push for reform has led to changes, evidenced by national elections and the formation of human rights organizations. This shift signals a change in Saudi Arabia's perception of human rights, previously considered incompatible with Islamic teachings.

The historical significance of national elections in Saudi Arabia is noted, marking a departure from established norms. Anwar (2006) underscores that the politics of sexual difference, rooted in religious and social-cultural constructs, extend beyond Islam, impacting non-Muslim Arabs as well.

## II.    MATERIALS AND METHODS

Researchers generally use the descriptive method to conduct research or research from literature or literary works such as books. The researcher will first look for some books relevant to the topic under study. Then, read them one by one to get the necessary data.

In addition to books, we can also rely on research results and studies with a similar discussion theme. We did this research using the literature study method. We also used various references in libraries, newspapers, and other scientific journals in private libraries and internet access to complete this essay.

The study used the text study method, in which four novels by Western authors, namely Sasson and Carmen Bin Laden, were selected. Sasson and Carmen wrote three of the novels studied. In addition, the author also refers to various reading materials generally found in libraries related to the concept of Postcolonial Feminist (PCF). In postcolonial studies, the concept of colonial space generally refers to the physical, social, and cultural spaces shaped and influenced by colonial powers during the era of colonialism. It involves examining how colonial powers

imposed their cultural, economic, and political structures on the colonized regions and how these spaces were contested, negotiated, and transformed by both colonizers and the colonized.

Apart from referring to existing textbooks, the author also uses the website as a reference source because not all reading materials available in the library can provide a clear review of the literary works studied. After all, these works are new. Therefore, using Internet sources helps us find information related to the two authors.

We also obtained articles related to the texts and works of the two authors above through sources other than libraries, websites, and newspapers in the West and East.

## III.    RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. FPC's Power on Women/men as the attacking space

A society cannot thrive with only one gender, whether comprised solely of men or women. The realization of this truth hinges on the collaborative efforts of both men and women, fostering a strengthened bond of brotherhood between them. However, as social structures become rigid and inflexible, women often find themselves marginalized within the confines of their homes. The relationships between men and women become orchestrated, discouraging interaction and leading to the emergence of two distinct groups, each grappling with diverse situations and issues. According to Reda-Mekdas (2004:266), from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, there was a notable increase in the publication of short-story collections by women, focusing on various themes, with women's problems being a common thread.

Such a divided society is fraught with conflict, as one group may antagonize another. This stands in contrast to a unified community led by a single leader, which typically faces minimal opposition. In many instances, such division poses challenges to shared interests. Observing men's attitudes toward women in royal palaces and the predominant male influence in Saudi Arabian politics, where the majority of power rests in the hands of men, underscores the gender disparities. Women receive less attention and inclusion in the development and governance of the kingdom. The prohibition and coercion, exemplified by rules such as the mandatory wearing of the hijab, highlight the challenges faced by women in adhering to outlined regulations. The ongoing debates about the right to divorce, both among and outside Muslims, reflect the controversies surrounding established norms.

The hijab controversy is seen as a societal response to the abandonment of old cultural traditions. Presenting the philosophical underpinnings of hijab rules is crucial for

their comprehension and acceptance by women. Lewis and Mills (2003:2) note that current feminist postcolonial theory continually emphasizes the need to consider gender issues within mainstream postcolonial theory.

As a divine religion, Islam seeks balance and prescribes patterns for achieving perfection in individuals and society. The hijab, delineated as an individual rule, holds significant meaning and contributes to the sustainability of society and civilization. Acting as a bond of obedience to God, implementing hijab rules significantly strengthens community bonds.

From the perspective of Saudi rulers, the hijab is perceived as a tool for attaining goals related to purity and family strength. It is considered a rule binding every woman, with the responsibility resting on women and encompassing the male rulers within a family. This perspective is grounded in references to the holy book Al-Quran, specifically surat al-Ahzab verse 53, where the term hijab means veil. Hisham (1988:8) asserts that neo-patriarchy values are prominently championed by a specific social class in the Arab world: the petty bourgeoisie. Sharabi explains that the petty bourgeoisie embodies the most representative values of neo-patriarchal society and culture, characterized by contradictory values and tendencies. This perspective on responsibility aligns with the interpretations derived from the Quranic reference to hijab, emphasizing its significance as a veil, as stated in Surat al-Ahzab verse 53.

"Every time you ask for something that should be asked of them (the wives of the Prophet), then ask from behind the veil." (QS. al-Ahzab: 53).

According to the cited verses, the male rulers of Saudi Arabia interpret the hijab as obligatory attire for women. However, this understanding has led people to believe that men desire to confine women within the confines of their homes, contradicting the true purpose of the compulsory hijab. The hijab is not intended to restrict women from leaving their homes; instead, its obligation for women is to protect themselves in society, especially when in the presence of unrelated individuals (non-mahram). Its purpose is to prevent women from revealing the beauty of their bodies. The implementation of the hijab has become a defining element of women's dignity in Islam from the perspective of men in Saudi society.

Consequently, Saudi men justify the hijab for women based on their interpretation of the Holy Quran. As a result, it has become a rule enforced on every woman living there, leaving them with no room for objection. This has sparked controversy and discrimination, limiting women's choices in dressing and contributing to a pattern leaning toward monastic life, social injustice, and a patriarchal culture.

Examining the historical context, the enforcement of the hijab arose from uncomfortable conditions in the past, where rulers, tribal leaders, kings, and sultans would take any woman they desired, prompting women to hide behind their hijabs. However, in the context of Islam, the reason for adopting the hijab is different. Before the time of Prophet Muhammad in Saudi society, the insecure conditions mentioned earlier did not prevail. The uncertainty of that era threatened the safety of individuals in general, not only women. The implementation of hijab in Islam is not aimed at concealing women, as was the case in palaces, but rather to protect them from the gaze of the opposite sex. Islam recognizes the natural attraction between men and women and emphasizes the purity of relationships. The idea that men's envy and competition are the reasons for women wearing the hijab, making them prisoners of men, is not justified by Islam. Islam discourages following lust, which can lead to undesirable attitudes and actions, including envy and blind jealousy. Therefore, none of the perspectives presented by men in Saudi Arabia can be considered a valid reason for wearing the hijab in Islam. The Islamic hijab, as affirmed by Allah in Surat An-Nur 30 and 31 and other mentioned surahs, is in place to uphold modesty and preserve the dignity of both men and women.

"Tell the believing men to restrain their gaze and guard their honour; that is purer for them, verily Allah knows best what they do." (QS. an-Nur: 30).

"Tell the believing women to restrain their gaze, guard their modesty, and let them not show their body adornment, except for what is apparent. Moreover, they should cover the neckline of their clothes with their headscarves up to their chests. Women should not show their jewelry except to their husbands, fathers, husbands' fathers, sons, husbands' sons, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, Muslim women, the enslaved people they have, male servants who have no desire (for women), or children who do not understand about women's private parts. Furthermore, let them not stamp their feet, so the jewelry they hide is known." (QS : An-Nur: 31).

"O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the believing women to come close to them with their hijab so that they are easily recognized and so that they are not disturbed; then indeed God is forgiving and most Merciful". (QS. al-Ahzab: 59)

According to the translation of the surah, as mentioned earlier, it encourages men to avoid looking at prohibited things and maintain their purity. A similar admonition is directed at women, urging them not to gaze at forbidden sights and to preserve their innocence. Except for certain

groups, women are instructed to conceal their beauty, covering their necks and chests with a hijab, ultimately avoiding self-display that might attract undue attention.

The Quran emphasizes that women's attire symbolizes purity and contributes to upholding societal honor. Although various verses propose different ways to achieve these objectives, the concept of hijab is particularly emphasized for Muslim women. The hijab is a distinguishing factor, identifying those who safeguard their innocence from those who do not. The surah suggests that when a woman diligently adheres to the hijab and upholds her purity within her family and community, she shields herself from disrespectful scrutiny, earning appreciation from the community. According to Islam, the relationship between men and women is based on a unique bond that excludes the intrusion of strangers outside the couple.

In Islam, adopting the hijab and discouraging promiscuity are measures aimed at fortifying family structures and preserving a nation's dignity. The strength of family bonds contributes to the honor of the lineage, ensuring the continuity of human generations. A relationship based not solely on biological urges but on love is deemed more beneficial for both partners, fostering resilience in the face of challenges and enduring into old age. Additionally, the amicable relationship between spouses significantly influences the dynamics between children and their parents.

As a legal mandate, the Quranic verse in Surat Nur outlines the rules for Muslim women, instructing them to preserve their modesty, refrain from displaying jewelry that might attract undue attention, and cover their necks. Fulfilling these guidelines necessitates effort and sacrifice.

Islam, as a social religion, seeks to safeguard civilization from potential destruction through individual and social regulations. The obligation of the hijab extends to both individuals and the broader community, emphasizing a dynamic and healthy societal development where the potential of each member is fully realized and protected from societal maladies rooted in base instincts. Islam underscores purity as a fundamental aspect of every human action, grounded in rational comprehension of religious arguments.

The role of Prophet Muhammad as a divine messenger is seen as correcting the community's misunderstandings in implementing religious teachings, in contrast to the actions of Saudi Arabian rulers who undermine women's personalities and curtail their independence and freedom. It contributes to a negative perception of women as a societal element, a significant factor in the stagnation of the Saudi Arabian community. The pride of men in having women obedient to their orders and wishes, as expressed

by Sultana, further exacerbates the backwardness of Saudi society.

"…In Saudi Arabia, the pride of a man's honor evolve from his women, so he must enforce his authority and supervision over the sexuality of his women or face public disgrace…The authority of a Saudi male is unlimited; his wife and children survive if he desires. In our home, he is the state…. From an early age, the male child is taught that women are of little value: they exist only for comfort and convenience"(Princess, 1993, p. 21).

Human civilization must progress toward a more advanced and improved state, aiming for elevated ideals and creating a society where individuals are not monotonous but advocates for freeing women from constraints. This emancipating community is formed when its foundational elements consist of exemplary individuals. Ideally, numerous women choose to wear the hijab based on a genuine understanding of its inherent advantages for their well-being. This choice should not stem from the fear of punishment or sin, nor a sense of shame, and should not be driven by a desire to appear pious. In the words of Sultana, reflecting on her son Maha's experience with wearing the hijab:

"It was a marvelous experience for Maha, for although she is forced to wear her abayas and headscarf, she is not required to wear the hated veil once inside the hospital doors" (Daughters of Arabia, 2004, p. 45.

This serves as proof that women are compelled to wear the hijab, even when they are unwell or in a hospital setting. It is indeed unfortunate if the issue of the hijab transforms into a challenge for women, turning them into commodities, sources of income, and marginalized entities. Moreover, women in Saudi Arabia face neglect from their fathers, animosity from their brothers, and harassment from their husbands, often not knowing their whereabouts. Sasson and Carmen depict and highlight these issues in their works, turning them into a platform for criticizing Islam, notably the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### 3.2. Political Power of the Feminist Postcolonial (FPC) on Islam (the East)

The fundamental nature of America's relationship with Arab countries, specifically Saudi Arabia, underwent a significant shift after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, which saw the destruction of the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York and the Pentagon building in Washington. The fact that 15 of the 19 suspected perpetrators were Saudi citizens marked a novel chapter in the history of U.S.-Saudi relations. In response, the United States sought to reshape the social order in Arab nations, seen as a breeding ground for radicalism and

terrorism. Consequently, a key objective of American political policy in the Arab region was promoting and implementing democratic principles.

Since November 6, 2003, President George W. Bush openly called on Saudi Arabia and Cairo to adopt the democratic system, even though full implementation had not been achieved. While many in Saudi Arabia supported Bush's call for a democratic system, this demand emanated not only from the moderate opposition but also from the hardline opposition, critical of the government and holding anti-American sentiments, often resorting to acts of terrorism against American assets on Saudi soil.

The primary obstacle to Saudi Arabia's transition to a more democratic region, including the advancement of women's rights, is the tension between American policies and anti-American opposition. The lukewarm response to supporting Bush's idea was influenced by the perception that the U.S. remained pro-Israel and its decisions to engage in conflicts in Iraq and Palestine. The wave of opposition intensified as protests against American policies gained momentum.

Despite the democracy concept advocated by the U.S., Saudi Arabia held its first elections in 2005 for seats in local councils, presenting it as a historic event. The Saudi government strategically organized an international anti-terrorism conference in Riyadh before the election to attract foreign journalists. However, the enthusiasm surrounding this event could not conceal the fact that the Saudi regime had promised political reform for the first time in 1962, and it took three decades for King Fahd to sign the country's Constitution through a government decree rather than a legislative process.

This history of unfulfilled promises has eroded trust among the people of Saudi Arabia, especially women, in their government's commitment to defending women's rights. Consequently, only a quarter of eligible voters registered, and only two-thirds of those registrants participated in the elections. As articulated by Sultana, women were still denied the right to vote, prohibited from driving and required to wear an abaya, a traditional dress covering them from head to toe.

When our veiled plight piqued the curiosity of numerous foreign journalists, many educated women of my land began to plan for the day that they could burn their veils, discard heavy black abayas, and sit at the steering wheels of their cars." (Daughters of Arabia, 2004, p. 38)

Government officials, particularly those adhering to the conservative Wahabi ideology, play a crucial role in Saudi Arabia. Islam is the official religion, and all legislation is exclusively derived from Shariah. The Supreme Council of Religion (Majlis As-Shura), appointed by the king and outlined in the Council of Ash-Shura law, determines the kingdom's daily religious legitimacy.

This formal and ritual application of Shariah by the Saudi Arabian government is a crucial factor that contributes to the negative portrayal of Islam, particularly in the perspectives of Sasson and Carmen as representatives of the West. Their works not only address religious aspects but also emphasize issues related to the lives of women, often portraying them with a lower status within the Saudi Arabian community. This portrayal is evident throughout their works; for instance, women in the kingdom face challenges such as not having their identity cards (IC) and needing to rely on the identity of a man (husband or father). This limitation arises from the impossibility of displaying their pictures on ID cards. Additionally, women require assistance to drive or travel alone. When leaving their homes, they must be accompanied by a mahram and wear a burqa, a garment that covers from head to heels with only a veil for the eyes to enable visibility. Sultana articulated this by stating:

"The veil interferes with everything I do! I cannot believe that we were unlucky enough to be born in a country that forces its women to wear shrouds of black!' I grumbled (Dessert Royal, 2004, p. 62).

The application of traditional Shariah jurisprudence, established over 12 centuries ago without significant reforms, particularly in family law, gives the impression that Islam is biased against women. Despite the dynamic changes in society, where women now have ample opportunities for education and employment, Shariah remains static. Women have demonstrated their capabilities and ability to outperform men when given the chance, yet Shariah remains unaltered. The authorities in charge of Shariah assert the sole accuracy of their perspective, dismissing all other views. Consequently, this has further deteriorated the image of Shariah (Islam) in Saudi Arabia, affecting both international relations, especially with superpowers like the United States and domestic politics, eroding trust in the leadership of the king.

This perspective reflects the negative interpretation of feminist postcolonial (FPC) viewpoints on Saudi Arabia, with the West perceiving Saudi society as traditional, irrational, and aggressive due to constraints imposed by religious teachings serving as the foundation for Islamic law. Women, in this context, are seen as victims of discrimination and marginalization, constrained by religious doctrine and male dominance, denying them opportunities for communication with authorities and subjecting them to violence and oppression.

Moreover, as the Western world continues to hold global influence, it perpetuates negative stereotypes about Saudi women, portraying them as passive, marginalized, closed, and exotic. The narrative extends to depicting mistreatment by husbands, fathers, and brothers, perpetuating a patriarchal culture through generations. FPC views this depiction as a means of controlling their colonial space, aiming to implement political reforms gradually or swiftly. Continued control of this nature is deemed hazardous, as it aligns with the West's vision and mission to undermine Saudi Arabia through the lens of human rights, particularly women's rights, and democratic principles. A brief examination of the Western perspective towards Saudi Arabia underscores the discrimination against women, notably regarding the enforcement of the hijab.

"Within a short time, she would be compelled to don the veil, for, in my country, many Muslim girls are being forced to veil even before they reach puberty" (Dessert Royal, 2004, p.181).

The debate over the hijab is a contentious issue within both feminist postcolonial and feminist studies, attracting attention in academic circles and popular media alike. It has emerged as a focal point, symbolizing oppression and resistance. From a cultural perspective, discussions surrounding the hijab delve into identity issues linked to colonialism and patriarchy. In the Western context, particularly in feminist postcolonial (FPC) discourse, the hijab is often portrayed as a tool of oppression, sparking ongoing debates within social and religious contexts. FPC perspectives from the West tend to interpret the hijab's development solely through their worldview, with Western media frequently depicting Islam as a religion exploiting women through patriarchal norms, emphasizing the burden of wearing the hijab. According to FPC views, the hijab is seen as a symbol of Saudi women's oppression and exploitation by men, with efforts to resist being likened to neo-colonialism.

The hijab is perceived as both a colonialist fantasy and a discourse on gender identity, with a specific focus on Saudi women, particularly princesses residing in palaces. The FPC approach, influenced by Western perspectives, attempts to understand the experiences of these princesses by scrutinizing definitions and explanations of the hijab worn by other Muslim women in Saudi Arabia. While FPC analysts use Western lenses to examine Saudi women, they struggle to comprehend the hijab's meaning and role within Saudi Arabian culture. Despite efforts to connect the historical process of wearing the hijab from the era of Jahiliyyah to the present, there is a disconnect leading to various protests, as elucidated by Carmen below:

Salome and I put on our veils a few minutes before we landed. We were entirely covered in thick black clothes, head and body. Just our feet stuck out. The hijab hid even our eyes behind the impenetrable black gauze" (Inside the Kingdom, 1994, p. 32).

The matter of the hijab is growing increasingly significant in the context of globalization, Islamophobia prevails in the Western world, and the rise of fundamentalist and nationalist groups continues to be emblematic in cultural discourse. Despite this, feminist postcolonial studies challenge the universal paradigm, critiquing its imperialist norms that perpetuate the marginalization of the Eastern world, exemplified by countries like Saudi Arabia, through spatial power dynamics. Consequently, the focal point of discussion centers on the reciprocal understanding of the hijab from both Eastern and Western perspectives, fostering a dialogue that aims to bridge cultural gaps, dispel misconceptions, and promote a more inclusive global discourse on religious attire and individual expression. However, the theoretical framework views the hijab as a constraining factor, representing differences such as East/West and male/female, opening the door for debates and negotiations to reconcile varying opinions.

Drawing on Edward Said's perspective on Orientalism, he deems it a discourse of colonialism, wherein a culture constructs a representation of foreign cultures as inferior and subject to control. Said emphasizes the pervasive nature of these hierarchical structures, asserting, "No area of experience was spared the unrelenting application of these hierarchies" (Said, 1994: 120).

Parallel to Said's stance, Sasson and Carmen argue that the hijab symbolizes oppression and backwardness for women, contributing to the negative portrayal of Saudi culture as cruel, primitive, and sensually driven. This portrayal suggests that the Eastern world is reduced to the hijab alone. Narayan echoes a similar sentiment, emphasizing the political struggle between Western and colonized cultures, particularly regarding the hijab, as a crucial issue that demands resolution through negotiation.

In these conflicts, such indigenous practices were symptoms of backwardness and barbarity of the third-world cultures and contrasted with Western cultures' progressiveness. The figure of the (veiled) colonized women became the representative of the oppressiveness of the entire "cultural tradition" of the colony." (Narayan, 1997:17)

Said reinterprets the European stance on Saudi Arabia, emphasizing an individualized perspective rooted in historical context. Throughout history, Saudi Arabia has been cast as an 'other,' posing a challenge to European moral standards. This portrayal is characterized by a

romanticized and sensual representation, casting doubt on the veracity of its true nature, as per Said's analysis. Direct observation or circumstantial descriptions of the Orient are fictions presented by writing about the Orient (Said, 1997:34)

Therefore, it is highly pertinent to delve into the works of Sasson and Carmen, allowing them to vividly illustrate the dichotomy between the East and West and between men and women. The crisis faced by women who wear the hijab takes the form of the burqa, which obstructs the view and conceals the face, sparking a global debate, mainly led by the Feminist postcolonial (FPC). The Western perspective not only scrutinizes the hijab but also questions ethical values, religion, politics, terrorism, and nationalism.

It is imperative to elevate the position of Saudi women from being perceived as mere victims of men to becoming agents of change, and this transformation is highly reliant on discourse. These works, viewed from a Western or Eastern standpoint, strive to neutralize and clarify women's identity, echoing Mills' assertion that stereotypes are not fixed behaviors but hypothesized versions played within mediated experiences such as television, advertising, newspapers, and magazines.

The concept of hijab, as described above, serves as a barrier between space and identity to empower women as agents. From the male perspective, the hijab represents a form of freedom and personal independence, as it shields something sacred and uncontaminated by external impurities. Examining this issue through feminist postcolonial theory involves analyzing power distribution in society, prompting questions about women's ability to act under societal expectations and visions or whether they remain silent followers of men's desires. Today, women must assert themselves as agents of change, addressing social reforms to attain equal roles with men.

In the fictional space of Sasson and Carmen's works, a form of colonization is depicted as they seek resolutions for the problems faced by the palace princesses. Simultaneously, they explore and challenge the system and rules in the Saudi Kingdom through cultural, political, and economic spaces, mainly through the discourse surrounding the hijab, which they perceive as a significant form of women's oppression and exploitation. Representing the West, the FPC deliberately constructs compelling narratives to influence and challenge readers' mindsets through hijabi concepts and perspectives. Their works, laden with political values linked to women's lives, offer a realistic portrayal of life by reconstructing personal stories and experiences as a process of acquiring true identity.

While the FPC freely describes the challenges faced by the princesses, they also encounter resistance and opposition from the Saudi government, including religious (Islamic) authorities. Portraying negative stereotypes becomes their means of challenging Saudi culture, particularly in opposing patriarchy. The use of space in the novels effectively competes with and dismantles the old myths prevalent in the royal palace. Works like "Princess," "Daughters of Arabia," "Royal Dessert," and "Inside the Kingdom" detail various forms of men's behavior towards women associated with Wahhabism, constraining the space and movement of princesses. These works juxtapose past experiences with the present, illustrating princesses' limited and confined lives behind the hijab. The West attempts to influence cultural values and norms by portraying characters that reconstruct the princesses' identity in alignment with Western styles and behaviors. Without the use of hijab, these princesses can move freely without male accompaniment, leading Sultana to liken Saudi women to exotic birds.

"I have been told that we Saudi women resemble bright exotic birds with our choice of attire under our black veil and abayas" (Princess, 1993, p. 153).

The style and approach employed by the Feminist postcolonial (FPC) in effecting changes in the lives of Saudi women are intriguing. One notable strategy involves liberating and emancipating princesses during their visits to other countries where they eschew the hijab. This portrayal signifies a momentary transformation in women's identity and independence, yet its impact is enduring. This transformation is vividly depicted in the experiences of Sultana and her sister in Italy, America, and England, as well as Carmen's visits to Switzerland, America, and Europe.

In addition to showcasing freedom and independence, the FPC ventures into the controversial territory by asserting that Saudi princesses residing in the United States compromise their honor with white men due solely to expressions of love. This narrative deliberately tarnishes the reputation of these princesses, placing them in a dishonorable light. Essentially, this narrative suggests a divergence from Islamic teachings, portraying the princesses as succumbing to Western influence at the expense of their Eastern roots.

The FPC crafts this narrative space to capture the princesses' authentic essence and life experiences. It serves as evidence that the FPC, representing the West, excels in constructing negative portrayals of Saudi women, influencing readers to accept and align with the ideas embedded in their novels. The aim is to cultivate readers into discerning consumers of literature, fostering sympathy

for the West and cultivating feelings of envy and animosity towards Saudis, particularly men. Nura articulates this sentiment in the passage below.

"Nura, the family's matriarch, lifted her veil and stared sternly at Me.'Sultana! I command you to stop! Today, you will concentrate on our trip, not your veil' (Dessert Royal, 2004, p. 238).

Portraying princesses in the palace as characters grappling with the hijab issue is a clever and captivating concept, suggesting a potential rejection or objection to the hijab. This depiction can swiftly influence the broader community of women to abandon the hijab. The envisioned reform hinges on the refusal of the hijab by the elite and upper classes, with other groups automatically following suit. The focus here is on mothers, wives, and daughters who have reached puberty, and for them, wearing the hijab becomes a reversal of their accustomed open life before adolescence. The hijab acts as a constraint, closing them off from the gaze of men and obscuring all external entities beyond their sphere. For these girls, it transforms into a mental and psychological burden, confining them like prisoners behind bars. Their palace becomes their prison, and the hijab serves as a mysterious confinement, a realm of darkness as deep and faded as its dark black color.

In this context, the image of the hijab takes on a highly political nature. Rather than empowering women as agents of change, it seeks to render them silent agents. Carmen, for instance, is obliged to adhere to her husband's directives regarding the Saudi dress code, especially since becoming part of the Bin Laden family. However, when she is not in the family setting, the hijab and abaya are immediately discarded, emphasizing that the hijab is not an integral part of her life. A similar dynamic is observed in the experiences of Sultana, as noted by El-Saadawi below:

The portrayal of Arab women in the past and contemporary Arab literature does not reflect an accurate image of her. It is Arab women as seen through the eyes of Arab men, and therefore, tends to be incomplete, distorted, and devoid of a clear understanding and consciousness. (El-Saadawi, 1980: 66)

Observably, Saudi princesses adhere to the wishes of men within the existing system and regulations. Their potential as agents of change is limited as long as male dominance persists in the government's leadership. However, a transformation is anticipated with the increased participation of women in various professional domains, including politics, which significantly impacts the trajectory of women's lives. In this context, feminist postcolonial intervention in this sphere is seen as a

strategic move to advance the success of Saudi women despite encountering numerous challenges and opposition, particularly from men.

Examining this scenario from a psychoanalytical perspective unveils a connection between the purpose of the hijab and men's desire to conceal women. Borrowing Freud's terminology, men's desire to gaze upon women and perceive them as inherently flawed beings is intertwined with the rationale behind women wearing the hijab – a measure to protect and shield them from the male gaze. Here, the hijab functions not only as a disguise but also as a reflective surface, concealing the woman's face like an empty canvas that mirrors the image of the man, symbolizing a phallus-centric ruler. The hijab, serving as a battleground, evokes memories of colonial faces in the daily lives of individuals, especially those associated with the Foreign Public Culture.

## IV.   CONCLUSION

In summary, our argument revolves around the assertion that the involvement of American women in the lives of Saudi Princesses within the colonial context cannot be solely analyzed through the lens of colonization. The architectural limitations and ideological restrictions on women's mobility within the colonial setting play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of a woman's place and contribute to the framing of spatial dynamics. Despite these constraints, the clash between these limitations and women as active agents, knowledge producers, and observers of Arab women results in varied roles for women.

The works of Sasson and Carmen affirm that women wearing the hijab may struggle to adapt physically or conform to the prescribed social norms, leading them to resist and challenge the hijab as a mandatory garment. This opposition stems from their perception of the hijab as a symbol of antiquity, tradition, and oppressive cultural norms. This resistance creates a space for Feminist post-colonialism (FPC) to criticize and influence Saudi women, men, and Islam.

Novels serve as a platform to conceptualize and advocate for women's rights and liberation from colonial constraints and male dominance. Sultana and Carmen employ this literary space to address issues related to the hijab and political power, shedding light on various forms of discrimination against women. However, the Western perspective of the FPC, whether conscious or unconscious, also contributes to the colonization of Saudi women by redirecting readers' attention to their narratives and scenarios. Despite their intention to amplify women's voices and hearts, their works impact the values and norms

of Saudi women, indirectly tarnishing Islam by misinterpreting the patriarchal aspects of the religion. In essence, the descriptions and comments presented by the FPC in their works can be characterized as a form of colonial space that oversimplifies and generalizes without recognizing the nuances of culture and religion.

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# An Analysis of the Italian Dubbing of Edgar Allan Poe's Poems in "The Fall of the House of Usher"

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*Abstract— This paper will analyse the Italian dubbing of Edgar Allan Poe Poems in the gothic horror drama "The Fall of the House of Usher" (2023) by Mike Flanagan. Specifically, the poems that will be analysed are "Annabel Lee" and "The City in the Sea". The analysis will be pursued following a qualitative approach. Poems will be examined individually, and the original English version will be compared to the Italian dubbing through a detailed discourse analysis. Particular attention was given to the level of literary rendering in the Italian version, lip movement visibility and the overall changes detected within the two versions of the poems. The two poems have been translated largely literally in the Italian version. Examining the results, it can be confirmed that the lip movement had a minor influence on the translation choices. The Italian dubbed version maintains the original meaning of the poem coherently with the scenes and contexts in which these are recited in the miniseries.*

*Keywords— Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation, Dubbing, Poetry Translation, Edgar Allan Poe*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Dubbing is part of the wider category of audiovisual translation. Audiovisual translation is characterised by determining major challenges for the translator compared to textual translation. Besides the usual challenges that the translator faces while translating a text from a source language to a target one such as elements with specific cultural references, specific linguistic characteristics and linguistic expressions strictly tied to culture, (Chiaro, 2008) during the dubbing process, the audiovisual translator will necessarily have to take into account elements such as the background scene, sounds and lip movements that cannot be deleted or modified.

This paper will analyse the Italian dubbing of the gothic horror drama "The Fall of the House of Usher" (2023) by Mike Flanagan. Specifically, it was decided to work on the translation and dubbing of poetry, often considered among the most challenging. The focus will be on two poems written by the English poet Edgar Allan Poe that are recited by characters at different moments throughout the miniseries. Specifically, the poems that will be analysed are "Annabel Lee" and "The City in the Sea".

After an introduction to the object of discussion which will include an explanation of the miniseries plot and a background on the two poems, the methods will be explained to successively move to a brief discussion on the main theories regarding dubbing and poetry translation supporting this paper, the analysis of the dubbing of the poems and consequent conclusions.

## II. OBJECT OF DISCUSSION

The Fall of the House of Usher is a gothic horror drama created by American director Mike Flanagan and directed by Flanagan himself and Michael Fimognari. The miniseries is divided into 8 episodes, telling us the story of the Usher family. It was released on the 12th of October 2023 on Netflix. The miniseries starts with Roderick Usher now in his seventies calling his former lawyer and now rival in a trial Auguste Dupin to give him a dreaded confession in the Usher's childhood home.

We get to know Roderick as the CEO of Fortunato Pharmaceutical, which he rules alongside his twin sister Madeline. We will learn a lot concerning Roderick's life

starting from the explanation of the mysterious deaths of his six kids, how he ascended to power and of his former, lost and true love Annabel Lee. The public won't be aware until the last episode of how the origin of the twin's wealth and success date back to the happenings of New Year's Eve of 1979. After betraying Dupin in the trial against Fortunato, the twins murdered the then-CEO of the pharmaceutical company Rufus Griswold on December 31st, 1979, as the last step to take control of the company. They then headed to a bar to create an alibi where they met Verna, a portrayal of the black Raven from Poe's poem "The Raven" (Verna is an anagram for raven). Verna proposes a deadly deal to the twins, guaranteeing that they will not be caught and convicted for the committed crime and promising them a life of wealth. The price to pay will consist of the death of Madeline and Roderick's bloodline right before the twins' deaths. (Fremont, 2023; Thao, 2024)

The miniseries contains references to Edgar Allan Poe's work, the title comes from the short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" dated 1839. Besides the title, numerous references can be found, starting with the title of every single episode, the name and storyline of the characters and the former's lines in which some of them recite poems by Poe. (Lee, 2023)

Let's now introduce the poems that are the object of discussion and analysis of this paper.

### ANNABEL LEE

Annabel Lee was published posthumously on October 9th, 1849, only two days following Edgar Allan Poe's death. (Law, 1922). The poem tells us the story from the point of view of a solitary mourner lamenting the loss of his wife who was taken away *"by a wind that blew out of a cloud by night"* (Poe, 1849). The mourner remarks on how they loved each other with a "*love that was more than love*" in a Kingdom by the Sea, claiming how the wind that had taken his beautiful Annabel Lee was sent by angels in heaven who were envious of their love. He also claims that their soul could never be separated because:

> the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
>
> Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.
>
> And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
>
> Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

(Poe, 1849).

In the miniseries, Annabel Lee, portrayed by actress Katy Parker, is Roderick Usher's ex-wife and mother of his two oldest kids. Annabel is allegedly believed to be Roderick's true love, who separated from him after

discovering Roderick's plan to own Fortunato Pharmaceutical. Following the divorce, Annabel could not accept the separation from her kids who decided to leave her for their father following Roderick's newfound wealth after his promotion as CEO of Fortunato. Like the protagonist of Poe's poem, we learn that Roderick's ex-wife died years before, likely suicidal following the events mentioned above. The poem is recited by both, young and old Roderick Usher on different occasions which we will analyse in the discussion section.

### THE CITY IN THE SEA

"The City in the Sea" was published in the form now available in 1845. The poem explores many themes highly related to those of the miniseries, including destruction, death and sin. Two unfinished versions of the poem appeared prior to its final publication with the titles "The Doomed City" and "The City of Sin". (*The Poe Museum,* 2024) The poem tells us about a city where "*Death has reared himself a throne*" and where everyone no matter if good or bad "*have gone to their eternal rest.*" (Poe, 1845) No light illuminates the city but a light from the "*lurid sea*" which is usually very still. Something changes towards the end when the air starts to stir and the water to wave, till the city begins to sink till

> Down, down that town shall settle hence,
>
> Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
>
> Shall do it reverence

(Poe, 1845)

Verna recites The City in the Sea while confronting Madeline in the Usher's childhood home in her final days. Unlike Annabel Lee, The City in The See is recited on one occasion only. We will analyse it in the discussion section.

## III. METHOD

The analysis will be pursued following a qualitative approach. Poems will be analysed individually, and the original English version will be compared to the Italian dubbing through a detailed discourse analysis. The original version and the dubbed one will be transcribed exactly as they are recited in The Fall of the House of Usher and copied in this paper to be consulted. Studies on translation, poetry translation and audiovisual translation will support the analysis. The focus will be whether the poems have been translated literally or adapted after the dubbing process. The results will also be contextualised considering the nature of the scenes in which the poems are

recited and whether or not the lip movement is seen when these are recited.

## IV.    DISCUSSION

Translating a text from a source language to a target one always implies an effort for the translator to find the best strategy to deal with elements such as cultural, references, specific linguistic characteristics and expressions strictly tied to cultural elements. (Chiaro, 2008). However, challenges can vary depending on the type of text the translator is working on. This paper will analyse two sub-categories of translation, poetry translation and dubbing.

Poetry translation is widely known to be one of the most challenging subcategories of translation, of which translatability has been historically highly debated among scholars. Poems usually do not have official translations, and many translated versions of one poem can be found, including the Italian versions of Annabel Lee and The City in the Sea. Compared to other kinds of translation, poetry translation is often considered to be tailored for translators having high critical and special writing abilities as a translated poem must be poetry itself and it "is difficult, cryptic, ambiguous and exhibits a special relationship between form and meaning" (Boase-Beier, 1998).

Dubbing is a sub-category of audiovisual translation. Audiovisual translation refers to that typology of translation which aims at the translation of original dialogues of audiovisual products, namely, those products that communicate their message through both, the visual and the acoustic channels. (Perego, 2005). Many are the typologies of audiovisual translation, with the most popular being dubbing and subtitling. The focus of this article is on dubbing which is characterized by major challenges compared to other forms of audiovisual translation. Dubbing implies that the original text is translated into the target language, registered and then added to the movie so that it substitutes the dialogues in the source language. Dubbing is tendentially more expensive and time-consuming. As for poetry translation, dubbing will determine a major consideration and effort by the translator that goes beyond the translatability of cultural and linguistic elements. The original dialogue may be subjected to major changes considering their subordination to lip synchronisation. Furthermore, it is necessary to maintain coherence with scenes and sounds, elements that cannot be modified within the dubbing process. (Diaz-Cintas, 1999; Perego, 2005)

Seeing the stated evidence, translating and dubbing poetry will require considerable effort by the translator, who must translate poems and adapt them following the rules

and variants one must consider within the dubbing process. As anticipated above, no official Italian translation exists for Poe's work. The Italian dubbing of the two poems will now be transcribed to detect the strategy used to create an adequate transposition of the source text into the dubbed version. The focus will be whether the poems have been translated literally or adapted after the dubbing process. The results will also be contextualised considering the nature of the scenes in which the poems are recited and whether the lip movement is seen when these are recited. In this section, the text in the original English version is transcribed and compared to the Italian dubbing, while the analysis will be discussed in the following section. The underlined verses are those that are recited with visible lip movement.

ANNABEL LEE

The poem is recited on multiple occasions during the miniseries. We first hear it recited by a young Roderick, displaying his love for Annabel during their time together. The poem is also recited later in the miniseries by older Roderick while remembering the now-gone Annabel. For this reason, the poem will be divided into 4 different sections named after the episodes in which the transcribed stanza is recited.

*Episode 2 – The Masque of the Red Death*

The first stanza of Annabel Lee is recited, as anticipated, by a young Roderick during his time with Annabel when the two are still much in love with each other. This is the first time we are introduced to the character of Roderick's former wife. In this scene, Annabel encourages Roderick to leave Fortunato, of which he was an employee at the time, after a humiliating work meeting with mounting discontent of Roderick's twin sister Madeline.

*Original English Version*

**Young Roderick**: It was many and many a year ago,

In a kingdom by the sea,

That a maiden there lived whom you may know

By the name of Annabel Lee;

And this maiden she lived with no other thought

Than to love and be loved by me.

*Italian Dubbed Version*

**Young Roderick**: Orson molti e molti anni,

Che in un regno in riva al mare,

Viveva una fanciulla

che con nome <u>chiamerete di Annabel Lee;</u>

<u>E viveva questa fanciulla con non altro pensiero</u>

<u>Che d'amar me e d'essere amata da me</u>

*Episode 3 - Murder at the Rue Morgue*

       The second stanza is recited by a young Roderick within the same period as the first while remembering his time with Annabel. In this scene, Roderick recites the stanza after Annabel is the only person showing him support for the tiny promotion and bonus he received after Fortunato's CEO Rufus Griswold stole his idea for the Ligodone pills.

*Original English Version*

**Young Roderick:** <u>I was a child and she was a child,</u>

<u>In this kingdom by the sea,</u>

<u>But we loved</u> with a love that was more than love—

<u>I and my Annabel Lee—</u>

With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven

Coveted her and me.

*Italian Dubbed Version*

**Young Roderick:** <u>Io ero un bambino e lei era una bambina,</u>

 <u>In questo regno in riva al mare,</u>

<u>Ma ci</u> amavamo di un amore che era più che amore,

<u>Io e Annabel Lee.</u>

Un amore che i serafini alati del cielo

Invidiavano a lei e a me.

*Episode 7 - The Pit and the Pendulum*

       The third stanza of Annabel Lee is recited by present-day Roderick during his "confession" to Dupin in his and Madeline's childhood home. Roderick recites the stanza after Dupin claims that he managed to trust him thanks to his wife Annabel, seeing that such a good and trustful loved him, praising Annabel and wondering how she hung on so long with Roderick.

*Original English Version*

**Present-Day Roderick:** <u>And this was the reason that, long ago,</u>

<u>In this kingdom by the sea,</u>

<u>A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling</u>

<u>My beautiful Annabel Lee;</u>

<u>So that her highborn kinsmen came</u>

And bore her away from me,

<u>To shut her up in a sepulchre</u>

<u>In this kingdom by the sea.</u>

*Italian Dubbed Version*

**Present-Day Roderick:** <u>E per questa ragione anni orsono,</u>

<u>In quel regno in riva al mare,</u>

<u>Un vento soffiato da una nube raggelò</u>

<u>La mia bella Annabel Lee;</u>

<u>Così vennero i suoi nobili cari</u>

La portarono via da me,

<u>Per chiuderla in un sepolcro</u>

<u>In questo regno in riva al mare</u>

*Episode 8 – The Raven*

       In the same way as the third one, the fifth and sixth stanzas of Annabel Lee are recited by present-day Roderick during his confession. The fifth stanza is recited by Roderick while remembering to see Annabel sitting in the church during the funeral of their kids. The seventh and final stanza is recited right after the former spouses talk, with Annabel claiming that Roderick killed their kids twice by bribing them to want to be with him thanks to his wealth. It is at this moment that we find out about the alleged suicide committed by Annabel, who could not live after his children chose Roderick instead of her. After we see Annabel approaching his kids' coffins and a flashback of a fight between the former spouses following Roderick's sabotage of the trial against Fortunato, present-day Roderick recites the final stanza when images of a devastated Annabel at their kids' side are shown.

*Original English Version*

**Present-Day Roderick:** <u>But our love was stronger by far than the love</u>

<u>Of those who were older than we—</u>

<u>Of many far wiser than we—</u>

And neither the angels in Heaven above

Nor the demons down under the sea

Can ever dissever my soul from the soul

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

(…)

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side

Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,

In her sepulchre there by the sea—

In her tomb by the sounding sea.


*Italian Dubbed Version*

**Present-Day Roderick:** Ma il nostro Amore era molto più forte

Che l'amor d'altri di noi più maturi,

Che l'amor d'altri di noi più saggi.

E né gli angeli lassù nel cielo

Né i demoni da giù nel profondo mare

Mai potran separare la mia anima

Dall'anima della bella Annabel Lee;

(…)

Giacche mai splende luna che non mi porti sogni

Della bella Annabel Lee;

Né mai sorgono stelle che io veda i fulgenti occhi

Della bella Annabel Lee.

E così ogni notte io giaccio al fianco del mio amore

Mio amore mia vita e mia sposa,

Nel suo sepolcro in riva al mare,

Nella sua tomba su risonante mare.


THE CITY IN THE SEA

Is Verna who recites the poem The City in the Sea after being confronted by Madeline in the Usher's childhood home. After an attempt by Madeline to renegotiate the terms of the deal she and Roderick made with Verna on New Year's Eve of 1979, Verna recites the poem she claimed to have written to offer "clarity" on how things cannot be changed to Madeline.


*Original English Version*

**Verna:** Lo! Death has reared himself a throne

In a strange city lying alone

Far down within the dim West,

Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best

Have gone to their eternal rest.

No rays from the holy Heaven come down

On the long night-time of that town;

But light from out the lurid sea

Streams up the turrets silently.

Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—

Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—

Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers

Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—

Resignedly beneath the sky

The melancholy waters lie.

But lo, a stir is in the air!

The wave—there is a movement there!

The waves have now a redder glow—

The hours are breathing faint and low—

And when, amid no earthly moans,

Down, down that town shall settle hence,

Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,

Shall do it reverence.


*Italian Dubbed Version*

**Verna:** Ecco! Morte ha elevato a sé stessa un trono,

In una strana città che giace sola

Laggiù nell'occidente fosco,

Dove i buoni e cattivi, i peggiori e i migliori

Sono andati al loro eterno riposo.

Non un raggio dal sacro cielo discende

Sulla lunga notte di quella città;

Sa un chiarore dal mare spaventoso

Scorre silenziosamente su per le torri.

Su cupole e pinnacoli, sui saloni regali,

Sui templi su mura babiloniche,

Su ombrosi pergolati obliati da tempo,

Di edera scolpita e fiori di pietra.

Rassegnativi ai piedi del cielo

Le malinconiche acque ristagnano.

Ma ecco, c'è un fremito nell'aria.

Un'onda, qualcosa si muove laggiù!

Le onde adesso emanano un più rosso bagliore.

Le ore respirano deboli e sommesse,

 E quando in fine tra non terreni lamenti,

In fondo, in fondo quella città finirà per posarsi,

L'inferno innalzandosi da mille troni,

a essa farà la riverenza.

## V.    RESULTS

*Annabel Lee*

In the miniseries, only five of the six stanzas of Annabel Lee are recited by Roderick, with the fourth one omitted. The poem is translated quite literally. Regarding the first stanza, a slight change was made to the phrasing of the verse "whom you may know By the name of Annabel Lee which was rendered as "whom you will call by the name of Annabell Lee". The dubbing of the second stanza was also interpreted slightly differently in the verses "I and my Annabel I and my Annabel Lee—With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven". I and my Annabel Lee was translated simply as "Me and Annabel Lee" omitting the possessive my of the original version, while in the second cited verse, Heaven has been rendered with the antonomasia "of the skies". The third stanza is translated literally with no major changes to be pointed out. Two slight vocabulary modifications can be detected in the fifth stanza. The first one regards the verse "Of those who were older than we". The word "old" was translated with the word "mature", having a literal meaning different from the original word used in English. However, "mature" can also be used in Italian to describe someone older. The final stanza was also literally translated. The word "darling" was rendered as "love" in Italian. Darling is usually more associable with adjectives such as "Cara" or "Tesoro" in the Italian language, however, it does not change the meaning of the verse.

Overall, the poem maintains its original meaning and form with little vocabulary modifications that do not determine major changes.

*The City in the Sea*

The City in The Sea is originally composed of four stanzas, in the miniseries Verna recites verses from three of them, precisely from the first, second and fourth one. The stanzas are not entirely recited. Regarding the first stanza, Verna recites the verses one to five. The stanza is translated quite literally. The more dated terms have been rendered with words of similar or identical meaning. The

exclamation "Lo!" in the first verse, which corresponds to a modern "oh!", was translated with the term "ecco!" which even though is a term still now in use in the Italian language, carries the same meaning as "Lo" aiming to direct attention to something. The verb "reared" past of "to rear" is also present in the first verse, which indicates that bringing up something to a higher level was translated with the verb "elevare", having a similar meaning in the Italian language. Finally, the word "dim" in the third verse, which refers to the light of a determined object being not clear or obscure, was rendered with the word "fosco" in Italian, a dated word carrying a similar meaning which was used to indicate something being greyish or dark.

The second stanza is also rendered quite literally. The verses recited by Verna are verses one to four, six to nine, thirteen and fourteen. In the dubbing of the first verse, we have a rendering of the word Heaven which was also detected in the dubbing of Annabelle Lee. Heaven is translated into "sacro Cielo" meaning "sacred sky", instead of the Italian literal translation "paradiso". A worth mentioning rendering is the translation of the word "lurid" referring to the sea in the third verse. The word lurid in English is an adjective associated with something unpleasant often referring to the colour shade. In the Italian dubbed version lurid was translated with "spaventoso", meaning "scary" in Italian. The list of buildings and structures cited in verses six to nine are all translated literally, with the ones in the Italian version being rendered with words commonly used to this day except "pergolato" which is the rendering of "bowers". The word long forgotten was rendered with the dated term "obliati", which has the same meaning but is not commonly used in today's Italian. In the fourteenth verse, the verb "lie" which refers to the waters was rendered with the Italian "ristagnano", which could be translated with the verb "to stagnate". Overall, it does not change the original meaning of the verse.

The fourth and final stanza also presents a quite literal translation. The verses recited by Verna are verses one and two and verses seven to twelve. In the first verse, we have the same rendering of the exclamation "Lo!" that could be detected in the first stanza, translated into Italian with the corresponding contemporary exclamation "Ecco". No elements need to be pointed out in the remaining verses recited, the translation results quite literally as anticipated, with both versions presenting a highly poetic language not commonly used in contemporary English and Italian.

## VI.    CONCLUSION

This paper analysed the Italian dubbing of the poems "Annabel Lee" and "The City in the Sea". Considering that no official Italian translation exists for

both poems, these have been compared paying particular attention to the detection of the level of literary in which they have been rendered in Italian, the influence of lip-synchronization in the translation highlighting the extract of the verses that are recited with visible lip movement and whether the overall meaning and coherence with the scene differ between the two versions.

Overall, the two examined poems have been translated literary with no or little changes, mostly relative to vocabulary choices. Changing in phrasing is rare and never modifies the original meaning of the verses. The influence of lip movement was minimal. As we can see in the above sections many of the verses of the two poems are recited without visible lip movement. However, there is no evident difference in how the verses with visible lip movement were rendered compared to those where the lips of the character reciting the poem were not visible.

Taking the stated evidence into account, the Italian version of both poems was rendered in a way that maintains the original nuance of the meaning of the original versions. Both poems maintained a poetic language and coherence to the scene.

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# The *Joker* Unmasked: A Literary Psychoanalytic Study

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*Abstract*—*Psychoanalysis primarily concerns itself with literature through the representation of the conscious and unconscious minds of characters within storylines. Sigmund Freud's theories are often reflected in literary works, using concepts such as the pleasure principle associated with the id, the reality principle linked to the ego, castration anxiety, and defense mechanisms. Other literary theories, like reader-response theory, focus on how texts are read and interpreted by readers. Norman N. Holland suggests that understanding a literary work involves not only reading the text but also considering the author's biography, if known, to grasp how they create their masterpieces. Literary psychoanalysis explores the psychological and emotional aspects the author embeds in their works. Even though many authors are remarkably discreet about their past, their experiences may surface through recurring themes or phrases in their writings. Joker is a film released in 2019, directed by Todd Phillips and starring Joaquin Phoenix, who won the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role. This paper conducts a psychoanalytic study of the character Joker, whose real name is Arthur Fleck. Arthur is a stand-up comedian aspiring to be the world's most famous comedian, despite suffering from a medical condition that causes sudden and uncontrollable laughter, compounded by traumatic events in his childhood.*

*Keywords*— *Freudian Concepts, Physical Abuse, Brain Damage, Defense Mechanism, Society*

## Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a combination of two disciplines, psychology and psychotherapy, that studies the unconscious mind and makes it conscious. It aims to understand abstract and unconscious aspects of the mind, such as feelings, memories, and thoughts, some of which may negatively impact individuals' lives. This field was developed in the 19th century by the Austrian father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, who was born in 1856 and died in 1939. By merging these two fields, psychoanalysis seeks to cure patients and help relieve their psychological distress. Freud's process of analyzing and interpreting a person's life involves delving deeply into their childhood memories and dreams to gain a better understanding of their issues and subsequently treat them (Lipner et al.).

## Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism

Psychoanalysis in literary criticism aims to study the author's personal background and experiences and how they are applied in literary works through the characters using Freudian methods. Freud often refers to literary texts as evidence supporting his theories. For example, we may consider Hamlet's inner conflict or Brontë's discussion on the role of the mother. As psychoanalytic literary criticism involves the personal and historical background of the author reflected in their work, the author will use their prior knowledge in writing, which encourages readers to investigate these authors' backgrounds. Some authors, nevertheless, are stigmatized and afraid of revealing their pasts, so they remain conservative about their lives and ensure they are not revealed. This compels readers to investigate an author's history through their works using analytical methods such as structuralism and deconstruction (Schmitz, 2007).

## Pleasure Principle and Reality Principle

Sigmund Freud sheds light on three major concepts: the pleasure principle, the reality principle, and castration anxiety. The pleasure principle refers to responding to human instincts and gratifications. The

purpose of the pleasure principle is to detach from the harsh realities that might cause significant suffering. The reality principle, on the other hand, is the return to the real world by confronting the current situations an individual faces. Finally, castration anxiety arises from experiences of oppression, prohibition, authority, and rules (Schmitz, 2007).

## Id, ego, and Superego

Additionally, the three components that intersect with the basic Freudian principles are the id, ego, and superego. The id generally correlates with our instinctual behaviors and desires. For example, we feel pleased with the food we chew or the beverages we drink because it is purely instinctual to eat and drink. Another example is sexual desires, which play a role in the id, evolving with the pleasure principle. In fact, our id is linked with the pleasure principle to increase pleasure and decrease pain.

The reality principle is directly linked to the ego. The ego tells us that we must be mature and learn to endure the pain we go through. It is preferable not to use distractions to avoid pain. It is more like giving instructions to the id on what to do or not to do. Sigmund Freud, in fact, likened the id to a horse and the ego to a horse rider. The horse roams aimlessly, and the role, or rather the responsibility, of the horse rider is to guide the horse where it should or should not go. To clarify further, the ego works as a mediator between the id and the superego, standing in the middle and tending toward reality.

Finally, the superego largely deals with judging others, morals, concepts, and societal norms. It is about being upstanding, which means one aspires not to acquire realistic standards but idealistic standards. The superego works to suppress all unwanted desires from the id while perfecting our conduct. This might begin by the age of five and is socially acquired through imitating the actions of parents, adults, and grown-ups around us.

We must realize that each of these three components does not stand on its own. They are practical and dynamic, acting as necessary, as proclaimed by Sigmund Freud. He introduced the concept of "ego strength," which suggests that the ego can mediate between the id and the superego and prevent either the id or the superego from exceeding its limits (Ostow 1119).

## Defense Mechanism

A defense mechanism was first mentioned by Sigmund Freud in his paper "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defense" (1894). It is a collection of mental processes that lean towards battling all the conflicts in a human being's unconscious. Freud explains the concepts that oppose one another in the unconscious, which may cause someone to feel unconfident and provoke fear and anxiety. A common and major defense mechanism is sublimation, which involves channeling unpleasant events into various activities such as physical exercises, work projects, or home tasks. For instance, when family members experience the death of a parent, some may occupy themselves with tasks to avoid being overwhelmed by grief. Psychoanalysts believe that defense mechanisms are highly essential in one's mind and do not indicate that an individual is suffering from any psychological disorder (Britannica, 2020).

Repression, as a kind of defense mechanism, is an indispensable concept in Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Repression involves the accumulation of memories, feelings, and thoughts that are stored in the unconscious and may distress individuals. These memories may include childhood experiences of sexual harassment, physical abuse, and verbal abuse. The impact is significant when these repressed memories attempt to surface into the conscious mind, affecting individuals' ability to live fully and engage in new experiences like marriage, work, or other relationships. Individuals unconsciously avoid these experiences due to repressed fears (Britannica, 2020).

Repression differs slightly from suppression. Repression involves unpleasant memories stored in the unconscious, which individuals, especially as young children, cannot recall or recognize. Suppression, on the other hand, is the conscious effort to push unwanted memories away from one's thoughts. The common aspect of both repression and suppression is their noticeable effect on behavior.

## Reader-Response Theory

A theory related to psychoanalytic literary criticism is the reader-response theory. Reader-response theory focuses on the reader's response to a particular text or literary work. The essence of this theory is that everyone has their own unique experience with a literary work. Person A's reaction to a text can be completely different from Person B's. An experiment by the American critic Norman N. Holland, described in his book *Readers Reading* (1975), involved giving the same literary work to five of his students. Each of the five students had a reaction or response that differed from the others. Holland states: "A reader responds to a literary work by assimilating it to his own psychological processes, that is, to his search for successful solutions within his identity theme to the multiple demands, both inner and outer, on his ego."

Reader-response theory helps us understand ourselves better through the texts we read. For instance, when a minor character in a story is bullied, a reader who has experienced bullying might have their memory

triggered and start sympathizing with this character, despite the character's minor role in the storyline. This demonstrates that reader-response theory is subjective. Its foundation lies in the idea that a particular literary work has many aesthetic values depending on the different readers' perspectives. Holland emphasizes not only how we see life from our psychological, emotional, and personal experiences but also how we interpret literary works through the experiences that shape our lives and become reflected in the texts.

Norman N. Holland defines the interpretation of a text as a process with three phases. The first phase is the defense mode, where we become psychologically aware of the threat posed by a character that reminds us of our painful personal experiences. The second phase is the fantasy mode, where we find explanations and justifications that help us calm our interpretation of characters similar to ourselves. Finally, the transformation mode combines the first two steps and abstracts them, so our reading of a particular text does not become distorted by our personal lives. However, we cannot completely hide our personal influences. The goal is to avoid an emotional response to a text, which could lead others to believe that our criticisms are biased.

Holland also believes that studying authors is essential, but with a slight difference: analyzing authors as readers, not just as writers. This involves studying their biographies, letters, and childhood events. For example, when someone reads Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea*, they might not just think about Antoine Roquentin as a purposeless character but also contemplate Sartre's own experiences. Events such as Sartre being held captive by the Nazi forces, his experience as an orphan, and his reflections on life's painful experiences provide context for the themes in *Nausea*. Hence, Holland aims for an empathic merger with the author, seeking to fulfill our psychological desires when interpreting a text (Mambrol 2018).

**Plot Summary and Characters of *Joker***

Arthur Fleck is a clown who works in the fictional city of Gotham. He aspires to become the world's most famous stand-up comedian. Arthur suffers from a mental condition that causes sudden, frequent, and uncontrollable laughter, which may be offensive to people around him. The first time this happens in the movie is when Arthur tries to make an African-American kid laugh by making amusing facial expressions, but the kid's mother thinks Arthur is bothering her child. Arthur then gives her a card that explains his medical condition in an attempt to inform her that he does not mean to be rude or impudent toward her or her child.

The movie starts with Arthur putting on makeup to advertise for a shop in the city by holding a sign. A group of impolite kids approaches him and bullies him. Suddenly, one of them steals the sign and runs away, forcing Arthur to chase them. They turn into an alley and stop. Arthur runs faster when he sees them not moving. He suddenly gets hit by one of them using the sign. After he falls down, the kids beat and kick him viciously and mercilessly.

Arthur later returns to his workplace. He struggles to widen his boots while bruises are marked on his back and the rest of his body. His colleague Randall appears, expressing his sadness about what happened earlier to Arthur. Randall suggests that Arthur should carry a gun to protect himself from the savages on the street so he will not be beaten again and can protect himself. Arthur politely refuses to accept the gun, but Randall insists, convincing Arthur that his safety is a priority. As a friend, Randall will stand by his side. Then, Gary, a dwarf who is verbally abused at work by being made fun of for his height, tells Arthur that Hoyt wants to see him. Hoyt is Arthur's boss and the one who runs the shop. He asks Arthur to get the sign back from Kenny's music store. Arthur explains that the sign was stolen from him and taken by force. Hoyt does not believe him and says it does not make sense to get beaten for a sign. As Hoyt tells Arthur off and threatens him, saying his employees do not feel comfortable around him, Arthur hopelessly smiles because he cannot believe how people tend to be rude and merciless.

When Arthur goes back to his apartment, his neighbor Sophie, along with her daughter, runs in a hurry to catch the elevator. Arthur puts his foot in to keep the door open for his neighbor. Inside the elevator, they start talking. Arthur becomes infatuated with her, which makes him follow her wherever she goes. Sophie notices this. She later knocks on Arthur's door to ask if he is the one who keeps following her. Arthur admits it. He indirectly asks her out by telling her that he performs stand-up comedy shows. Sophie agrees to come.

Arthur goes to a children's hospital to entertain kids. As he moves, dances, and hits the floor, his gun, the one Randall gave him earlier, falls onto the ground. Everyone is shocked. Hoyt immediately calls Arthur and asks why he brought a gun into a children's hospital. Arthur is forced to lie to keep his job, saying it is a prop for his act. Hoyt tells Arthur that Randall said it was Arthur who asked him to buy the gun. Arthur is shocked because he was the one who was offered the gun by Randall. Why would Randall tell on Arthur then? Eventually, Arthur is fired.

On his way back home, on the train, a group of white-collar Wayne Enterprise businessmen harass a girl. It starts with them asking her if she wants some fries. The bullying begins when one of them throws fries piece by piece at her. Arthur's condition is triggered, and he starts laughing. The men begin harassing Arthur verbally and later

physically. The scenario of beating Arthur is replayed on the train. He is kicked mercilessly by these high-social-class individuals. This is the limit for Arthur's endurance. He goes wild and explodes. He shoots one of them in the head, killing him. Another is shot in the heart and chest. The third man runs away, but Arthur shoots him in the leg. As the man limps and tries to escape the subway, Arthur shoots him in the back, causing him to fall. Arthur then follows him as the man crawls to escape. Arthur shoots him three more times in the back, putting him out of his misery. Arthur flees, devastated yet relieved, marking the starting point of his transformation into the Joker.

Arthur returns to his normal life, seemingly undisturbed by the murders. Instead, he views them as a victory over the upper-class society in general and against Thomas Wayne in particular. This becomes evident when Thomas Wayne appears on TV to comment on the murders. Penny Fleck eagerly waits to see Thomas Wayne, agreeing with every word that comes out of his mouth. When the wealthiest man in Gotham announces his candidacy for mayor, he describes hiding behind a mask as a cowardly action and criticizes the lower-class residents of Gotham as "nothing but clowns." This makes Arthur laugh.

When Arthur returns home from an unsuccessful comedy show, he comes across a letter his mother wrote to Thomas Wayne, claiming that Arthur is his illegitimate child and should be taken care of in case anything happens to her. Arthur and Penny start a quarrel. Penny hides in the bathroom, complaining that she is fed up with Arthur and cannot endure it anymore. Arthur calms her down and says he is not mad at her; he just needs to know the truth. She tells him they were in love while she was working for Thomas Wayne, but he was afraid of people knowing the truth, which would disrupt his public image. Arthur decides to visit Wayne Manor to learn the truth from Thomas Wayne himself.

When Arthur reaches Wayne's gigantic mansion, he finds the young Bruce, who will later become Batman, and starts performing magic tricks to please him. Alfred, the butler at Thomas Wayne's house, appears and asks Arthur to leave and get away from Bruce. Arthur politely asks to see Thomas Wayne, introducing himself and acknowledging that Penny Fleck is his mother. Alfred is shocked. Arthur continues, saying he knows what happened between them. Alfred states that his mother is delusional and sick. Arthur becomes enraged and chokes Alfred. After seeing the terrified reaction on Bruce's face, he releases Alfred and runs away.

Arthur returns home to find an ambulance next to the building, taking his mother to the hospital. He gets into the ambulance to escort his mother along with the

paramedics to the hospital. They do not have the slightest idea about what happened to her. Later, as Arthur waits outside the hospital, two detectives approach him to interrogate him about the murders that happened in the subway. He avoids them without arousing suspicion and goes to see his mother. Sophie waits with Arthur and calms him. On the TV, the Murray Franklin show starts. Arthur is inspired by Murray Franklin. However, Franklin begins the show with a clip of Arthur and starts making fun of him in front of the public. Arthur becomes angrily disappointed with Franklin, who he once looked up to.

Arthur goes to a cinema where a riot and protest occur outside the building where Thomas Wayne is watching a Charlie Chaplin film with the bourgeoisie. All of the proletarians scream against Thomas Wayne, chanting "Down with Wayne" repeatedly. Arthur infiltrates the building, disguises himself as a worker, and intentionally comes across Thomas Wayne to learn the truth, be sympathized with, and accepted by his father. Arthur meets Wayne eventually, but does not know how to begin the conversation. Arthur introduces himself. Thomas Wayne instantly recognizes him, saying he is the one who visited earlier. Wayne proclaims that he is not Arthur's father and that Arthur is adopted. Arthur does not believe it, but Thomas Wayne continues, saying Penny Fleck adopted him while working for them and was later committed to Arkham State Hospital, a mental institution, and asylum. Arthur goes mad, and his condition flares up. He asks why people behave so rudely, questioning, "What is the matter with you people?" As his uncontrollable laughter continues, Thomas Wayne punches Arthur in the face and threatens to kill him if he touches his son again.

As Arthur goes back home, he acts hopelessly and hides inside his refrigerator after emptying it. The next day, Arthur receives a call from a staff member of the Murray Franklin Show, inviting him to the show after the huge response to the clip that was played earlier. Arthur, calmly surprised, accepts the invitation.

Arthur decides to go to Arkham State Hospital to verify the rumors about his mother. He visits the receptionist in the records office, who brings out an old box with files kept for over thirty years. As the worker reads the file aloud, the diagnoses mentioned include delusional psychosis and narcissistic personality disorder. The worker stops reading further once he notices the innocent reaction on Arthur's face, asking him to bring proper forms or his mother's signature to release the file. Arthur forcibly takes the file and runs away. Hiding in the hospital stairwell, he reads about his mother's past. The documents reveal that Arthur was adopted and that Ms. Fleck allowed physical abuse on Arthur, causing the brain damage responsible for

his condition. In the film, Penny Fleck denies these accusations, claiming Thomas Wayne fabricated them to protect his public image. Arthur laughs and sobs simultaneously, marking a turning point in his personality.

Arthur goes to Sophie's apartment in a disoriented state. Sophie is shocked to see him in her living room and asks him to leave, worried about her daughter. Arthur leaves instantly and goes to his apartment, where he laughs uncontrollably.

The next day, Arthur visits the hospital to see his mother for the last time. He tells her about his past mistreatment. When Penny expresses happiness, Arthur responds, "Happy. Hmm. I haven't been happy one minute of my entire life. You know what's funny? You know what makes me laugh. I used to think my life was a tragedy. But now, I realize it is a comedy" (Joker, 2019). He then smothers her to death with a pillow, making her his first victim of revenge.

Arthur begins preparations for The Murray Franklin Show, obsessing over the idea of becoming a guest. He imagines receiving a warm welcome from Franklin and exchanging fame and fortune. However, this changes after Franklin mocks Arthur by playing a video of his failed stand-up routine. The show invites Arthur to lampoon him further.

While preparing, Randall and Gary, former colleagues, visit Arthur to offer condolences and bring a drink. Randall mentions the police investigation into the subway murders and asks if Arthur has been interrogated, seeking to align their stories. Arthur stabs Randall in the throat and eye, then repeatedly hits his head against the wall, killing him for betraying him about the gun. He spares Gary, who has always been kind to him.

Arthur heads to The Murray Franklin Show. On his way, he is chased by police but escapes into a train filled with clown-masked protesters. This camouflage helps him evade capture after the police are murdered on the train. At the studio, Murray Franklin and his manager Gene are shocked by Arthur's clown makeup, a symbol of the revolt. Arthur claims ignorance of the city's riots. On the show, Franklin mocks Arthur, who tells a dark joke about death and confesses to murdering Thomas Wayne's employees. Arthur criticizes the daily bullying, societal neglect, and Franklin's cruelty. As Franklin instructs Gene to call the police, Arthur shoots him in the head, sparking citywide riots.

Arthur gains many followers among the mistreated lower class. Amid the chaos, one follower kills Thomas Wayne and his wife in front of Bruce Wayne. Arthur, locked in a police car, enjoys the sight of the city in chaos. An ambulance, driven by a follower, crashes into the police car,

freeing Arthur. His followers gather around and embrace him. Arthur is eventually incarcerated in Arkham State Hospital, where he kills the social worker responsible for his case.

## Application and Analysis

The character of the Joker is inspired by Alan Moore's life. He wrote the graphic novel *Batman: The Killing Joke* (1988) along with Brian Bolland. Alan Moore's life shares similarities with Arthur Fleck's in *Joker*. Moore attended a grammar school coming from a poor neighborhood to study alongside richer classmates, where he experienced incidents that made him detest school and academic life due to attempts to enforce punctuality and obedience (Wikipedia contributors).

Freudian concepts like the pleasure principle (id), reality principle (ego), and defense mechanisms are applied in *Joker* in various scenes. Regarding the pleasure principle, Arthur seeks to please himself with unreal events to make his life more joyful and less painful. For example, he imagines a romantic relationship with his neighbor Sophie, who supports him in his stand-up comedy shows and stands by his side when his mother is in the hospital. However, after confronting his past at Arkham State Hospital, he realizes that his relationship with Sophie was a delusion, activating the reality principle and forcing him to face his real, lonely existence. Another example of the pleasure principle is his repeated dancing, which aims to relieve his suffering.

Arthur employs defense mechanisms when bullied physically. He occupies himself with his work and writing material, demonstrating sublimation. This defense mechanism recurs throughout the story, such as when Hoyt threatens to deduct Arthur's salary for not returning a sign, despite Arthur having been physically abused. Arthur's reaction, hitting bags of garbage, relieves his anger. Another defense mechanism is rationalization. When Randall asks Arthur about his bruises, Arthur dismisses it, saying, "It was just a bunch of kids. I should have left it alone." Randall insists, "No. They'll take everything from you if you do that," prompting Arthur to reluctantly accept a gun from Randall.

Repression occurs when Arthur reads his mother's file at the asylum. He learns he was physically abused by his mother's partners and witnessed his mother being battered. These memories had been repressed in Arthur's mind, and learning these facts contributes to his transformation into the Joker.

The extreme class divide in the story provokes grudge and hatred, especially for a character like Arthur, who should be treated for his medical condition. Arthur comments on the upper class's behavior and attitude in

various scenes. When he confronts Thomas Wayne, who tells him he is adopted, Arthur is shocked and tries to defend himself, denying the adoption:

> "Why are you saying this? I don't need you to tell me lies. I know it seems strange. I don't mean to make you uncomfortable. I don't know why everyone is so rude. And I don't know why you are. I don't want anything from you. Maybe a little bit of warmth, maybe a hug, Dad! How about just a little bit of decency? What is it with you people? You say that stuff about my mother." (*Joker*, 2019)

Another scene foreplays the unbalanced society is when Arthur is hosted by Murray Franklin and tells him how societies can drive someone mad by saying: "Comedy is subjective, Murray. Isn't that what they say? All of you, the system that knows so much, you decide what's right or wrong. What's real or what's made up. The same way you decide what's funny or not."

Reader-response theory is applied in *Joker* in the interpretation of the film. Some people suggest that all the actions of the Joker are not justified. Others believes that everything and everyone the Joker takes his revenge from on what he has gone through by the society is totally understandable and rightful. No one, in the film, has brought justice to Arthur, which makes him seek it by himself.

The character of the Joker is inspired by Alan Moore's life. He wrote the graphic novel *Batman: The Killing Joke* (1988) along with Brian Bolland. The life of Alan Moore, to a certain extent, is similar to the life of Arthur Fleck in *Joker*. Alan Moore attended a Grammar School coming from a poor neighborhood to study with richer colleagues. He experienced some incidents in the school. For instance, he explained that there were attempts for punctuality and obedience, which made him detest school and the academic life (*Alan Moore Fan Site*).

## CONCLUSION

This paper examines Freudian concepts applied in *Joker* throughout different scenes. In fact, the Joker can resemble a number of individuals in different societies whose their conditions are not respected. Humanity is essential in so many societies. One would experience some Freudian concepts like id to unwind the pressure on himself or herself. They might develop the habit of superego on

himself including the others. Defense mechanism with its many kinds might not last for a long time. This is why people should be aware of treating others properly like Arthur says in the show: "Everybody just yells and screams at each other. Nobody's civil anymore. Nobody thinks what it's like to be the other guy." (*Joker*, 2019) When peoples from different societies behave properly towards people with special conditions, love will be provided by these people and will make us thrive.

A Marxist analysis of *Joker* reveals the stark class struggles and systemic inequalities that drive Arthur Fleck to madness. The film vividly illustrates the consequences of an exploitative capitalist society where the rich get richer and the poor are left to fend for themselves. Thomas Wayne's dismissive attitude towards the lower classes and the harsh realities of Gotham's neglected neighborhoods highlight the alienation and resentment that fuel Arthur's transformation. Moreover, a deeper psychoanalytic exploration could further unravel Arthur's descent into madness, examining how societal neglect exacerbates his fragile psyche. His hallucinations and delusions can be seen as manifestations of a deeply fractured mind, grappling with a world that offers no solace. Finally, from the perspective of absurdism, Arthur's journey reflects the search for meaning in an indifferent universe. His declaration that his life is a comedy, not a tragedy, echoes the absurdist belief that life's inherent meaninglessness can lead to either despair or liberation. The Joker's laughter, in this context, becomes a symbol of defiance against a world that refuses to acknowledge his existence.

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# The Approaches to Teaching English Majors Reading in China: A Case Study of the Comprehensive English Course

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*Abstract*— *This paper explores the challenges associated with teaching reading to English majors in China, concentrating on the course designated as "Comprehensive English" or "Intensive Reading". Through historical analysis and critical synthesis, it identifies two significant obstacles in the prevailing teaching approaches. First, a discrepancy is noted between the course's static positioning and the dynamically shifting educational objectives. Second, the prevailing approaches such as TBLT, CBI, and POA are found to be misaligned with the specialized educational needs of English majors, thus requiring modification to align with the academic aspirations of English as a discipline. To address the first challenge, the paper advocates a broader scope for the course, extending beyond mere language skills training to cultivate language proficiency, humanistic literacy, and establishes connections with disciplinary knowledge. For the second challenge, a refined approach is presented, assimilating strengths from both traditional and contemporary approaches, and focusing on critical concepts such as learner autonomy, the flipped classroom model, and Barrett's taxonomy of levels of understanding. This customized approach provides efficacious procedures, aligned with the academic goals of English majors, offering implications for teachers and curriculum designers engaged in English major programs in China.*

*Keywords*— *English major education in China; Comprehensive English course; Intensive Reading course; learner autonomy; flipped learning; Barrett's taxonomy of levels of understanding*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In China, the teaching of reading to English majors consists of two distinct courses: Comprehensive English (Intensive Reading) and English Reading (Extensive Reading). The former, as its name implies, emphasizes the acquisition of essential language knowledge and the cultivation of fundamental language skills through the careful selection of reading materials. On the other hand, the latter course places a primary emphasis on the development of reading skills through extensive reading practice. The Comprehensive English course, with a history spanning over 70 years and the highest number of credit hours, holds a significant position within the undergraduate curriculum for English majors. As a major

course, it plays a crucial role in the teaching of reading to English majors, shaping their language proficiency and overall language education. Consequently, investigating the present challenges and potential solutions associated with this course can provide valuable insights for the reform of related courses.

The traditional method of teaching intensive reading, implemented since the 1950s and 1960s, followed a structured approach that primarily focused on discussing the content of the entire text and subsequently explaining the vocabulary and grammar points (Shu, 2005:3). The main goal of this approach was to facilitate students' comprehensive understanding of the text's meaning while addressing specific language components. This traditional teaching method has faced criticism for prioritizing teaching rather than guiding students in their learning process, and placing excessive emphasis on written language. Moreover, the course primarily focuses on text-based content and adopts an input-based approach, which is predominantly teacher-centered in nature.

New language teaching approaches have been adopted and transformed over time. As noted by Wen (2020:3-4), the development of foreign language education approaches in China has been characterized by a dominant trend of "improvement and transformation," which has had a widespread impact and lasting influence. These changes have occurred in a chronological sequence and encompassed major teaching approaches such as the text-centered approach, Audio-Lingual Method, Communicative Approach, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Content-Based Instruction (CBI). New approaches specifically designed for the tertiary level have also emerged in China, including The Length Approach (Write to Learn) (Wang, 2000; Wang, 2017), and the production-oriented approach (POA) (Wen 2020).

Despite the introduction of these new approaches, the influence of traditional intensive reading practices remains significant. This influence can be attributed not only to the emulation of Soviet teaching practices but also to its alignment with behaviorist and structuralist perspectives in language teaching, as well as its resonance with ancient Chinese philology (Qu, 2019:73). As a result, in some contexts, the practice of breaking down texts into isolated vocabulary and grammar components still persists, even as

foreign language teaching methods have evolved over the years.

It is worth noting that while various approaches have been introduced and practiced at different times, the earlier ones have not been replaced by the later ones; rather, they coexist, resulting in an interconnected pattern of approaches. However, despite the coexistence of these approaches, the actual teaching practice of the intensive reading course has not significantly progressed beyond the confines of traditional approaches (Wen, 2008), and the methods employed do not fundamentally differ from those used in general language schools (Qu & Chen, 2018). This lack of clear progression and the absence of consistent and applicable solutions raise questions about the overall approach to teaching reading, signaling a need for further investigation and improvement in the course's design and implementation.

This paper seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the current predicament of the teaching approaches in the course and explore potential solutions that better align with the educational objectives of English as a major. It aims to address the following two research questions:

(1) What are the factors contributing to the challenges faced by the teaching approaches of the course?

(2) What are the potential solutions?

## II.      DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data for this study is collected from two major sources: national curriculum documents and research papers published in Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI) journals and international journals. The inclusion of these sources provides a comprehensive foundation for the analysis and investigation of the teaching approaches in the course.

To address the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study, a historical and comparative perspective is adopted. This approach enables a thorough review of the development of the course over a period of more than seventy years. By examining the objectives and instructional approaches implemented throughout the course's history, the study aims to uncover the underlying factors contributing to the challenges faced by the teaching approaches.

Furthermore, a content analysis is employed to delve into the principles and processes of a teaching approach that aligns with the educational goals for English majors in general and the specific teaching objectives of the course. This analysis allows for a detailed exploration of the key elements and processes that are essential for effective teaching and learning within the context of English major education.

## III.    THE HISTORY OF THE COURSE

To trace the origins of the challenges faced by the teaching approaches in the course, it is essential to examine the development history within the broader context of foreign language education and talent cultivation in China.

The development of foreign language teaching and research in China has been shaped by historical factors, resulting in a deviation from its intrinsic logic (Qu, 2019). Foreign language policies have often been politically motivated and lacked consistency (Chang, 2006). By the time the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, about 49 of the 205 universities in mainland China had English departments (Fu, 1986:64-65). The curriculum then was heavily influenced by Western education, particularly the British and American systems, with a strong emphasis on the study of English and American literature (Li et al., 1988:419). Admission to these English departments was highly competitive, as students were required to have a solid foundation in English acquired during secondary school, enabling them to adapt to the teaching methods employed in Western universities (He, 2003).

However, the early 1950s brought significant changes to the curriculum. First, recognizing the low language proficiency of incoming freshmen (Hu, 2008:18), priority was given to developing practical language skills.

Moreover, due to the increasing prevalence of Russian as the primary foreign language taught in high schools, the English proficiency of high school graduates had declined. Even for those who had studied English, their foundation was generally weak after only three years of high school instruction. As a result, the primary focus for students entering English departments at universities was to learn and master the English language (He, 2003).

Another notable change during this period was the adoption and widespread implementation of the subject-based approach to language teaching, influenced by the Soviet Union. Language learning was compartmentalized into distinct subject areas, such as grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with separate courses designed for each area. This shift had a far-reaching impact, gradually replacing the traditional general education tradition in foreign language departments with a more practical and skills-oriented approach to foreign language education (Wang, 2013).

Within this context, the Intensive Reading course emerged in the English major curriculum as a core course, intended to provide comprehensive language skills training. Over time, the course has been referred to by various names, with the most commonly used ones being Intensive Reading and Comprehensive English. This section explores the course as outlined in different curricula over time.

English major education in China has been guided by six national documents that outline the curriculum, teaching plans, and syllabi since 1950. These documents reflect the developmental stages of foreign language education in China since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Table 1 provides an overview of these national curriculum documents and their corresponding talent cultivation goals. The division of the four developmental stages is based on (Wen, 2019).

*Table 1 National curriculum documents*

| Developmental stages of foreign language education since 1949 | Talent cultivation goals | Curriculum / teaching plan/syllabus |
|---|---|---|
| Exploratory stage （1949-1977） | Skilled talents | Draft Curriculum for Higher Education Institutions: Departments of Arts, Law, Science, and Engineering (1950 Curriculum) <br> Teaching Plan for English Language and Literature Majors (1961 Teaching plan) |

| Developing stage（1978-1998） | Skilled talents | Preliminary Drafts of the Four-Year Curriculum for English Majors in the School of Foreign Languages, English Language and Literature Majors at Comprehensive Universities, and English Majors at Higher Teacher Education Institutions (1979 Curriculum) |
| | | Syllabus for the Foundational Stage of English Major Programs in Higher Education Institutions (1986 Syllabus) |
| | Compound talents | |
| Accelerating stage（1999-2011） | Compound talents | Syllabus for English Major Programs in Higher Education Institutions (2000 Syllabus) |
| Innovating stage（2012-） | Compound talents | Teaching Guidelines for Undergraduate Foreign Language and Literature Majors at Higher Education Institutions (2020 Guidelines) |

The 1950 Curriculum introduced a mandatory foundational course called "Basic Readings" as part of foreign language education (Li et al., 1988:421). This course incorporated grammar, dictation, and related subjects, which were either integrated into the classes or offered separately depending on specific circumstances.

In the 1961 Teaching Plan, the "English" course was established as a specialized course, encompassing 1450 credit hours over a period of 167 weeks.

The 1979 Curriculum stipulated the "English Practice Course" as a compulsory subject, with Intensive Reading for English departments in comprehensive universities, Basic English (or Essential English) for schools of foreign languages, and Intensive Reading for Normal universities. The subsequent syllabi provided explicit objectives, principles, and methods for the course.

The 1986 Syllabus introduced the Comprehensive English course as a comprehensive skill training course (Li et al., 1988:468-470). The objectives of the course were to impart fundamental language knowledge, train basic language skills, cultivate communication abilities, and guide students' learning methods and logical thinking. Emphasis was placed on developing the ability to use language effectively in both oral and written forms.

The 2000 Syllabus renamed the course as Basic English (or Essential English), positioning it as a professional skills course (Supervision Committee for Foreign Language Majors, 2000). The aim was to enhance students' overall English proficiency through language foundation training and textual analysis. Compared to the 1986 syllabus, greater emphasis was placed on developing

reading comprehension, as well as oral and written expression skills.

The 2020 Guidelines reinstated the name Comprehensive English, designating it as a professional course (Supervision Committee for Foreign Language Majors, 2020). Its objective was to cultivate students' comprehensive ability to use English language knowledge and skills for communication. The guidelines built upon the 2000 syllabus by incorporating the development of critical thinking and reasoning skills through the application of learned knowledge and techniques. Notably, the course content description for the first time explicitly emphasized the systematic emphasis on language knowledge and highlighted the humanistic characteristics of literary and cultural knowledge.

The analysis of national documents reveals the evolution of foreign language education for English majors in China over various developmental stages. During the exploratory and early developmental periods, the primary focus was on cultivating skill-based language professionals. This educational objective is evident in the course descriptions of the 1950 Curriculum, 1961 Teaching Plan, 1979 Curriculum, and 1986 Syllabus, all formulated during this phase.

As the developmental period progressed, there emerged a shift towards nurturing compound talents, i.e., versatile talent with multiple skills. The 2000 Syllabus, developed during this stage, placed considerable importance on developing reading comprehension and expressive abilities.

In the more recent era, the academic community has

not yet reached a consensus on the objectives of foreign language education for English majors (Wen, 2019), but there has been increased attention to the exploration of English as a discipline (He, 2003, 2004; Lan, 2009; Jin, 2010; Zhang, 2010; Wang, 2013; Zha, 2018; Qu & Chen, 2018, 2019, 2020; Qu, 2019). In addition to fostering language knowledge and skills, the curriculum descriptions in the 2020 Guidelines explicitly propose the integration of language and disciplinary knowledge teaching, emphasizing a comprehensive and systematic approach; the teaching of literature and cultural knowledge accentuates the need for disciplinary and humanities-oriented characteristics. This also reflects a reconsideration of the discipline's attributes following the objectives of skill-based and versatile talent cultivation in English majors.

## IV.    FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TEACHING APPROACHES

### 4.1 The Discrepancy between Static Course Positioning and Dynamic Educational Objectives

The first challenge becomes evident through two key observations drawn from the examination of the course history. Firstly, regarding the course itself, it originated during a historical period when students had low levels of entry proficiency and required urgent language skills training. Throughout its existence, the course has undergone a series of name changes, including English, Intensive English, Basic English (or Essential English), and Comprehensive English. Nevertheless, its fundamental role as a platform for comprehensive language skills development has remained constant.

Secondly, an analysis of the changes in syllabi unveils a consistent prioritization of teaching language knowledge and honing language skills. Over time, there has been a growing emphasis on language knowledge, skills, communication abilities, and critical thinking. These shifts mirror the growing entry-level proficiency of students and underscore the recent transformation in in focus within the English major, transitioning from skills-based and composite talent development to a renewed emphasis on establishing strong academic foundations.

The central challenge in shaping the appropriate teaching approach for this course resides in the paradox between the course's persistent positioning and the evolving educational objectives. Despite the changing educational goals over time, the course's structure has not evolved accordingly. This lack of adaptation stands as a significant factor contributing to the encountered challenges. The topic has even sparked debate in the early 1990s, with some advocating for the elimination of the intensive reading course (Wen, 2008; Cai, 2010). Despite such discussions, the course remains integral to the curriculum, and the predicament persists due to the unresolved discrepancy between its established role and the dynamic shifts in educational priorities.

Existing literature highlights the lack of clarity in the course's positioning and objectives (Hou, 1994; Lu and Ding, 2002; Kang, 2016; Chen and Cheng, 2015), as well as its connection from other courses (Wang, 1987). Additionally, the course fails to establish specific instructional targets for professional knowledge content, posing challenges in assisting students in constructing a comprehensive knowledge structure (Chang and Jin, 2012). Even with respect to language teaching objectives, the course aims to develop a wide range of language skills, encompassing listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating, without providing clear and specific target levels or criteria. Consequently, the course's objectives become overwhelming, impractical, and lack feasibility and focus.

Due to this lack of appropriate positioning and actionable objectives, teachers often struggle to define a sense of purpose and direction for the course. This issue is prevalent across language training courses (He, 2003) and leads to a haphazard approach to instruction. The teaching methods employed in the course lack effective and systematic operational norms (Lu and Ding, 2002; Kang, 2016). Teachers may either adhere to traditional pedagogical methods or rely heavily on their disciplinary background and personal interests, resulting in a significant degree of arbitrariness and making it challenging to ensure effective teaching outcomes.

### 4.2 The Misalignment of Existing Approaches with the Educational Goals of English as a Major Field of Study

The second obstacle in determining the appropriate teaching approach arises from the lack of readily feasible

methods that are specifically tailored for English majors and align with the educational goals of English as a major discipline.

For the traditional text-centered approach, it has long been argued that adopting the intensive reading practice as a teaching method has significant drawbacks. For instance, breaking down texts into individual vocabulary and grammar elements deprives students of the opportunity to guess word meanings and understand meanings through context (Short, 1984). Moreover, immersion in intensive reading can constrain students' thinking and make them reliant on analysis and translation, which hinders the broadening of their knowledge base and the development of rapid reading skills (Fu, 1986:127). Overemphasizing language at the expense of other skills also prevents the systematic development and training of other abilities (Cai, 2001; Qu, 2016).

To address these challenges posed by the traditional approach, researches have explored alternative teaching methods that promote a more balanced and integrated approach to language and disciplinary knowledge development. Over time, the traditional approach to teaching intensive English has coexisted with the adoption of these new approaches, the most discussed being CBI, TBLT and POA.

Researches have been conducted on the implementation of CBI, reporting that content-based courses have positive impact on students' reading comprehension, writing as well as their learning of knowledge in content areas (Chang et al., 2009; Chang & Zhao, 2010; Gao & Chang, 2013). Content and Language Integration (CLI) was formulated based on the implementation of CBI in Chinese contexts (Chang & Zhao, 2020). Chang and Xia (2011) conducted an experiment comparing Content-based instruction with Skill-oriented instruction, finding that the former yielded better outcomes in developing language knowledge, language skills, and disciplinary knowledge. This suggests that incorporating meaningful content into instruction can more effectively achieve the objectives of the national curriculum.

However, the implementation of CBI and CLI requires a reconstruction of the English major courses. Take the practice of Dalian University of Foreign

Languages for example. The conventional two-year intensive reading course was substituted by content-based courses like Selective Readings in American Literature, British Literature, Contemporary Chinese Philosophy and World Literature ("Dalian University of Foreign Languages"). Considering that the majority of institutions offering English majors still maintain traditional curriculum settings, the practice of CLI is not entirely applicable to the exploration of teaching approaches for the comprehensive English course in this study. Additionally, Chang (2022) also pointed out that implementing CLI may lead to difficulties in the progressive organization of language instruction, as well as a tendency to overlook language training.

As Wen (2020:76) pointed out, the full implementation of TBLT is fraught with difficulties, as it is impossible to either predict or account for the tasks that college students will need to complete in the future. Consequently, we are unable to formulate a TBLT teaching syllabus, nor is it easy to create teaching materials that are purely based on TBLT. Meanwhile, there is a lack of specific procedures, especially detailed descriptions of the teachers' activities in the three stages of pre-task, main task and post-task. This absence emphasizes the challenge in putting TBLT fully into practice and calls for a nuanced understanding of how to adapt it to particular educational contexts. On the other hand, it is common for teachers to guide their instruction by the contents of the teaching materials and the fundamental principles of TBLT, by designing communicatively valuable tasks that allow students to enhance their ability to use a foreign language through simulated communicative practice.

Wen (2018, 2020) advocated for the promotion of a Production-oriented Approach (POA), emphasizing the integration of learning and application. This approach encourages students to actively engage in the learning process, and apply what they have learned in meaningful contexts. Deng (2018) compared the pedagogical principles, hypotheses and procedures of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) with those of POA, arguing for three strengths of POA. Bi (2019) made the comparison in the design and use of the teaching materials compiled based on the two approaches, concluding that POA-based teaching materials are more suitable in the

context of tertiary English education in China because of its unique features in target users, teaching goals and teaching procedures. Tang (2020) demonstrated the application of this approach in intensive reading courses, and concluded that POA performs better in motivating students to learn more, enabling them to accomplish tasks and enhancing their sense of fulfillment. In a case study conducted by Yi (2020), goals were set for three levels: cognition, language, and discipline knowledge. The findings revealed that using meaning as a guide and analyzing text logic can significantly deepen students' understanding of the text. Moreover, the explanation of complex sentence structures contributes to language learning, while the incorporation of theoretical perspectives from various disciplines fosters the development of critical thinking skills. These insights further underscore the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach in English courses.

While the aforementioned approaches have brought positive changes to contemporary classrooms, there are still challenges in their application. The first challenge stems from the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all approach in language teaching. While the new approaches have shown promise in diverse educational settings, they may not be tailored specifically for English majors. The goals and objectives of English majors differ from those of non-English majors, requiring a specialized approach that addresses their unique needs. While language proficiency is a crucial component, English majors also seek to develop humanistic literacy, which involves an appreciation for the form of language and its aesthetic value. In addition to reading for information and comprehension, English majors benefit from a focus on the stylistic and aesthetic aspects of language.

The second challenge lies in the tendency of the new approaches to swing to the other extreme as they attempt to break away from the limitations of the traditional method. In their pursuit of innovation, some classrooms may overly emphasize the new approaches, neglecting the valuable aspects of the traditional approach that can still contribute to effective language learning. Striking a balance between the old and new methods is crucial to create a comprehensive and well-rounded learning experience.

While the new approaches offer alternatives to the traditional methods, it is important to strike a balance. Swinging to the other extreme, where there is an overemphasis on output and divergent activities, may oversimplify complex texts and themes, resulting in a lack of depth. According to Qu (2016), the text in the comprehensive English course is often marginalized, with its primary role reduced to being a mere topic for discussion. In this approach, the training of critical thinking skills is primarily conducted using supplementary resources that are related to the topic of the text. Consequently, there is a noticeable absence of in-depth interpretation and appreciation of the text within the curriculum. This overlooks the significant potential of the selected texts to serve as a valuable medium for intellectual exploration and development. He (2004) also emphasized the favorable conditions provided by language teaching for cultivating students' abilities and qualities. Language serves as a means of expressing thoughts, and the selected texts used in teaching not only facilitate language expression but also offer intellectual content, convey information, stimulate thoughts, and cultivate thinking abilities. These texts have a subtle influence on students' personal growth and development. However, the significance of foreign language teaching in this regard has not been fully recognized, and the value of reading selected texts is often underestimated, even after two decades.

To put it another way, while designing diverse activities based on themes can stimulate students' interest in learning, an excessive reliance on divergent activities may oversimplify complex texts and themes, leading to a lack of depth. It is akin to being enthusiastic about film and television adaptations while neglecting the original works. Therefore, a comprehensive approach should integrate language proficiency development with intellectual inquiry, promoting in-depth interpretation and appreciation of the text while addressing students' cognitive needs in terms of knowledge and ideas.

Additionally, activities designed for the purpose of output, such as communicative scenarios, may face challenges. For example, in a production-oriented approach, students may be asked to explain how to make dumplings to foreign friends, intending to encourage their

expression (Wen, 2020:107-108). While this topic may motivate students to search for appropriate expressions, it may provide limited cognitive challenges in terms of knowledge and ideas, potentially failing to inspire students' motivation for output. Hence, it is crucial for the learning content and output tasks to go beyond language proficiency and also address students' cognitive needs in terms of knowledge and ideas.

Furthermore, since classroom activities often unfold spontaneously, with group discussions and presentations occupying significant class time, providing targeted feedback and suggestions becomes challenging within the limited time available.

## V.     POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

The proposed solutions for the challenges faced by the teaching approach are rooted in a redefined understanding of the traditional course positioning and comprehensive objectives. By combining the strengths of the traditional approach and incorporating elements from newer methodologies, it becomes possible to devise a practical approach with effective teaching procedures that aligns with the educational goals for English majors.

### 5.1 Refining the Course Positioning and Objectives

When designing a course, it is essential to identify the educational goals and objectives (Fink, 2013:69). In the case of the Comprehensive English course, understanding the nature of English as a discipline is crucial for determining its positioning. English education in China has historically emphasized the utilitarian nature of English (Dai and Zhang, 2007), resulting in foreign language majors being influenced by instrumentalism, which has blurred the concept of the discipline (Lan, 2009).

To address these issues, Qu and Chen (2019) argued that the English major should adjust its disciplinary hierarchy and attributes to align with society's expectations for undergraduate education. The English major is an undergraduate program with both humanistic and professional components, focusing on literature, culture, linguistics, and area studies (Zha, 2018). Jin (2010) emphasized that foreign language education is fundamentally humanistic education, emphasizing mental training and emotional cultivation. Mastery of foreign language skills is essential, as it enables students to engage

with a wide range of texts and cultural artifacts, allowing them to delve deeper into the nuances and complexities of the language. However, it is through the exploration of literature, history, society, politics, and culture that students truly gain a comprehensive understanding of the foreign language and its significance. Therefore, English majors are expected to possess a strong command of the language and a high level of humanistic literacy, which are the core aspects of their education.

The concerns regarding the Comprehensive English course reflect dissatisfaction with it being perceived solely as a language knowledge and skill training course, a course assembled from separate and disconnected components, lacking coherence and integration. There have been researches exploring the unique value of this course, which originated from intensive reading, beyond its function as a skills-based course. The course can be characterized by its focus on intensive reading, emphasizing a comprehensive and profound interpretation of discourse meaning from multiple perspectives (Lu and Ding, 2002). It can go further as to build a strong foundation of knowledge and provide intellectual challenges for students (Han, 2001). By combining the disciplinary attributes and curriculum positioning, Han (2001) suggested that the Comprehensive English course can serve as a valuable transition from purely technical training to a more comprehensive understanding of the discipline, making it an enlightening and engaging foundational course.

While specialized courses in linguistics and literature provide systematic knowledge and research methods, the Comprehensive English course has its own unique mission. English majors often lack a solid foundation in language, literature, and cultural knowledge (He, 2004; Wen, 2019), which can hinder their ability to fully engage in advanced-level coursework without the development of critical thinking habits and understanding of language and cultural knowledge during their early years of study (Han, 2001). Thus, there is a need for a bridging course like Comprehensive English to help students establish a strong language foundation, connect with subject content, and bridge the gap with specialized courses.

The clarification of the disciplinary nature and positioning of the English major course is instrumental in setting effective teaching objectives. The 2020 Guidelines

outline the course objectives, which aim to cultivate students' ability to use English language knowledge and skills for communication, including pronunciation, intonation, word classes, grammatical forms, common word formation processes, sentence patterns, syntactic structures, genre recognition, cohesive devices, rhetorical techniques, writing skills, and critical thinking (Supervision Committee for Foreign Language Majors, 2020:15). While these objectives encompass language knowledge and skills, they lack emphasis and depth in specific areas, leading to overlap with other language skills courses at a similar level.

To address this, carefully selected texts should be chosen to focus not only on traditional informational or skill-based knowledge but also on structural knowledge and intellectual inquiry. The course should provide perspectives from literature, linguistics, and related disciplines, guiding students in exploring and thoroughly studying texts to achieve a profound understanding in both language and ideas.

At the linguistic level, the course should emphasize the recognition of the correlation between language forms and meanings, enabling students to comprehend the complexity of language expression and develop systematic knowledge (Qu, 2016). At the conceptual level, the course should encourage students to delve deeply into the thoughts and cultural implications embedded within the works, cultivating their intellectual skills and habits of thought.

In summary, the potential solutions for the Comprehensive English course involve redefining its course positioning and objectives, aligning them with contemporary educational demands. The course should go beyond language skills training and serve as an enlightening and inspiring course that promotes language proficiency, enhances humanistic literacy, and establishes connections with disciplinary knowledge. By focusing on both linguistic and conceptual aspects, the course can provide a transformative learning experience for English majors, contributing to their holistic development.

**5.2** A Refinement of the Teaching Approach

As the above-mentioned teaching approaches do not align precisely with the unique demands of English specialization, they cannot be applied wholesale, but must be approached eclectically, drawing from the strengths of each method. As Wen (2020:77) observed, every pedagogical strategy has its distinct applicability. Educators are thus encouraged to identify and extract components that resonate with their individual teaching objectives, integrating them into their classroom practice.

The refinement of the teaching approach in this paper draws on the strengths of both the traditional and new approaches, with a focus on three key understandings: learner autonomy, the flipped classroom model, and different levels of understanding. By incorporating these principles into the course design, the teaching approach can be enhanced to better meet the needs of English majors and facilitate their language learning and development.

The criticism faced by the intensive reading course for its emphasis on input rather than output is not unique to this specific course but extends to other language skill courses as well. Recognizing this issue necessitates a shift in teaching philosophy, acknowledging that the traditional approach of solely imparting knowledge is no longer sufficient in today's rapidly changing world. In this context, cultivating learner autonomy becomes crucial, as students need to be active agents in their own learning process.

To foster learner autonomy, the proposed refinement aligns with Little's three pedagogical principles, which include the use of the target language, learner control, and reflection (Little, 2022). By incorporating these principles, students are encouraged to set learning targets, choose activities, and document their learning process, thereby taking ownership of their learning journey. Reflection and evaluation play a central role, including self-assessment and peer assessment, further empowering students in their learning process.

Furthermore, the integration of the flipped classroom model serves as a bridge between classroom learning and autonomous learning. By utilizing this model, teachers can optimize classroom time by addressing specific difficulties and providing guidance, while utilizing external resources such as reference books and textbook-based platforms for conventional teaching content. This allows classroom sessions to focus on key aspects and challenges that students may face in their autonomous learning journey.

The flipped classroom model aligns with Talbert's definition of flipped learning, where "first contact with

new concepts moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space in the form of structured activity, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter." (Talbert, 2017)

To facilitate a profound understanding of both language and ideas through the reading of selected works, Barrett's taxonomy offers valuable insights into the levels of understanding that cater to the needs of English majors in terms of information and humanistic literacy. This taxonomy identifies five distinct levels of understanding:

literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation (Richards, 2015:451-452). English majors can navigate these different levels of understanding, progressing from literal comprehension to higher-order thinking skills such as evaluation and appreciation. This approach not only enhances their language proficiency but also develops their humanistic literacy, enabling them to engage deeply with the texts and appreciate the aesthetic and intellectual value they offer.

Table 2 presents the learning process that encompasses the aforementioned considerations.

*Table 2 The Process of Learning Activities*

| Stages of learning | Learning Activities |
|---|---|
| Pre-class | Self-directed reading of the text:<br>1. Students engage with instructional videos on effective learning strategies.<br>2. Students independently read the article, marking noteworthy passages and identifying challenging sections. They utilize various resources, such as dictionaries, teaching materials, courseware, and corpora, to explore potential solutions.<br>3. Students connect their personal reading experiences, compile a list of works that resonate with the text, and provide brief introductions. They share their findings on the platform.<br>Peer evaluation and teacher feedback on the platform:<br>Students and the teacher provide feedback and comments on perspectives, content, structure, grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects. |
| In-class | The teacher leads students to think between the lines, to think through and beyond the text (Moreillon, 2007:59), via instruction, questioning and discussion:<br>1. Identify the central theme and primary concepts.<br>2. Recognize the organizational structure or pattern of the text.<br>3. Analyze and appreciate the language usage: examine the selection of words, nuances of meaning (from a semantic perspective), and the author's intended effect (from a pragmatic perspective). |
| Post-class | Extended exploration of related works with a shared theme through bilingual comparison:<br>1. The teacher offers texts, question lists from various perspectives, and introductory materials. Students select topics, collaborate in groups to investigate, upload inter-group evaluations on the platform, and present their collaborative work in the subsequent class.<br>2. Students reexamine the text in the context of the expanded reading.<br>3. Writing practice: students delve deeper into the theme from their perspectives, and attempt to compose their own rendition of the story. |

Table 2 outlines the course structure, which is divided into three stages. The first stage centers on autonomous learning, adhering to the three pedagogical principles established by Little (2022). During this stage, students engage in self-directed reading, where they take charge of setting learning objectives, selecting appropriate activities, and documenting their learning process (Principle 2: learning control). Subsequently, peer evaluation and teacher feedback are incorporated to foster reflection and assessment (Principle 3: reflection). The reflective

component is integrated into the self-directed reading process and further reinforced through peer and teacher assessments. As this learning process encompasses listening, reading, and writing to fulfill all functions of English language acquisition, it satisfies Principle 1, which emphasizes the use of the target language. This stage prepares them for in-depth class discussions by allowing them to develop their initial thoughts and perspectives on the text. The class stage offers an opportunity for the flipped learning approach to be

implemented.

During the class stage, students shift their focus towards analyzing the overall meaning, structure, and language usage of the text. They progress through the stages of literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation. Through collaborative learning and shared insights, students engage in discussions that help them explore underlying principles delve into the text's themes and concepts. The objective of this stage is to cultivate critical thinking skills and facilitate a deeper understanding of the text.

The third stage involves the exploration of works with shared themes in both languages, incorporating literary, translation, and other approaches. Writing activities based on extended reading and collaborative learning are the outcomes of this stage. This stage encourages students to apply their knowledge and skills to express their thoughts and ideas effectively.

Disciplinary knowledge is integrated throughout the course using a jigsaw-like approach. Specific aspects of disciplines such as literature, linguistics, and translation are highlighted based on the language features of the text. Students gradually develop a comprehensive understanding of these aspects through consecutive learning. For example, when examining shades of meaning, the focus is on semantic relations, and students learn to explore semantic, distributional, collocational, dialectal, and stylistic differences, which fall within the realm of lexicology. Such inquiries prepare students for future studies in theoretical courses for English majors.

Throughout the flipped learning process, autonomous learning is integrated with in-class instruction, fostering in-depth thinking alongside the acquisition of language, culture, and related aspects. Students not only acquire information through reading but also learn to assemble and organize knowledge, seeking explanations for linguistic phenomena, and exploring the profound thoughts and cultural aspects embedded in language.

By incorporating these approaches and stages, the course promotes active learning, critical thinking, and a comprehensive understanding of both language and disciplinary knowledge. It encourages students to engage with the texts deeply, explore various aspects of the disciplines, and develop their own insights and

interpretations.

## VI.    CONCLUSION

Being a longstanding and prominent course in the undergraduate curriculum for English majors in China, the teaching of reading in the Comprehensive English course holds great significance. However, the challenges faced by its teaching approach extend beyond the course itself and have implications for related courses as well. This paper seeks to address two key questions: the factors contributing to the challenges encountered by the teaching approaches in the course, and potential solutions to these challenges.

A historical examination of the course reveals its origins during a period characterized by students' low levels of entry proficiency and the urgent need for language skills training. Over time, there has been an increasing emphasis on language knowledge, skills development, communication abilities, and critical thinking. However, the course's positioning has largely remained focused on the comprehensive training of skills.

This discrepancy between the static course positioning and the evolving educational objectives presents significant challenges when it comes to determining the appropriate teaching approach. While the traditional intensive reading approach continues to be practiced in certain contexts, there is a growing trend towards the adoption of new approaches. However, these approaches are not immediately suitable without modification, as they are not precisely tailored to meet the unique educational requirements of English majors, thereby failing to align fully with the academic goals inherent to English as a field of study.

To address these challenges, it is necessary to redefine the course's positioning and objectives, aligning them with contemporary educational demands. The course should aim to develop students' language proficiency, enhance their humanistic literacy, and establish connections with disciplinary knowledge. It should go beyond traditional intensive reading approaches and encourages in-depth analysis and interpretation.

Drawing upon the strengths of both traditional and newer approaches, this paper presents a refined teaching approach that integrates the principles of learner autonomy, flipped learning, and Barrett's taxonomy of levels of

comprehension. The proposed approach encompasses three distinct stages of learning, each supported by relevant procedures that align with these key notions. By doing so, the course aims to foster active learning, critical thinking, and a comprehensive understanding of both language and disciplinary knowledge.

The incorporation of learner autonomy empowers students to take ownership of their learning process, making informed decisions about their learning targets and engaging in self-directed activities. Flipped learning bridges the gap between classroom instruction and autonomous learning, allowing students to access foundational content outside of class and utilize valuable class time for in-depth discussions and targeted guidance. Barrett's taxonomy of levels of comprehension serves as a framework for developing students' reading skills, enabling them to progress from literal comprehension to higher-order thinking skills such as evaluation and appreciation.

Through the implementation of this refined approach, it is anticipated that the challenges faced by the teaching of reading in the course will be effectively addressed. Furthermore, the insights and findings from this study hold valuable implications for future enhancements not only within the course itself but also for the broader advancement of English as a major discipline.

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# Poeming Odisha: Revisiting Jayanta Mahapatra

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*Abstract— The relationship between Odia Poetry in English and Jayanta Mahapatra is the relationship between architecture and its architect, between sculpture and its sculptor. In other words, the origin of Odia Poetry in English lies in Jayanta Mahapatra's poetic oeuvre. It is Mahapatra who indeed has given birth to the domain. It is again he who has nurtured it all through to its maturity. If a single figure who has been existentially linked to the Odia Poetry in English right since its very inception and has been moreover, an eyewitness to its entire history, it is none other than Jayanta Mahapatra. Then who is Jayanta Mahapatra and what is the identity of this patriarch of Odia Poetry in English? If any singular label that is most ubiquitously applied to Jayanta Mahapatra is his being an Odia poet writing in English. Besides this monism of identity, he is nowhere to be assumed as a poet of some specific theme or concern. To ascribe particularities concerning his content is perhaps to narrow his poetic output. Though Odisha appears recurrently in his poetry, it would not perhaps be sensible to declare Mahapatra as a poet whose canvas solely permits anything quintessentially Odia. Besides, he has dealt with multiple themes, issues, concerns, commitments, etc. His is a vignette or a spectrum of plenty. In Mahapatra, more interestingly, the form is foreign but the content and the thought are incontestably his own. Such an obvious discrepancy is so skillfully managed by Mahapatra that the readers relish the beauty of the borrowed and the savior of the indigenous. This paper looks at how Mahapatra poems Odisha, his microcosm for the world, with special reference to a few of his poems wherein Odisha emerges as a major trope.*

*Keywords—Odia poetry in English; Poeming Odisha; Microcosm; Trope*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Locating Odisha and Odishan elements in Odia poetry in English is the central concern of this paper. Mother and motherland have always and invariably remained the first love of a person. The first sights the eyes catch, the first chores the ears resonate with, the water and air of a land a man first appropriates into his being do always leave an indelible imprint in the mind and psyche of one's being. The poet with his origin and upbringing in the soil of Odisha cannot but be inextricably hinged to Odishan culture, legends, myths, to its socio-political ethos, historical monuments and geographical scenario. In the eyes of R. W. Emerson, the father of American literature, 'America is a poem.' American literature as a whole constitutes a secondary text with its origin in the mother

text America. The province of Odia poetry in English does have a similar existential link with Odisha. The most prominent figure that fills the measure of Odia-English poetry, Jayanta Mahapatra, has grown in the close vicinity of Odisha's scenic, serene and sublime ambience. The makings of his being and sensibility have been tempered with Odishan ethos. A look at the poetic output of Mahapatra reveals Odisha to be a strong presence amid a myriad of autobiographical as well as extra-autobiographical themes that he deals with. The poetic terrain of the state of Odisha poses either as a politico-cultural background or a canvas of central constitutive force or even the both. It appears to be both the ground and the background of the poet's poetic sense and sensibility. It appears simultaneously to be the echo and the essence.

To begin with, Jayanta Mahapatra undoubtedly happens to be the most stubborn, seasoned and patriarchal figure in the realm of Odia poetry in English. He has definitely made Odisha more visible on the international arena as the most vibrant landscape rich in myth and culture. In "Dhauli" from the collection entitled *One: The Sad Green of Bamboo Groves* Mahapatra invokes the legends of Odisha. Odisha is the land of histories, myths, legends, tales, etc. It is a land which carries God's plenty. Ashoka, the legendary king, realized in victory the nausea of achievement. The meaning of war was seen in the fertility of the soil of Kalinga. The voiceless decomposing dead bodies melted into the consuming self of the soil in Dhauli. The bank of the river Daya along which once enemies locked in a brutal war does not seem to have forgotten the cries of the maimed soldiers. The weather-beaten rock edict, the relic of time, is the only evidence of that decisive historical event. Now it appears to be just a piece of insignificant rock, time's negligent witness, "Years later,/ the evening wind,/ trembling the glazed waters of the River Daya,/ keens in the rock edicts the vain word,/ shuttered silence, an air:". Neither the cry of the dying war veterans nor the lament of the king is heard from the decaying stone, "… the measure of Asoka's suffering/ does not appear enough."

In "Village Evening" Mahapatra invokes a typical village scene – the bats hanging from the rain-wait deodar and wind's romance with the little gods under the banyan tree. Besides these beautiful views of the village there is a narrative of poverty that goes parallel. He presents a micro-narrative of Ahalya, a widow with a seven year old son, who dreams of a different dawn by caressing the one rupee coin which her son has earned from his day-long labour. Her life seems to have taken a curve after years of blank solitude. A hope of a different life with the hands of her little son indulges her in some fancies of the future. She does not need to visit houses to procure food for her child. The stale rotten food she receives as a charity from the so called generous people or some coins she gets from a night's stay with the known strangers has tired her completely. Her son's little income though insufficient engages her in the imagination of a distant happiness, "In the dark air of her hut,/Ahalya, the widow, caresses the rupee/ her seven-year-old son/ has brought home from his day-long labours,/ dreaming of daybreak." Mahapatra successfully demonstrates the fact that at the background of the idealized lies poverty, darkness, inhumanity, decayed dreams and hopeless hopes.

In "The Abandoned British Cemetery at Balesore" captures the silence of the cemetery and the corresponding thought and the image that it engenders in the poet. History turns silent in the cemetery of its own creation.

Time has silenced history at the outskirts of civilization. The poet's presence among the community of the dead hardly affects the monotony of the departed. Only the names remain as the visible reminder of their lives they once lived. The weather-beaten epitaphs are the surviving imprints of their achievements. The people of power lay buried so powerless. The uncompromising ego of the British sleeps flat under the earth with the decomposing ugly-looking worms. If they have left anything it is only the epitaphs. They lay buried in the fringe of some nondescript place obscure in the map. Cholera, a nemesis to the colonial ego, came as an instrument of control to the self-declared masters of the world. The vanity of conquest and domination turns into dust. Now they are a part of the catalogue of time which equalizes the king and the pauper by putting them on the same page. There is no exit from the labyrinth of time. The dead lay silent among the deserted wild creepers and cobwebs.

The poem entitled "Dawn at Puri" is possibly about the poet's mother's last wish to be cremated at Puri, the land of Lord Jagannath and the land that makes you get 'mingled'. Saul Bellow's line in his book *To Jerusalem and Back* – "Elsewhere you die and disintegrate. Here you die and mingle." – is most apposite here. What does this word 'mingle' precisely mean? It certainly implies spiritual significance but history more importantly remains in undertones. Jerusalem is the land where the Jews belong and they seek their identity from. They experienced centuries of exile and expulsion but they finally returned to their 'chosen land'. Outside Jerusalem Jews have no cultural and historical existence. Jagannath is also the central cultural force that immortalizes history. Here culture decides history. This is of course a contra-Marx stance. Marx's reversion is just a hypothesis or his understanding on the concept of history. And that has been made a paradigm. It is not a paradigm by itself. His notion of history is also conditioned by the circumstances of his time. To implant it on a different temporality is proved to be just a graft not a synthesis. It is a clash, not a consensus. On the contrary, Jagannath as the cultural epicenter of the Odias integrates people historically. It is both the source and the sequence. The historical temporality is consecutive to the cultural one. Here history dwindles into unimportance without the aid of the culture. Here the terror of history is mitigated by the consolation of permanent mingling. Here death is a wish, a gift and a preparation. Here the magnificent Marx is a dull monotone. Here history is culture's footnote. Despite visible sites of poverty and starvation Puri remains quintessentially the land which fulfills, connects and completes. The funeral fire not only burns but also consumes in order to 'mingle'-

"… her last wish was to be cremated here/ twisting uncertainly like light/ on the shifting sands".

On the other hand, in "A Hint of Grief" Mahapatra celebrates the beauty of Odisha in a rainy season. He juxtaposes both nature, which is the realm of repetition, and history, the domain of difference. History, the book of the dead, is inseparable and therefore the source of torment. The spectre of history stifles our ability to enjoy and appreciate the beauty of nature. Those 'weathered stones' of history survives in nature in order to make alive the dots of dead temporality.

In "Hunger" Mahapatra integrates the erotic and the pathos on the same canvas showing the life of the fisherman's daughter. On the same page we see the images of 'the fish slithering, turning inside' and 'wormy legs wide'. The poem "Hunger" is on a fisherman who sells the body of his daughter to procure food for the two dying skeletons. Mahapatra almost invokes the Dickensian world in verse. She is just fifteen and does not know how to prepare those partly formed parts of sex. Her father becomes the pimp. His obvious wiles and the clichéd and crude semantics of transaction keep morality in back burner. Morality does not feed. Morality is not food one eats. Morality is always subservient to survival. She opens her wormy unexcited legs for just that act to be done as fast as possible so that she can fill her belly. Hunger is so apparent on her thighs and things, "Long and lean, her ears were cold as rubber./ She opened her wormy legs wide. I felt the hunger there,/ the other one, the fish slithering, turning inside." Mahapatra has been very successful with his words to express that act of sex without being reduced to indelicacy and obscene. With the employment of an apt image 'fish slithering' he could avoid all probabilities of being too obvious.

In "A Country" Mahapatra portrays a character that almost resembles Maud Gonne, Yeats' love. Unlike Yeats' lady who was a nationalist, Mahapatra's girl is a Naxal and therefore, a derelict and reprobate. But what hurts the poet most is the way she combine grace with grossness. Indoctrinated by the norms of Naxalism she has neglected the beauty she has been gifted with. She holds knife in those delicate hands. The knife in her hand makes a sharp contrast with the beauty that she possesses, "Why am I hurt still by the look/ in the hands of that graceful Naxal girl/ who appeared out of nowhere that winter,/ holding a knife as old as history." The expression 'holding a knife as old as history' implies the history of exploitation, injustice and poverty. The indifference of the state mechanism to address the problems of the people at the margin seems to have forced many of the innocents to hold weapons. Odisha being a state where the germ of Naxalism exists

might have inspired Mahapatra to compose this poem. Without being judgemental Mahapatra expresses what troubles him most in so far as Naxalism is concerned. It is the malignant cells of Naxalism which corrupts the innocents. The slogan of exploitation and unemployment has influenced many to mingle in the flow and current of protest and vandalism.

His poem "Grandfather" is the most touching one among others. What makes it so remarkable is the history of Odisha in 1866. This year Odisha underwent the cataclysmic spell of the terrible famine. This famine forced the poet's grandfather to change his faith. In order to survive he embraced Christianity. He bartered his soul to the machines of the missionaries for a few bagful of rice. The force of hunger dwindled the faith to which he primordially belonged. The poet finds from his grandfather's 'yellowed diary' the notes which whisper in vernacular the 'cramped cry'. His superego hacked him every minute until the end of his life. It was not an easy job to relinquish the one whose perpetuity was his only purpose of his life. In *Arogya Niketan* Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay writes, "Belief is not emotion". It is always contra-emotion. Emotion implies motion and speed, therefore short-lived. Belief is more fundamental, grounded, and formidable. The torture of dying compelled him to compromise with the uncompromisable. Such compromise was not without a consequence. The interminable agony followed like an interminable shadow after the event until the complete erasure of the object that caused the shadow. The empty sky, 'the cracked fallow earth', 'empty trees', 'dragging river', 'the jackals', 'the cold mean nights of the belly' and the horror of the certitude of death stooped him to folly. If it was a choice without judgment in order to save life from the hem of death, it was indeed a legitimate choice. But it was not a mere choice. This choice involved an irrecompensable loss – the loss of faith. It was another death, not 'another life'. The instinct buried the ethical. The acquired faith did not blur the visibility of the deserted. The specter of the deserted reminded him of the indignity and the pain of conversion, "The separate life let you survive, while perhaps/ the one you left wept in the blur of your heart".

In "Possessions" Mahapatra repeats the refrain of W. H. Auden who writes in his poem "In Memory of W. B. Yeats", "For poetry make nothing happen". A poet witnesses and writes the events of history but, never acts. His voice is his writing. He does not exist outside his work, "In pain perhaps/ they stand inside, but cannot/ yet slam the door of their voice." They reflect on the idea of pain, but hardly mitigate anyone's pain. Therefore, Plato is perhaps not incorrect when writes in The Republic that art is twice removed from reality. Friedrich Nietzsche, the

most radical voice of the German romantic cult, is often celebrated and quoted for one of his famous statements in the *The Gay Science* (1882), "The secret of reaping the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment from life is to live dangerously." Such a statement certainly creates an impression that the writer must have been a most courageous man but on the contrary Nietzsche fainted when he saw the wounded soldiers bathed in blood admitted to the Red Cross centres during the First World War. It is easy to write about courage but to have courage is different. The energy of his language may inspire someone else to act not certainly the writer. Mahapatra writes that the artists and poets are incapable of any action, so do the politicians. They are reduced to mere promises and hopes which they conveniently overstep after the election, "The elections over, villages filling with shadows." Here he expresses a bit of Odisha's political reality. He indicates here the poet's helplessness to remove the shadows with light. The empty rhetoric of the politicians leads people nowhere. The stinking piles of yellow papers at the corners of the office and the rigorous planning without implementation never alleviate poverty, "… sixty thousand children will go hungry again."

## II.     CONCLUSION

From the above exposition of Mahapatra's poems it can be gauged that no singularity of theme, thought, concern and commitment defines the poet. Multiple voices coalesce in him and myriad monologues make his poems clusters of plenty. What defines him the most is the mosaic which his poetry inarguably leads to and his openness towards the horizon which blends the possible and the prevalent on the same canvas. Therefore, any specificity to be imposed on his art would be reductionist. However, Mahapatra's corpus being a keen mirror of the Odia topography, people, politics and their conditions, it also constantly engages with the concepts of time, history, silence, memory, loneliness, death, violence etc. In Mahapatra the polyphony of concepts, conjectures and conditions combine into a coherent whole. The thematic heterogeneity does not result in producing pastiche, but contradictorily there is an immanent symmetry against the background of apparent horizons of differences and concerns. That is what makes his poetry so different and so characteristic of him –dialogic monism.

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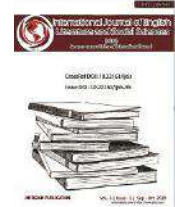
# Competencies of Marine Engineering Students of a Maritime Higher Education Institution: An Assessment

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*Abstract*— *Competency assessment plays a critical role in determining the proficiency and effectiveness of future marine officers. The competence of marine engineering students focusing on their performance, the perceived factors that affect their competency, and the challenges they met during practical assessment were assessed. Using quantitative descriptive design, a practical assessment using the adopted practical assessment from the Maritime Administration and a survey questionnaire were used to achieve the research objectives. Total enumeration of the 30 marine engineering students and ten engine instructors who handle laboratory courses were the participants and respondents. Results include the general exemplary performance of the participants except in Function 2; several factors affect the students' performance, such as student-related factors, instructor-related factors, facilities and equipment, and policy-related factors; and 46 challenges were identified. Several recommendations were presented. Among them are the incorporation of more simulation-based training that presents real-life scenarios requiring quick and effective decision-making; use of mnemonics memory aids; digital versions of learning materials for easy access; provision of scholarship grants, and others.*

*Keywords*— *Competence, Marine Engineering, Outcome-based education, Performance, Standard of Competence*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Filipino seafarers are highly valued for their remarkable abilities, versatility, and tenacity, making them an invaluable resource for global marine operations. These characteristics highlight how important Filipino seafarers are to preserving the vital link that sustains international trade. As the Philippines became a major source of cheap labor, the manning industry grew influence when it came to conditions of employment for Filipino seafarers to shape its labor, especially in compliance with the international obligations to fully perform the standardization of maritime education and training.

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Annex IV Table A-III/1 states, "Specifications of minimum standards of competence for officers in charge of an engineering watch in a manned engine-room or designated duty engineers in a periodically unmanned engine room, enumerate all the competences needed for practical assessment: Function 1- Marine Engineering at the operational level; Function 2- Electrical, Electronics, and Control Engineering; Function 3-Maintenance and repair at the operational level; and Function 4- Controlling the operation of the ship and care for persons on board.

Captain Noestvik emphasized what is lacking in a seafarer that results to non-competence. This includes lack of basic skills, substandard shipboard training, no proper screening, and non-alignment of practical and theoretical exams with the International Convention on Standards of Training Certification and Watch keeping (AHK News, 2022). In the article "Maritime Knowledge, Seafarers", (2019) state that the standard of competence is the minimum knowledge, understanding, and proficiency a seafarer achieves to be considered competent. As Dr. William H.

Moore emphasized, the commitment to competence assurance is vital to retaining the seafarers' skill sets and employment and defines competence as the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standards of performance expected in the workplace (Moore, W. 2017).

Filipino seafarers are highly valued for their remarkable abilities, versatility, and tenacity, making them an invaluable resource for global marine operations. These characteristics highlight how important Filipino seafarers are in preserving the vital link that sustains international trade.

Nevertheless, international business groups have highlighted deficiencies in the quality of training and education received by Filipino seafarers, even though their services remain in high demand (The Manila Times 2022). Despite being a major supplier of seafarers globally, the Philippines faces growing concerns regarding the competency of its maritime workforce. Therefore, ensuring these seafarers possess the necessary competencies to meet the safety and efficiency standards of global shipping operations is a critical challenge.

Raising Filipino standards is an endeavor that holds the potential to elevate the nation's progress and prosperity. Under Executive Order No. 63, the Maritime Administration shall ensure that all maritime educational institutions comply with the set international standards prescribed under the STCW Convention (Manila Bulletin, 2018). Moreover, Joint CHED MARINA Circular No.3 series of 2022, Article I Section 2 Policies and Legal Bases, states that the Authority of CHED and MARINA are to monitor the performance of maritime higher education institutions. With this, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum No. 46 implemented the shift to learning competency-based standards/outcomes-based education. It adopts the competencies needed to comply with the Standards Certification and Watch keeping (STCW) Convention, 1978, as amended. Article IV, under program specifications, Section 4, BSMarE, is a maritime education program that covers the mandatory education and training for Officers in Charge of an Engineering Watch required under Regulation III/1 of the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended.

The vision of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) is to sustain the status of the Philippines as a major provider of qualified and competent seafarers in the world labor market, and its mission is to ensure that Filipino seafarers are well-educated, well-trained, and well-equipped with knowledge and competencies aligned with the national and international standards to develop into a globally competitive seafaring workforce (MARINA-STCW). In line with this, MARINA commits to ensure the competence of Filipino seafarers through the effective and efficient implementation of the regulations under Chapters II, III, IV, V, and VI specified in the STCW Convention as amended and compliance with the applicable statutory and regulatory (STCW 2018 Amendment).

The Joint-CHED MARINA Circular No. 02 series of 2022, under Section 2, explains the authority of CHED in the administration and supervision of maritime education programs and institutions of higher learning. The Office of Programs and Standards Development (OPSD) implements the joint evaluation and inspection of maritime educational programs and ensures coordination with the STCW Office of MARINA. On the other hand, the authority of the MARINA in the administration and supervision of the maritime education programs is to implement and enforce the STCW Convention 1978, as amended.

Under Article1, Section 1 of the Joint CHED-MARINA Memorandum Circular No.01 series of 2023, educational reforms aim to enhance the basic education curriculum. Additionally, in compliance with Regulation I/6 of the STCW Convention, curriculums are structured according to Table A-II/1 and Table A-III/1 of the STCW Code.

Maritime Higher Educational Institutions (MHEI) in the Philippines is unique. Educational standards do not just govern these schools, but more importantly, from the point of view of global competition, they are regulated by an International Convention, the Standard of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for seafarers (STCW 1978,) as amended, of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). It provides enhancement for growth, expansion and positive change to face the challenges in the maritime industry.

Among these MHEIs is the Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation Lucena City, College of Maritime Education Department. It is a CHED-recognized, PACUCOA Level III Accredited Maritime Educational Institution which provides technical courses such as Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation and Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering based in Lucena City, Quezon Province.

As this educational institution aims to continuously provide its students with the competencies that they need according to STCW 1978, as amended, this assessment was pursued. Along with the factors that affect the students' performance, the study's result may serve as baseline for improvement by maritime higher education institutions.

## II. FIGURES AND TABLES



*Fig.1: Competency-Based Education*

CBE involves authentic assessment, constructive alignment, and criterion-reference assessment principles. It emphasizes that assessments should measure specific learning outcomes and be directly aligned with well-defined criteria for mastery. The primary purpose of assessment in competency-based education is to determine whether a student has mastered a particular competency. Assessments are not used solely for grading but as tools for formative feedback and continuous improvement.

The CBE curriculum is also designed, developed, and directly relevant to the student's future careers and real-life situations, providing practical skills applicable in the workplace. This personalized approach helps accommodate diverse learning styles and paces. The assessments accurately measure the student's proficiency in the targeted competencies.
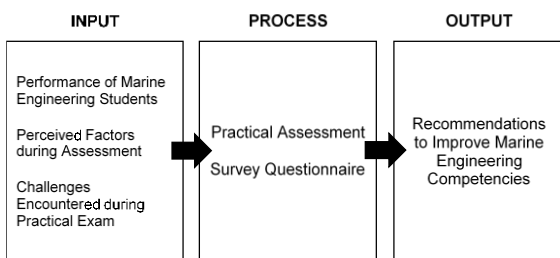


*Fig.1: Research Paradigm*

*Table 1 Cronbach's Alpha Result*

| Section | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Internal Consistency |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Perceived Factors Affecting the Performance of Marine Engineering Students | | | |
| ▪ Student | 9 | 0.945 | Excellent |
| ▪ Instructor | 6 | 0.921 | Excellent |
| ▪ Facilities and Equipment | 15 | 0.922 | Excellent |
| ▪ Policy | 6 | 0.762 | Acceptable |
| ▪ Financial | 5 | 0.887 | Good |
| ▪ Family Background | 5 | 0.764 | Acceptable |
| ▪ Belief | 3 | 0.888 | Good |
| B. Challenges During Practical Assessments | 51 | 0.986 | Excellent |

## III. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

The students demonstrated exemplary competence in marine engineering except Function 2: Electrical, Electronic, and Control Engineering at the Operational Level in many aspects. Moreover, there were specific competences that require improvement. Putting more attention to them would result in better performance.

The majority of the factors included in the survey affect the performance of marine engineering students. These must be considered for any related development planning, as they can serve as motivation for improved performance.

The significant difference in the students and instructors' responses covering instructor-related factors may have been affected by differing views as the instructors are performing self-evaluation. Self-appraisal is subjective, but the third-party assessment made by students provides the balance it needs.

Numerous challenges are met by the students during practical assessment. Addressing them can help improve performance.

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# Bleeding Stubs and the Evolution of African Writing: Navigating Standard English and Uncertain Linguistic Futures

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*Abstract— Several African novels and short stories have been analysed linguistically. The authors of those analytical articles found that some of the stories employed the linguistic style set by the authors Chinua Achebe and Flora Nwapa. A major characteristic of this writing style is the use of African English or a blend with standard English. Language evolves regionally, so for this article, standard English refers to any English used by the VOA, BBC, British Royal Family, or even Brits in a pub, including UK and US slang relevant to the novel's setting. It excludes English spoken by learners. The researcher considers this definition broad and lenient. African English refers to varieties of the English language spoken and written across Africa, often influenced by local languages and cultures, resulting in unique expressions and idiomatic usage. It encompasses different forms, including Nigerian English, Kenyan English and South African English, reflecting the diverse linguistic landscape of the continent. African literary researchers often show a strong interest in novels written in African English because these works reflect the linguistic diversity, cultural identity, and lived experiences of African communities. Nevertheless, many African authors write in Standard English. The academic discussion reveals that the debate on language choice in African literature is ongoing. This paper provides an overview of the English styles used by African authors and highlights the uncertainty regarding the future of African literature due to a lack of credible sources on current trends. The paper then analyses the style of African works in standard English alongside African English. For the purposes of this article, the researcher chooses Donald Besong's Bleeding Stubs, which has not been analysed previously, to represent standard English works. The selection of Bleeding Stubs is based on its brevity, recent publication, and its setting in Cameroon—a country with limited representation in fiction. The paper concludes that the preferred language style for African authors remains fluid. Finally, it recommends fostering improved reading habits on the continent, encouraging greater engagement with the global reading community. This would lead to better career progression across various fields, foster the development of more internationally marketable writers, and empower them to use their income to support the growth of African languages, thereby reducing the reliance on English for expressing African pride.*

*Keywords— African literature, linguistic analysis, African English, unique style, literary resistance.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The term "African literature" lacks a concrete, universally accepted definition due to the diverse and evolving nature of the literary traditions across the African continent (Gikandi, 2001). For the purposes of this paper, any story written or narrated by a person of African descent, partly or entirely set in Africa, and featuring some African characters is considered part of African literature.

African English and Standard English are defined in the abstract. Some African authors choose to write in African English or a blend of African English and Standard English. Examples of such authors include Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Flora Nwapa. It is the researcher's observation that these names are well known, so specific works of only a couple of them are discussed here to make way for relatively less mainstream names. Many African authors have diverged from using African English to write in standard English. The authors referenced in the rest of this paragraph write in standard English.

This paragraph offers brief summaries of the contributions from a small selection of African authors who write in standard English, without delving into linguistic details. Linguistic considerations will be addressed later. For completeness, this paper includes authors who wrote in other languages and their works translated into standard English.

Mungo Beti, a Cameroonian author writing in French, explores themes of colonialism and corruption in his novel *Mission to Kalabani* (Beti, 1957). Beti faced government opposition due to his critical perspectives and has written many more books throughout his career.

Meja Mwangi's *Going Down River Road* is a novel that explores the challenges of urban life in Nairobi, Kenya, focusing on the struggles and experiences of its inhabitants (Mwangi, 1976). Mwangi, a Kenyan author, is known for his vivid portrayal of contemporary African life. He has written several other notable works, including The Cockroach Dance and Bitter Fruit, making him a significant figure in African literature.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (Ngũgĩ, 1977) is a novel that critiques post-colonial Kenya by intertwining the lives of its characters with themes of political corruption, class struggle, and the impact of colonial legacy.

Henry Lopes' novel, *The Laughing Cry* (Lopes, 1987), was translated from French to English by the French writer Hélène Cixous. Lopes, a Congolese, has authored several other works and writes primarily in French.

*Shadows of Your Black Memory* (Ndongo, 2007) by David Ndongo was translated from Spanish to English by Michael Ugarte. Ndongo, a writer from Equatorial Guinea, has authored several other novels primarily in Spanish, further exploring themes of identity and cultural heritage.

*Nairobi Heat* (Ngugi, 2009) is a novel by American-born author Mwangi wa Ngũgĩ, whose father is the renowned Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Mwangi wa Ngũgĩ has written additional novels, continuing his exploration of themes in crime fiction and socio-political issues.

*Harmattan Rain* (Attah, 2013) is a novel by Ghanaian author Ayesha Haroun Attah. She has written additional novels.

The above authors are well known; their biographies can be found in various media and will not be included here for the sake of brevity. The paper includes a brief, tentative biography of the next author, Donald Besong, because the researcher enjoyed his short fiction and recognizes that he is not well known. The researcher compiled information from various internet sources, so the following short biography may be accurate.

Born and raised in Cameroon, Donald Besong wrote the short fiction *Bleeding Stubs* (Besong, 2024) to explore the themes of acceptance and assimilation of Western technology and supremacy in Africa. Besong is a mathematician and engineer who has authored several papers in his field, and Bleeding Stubs is his first and only literary work to date. He writes primarily in English.

This article uses *Bleeding Stubs* (Besong, 2024) for this study because of its brevity and recent publication. However, before we delve into the story, we present a background of studies examining the primary writing styles in other African stories.

A brief introduction to the linguistic styles of African authors.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, published in 1958, is often regarded as the cornerstone of modern African literature from an international perspective. It spearheaded African Literature's recognition and influence on the global stage. The novel is set in pre-colonial Nigeria and focuses on the life of Okonkwo, a respected leader and warrior of the Igbo community (Achebe, 1958). Okonkwo's fear of being perceived as weak drives him to success but also leads to his downfall.

Several years later, Nwapa's novel *Efuru* came with the eponymous female protagonist whose economic standing challenged that of her husband, which did not sit well with her patriarchal environment (Nwapa, 1966).

An author's style is the sum total of the features and language habits that distinguish them as a writer (Wales, 2011). This sum total may be the linguistic fingerprint of a particular text (Leech & Short, 2007, p.1). Figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole and anaphora, are commonly used by every experienced writer. Marcella Melly Kosasih studied these aspects in Achebe's style (Kosasih, 2019). The literary devices treated in Kosasih's paper are present in Western novels and are, therefore, not unique to Achebe. Achebe's writing was largely influenced by European writers

(Killam, 1969, p.2). What makes Achebe's storytelling linguistically different from Western novels is:

- his rich portrayal of Igbo culture.

- transliteration of Igbo words.

- source-language bias in both the dialogue and the narrative (specifically in the syntax, vocabulary, and grammar).

Flora Nwapa depicts a similar linguistic approach. Many African authors and literary analysts argue that the works of Chinua Achebe and Flora Nwapa have provided substantial foundations for the modelling of African literature (Uwakwe & Amadi, 2021). Therefore, it makes sense that African storytellers would write in English—using the blueprint from the pioneers of modern African Literature.

Linguistic analysis abounds on various African works of fiction. Simon Gikandi explores how Achebe employs African English to reflect African cultural contexts and oral traditions (Gikandi, 1991). Oluwaseun Okuyade focuses on Achebe's strategic use of African English to convey the themes and cultural nuances in *Things Fall Apart* (Okuyade, 2009). M. Osakwe examines how Nwapa integrates oral traditions and linguistic elements of the Igbo culture into her novel  (Osakwe, 1999). Many African authors have undergone similar scrutiny, which has revealed a diverse range of diction.

Africanness in African Literature.

In literature, Africanness refers to representing and expressing African cultural identity, traditions, values and experiences, often emphasising the African continent's unique social, historical and political contexts. Writing in African English has become a part and parcel of Africanness. It could be argued that the concept of Africanness is as elusive as the definition of African literature.

Ben-Fred Ohia asserts that African literary writers are committed to keeping African fiction as protest literature (Ohia, 2023). Protest literature can be seen in Achebe's novels. This type of narrative portrays characters from the oppressed community standing up against the oppressor, such as the government or the coloniser, with resistance manifesting in both the author's narrative and the characters' linguistic and cultural expressions. Many subsequent African writers have primarily written similar narratives to underpin their Africanness. As per the present article, another term for protest literature is victim literature.

African literary researchers take pleasure in analysing novels of communal victimhood. Many articles highlight the cruelty of colonisation in Africa and the upheavals it incited. Other articles examine colonisation's linguistic angle and Africa's resistance to the English language.

This protest mentality is seen in Achebe's antagonism toward European author Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe (1977) criticised Conrad for describing Africa and her people as dark and savage in that novel. Achebe wrote several accusatory articles on *Heart of Darkness*. Numerous African literary scholars have followed suit in viewing the novel in a negative light. *Heart of Darkness* is a vivid account that follows the journey of a 19th-century sailor who travels up the Congo River, uncovering the darkness and moral ambiguity of European colonialism in Africa. Achebe interpreted the "Darkness" in "Heart of Darkness" as a critique of Africa itself, influenced by Conrad's overly descriptive writing during an era when Europeans viewed Africa as primitive.

*Heart of Darkness* remains one of the researcher's favourite books. The author, Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, was Polish and wrote in English as a second language. Born in a Poland colonised by Russians, Austro-Hungarians, and Germans, Conrad's experiences parallel those of some African writers. The researcher believes that Conrad's novella was not racist, and any such readings were unintentional.

From a linguistic angle, Achebe (1975) laid the foundation for African victim literature and its complementary African English when he wrote: "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings."

Writers and scholars who say Africans must write their novels in African languages have proposed an even more drastic strategy toward language resistance. They expressed their strong opinion at the Makerere Conference in 1962, where they opposed Achebe and others for using English for African literature. Two camps emerged from the conference. One was led by the late Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, who advocated using African English. The other was led by the Kenyan literary critic and writer Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, pressing for the use of African languages in novels and other literary works (Mutamda, 2017). The Makerere Conference demonstrates that African writers hold strong opinions about their colleagues' writing styles, which exposes  certain genres to the risk of being policed or even subjected to counter-marketing.

This article analyses a story by a new African writer.

Besong's Bleeding Stubs is a short story with a neo-colonialist theme involving the CIA and terrorism. It is written by an African, set in Africa, features predominantly African characters, and includes a bet about the African Nations Cup. The researcher therefore categorises it as part of the African literature genre. Since the researcher has

selected Bleeding Stubs as a convenient short fiction for discussing standard English in African literature, it is important to provide the story's blurb for the benefit of the article's readers. Therefore, *Bleeding Stubs* The rest of this section presents the plot of *Bleeding Stubs*.

*Bleeding Stubs* (2024) is an action-packed short fiction by Donald O. Besong. In the story, Lasso Tambong is an exceptional recruit of Besong's fictional African Military Intelligence Bureau (AMIB). The young gendarme is obsessed with stoicism. His mind has been toying with climbing the jagged wall of a forbidden cliff without a mountaineer's tools. Then, one morning, his obsession suddenly shoots through the roof after a virtual meeting in which his CIA boss, Sean Geiger, recounts his endurance after a bomb attack in a remote Iraqi field. Lasso then makes a bet with his teacher, Colonel Mvodo. Mvodo will win if Lasso cannot resist the urge to claw up the lethal cliff. The young recruit is now caught in a dilemma that jeopardises his winnings, even suspecting that his obsession with the cliff stems from Mvodo's subliminal verbiage over the years. Agent Lasso sneaks to the bottom of the cliff to embark on the much-awaited climb that very night. And yes, he used only his bare hands! To him, this feat is an ideal test of his endurance.

But the odds are not on his side. The story ends with Lasso inhaling a snake's deadly venom and Besong's suspenseful sentence:

> It was hard for him to part with consciousness.

We observe how brief the sentence is, yet it may carry various dark implications for the reader's mind. This is a grim scene in which the stubs of Lasso's fingers bleed after being scraped on the rough, thorny wall. Thus, Besong takes advantage of English's full potency to create dark suspense when Lasso loses consciousness.

The next section looks more in-depth at the story from a linguistic viewpoint: it provides a linguistic analysis of Bleeding Stubs as a sample from African stories written in Standard English, with occasional comparisons to works in African English.

## II. ANALYSIS

*Bleeding Stubs* (Besong, 2024) shares common linguistic aspects with other African authors who write in Standard English.

*Bleeding Stubs* uses target-language bias.

The author of *Bleeding Stubs* uses English, the target language, in its full capacity. As seen in the introduction, the typical African author is source-language biased. For

instance, the characters in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* use elevated diction to convey the structure of the Igbo speech (Achebe, 1958). This kind of diction is also found in the narrative. Consider the following proverb from chapter two of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*:

> When the moon is shining, the cripple becomes hungry for a walk.

It suggests that sometimes circumstances or events can inspire unexpected desires or actions in people. The syntax and choice of words are the same as those uttered in Igbo. This source-language bias is prevalent in Achebe's writing and the works of subsequent African fiction authors. *Bleeding Stubs*—like all the other stories in standard English mentioned in this article—is different in that it is written with a target-language bias.

While the overall structure of the English language is followed in novels by African authors (Chinua Achebe, Flora Nnwapa, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, to name a few), variations in syntax and grammar may reflect the influence of Nigerian languages. For instance, Adichie applies the omission of articles. In Nigerian English, articles (such as "a," "an," and "the") are sometimes omitted or used differently compared to standard English. For example, characters might say "Go to market" instead of "Go to the market."

However, *Bleeding Stubs* and the other African novels written in standard English diverge dramatically from the above. Let us examine the following excerpt from *Bleeding Stubs*:

> Mvodo and Lasso talked shop down the stairs and all the way to the car park. They spoke in AMIB code: Kool-M for Geiger, Q-jungle for Iraq, etc.
>
> "Kool-M could be summed up in one word: stoic," Lasso said.
>
> "You can say that again. The top spy seems nowhere near retirement. I would have quit after the Q-jungle incident."
>
> "I love his designer waistcoats and bow ties. Bloke is neat, Colonel. He'd make a good clothes horse for CICAM's fancy wax department."
>
> Mvodo's hard mouth relaxed into a smile. "What's more, he's pushing seventy—double my

age, and I swear he is built for it.
I wish I had his balls."

In the above excerpt, the sentence structure in the characters' speeches and the narrative are in contemporary Western English. Since the author's mother tongue is African and the target language is English, this is known as target-language bias.

This is a lively conversation between Lasso and Mvodo as they leave a strategic meeting. They are talking about their CIA mentor. Notice expressions in the narrative, such as "talk shop," which suggests a strong target-language bias. This target-language bias is also strong in the conversation. Instead of "The bloke is neat," Lasso says, "Bloke is neat." In banter, this brevity of omitting "the" at the beginning of a sentence where humour is intended is common in spoken English in Britain and the USA and is usually done sparingly. Notice that it happens only once in *Bleeding Stubs*.

Using "balls" as a synonym for "courage" is also trendy in contemporary English.

Target-language bias may help English learners from across the globe improve their English while learning about Africa. Readers—much more so secondary English speakers—may need clarification when reading African English, which Besong avoids. Therefore, like the works of other African writers of standard English mentioned in the introduction, the English in Bleeding Stubs is more internationally palatable. It may be argued that "international English" is a more descriptive term for these works, given their incorporation of British and American slang. However, for the purposes of this article, the researcher will continue using the term "standard English."

*Bleeding Stubs* does not use calque.

Calque refers to converting words or text from one language into another while maintaining the source language's grammar or syntax. It is common in African English. African authors who write in Standard English typically avoid using calque and use it sparingly, only to distinguish a character's speech when it differs from that of the other characters. Likely motifs for Besong's avoidance of calque might be:

- To motivate African readers to learn how to express different situations in English.

- To reach a wider readership.

- To make his readers relax and enjoy the fun-packed story without having to cope with the writer's mother tongue.

- To utilise the richness that English has accumulated over centuries as a written language.

*Bleeding Stubs* does not use code-switching.

The frequent insertion of a secondary English speaker's native language, such as Igbo, into English is known as code-switching. Most African authors use code-switching. Adichie applied code-switching in *Purple Hibiscus* (Adichie, 2003). Throughout the novel, characters switch between English and Igbo while conversing. For instance, when Mama addresses Kambili and Jaja, she may say something like "*Ndo, my children, jisie ike*" (Igbo for "Sorry, my children, take heart").

Code-switching is certainly artistic and stylistic, giving greater variety to the vocabulary, it might alienate certain readers. However, Achebe and Adichie have used it expertly, and their books are well-loved internationally.

Lopes, Besong, Ngũgĩ, Attah, and other writers of Standard English generally do not code-switch their characters. However, they may use code-switching for a character who is linguistically distinct from the others. For instance, in *Bleeding Stubs*, Besong uses standard English to express every narrative, thought and spoken word, avoiding code-switching. However, perhaps to imply that French and English are common languages in Cameroon, he uses the following French words once:

- Bonjour (a jogger greeting Agent Lasso).

- Interdit (on a signboard).

*Bleeding Stubs* uses italics for the narrator's thoughts.

An author has several choices for expressing the viewpoint character's essential thoughts. They may use italics without a tag or avoid italics and include tags (he/she thought). Besong prefers the former. According to the article "Inner Dialogue—Writing Character Thoughts" (2012), although this method might be too intrusive for the reader, it is universally understood. The researcher criticises using italics as thoughts because they are distracting and are rarely used in African literature. However, it is up to the reader's taste if they prefer italics.

Besong's characters do not code-switch, even in their inner thoughts.

This could have one or more of the following implications:

- The characters are so familiar with the coloniser's language that it has become their language of thought—indicating a colonial mentality. From the realists' viewpoint, we see a present-day African society where people of higher social status may be delighted with this mental colonisation.

- Besong may imply that the characters code-switch in their thoughts or even muse in Cameroonian languages, but he chose a standard English representation to make the story flow better. In

addition, this makes his writing more internationally marketable

- This may be his favourite strategy for dealing with multi-tribal people. The case is different when dealing with just one African language. For instance, the characters of *Things Fall Apart* are all from the Igbo tribe, making the author's application of code-switching to their thoughts possible.

## III.    CONCLUSION

African authors may use African English to protect their cultural identity, for authenticity, and to show language resistance. However, writing in African languages would be the most effective way of preserving the African cultural identity and resisting the English language. It is well established that to write in African languages, one must first learn the Latin Alphabet, which is a relic of colonisation. This implies they should be already educated in a European language (English, relevant to this paper) before learning to write in an African language. Therefore, African literature is caught in a nuanced loop.

English is more accessible to write than Igbo or any other African language. Therefore, African writers twisting English to fit their tribal languages or their knowledge of English may be the only way to resist English and propagate the African culture. Achebe and Nwapa, along with their followers, write in that style to portray a strong tribal identity and to resist imperialism.

On the other hand, Ngugi, Atta, Soyinka, Besong, and others use Standard English to achieve brevity, reach a wider audience, make their writing more universally understood, and avoid language resistance—among other reasons.

Besong's jovial expression might suggest that he glorifies the coloniser's language. His humour appears to set aside antagonism, focusing instead on entertaining his readers while expressing his Cameroonian patriotism in a lighthearted manner. The researcher argues that Besong's exaggeratedly cheerful writing in the coloniser's language defies the ongoing struggle of Africans to reclaim their identity.

Improving reading habits and literacy across Africa might help clarify the future direction of African literature. Despite ongoing debates on language choice, better engagement with diverse literary styles could guide this evolution. Enhanced literacy may also address uncertainties about current trends in African writing.

## IV.    RECOMMENDATIONS

Works by Ngũgĩ, David Ndongo, Attah, Mwangi, Besong and others who write in Standard English should receive the same recognition as those written in African English. Besong's *Bleeding Stubs* reads as authentic from the realist's viewpoint, depicting the interactions of today's educated people in Africa. If anyone craves a fun-packed African story in a setting that goes beyond tribal barriers, this story is a must-read.

Given the ongoing debate over language choice in African literature and the risk of African English being misjudged as bad English—potentially reinforcing stereotypes about Africans' abilities and limiting international opportunities—African English writers and speakers might consider using Standard English to reach a broader audience. Royalties from book sales could then fund studies in African tribal languages, ensuring their preservation and independent development.

African readers should engage with the global reading community to gain a clearer understanding of the direction of African literature. Additionally, Africans should embrace and promote the use of African languages as a more effective means of expressing and preserving their cultural identity.

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# Diasporic Experiences, Identity Crises and Ontological Insecurity in Lola Aworanti-Ekugo's *Lagos to London*

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*Abstract— This study, Diasporic Experiences, Identity Crises and Ontological Insecurity in Lola Aworanti-Ekugo's Lagos to London, examines how migration-induced diasporic experiences by Nigerians in diaspora were portrayed. In examining the work this author, the study explores the ways in which characters in the novel navigate their new surroundings and the ways in which they negotiate their identity and/or culture amidst the pressure of being immigrants. It also considers how these characters grapple with the consequences of leaving behind their homelands and the difficulties they face as a result. The study employs content and context analysis approaches of qualitative methodology in analysing the various challenges faced by Nigerians in diaspora in the selected texts. This study draws on Homi Bhabha's Postcolonial Theory of Hybridity and Mimicry to argue that the authors whose novels are under investigation use their works to articulate the complexities of the Nigerian diasporic experiences and to criticize the effects of oppressive power structures. Findings from the study show that Nigerians living in diaspora are faced with multiple challenges in their formation of a new cultural identity through cultural contact with their host countries. The play-white-syndromes also expose these characters to multi-cultural lifestyles that resulted in their hybrid identity. Furthermore, due to the material disparities that constantly empower the white subject and degrade the black as well as the difficulties of negotiating new identities, these characters are overwhelmed by anxieties that threatens their identity, developed neurotic conditions which were manifested in their dreams and aspirations to obtain the humanity granted to white subjects.*

*Keywords— Diasporic Experiences, Identity Crises, Ontological Insecurity, Postcolonial, Nigeria*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In this age of globalisation, with the influx of people across boundaries, studies have shown that migration is one of the pressing concerns garnering more and more attention from writers, critics, and literary academics worldwide. Human migration involves the movement of individuals from one location to another to stay there either permanently or temporarily. Migration is unavoidably a component of human existence. African history has been heavily influenced by migration. Between 2 and 2.5 million years ago, the human species most likely began to disperse throughout the earth, both inside and outside Africa. Although the origins of human migration are a hotly contested topic, most theories centre on

movements that took place on the African continent. According to Awoonor, "Among every African people, there are stories of migrations and legends of their movement in vast numbers across great expanses of land over long periods. These waves of migration took place at periods of great intervals and over many centuries" (1975:4). The trans-Atlantic slave trade, despite occurring over a shorter time than the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trades can be seen as the largest long-distance forced migration of people. Long-distance trade workers and traders moved freely within Africa due to trade between ecologically compatible regions and the seasonality of production.

Migration has happened worldwide, and Africans form a more significant percentage of world Diasporas. The first migration of the African people occurred during the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The colonial era, too, witnessed migration, mainly in the name of labour, from Nigeria. After gaining independence, many Africans willingly left the African continent for Europe and America for better work or to acquire a better quality of life and education. In African literature, migration has become an important field of investigation since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Thus, this study has been prompted by its topical relevance around Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular. A quick glimpse at written and online media headlines reveal how many people of all ages in Nigeria, for example, are every day taking the risk to embark on the gloomy path of clandestine and illegal immigration despite the danger it represents for their lives. In 1917 available statistics, according to Krdzalic, indicates that Nigerian migrants account for the highest number of arrival in Italy by sea, with about 17,000 out of the total of 99,127 migrants from all countries who arrived in Italy between January and August 2017 (Olusegun, 2019:5). The choice of *Lagos to London* as a template for this study lies on this premise. This literary text discusses the multifaceted and intertwined combination of experiences that afflict and characterises transnational trajectory and the complex dynamics of diaspora existence. The gist of this study is then to show how Lora Aworanti-Ekugo's transnational engagement underscores the perception of the West as an 'El Dorado' of sorts.

Researchers have been drawn to studies on literary studies like feminism, racism, identity crisis and post-colonialism. However, there is relatively limited, or no research around the identity crises concerning the experiences of Nigerians in diaspora in *Lagos to London* as it is a newly published texts (published 2021). As a result of the very few studies that exist, it has not been fully established how the work of this author has contributed in creating the image of Nigerians/immigrants in diaspora, which serves as the main thrust of this research work. The limited scholarship has constituted a problem which makes this research to focus on the challenges Nigerian migrants are faced with in locating their identities in their host countries.

In this work, Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory of hybridity and mimicry is used as the theoretical frameworks. According to Bhabha's theory, such terms describe how colonised people have reacted to the power of the coloniser. Hybridity describes the emergence of new cultural forms. Mimicry appears when members of a colonised society imitate and take on the colonisers'

culture. Colonial mimicry comes from the colonist's desire for a reformed, recognising others as a subject of difference.

## II. IDENTITY CRISES AND OTHER MIGRATION EXPERIENCES IN *LAGOS TO LONDON*

In his 'Forward' note in *Lagos to London*, Bolanle Austen-Peters stated that the crushing weight of a family of overachievers, the drive to rise and raise your loved ones from economic turmoil, the ocean of socioeconomic divide between the upper and lower class in Nigeria, the realities and impact of culture shock on Nigerians in diaspora, *Lagos to London* has it all in one (x). As Bolanle posits above, it is evident that Remi's struggle for her identity as she pursues her dream curse in her host land resulted from the pressure from her parents (overachievers) – the Cokers as they desired to raise her from their perceived economic turmoil.

Although, some scholars have written on the challenges of migration as it affects characters personally in their bid to figure out their survival, the drive to rise and raise their loved ones from economic turmoil, unleashing forces within colonised countries to permanently alter their cultural priorities, the reviewed literature showed that Lora Aworanti-Ekugo's *Lagos to Landon* as a diasporic novel is yet to receive much scholarly attention a newly published text (published 2021). Therefore, this dearth of study on "Migration: Identity Crisis and the Nigerian Diasporic Experiences in the Selected Works of Adichie and Aworanti-Ekugo" has created a gap in literature which this study examined.

Lora Aworannti-Ekugo novels are mainly concerned with the experience of migration itself, on the mixed welcome the migrants receive in their host countries, on experiences of racism and hostility, as well as on the rootlessness and search for identity that arise from displacement and cultural diversity. The characters' personalities develop as they acquire cultural values, norms and roles. It is these personalities that define their identity. This writer writes semi-autobiographical novel, delving into her characters' personal pasts to either discover or re-examine their motivations and affinities. She also use fictional characters and situations to question traditional norms, testing, trying, and occasionally reinforcing (internally or otherwise) notions of race and culture, as seen in her novel *Lagos to London*.

Survivor of the colonial era in Africa faces the problem of being utterly unable to create an original identity because the beautiful African identity has been lost to colonialism. As was already said, Achebe claimed that before the

arrival of the Whiteman, African communities were not stupid but frequently had a philosophy of considerable depth, significance, and beauty. "That they had dignity and poetry. We must now reclaim the dignity that many Africans almost completely lost during the colonial era. Losing one's dignity and regard for oneself is the worst thing that can happen to anyone (1975:8). Rather than having a "loss of identity," Africans in the diaspora could be seen as being historically denied one altogether. Erikson referred to this kind of experience as an absence of identity or a negative identity; he indicated a preference for the term surrendered identity. This concept is meant to index that a historical existence and culture serve as the foundational past for African diasporic identities. However, through the slave trade (and colonisation), that identity was "surrendered" to the White oppressors, who have held control of it ever since. According to him, "surrendered identity indicates that there is an identity to be reclaimed and hope for establishing the sense of self-continuity vital to healthy identity development" (1975:8).

Racial segregation is a significant identity problem that affects the lives of immigrants in *Lagos to London*. Some characters face racial discrimination due to their physical appearance and are classified as the 'other'. Fanon in *Black Skin White Mask* expresses the issue of 'other'. These (migrants as) colonised subjects (the negroes) become psychologically traumatised when they realise that they cannot be 'white' as much as they try to attain whiteness. According to him, "there is a fact: white men consider themselves superior to black men" (2016:10). With this, it is observed that the whites see themselves as superior and the blacks as inferior, thus, the 'other'.

For most Nigerian authors living abroad, it was not until sometime later in their life that they migrated out of their homeland; as such, their inner core' has been formed, seeing themselves as Nigerian. It is not just their birth within a geographical location that identifies them as Nigerian; it is their relationship with the community where they grow up. Their inner core never changes; not even the colour of a passport changes it. It is a continuous and unbroken story. This is seen in Aworanti-Ekugo, irrespective of where she lives, as her novel is a reflection of her background as Nigerian. She confesses in her novel that "It can be difficult being far away from home and integrating into a new culture" (2021:234). Her work reflects this cultural heritage as they feed off it. She also advises African migrants in the United Kingdom to "Also, always remember where you are from and stay true to your roots and values" Like the case of the harsh living condition that encouraged young Nigerians to seek relocation to Europe, as we observed in *Lagos to Lagos to London*. The harsh condition of living gets tough coupled with the tightening of economic spending on education as recommended by global financial institutions like World Bank, many Nigerians in the texts under study crave and desire to migrate to Europe. It becomes common for parents to send their children abroad to complete their university programs, as is the case with Nnamdi, Remi, Mope, Bayo in *Lagos to London.*

Nnamdi, whose academic progress had been delayed by countless strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria, desired a better country for his university education as the author narrates:

> The ASUU strikes were fast becoming every student's nightmare as they seemed to be spending more time at home than at university. This meant that the students could be home for anything from weeks to months doing nothing. It was a complicated situation: lecturers were unhappy about their wages and conditions of service, there were allegations of outstanding earned academic allowances, requests for more funding and more. ASUU and Federal Government would have several meetings, which always seemed to be deadlocked, thus resulting in prolonged strikes (2021:14).

With the above challenge, Nnamdi was worried about the strike, having heard that some of his secondary school classmates abroad were already close to completing their degrees. At the same time, he was still stuck on one he did not have any idea when he would finish; he started desiring to move to the UK to continue his education, as the novelist puts it:

> The UK was a place of endless opportunities. He would complete his education at one of the best universities there and meet like-minded people. He would graduate with a first-class, land a white-collar job, send money back home to support his family, marry a beautiful girl his parents would love, and start a family (2021:21).

Nnamdi is not alone in this quest as his friend Bayo, in his bid to travel abroad, narrates how he had to go through the horror experience of swallowing cocaine (flipping chicken) to get sponsorship to travel to Europe. He recounts his ordeal as the pain of swallowing cocaine creates:

> the searing pain that tore through his body, of how he ambled towards the taxi

that took him to the contact's apartment, of how his host had given him some laxatives that made him go from deep within his gut. He remembered being held up by the shoulders as he sleepily excreted all seventy cocaine pellets (2021:130).

According to Bhabha, imitation reveals the boundaries of colonial discourse's authority, almost as though colonial authority inherently embodies the seeds of its demise (2012:19). Furthermore, the concept of hybridity occupies a central place in postcolonial discourse as Hoogvelt posits that, "It is celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference (2012:158). This is especially true when Bhabha talks about cultural hybridity.

From the beginning of the novel, the reader encounters several situations when the characters are exposed to various types of discrimination such as cultural background, gender, ethnicity or racial group and economic position. The significance of these diverse discriminatory layers is profoundly harmful and unjust to black migrants as they are dragged to the bottom of the social scale. Valente and Valera Pertegas stated that " … structural factors (problems affecting the place in which people live) combined with more intangible attributes (i.e self-perceieved unsafety, anxiety provo king situations and social exclusion) can limit a person's ability to cope with or perceived factors of insecurity (2017:14). Through the exploration of *Lagos to London*, one can distinguish a two-way relation between these two categories as necessary ingredients contributing to the shaping of black identity.

In the lives of Nigerian migrants in the diaspora, racism is a pervasive societal evil that is the foundation of all other concerns, including identity crises and psychological disorders, as seen in the fiction under discussion by Aworanti-Ekugo. This racial discrimination these migrants suffer in the areas in which they live have significant effects on their ontological insecurity. Remi, the protagonist in the novel under consideration, embody the real struggle of the foreign black migrant to find a place for herself within the bewildering European cultures. She was involved in activism as she struggled to define her identity in her host country. Orabueze comments on activism as a vital aspect:

> Silences in the face of oppression and brutalisation are contributory factors to the erection and sustenance of the walls of imprisonment of the individual in Nigerian society. She shows that silence can be a weapon and shield, depending on how the individual wants to wield it. She tenaciously believes that silence is no longer golden in the face of oppression and degradation (96).

Indeed Lora strongly feels it is only the voice of the individual raised in protest against obnoxious native laws and customs and draconian leadership that can bring meaningful change in society. Another distinctive attribute of Remi's personality is her assertiveness. Throughout the novel, Remi exhibits an asserted character in her work (blogs) and personal life. Though it is the most misunderstood aspect of her personality, the protagonist embraces firmness in specific contexts to make positive changes.

The feeling of alienation is also evident in *Lagos to London*, one of the characters, Nnamdi, feels out of place. He has always believed that in Europe, everyone can make it. Whenever he was in the lecture hall in Nigeria, he would dream about life in London. As the author shared, "There will be no students cramped in lecture halls, so I won't chock on body odours just because I am receiving lectures. Everything they have is great! No wonder people who go there never wish to return. I will make a lot of money when I get there" (2021:44). He needed to understand that there were tough challenges he would have to face. His struggles to make ends meet, working to pay off rent and other dues, and creating time for schooling, frustrated him. He could not even write back home because he had no story to tell.

Racism is also evident in Europe and particularly in England with regard to Emenike. This Nigerian newcomer experience racism when they go somewhere, relax and take some beer. Unfortunately, the waitress is not eager to serve them; she even does not seem to care about them just because of their skin colour, as Emenike remorses, "She is ignoring me. Did you notice how rude she was earlier? These Eastern Europeans just don't like serving black people" (2021:265). Emenike is also a victim of racial discrimination when standing on Upper Street to hail a taxi. Still, the driver avoids him and takes two white women after it passes him by. "From afar, the cab light was on, but as the cab approached him, the light went off, and he assumed the driver was not on duty. After the cab passed him by, he looked back idly and saw that the cab light was back on and that, a little way up the street, it stopped for two white women (275).

Lora's fiction offers an outside perspective on what it means to be black in Europe and contributes to understanding the notion of race. Ashcroft *et al*. argued

that, "All postcolonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved this problem" (2013:2). *Lagos to London* is filled with social commentary about identity crisis, race and modern representations of black characters. The novelist aims to describe the experience of black immigrants in Europe and to undo the double colonisation that blacks suffer from. The stories reflect the authors' views and observations on race and its challenges. Many of the migrants engage in blogging to share their various experiences in their host lands. In narrating her protagonist's experience, Lola said that her character Remi "followed quite a number of the bloggers, especially Nigerian students in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world. They wrote about the challenges of being one of the few black students on their campuses, how they dealt with racism and how they missed home" (71). Remi made the readers of her blogs see London through her eyes.

Nnamdi in was denied a visa simply because 'he did not present enough proof that he was going to study in the UK … he was at the age when most youths left Nigeria for greener pastures and never returned" (51). In this case, such bureaucracy systematically ensures that blacks are cut off from receiving certain benefits.

With the above, one can see that the majority of the issues addressed in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, including the role of white "language" (8) "white", "beauty" and its relation to "daylight" (32); the religious connections of blackness to "sin" and whiteness to "virtue" (106); are all subjects to what Aworanti-Ekugo have purposefully and ingeniously exposed in their stories. Thus, by observing Fanon's progressive analysis of neurosis, one could see how racism and the subjugation experiences of these Nigerian migrants in Aworanti-Ekugo's stories cause common traumatic experiences with African immigrants in the diaspora.

Remi feels alienated; as the author puts it: "It took her more time than she taught to adjust to things in London. For instance, Remi struggled to cope with the accent of her lecturers in the UK, as the author reveals:

> Only that Remi could barely hear what he said. 'Why is he just speaking through his nostrils? Remi asked, no one in particular, in a quiet voice. The lecturer reeled on about laws and conventions and called British names that struggled to stick in Remi's head. It seemed as though he spoke the words; as they entered her ears through the right, they

left through the left ear. The words never had a chance to ever stay (2021:72).

She experiences culture shock in multiple ways "… Not to mention the differences in food. The party jellof rice, pounded yam and egusi soup, which she turned down back home, were now scarce commodities" (67). Remi faces weather challenges as a new migrant in the UK, the author narrates these experiences thus: "Winter soon came with a piercing cold that left Remi wearing four layers of clothes sometimes. In Winter, Remi soon saw that it seemed as if a colour scheme was handed over to every Londoner" (69). Remi also, in her blog, narrated the differences in the weather of both her home and host countries as she puts it:

> What they can't tell you about 'the abroad' is the Winter. It is like a rude awakening, and if you are caught unawares, it could make you reconsider your decision to move abroad. You know, for migrants from warm countries, Winter should be a valid excuse … after all. Nothing in your previous life prepares you for it (2021:74).

Most of these migrants pay less attention to the weather in their host countries. Instead, their attentions are mostly on the possibility of meeting their financial needs. It takes most of them a long time to adjust to their new weather because they are unprepared for it. When Remi was exposed to the cold hands of the Winter, she felt the cold 'deep in her bones' so much that she stayed home for three days straight without going out, missing her lectures.

Exploitation is another major challenge that affects the identities of Nigerian (African) characters in *Lagos to London* as well as oppression. As these characters migrate to Europe with the conviction that it has so much to offer in terms of opportunities and better prospects, they soon realise that their status as immigrants creates room for exploitation and oppression. Nnamdi in *Lagos to London* is almost exploited as he devises a plan on how London would be home for him as his friends introduce him to Sam, who claims to be a professional in obtaining British *kpali*. Nnamdi's friends describe Sam as "an arranger guy because of his specialisation: marriage arrangements for immigration purposes. He was a professional when it comes to finding the European citizens who were the perfect matches for those who saw marriage as a pathway to immigration" (133). These migrants lose huge amounts of money in the hands of these arranges. Some promise to help them only to vanish into thin air as soon as they are paid for the job yet to be done.

Many studies have shown that migrants suffer from alienation, loneliness, despair, disappointment, racial discrimination, loss of identity and psychological trauma. They face the challenge of displacement from their host countries, melded with racial issues, alienation, marginalisation, cultural difference, identity crisis, and an urge to return to their roots. They are uprooted from their tradition and are welcomed there with racism, indifference and feelings of exile. Many expatriates have penned their experiences of living in a foreign country with firsthand narration and ingenuity.

Aworanti-Ekugo's *Lagos to London* examine the notion of the doubleness of identity, which emphasises the challenges that resulted in some alteration in the character's inner lives and how immigration impacted the self-identity to give birth to a double identity.

This study focuses on the lives of those African immigrants who have left their countries for a better life and are now entangled in the doubleness of diasporic identity. Identity is presented here as something given by the community one finds oneself. On how to become permanent residents in the UK, Nnamdi's roommates narrated the four routes to a UK passport as follows:

> The first one is the hustler; you will find them studying and working, ending one course and starting another, ending a PhD and starting another – just for him to stay in the UK for ten years without a gap. The second pathway was the worker route; one needed to be gainfully employed in the UK for five years. The third was the businessman route; one needed to have hefty capital to run a business. The fourth was the lover route; one could marry a British or European citizen for three years. (2021:100)

As most of the characters become homesick, they begin thinking about going back home. in *Lagos to London*, due to the many life complexities, Bayo endures in the host lands, he becomes nostalgic for his home country. Lora epitomises these immigrants' homesickness through the narrator's mouth:

> Bayo walked by the row of shelves in the store, scanning for something striking. Just as he walked past a shelf full of fragrances, he got a whiff of a musky scent that made him long for home. He stopped, closed his eyes and gave himself to the longing the scent brought him; since his return to the UK,

he becomes unusually homesick (2021:166).

In the hospital, Bayo also reassured Nnamdi of his burning desire to return home to Nigeria as he said:

> I want to move back home,' he said. When Nnamdi didn't react, Bayo explained. 'I came to the UK because I wanted a better life for myself; I risk so much. Looking back, I am not sure it was worth it. And you know, if it wasn't for this, I doubt I would have had the got to admit it to myself.' Bayo pausedto pick at a spot on the bedsheet before continuing, 'now more than ever, I'm clear about what is most important to me; it's no longer about forced comfort but purpose – finding meaning.' He balled his right fist and hit it with his chest. "I want more" (2021:179).

Thinking of all he had gone through to get to Europe and his horrible experience of narrowly escaping death, Bayo thought it wise that it was time to get back to her root and reunite with his family.

Many of the characters in the selected novel perceive the West as lands flowing with milk and honey but have no clue about what baggage migrants in these countries carry with them in their host lands, lands likely to be marked with the problem of race relations that burdens the present time.

It is also important to note that political imbalance, human rights violations, and persecution plaguing most African countries are among the migration factors. In some cases, people have no other alternative than fleeing their homeland where they have dwelt for ages just because of oppression .*Lagos to London* as literary references to the military upheavals that Nigeria had gone through, University staff went on strike for several months. As a result, both staff and students looked to new horizons to secure better chances for their education and professional careers.

## III.     CONCLUSION

Immigrant characters who longed for the Transnational spaces, chiefly Western countries, as lands filled with milk and honey, where every dream and aspiration would be fulfilled, are grossly disillusioned and frustrated at the belated realisation. The characters' experiences in their different environments and their reactions/responses are the migrants' attempts at negotiating their cultural identity in an alien environment. In the characters' actions, one

identifies the conflation of cultural habits alien to African culture but indigenous to the foreign land. Such unfamiliar cultural practices Ojaide identified as apparent manifestations of the "Third Space of enunciation" (20212:2), which means in between or cultural hybridity. The racialised foreign environment compels the migrants in the texts to wear false foreign identities to gain acceptance. This emphasises the challenges that resulted in some alteration in the protagonist's inner life and how immigration impacted the self-identity to give birth to a double identity. This study focuses on the lives of those African immigrants who have left their countries for a better life and are now entangled in the doubleness of diasporic identity. These migrants go to the extent of forging a new identity in their search for recognition. As can be seen, under the pressure of American society, migrants exchange their linguistic identity and need to feign a British accent to impress white men about their language proficiency.

The selected novels are replete with the themes of identity crisis, nostalgia, alienation, otherness, the illusion of superiority and better prospects, oppression and exploitation, exile, hybrid identity, an attempt to assimilate in the diasporic space, among others which constitute what the researcher termed diasporic experiences.

This research points to the fact that every culture has gaps that need to be filled, and it is only by the interaction between other cultures that the gaps in these cultures become clearer. As a result, members of a colonised society usually imitate and take on the colonisers' culture to make up what they think is missing in theirs; this Homi Baba refers to as mimicry (the copying of the colonising culture, behaviour, manners, and values by the colonised). Hence, when these characters reach that point of realisation, they attain a state of hybridity which is seen as the ability to easily blend with both cultures (their culture and the culture of their host) and live within the demands of both cultures. The racialised foreign environment compels the migrants in the text to wearing false foreign identities to gain acceptance. This emphasises the challenges that resulted in some alteration in the protagonist's inner lives and how immigration impacted their self-identities to give birth to a double identity.

With an emphasis on the novel under study, this research dismantles the popular notion that migrating to the diaspora is the key to finding rest from the postcolonial conditions in Nigeria. This is achieved in the selected texts through a portrayal of the hardships faced by Nigerians in the Diaspora, the disillusionment that greets their search for a better life, the nostalgia that prompts their return. Also, this study portrays Lola Aworanti-Ekugo's novel as

expressions of the fact that the massive influx of Nigerians to the West is marked by missed opportunities, truncated development, frustrated hope and political sense manifested in poor socio-economic performance, causing suffering and unfulfilled expectations as well as conflicts and political instability. The selected works reveal the unlivable nature of the British dream, especially for Nigerians and their unwelcome status. The dream of the these characters to obtain the humanity granted to white subjects that remains unfulfilled leads to irrational actions and beliefs regarding whiteness that produces neurotic disorder in their lives. This study, therefore, exposes Nigerians and Nigerian youths to the complex, sad, unsafe realities of life in Europe and other Western Nations as it concerns aliens or migrants who perceive the West as the Promised Land.

Overall, the diasporic experiences of the characters in the novel express the view that the Western world is not a safe haven but presents unique challenges, especially based on race. The nostalgia that such challenges invoke puts to question the influx of Nigerians to the West. It is based on this double-edged portrayal of the diasporic experience that this study recommends the repositioning of the study of diasporic literature (prose), especially in relation to Nigerians in the diaspora because such literature will forever remain a significant tool not only to drawing awareness to the happenings within and without the immediate society but for the general development of the citizenry and the society at large. Massive awareness is needed among Nigerians at home and in the diaspora concerning the 'Greener Pasture' illusion. Hence, exploring sensitive concerns like identity crisis, ontological insecurity, psychological trauma, racial issues, alienation, cultural difference, nostalgia, etc., constitutes the major basis upon which the authors under consideration qualify as literary models in diasporic literature.

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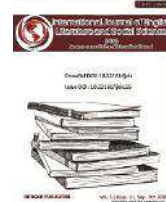
# Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) for Grade 9 English

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*Abstract*— *This study determined the effectiveness of using SRSD in enhancing the writing performance of Grade 9 students in Abellana National School, for the school year 2018-2019. It determined the significant relationship between the two groups of students' English 9 grades. The experimental group was taught writing using SRSD, while the control group was taught using the traditional method of teaching writing throughout the intervention which lasted for two weeks. Based on the findings, a proposed action plan which integrates SRSD was formulated. The study used the quasi-experimental design utilizing simple percentage rubric and narrative essay. A total of 44 students were rated. Statistical treatments utilized were weighted mean and simple percentage level of proficiency in writing essay. A writing prompt of Romeo and Juliet was used as the main instrument. The study findings showed significant differences between the mean scores attained by the experimental group and by the control group, and such difference was attributed to the SRSD writing strategy used. SRSD was able to aid the experimental group students to adapt the needed behavior of self-assessment wherein they became independent and active learners.*

*Keywords*— *Behavior, effective, narrative writing, self-regulated strategy development, quasi-experimental*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a productive skill, which needs competence in other macro skills, namely: listening, reading, and speaking (Almaden, 2006). As such, it is a highly complex process for both professional and non-professional writers since it involves a host of advanced skills that include critical thinking, logical development, and coherence of ideas. Additionally, this is often viewed by many as the most difficult task compared to the other macro skills because it relies on complex interrelated skills and (meta) cognitive abilities (Johnson, Mercado, and Acevedo, 2012).

It is a common observation that classrooms come alive once the teacher divides the class into groups (Foote, 2010). In fact, a trend of incorporating several group activities are happening in the elementary and secondary classrooms especially in the implementation of higher-grade percentage of performance tasks in the Enhanced K to 12 curricula in the Philippines.

But the goal of every teacher is not just to teach and motivate students so they can move up to the next level but to aspire them to be ready for senior high school and university. This is cognizant with Article IV Section 2 of 1987 Philippine Constitution which states that: (iii) Graduates will be prepared for higher education.

Moreover, senior high school and college education are heavy on essay exams, research reports, term papers, theses, and all other kinds of written output. Even top universities all over the world require incoming students to write an application essay and some also include an essay portion in their admission tests (Foote, 2010). This is why writing skill is considered imperative for success not just in education but also in employment (Yuan, 2010).

So, how can the teachers develop the writing performance of the students if there is more focus on group activities and less on writing tasks? Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) addresses students' cognitive, behavioral, and affective processes (Harris and Graham, 1999) and can be an effective intervention for students with or poor performance in writing. Students will be introduced to a writing strategy in tandem with the self-regulation strategy through SRSD and will monitor their performances, either individually or in a group, as the strategies are applied.

In theory, students do not instantly become effective independent learners by themselves, rather it is crucial that they learn how to learn. SRSD incorporates a writing strategy with self-regulation instruction. When students can monitor their own performances then there will be a shift of responsibility for the learning process from the teacher to the student. This shift involves students understanding their learning, being motivated to learn, and collaborating with their teachers and classmates to structure their learning goals which will result in becoming independent learners.

The researcher observed a grade 10 English class when students were asked to write a journal entry after a module was discussed. Students simply enumerated the lessons covered in the whole module. But when the teacher showed to the class a sample journal entry and gave comments and remarks of their previous entry, students learned to include insights and questions on their next entries. With this observation, two other English teachers were interviewed on their students' writing skills and received the same observation that students committed many mistakes not only in spelling and grammar but importantly they have poor essay development.

In the interview with the two English teachers, Grade 7 and 8 teachers at Abellana National School, they described the general classroom writing practices they implemented were a combination of traditional writing skills (e.g., grammar and punctuation) and teaching methods (e.g., Lecture and Didactic). Both teachers also shared the less frequent writing activities they implemented such as handwriting skills, using writing prompts, or dictation, in class the less interested their students were in writing activities.

Reasons attributed to this, writing activities were only given as supplementary activities but not as a culminating output of the other macro skills. Students also showed a lack of proper usage of punctuation and capitalization. Though cohesion was evident the sentence structures were not established. There were also some spelling errors with same sounding words (e.g., "great" instead of "greet").

Despite the constant input and lecture of both teachers with basic writing skills, students still failed to produce quality written outputs.

Furthermore, according to Bloom's Hierarchy of Skills, writing comes last. Most of the time, a book report is asked after a reading assignment, a reflection paper for every film viewed, or a reaction paper after hearing a politician's speech, etc. Therefore, as mentioned, the researcher can say that writing is the achievement of the proficiency level of the other macro skills.

Educators, curriculum designers, and the government must examine current writing instructional practices to determine how to better support students who are struggling to acquire this necessary skill. Hence, these observations paved the way to study writing instruction in developing the writing performance of students through self-regulated goals and tasks.

## II.    THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study is anchored on Barry Zimmerman's theory of Self-regulated Learning. The supporting theories are Donald Meichenbaum's Cognitive-Behavioral Modification (CBM) and Lev Vygotsky's Scaffolding theory.

Barry Zimmerman's theory of Self-regulated Learning discussed the four levels of development, namely: observation, emulation, self-control, and self-regulation. The main theory will be utilized to heighten the writing performance of the students and to regulate their output through goal setting, self-instruction, and self-assessment.

The first level, which is observation, is based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which suggests that through observation, any individual can learn to do things by observing the behavior of others.

The second level, the emulative level, is when the learner begins to try the action or conduct the behavior on his or her own. The difference between the first two levels is that in the first level the student is merely observing, while the second level is using cognitive and motor skills to imitate the behavior that was observed (Schunk and Zimmerman, 1997).

The third level, which is self-control, allows the student to internalize what has been observed but will still be dependent on the teacher's modeling.

The final level is self-regulation, which occurs when the student can adapt the behavior as needed and is independent of the teacher's guidance (Zimmerman, 1998).

Zimmerman's level of self-regulation constitutes the framework for successful modeling for a writing task. Meichenbaum even added in his Cognitive-Behavioral Modification that modeling is used as a scaffold. Thus, for teachers to modify students' behavior and implement self-assessment for their performance, the sub-theories of Cognitive-Behavioral Modification and Scaffolding theory are utilized.

Meichenbaum developed Cognitive-Behavioral Modification that typically involves children learning to control their own behavior through goal setting, self-instruction, and self-assessment (Harris and Graham, 2009).

Students who had difficulty in writing may need more than a learning strategy, but also, they need to regulate their own behavior. The principle of setting a goal creates a positive linear relationship between a challenging specific goal and task (Locke and Latham, 1968). Thus, making goal setting as one of the most powerful and evidence-based interventions for enhancing performance (Locke and Latham, 2002).

No doubt that students' biggest critics are neither the teachers nor their parents, but themselves. And that is all right because when they are engaged in the process of thinking about (self-instruction), assessing their own work (self-assessment), then they take responsibility for their own learning. Thus, activating learners as owners of their learning leads to student performance improvement and positive behavior towards goal setting (Williams, 2008).

CBM also emphasizes the significance of the student playing an active and cooperative part in the design, implementation, and evaluation of learning (Meichenbaum, 1977). On the other hand, the teacher should gradually fade support and engage students in a hands-on task for the instruction to be highly responsive for each child.

Lev Vygotsky's Scaffolding theory is part of the education concept "Zone of Proximal Development" or ZPD. Vygotsky pointed out that students learn the most when they are in their ZPD with the help or guidance of someone else, may it be teachers or other students. In presenting a new instruction for writing through procedural facilitation and guided practice, students may acquire the final level of self-regulation.

This study is mainly focused on the effects of Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) instruction on the writing performance of students. Since SRSD is a form of self-instructional strategy that promotes writing quality in Grade two to twelve (Rogers and Graham, 2008) it allows students to do much of the work while achieving specific criteria.

In 1985, Karen Harris and Steve Graham published their very first study on strategies instruction approach to writing called "Self-control Strategy Training". Further development was made of this approach as "Self-instructional Strategy Training" (Graham Harris, & Sawyer, 1987) and in 1989 as "Self-instructional Strategy Development" (Harris and Pressley, 1991). Since 1992, this approach has been referred to as "Self-regulated Strategy Development," or SRSD (Case, Harris, & Graham, 1992).

SRSD provides supported, definite instruction targeting: (1) writing strategies for specific writing genres (e.g., persuasive, descriptive); (2) general writing strategies (e.g., using powerful vocabulary, engaging opening and closing sections); (3) self-regulation strategies (e.g., goal setting, self-instruction, self-assessment, and self-efficacy); and (4) relevant declarative, conditional and procedural knowledge (knowing what to do; how to do it; and when, where, and why to do it) (Graham and Harris, 1992).

It is with this principle that the researcher will now proceed with the shift in strategy for English writing instruction using SRSD on narrative writing. The framework for the six stages of SRSD is explained below:

Stage I: Develop Background Knowledge (teacher to class). Teacher and students need to work together during stage one to develop the students' background knowledge. Students will recall any previous knowledge about narrative writing. Then, the teacher will discuss different examples of writing prompts.

Stage II: Discuss It (teacher to class). During this stage, the teacher will discuss steps in writing a narrative essay through two mnemonics: TOWER and TACO (Sandmel, 2010).

Stage III: Model It (teacher to class). Students will observe the teacher model the writing steps in answering an example writing prompt using the two mnemonics: TOWER and TACO.

Stage IV: Memorize It (student to student). Students will memorize the steps of the TOWER and TACO. With the use of flashcards and graphic organizers, the class will have an activity to reinforce memorization of steps.

Stage V: Support It (student). Students begin to write using the steps of the two mnemonics. If a student is struggling, the student and the teacher will collaboratively plan and write gradually shifting control to the student. The writing rubric will be explained to the students in this stage. Students are encouraged to assess their initial written output through the rubric.

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Stage VI: Independent Performance (student). The teacher and students will review the rubric and the two mnemonics. In a timed practice test, students should now be able to plan and set a goal for their writing output and use the strategies effectively and independently.

These six stages of SRSD instruction are a flexible set of guidelines intended to be combined, modified, and redefined in response to the needs of the students and teachers. For example, stages I and II can be integrated together in the early part of the lesson rather than being taught as distinct individual stages.

## III.    RELATED STUDIES

This research used the SRSD approach in writing a narrative essay. To further support the present study, the following researches were conducted internationally and were found that the writing approach can be used across different writing genres:

Sandmel (2010) conducted a study using SRSD approach with new writing strategies (TOWER and TACO) for a writing genre (Story About Me) for a purpose (on-demand writing) within a comprehensive model of prevention for students with writing and behavior difficulties. The effect size (21) was small but positive. All students were given the WJ-III Test of Achievement Writing Sample Subtest prior to the beginning of the intervention and upon the completion of the study. However, the design of the study did not include a control group. This study makes an important contribution to the literature based on these findings. Fourth and fifth-grade students (N=12), with writing and behavior difficulties, were able to improve the total number of writing elements included in their writing. Five students scored SRSD instruction and the writing strategies higher at post-instruction than before the intervention, and two students scored the same. In regard to writing quality, five students discussed the quality scoring rubric with the teachers and developed individual goals for their writing.

Akincilar (2010) investigated the effects of a paragraph writing strategy PLEASE (Pick, List, Evaluate, Activate, Supply, End) instruction through the SRSD approach on descriptive writing of fifth grade English learners studying in a private elementary school in Istanbul. For the study, eight fifth grade students participated in a free writing workshop offered by the researcher at school. Strategies for planning and drafting descriptive paragraphs were taught to the students. They were also taught the procedures for regulating the use of these strategies and the writing process itself through the SRSD model. The findings of the study show improvement in terms of overall quality and length of the written paragraph by

students. Students became more aware of the planning of a descriptive paragraph. After the treatment, the students also gained self-confidence in writing.

Syiem (2012) conducted a study on improving the English writing skills of higher secondary students (N=114) in Meghalaya, India, through a Three-Week Module grounded on the SRSD approach. A feasible and cost-time-effective training module for enhancing the writing skills (letter writing and composition) in English was developed, and its effectiveness was evaluated. Modules of varying duration and intensity were formulated with experienced teachers, some parents, and representative sample. A Pretest - posttest research design was followed for a period of three weeks. Statistical Analysis was done using paired t-test, Chi-square test, and ANOVA. The findings showed that the module was effective in teaching writing skills.

In these studies, the writing performance of students in the SRSD groups' post-instruction was significantly better than the writing of the control group in regard to sentence lengths, spelling, coherence, and quality of ideas.

Since, recent researches have demonstrated that the SRSD model of writing instruction has constantly been successful in improving student writing outputs across different writing genres at the elementary and secondary level (Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005; Graham & Perin, 2007; Tracy et al., 2009). This study would like to culminate on narrative writing. The researcher believed it would be more effective if students are encouraged to write with the use of their imagination and personal experiences.

## IV.    RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) in enhancing writing for Grade 9 English, Abellana National School, Cebu City, S.Y. 2018-2019. The findings were the base of a proposed action plan.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the pretest performances of the control and experimental groups?

2. What are the posttest performances of the control and experimental groups?

3. Is there a significant difference on the pretest performances of the control and experimental groups?

4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest performances of the control and experimental groups?

5. Is there a significant difference between the posttest performances of the control and experimental groups?

6. Grounded on the findings, what action plan could be proposed?

## V.　METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quasi-experimental design to determine the effectiveness of SRSD to engage Grade 9 English students in improving their writing performance at Abellana National School, Cebu City, school year 2018 – 2019.

This study was conducted at Abellana National School, Osmeña Boulevard in Cebu City, Philippines. It is the biggest public high school in Cebu City Division with about 4,753 junior high school students. Also, there are 206 teachers and 17 of whom are English teachers. The other subjects include key areas like Science and Mathematics; major subjects under the Technical Vocational Livelihood (T.V.L) such as drafting, carpentry, garments, foods, and ICT; and Special Program for Sports (SPS) like swimming, basketball, etc. The school is the only school in the Cebu City Division that offers specialized subjects for T.V.L, SPS, and Special Program for Foreign Language – Japanese under T.L.E.

The sample population of this study utilized one class who are currently taking grade 9 English at Abellana National School. There were 44 students involved in this study who were streamed into two heterogeneous groups. There were 22 students for the control group and 22 students for the experimental group. Both groups were between 14 and 15 years old; clustered heterogeneously and had mixed gender. Their academic performances in English in the First quarter of the school year were used as the basis for their groups.

The main instrument used in this study was a researcher made writing prompt about Romeo and Juliet. This instrument served as a pretest and posttest assessment tool. Before the pretest was conducted, the writing prompt was given to three Grade 9 English teachers for review and validation purposes. The writing prompt was also pilot tested in another Grade 9 English class who took the same lesson and who were not part of the study.

Before the study was conducted, a letter requesting permission to conduct this study was also sent to the English Coordinator, Registrar, and the School Principal. The request to conduct the research enabled the researcher to secure access to students' records and other files helpful to the research process. The approved communication letter was provided to the Principal, English Coordinator, and the English teachers for their awareness of the ongoing study and for any necessary support to the researcher. A letter request was also sent to the students and their parents explaining the background and purpose of the study and the utmost confidentiality of data were observed.

Prior to the administration of the pretest to the control and experimental groups, the writing prompt (Romeo and Juliet) was administered to students who were not included in the study. This was for the purpose of pretesting and piloting the research main tools before using it to collect data. Through this step, any errors and vagueness on the writing prompt (Romeo and Juliet) were modified and/ or changed by the researcher.

The pilot testing was administered to a class who were not included in the study but of the same grade level and the instrument was validated on 10 subjects. The result was interpreted through content reliability through the rubric. The content validity of the writing prompt was checked using the rubric and yielded the score of more than 75%. Thus, found out that subjects had a score of more than a passing score.

Subsequently, the researcher used the improved writing prompt (Romeo and Juliet) and the rubric as the main tools to measure the writing performance of students. The writing prompt was administered to the control and experimental groups in a unified session. Then, the two-week SRSD approach was taught to the experimental group from November 26, 2018, to December 7, 2018, which was guided with a 6 researcher-made Lesson Plans. The experimental group had their sessions during their original English class schedule at 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. while the control group had their classes at 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. The research was done in the Third quarter since Romeo and Juliet was one of the main selections.

Both the control and experimental groups were taught with Lesson 1 of the researcher-made Lesson Plans in developing the students' background knowledge. After which, the control group was taught how to write a narrative essay (without SRSD) using the Writeshop Guide found on pages 128-129 of Grade 9 English Learner's Manual: A Journey through Anglo-American Literature. Paper and pencil were utilized. During the two-week of intervention, the control group answered the intervention writing prompts using the Writeshop Guide, while the experimental group was taught with Lessons 2 - 6 SRSD based Lesson Plans.

The pretest writing prompt was also found in the researcher-made lesson plan. However, the presented situation was used in a different context. A posttest using the same assessment tool in the pretest was administered after two weeks of experimental study. The data gathered

was treated for tabulation, statistical analyses, and interpretation.

The SRSD stages of instruction were used as a guide to construct the six researcher-made lesson plans. Lesson 1 was administered to both control and experimental groups since it was the development of background knowledge. Narrative writing and a sample writing prompt are explained in this lesson.

However, Lessons 2 - 6 were introduced to the experimental group, while the control group used the Writing Guide found on their Learner's Manual.

In Lesson 2, students discussed what they learned with one another and with their teacher. Then, the teacher introduced 2 writing steps through the mnemonic TOWER and TACO.

In Lesson 3, students observed how the teacher models the writing steps.

In Lesson 4, students memorized the steps of TOWER and TACO. With the use of flashcards and graphic organizers, the class had an activity to reinforce memorization of steps.

In Lesson 5, students began writing using the mnemonics and the sample writing prompt. The writing rubric was also explained to the students in this lesson. Then, students were encouraged to monitor their progress through the given rubric.

In Lesson 6, the teacher and students reviewed their writing outputs using the rubric. Afterward, a timed practice test using the same writing prompt was conducted as an independent writing performance.

After giving the SRSD based Lesson Plans, a posttest using the same assessment tool in the pretest was given to both control and experimental groups. The result served as the basis for the proposed action plan.

## VI.    RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Pretest Scores of Control and Experimental Groups

The performances of students in the control and experimental groups were examined through writing prompt and were evaluated by two English teachers using the researcher-made rubric. Table 1 presents the results of the pretest performances of the two groups.

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents in both control and experimental groups belong to poor and good category. The data revealed that most of the students in control and experimental groups showed low performances in the pretest. Furthermore, it gives an implication that writing is a skill that needs to improve, and students need to master their written communication especially sentence structure and grammar. One probable reason for this is the failure of exposure to writing activities during lower years which have not been drilled through narrative writing.

*Table 1 Pretest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups*

| Pretest Result | | Control Group | | Experimental Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | Level of Performance | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 13-16 | Very Good | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 9-12 | Good | 7 | 31.82 | 12 | 54.55 |
| 5-8 | Poor | 12 | 54.55 | 8 | 36.36 |
| 1-4 | Needs Improvement | 3 | 13.64 | 2 | 9.09 |
| Total: | | 22 | 100.00 | 22 | 100.00 |
| Mean: | | 7.09 | *Poor* | 8.63 | *Good* |

The Cognitive-Behavioral Modification of Meichenbaum supports the result of the students' scores; students who had difficulty in writing may need more than a learning strategy; they may need to regulate their own behavior. CBM is a form of self-instructional learning, meaning students can do much of the work and learn best when guided with a challenging specific goal and task.

Thus, making goal setting as one of the most powerful and evidence-based interventions in enhancing writing performance (Locke and Latham, 2002).

6.2 Posttest Scores of Control and Experimental Groups

Table 2 shows the posttest performances of the control and experimental groups.

As shown in table 2, the experimental group shows a remarkable increase in performance from Good to Very Good. While the control group shows an increase from Poor to Good apart from 7 students (31.82%) who belong to the Very Good Category.

*Table 2 Posttest Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups*

| Posttest | | Control Group | | Experimental Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | Level of Performance | Frequency | Per Cent (%) | Frequency | Per Cent (%) |
| 13-16 | Very Good | 7 | 31.82 | 14 | 63.64 |
| 9-12 | Good | 14 | 63.64 | 6 | 27.27 |
| 5-8 | Poor | 1 | 4.55 | 2 | 9.09 |
| 1-4 | Needs Improvement | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Total: | | 22 | 100.00 | 22 | 100.00 |
| Mean: | | 10.95 | *Good* | 12.52 | *Very Good* |

The experimental group which used SRSD in writing a narrative essay showed a high increase in performance which could be described that the use of self-regulation is effective. The experimental group proves that students are motivated by visuals and writing strategies (TOWER and TACO) which were actively used during the writing drills.

As pointed out in Lev Vygotsky's Scaffolding theory, if a concept or skill is something that a student could do with the help of a "more knowledgeable other," then that skill is something they could perform on their own after learning it with less support (Farr, 2014).

6.3 Significance of the Difference Between the Pretest Performances of the Control and Experimental Groups

Table 3 shows the significant difference between the pretest performances of the control and experimental groups.

*Table 3 Test of the Significance between the Pretest Performances of the Control and Experimental Groups*

| Variables | Computed t-value | Critical Value | $\rho$-value | Decision on $H_0$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest Performances of the Control and Experimental Group | 2.15817352640354 | 2.01808167886218 | 0.0366785504116581 | Reject $H_0$ |

Table 3 shows the computed $\rho$-Value is 0.036 which is lesser than the level of significance alpha ($\alpha$) which is 0.05; ($\rho$-Value = 0.036 < $\alpha$=0.05); therefore, null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in the pretest scores of the control and experimental groups. It showed that the teaching strategy used in the writing activities has a correlation with both groups' performances.

6.4 Significance of the Difference Between the Pretest and Posttest Performances of the Control and Experimental Groups

Table 4 presents the significant difference between the pretest and posttest performances of the control and experimental groups.

*Table 4 Test of the Significance between the Pretest Performances and Posttest Performances of the Control and Experimental Groups*

| Variables | | Mean | Computed t-value | Critical Value | Decision on $H_0$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control Group | Pretest | 7.09 | 16.7467269955862 | 2.07961383708272 | Reject $H_0$ |
| | Posttest | 10.95 | | | |
| Experimental Group | Pretest | 8.64 | 16.5834850392764 | 2.07961383708272 | Reject $H_0$ |
| | Posttest | 12.52 | | | |

Table 4 presents the mean of the posttest of the control group is 10.95 which is higher than the mean of the pretest of 7.09. There is also a significant increase on the mean of the experimental groups' performance from 8.64 on the pretest to 12.52 on the posttest.

The table further implies that after the discussion of what is narrative essay and application of the steps using the Writeshop Guide found on pages 128-129 of Grade 9 English Learner's Manual: A Journey through Anglo-American Literature in writing a narrative essay through traditional teaching improved the performance of the students in the control group. Furthermore, the significant increase of the experimental group's performance can be attributed to the SRSD writing intervention. Though traditional teaching methods are still effective given that they are closely monitored, the significant increase of the performance of the experimental group implies that SRSD is more effective than the traditional teaching method.

6.5 Significance of the Difference Between the Posttest Performances of the Control and Experimental Groups

Table 5 shows the significant difference between the posttest performances of the control and experimental groups.

*Table 5 Test of the Significance between the Posttest Performances of the Control and Experimental Groups*

| Variables | Computed t-value | Critical Value | $\rho$-value | Decision on $H_0$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest Performances of the Control and Experimental Group | 2.15070933898399 | 2.01808167886218 | 0.0373002322120877 | Reject $H_0$ |

Table 5 shows the computed $\rho$-Value is 0.037 which is lesser than the level of significance alpha ($\alpha$) which is 0.05; ($\rho$-Value = 0.037 < $\alpha$=0.05); therefore, null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in the posttest scores of the control and experimental groups. It strongly supports that the teaching strategy used in teaching the two groups has a correlation on their performance.

The main theory of this study firmly supports the result of the posttest performances. Self-regulation which is the final level of Barry Zimmerman's Self-regulated Learning, highlighted that students who were able to adapt the needed behavior of self-assessment becomes independent and active learners (Zimmerman, 1998). Hence, SRSD provided additional support to students to target writing strategies and self-regulation strategies.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the intervention that uses self-regulation such as SRSD proved to be effective in aiding students during writing tasks thus enhancing their writing performance. Therefore, self-regulated strategies are important for executing higher-level skills involved in the writing process.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## RECOMMENDATION

The researcher proposed the following as a result of this research:

1. Topics for future researches

   1.1. SRSD Application to General Education Classroom

   1.2. SRSD Intervention to Students with Writing Disabilities

   1.3. Impact of Writing Fatigue on Students Written Output

2. Adopt the proposed action plan.

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# Poeticizing Love: Reliving the Ethics and Aesthetics of Odia-English Love Poetry

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*Abstract*— *Love is the finest of all motifs of poetry. No poetry can attain perfection and sublimity without vindications as well as visitations of love. It is the azure the very touch of which enlivens the idioms of poetry. Indian-English poetry has never sealed its boundaries to keep the angelic spirit of love off from its habitations. On the contrary, it has held its doors wide open to felicitate love at its thresholds. The prime objective of this paper is to shed some critical lights on the trajectory of love and its nuances as they have figured in the Odia-English poetry. While almost all the poets in the Parthenon of Indian-English poetry have been more or less accommodative to love, it is Bibhu Padhi and Dilip Naik who have been the most generous one in rehabilitating love at the habitations of their words. The spotlight has been on love as one seminal motif of the province of poetry under analysis. This paper has endeavoured to map out the aesthetics and ethics of love as depicted in the poetry of the Indian-English poets in general and Bibhu Padhi and Dilip Naik in particular.*

*Keywords*— *Odia Poetry in English, Love, Transcendence, Parthenon, Ethics, and Aesthetics*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding the fact, love as an idea is universal in its appeal and efficacy; ironically it has always remained immensely defiant to defining yardsticks. As a feeling, love is as much endearing as enigmatic. As the noted scholar, PCK Prem has rightly stated in his insightful work *English Poetry in India*

> To define love is very difficult. To limit love in a few words is impossible. To speak of love is subjective. It has not only the psychology as the origin or centre but the body and its physiology provide it a solid backdrop giving birth to feelings like sensuousness, sex and sexuality. This automatically leads to various perceptions of love.

Considered by the criterion of quantum alone, no other Odia-English poet with the singular exception of Jayanta Mahapatra, has contributed so much to the province under analysis as Bibhu Padhi has done. Padhi also happened to

be a professor of English literature and in that, of English poetry as well. While reviewing an anthology of poems of Padhi titled *Midnight Diary* (2015), Jayadeep Sarangi, also a Professor of English and noted literary critic, has rightly termed Padhi as an 'introvert'. It's a different thing that Padhi's profession – the profession of a teacher, does demand a man of opposite disposition i.e. a man of great oratorical skill and openness. Whether his mind set of an introvert had had any adverse effect or not on his delivery as a class room teacher, but it certainly has not proved a liability on his passion, or on the way of his imaginative preoccupation. His dispositional trait of self-reflection and narcissism, - narcissism not in its pejorative sense, has helped him fine-tune his mind and pay increasing attention to the inner world of self or psyche, to the fathomless aporia of mind, to the inward gloom rather than to the outer world of bright sun shine. Again as Professor Sarangi has pertinently pointed out in the same review article, Padhi has turned to be predominately a 'meditative poet'. 'Poetry for him is', Sarangi has further observed, 'an expression of the non grammar of being: a journey beyond

the physical parameters and social contexts.' A little earlier in the same article Sarangi has gone on to say 'Bibhu Padhi's poems are collage of varied impressions, psychological imprints, and moods. They invoke many lived moments, small acts and psychological views. . . .' A little later he has further explained 'The poet's creativity and imagination are reflected in careful use of metaphors that evoke incessant images of hope and picture of life's daily course in the readers' mind.' Portraits of inner landscape, of the invisible landscape of mind can be availed in abundance from his voluminous poetic album which consists of such collections of poetry as *Painting the House* (1999), *A Wound Elsewhere* (1992), *Going to the Temple* (1988), *Lines from a Legend* (1992), *Games the Heart Must Play*(2002), *Migratory Days*(2011), *Brief Seasons*(2013), *Magic Ritual*(2014), *Selected Poems*(2014) and the one already referred above, *Midnight Diary*(2015). As evidential from above, with Padhi, the domain of Odia poetry in English has undergone enormous expansion both vertically as well as horizontally, in breadth as well as in depth. On thematic front, it has gone many extra miles by penetrating deep into the dark, secret and subterranean realm of mind and earnestly endeavouring to capture some of its subtle nuances in the cryptic clutches of words. With Bibhu Padhi, Odia-English poetry has indeed acquired a new psychological dimension. In spite of the fact that Padhi has taken keen interest in the vagaries of mind, he has also descended to the pulsating chamber of the heart to listen to and grasp its ecstatic beatings. He has never been indifferent to, to use his own expression, 'the game' of 'heart'. The game, the heart has exclusive licence to play is the game of love. As such poets are very prone to the feeling of love. But Padhi has held deep excursions to the passionate province of heart to have the exuberances of the supreme most emotion, 'love'. Ample evidences of his frequent excursions to the enigmatic affairs of the heart are manifested in the pages of his two collections, *Games the Heart Must Play* and *Brief Seasons*. These two volumes tend to be Bibhu Padhi's manifesto of love. The lines of the poems included in these two volumes bristle with the fine ripples of that most delicate emotion. Referring to the theme of love of the poems of the first volume, Jayanta Mahapatra, the mentor and patriarchal figure of Odia English poets has aptly stated in his review note on the collection, 'these are straightforward poems of love in an age of cynicism and technological certainty.' As to Padhi's vision of love, Mahapatra has further stated, '[h]is vision centres around belief in love, and love becomes his perfect *deity* for a time that embraces unbelief.' As a matter of fact, the poems of these two volumes, especially the ones of the latter volume, are love in its best possible verbal

manifestation. Love as a stream of feeling – feeling at its most real, original, authentic and unadulterated, simmers through the lines of Padhi's love songs and therefore, the lines appeal to the mind and heart of the reader exactly the same way the lover and the ladylove do galvanize one another through their physical presence. In other words, love is at its most alive and intense form and appearance at the habitations of Padhi's words. Padhi has delineated love the sensuous way Keats has nature. Besides, Bibhu Padhi has perceived love in its true colour and contour, conceived its true posturing and persuasiveness through varying situations. To cite an example, how one soul perspiring May day the lover and the lady love had felt when the latter suddenly came to meet the former. In the love song numbering 9 in *Brief Seasons* Padhi has written

> You came to me
>
> on one of those last days of May,
>
> when even the soul perspires,
>
> is restless under
>
> heat, sunshine and day.
>
> I recall holding you
>
> and feeling the first rains
>
> falling inside me, inside you.

Even on that extremely grueling summer day, the lovers have been caught in the so to say, tsunami of that powerful emotion 'love'. The feeling was so strong and endearing that the speaker has not forgotten it till today even after a long span. The memory of that loving moment is evenly fresh today in the mind's eye of the poet. In the last few lines, Padhi has written

> Today, when I see
>
> the May rains once again,
>
> I still feel those old rains
>
> falling inside each of us,
>
> in between me and you,
>
> . . . .

To cite another example of Padhi's way of understanding as well as weighing of a small deed in the form of 'kiss' in which rides love. In the love song Number 23 in the same collection, the poet has written

> I know there are other ways
>
> of loving than asking for a kiss,
>
> but a kiss is what everything
>
> is, is supposed to be –
>
> a strange game
>
> of fire and ice, a way of

relocating each other

as if for the first time,

a mode of transferring

all one seems to own

to a warmer, more careful owner,

a touch that can see

and yet is ready to endure

all that it begs to see.

Love, the supreme emotion and the magnetic force has here transformed itself to a mode of action or a performance in the form of a 'kiss' and its attendance as 'a touch' has turned out to be the most precious and revelatory experience both to the body and mind. What Eliot has said about 'thought' in the context of Donne holds good to Padhi with regards to 'love'. According to Eliot, 'a thought to John Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility.'

With Padhi's abode of idiom, the idea of love has taken a sensuous turn and felt as a heightened visible experience. Look at the following lines from his love song number 18 in which he has depicted the ladylove, how she appeared one night.

You were shining all over

in the night's mineral dark –

each and every part of you,

each whisper issued out of you,

all the hushed words

your kisses showered on me

that night, that day.

At that moment when love got embedded in the corporeal frame of the beloved, even the silver luminary, the moon, has appeared deficient in its haze and has had to do with the love emblazoned ladylove to comply with the deficit. The poet has written

What did the moon

have to do with you

that night, that day?

What unseen, precious gift

it owed to you?

Thereupon, in the final three lines, the ladylove has eventually transmigrated herself to the moon. Padhi has written,

At that time you were the moon

that had been, until then,

so, so far away.

As a matter of fact, with Padhi, Odia poetry in English has thus entered into that mysterious zone where the 'strange game/of fire and ice' is played. By entering into that enigmatic field, the ambit of Odia poetry in English has undergone further expansion and side by side, it has been added with one more dimension. The other Odia English poet in whose hands this dimension implying 'the game of heart' and the 'strange game/of fire and ice' has grown stronger and appeared more striking is Dr. Dilip Naik. Dr. Naik has three books of poems to his credit and they form a kind of sequel specifically the second book titled *By Inference* (2014) tends to be a sequel to his first one *You I Could Hold* (2013). The poems of these two collections most like the ones of Padhi's *Games the Heart Must Play* and *Brief Seasons* are love poems.

If love has been accorded the berth of a 'deity' by Bibhu Padhi, it has not been accorded any less sanctified position either by Dilip Naik. The latter one, Naik, has elevated love, or more appropriately, restored love to its originary paradisiac realm. Notwithstanding the fact, his province of poetry is not totally alien to sublunary love; it is more pervaded with its counter countenance. Whatever its facets and to whatever degree be it sensuous or sublime, love has remained the nucleus of Dilip Naik's poetry. Most of his poetry rotates around one and only gravitational centre that is love. In other words, love has been the central motif of his poetry. Therefore, this paper looks deeply into every tissue of his poetry to arrive at an understanding of Naik's expression of love. Naik does not depart from the conventional narration of love but he narrates love with difference. Love has no convention. It is not historically conditioned. It is quintessentially the same from the day of its origin. Neither time nor language corrupts it. Love never sheds its newness. It is not subject to any season's arbitration. In its repetition it does not get reduced to a cliché. Dilip Naik is neither the first nor the final poet on love but his understanding of love makes a marked difference. He writes in an idiom which is quite new in comparison to the conventionality. The essential ambiguity of his poetry rests on the fact that in his sacrifice lies a passionate desire for renewal. This paper concentrates its critical attention on Naik's intense articulation of love in his poetry. The difference of Naik's poetry lies in the depth of his words and expressions. His poetry never appears distant to the readers. It is too engaging and truthful that readers do lose themselves in his lines. His words are alive with feelings. His words have revelatory power and express with all liveliness his nostalgia and anguish. Dilip Naik said in one of his lectures, "A broken heart is a real heart." He seems here more Yeatsean. Poetry is life for the broken but art for the successful. Dilip Naik does not write poetry for any academic honour. He writes it as poetry

needs him to. Words flow though him as wind through trees. Poetry chose him not he. Therefore, Dr. Bhima Charan Nayak quite aptly writes in his famous essay "Love Ethics of Dilip Naik", "Dr. Dilip Naik is a teacher by profession and a poet in passion".

A close-up view of Naik's poetic canvas reveals it to have been pervaded by, to use his own words, 'the matrices of love' and these matrices have been dressed in and decorated with true 'contours and colours' of love. The poetic trajectory of Naik displays 'love' as its governing motif and this motif has been discernible at three different sites: sentient, psychic or cerebral, and philological. The first one does indeed lay the foundation for the next two. The inaugural plane has been the expositional one and shortest in duration, during which the persona has been by chance, gifted to have just a taste of this divine feast that too, only for once and for a short while. Referring to this precious and providential gift, the ladylove, Naik has written

> you the gift of chance
>
> given as a libation
>
> given for once.

The lines of a dedicatory poem, dedicated to Harel Skaat, do in fact; explain what the ladylove has been to the poet. As he has written in the poem

> in you the boundless life of pure feeling
>
> ranges from hymn to elegy
>
> you are the serenade of the ever evening
>
> and the exalted octave of agony (italic added).

As a matter of fact, in this extremely brief but blissful phase, the protagonist of Naik's saga of love has undergone 'the boundless life of pure feeling.' Paradoxical may it sound but it's true, the moment of love in this sentient stage has been brief but 'boundless'. As the above cited lines testify, the mood in this short sojourn 'ranges from hymn to elegy' and the poetry that the poet has harvested in the last stage of his love-lorne life has been a concert of hymns and elegies and of 'the exalted octave of agony' inextricably tinged 'in the permanence of melancholy.' The finished products of Naik's poetic endeavor, or better, of his playing the language game, have been hymns and elegies with intonations of melancholy. But these products have undergone a prolonged churning process, a process of rumination and intense reflection in the ruffled realm of poet's mind, memory and imagination during the intermediary stage before they have been finally delivered. Here Naik's creative process is in close proximity with the famous one of Wordsworth according

to which poetry is 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling recollected in tranquillity.' As a matter of fact, the poetic moment with both Wordsworth and Naik, and for that matter with many other poet as well, has been a moment of re-living of the original experience. The original experience which is embedded in its objective correlatives, to use Eliot's famous expression, and felt in conjunction with its material stimulants, is lost afterwards and the poet is left only with its fossils, its traces and its faint, with its ghost or the blurred and spectral being. But the initial feelings have been so powerful and persuasive that the poet has never come out of it. What on the other hand they try to do is to recapture and re-live the initial but lost moments in the deep, dark and invisible world of his/her phantasmagoria. The love-ridden lines of Naik are evincive of a prolonged trouble torn afterlife – life after the beloved, the chance begotten gift, has been withdrawn from him and withdrawn once and for all. It is a life held in captivity at the altar of ladylove. It is a life of lifetime enthrallment with the lost moment. The ladylove has transmuted to, to use his own words, 'an abstract blood' that incessantly 'flows in' him and has turned again, 'a destiny of consciousness.' In the poem "The Sickness of Thinking You" in *By Inference* the poet has pronounced

> I can still think you,
>
> untiring, interested endlessly,
>
> even though we can't meet outside,
>
> it flows in me, an abstract blood,
>
> the wonder of still thinking you –
>
> a destiny of consciousness.

The beloved has thus abstracted to 'a destiny of consciousness' never to part with the poet-lover. Referring to her in another poem titled "A Hymn", Naik has reiterated

> you who are nothing in the language of things,
>
> pure as impossibility,
>
> you are the beloved I can't live with
>
> or live without.

Men are creatures of memory, of consciousness. They are inextricably dogged with this all throughout their life. In so far as Naik's ways with and attitude towards his beloved are concerned, as he has proclaimed it in his poem "Are You Really Impossible" That's how I live –

> myth-making, picturing, narrating you,
>
> for you are the bread of my imagination,
>
> you are all I do.

As a matter of fact, the poems of Dilip Naik have been versified narratives of love. As to his attitude to love and ladylove, ladylove has been his idol or his deity and love his worship. In the earlier cited poem "A Hymn", he has asserted

> like a marble statue
>
> you have no blood.
>
> Like an idol
>
> you can't answer.
>
> But you alone deserve my worship.

The beloved to Naik is a goddess, love is worship and on that account, something sacred, sanctimonious and at once a religious experience. The songs that depict that divine experience happen to be 'prayers' in form and nature, and the poet, the singer is a dedicated devotee, a priest, a worshipper reciting those devotional lines in elegiac tone. To put in another way, the songs which eulogize such feelings are 'hymns'. Accordingly Naik has aptly termed his poems as 'elegiac hymns' tempered 'in the permanence of melancholy'. Here it is worth mentioning that insofar as the matter of poeticizing love is concerned, Dilip Naik is undoubtedly the greatest poet in Odia English poetry for the terrain of his poetry is pervaded by one and only motif, love. As he has recorded it in another of his seminal song titled "This Lifelong Conversation", he has intermittently held himself in 'Lifelong conversation with' his silent goddess. As he has put it

> This lifelong conversation with you is the only life I've really lived.

The matter of fact with Dilip Naik's poetry indeed has been, his songs have invariably remained a prolonged series of interior monologues the speaker of which is constantly seen in lifetime dialogue with his beloved, or with his 'central other'. He is seen ever and anon loitering in the corridors of his beloved's shrine.

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# Distribution Pattern and Influencing Factors of Highly Educated Talents in Guangdong Province from 2000 to 2020 based on GIS and GeoDetector Model

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*Abstract*— *Nowadays, in the context of globalization and informatization, highly educated talents (HET) have become an important driving force for the economic and social development of countries and regions. Therefore, analyzing the geographical factors related to talent can provide important references for the formulation of regional talent introduction policies and talent management. From this perspective, this study uses the data of the Chinese population census from 2000 to 2020, analyzes the distribution pattern and primary influencing factors of HET in Guangdong Province in the past 20 years through the Theil index, multiple linear regression model (MLR), and GeoDetector model, and proposes optimization suggestions on this basis. Study has shown that: (1) Guangdong's HET are concentrated in economically developed cities in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, presenting a spatial distribution pattern of "dense in the PRD region, sparse in other regions," with Guangzhou and Shenzhen having the highest talent density. (2) There was a significant difference in the change rate of high educated talent density among cities in the province before and after 2010. The growth rate was relatively fast before 2010, but slowed down after 2010. The change rate of talent proportion shows a trend of "fast growth in the PRD region and slow growth in other regions." (3) The imbalance between the density and proportion of HET among cities is on the rise. Through the analysis of the geographic detector model, it was found that administrative hierarchy, scientific research environment, and economic opportunities are the three main factors affecting the distribution pattern of HET in Guangdong Province.*

*Keywords*— *Highly educated talents (HET), Pearl River Delta (PRD), Theil index, GeoDetector, Multiple linear regression model (MLR).*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Highly educated talents (HET) usually refer to human resources with a higher level of education, often possessing rich professional knowledge and skills, capable of performing highly skilled and high-quality jobs. In this study, HET refer to human resources with a bachelor's degree or above who play an important role in promoting technological innovation, economic development, and social progress. As the main driving force of the knowledge economy era, the distribution pattern and influencing

factors of HET have important theoretical and practical significance for regional development. The study of the distribution pattern and influencing factors of HET in Guangdong Province, as a major economic province in China, has important practical significance.

In the study of the number and flow of highly qualified talent, scholars generally use statistical data analysis and survey study methods to examine the flow of talent. For example, Liu et al. (2023), using the national census data, conducted an in-depth analysis of the distribution pattern of Chinese highly educated talent between 2000 and 2020. The study found that the talent density was higher in the southeast and lower in the northwest, forming a distribution pattern of "southeast intensity, north-west scarce" [1]. By conducting a survey of the urban dimension, Wu et al. (2019) found that China's highly educated talent is highly concentrated in municipalities, provinces, and planned municipalities [2].

In the study of the driving factors of the distribution of highly educated talent, it has expanded from a single socio-economic factor to multiple influence factors. For example, Scholars such as Abel (2012) believe that economic factors play a crucial role in the capacity-gathering model of higher education [3]. Lu et al. (2024) pointed out that there were differences in the levels of gathering of different talents, which influenced the factors of gathering talents [4].

Therefore, by studying the distribution pattern and influencing factors of HET in Guangdong Province, the laws of talent flow and distribution can be revealed, providing new research perspectives and methods for population geography. Secondly, this study can provide reference and inspiration for the formulation of talent strategies, optimization of educational resources, and regional coordinated development in Guangdong Province. In addition, this study can provide experience and inspiration for the management of HET in other regions.

## II.  STUDY AREA AND DATA SOURCES

### 2.1 Study Area

Guangdong Province is located between latitude 20 ° 09 ′ -25 ° 31 ′ N and longitude 109 ° 45 ′ -117 ° 20 ′ E (Figure 1). Its gross domestic product (GDP) has consistently ranked first in the country, making it the largest economic province in China, accounting for 1/8 of the country's total economic output. In terms of administrative regions, it is divided into four major areas: the PRD, northern Guangdong, eastern Guangdong, and western Guangdong, with 21 prefecture-level cities under its jurisdiction. Its characteristics include a large population base, a high urbanization rate, population concentration in the PRD, and continuous improvement in education level.
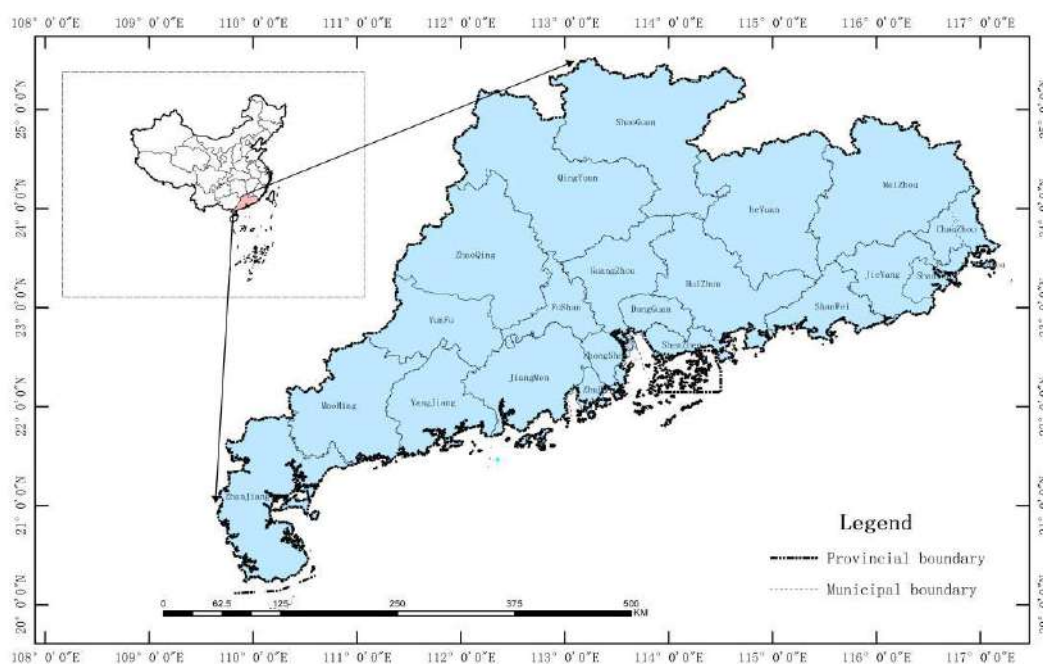


*Fig.1 Location map of Guangdong Province*

**2.2 Data Sources**

This article extracts data on HET in Guangdong Province based on the data from the 2000, 2010, and 2020 China Population Census data by county. The key indicators involved include the number of higher education talents, education level, occupational distribution, etc. Other socio-economic and cultural data are taken from the Guangdong Provincial Statistical Yearbook and the Guangdong Provincial Social Statistical Yearbook. The data sources and purposes are shown in Tables 1 to 4.

*Table 1 Data sources list*

| Data Requirement | Data sources | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| **Virtual talent pool** | 2000 China census by county (www.zgtjnj.org) | Analyze the distribution of highly educated talents |
| | 2010 China census by county (www.zgtjnj.org) | |
| | 2020 China census by county (www.zgtjnj.org) | |
| **Political, economic, and cultural data** | 《Guangdong statistical Yearbook》（www.zgtjnj.org） | The influencing factors of its distribution pattern were analyzed |
| | 《Social statistics Yearbook of Guangdong Province》（www.zgtjnj.org） | |

*Table 2 Talent data for 2000 (Bachelor's degree or above)*

| **2000** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of talents (people) | Area (km2) | Number of students above 6 years old (people) | Talent density (people/km2) | Proportion of talents |
| **ShenZhen** | 564093 | 1998 | 6730702 | 282 | 8.38% |
| **GuangZhou** | 926345 | 7436 | 9343161 | 125 | 9.91% |
| **DongGuan** | 139125 | 2512 | 6207672 | 55 | 2.24% |
| **ZhuHai** | 92684 | 1725 | 1153878 | 54 | 8.03% |
| **FoShan** | 195717 | 3875 | 5011270 | 51 | 3.91% |
| **ShanTou** | 103439 | 2123 | 4163064 | 49 | 2.48% |
| **ZhongShan** | 62271 | 1770 | 2223841 | 35 | 2.80% |
| **ZhanJiang** | 150215 | 11692 | 5376171 | 13 | 2.79% |
| **ChaoZhou** | 38080 | 3098 | 2173248 | 12 | 1.75% |
| **JiangMen** | 92430 | 9554 | 3669811 | 10 | 2.52% |
| **MaoMing** | 99257 | 11345 | 4647692 | 9 | 2.14% |
| **HuiZhou** | 81101 | 11159 | 2957389 | 7 | 2.74% |
| **JieYang** | 34362 | 5269 | 4603280 | 7 | 0.75% |
| **MeiZhou** | 88705 | 15925 | 3452387 | 6 | 2.57% |
| **ShaoGuan** | 97501 | 18398 | 2519148 | 5 | 3.87% |
| **ZhaoQing** | 76039 | 15006 | 3027286 | 5 | 2.51% |
| **YangJiang** | 38656 | 8006 | 1985310 | 5 | 1.95% |
| **ShanWei** | 23633 | 4957 | 2125218 | 5 | 1.11% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **YunFu** | 31810 | 7778 | 1933183 | 4 | 1.65% |
| **QingYuan** | 60583 | 19265 | 2858605 | 3 | 2.12% |
| **HeYuan** | 35277 | 15644 | 2035619 | 2 | 1.73% |

*Table 3 Talent data for 2010 (Bachelor's degree or above)*

| | **2010** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of talents (people) | Area (km2) | Number of students above 6 years old (people) | Talent density (people / km2) | Proportion of talents |
| **ShenZhen** | 1827627 | 1998 | 9865777 | 915 | 18.52% |
| **GuangZhou** | 2491688 | 7436 | 12103857 | 335 | 20.59% |
| **DongGuan** | 596079 | 2512 | 7934639 | 237 | 7.51% |
| **FoShan** | 701158 | 3875 | 6853358 | 181 | 10.23% |
| **ZhuHai** | 289837 | 1725 | 1478940 | 168 | 19.60% |
| **ZhongShan** | 249970 | 1770 | 2977101 | 141 | 8.40% |
| **ShanTou** | 230400 | 2123 | 5006963 | 109 | 4.60% |
| **ChaoZhou** | 110041 | 3098 | 2488397 | 36 | 4.42% |
| **ZhanJiang** | 356179 | 11692 | 6440811 | 30 | 5.53% |
| **HuiZhou** | 293260 | 11159 | 4261832 | 26 | 6.88% |
| **JiangMen** | 248858 | 9554 | 4217176 | 26 | 5.90% |
| **MaoMing** | 267355 | 11345 | 5287984 | 24 | 5.06% |
| **JieYang** | 110475 | 5269 | 5445169 | 21 | 2.03% |
| **ShanWei** | 71079 | 4957 | 2719556 | 14 | 2.61% |
| **YangJiang** | 114043 | 8006 | 2232694 | 14 | 5.11% |
| **MeiZhou** | 205986 | 15925 | 3907483 | 13 | 5.27% |
| **ZhaoQing** | 181704 | 15006 | 3611357 | 12 | 5.03% |
| **ShaoGuan** | 201417 | 18398 | 2616591 | 11 | 7.70% |
| **YunFu** | 76713 | 7778 | 2154694 | 10 | 3.56% |
| **HeYuan** | 127968 | 15644 | 2640854 | 8 | 4.85% |
| **QingYuan** | 153671 | 19265 | 3404265 | 8 | 4.51% |

*Table 4 Talent data for 2020 (Bachelor's degree or above)*

| | **2020** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of talents (people) | Area (km2) | Number of students above 6 years old (people) | Talent density (people / km2) | Proportion of talents |
| **ShenZhen** | 5060813 | 1998 | 16310173 | 2533 | 31.03% |
| **GuangZhou** | 5094467 | 7436 | 17471528 | 685 | 29.16% |
| **DongGuan** | 1385885 | 2512 | 9906978 | 552 | 13.99% |
| **FoShan** | 1533405 | 3875 | 8858452 | 396 | 17.31% |
| **ZhuHai** | 628248 | 1725 | 2270837 | 364 | 27.67% |
| **ZhongShan** | 590075 | 1770 | 4115594 | 333 | 14.34% |

| ShanTou | 454176 | 2123 | 5027785 | 214 | 9.03% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HuiZhou | 744619 | 11159 | 5563871 | 67 | 13.38% |
| ChaoZhou | 196961 | 3098 | 2376239 | 64 | 8.29% |
| JiangMen | 568059 | 9554 | 4475747 | 59 | 12.69% |
| ZhanJiang | 615551 | 11692 | 6252873 | 53 | 9.84% |
| JieYang | 246446 | 5269 | 4815372 | 47 | 5.12% |
| MaoMing | 498487 | 11345 | 4615332 | 44 | 10.80% |
| YangJiang | 236739 | 8006 | 2388989 | 30 | 9.91% |
| ShanWei | 144075 | 4957 | 2475314 | 29 | 5.82% |
| ZhaoQing | 361410 | 15006 | 3776715 | 24 | 9.57% |
| YunFu | 163759 | 7778 | 2165676 | 21 | 7.56% |
| MeiZhou | 320171 | 15925 | 3537955 | 20 | 9.05% |
| QingYuan | 367366 | 19265 | 3606363 | 19 | 10.19% |
| ShaoGuan | 331559 | 18398 | 2618275 | 18 | 12.66% |
| HeYuan | 240638 | 15644 | 2595207 | 15 | 9.27% |

## III.    RESEARCH METHODS

On the basis of population geographic spatial analysis, this study proposes an analytical framework for the spatial distribution pattern and influencing factors of HET in Guangdong Province (Figure 2). Firstly, key information such as the number of HET, educational level, and occupational distribution in various cities of Guangdong Province from 2000 to 2020 were collected, as well as data on the economy, culture, education, and other aspects of each city. After data acquisition, perform data cleaning to eliminate possible errors and outliers. Next, use ArcGIS software to process spatial data, analyze the spatial distribution pattern of HET, create a visual analysis map, and use the Theil coefficient to evaluate the uneven level of talents. Then, the driving factors were analyzed using a geographic detector model and a multiple linear regression model. Based on the analysis results, conclusions were drawn and relevant policy recommendations were proposed.
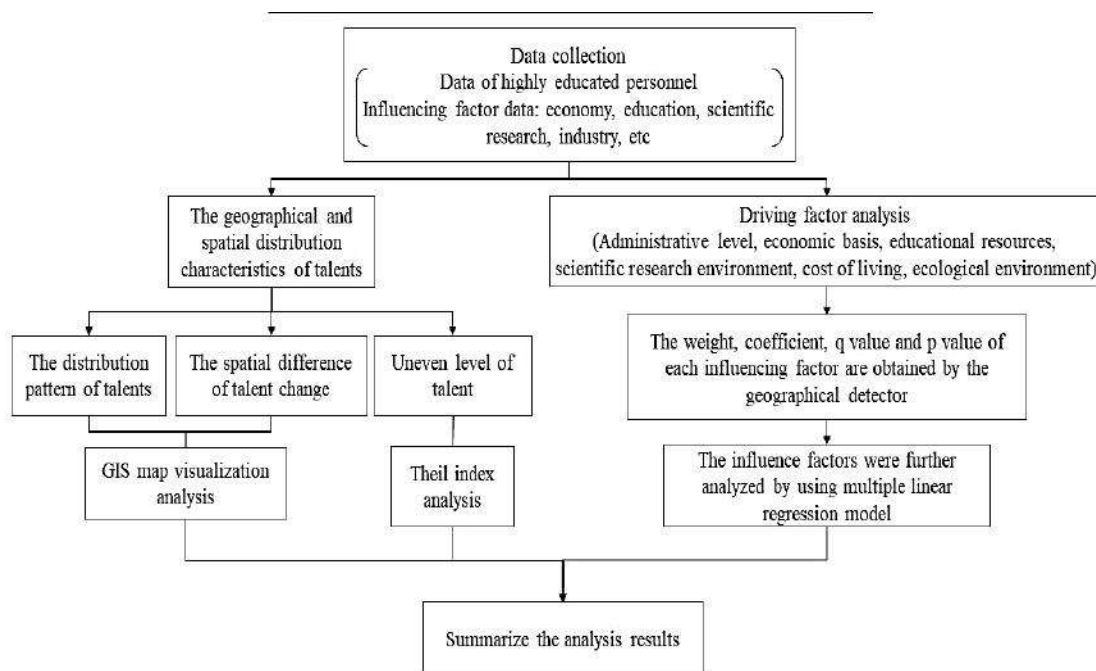


*Fig.2 The schema of this study*

(1) Talent density refers to the number of higher education talents per square kilometer of land, used to measure the degree of agglomeration of talents in spatial distribution. The specific calculation formula is shown in (1).

$$TD = \frac{Q}{A} \tag{1}$$

In the formula: TD represents talent density (people/square kilometer), Q represents the number of HET in the region (people), and A represents the area of the region (square kilometer).

The proportion of talents refers to the proportion of higher education talents to the total number of people aged 6 and above who receive education at all levels, reflecting the level of population quality in a region. The specific calculation formula is shown in (2).

$$PT = \frac{Q}{TQ} \tag{2}$$

In the formula, PT represents the proportion of talents (%), Q represents the number of HET in the region (people), and TQ represents the total number of people aged 6 and above in the regions who receive education at all levels (people).

(2) Talent density change rate: The talent density change rate of a city from 2000 to 2010 is equal to the talent density of the city in 2010 minus the talent density in 2000, divided by the talent density of the city in 2000, and finally multiplied by 100%. Similarly, extrapolate the data from 2010 to 2020.

The change rate of talent ratio: The relative growth rate of talent ratio in a certain city from 2000 to 2010 is equal to the difference between the talent ratio in 2010 and 2000, divided by the difference between the talent ratio in 2010 and 2000 nationwide. Similarly, extrapolate the data from 2010 to 2020.

(3) Theil index: By calculating the mean and variance of the number of HET, the imbalance is transformed into a specific value, allowing researchers to intuitively understand the degree of talent distribution differences between different urban areas. In addition, by decomposing the Theil index, further analysis is conducted on the contribution of each region to overall inequality in order to more accurately grasp the specific situation of each region [5]. The formula is as follows:

$$T = \frac{\left( \Sigma p_i^2 - \frac{[\Sigma p_i]^2}{n} \right)}{\left[ \frac{(\Sigma i p_i)^2}{n} \right]} \tag{3}$$

Where pi represents the proportion of HET in the i-th city, and n represents the number of cities. The numerator of this formula represents the difference between the sum of squares of the proportion of HET in each city and the square of the average, while the denominator represents the mean of the sum of squares of the proportion of HET in each city. By calculating the Theil index, the equilibrium distribution of HET in various urban areas of Guangdong Province can be evaluated.

(4) Geodetector: is a spatial analysis tool used to explore spatial heterogeneity and its underlying drivers, widely used in driving force analysis and factor analysis [6]. Factor detection aims to detect the spatial differentiation of Y as well as the extent to which a certain factor X explains the spatial differentiation of attribute Y, measured by the q value, expressed as:

$$q = 1 - \frac{\sum_{h=1}^{L} N_h \sigma_h^2}{N \sigma^2} = 1 - \frac{SSW}{SST} \tag{4}$$

$$SSW = \sum_{h=1}^{L} N_h \sigma_h^2, SST = N \sigma^2 \tag{5}$$

In the formula: h = 1, L represents the stratification of variable Y or factor X, i.e., classification or partitioning; Nh and N represent the number of units in layer h and the entire region, respectively; $\sigma_{2h}$ and $\sigma_2$ are the variances of the Y values for layer h and the entire region, respectively. SSW and SST are the Within Sum of Squares and the Total Sum of Squares, respectively.

(5) Multiple linear regression model: Further analysis can be conducted on driving factors [7], selecting some factors that may affect the distribution of HET, such as per capita GDP, average employee wages, urban forest coverage, etc., as independent variables. Through model fitting, the degree and direction of the impact of these factors on the distribution of HET can be evaluated. The expression is:

$$q = f(X1, X2, ..., Xn) \tag{6}$$

Among them, q is the distribution index of HET (density and proportion of HET), X1, X2,..., Xn are the influencing factors.

## IV.   DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Spatial Distribution Pattern of Talent Density and Talent Proportion

Based on the indicator of "density of HET" and using data from 2000 as a benchmark, the natural breakpoint method was used to divide all urban areas in Guangdong Province into five categories: "low level," "lower level," "average level," "higher level," and "high level" (Table 5), in order to depict the spatial distribution pattern of talents. The Figures 3 and 4 shows the spatial differences in the density and proportion of HET in Guangdong Province from 2000 to 2020.

*Table 5 Classification of talent density data range*

| Project | Label | Scope（per/km²） |
|---|---|---|
| Talent density | Low Level | 1-10 |
| | Lower level | 11-40 |
| | Average level | 41-180 |
| | Higher level | 181-350 |
| | High level | 351-2500 |

This study results show that: (1) Guangdong's HET are concentrated in developed cities such as the PRD economy, presenting a spatial distribution pattern of "dense in the PRD region and sparse in other regions." (2) The level of talent has generally improved: over the past 20 years, the number of HET in Guangdong Province has gradually decreased in low-level regions, while the number of high-level regions has gradually increased. (3) Dynamic trend: The spatial distribution pattern of HET in Guangdong Province is changing, showing a trend of diffusion from the PRD to the periphery.
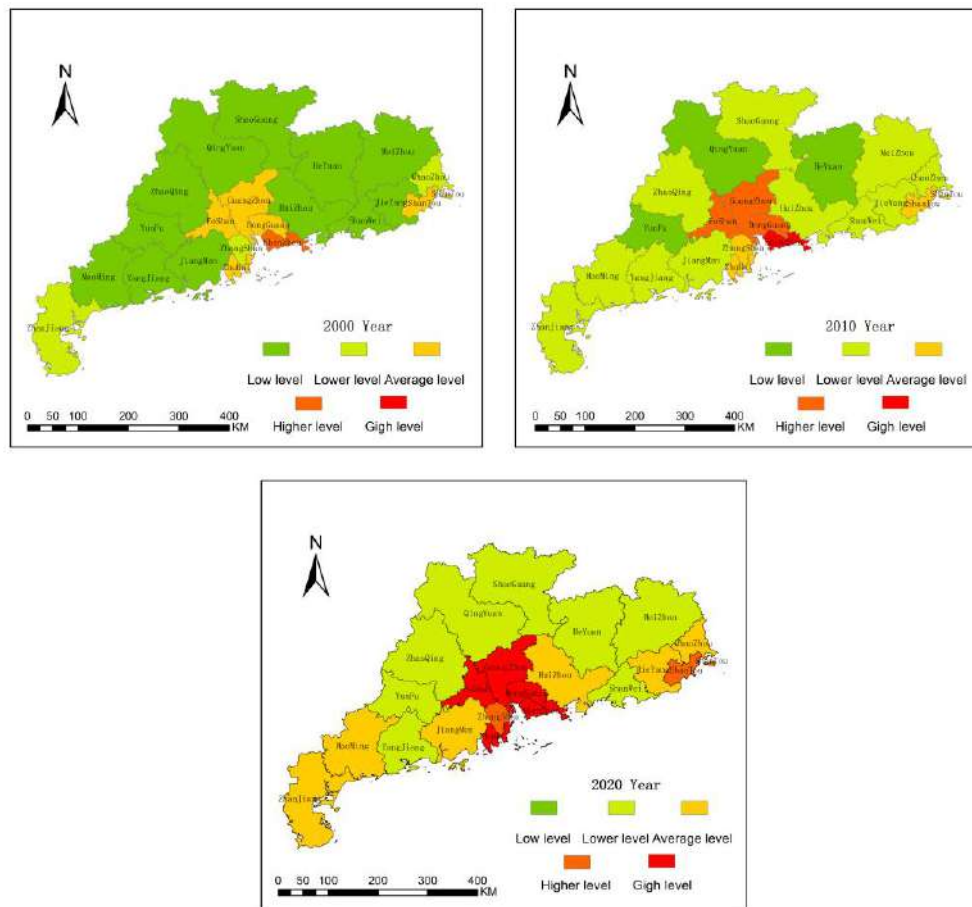


*Fig.3. Density of HET by city in Guangdong Province from 2000 to 2020*
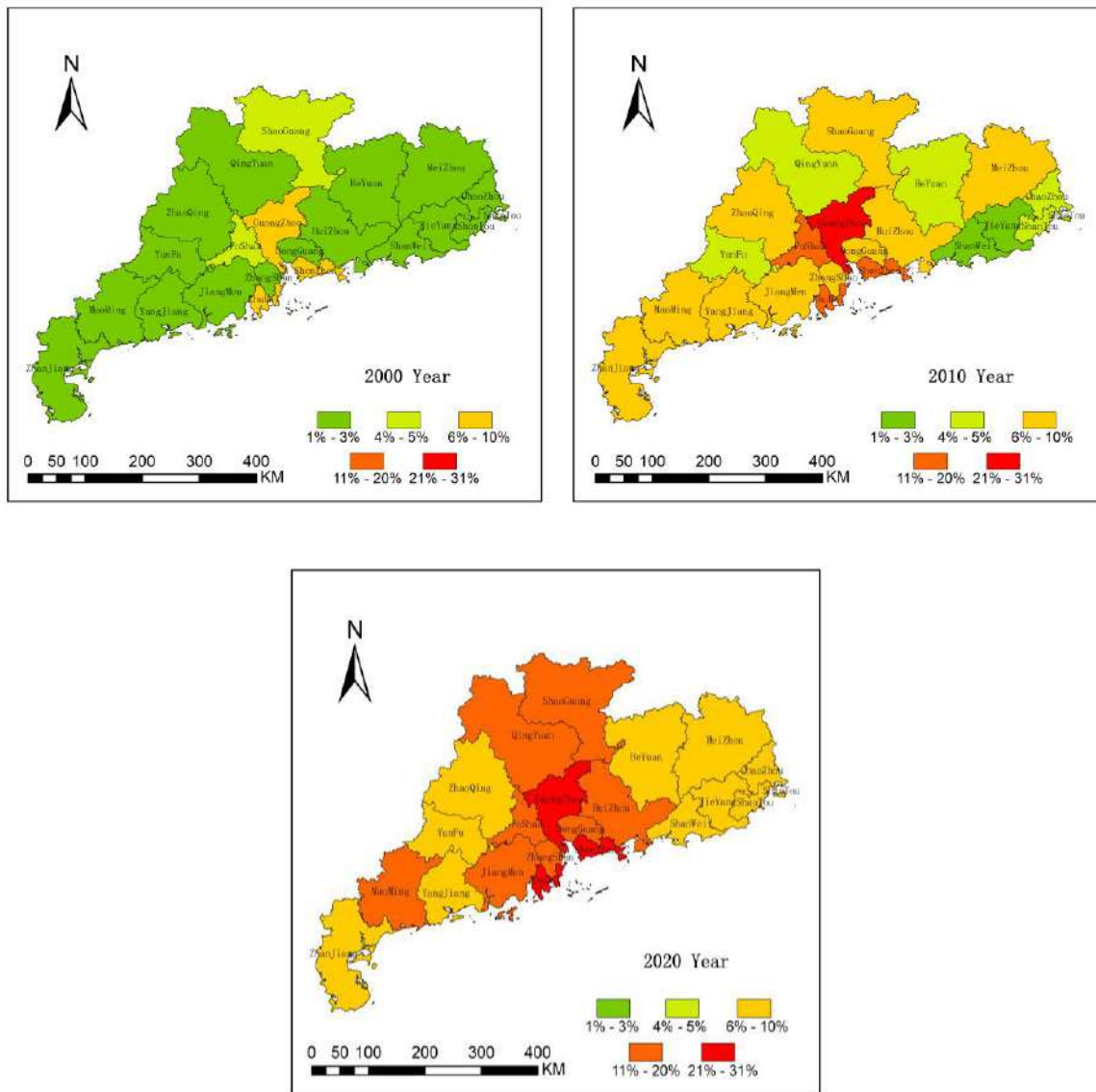
*Fig.4 Proportion of HET by city in Guangdong Province from 2000 to 2020*

## 4.2 Spatial Differences in Talent Density and Talent Proportion Changes

Calculate the change rates of talent density in each urban area from 2000 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2020, respectively. Divide all cities into five categories: "density reduction," "basic stability," "slow growth," "medium growth," and "high growth" (Table 6).

*Table 6 Classification of talent density change rate*

| Project | Label | Scope（×100%） |
|---|---|---|
| **Changing rate of talent density** | Density reduction | 0.01-0.65 |
| | Basically stable | 0.66-1.15 |
| | Slow growth | 1.16-1.65 |
| | Medium growth | 1.66-2.15 |
| | High growth | 2.15-3.32 |
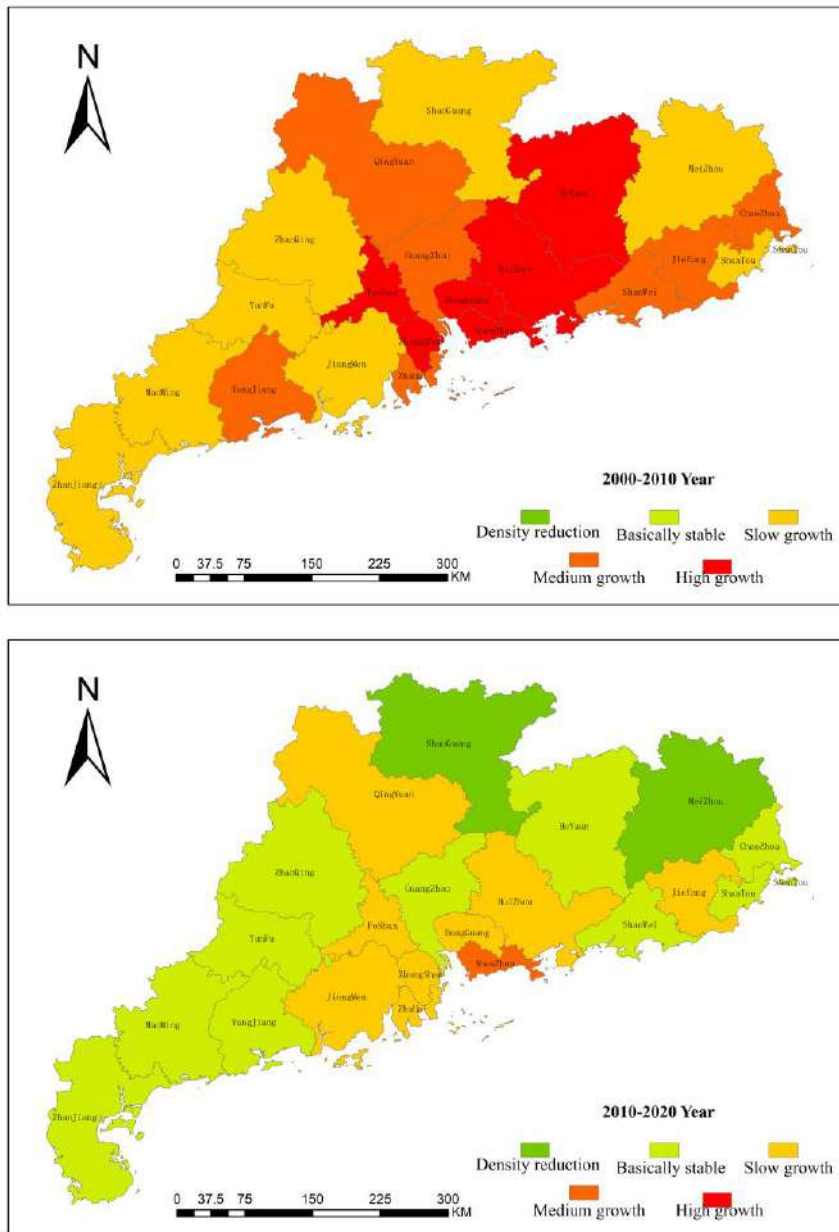
*Fig.5 Spatial variation pattern of the density of HET from 2000 to 2020*

As shown in Figure 5, (1) the growth rate of talent density in Guangdong Province has slowed down over the past 20 years, and the talent density in the vast majority of regions has shifted from a growth type to a basically stable type. From 2000 to 2010, the PRD region experienced the fastest growth, especially in cities such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Dongguan, while the eastern and western regions of Guangdong experienced slower growth. From 2010 to 2020, the growth rate of various cities in the province was slow, with most cities in western and northern Guangdong reaching the basically stable stage, while only

some cities in the PRD region were in the slow growth stage. (2) Over the past 20 years, the density of HET in Guangzhou has maintained a steady growth rate, higher than the provincial average level; Shenzhen has a strong growth momentum, attracting numerous HET to come for employment and entrepreneurship

Calculate the relative growth rate of talent proportion in each urban area from 2000 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2020, respectively. Using the natural segment method, all cities are classified into five categories: "slower growth," "low growth," "basically stable," "medium growth," and "high

growth" (Table 7).

*Table 7 Classification of talent ratio change rate*

| Project | Label | Scope（×100%） |
|---|---|---|
| **Change rate of talents proportion** | Slower growth | 0.01-0.57 |
| | Low growth | 0.58-0.88 |
| | Basically stable | 0.89-0.96 |
| | Medium growth | 0.97-1.48 |
| | High growth | 1.49-2.70 |

As shown in Figure 6, (1) the change rate of the proportion of HET shows a trend of "fast growth in the PRD region and slow growth in other regions." The proportion of HET in cities such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Zhuhai has a relatively high rate of change. However, economically underdeveloped areas such as Yangjiang, Yunfu, and Zhaoqing in western and northern Guangdong have lower rates of change. (2) The change rate of the proportion of HET shows a diversified characteristic. Some cities have been growing rapidly, and the rate of change in some cities has fluctuated. (3) The change rate of the proportion of HET in cities outside the PRD region, such as Huizhou and Jiangmen, has begun to surpass that of the PRD. These cities actively undertake the transfer of industries from the PRD, develop high-tech industries, and continuously expand the demand for HET.
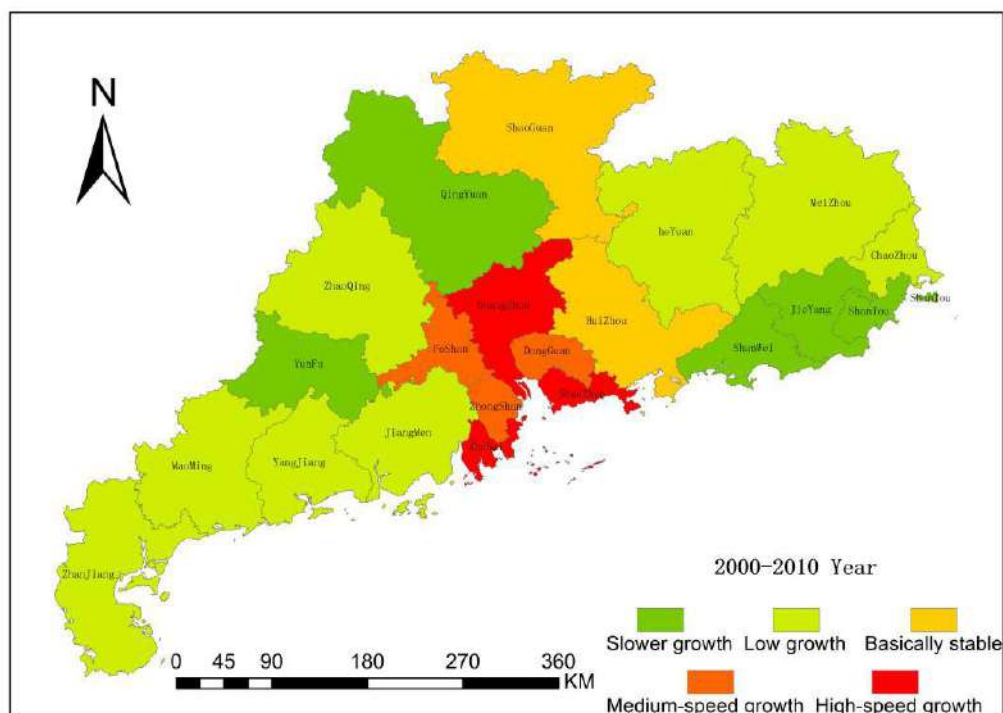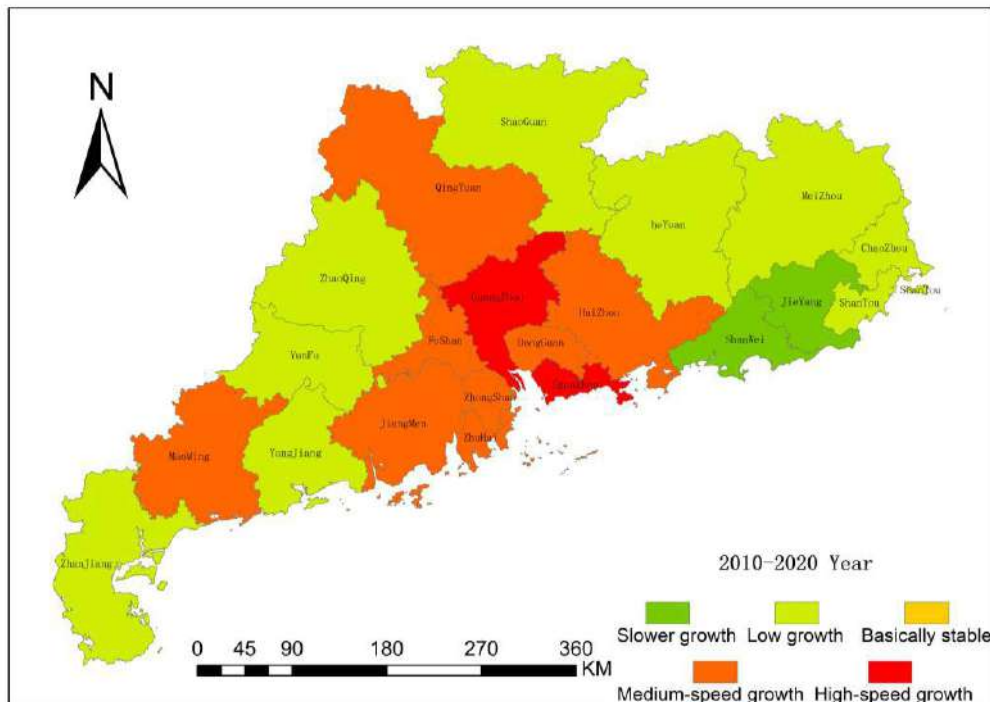
*Fig.6 Spatial variation pattern of the proportion of HET from 2000 to 2020*

## 4.3 Regional Imbalance Level between Talent Density and Talent Proportion

This study uses the Theil index to analyze regional differences in the density of HET and their proportion among talents in Guangdong Province from 2000 to 2020. The results show that the regional imbalance in the density and proportion of HET is on the rise.

Divide the urban areas of Guangdong Province into four regions based on administrative regions and conduct Theil index analysis on the talent density and talent proportion in three different periods, revealing the overall differences in talent proportion and its contribution rate to the total difference (Table 8), as well as the radar chart of the Theil index contribution rate for each region (Figure 7).

The results indicate that:(1) In the PRD region, the overall difference in talent distribution is gradually increasing, indicating that the degree of imbalance in talent distribution is intensifying. The overall differences in the eastern, western, and northern regions of Guangdong are gradually decreasing. Specifically, the gap between Guangzhou and Shenzhen and other cities is becoming increasingly prominent. It can be seen that the main component of the difference in talent distribution in the PRD region is driven by the changes in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. (2) The contribution rate of HET in the PRD region is significantly higher than that in the eastern, western, and northern regions of Guangdong, and the gap is becoming larger and larger.

*Table 8 Theil index and its decomposition of the proportion of HET*

| Decomposition of difference | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Theil coefficient | Contribution ratio（%） | Theil coefficient | Contribution ratio（%） | Theil coefficient | Contribution ratio（%） |
| Pearl River Delta | 0.172 | 74 | 0.116 | 77 | 0.071 | 81 |
| DongGuan | 0.061 | 6 | 0.087 | 9 | 0.087 | 9 |
| ZhongShan | 0.028 | 3 | 0.036 | 4 | 0.037 | 4 |
| FoShan | 0.088 | 9 | 0.01 | 10 | 0.096 | 10 |
| GuangZhou | 0.415 | 42 | 0.362 | 36 | 0.319 | 32 |
| HuiZhou | 0.036 | 4 | 0.043 | 4 | 0.047 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **JiangMen** | 0.042 | 4 | 0.036 | 4 | 0.036 | 4 |
| **ShenZhen** | 0.253 | 25 | 0.266 | 27 | 0.317 | 32 |
| **ZhuHai** | 0.042 | 4 | 0.042 | 4 | 0.039 | 4 |
| **ZhaoQing** | 0.034 | 3 | 0.026 | 3 | 0.027 | 2 |
| **East** | 0.118 | 7 | 0.064 | 6 | 0.031 | 5 |
| **JieYang** | 0.172 | 17 | 0.209 | 21 | 0.238 | 24 |
| **ShanTou** | 0.522 | 52 | 0.442 | 44 | 0.442 | 44 |
| **ShanWei** | 0.122 | 12 | 0.143 | 14 | 0.143 | 14 |
| **ChaoZhou** | 0.183 | 19 | 0.205 | 21 | 0.186 | 19 |
| **North** | 0.047 | 10 | 0.029 | 9 | 0.012 | 7 |
| **MeiZhou** | 0.282 | 28 | 0.271 | 27 | 0.222 | 22 |
| **HeYuan** | 0.111 | 11 | 0.174 | 17 | 0.171 | 17 |
| **QingYuan** | 0.187 | 19 | 0.205 | 20 | 0.257 | 26 |
| **ShaoGuan** | 0.311 | 31 | 0.257 | 26 | 0.229 | 23 |
| **YunFu** | 0.099 | 10 | 0.101 | 10 | 0.098 | 10 |
| **West** | 0.011 | 10 | 0.001 | 8 | 0.001 | 7 |
| **ZhanJiang** | 0.523 | 52 | 0.483 | 48 | 0.463 | 46 |
| **MaoMing** | 0.341 | 34 | 0.357 | 36 | 0.271 | 37 |
| **YangJiang** | 0.126 | 13 | 0.153 | 15 | 0.177 | 18 |
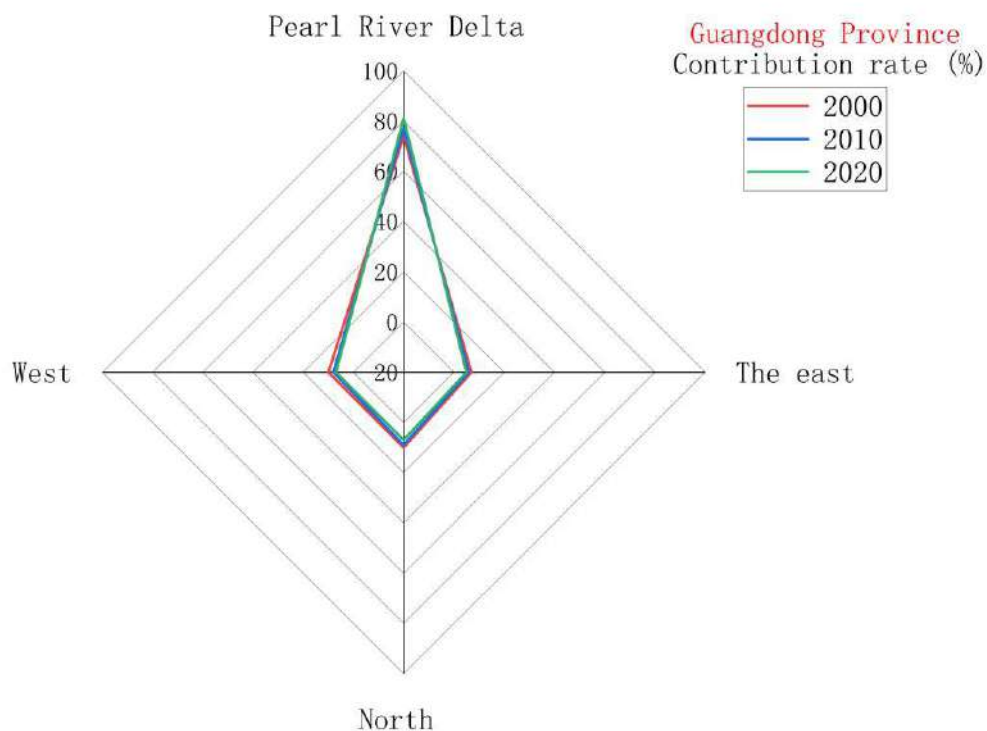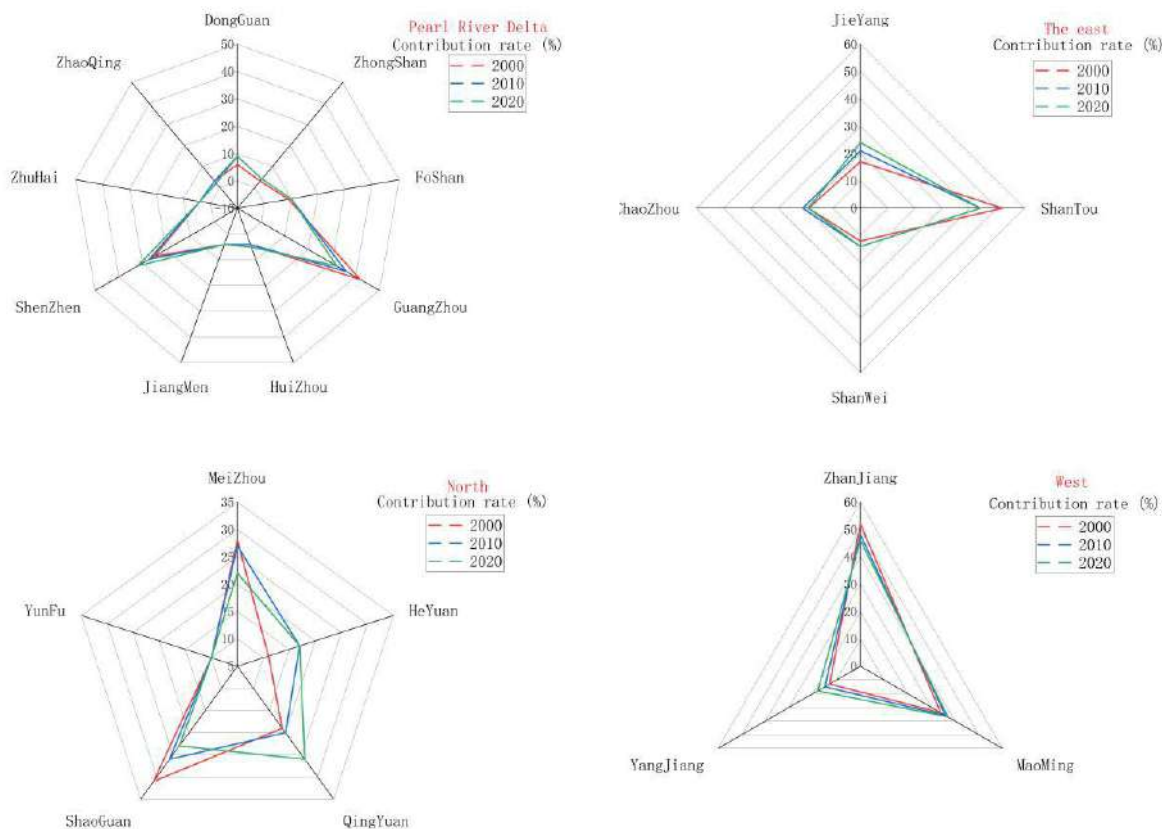
*Fig.7 Contribution rate of Theil index in various regions*

### 4.4 Analysis of Driving Factors for Talents

In the construction of a multiple linear regression model for the factors influencing talent density and talent proportion from 2000 to 2020, the statistical data of the independent and dependent variables involved are shown in Table 9. We selected talent density and talent proportion as dependent variables in order to identify the influencing factors of talent spatial distribution from the level of talent aggregation and quality.

*Table 9 Basic statistics of variables*

| Variable Name | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean Standard | Deviation | Mean Standard | Deviation | Mean Standard | Deviation |
| **Talent density (person /km²)** | 35 | 62 | 111 | 200 | 266 | 542 |
| **Talent ratio (%)** | 5.75 | 9.93 | 12.78 | 16.85 | 20.74 | 23.05 |
| **Gross domestic product per capita (Yuan)** | 13183 | 9851 | 35722 | 26557 | 47003 | 32242 |
| **Average urban wage (Yuan)** | 6127 | 2615 | 7168 | 2095 | 10312 | 1851 |
| **Scientific research funds (Yuan)** | 9824 | 35644 | 19049 | 68676 | 57339 | 203653 |
| **Teacher-student ratio** | 17 | 3 | 16 | 3 | 16 | 2 |
| **Number of cultural institutions (number)** | 149 | 87 | 677 | 470 | 803 | 723 |
| **Number of hospital beds per 10,000 people** | 32 | 35 | 28 | 26 | 28 | 9 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Forest coverage (%)** | 49 | 16 | 56 | 11 | 60 | 9 |
| **Provincial capital, municipality (yes =1, no =0)** | 0.1 | 0.29 | 0.1 | 0.29 | 0.1 | 0.29 |
| **Tertiary industry increase index** | 112 | 4 | 113 | 3 | 107 | 1 |
| **Population density** | 578.46 | 426.9 | 688.3 | 501.59 | 853.92 | 695.14 |

This study based on literature, select influencing factors from six dimensions to analyze the trend factors of variable relationships. Such as:

(1) Administrative hierarchy [8]. Through comparative analysis, it was found that provincial capital cities and municipalities directly under the central government are far superior in terms of administrative resource allocation compared to other prefecture-level cities. These cities not only have higher levels of economic development, more modern industrial structures, stronger attraction of talent policies, and superior living environments, but also have unparalleled advantages in attracting population. Based on this understanding, this study will include whether the prefecture-level administrative unit is a provincial capital or municipality directly under the central government as a key dummy variable in the analysis model.

(2) Economic opportunities [9]. In economically developed regions, such as municipalities directly under the central government and provincial capital cities, due to providing a large number of employment opportunities, higher salary levels, and better living conditions, it is natural to attract many highly educated professionals. However, regions with insufficient economic development tend to have a lower proportion of HET. To accurately measure the economic opportunities provided by a region, this study uses two specific indicators: per capita GDP and average employee wages.

(3) Educational resources [10]. The richness and quality of educational resources directly affect the cultivation and aggregation of HET. If a region has a large number of high-quality higher education institutions, it has the ability to cultivate a large number of HET. Meanwhile, a good academic atmosphere and advanced research facilities also help attract and retain these talents. Therefore, we select the teacher-student ratio as two indicators to measure the scale of talent cultivation in a region.

(4) Research environment [11]. In areas with highly developed technology, the concentration of scientific researchers is often high, and the research funding is also relatively high, which reflects the degree of importance that the region places on scientific research investment. Therefore, scientific research expenditure is selected as an indicator to evaluate the scientific research investment situation in various regions.

(5) Cost of living and cultural level [12]. Over time, the level of public service has become one of the key factors in attracting talent. This study selects the number of hospital beds per 10,000 people and the number of cultural institutions as indicators to measure the medical and cultural level of a region.

(6) Ecological environment [13]. A good ecological environment can not only improve the quality of life of residents but is also an important factor in attracting talents to settle down. This study uses forest coverage to measure the degree of greening in a region, which also represents the ecological environment indicators of the region. By analyzing the above indicators, it is possible to accurately understand and predict the trend of talent mobility and the driving forces behind it.

This study used a GeoDetector model to construct a factor detection model that affects the distribution of HET in Guangdong Province, and solved the model using GeoDetector software to obtain the q and p values of each influencing factor. Obtain the results of the GeoDetector model between talent density and various influencing factors in 2000, 2010, and 2020 (Table 10). The larger the q value, the stronger the explanatory power of the independent variable talent density on various influencing factors, and vice versa. The analysis results show that the main factors affecting the distribution of HET in Guangdong Province are administrative hierarchy, research environment, and economic opportunities in sequence. Among them, the influence of administrative hierarchy is the strongest, followed by the research environment, and the impact of economic opportunities is also more significant. The impact of cost of living and cultural level is relatively

weak, and the degree of influence of industrial structure is also relatively low, but it still has certain significance.

Next, further pairwise analysis was conducted on the various influencing factors, analyzing the interrelationships between the influencing factors of HET from 2000 to 2020 (Figure 8). X1 represents per capita GDP, X2 represents average employee salary, X3 represents research funding, X4 represents teacher-student ratio, X5 represents the

number of cultural institutions, X6 represents hospital beds per 10,000 people, X7 represents forest coverage, X8 represents provincial capital, a municipality directly under the central government, and X9 represents the tertiary industry growth index. The results show that over time, the driving factors affecting the distribution of h HET are becoming increasingly diverse.

*Table 10 The influence factors of HET distribution*

|  | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | q value | p value | q value | p value | q value | p value |
| **Gross domestic product per capita** | 0.661 | 0.05 | 0.635 | 0.027 | 0.634 | 0.081 |
| **Average urban wage (Yuan)** | 0.64 | 0.025 | 0.666 | 0.017 | 0.686 | 0.027 |
| **Scientific research funds (Yuan)** | 0.833 | 0.003 | 0.802 | 0.008 | 0.879 | 0.005 |
| **Middle school teacher ratio** | 0.638 | 0.026 | 0.649 | 0.022 | 0.58 | 0.052 |
| **Number of cultural institutions (Number)** | 0.574 | 0.038 | 0.591 | 0.031 | 0.51 | 0.034 |
| **Number of hospital beds per 10,000 people** | 0.567 | 0.036 | 0.534 | 0.047 | 0.514 | 0.036 |
| **Forest coverage (%)** | 0.684 | 0.014 | 0.721 | 0.016 | 0.665 | 0.038 |
| **Provincial capital, municipality (yes =1, no =0)** | 0.863 | 0.001 | 0.891 | 0.005 | 0.846 | 0.001 |
| **Tertiary industry increase index** | 0.481 | 0.148 | 0.641 | 0.056 | 0.568 | 0.06 |
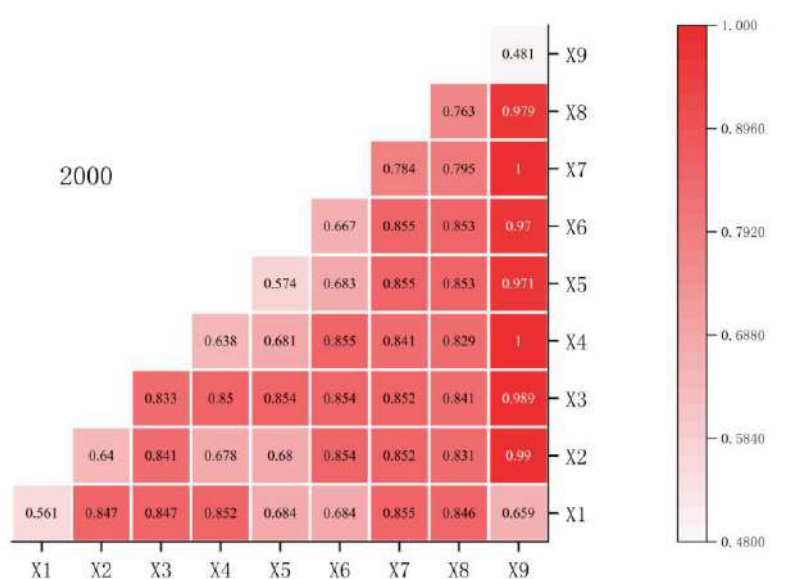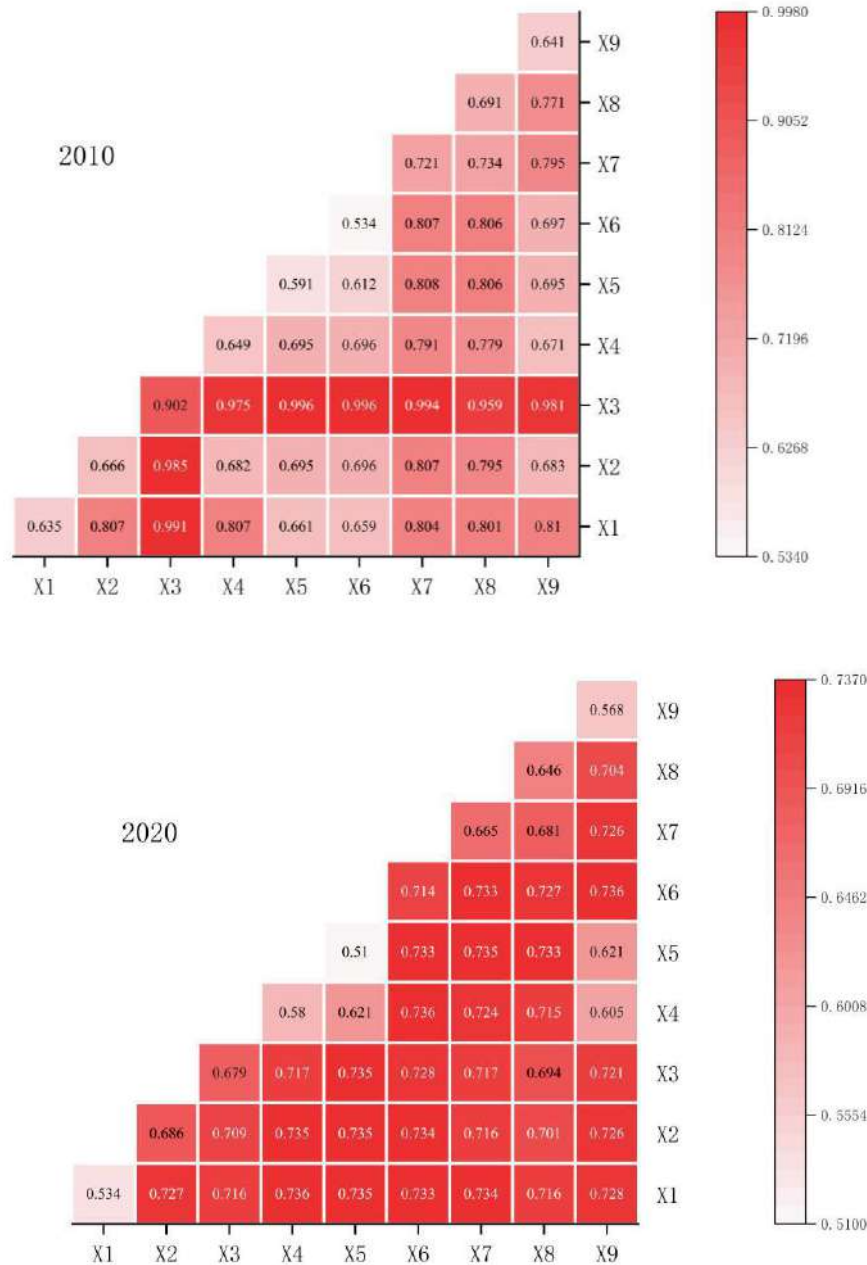
*Fig.8 The relationship between the influencing factors of HET from 2000 to 2020*

This study further conducted multiple linear regression analysis on various influencing factors, revealing the correlation coefficients of the factors affecting the distribution of HET from 2000 to 2020 (Table 8).

*Table 8 Correlation coefficient between talent density and talent proportion*

| Variable name | Talent density | | | Proportion of talents | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2010 | 202 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 |
| GDP per capita (Yuan) | 0.048** | 0.036** | 0.018** | 0.046** | 0.028** | 0.018** |
| | (2.253) | (1.889) | (1.235) | (2.242) | (1.746) | (1.218) |
| Average urban wage (Yuan) | 0.048** | 0.066* | 0.047** | 0.035**(2 | 0.042* | 0.020** |
| | (2.533) | (3.089) | (2.435) | .242) | (1.746) | (0.918) |
| Scientific research funds (Yuan) | 0.058* | 0.039** | 0.034** | 0.041**(0 | 0.039** | 0.034** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | (0.658) | (1.787) | (0.911) | .658) | (1.787) | (0.911) |
| Teacher-student ratio | 0.058* | 0.62* | 0.057* | 0.054* | 0.058* | 0.054* |
|  | (0.658) | (0.330) | (0.634) | (0.538) | (0.420) | (0.586) |
| Number of cultural institutions (Number) | 0.034** | 0.035** | 0.032** | 0.032**(0 | 0.030** | 0.028** |
|  | (0.261) | (0.581) | (0.184) | .165) | (0.581) | (0.184) |
| Number of hospital beds per 10,000 people (Number) | 0.055* | 0.048** | 0.054* | 0.052* | 0.058* | 0.054* |
|  | (0.181) | (0.581) | (1.264) | (2.181) | (1.856) | (1.964) |
| Forest coverage (%) | 0.058* | 0.066* | 0.068* | 0.066* | 0.078* | 0.068* |
|  | (2.253) | (1.889） | (2.564) | (1.564) | (1.716) | (1.615) |
| Provincial capital, municipality (yes =1, no =0) | 0.048** | 0.052* | 0.032** | 0.064* | 0.041** | 0.022** |
|  | (2.253) | (2.465) | (0.114) | (2.025) | (1.164) | (0.902) |
| Tertiary industry increase index | 0.052* | 0.041* | 0.037** | 0.031**(0 | 0.024** | 0.008*** |
|  | (0.474) | (1.250) | (1.684) | .511) | (1.434) | (2.814) |
| Population density | 0.014** | 0.008*** | 0.003*** | 0.014**(0 | 0.007***( | 0.003***( |
|  | (0.856) | (0.011) | (0.032) | .856) | 0.011) | 0.032) |
| Constant | 110.099 | 0.364 | 181.941 | 0.264 | 266.481 | 0.358 |
|  | (1.741) | (3.171) | (0.885) | (2.171) | (0.178) | (0.939) |
| Observed number | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| Adjust R² | 0.9723 | 0.964 | 0.922 | 0.982 | 0.945 | 0.962 |

Note: Use robust standard error t values in parentheses:*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

The data shows a significant positive correlation between administrative hierarchy, talent density, and talent proportion over three different periods. The higher the administrative level of a prefecture-level administrative unit, the stronger its ability to attract talents. Over time, the impact of administrative hierarchy on talent density weakens, but its impact on the proportion of talent increases. HET tend to migrate to areas that provide more employment opportunities and higher salaries. The average salary and per capita GDP of various urban areas in Guangdong Province have significantly increased between 2000 and 2020, and the positive correlation between salary levels, talent density, and talent proportion has increased over time.

There is a significant positive correlation between the number of universities and the density and proportion of talents, while the correlation between the proportion of middle school students and teachers and the proportion of talents is increasing year by year. The impact of research environment on talent density and proportion is gradually increasing. Medical and cultural atmosphere have a certain impact on talent density and proportion, and the number of cultural institutions is significantly correlated with talent density and proportion. The forest coverage rate maintains a significant positive correlation with the density and proportion of talents. However, HET are more affected by economic, social, and cultural factors and are concentrated in the PRD, while there are fewer in eastern and western Guangdong.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study uses China's census data from 2000 to 2020 and analyzes the distribution pattern of highly educated talents in Guangdong Province and its main influencing factors in the past 20 years through the Theil index, multiple linear regression model, and geodetector model. On this basis, make optimization suggestions.

Research shows that: (1) Guangdong's highly educated talents are concentrated in economically developed cities in the PRD region, showing a spatial distribution pattern of "dense in the PRD and sparse in other regions," with Guangzhou and Shenzhen having the highest concentration of talents. (2) Before and after 2010, there was a clear gap in the change rate of the density of highly educated talents in various cities in the province. The growth rate was faster

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before 2010, but the growth rate slowed down after 2010. The change rate of the proportion of talents shows a trend of "fast growth in the PRD region and slow growth in other regions." (3) The imbalance in the density and proportion of highly educated talents among cities is on the rise. Through geodetector model analysis, it was found that administrative level, scientific research environment, and economic opportunities are the three main factors affecting the distribution pattern of highly educated talents in Guangdong Province.

Based on the above, this article will propose relevant policy optimization suggestions for optimizing administrative levels, scientific research environments, economic opportunities, and other aspects to enhance talent aggregation. Firstly, in terms of administrative hierarchy, a hierarchical talent management mechanism should be established. Provincial governments should formulate macro talent policies, while governments below the city level should develop specific talent introduction and training plans based on their own characteristics and needs. Establish talent mobility incentive policies: Encourage highly educated talents to move from developed regions to underdeveloped regions, such as recommending talents from the Pearl River Delta region to other regions for job support. Secondly, in terms of the scientific research environment: enhance the construction of scientific research platforms, increase investment in scientific research projects, and provide sufficient scientific research projects and financial support for scientific research institutions at different administrative levels. Thirdly, in terms of economic opportunities: developing regional characteristic industries, cultivating and strengthening regional characteristic industries based on local resource endowments, and providing more employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for highly educated talents. At the same time, strengthen support for higher education, especially for universities in poverty-stricken areas, to optimize talent distribution.

The analysis results of this study not only reveal the patterns of talent mobility and distribution, providing new research perspectives and methods for population geography, but also provide reference and inspiration for the formulation of talent strategies, optimization of educational resources, and regional coordinated development in Guangdong Province.

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Guangdong Province.

# Analysis of the Spatial-temporal Evolution of Land Use and Driving Force based on the Production-Living-Ecological Space: A Case Study of Shenzhen

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*Abstract— Exploring the evolution of land use and its driving force in Shenzhen's Production-Living-Ecological Space (**PLES**) may serve as a reference for optimizing regional land spatial patterns and urban spatial structures, as well as providing a scientific foundation for supporting regional sustainable development. The research period was 2010 to 2020, and the spatial-temporal evolution was analyzed using GIS and a land use transfer matrix, followed by an examination of the driving factors of its change using geographic detectors. The results indicate that: (1) Shenzhen's production space increases initially before decreasing, while the living space increases little and then grows significantly, while the ecological space continues to shrink significantly. (2) From 2010 to 2015, the degree of conversion was quite low, but from 2015 to 2020, it climbed dramatically. (3) The majority of the factors have strong explanatory power for the land use intensity of **PLES** but the annual average temperature, NDVI, and the added value of tertiary industry are always important driving factors influencing the land use intensity (4) In the interactive detection, the average annual temperature, NDVI, PM2.5, population density, and the added value of tertiary industry were interacted with other factors, and the results significantly increased the explanatory power of the land use intensity of **PLES**.*

*Keywords— Production-Living-Ecological Space (PLES); Land use; Geodetector; Driving force analysis; Shenzhen City*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Changes in land use are one of the important indicators of how human activities affect the natural environment, reflected in the transformation of regional land cover [1]. With the advancement of science and technology, humanity's degree of land development and utilization has substantially grown, and the frequency of conversion between different land types has accelerated [2]. Land use change is the result of the interaction of various factors, with the combined effects of natural

factors and social environmental factors driving the process of land use.

As research progresses, many scholars have proposed the concept of production-living-ecological space **(PLES)** from the perspective of land use function classification. This term refers to land that encompasses production, living, and ecological functions and is a product of the coordinated coupling between natural systems and socio-economic systems [3]. Among them, the production space refers to the functional area that provides agricultural products and industrial products to meet the basic needs of human life, and is the basis of the **PLES** system. Living space is related to the capacity to support and ensure human habitation. It is an area primarily focused on providing functions for human residence, consumption, leisure, and entertainment, which is the goal of the **PLES** system [4].

Ecological space is related to the natural background and is an area with the leading function of providing ecological products and ecological services. In regulating, maintaining, and ensuring regional ecological security. It plays an important role and is the support of the **PLES** system [5]. Land use transformation is a dynamic process that involves the quantitative and spatial reallocation and reallocation of land resources in production, life, and ecology at different stages of regional economic and social transformation [6]. Therefore, the spatio-temporal characteristics of land use evolution and its driving force analysis based on **PLES** have become a hot issue in current geography research.

In view of this, this study is based on the perspective of **PLES** and explores the spatio-temporal evolution law of land use data in Shenzhen from 2010 to 2020. By analyzing the driving factors that affect the changes of **PLES** through geodetector, the evolution characteristics of the **PLES** pattern in Shenzhen are summarized, providing reference for promoting the effective utilization of land resources and optimizing urban structure.

## II.        MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Study Areas

Shenzhen is located on the southeast coast of

Guangdong Province, bordered by Daya Bay and Dapeng Bay in the east, the Pearl River Estuary and Lingding Ocean in the west, Dongguan and Huizhou in the north, and Hong Kong in the south, with a total area of 1997.47 km2. It is one of Dawan District's main engine cities in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. At the same time, Shenzhen has had one of China's highest urbanization rates in recent years. Currently, land development intensity can reach 50%, and land resources are in short supply [7]. It has entered the stage of profound urbanization, which is characterized by the usage of existing land.

### 2.2. Data Sources

The data sources for this study include land use data, temperature and precipitation data, Normalized Difference Vegetation Index（NDVI）data, PM2.5 data, and socioeconomic statistics, which were analyzed after preprocessing (Table 1).

### 2.3. Methodology

### 2.3.1 Classification System of PLES

This study is based on the current land use classification, categorizing different land types according to their dominant functions. Additionally, it references the research of Yang et al. [8] and Wang and Xiang [9]. Through Table 2, which outlines the PLES classification system, it summarizes and consolidates six categories of primary land. Firstly, production space includes agricultural production space and industrial and mining production space, reflecting cultivated land and other construction land in the classification of land level;

Secondly, living space includes urban or rural living space, namely urban land and rural residential areas; Finally, ecological space includes three parts: green ecological space refers to grassland and forest land; water ecological space includes natural land, water, and water conservancy facilities; and other ecological space includes sand, Gobi, and other unused land, but it also plays a great role in supporting the ecosystem, so it is classified as ecological space land.
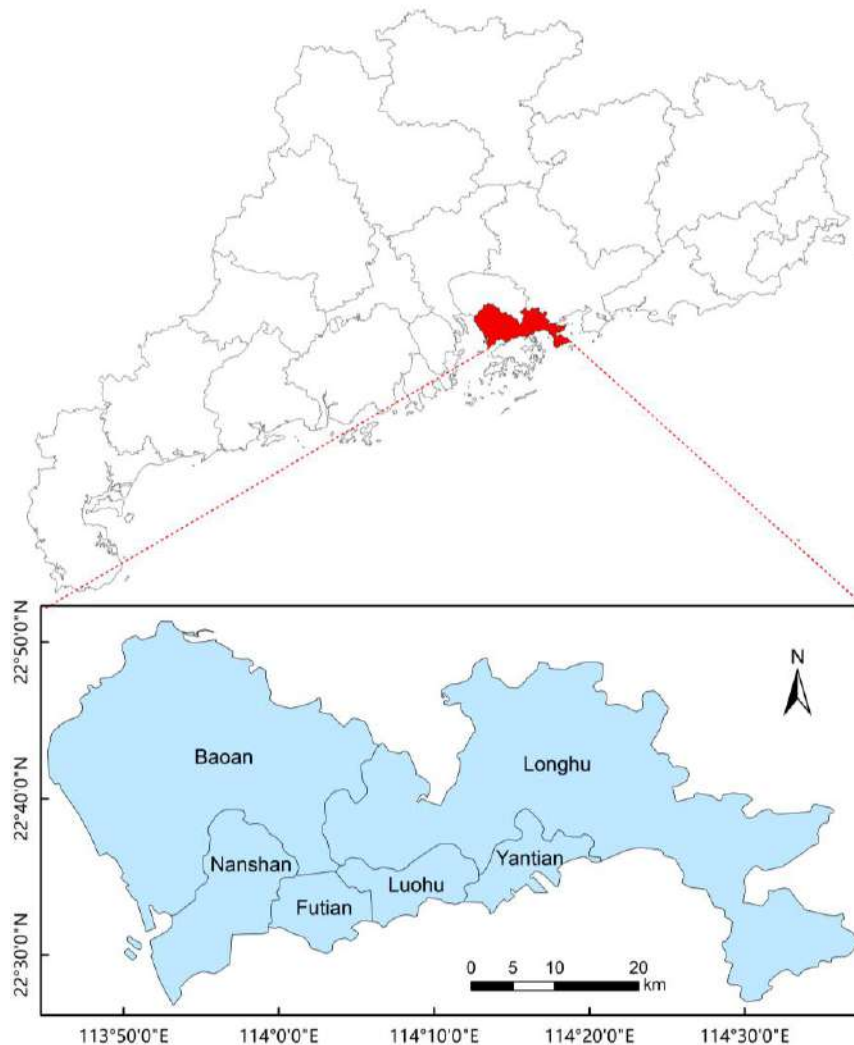
*Fig.1 Administrative division map of the study area*

*Table 1 Data sources*

| Data Name | Data Sources | Pretreatment process |
|---|---|---|
| **Land use data on 2010, 2015 and 2020 (30m resolution)** | Resource and Environmental Science and Data Center, CAS(https://www.resdc.cn/) | Crop the study area |
| **Temperature and precipitation data** | The ERA5-Land dataset released by organizations such as the European Union and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (https://cds.climate.copernicus.eu) | The original data consists of monthly average temperature raster data. Using the raster calculator, the average value of the average temperatures for the 12 months is calculated to obtain the annual |

| | | average temperature raster data. Then, the average raster values for each district in Shenzhen are computed to derive the annual average temperature. The pretreatment of precipitation data is the same as above |
|---|---|---|
| **NDVI data** | MOD13A3 data under the MODIS dataset<br><br>(https://search.earthdata.nasa.gov/search) | Based on the original NDVI data, calculate the average raster values for each district in Shenzhen to obtain the annual NDVI for each district. |
| **PM2.5 data (Resolution of 0.01° × 0.01°)** | Atmospheric Composition Analysis Group, Washington University, St. Louis<br><br>(https://sites.wustl.edu/acag/datasets/surface-pm2-5/#V5.GL.02) | Convert original.nc format data to .tif format |
| **Socio-economic statistical data** | Shenzhen Statistical Yearbook 2010, 2015, 2020.<br><br>(https://www.sz.gov.cn/) | Organize and merge data |

*Table 2 Classification system of PLES*

| Class I | Class II | Explain |
|---|---|---|
| **Production Space (PS)** | Agricultural production space (PS1) | Land on which crops are grown, including paddy fields and dry lands |
| | Industrial and mining Production space (PS2) | Refers to land for factories, large industrial zones, oil fields, salt fields, quarries, etc., that are independent of towns, as well as transportation roads, airports, and special land use. |
| **Living Space (LS)** | Urban living space （LS1） | Refers to urban land use, including land use in large, medium, and small cities as well as built-up areas in towns above the county level. |
| | Rural living space （LS2） | Rural residential areas |
| **Ecological Space (ES)** | Green ecological space （ES1） | Forest land refers to areas where trees, shrubs, bamboo, and coastal mangroves grow, while grassland refers to various types of land primarily covered by herbaceous plants with a coverage of over 5%. |

| Water ecological space（ES2） | Refers to natural land water areas and land used for water conservancy facilities, including rivers, lakes, reservoirs, permanent glaciers and snowfields, tidal flats, and shoals. |
|---|---|
| Other unused space（ES3） | Refers to unused land, including sandy land, Gobi desert, saline-alkali land, marshland, bare land, and bare rocky gravel land, among others. |

**2.3.2 Land Use Transition Matrix**

The land use transfer matrix can reflect the sources, destinations, and conversion areas of various spatial types over a certain period. The matrix expression [10] is:

$$S = S_{ij} = \begin{bmatrix} S_{11} & S_{12} & S_{13} & S_{1n} \\ S_{21} & S_{22} & S_{23} & S_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ S_{n1} & S_{n2} & S_{n3} & S_{nn} \end{bmatrix}$$

(1)

In the formula: S represents the total land use area of Shenzhen; n indicates the number of land use types in Shenzhen; i and j represent the land use types during the research period, respectively.

**2.3.3 Geodetector**

The geographic detector is a novel statistical tool for detecting geographical diversity and determining the driving forces behind it. This study investigates the impact of driving variables on land use changes as well as the interaction links between these driving factors using factor and interaction detection methods.

Factor detection: revealing the spatial differentiation characteristics of the dependent variable land use change Y, as well as the explanatory degree of factor X on the spatial differentiation of the dependent variable Y. The model expression [11] is:

$$q = 1 - \frac{\sum_{h=1}^{L} N_h \sigma_h^2}{N\sigma^2}$$

$$\begin{cases} SSW = \sum_{h=1}^{L} N_h \sigma_h^2 \\ SST = N\sigma^2 \end{cases}$$

(2)

In the formula: q represents the degree to which factor X explains the spatial heterogeneity of land use change, with a range of values of [0,1]. The larger the q value, the greater the impact of the factor on land use change; h=1, 2,..., L is the number of partitions or classifications of factor X; Nh and N are the number of samples in the h-th class of factor X and the total number of samples in the region, respectively; σ h and σ are the variance of factor X's h-th class and the total variance of the region, respectively.

Interaction detection: The difference in explanatory power between the combined action of discriminative factors Xi and Xj and the action of a single factor. Firstly, calculate the explanatory power of factors Xi and Xj for Y separately (q (Xi), q (Xj)), then calculate the explanatory power of the interaction between the two factors (q (Xi ∩ Xj)), and compare q (Xi), q (Xj), and q (Xi ∩ Xj) to analyze the type of interaction between the two factors (Table 3).

*Table 3 Types of interaction among independent variables [12]*

| Graphic | Discrimination criteria | Interaction type |
|---|---|---|
|  | $q(X_i \cap X_j) < \min(q(X_i), q(X_j))$ | Nonlinear weakening |
|  | $\min(q(X_i), q(X_j)) < q(X_i \cap X_j) < \max(q(X_i), q(X_j))$ | Single-factor Nonlinear weakening |
|  | $q(X_i \cap X_j) > \max(q(X_i), q(X_j))$ | Two-factor enhancement |
|  | $q(X_i \cap X_j) = q(X_i) + q(X_j)$ | Independent |
|  | $q(X_i \cap X_j) > q(X_i) + q(X_j)$ | Nonlinear enhancement |

**Tip:** 🔴 denote $\min(q(X_i), q(X_j))$; 🟢 denote $\max(q(X_i), q(X_j))$; 🔵 denote $\max(q(X_i), q(X_j))$; 🔽 denote $q(X_i \cap X_j)$

## III. RESULTS

### 3.1 Temporal and Spatial Evolution of PLES

### 3.1.1 Quantitative Analysis

Overall, from 2010 to 2020, the evolution of the **PLES** in Shenzhen shows a significant increase in living space, with the area growing from 814.96 km² to 851.29 km². The area of production space and ecological space has both decreased. Specifically, the area of production space saw a slight increase of 8.53 km² from 2010 to 2015, but then experienced a significant reduction of 21.45 km² from 2015 to 2020. Meanwhile, the ecological space continuously shrank from 2010 to 2020, decreasing in area from 853.73 km² to 828.31 km² ( Figure 2).
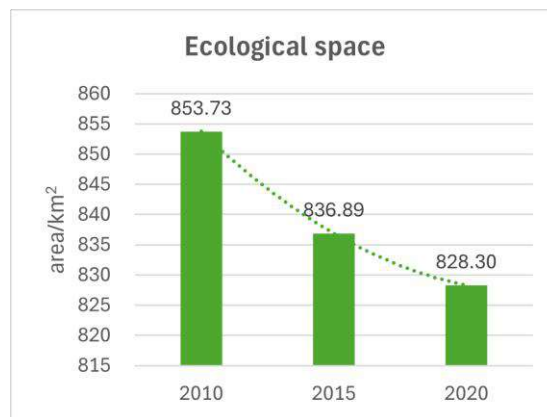
*Fig.2 Change Map of PLES Area in Shenzhen from 2010 to 2020*

From the ten-year span of 2010 to 2020, the total area of change in the **PLES** was 253.29 km², accounting for 13.15% of the total land area. In the conversion of areas among different spaces, only the area of living space has increased, while the areas of production space and ecological space have all decreased. Among them, the area transferred out of living space and the area transferred in are 69.53 km² and 106.41 km², respectively, with a difference of 36.88 km².

The area transferred out of production space and ecological space is 38.19 km² and 31.34 km², respectively, while the area transferred into production space and ecological space is 60.42 km² and 45.99 km².

The areas transferred out of production space and ecological space are 94.51 km² and 89.25 km², respectively, and the areas transferred in are 81.14 km² and 65.43 km² which decrease by 13.8% and 26.7% compared with 2010. Therefore, it can be seen that large areas of land in these two types of spaces are converted into living spaces (Table 4).

*Table 4 Land use transfer matrix of PLES from 2010 to 2020 (Unit: km²)*

| Year | | 2020 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PLES type | Production space | Living space | Ecological space | Transfer-out total |
| 2010 | Production space | —— | 60.42 | 34.09 | 94.51 |
| | Living space | 38.19 | —— | 31.34 | 69.53 |
| | Ecological space | 43.26 | 45.99 | —— | 89.25 |
| | Transfer-in total | 81.45 | 106.41 | 65.43 | —— |

Further analysis of the land use types in Class II **PLES** reveals that the area of production space is small and primarily consists of agricultural production space. The area of living and ecological space is significant, with living space primarily consisting of urban living space, while ecological space mainly comprises green ecological space (Table 5).

*Table 5 Proportion of various land use types in Shenzhen from 2010 to 2020*

| Year/ Land use types | Agricultural production space | Industrial and mining Production space | Urban living space | Rural living pace | Green ecological space | Water ecological space |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2010** | 8.58% | 4.9% | 40.82% | 1.44% | 40.58% | 3.68% |
| **2015** | 8.13% | 5.78% | 41.25% | 1.44% | 39.96% | 3.43% |
| **2020** | 6.41% | 6.4% | 41.29% | 2.9% | 39.78% | 3.22% |

From 2010 to 2020, the land type that experienced the most transfer among the six Class II land categories was green ecological space, totaling 80.59 km², of which 35.21 km² was converted into urban living space. Secondly, the urban living space has been converted the most, with a large portion of the land being transformed into industrial and mining production space as well as green ecological space. The urban living space is the land type that accepts the largest area of land conversion, totaling 87.37 km², primarily transformed from agricultural production space and green ecological space.

Following this, the land areas that have been converted the most are industrial and mining production space, as well as green ecological space. These indicate that the mutual conversion among green ecological space, urban production space, and industrial and mining production space in Shenzhen is quite frequent, reflecting the intensive utilization and development of these three types of land. The agricultural production space and water ecological space are less transferred than transferred out, and the overall reduction is 57.72% less than that transferred out, most of which are transferred out to living space, and large areas of water ecological space are transferred out to industrial and mining production space and transferred into green ecological space (Table 6 and Figure 3).

*Table 6 Land Use Transfer of PLES in Shenzhen from 2010 to 2020 (Unit: km²)*

| Year | 2020 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Production space | | Living space | | Ecological space | | Transfer-out |
| **2010** | PS1 | PS2 | LS1 | LS2 | ES1 | ES2 | |
| **PS1** | —— | 8.42 | 36.74 | 15.61 | 8.48 | 3.01 | 72.26 |
| **PS2** | 7.97 | —— | 7.64 | 0.43 | 19.98 | 2.61 | 38.63 |
| **LS1** | 10.43 | 25.07 | —— | 17.66 | 24.10 | 1.39 | 78.65 |
| **LS2** | 1.53 | 1.17 | 2.82 | —— | 5.40 | 0.45 | 11.37 |
| **ES1** | 8.68 | 18.70 | 35.21 | 5.72 | —— | 12.28 | 80.59 |
| **ES2** | 1.94 | 13.94 | 4.96 | 0.10 | 7.10 | —— | 28.04 |
| **Transfer-in** | 30.55 | 67.30 | 87.37 | 39.52 | 65.06 | 19.74 | —— |
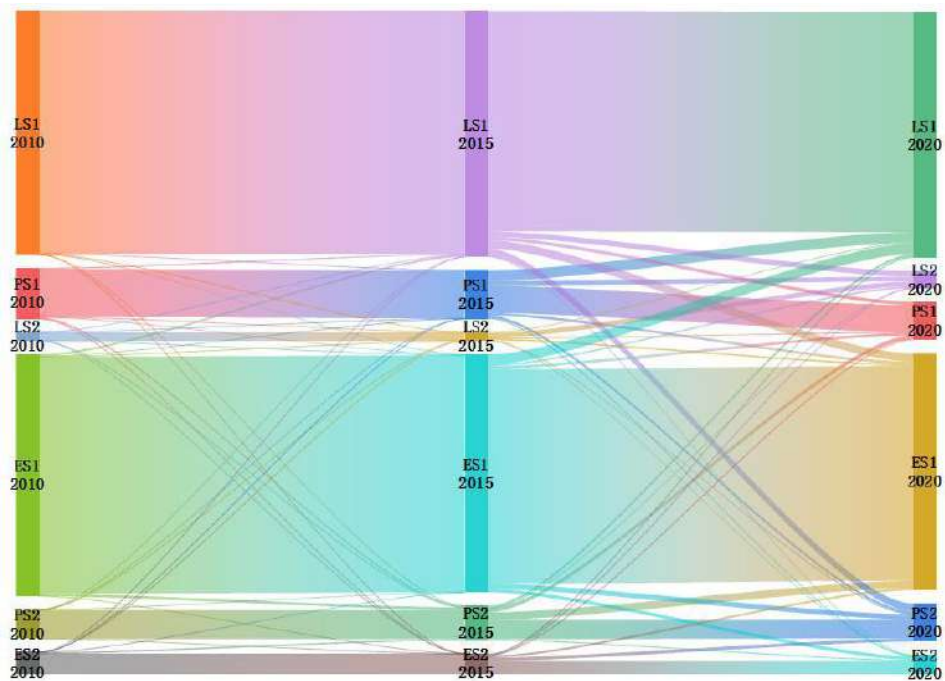


*Fig.3 PLES of Land Use Transfer*

**3.1.2 Spatiotemporal Analysis**

According to the analysis of different time periods, from 2010 to 2015, the land use change range of PLES in each district of Shenzhen is relatively small, mainly that part of ecological space in the west of Baoan is converted into production space, and a small part of ecological space in the west and north of Longgang is converted into living space and production space. From 2015 to 2020, the area of PLES in various districts has shown a significant increase, with a large area of production and ecological space within living space being converted into living space.

The ecological space in the western part of Baoan has further shrunk, being converted into production space, while some in the northern part has been transformed into ecological space. A similar land transformation has occurred in Longgang as well. Secondly, the large living spaces in the central and southern parts of Yantian are being converted into production spaces (Figure 4).
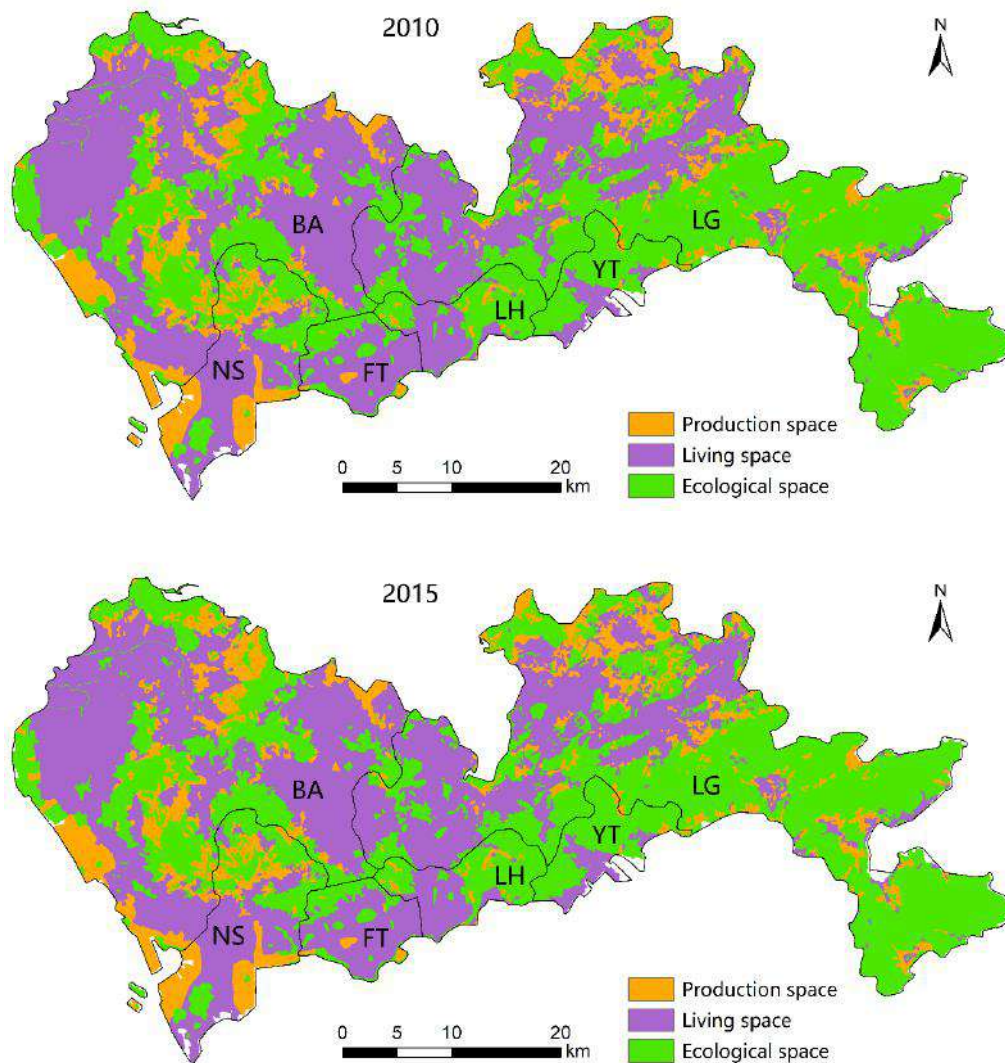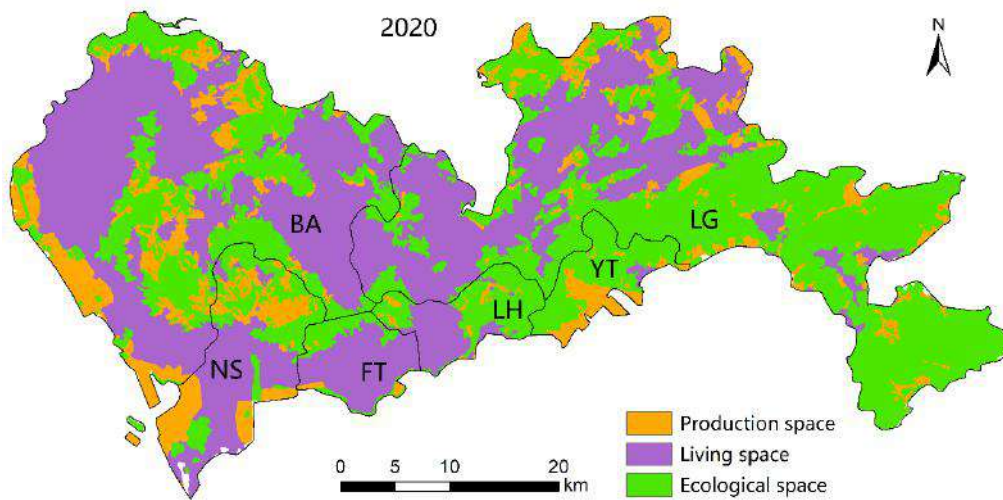
*Fig.4 Distribution of PLES in Shenzhen from 2010 to 2020*

Combined with the land use types of Class II PLES, the obvious change from 2010 to 2015 is that the ecological space of water ecological space in the west of Baoan continues to shrink and transform into industrial and mining production space; part of agricultural production space in the north of Longgang is transformed into urban living space, and urban living space is transformed into rural living space.

From 2015 to 2020, industrial and mining production space in the northwest of Baoan was transformed into green ecological space. The urban living space in Yantian has been extensively transformed into industrial and mining production space. A part of urban living space in the northern part of Nanshan has been converted into industrial and mining production spaces (Figure 5).
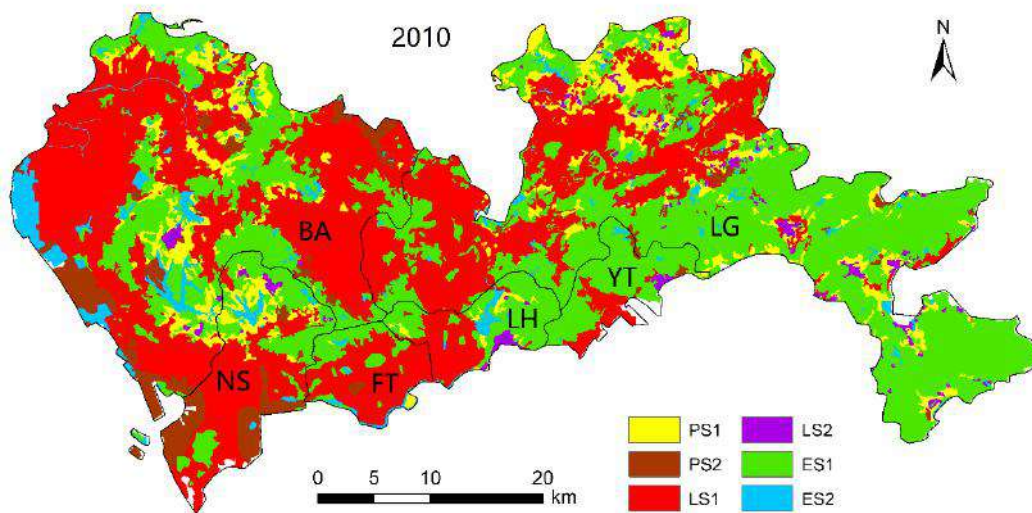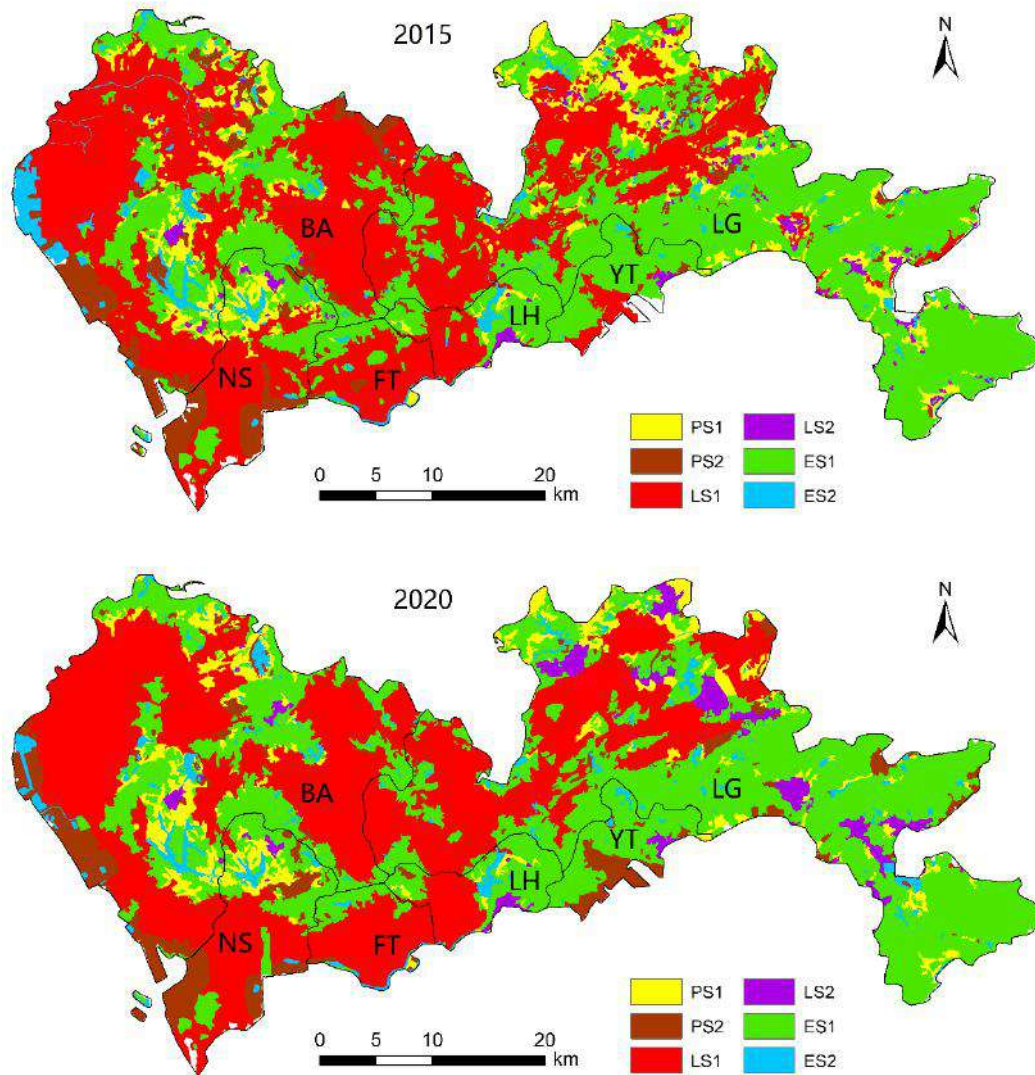
*Fig.5 Distribution of Secondary Land Use Types in Shenzhen from 2010 to 2020*

From the perspective of a single PLES, from 2010 to 2020, production space was fragmented and distributed in various districts. Among them, Baoan and the northern part of Longgang, as well as the central part of Nanshan, showed a significant decrease in small-scale production space. The large-scale increase in production space was mainly concentrated in the western part of Baoan and the central southern part of Yantian, while other districts also had small-scale increases, but the distribution was relatively scattered. The living space is generally distributed in a concentrated and contiguous manner, with a main decrease in block like contiguous areas.

The most obvious areas are in the central and southern parts of Yantian and the northwest part of Longgang. In areas with unchanged living space area, there are also many small areas with newly added area. The ecological space is concentrated in the eastern and central western regions of Shenzhen, with Longgang having the widest distribution, followed by Baoan, Yantian, Luohu, Nanshan, and Futian. The ecological space area of each district shows scattered and scattered decreases and increases (Figure 6).
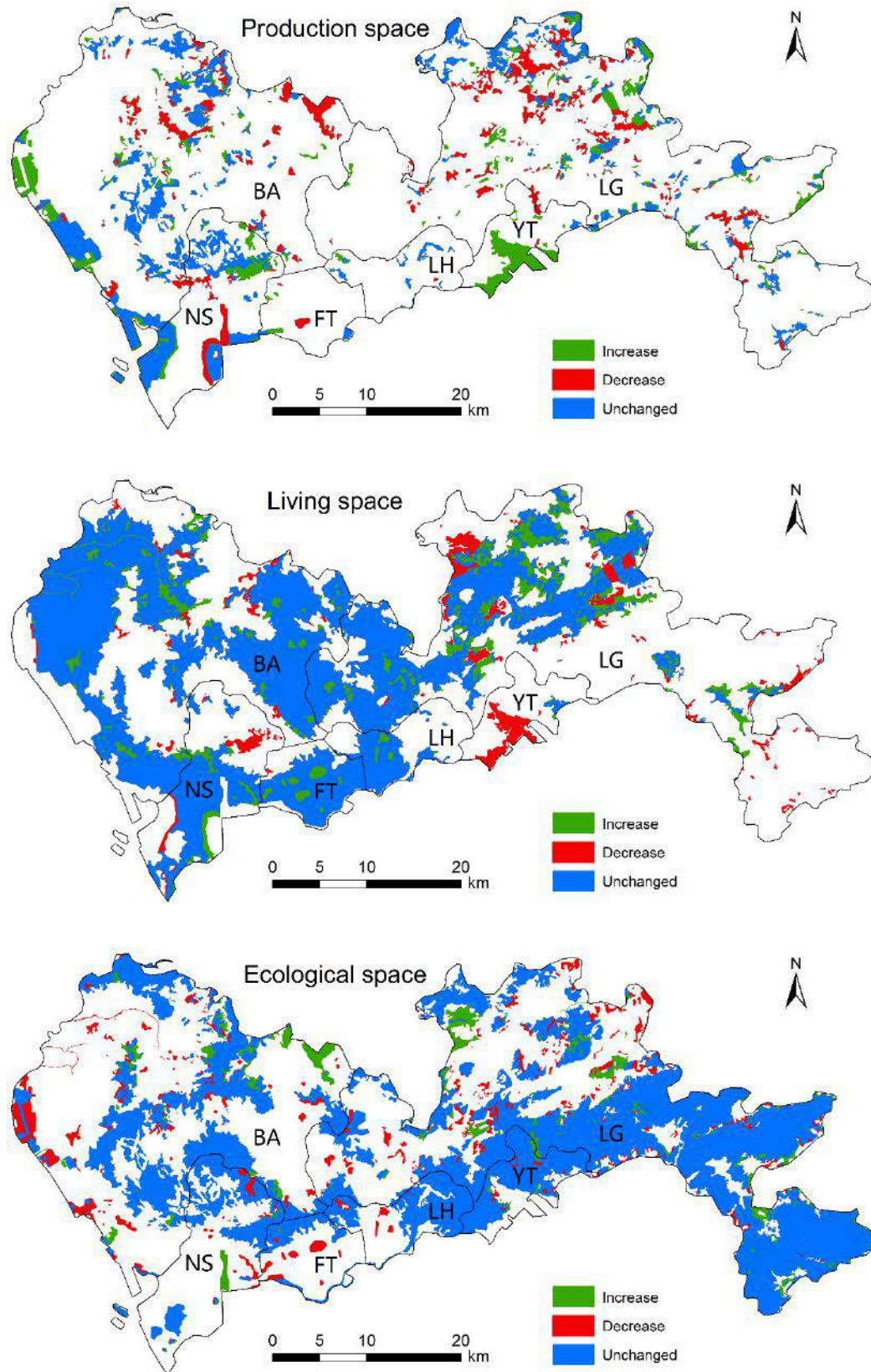
*Fig.6 Spatial distribution of the change in Shenzhen from 2010 to 2020*

## 3.2 Driving Factors Analysis

From 2010 to 2020, there have been varying degrees of changes in the land use types of the PLES in Shenzhen. Based on the actual situation of the research area and the availability of data, considering the representativeness and research significance of the selected factors, 11 driving factors were selected from the natural, social, and

economic aspects to explore the driving mechanism of the spatio-temporal evolution of land use in the PLES in Shenzhen. The selection of each factor is shown in Table 7. This study discretized the treatment of numerical independent variables using the K-means classification algorithm. After repeated experiments, the results were more scientific when the number of clusters was 4.

*Table 7 Classification of Influencing Factors*

| Factor Type | Factor | Unit |
|---|---|---|
| **Natural Factors** | X1: Average Annual Temperature | °C |
| | X2: Average Annual Precipitation | mm |
| | X3: NDVI | |
| | X4: PM2.5 | |
| **Social Factors** | X5: Population Density | people/km² |
| **Economic Factors** | X6: Regional Gross Domestic Product | 10,000 yuan |
| | X7: Per Capita Regional Gross Domestic Product | |
| | X8: Value Added of the Primary Industry | |
| | X9: Value Added of the Secondary Industry | |
| | X10: Value Added of the Tertiary Industry | |
| | X11: Fixed Asset Investment Amount | |

### 3.2.1 Factor Detection Results

Using a geodetector, factor detection was conducted on the spatial distribution changes of land use types in the PLES in the three periods of 2010, 2015, and 2020 to explore the explanatory power of each factor on the land use intensity (Y value) of the PLES in Shenzhen.

The results of factor detection are shown in Table 8. It can be seen from the table that in 2010, the explanatory power of each factor to the land use change of Shenzhen's PLES from big to small is: annual average temperature>NDVI>population density>added value of the primary industry>added value of the secondary industry> fixed asset investment amount >added value of the tertiary industry>annual average precipitation>Regional Gross Domestic Product>PM2.5>Per Capita Regional Gross Domestic Product. Among them, X1 (annual average temperature), X3 (NDVI), and X5 (population density) have strong explanatory power. Annual average temperature has a direct impact on the growth of crops and vegetation, NDVI reflects regional vegetation coverage, and these two factors

directly affect the process of land use change in the PLES. Population density reflects the degree of regional population aggregation and has an important impact on land use change in the PLES. Except for X7, the explanatory power of all other factors exceeds 0.5, indicating that the land use change of PLES in Shenzhen in 2010 was influenced by multiple factors, including natural, social, and economic factors.

Compared with 2010, the explanatory power of X6 (regional gross domestic product), X7 (per capita regional gross domestic product), X2 (annual average precipitation), and X8 (added value of the primary industry) has significantly increased in 2015. Among them, X1 (annual average temperature) has stronger explanatory power than in 2010, but the explanatory power of X5 (population density), X4 (PM2.5), and X3 (NDVI) has significantly decreased. During this period, it can be seen that land use change in the PLES has shifted to a situation dominated by economic development, while the intensity of the impact of climate factors is increasing. Compared with 2015, factors with significantly increased explanatory power in

2020 include X4 (PM2.5), X3 (NDVI), X5 (population density), and X10 (added value of the tertiary industry). In addition, factors with explanatory power greater than 0.5 include X1 (average annual temperature), X6 (regional GDP), X2 (average annual precipitation), and X8 (added value of the primary industry). From the above, it can be further inferred that the land use change of the PLES in Shenzhen is mainly influenced by economic and natural factors.

From the perspective of the entire research period, the

driving factors that affect the land use change of the PLES in Shenzhen in different years have varying strengths. However, factors such as X1 (average annual temperature), X3 (NDVI), and X10 (added value of the tertiary industry) have strong explanatory power during the research period. Due to the development of strategic emerging industries in Shenzhen, which have high requirements for environmental quality, economic and natural factors directly determine the pattern of land use change in the PLES to a large extent.

*Table 8 Q value of driving factors*

| Year\ Factors | X1 | X2 | X3 | X4 | X5 | X6 | X7 | X8 | X9 | X10 | X11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2010 | 0.94 | 0.72 | 0.94 | 0.63 | 0.94 | 0.68 | 0.21 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.73 | 0.75 |
| 2015 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 0.50 | 0.20 | 0.41 | 0.99 | 0.50 | 0.94 | 0.49 | 0.69 | 0.49 |
| 2020 | 0.95 | 0.64 | 1.00 | 0.97 | 0.77 | 0.65 | 0.17 | 0.64 | 0.30 | 0.97 | 0.30 |

### 3.2.2 Interaction Detection Results

Interactive detection can reflect the combined effects of factors on land use change in the PLES and the differences between single factor effects. The results of interactive detection are shown in Figure 7. There was no independent or weakened interaction between the driving factors in each year, indicating that compared to single factor interaction, the explanatory power of the interaction between the two factors for land use change in the PLES was enhanced to varying degrees. This further demonstrates that land use change in the PLES is the result of the interaction and influence between different factors.

From the interaction detection result graph, it can be clearly seen that in 2010, X1 (average annual temperature), X3 (NDVI), X5 (population density), X10 (added value of the tertiary industry), and the interaction results with 10 other factors except for themselves all showed a dual factor enhancement, indicating that during this period, average annual temperature, NDVI, population density, and added value of the tertiary industry were the dominant driving factors jointly promoting the changes in land use in the PLES; In 2015, X1 (average annual temperature), X2 (average annual precipitation), X6 (regional gross

domestic product), X8 (added value of the primary industry), and X10 (added value of the tertiary industry) were the dominant driving factors. Among them, the interaction between X3 (NDVI) ∩ X4 (PM2.5) and X4 (PM2.5) ∩ X7 (per capita regional gross domestic product) showed a non-linear enhancement, indicating that the impact of natural factors on the land use of the PLES in Shenzhen has become increasingly significant over time; In 2020, with X1 (average annual temperature), X2 (average annual precipitation), X3 (NDVI), X4 (PM2.5), X5 (population density), and X10 (added value of the tertiary industry) as the main driving factors, it can be seen that nature, society, and economy, especially the tertiary industry, have become important sources of jointly promoting land use change in the PLES.

The interaction mechanism of factors leading to land use change in the PLES varies significantly in different years, but X1 (annual average temperature), X3 (NDVI), X4 (PM2.5), X5 (population density), and X10 (added value of the tertiary industry) all show strong explanatory power for the interaction of other factors, indicating that these factors have a relatively active effect on land use change in the PLES in different periods.
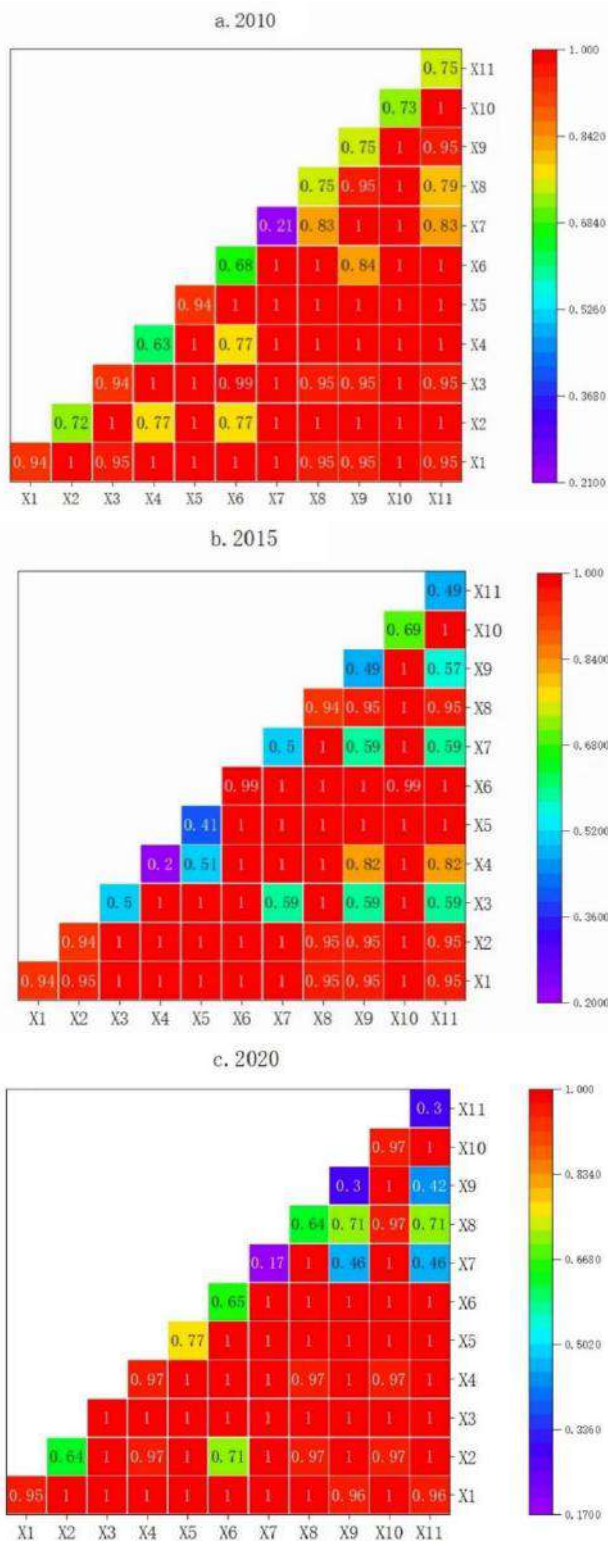
*Fig.7 Interaction detection results*

from the perspective of land use transfer matrix. During the research period, in terms of quantity, the production space first showed growth and then decreased, the living space continued to increase, and the ecological space continued to decrease. The area of each class II land use type in the space increased and decreased, showing varying degrees of fluctuation. In terms of temporal and spatial evolution, the evolution of land use in the PLES from 2010 to 2015 was relatively small, and the transformation of various class II land use types was also relatively small. From 2015 to 2020, the change in the PLES increased, and complex transformations occurred in the class II land use types of each district. Then, a geographic detector was used to analyze the driving factors affecting the land use evolution of Shenzhen's PLES.

The results showed that annual average temperature, NDVI, and added value of the tertiary industry were always important factors affecting the land use change of Shenzhen's PLES. At the same time, the interaction between factors in each year showed dual factor enhancement or nonlinear enhancement, indicating that the interaction between factors was relatively enhanced compared to single factors, further promoting the transformation of land use in the PLES.

Compared to previous studies [13-15], this study incorporates NDVI factors that more accurately reflect vegetation coverage, PM2.5 factors that focus on air quality, and increases the explanatory power of land use intensity in the PLES. Secondly, this study further explores the mechanism of land use change in the PLES from two aspects: single factor detection and interaction detection. At the same time, geodetectors were used in the research process. Due to their suitability for continuous dependent variables, numerical dependent variables need to be discretized. The choice of discretization methods for each factor is a limitation of geographic detectors and is prone to errors during the processing. There is also a certain subjectivity in the selection of factors, which has a certain impact on the analysis of land use evolution in the PLES.

The above issues need further in-depth research, and the next step should be to consider selecting more scientific and meaningful methods for driving force

## IV.     DISCUSSION

This article first systematically analyzes the spatio-temporal evolution of land use in Shenzhen's PLES

analysis. Moreover, the selection of factors should be more comprehensive and tailored to the characteristics of the research area.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

This study used a land use transfer matrix to analyze the spatio-temporal evolution of land use in the PLES in Shenzhen from 2010 to 2020. Geodetectors were used to detect factors and interactions among selected factors, and the following conclusions were drawn:

(1) During the research period, the production space in Shenzhen showed an initial increase followed by a decrease, the living space showed a slight increase to a significant increase, and the ecological space showed a sustained and significant decrease trend; The frequent conversion of industrial and mining production space, urban living space, and green ecological space is the main type of secondary land.

(2) The conversion of land use types in the PLES of various districts in Shenzhen was relatively small from 2010 to 2015, but significantly increased from 2015 to 2020. Among the class II PLES land use types, the transformation of the ecological space in the western water ecological space of Baoan into an industrial and mining production space and the transformation of the large-scale urban living space in the central and southern parts of Yantian into an industrial and mining production space are more significant.

(3) The driving forces behind the evolution of land use in the PLES at different stages follow the following pattern: Most factors in factor detection have strong explanatory power for the intensity of land use in the PLES, but annual average temperature, NDVI, and added value of the tertiary industry are always important driving factors affecting the intensity of land use in the PLES.

(4) Interaction detection shows that the explanatory power of interaction factors on the land use intensity of the PLES is stronger than that of single factors. Among them, the interaction effects of annual average temperature, NDVI, PM2.5, population density, and added value of the tertiary industry on factors other than themselves significantly increase the explanatory power of the land

use intensity of the PLES.

Overall, exploring the evolution of land use and its driving force in Shenzhen's PLES may serve as a reference for optimizing regional land spatial patterns and urban spatial structures, as well as providing a scientific foundation for supporting regional sustainable development.

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# An Enigmatic view on trauma of a woman and reign of Education in Sudha Murty's *Mahashweta*

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*Abstract*— *Myth occupies a major part in the life of women. Various kinds of belief made women to be in the corner of the society. We have seen many such taboos which suppresses women. This article discusses one among that. Anupama being suffered from Leukoderma was considered as a person of bad omen and sent out from her in-laws house. The entire society believed her as a person of untouchable. Though she slipped down slightly she successfully gave a good come back with the weapon called education. Education plays a major role in this novel which was used excellently by the heroine Anupama in the upliftment and betterment of her life whereas from the side of male protagonist even though he was educated he remained in shallow darkness. Anand being a doctor couldn't understood the reality and failed to stand by the side of Anu as he had only physical attraction over her. This article paves a way for every citizen to look into the beauty called character of a woman not merely external appearance. It also shows the tendency of Anu coping up with all kind of situation with boldness.*

*Keywords*— ***Education, Leukoderma, Ignorance.***

Sudha Murty's work Mahashweta remains as a bench mark of this era in portraying the position of women. The enlarged vision of this article is to accomplish a better perspective for the community of women, who have been facing number of taboos in different forms. There is no similarity in the climax of this novel as in other works. As proceeded, it took the reader to various stages of critical analysis. Sudha Murty as a woman is a symbol of excellence, she maintained her own company and helped the poor people from the profit earned through her business. She wants to impart the same to the public. She decided to incorporate this to people through her pen. Her novel Mahaswetha reflects her inner quest. With the start of the life of Anupama, she remained as an loyal, brave, independent girl who lead her life without the support of her father. She was a girl who was growing under the arms of her stepmother and subjected to face number of traumas. Even under that heart aching situations she performed well in her courses to obtain scholarship which was the main source of her survival. As per Sudha Murthy, "It was true

that Shamanna could not afford to pay for his daughter's education. His wife Sabakka, Anupama's stepmother, had told her husband categorically, 'Let us not educate her further. It might become difficult to find a husband for her. Besides, she will not support us. She has to marry and go to somebody else's house one day.".(20)

Anu observed it correctly, that, in the absence of her scholarship she would be the wife of someone. So she believed that education was her life saver. Her stepsisters who were in her home could enjoy all kind of benefits which she couldn't enjoy as a heir of that family. She would sure to get married if she losses her scholarship that forced her to prepare well for her exams.

Apart from studies she had concentrated in enacting plays. She was a best stage performer who could enact any character in a lively manner. Through the character of Mahashweta she gained the heart of Dr. Anand. Anand made effort to own her against the wish of his mother Rathakka. Rathakka being a traditional woman don't want to have daughter-in-law from poor family. Though she had many

differences towards Anupama she accepted her only because of the wish of her son.

As a typical Indian woman, Anupama loved Dr. Anand but hesitated to expose it to her friend. In play, while enacting the role of Mahashweta on stage, she transfigured herself as real Mahashweta, who through her real love could regain her beloved breath back to the world. Being a poor girl, she assisted her own life and also supported her family. She was a multi talented girl who revealed these in stages. Her love towards acting soon came to an end after her marriage to Anand. Rathakka showed her dark side face towards Anupama in all the situations. She waited for an opportunity to disclose her chapter from the life of her son. As Anand was far away from his home town, Anupuma suffered from Leukoderm. She had white patches in her feet, but she didn't reveal it to anyone as it was considered as bad omen in her society. She feared to lose her husband because of this but she had a little hope that being a doctor her husband will surely understand her. So she secretly consulted a doctor for treatment. But everything end in vain, she couldn't found any improvement, instead of increased size of patches. Meanwhile she found her sister- in -law's behaviour too odd. She tried to warn her but Girija changed the entire situation against Anupama and portrayed to Rathakka that Anupama was treating her rudely by making a fake story.

When Anupama's mother in law came to know about her white patches she addressed the same to her father and made him to take back his daughter to his home. For Anupama, her dignity was more important than continuing her marriage which put her in trouble. "Anupama went to her room, collected the few things that belonged to her, picked up one of Anand's photographs and returned where Shamanna waited for her. She took his hand in hers, and silently clutching her bag, walked out of the house. She knew in her heart that this was the last time she would be seeing the house or its people…but she did not look back even once. "(59) Anupama received hotness from her step mother after reaching her home.  She wrote many letters to Anand with hope that he would stand strong by her side as the promise made by him during their wedding. But God has different plan for her. She didn't received any reply from Anand. The people in her village started to talk about her that she was a bad omen because of that she was returned back to her father's home from her In-law's house. Everyone believed that her sister's marriage was called off because of her bad luck. The habit of mending stories with a single stray remained as a habit for the people in nature. Even today this continued in many places, which hurts many souls. These sort of people have pleasure in criticizing others though they have bundle of dirts at their back. Though Anupama managed to overcome all, she slipped at

a point and decided to gave up her life. But later realized it's seriousness and called off her decision and decided to move to Bombay. So that she won't be burden to anyone. She believed in herself , education helped her to achieve many thing. She joined as a professor in college and moulded her students with her experience.

Education plays a vital role in Anupama's life, being a real Mahaswetha she strived a lot to be away from the society which ignored her because of the patches. Anand who was not a person to maintain his promise, remained passive under the control of his mother words and failed to be a dedicated husband. To be frank he only loved the outer appearance of Anupama, failed to look her inner self. The Character of Vasant was entirely opposite to Anand, whom she met in her work place. He loved her inner self and ready to accept her with patches.

But Anupama knowing about Vasant very well ignored his offer. Because she didn't want to enter into a cage called marriage again. She wanted to be free. After marriage she was restricted from going outside, meeting her friends, enacting plays and about to get permission for doing things which was her basic one. She didn't want to enter into these struggles again. She wanted to explore her world again as Mahaswetha. But now she wants to gain back the life of her own with full confidence and braveness. According to David Bouchier, "Any form of opposition of social, personal or economic discrimination which women suffer because of their sex."(2)

Myth plays a vital role in this play, which changes the life of  a woman who wants to explore it. Even today many parts of our society used to have this kind of mentality and restrict the people's who were the victims from living a normal life. As like myths the problem faced by children from stepmother is also a matter in the conversing desk in today's life. As I stand in the side of women I won't accept the worse behaviour of stepmothers. A child being a delicate soul is being treated harshly which should be condemned. Sabakka in this story remained loyal for her daughters but failed to do so towards Anu. Shamanna lost his power and failed to stand by his daughter side. Lakshmi Vilas being a place of prosperity lacks it purity by the presence of Radhakka's family. Girija being disloyal to her husband enjoyed a luxurious life. But Anu being modest gained nothing but vain in her life. Apart from all these she faced sexual harassment too. But she faced it intelligently and came out of it. As Sushila Singh puts it in Feminism and Recent Fiction in English, "Human experience for centuries has been synonymous with masculine experience with the result that the collective image of humanity has been one-sided and incomplete. Woman has not been defined as a

subject in her own right but merely has an entity that concerns man either in his real life or in his fantasy life."(7)

This paper brings out the insights of Anu from the patriarchal society in which she survives. She took the right decision at right time in many situations which needs to be mentioned. Anupama will be the role model for all those women in this society who are facing taboos by the name of myth.

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# Impact of Demographic Variations on Consumer Satisfaction: A Study of Local and Non-local Goods in Nagaland

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*Abstract— This study looks at how consumer satisfaction with local and non-local goods is affected by demographic characteristics in six districts of Nagaland: Dimapur, Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Mon, and Kiphire. The study aims to investigate how consumer satisfaction levels are influenced by characteristics such as gender, occupational status, and district-specific differences. Using an organized interview schedule, primary data was gathered from a sample of 600 respondents—a varied cross-section of Nagaland's population. The primary measure used for examining satisfaction levels was the Average Consumer Satisfaction Score (ACSS). The results show considerable differences in consumer satisfaction between various demographic groups when it comes to local and non-local items. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to consider demographic variables when figuring out Nagaland's consumer behavior. It implies that district-specific dynamics, local cultural identity, and economic considerations all significantly impact customer satisfaction. The knowledge gathered from this study can help shape focused marketing plans and legislative initiatives that support regional products and cater to the interests of various customer segments. By providing a sophisticated knowledge of the relationship between demographics and consumer satisfaction in a culturally and economically diverse region like Nagaland, this study adds to the broader discussion on consumer behavior.*

*Keywords— Consumer Satisfaction, Demographics, Local Goods, Nagaland.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is a crucial indicator of the performance of both local and non-local products in the market. Knowing what influences customer satisfaction becomes vital in areas like Nagaland, where economic growth and cultural legacy are linked. A complex mix of cultural, economic, and demographic variables influences the market in Nagaland for both non-local and local goods. Non-local commodities frequently symbolize modernity and international trends, but local goods are firmly anchored in the region's cultural legacy. However, different demographic groups and districts have varied levels of consumer satisfaction with these commodities. This study investigates the relationship between customer satisfaction with local and non-local goods across six districts in Nagaland and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, occupation, marital status and place of residence. By examining these characteristics, the research seeks to identify the underlying behaviors and preferences that influence consumer decisions, advancing our understanding of how consumers perceive and value local and non-local items in this cultural setting.

Numerous studies have examined consumer satisfaction in a variety of settings, emphasizing its importance in

promoting brand loyalty, repeat business, and general market success. Research has indicated that demographic variables, such as age, gender, income, and education, significantly influence the choices and satisfaction levels of consumers. While older consumers place a higher value on product quality and dependability, younger consumers are typically more influenced by trends and social media prioritizing things like price and brand image (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Age and gender are two examples of demographic characteristics that influence the kinds of products that buyers associate with their identities (Solomon, 2019).

Previous research studies have also highlighted the significance of cultural identity and regional pride in shaping consumer preferences regarding local and non-local goods. According to Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2000, demographic variables like age, income, and cultural background influence consumer responses to relationship marketing initiatives. When local items are in line with their beliefs, consumers can feel more satisfied because they see them as extensions of their cultural identity (Belk, 2013). Local goods that appeal to consumers' cultural and demographic characteristics have the potential to enhance brand equity in regional marketplaces (Ailawadi et al, 2003).

While non-local commodities could be connected to modernity and status, local goods are frequently seen as more genuine and aligned with cultural values. However, depending on demographic variables and the accessibility and availability of these products in other regions, the satisfaction obtained from these things can fluctuate greatly. Consumers who are younger and have lower incomes are more likely to experience disappointment and regret, although demographic factors like age and wealth can also mitigate these effects on satisfaction (Inman et al., 2017).

Even while consumer happiness has been extensively studied, more is needed to know about the unique dynamics at work in places like Nagaland, where cultural legacy, economic progress, and demographic variety come together. Comprehensive studies investigating the ways in which age, gender, income, and education affect customer satisfaction with both local and non-local items in Nagaland are lacking. In order to close this gap, this study examines how these demographic characteristics affect customer satisfaction, paying close attention to district-specific differences. It analyses customer satisfaction with both local

and non-local items at the district level while taking demographic considerations into account.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study's research methodology entails gathering and evaluating both primary and secondary data to assess Nagaland consumers' satisfaction with local and non-local goods. A structured interview schedule is used to collect primary data, ensuring that responses are thoroughly noted and examined. The state of Nagaland is included in the study's population, with a focus on six important districts: Kohima, Dimapur, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Mon, and Kiphire. A total sample size of 600 respondents is selected from these districts to guarantee a complete representation of varied demographic characteristics. A scale has been developed to independently assess each respondent's degree of satisfaction with local and external goods. The scale is a Likert type-five points scale with 25 items representing various aspects of consumer satisfaction with local goods. Five degrees of satisfaction were recorded based on the respondents' responses to the 25 items. Five points are given for the most desired response and one point for the least. As a result, the maximum score on the Average Consumer Satisfaction Scale (ACSS) is 125 (25 items X 5 points). This ACSS is used to examine the data and measure the respondents' level of satisfaction.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first paragraph under each heading or subheading should be flush left, and subsequent paragraphs should have a five-space indentation. A colon is inserted before an equation is presented, but there is no punctuation following the equation. All equations are numbered and referred to in the text solely by a number enclosed in a round bracket (i.e., (3) reads as "equation 3"). Ensure that any miscellaneous numbering system you use in your paper cannot be confused with a reference [4] or an equation (3) designation.

3.1. Overall consumer satisfaction: District wise

The Overall Consumer Satisfaction towards local and non-local goods has been worked out based on average consumer satisfaction score (ACSS) obtained for each district under study. The Table 1 given below provides an idea about the district-wise variation of Average Consumer Satisfaction Score.

*Table 1: Overall consumer satisfaction: District wise*

| District | No. of Respondents | ACSS | | Local Goods (No. of Respondents) | | Non-local Goods (No. of Respondents) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Above ACSS | Below ACSS | Above ACSS | Below ACSS |
| Dimapur | 168 | 89.51 | 89.07 | 87 | 81 | 83 | 85 |
| Kiphire | 30 | 89.57 | 91.47 | 15 | 15 | 12 | 18 |
| Kohima | 120 | 95.20 | 88.96 | 48 | 72 | 44 | 76 |
| Mokokchung | 84 | 85.51 | 86.51 | 43 | 41 | 38 | 46 |
| Mon | 108 | 90.57 | 90.29 | 51 | 57 | 52 | 56 |
| Tuensang | 90 | 95.13 | 90.17 | 47 | 43 | 42 | 48 |

Source: Field Survey

The data in Table 1 shows that there are varying levels of consumer satisfaction with local and non-local goods across different districts in Nagaland. it can be inferred through the ACSS that respondents from Kohima District were more satisfied with local goods with an ACSS of 95.20 and number of respondents above and below ACSS was 48 and 72 respectively. On the other hand, it can also be inferred that respondents from Kiphire District were more satisfied with non-local goods with a ACSS of 91.47 and number of respondents above and below ACSS was 12 and 18 respectively.

3.2. Relationship between Gender and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise

The data in Table 2 presents a district-wise analysis of the relationship between gender and consumer satisfaction towards local and non-local goods in Nagaland. The Average Consumer Satisfaction Score (ACSS) is used to measure satisfaction levels, with scores provided separately for female and male respondents across six districts.

*Table 2: Relationship between Gender and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise*

| District | No. of Respondents | Average Consumer Satisfaction Score (ACSS) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Female | | Male | |
| | | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods |
| Dimapur | 168 | 90.63 | 90.40 | 88.21 | 87.53 |
| Kiphire | 30 | 88.85 | 93.08 | 90.12 | 90.24 |
| Kohima | 120 | 95.09 | 87.39 | 95.32 | 90.75 |
| Mokokchung | 84 | 83.96 | 86.85 | 87.39 | 86.11 |
| Mon | 108 | 90.72 | 89.64 | 90.45 | 90.84 |
| Tuensang | 90 | 94.19 | 89.00 | 96.42 | 91.76 |

Source: Field Survey

With a few notable exceptions, the ACSS of the data in Table 2 indicates that, in most districts, respondents, male and female alike, tend to be satisfied with local than non-local goods. Both genders express great satisfaction with local goods in Dimapur, Kohima and Tuensang. However, Kiphire and Mokokchung demonstrates a distinct pattern in

which females are more satisfied with non-local goods with an ACSS of 93.08 and 86.85 respectively.

3.3. Relationship between Age and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise

The Table 3 presents a district-wise analysis of consumer satisfaction with local and non-local goods based on the age group of respondents.

*Table 3: Relationship between Age and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise*

| District | No. of Respondents | Average Consumer Satisfaction Score (ACSS) | | | | | | | |
| | | 18 to 25 | | 26 to 40 | | 41 to 60 | | 61 and above | |
| | | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods |
| Dimapur | 168 | 90.67 | 90.30 | 88.66 | 89.75 | 87.86 | 81.86 | 87.00 | 90.80 |
| Kiphire | 30 | 83.88 | 91.25 | 92.43 | 92.00 | 90.25 | 90.75 | 0 | 0 |
| Kohima | 120 | 94.77 | 86.56 | 94.45 | 89.86 | 98.71 | 92.12 | 95.50 | 88.75 |
| Mokokchung | 84 | 88.57 | 88.21 | 81.85 | 86.20 | 88.36 | 87.50 | 97.50 | 67.00 |
| Mon | 108 | 89.91 | 88.46 | 90.83 | 91.61 | 92.60 | 91.60 | 85.25 | 83.50 |
| Tuensang | 90 | 93.05 | 87.80 | 98.03 | 92.39 | 92.91 | 91.27 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Field Survey

It is seen through the ACSS of that data in Table 3 that though there are variations per district, younger age groups (18 to 25) show a balanced satisfaction with both local and non-local goods. For example, younger respondents in Kiphire favor non-local goods, whereas those in Dimapur and Tuensang are more satisfied with local goods. The middle-aged groups (26–40 and 41–60) exhibit high levels of satisfaction with local products, especially in Tuensang and Kohima, where scores are quite high. Older age groups (61 and above) show a range of preferences. For instance, the older respondents in Dimapur favor non-local goods, but in Mokokchung, the same demographic strongly prefers local goods. Overall, the data points to a tendency among consumers, especially in certain districts like Kohima and Mokokchung, to be more satisfied with local goods more as they age. Even if they are still valued, non-local goods appear more popular with younger and middle-aged consumers, especially in areas like Kiphire and Dimapur.

### 3.4. Relationship between Educational Qualification and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise

The Table 4 presents a district-wise analysis of consumer satisfaction with local and non-local goods based on the educational qualification of respondents.

*Table 4: Relationship between Educational Qualification and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise*

| District | No. of Respondents | Average Consumer Satisfaction Score (ACSS) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Below Class 10 | | Matriculate | | Higher Secondary | | Graduate | | Post-Graduate | |
| | | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods |
| Dimapur | 168 | 91.60 | 94.80 | 91 | 85.40 | 88.43 | 91.43 | 90.47 | 89.65 | 88.45 | 86.93 |
| Kiphire | 30 | 83.00 | 91.00 | 98.00 | 84.00 | 93.60 | 100.80 | 82.75 | 86.25 | 89.84 | 90.53 |
| Kohima | 120 | 91.33 | 84.33 | 97.00 | 87.00 | 95.91 | 90.36 | 95.04 | 87.45 | 95.36 | 90.85 |
| Mokokchung | 84 | 87.33 | 91.00 | 90.20 | 90.00 | 82.50 | 83.00 | 82.24 | 85.38 | 87.73 | 86.88 |
| Mon | 108 | 87.93 | 85.53 | 91.73 | 98.09 | 89.73 | 90.73 | 91.44 | 90.00 | 90.79 | 89.93 |
| Tuensang | 90 | 0 | 0 | 88.50 | 87.50 | 99.46 | 92.38 | 92.89 | 87.63 | 96.27 | 92.14 |

Source: Field Survey

The ACSS results of the data in Table 4 shows that respondents who are from Graduate and Post-Graduate levels in most districts exhibit balanced satisfaction with local and non-local goods. However, Kiphire district show a less satisfaction score for local goods. Below Class 10 are more satisfied with non-local goods in districts like Dimapur, Kiphire and Mokokchung. However, matriculate respondents are satisfied highly with local goods in all districts except Mon. Higher secondary respondents show great satisfaction with locally produced goods in 3

districts, especially in Tuensang, and more satisfaction with non-local goods in the remaining 3 districts, especially in Kiphire.

### 3.5. Relationship between Occupational Status and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise

The Table 5 presents a district-wise analysis of consumer satisfaction with local and non-local goods based on the occupational status of respondents.

*Table 5: Relationship between Occupational Status and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise*

| District | No. of Respondents | Average Consumer Satisfaction Score (ACSS) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Govt. Service | | Homemakers | | Private Service | | Self-employed | | Student | |
| | | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods |
| Dimapur | 168 | 91.72 | 90.21 | 90.75 | 92.08 | 88.76 | 89.97 | 89.77 | 86.65 | 85.94 | 84.75 |
| Kiphire | 30 | 81.00 | 91.00 | 84.00 | 84.67 | 90.63 | 92.63 | 92.50 | 92.33 | 89.33 | 90.50 |
| Kohima | 120 | 95.27 | 87.16 | 93.00 | 88.13 | 94.50 | 90.85 | 96.79 | 89.68 | 96.00 | 90.60 |
| Mokokchung | 84 | 82.29 | 86.54 | 85.27 | 85.45 | 86.19 | 88.31 | 88.89 | 90.89 | 90.00 | 79.00 |
| Mon | 108 | 89.09 | 88.38 | 94.33 | 92.33 | 93.06 | 89.81 | 88.53 | 91.15 | 92.86 | 91.36 |
| Tuensang | 90 | 92.48 | 87.35 | 92.29 | 88.57 | 94.93 | 88.97 | 97.96 | 92.88 | 98.40 | 99.00 |

Source: Field Survey

Through the ACSS in Table 5, it can be inferred that Dimapur shows a trend where homemakers and private service employees tend to prefer non-local goods, while government service employees, students, and the self-employed lean towards local goods. Kiphire displays a unique pattern where self-employed individuals have the highest satisfaction with both local and non-local goods, while government employees are less satisfied with local products. Kohima strongly favors local goods across all occupational groups, particularly among the self-employed and students, reflecting a cultural or regional preference. Mokokchung indicates a distinct preference for local goods among students and the self-employed, while non-local goods receive mixed satisfaction levels. Mon shows high satisfaction across all groups, with homemakers leading in

both local and non-local goods satisfaction, suggesting a broad acceptance of both product types. Tuensang stands out for its overwhelmingly high satisfaction with local goods, especially among the self-employed and students, with students also showing the highest satisfaction for non-local goods.

### 3.6. Relationship between Marital Status and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise

The Table 6 presents the relationship between marital status (married vs. unmarried) and consumer satisfaction with local and non-local goods across the six districts in Nagaland.

*Table 6: Relationship between Marital Status and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise*

| District | No. of Respondents | Average Consumer Satisfaction Score (ACSS) | | | |
| | | Married | | Unmarried | |
| | | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods |
| Dimapur | 168 | 91.83 | 90.89 | 88.60 | 88.36 |
| Kiphire | 30 | 89.09 | 93.09 | 89.84 | 90.53 |
| Kohima | 120 | 93.08 | 84.54 | 96.14 | 90.93 |

| Mokokchung | 84 | 83.68 | 86.78 | 87.18 | 86.27 |
| Mon | 108 | 90.12 | 88.93 | 90.85 | 91.12 |
| Tuensang | 90 | 92.36 | 87.82 | 96.74 | 91.53 |

Source: Field Survey

The data in Table 6 shows how marital status influences consumer satisfaction with both local and non-local items, with notable district-specific variances based on the ACSS score. Therefore, it can be concluded that married respondents generally exhibit great pleasure with local goods, notably in Dimapur, Kiphire, and Tuensang, even though their contentment with non-local things varies by district. For example, married respondents from Kiphire and Dimapur express greater satisfaction with non-local things than respondents from Kohima and Tuensang. Unmarried respondents indicate more satisfaction with local and non-local commodities, especially in places with a significant preference for local goods, such as Kohima and Tuensang. In most districts, unmarried respondents had a slightly higher preference for locally produced goods than respondents who are married.

### 3.7. Relationship between Place of Residence and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise

The Table 7 presents a district-wise analysis of consumer satisfaction with local and non-local goods based on the place of residence of the respondents.

*Table 7: Relationship between Place of Residence and Consumers' Satisfaction: District wise*

| District | No. of Respondents | Average Consumer Satisfaction Score (ACSS) | | | |
| | | Town | | Village | |
| | | Local Goods | Non-local Goods | Local Goods | Non-local Goods |
| Dimapur | 168 | 89.88 | 89.52 | 85.94 | 84.75 |
| Kiphire | 30 | 89.59 | 91.56 | 89.33 | 90.67 |
| Kohima | 120 | 95.05 | 88.77 | 96.19 | 90.19 |
| Mokokchung | 84 | 85.20 | 87.23 | 90.40 | 75.20 |
| Mon | 108 | 90.36 | 90.38 | 91.67 | 89.83 |
| Tuensang | 90 | 95.44 | 90.01 | 92.91 | 91.27 |

Source: Field Survey

According to the ACSS in Table 7, it can be inferred that respondents from town are more content with non-local goods in the districts of Kiphire, Mokokchung, and Mon and are more satisfied with local goods than non-local goods in the districts of Dimapur, Kohima, and Tuensang. Except in Kiphire, where respondents from village residency are more likely to favor non-local goods, village residents in all districts also vastly prefer local goods.

## IV.      CONCLUSION

A conclusion section must be included and should indicate clearly the advantages, limitations, and possible applications of the paper.  Although a conclusion may review the main points of the paper, do not replicate the abstract as the conclusion. A conclusion might elaborate on the importance of the work or suggest applications and extensions.

This study examined the impact of demographic variations on customer satisfaction with local and non-local goods across six districts in Nagaland, viz., Dimapur, Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Mon, and Kiphire.   The demographic parameters examined in this study included gender, age, occupational status, educational background, marital status and place of residence. The results show notable differences in consumer satisfaction between districts, which are driven by demographics. The insights gained can assist local businesses in better understanding the needs of various demographic groups and tailor their marketing plans and product offers and development strategies to the interests of such groups. Policymakers can also create policies that encourage the consumption of locally produced items and support local enterprises, thus promoting economic development in the area.

When creating marketing plans, businesses should consider the demographics of their targeted consumer base. There should be campaigns to highlight local products'

distinctive features and cultural value to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty toward them, particularly in areas where non-local items are more popular. Businesses and policymakers should implement district-specific strategies considering the differences in consumer satisfaction across districts. More market access, financial aid, and training should be provided for local artisans and producers to boost the allure of locally produced goods. By addressing these areas, future studies could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of consumer satisfaction in Nagaland and inform more effective strategies for promoting local economic development and cultural preservation.

The six districts included in the study might not accurately represent the entire state of Nagaland. If additional districts were added, the results might be different. To obtain a more thorough knowledge of consumer satisfaction towards local and non-local goods in Nagaland, future research might broaden the scope to include more districts, more significant sample numbers, and additional variables, including income level and lifestyle preferences. Expanding the study to other states or areas may yield comparative perspectives, facilitating the identification of broader patterns in consumer behavior concerning local and non-local goods across varied cultural environments.

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# Subtle Orientalism: Moroccan Self-Criticism and Poor Hygiene as Tools for Western Representations

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*Abstract— By analyzing Jeffrey Tayler's Glory in a Camel's Eye (2003) and Tahir Shah's The Caliph's House (2006), this paper considers the more elusive elements of Orientalism in contemporary travel writing . While earlier colonial-era writers were less subtle, often in obvious terms suggesting backward and undeveloped narratives to the point of being almost negative—these visceral accounts are bound up with the skillful deployment of local voices that serve as a weaponized device for endorsing Western constructions. They often use the self-critical words of Moroccans to disguise their prejudices, granting them an appearance of impartiality and legitimacy. The paper argues that even in its most nuanced form, teaching culture through such subtle comparison sustains Orientalist frameworks by comparing a "modern" West with the primitive East. Using a more subtle, strategic representation of Western dominance as instantiation enables the study to show in scrutinizing travelogue passages that local voices of Morocco had been weaponized to promote/propagate white supremacy and live among larger narration for cultural imperialism. This study also explores how these travelogues capitalize on representations of dirt, poor hygiene, and otherness in Moroccan life, serving to highlight how depictions of uncleanliness and animal-like imagery continue to dehumanize and exoticize non-Western peoples.*

*Keywords— Orientalism, otherness, travel writing, stereotyping, stereotypes*

## INTRODUCTION

For a long time, travel literature has served to forge and sustain images of the exotic and primitive East. It has long been a site for perpetuating a fantasy that preaches a simple story. It contains the same set piece with potentially different players but always with a Western cast. The narrative is as follows: The traveler journeys out of "his" civilized territory and into the woefully primitive one, falling momentarily under "their" spell and then waking up to the realization that the poor East is but a set piece where "they" (non-Western cultures) perform cultural "theater" for "us" (Westerners). The same story is told differently today in every travelogue but with a simple punchline that is coy about calling non-Western cultures "inferior" or "uncivilized". This study explores how these strategies operate and what they reveal about the enduring nature of Orientalism in contemporary travel writing. Specific passages will be analyzed from two travel accounts written

in the 21st century and compared to those written in past centuries. This comparison will uncover similarities, differences, and developments that took shape in the travel writing genre. This essay also examines how contemporary travel writing keeps using clichés, mainly the 'dirty' and 'filthy' other. Jeffrey Tayler's *Glory in a Camel's Eye* describes Moroccan life via many allusions to inadequate sanitation, hence our main attention will be on his work. This paper will show how the genre of travel writing still depends on well-known clichés to appeal to Western readers by contrasting Tayler's work with colonial-era travelogues, including John Davidson's *Notes Taken During Travels in Africa* and Edith Wharton's *In Morocco*.

### Local Voices as Tools for Western Validation

*Glory in a Camel's Eye* (2003) depicts the Moroccan culture, manner, and way of life as primitive. Although Tayler does not outright say that 'they' are uncivilized, he uses what Moroccan people say when he converses with

them to prove their innate primitiveness. In common practice, the average writer in travel writing acknowledges the lack of civilization through direct language and concise depictions of the aspects of the culture he views as backward. Writers also make comparisons between the East and the West, usually insinuating a discourse to the effect of 'we are better than they are'. However, this is not true in Jeffrey Tayler's travelogue. During his interactions and dialogues with Moroccan people, he documented their reflections and criticism about their culture and, interestingly, that is what he chose to include in his book. The following passage demonstrates this perfectly well:

"I think tourism is great," he replied. "I wish we Arabs had the same curiosity about the world as Nasranis. Look at Arabs when they get money: all they do is spend it on booze and sex. Their heads are empty—they're just animals. The Saudis, the Emiratees, they're donkeys with no culture at all. By the way, what are your traditions concerning meat?" (Tayler, 2003, p. 106).

Jeffrey Tayler subtly presents Moroccan culture, customs, and methods of life as primitive. Rather than calling the Moroccan people uncivilized, Tayler uses their voices to support this primitiveness. Including the opinions and complaints of Moroccan people serves as proof and helps Tayler effectively convey his ideas. This strategy helps him to avoid direct criticism, therefore giving his story authenticity and objectivity. It looks as if the criticism comes from within the society, thereby confirming his pre-built beliefs. The excerpt above describes a Moroccan who bemoans Arabs' lack of cultural awareness and interest, especially those of wealthy Gulf states. This self-criticism supports preconceptions of primitiveness and decadence that fit Tayler's perspective without his personally making the assertion. Moreover, the remark made about how Arabs spend their money is a direct smear of the Arab image and behavior. Only this time it is articulated by a Moroccan person rather than a Western travel writer. Thus, it appears from an insider's point of view, which gives the portrayal greater validity and credibility. Usually, travel writers compare the West and the rest by stressing Eastern countries' lack of infrastructure, cleanliness, or education. They then juxtapose these with Western achievements. When a Moroccan describes rich Arabs as "donkeys with no culture at all," for instance, it implies that Westerners (Nasranis, a term Moroccans often use to refer to foreigners) are more civilized, enlightened, and cultured. The Nasrani way of life is thus always superior in the eyes of the Moroccan population, which often aligns with Westerners' beliefs. Tahir Shah, author of *Arabian Nights (*2009) and *The Caliph's House* (2007), also did this multiple times in his works. In the following examples, he uses the same

tactic that Tayler relied on which is to highlight Moroccan voices:

"Don't think for a minute people are going to be like Europeans," he said. "They may be wearing the latest Paris fashions, but in their minds, they're Orientals." François paused to tap a fingertip to his temple. "In there," he said, "it's The Arabian Nights" (Shah, 2007, p. 23).

"I learned to work hard in America," he said one afternoon. "Over there people just get on with it. They don't sit about making up excuses, feeling sorry for themselves, or drinking mint tea all day long. If you work hard in the U.S., you can make good money and," he added, "you can get respect" (ibid, p. 109).

By tapping his temple and saying, "In there, it's *The Arabian Nights*," François paints the picture that Moroccans live in a fantastical, pre-modern world. Westerners love reading about the *Arabian Nights* and usually associate that world with Morocco and other Oriental countries. Shah's portrayal of Moroccans as mentally living in *The Arabian Nights* mirrors Tayler's portrayal of Moroccans as primitive and unclean. Both authors believe Morocco to be a place stuck in time and fundamentally different from the progressive West. William Burroughs famously expressed disdain for the Moroccan people and their customs.

"The mistake Burroughs made, which prevented him from getting on with Moroccans and living among them, was that he trampled on their traditions and customs without the slightest concession to civility or courtesy, in contrast to Bowles, who was astute enough to adapt to the local culture. Burroughs, however, considered himself above this kind of humility, as he wrote to Brion Gysin in Paris: 'I have to leave before I open fire in Tangier's ridiculous people with my laser gun'" (Choukri & Shukrī, 2008, p. 172).

Initially, Tayler was reluctant to go to Morocco because he said he would rather go to any Arab country except Morocco. This indicates a preconceived negative attitude. His writings, similar to his demeanor, reveal discomfort, especially with proselytizing, hygiene, faux guides, and primitiveness. William Burroughs' experience in Morocco, particularly in Tangier, reflects a similar disdain. Burroughs disrespected Moroccans because he loathed their habits and beliefs. Burroughs placed himself above the humility required to fit local culture, as the passage above notes. Burroughs's negative perspective of Moroccan culture as well as his incapacity to adapt are confirmed by his hatred and contempt for the people of Tangier. His lack of integration is much more conspicuous than Tayler's since his actions alienate Moroccan people and openly defy local norms. His comment on wanting to "open fire" on the people of Tangier captures his bitterness and incapacity to live in peace with the population. Shah and Tayler's

inclusion of Moroccan voices serves a similar function, albeit more subtly. By including Moroccan voices that criticize their own culture, the authors provide more credibility, authenticity, and insider knowledge which then betters the reader's vicarious experience. On one hand, the authors claim to demystify the East, and on the other hand, their narratives do the exact opposite which is the perpetuation of Orientalist stereotypes. The use of these voices to criticize their own culture serves one purpose: to present the East as a land of inherent difference and backwardness. It is a technique that enables travel authors to interact with the exotic other. This type of writing challenges the preconceptions of the Western reader while fulfilling their need for adventure.

## Comparing Early Colonial Narratives and Modern Travel Writing

It is also noteworthy that Shah makes direct comparisons between the East and the West. He emphasizes, for instance, the lack of timeliness in the Draa Valley specifically and compares how Moroccan people prefer squandering time in Cafés.

"Punctuality and timetables were concepts that hadn't reached the Draa Valley" (Shah, 2009, p. 254).

Shah has various phrases that begin with "In the West, we…" or "In the East, …", in which he conveys the differences between sides of the world that are starkly different. In the 20th and 19th centuries, writers used more vulgar and patronizing language to describe Morocco and its people. A case in point is Alec John Dawson's *Things Seen In Morocco* where he refers to people as savages:

"We of the West, with our wireless telegraphy, and our Science Snippets for the multitude, are apt to think that we have said the last word and thought the last thought in most matters. We are apt to forget, too, that many of our most wonderful and well-trumpeted discoveries were matters of common knowledge many centuries ago to folk whose cuticle is different from ours and whom we regard as savages. I suppose this is a fibre of our wholesome British pride, and of that royal confidence in ourselves which alone makes it possible for us to dominate a very large share of the earth's surface. So far, so good. But the under-rating of the powers of the "savages" and "semi-savages" is little misleading, and involves an occasional shock of surprise for us" (Dawson, 1904, p. 163).

Examining these quotes reveals a clear difference in portrayal between Morocco and the West, notably the UK and America, from clearly negative language to more subdued techniques of stressing perceived distinctions between them. Early 20th-century travel writers employed blatantly harsh language. Dawson's book, *Things Seen In Morocco*, confirms this. One excellent illustration of how

Western superiority was displayed is his calling of Moroccans as "savages". Words like "savages" and "semi-savages" indicate a condescending attitude widespread in colonial literature due to their dehumanizing of people. Dawson claims that Westerners downplay the knowledge and skills of people they consider "savages." Still, this insight does not lessen Dawson's attitude of superiority. Instead, it clarifies the "shock of surprise" Westerners experience when learning sophisticated knowledge or techniques that belong to non-Western countries. Through their sophisticated depictions, writers such as Shah and Tayler nevertheless do the same basic act of exoticizing and denigrating the people they encountered. In the following quotes, Tayler uses a Moroccan person's voice to portray a deeply negative view of Morocco.

"Moroccans are liars and cheats who think only of money. They have no culture and understand nothing. They do ill even to their own family" (Tayler, 2003, p. 121).

"There is racism here," he went on to say, "between Arabs and Berbers. I've lived in Europe, so I know what racism is, but it's not quite as bad here as it is there. I've never been to America, but I think Americans are very conscious and developed. America is a land of reasonable people, and reasonable people aren't racist. Unlike here. Oh, and I'm not from here, from this village, that is—God forbid. I'm just visiting for a wedding. I'm really from the Sous. Does that mean anything to you?" (ibid, p. 159).

This method implies that these critiques are part of the internal dialogue within Moroccan society, rather than external judgments. By showing that these strong words came out of a Moroccan person's mouth, Tayler highlights internalized negative perceptions within the society. In the second quote, a Moroccan discusses racism between Arabs and Berbers in which he contrasts it with experiences in Europe and idealized views of America. The speaker expresses a belief in American exceptionalism regarding racism. By showing how Moroccans criticize their own culture without having to do any criticism himself, Tayler highlights internal divisions and societal issues. This mirrors Tahir Shah's approach, where local Moroccan people articulate perceptions that align with Western stereotypes of the East. For example, in *The Caliph's House,* Kamal mentions that life was better in America because you can "make good money" and you can "get respect" (Shah, 2007, 109). This presents the East as a place of inherent backwardness and moral deficiency. The second quote's idealization of America as a land of reason and lesser racism illustrates a common theme in travel literature: the backward East and the advanced West. Dawson's *Things Seen in Morocco's* juxtaposition shows the idea that Eastern societies require Western enlightenment. Tayler's

usage of local voices places Western civilization as better. According to these books, Moroccans understand their flaws relative to Western norms.

"for the hotels of Tangier, in the midst of the squalor and wretchedness of a degraded and degenerate Mohammedan population, are European in their commodiousness and comfort, and in their luxury almost Parisian" (Campbell, 1897, p. 19).

"but expressed his pleasure at finding me to be of that nationality" (ibid, p. 21)

"And he did it like a Briton" (Dawson, 1904, p. 112).

The writings of Arthur Campbell and Alec John Dawson vividly show colonial viewpoints. Their travelogues present Britishness as a sign of superiority. According to Campbell's account, the "squalor" of the indigenous populace highlights his feeling of cultural supremacy. From this vantage point, Moroccan society is perceived to be in a condition of deterioration while European influences are made to look like civilizing forces. In his "he did it like a Briton," Dawson's pride in British nationality supports the idea of British exceptionalism. This type of story presents the British as essentially above, able to impose refinement and order on what they consider to be wild and primal settings. The writers aimed to be courteous messengers from society. By juxtaposing the "squalor and wretchedness" of Tangier with the "luxury" of European hotels, Campbell says the West lends comfort and civilization to an otherwise deteriorated setting. Similarly, Dawson's "he did it like a Briton" expresses pride in Britishness, therefore implying that British actions are moral and a benchmark of behavior. Tayler's portrayal of "modern" living in the Moroccan Sahara in the following passage exposes a critical, perhaps condescending viewpoint that contrasts his Western ideas of modernism against the reality of life in this area:

"By any measure, however, Assa was modern. Unfortunately, "modern" in the Moroccan Sahara equates with concrete row houses where the plumbing backs up until people prefer to "go" in the streets, where temperatures inside exceed those outside by a factor of ten, and where the screaming of one child echoes from house to house until it kicks off a crying jag among all the tots in the neighborhood. Modern also means soldiers in sandals peddling bicycles, plainclothes policemen, recognizable by their crewcuts and urban dress, and a walled-off palace with a crenelated roof and white-trimmed windows for the royally appointed governor. And modern of course means electricity, much of which goes to illuminating the governor's residence" (Tayler, 2003, p. 203).

Tayler delivers a somewhat dismal depiction of the concrete homes, leaky pipes, and intolerable temperatures that define this "modern" development. His rhetoric points to a disdain for current living circumstances which he depicts as unsuitable. Described in a slightly sinister manner, the presence of military and plainclothes police suggests an aura of control and surveillance that Taylor links with modernity. Emphasizing a lack of development by separating the daily life of the people from the ruling elite, the walled-off castle of the "royally appointed governor" stresses the illumination of the governor's mansion which makes most of the available power used. Thus, this leads to the emphasis on the unequal distribution of modern comforts to the favored class versus the whole population. Taylor seems to be criticizing a specific type of "modernity" that the Moroccan Sahara is being forced upon, one marked by inadequate living circumstances, militarization, and the concentration of power and resources within the hands of a governing elite. From this point of view, the trappings of development seem to be disconnected from the reality that the common people experience, which results in Tayler's relatively negative and critical evaluation of "modern" life in this area. Perhaps reflecting a Western perspective on what "modernity" should look like, his tone and word choice expose a certain degree of cultural remoteness and judgment. Tayler is suggesting, all things considered, that Morocco's modernism is far behind that of any Western nation. He argues that actual "modernity" can only be ascribed to Western nations, hence his picture of the situation in the Moroccan Sahara is justified.

## The Role of Dirt and Hygiene in Exoticizing the 'Other'

During his encounters with Moroccan people in their homes, Jeffrey Tayler shed light numerous times on dirtiness and low hygiene—a recurring trope Western travel writers use in their travelogues for their representations. This was also evident and consistent in John Davidson's *Notes Taken During Travels in Africa,* as exemplified in these passages:

"met many beautiful women, if they were only clean" (Davidson, 1839, p.96).

"on returning, saw some very fine women, but they were beastly dirty" (ibid, p. 95).

"I confess I was pleased with the candour of mine host, who said, when taking- away his carpet, that it was full of fleas, and he supposed I should prefer my own fleas to his. I wish, with all my heart, he had taken his mats also ; we never had so bad a night—almost devoured by vermin". (ibid, p. 63–64).

When Alice Morrison, author of *My 1001 Nights*, arrived at Marrakesh's oldest tannery, she and Najib, one of the people working there, worked on turning animal hides into usable leather. To do that, they were required to engage in a lot of dirty work, including getting in a tank full of gypsum

and poison to remove the hair from the hide. In addition, Morrison worked with pigeon excrement that has ammonia which acts as a softening agent to make the hides more malleable. Though this was repulsive and uncomfortable, Morrison loved it. With a smile on her face, she joyfully tried these 'dirty' experiences despite the inconveniences. Jeffrey Tayler, however, on multiple occasions seemed to have an issue with the filth, squalor and flies he saw. This trope is a technique of 'otherness' that Tayler purposefully overused in his book that paves the way for the denigration of the Moroccan image. The following passages perfectly illustrate this denigration:

"Eventually only the meat remained. The marabout grabbed it and pulled it apart into chunks, which he distributed to all. Grease glazed everyone's hands, and flies were thick on our slippery fingers" (Tayler, 2003, p. 67).

"We entered. The pen was in fact a home. An old black woman sat on the earthen floor tending But a gas burner, making tea, and covering her eyes with a threadbare veil. Her teenage daughter, gaunt, wearing mud-caked rags, lay next to her. The family shared the room, which was open on one side, with goats; there was a stench of scat. Hassan and the woman exchanged greetings, and told each other news about family members. Flies buzzed loudly around the scat" (ibid, p. 125).

Thick flies and hands crusted with grease help to capture the physicality and messiness of the meal. This image generates a situation that accentuates unpleasantness and dirtiness. The phrase "slippery fingers" helps the reader to see less hygienic standards. The dirt and discomfort of the scene are exacerbated by the reference to shared space with animals and the scat. Western travel writers have historically relied heavily on animal images, analogies, sometimes zoological terms, and descriptions to compare Oriental people to nature, particularly by referring to donkeys, camels, dogs, and mules—often presented in appalling circumstances. Edith Wharton, for example, in her book *In Morocco* used animal language to describe the people, turning them into animals meant for observation and investigation. Terms such as "big friendly creatures", "swarm of gnats", "these infants buzzed" and "naked as lizards" (Wharton, 1927, p. 16). The buzzing flies in Tayler's quote, which holds a striking similarity to Wharton's "buzzing infants", intensify the unsanitary conditions. Tayler made four more "fly" references in his book:

"The flies settled on our clothes and hung on tight" (Tayler, 2003, p. 149).

"He set off for the village, the flies resettling over his firwal. The camels turned east, looking homeward, wagging their tails. Hassan stretched out on his foam mattress. I lay down

again on the flat earth, put my hat over my face, and tried to sleep, feeling flies skitter over my forearms" (ibid, p. 147).

"Two hours after that, with the sun gone and the flies asleep, we grilled and ate the meat" (ibid, p. 148).

There is nothing new about Tayler's work in terms of this emphasis on filth. Many travel authors who chronicle their adventures in non-Western nations apply similar representational practices. In Paul Theroux's *Dark Star Safari*, for instance, he describes crowded, filthy markets and run-down villages, therefore stressing the chaotic, messy, and deteriorated conditions in Africa. His story regularly contrasts these sequences with his unease and difficulties with these awkward settings. Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia* highlights the poor living circumstances and the untamed, unclean environments that help to exoticize the rural South of America and set it apart from Western life. Dalrymple's portrayal of India in *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* uncovers depictions of poverty and degradation where he juxtaposes modern dirt and damage with historic beauty, therefore magnifying the exotic quality of the "other." Travel writers exoticize the people they investigate and present them as basically different. Emphasizing the bad features of a country leads to a distinction between the "civilized" West and the "uncivilized" rest. Travel writers from past generations claimed to be more civilized by exposing what is wrong with "others"; today's current travel writers continue to mimic their ancestors. Since the works of Jeffrey Tayler and Paul Theroux were produced in the twenty-first century, it proves that othering native populations in foreign places by showcasing dirt, and poor hygiene, has persisted in contemporary travel writing. Jeffrey Tayler's emphasis on uncleanliness in his representation of Moroccan life is yet another trope that was passed on through generations of travel writers. Here are additional passages from *Glory in a Camel's Eye* that highlight it:

"Inside, Berber boys, kinky-haired and barefoot, snot-nosed and violent, passed around a bottle of Fanta" (ibid, p. 157).

"I had been suffering stomach upsets, possibly owing to my companions' poor hygiene habits" (ibid, p. 182).

The hygiene habits of Tayler's companions are there to prove that they are the cause of his stomach upsets. He is thus sick because of them. It implies that he is cleaner, while they are dirty. He is blaming his sickness on them, showing again that this would not have happened had he not been exposed to these people with poor hygiene habits. One important reason why these depictions exist in travel writing is simply because it is entertaining and interesting to read. Therefore, travel writers contribute to the persistence and profitability of the genre. Tayler emphasizes exotic and unclean aspects of his destinations

because these themes sell well in the Western market. Readers fantasize about adventure and exploration in exotic places and the portrayal of Morocco as a place of adventure matches readers' expectations—where bad, good, and magical things happen. Hence, such portrayals cater to this demand. Ultimately, this makes otherness, showing 'others' as fundamentally different, a lucrative business even in contemporary travel writing. However, travel writers with postcolonial backgrounds must balance their political awareness with a genre that has always depended on producing and profiting from otherness. Though Tayler wants to show a more demystified image, his evocative account of Moroccan life can be seen as maintaining these images. Writers like Tayler seek to document their encounters and highlight diverse cultures. However, the intrinsic tendencies of the genre reinforce already strong preconceptions, hence leading to the othering of people.

"In a postcolonial era, 'otherness' is a profitable business, even if the exotica it throws up might look very different in kind from those of earlier times and places. Postcolonial travel writers, in this context, are necessarily embattled: they must struggle to match their political views with a genre that is in many ways antithetical to them—a genre that manufactures 'otherness' even as it claims to demystify it. And that is reliant even as it estranges on the most familiar of Western myths" (Holland & Huggan, 1998, p.77).

The quotation above implies that travel writing seeks to demystify other cultures. This leads one back to classic Western myths and clichés. By presenting Morocco in this way, Tayler appeals to a deep-seated Western obsession with and contempt of the other. As already discussed, Paul Theroux, Bruce Chatwin, Jeffrey Tayler, and William Dalrymple make references to dirt and the lack of hygiene in their travel narratives. Using this language is consistent with the genre's reliance on exoticism and otherness to engage Western readers. The focus on uncleanliness by all these travel writers illustrates how contemporary travel writing, despite its postcolonial context, continues to carry on the work of previous travel writers by employing and perpetuating familiar tropes and stereotypes simply because they sell well in Western markets. Jeffrey Tayler's *Glory in a Camel's Eye* is a prime example of how postcolonial travel writing may still create otherness and profit from exoticism. This dependence on well-known Western myths and stereotypes guarantees that otherness maintains the money flowing through the travel writing business and Tayler's focus on the unhygienic conditions and exoticism of Moroccan life echoes these old Western narratives about the East being dirty, chaotic, and primitive.

## CONCLUSION

Though using more subtle strategies than their colonial predecessors, Jeffrey Tayler and Tahir Shah show in their works how modern travel literature continues to amplify Orientalist preconceptions. Moroccan voices expressing self-critical opinions generate a patina of authenticity and objectivity. As a result, it covers their underlying presumptions of Western superiority. Whether via direct commentary or the inclusion of local voices, such portrayals of Morocco eventually help to cement the binary difference between a contemporary West and a primitive, backward East. This study has demonstrated, that Orientalism is still a recurring motif in travel writing. Though it has changed with the years, it still affects Western perceptions of the East to maintain cultural hierarchies. The books under discussion in this paper are excellent illustrations of how travel writing shapes the more general debate on cultural imperialism. Jeffrey Tayler's *Glory in a Camel's Eye* corroborates this tendency to depend on Western mythology and exoticism. His novel purposefully highlights the dirt and filth that penetrates Moroccan life. This allows us to conclude that by following this method, Tayler reflects the depictions of past travel authors including Edith Wharton and John Davidson. It is evident from contrasting Tayler's travelogue with that of other era-colonial writers that, despite their postcolonial setting, the genre of travel writing stays bound to its colonial past.

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# A New Approach to the Framework of Children's Literature Translation Criticism: A Case Study of The Wednesday Wars

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*Abstract— Translation criticism is an indispensable part of translation activities, playing a crucial role in improving the quality of translations and advancing the development of the discipline. This paper uses the American children's literature work The Wednesday Wars as a case study to propose a new approach to the framework of children's literature translation criticism. Combining both macro and micro perspectives and guided by the principle of child-centeredness, the study analyzes the translation from four dimensions: accuracy, readability, literary quality, and educational value. It explores effective translation methods and techniques for children's literature and reflects on the standards of a translation criticism framework for this genre.*

*Keywords— Children's literature, framework of children's literature translation criticism, translation methods and techniques*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the translation and introduction of foreign children's literature in China. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, from 2015 to 2020, children's books consistently accounted for the largest share of book imports. With China's rapid economic and social development, "children's literature" has gradually become an important factor in enhancing the country's cultural soft power. The growing demand has fueled the development of children's literature translation, making studying framework of children's literature translation criticism an important topic among scholars. A scientific and effective framework for translation criticism in children's literature is crucial for

promoting its development.

The Wednesday Wars is a representative work by American author Gary Schmidt, which won the Newbery Medal in 2008 and has been praised by many adult readers as their "favorite book". The story humorously depicts the experiences of a seventh-grade student, Holling Hoodhood, particularly focusing on Wednesday afternoons when, as the only Presbyterian in his class, he has to spend time alone with the stern Mrs. Baker. These Wednesday afternoons witness Holling's growth journey, from harboring hostility toward Mrs. Baker to forming a pure friendship and learning the values of courage, sincerity, love, and tolerance. This paper takes the well-known translator Gao Xuelian's translation, The Wednesday Wars, as an example to propose

a new approach to the framework of children's literature translation criticism. This approach combines macro and micro perspectives, with "child-centeredness" as its core, analyzing the translation methods and techniques used from the dimensions of accuracy, readability, literary quality, and educational value, and verifying its practical application with specific examples.

## II. FRAMEWORK OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE TRANSLATION CRITICISM

Israeli scholar Zohar Shavit argues that children's literature occupies a marginal position in the literary polysystem, and Professor Zhang Guolong from the College of Literature at Beijing Normal University also points out that Chinese children's literature is a marginalized "minor discipline", making the translation of Chinese children's literature even more marginalized. Currently, research on children's literature translation in China mainly focuses on the historical study of children's literature translation, modern translators, and discussions on children's literature translation phenomena from various perspectives. However, there is relatively little exploration of the framework of children's literature translation criticism. In recent years, Chinese scholars have achieved varying degrees of success in research perspectives and outcomes in children's literature translation criticism. Xiao Honglin (2006) proposed criteria for children's literature translation criticism, emphasizing the importance of viewing translations from a child's perspective and applying objective and fair standards to supervise and critique children's literature. Building on this foundation, Xu Derong significantly advanced the development of the framework for children's literature translation criticism. Xu (2014) established a framework that includes three parameters: accuracy, readability, and literary quality of children's literature, and proposed child-centered equivalence as the standard for children's literature translation. He also outlined a practical approach that combines comprehensive analysis with textual analysis. With further research into the framework of children's literature translation criticism, Xu Derong (2017) integrated the truth-seeking and pragmatic comprehensive model with the internationally recognized The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning,

Teaching, and Assessment, proposing a quantitative method of graded scoring. This criticism model organically combines the definition of criticism parameters and evaluation standards with quantification, promoting the objectivity and scientific nature of children's literature translation criticism. Zhao Xiyuan and Zhang Yan (2021), on the other hand, explored new approaches to children's literature translation criticism from the perspective of stylistic features, combining domestication and foreignization strategies, but did not focus on the finer details of translation methods. In the West, scholars are more concerned with the issues and challenges of translating children's literature, particularly the cultural specificities in translating classic works such as Alice in Wonderland (Natalia Kaloh Vid, 2024) and Harry Potter (Jan Van Coillie & Jack McMartin, 2020, p.12), but discussions on the framework of children's literature translation criticism remain insufficient.

## III. CHILD-CENTRIC APPROACH

Children's literature translation in China originated in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republican period, flourished during the "May Fourth" Movement, underwent a political shift in the 1930s and 1940s, and reached a peak after the Reform and Opening-up period (Gao Luyi, 2017). The rise of children's literature translation has driven the development of modern Chinese perspectives on childhood. With the wave of the May Fourth New Culture Movement, advanced ideas of "child-centered" philosophy by figures such as Dewey, Montessori, and Piaget were introduced to China, prompting a shift in the perception of children and the recognition of their status. Guo Moruo applied child-centered principles to children's literature and its translation. In the new era, the child-centric philosophy continues to evolve. Unlike adult literature, children's literature is designed to be suitable for the psychological development of children, contributing to their healthy growth. The target audience for children's literature is children, whose psychological level, cognitive capacity, and comprehension abilities differ from those of adults. A high-quality translation of children's literature should not only accurately convey the content using language that children can understand and enjoy, but it must also align with children's psychological needs, stimulating their curiosity

and desire for knowledge. The child-centric theory influences word choice, sentence structure, and the transmission of emotions in translation. Only when children's literature translations are centered on the child, evoking their interest in reading and emotionally resonating with them, can such works be effectively passed down.

## IV.  CASE ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Faithfulness to the Original-Accuracy

Accuracy is the starting point of translation and is a fundamental principle in the translation of children's literature (Xu Derong & Jiang Jianli, 2014). An accurate, fluent, and expressive translation is crucial for readers to comprehend the original author's thoughts and intentions (Cui Bin, 1991). Here, accuracy refers to the precise reproduction of both subjective and objective information from the original text, including spelling, idiomatic expressions, and logical sequence, as well as the storylines, scenes, environments, character portrayals, and psychological aspects depicted in the original, even extending to the subjective feelings the original text elicits in its readers. In children's literature translation, accuracy is not limited to textual information but can also be reflected in various aspects, such as the original text's font, size, layout, color, and other visual elements like illustrations and symbolic imagery, which contribute to the work's style. Eugene A. Nida stated that style is not the icing on the cake, but an integral part of interlingual communication (2001, p. 4). If word choice is inappropriate, comprehension is difficult, or content unsuitable for the target age group appears, it will inevitably harm the style and fluency of the translated text.

### 4.1.1 Whether Mistranslation

The first aspect of assessing "accuracy" is to examine the translation's grasp of the original content, including whether mistranslations, omissions, misinterpretations of words, or incorrect word collocations have occurred. Translators may appropriately add or omit content from the original text, but they must be mindful of maintaining a proper balance. Although such errors are difficult to entirely avoid in lengthy and complex texts, any occurrence of these issues is bound to affect the storyline and character development.

Example 1

Source Text: In the real world, people fall out of love little by little, not all at once.

Target Text: 在这个现实的世界中，人们是逐渐相爱的，而不是突然之间。

Analysis: This sentence highlights the protagonist Holling's skepticism about the romantic development between the main characters in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Considering the subsequent narrative about the previously cold interactions between Holling's parents, it is evident that translating "fall out of love" as "逐渐相爱" is a mistake, where the preposition "out" was misinterpreted as "in", leading to a mismatch between the translation and the original text. This error results in a lack of coherence within the translated sentence, confusing the reader. Accuracy is the foundation of all translation.

### 4.1.2 Supplementary Information

The translator's role is to "eliminate misunderstandings" (Newmark, 2001, p. 211). Given children's limited comprehension abilities, translators must fully consider the target age group and address the difficulties in understanding that arise from cultural differences. In the translation, a total of 26 footnotes were used to provide brief explanations of the original content, along with multiple instances of amplification, endnotes, or paraphrasing to clarify cultural references in the original text, thus helping readers overcome cultural barriers.

Example 2

Source Text: Instead, you pull a string on them and a bad record plays.

Target Text: 而是像一只提线木偶，或者一张坏掉的唱片，总是滔滔不绝的重复着那几句话。

Analysis: Holling interprets Mrs. Baker's gaze as hate. In his urgency to seek comfort from his parents, Holling finds that they do not understand him at all, merely repeating their thoughts without truly listening. If the translation were to stick strictly to a literal translation without additional explanation, readers might find it confusing and unclear. Therefore, the translator, while conveying the original information, adds supplementary explanations to help the target audience grasp the meaning of the text, aiding in their understanding of the characters and the protagonist's psychological state, which in turn facilitates better comprehension of the characters' emotions.

### 4.2 Smooth and Fluent-Readability

Children's literature is either read aloud by parents or read independently by children, requiring translators to consider the psychological and intellectual levels of young readers, using language that children find enjoyable, simple, easy to understand, and pleasant to hear. Readability is a crucial aspect of the framework of children's literature translation criticism. Since the target audience is children, word choice should be both concise and clear to facilitate understanding while also being vivid enough to spark the reader's imagination. In terms of sentence structure, the translation should be natural, concise, easy to understand, and engaging, carefully maintaining the original text's rhythm and recreating its style.

### 4.2.1 Conformity to Children's Expressive Habits

The target audience for children's literature translation is children. Overly foreignized texts can increase reading difficulties, reduce cultural identification, and cause readers to lose interest in reading (Tong Minjun, 2011). Given children's limited vocabulary, obscure words, and awkward sentences that even adults find challenging, it's unrealistic to expect children to engage with the text. Therefore, translating children's literature requires language that aligns with children's thinking patterns.

Example 3

Source Text: Mrs. Sidman was grumbling more than a little by the time we got back.

Target Text: 我们回去时，西蒙夫人嘀嘀咕咕地抱怨个不停。

Analysis: Holling loses all the classroom cooking utensils that he had packed in his backpack while hiking, leaving the teachers unable to cook. Unlike Mrs. Baker, who is close to the students, Mrs. Simon is portrayed in the novel as distant, keeping herself as far away as possible from the "mischievous kids". The translator converted the original word "grumbling" into the verb phrase "嘀嘀咕咕地抱怨" using a form with reduplication and onomatopoeia, words that have a distinctly childlike quality. This vivid choice of language effectively conveys Mrs. Simon's impatience with Holling, creating a strong visual image and clearly defining her character.

### 4.2.2 Smooth Sentences

Ensuring the readability of the translation hinges primarily on maintaining smooth and fluent sentences. Compared to the content itself, children are more attuned to the rhythm

and cadence of a work. Language that is melodious and rhythmically strong not only captures the interest of young readers but also helps to engage their emotions. The translation should be logically sound, with a well-structured and naturally flowing narrative, avoiding translationese and overly Europeanized language.

Example 4

Source Text: But if anyone had ever walked in and plinked a key or sniffed the artificial tropical flowers or straightened a tie in the gleaming mirror, they sure would have been impressed at the perfect life of an architect from Hoodhood and Associates.

Target Text: 若是有人进来，敲一敲琴键，闻一闻加热带花，或者站在亮堂堂的镜子前整一整领带，就会陶醉于这一切由胡佛设计协会的设计师倾力打造的完美生活。

Analysis: The original sentence was a conditional adverbial clause, but the translation broke it down into several shorter sentences and employed verb reduplication to translate the predicates as "敲一敲", "闻一闻", and "整一整". These brief verbs carry a light and casual tone, highlighting the lively nature of the young protagonist, Holling, and enhancing the overall enjoyment of reading.

### 4.3 Full of Interest-Literary Quality

Literary quality is a crucial parameter in the framework of children's literature translation criticism. Some translators believe that the simple language structure of children's literature requires only a direct translation of content. However, this perspective is biased. Excellent children's literature is rich in meaning, with a distinct style and emotional depth. Translators must not only grasp the essence of children's literature but also pay attention to its "literary" characteristics. Rhetoric is an effective means of creating childlike fun (Xu Derong, 2004). In literary translation, language serves as the vehicle for emotion, and the handling of rhetoric tests the translator's language comprehension and translation skills. Appropriately translating rhetorical devices such as puns, personification, and exaggeration, which help to emphasize and enhance characters and plots, is a key marker of literary quality.

Example 5

Source Text: We sat beside each other by the fire, silent, watching the jewels change and glow first into white diamonds, then into sapphires, then into rubies.

Target Text: 我们彼此依偎着，围着火堆，安静地，看着

宝石的光芒变幻莫测，一会儿是亮闪闪的钻石，一会儿是蓝宝石，一会儿又变成了红宝石。

Analysis: This passage describes a scene where the students are camping in the wilderness. In just a few words, the author employs two rhetorical devices: metaphor and parallelism. From the translation, it is evident that the translator adhered to the structure of the original sentence, preserving the rhetorical techniques used in the source text. The firelight is metaphorically compared to flickering gems, reflecting the rich imagination and creativity of children. The translator used a literal translation method to link two seemingly unrelated elements. Additionally, parallelism is employed to describe the changing colors of the firelight using different colored gems, maintaining a logical flow and strong rhythm. Although these rhetorical devices may seem simple, they add interest to the translation and create a vivid image.

## 4.4 Edutainment-Educational Value

Children's literature is a golden key that unlocks children's minds (Fan Jing, 2019). It is not only a form of entertainment for children but also carries significant educational value. The educational function is one of the essential characteristics of children's literature. Through children's literature, children can develop a correct worldview, outlook on life, and value system while appreciating and creating beauty. Therefore, the educational value of children's literature translations must also be considered. A well-translated piece of children's literature can help children experience proper moral concepts and aesthetic qualities while expanding their knowledge base.

### 4.4.1 Knowledge Education

Children are at the peak of their learning capacity. Although their literacy skills and knowledge are limited, books can greatly enrich their knowledge and broaden their horizons. The knowledge conveyed through children's literature can be categorized into two types. The first is language-related knowledge, such as new words or well-crafted sentences. The second type involves general knowledge about life or specific fields, taught through the characters and situations in children's books.

Example 6

Source Text: And so save me from my undeserved humiliation.

Target Text: 这样才能救我于水深火热之中。

Analysis: As a middle school boy playing the role of a fairy on stage, Holling hoped that no one he knew would watch the performance. However, he later learned that Mrs. Baker was collecting students' ticket stubs for extra credit, which only deepened his embarrassment. He wished for a disaster or an atomic bomb to erase any news of the performance, hoping to salvage his dignity. The translator did not opt for a literal translation but instead employed the common Chinese four-character idiom "水深火热", thereby teaching readers its usage while making the sentence smoother and more natural.

### 4.4.2 Moral Education

Children are at a critical stage of value formation. During the process of joyful reading, they are subtly influenced by correct moral values, integrating education with entertainment, which contributes to the development of a well-rounded character.

Example 7

Source Text: It's not always smiles. Sometimes the real world is like Hamlet. A little scared. Unsure. A little angry. Wishing that you could fix something that you can't fix. Hoping that maybe the something would fix itself, but thinking that hoping that way is stupid.

Target Text: 有时，现实世界就像哈姆雷特一样，并不总有欢笑，而是有一些惶恐、不确定，还有一些愤怒。有时你希望某个根本不可能实现的愿望能变成现实，甚至像天上掉馅饼那样能坐享其成，可这样的想法本身就是愚蠢的。

Analysis: The translator has rendered the term "fix" into various expressions such as "实现愿望", "变成现实", "天上掉馅饼" and "坐享其成". This multiplicity of translations conveys to readers that "way is stupid", teaching them that life is unpredictable and that one must strive diligently and not easily give up to create "miracles" like Captain Baker, even in perilous situations.

## V.    SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

Through in-depth analysis and discussion of Gao Xuelian's translation of The Wednesday Wars, this study constructs a child-centered framework for the children's literature translation criticism, integrating both macro and micro perspectives. This framework, grounded in the dimensions of accuracy, readability, literariness, and educational value, not only provides concrete evaluation standards and

guidance for the practice of translating children's literature but also reveals a series of strategies and techniques for effective translation. Accuracy forms the foundation of the criticism framework, using methods like amplification and annotation can effectively bridge readers' comprehension gaps. Readability is paramount, employing techniques like transposition and redundancy ensures that the translation aligns with children's reading habits. Literariness serves as an essential criterion, utilizing literal translation to retain the original rhetorical devices enhances the translation's interest and preserves the stylistic features of the original text. Educational value is an indispensable component, using four-character idioms and polysemous words allows young readers to learn knowledge subtly. This study demonstrates that adhering to this critique framework can significantly improve translation quality, better conveying the spirit and values of the original work, while also promoting the development of the discipline of children's literature translation.

Admittedly, the analysis and discussion in this study still carry a degree of subjectivity, and the framework of children's literature translation criticism requires further refinement and scientific research to advance the development of children's literature translation.

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# Women Safety Matters: Addressing the Complexities and Violence Against Women

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*Abstract*— *Violence against women is a pervasive global issue, affecting millions of lives. This paper examines the multifaceted nature of women's safety, exploring the types of violence, causes, effects, and consequences. Through a critical analysis of existing literature and case studies, this research highlights the sociocultural, economic, and political factors contributing to women's vulnerability. It also showcases innovative solutions, strategies, and initiatives aimed at preventing violence and promoting women's safety. By emphasizing the importance of education, community engagement, and policy reforms, this paper advocates for a comprehensive approach to address the complexities of violence against women. Ultimately, it calls for collective action to ensure women's safety, equality, and empowerment.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes increasingly urban, gender-based violence in urban public spaces has become a growing phenomenon. With increasing population density, a diverse mix of people in cities, growing inequalities and lack of opportunities for a large proportion of disaffected youth, urban crime in general is on the rise. Violent Crimes against women are also increasing as part of this process.[1] Women's safety refers to the comprehensive and multidimensional protection of women and girls from various forms of harm, violence, and discrimination, encompassing:

1. Physical safety: Protection from physical harm, injury, or violence, including domestic abuse, sexual assault, and harassment.
2. Emotional safety: Freedom from emotional distress, psychological manipulation, and mental health impacts resulting from violence, abuse, or discrimination.
3. Psychological safety: Protection from mental health impacts, trauma, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) arising from violence, abuse, or discrimination.

4. Sexual safety: Protection from sexual harassment, assault, exploitation, and abuse, including online and offline forms.
5. Economic safety: Protection from economic exploitation, financial abuse, and discrimination, ensuring access to resources, employment, and financial independence.
6. Social safety: Protection from social exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, or other factors.
7. Digital safety: Protection from online harassment, cyberbullying, and digital exploitation.
8. Environmental safety: Protection from environmental hazards, natural disasters, and climate change impacts.
9. Institutional safety: Protection from systemic and institutional violence, discrimination, and abuse within public and private institutions.
10. Cultural safety: Protection from cultural exploitation, appropriation, and erasure, ensuring respect for diverse cultural identities and practices.

Current state of women's safety and the global issues regarding it could be divided into multiple sections:

| Violence Against Women: |
| --- |
| - 1 in 3 women experience physical or sexual violence worldwide (WHO, 2020) |
| - 38% of murders of women are committed by intimate partners (UNODC, 2018) |
| - 71% of human trafficking victims are women and girls (ILO, 2017) |
| **Gender-Based Violence:** |
| - 243 million women and girls experience sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner in the past year (WHO, 2020) |
| - 82% of women experience online harassment (Pew Research Centre, 2020) |
| **Femicide:** |
| -50,000+ women killed by intimate partners or family members annually (UNODC, 2018) |
| **Sexual Harassment:** |
| -60% of women experience sexual harassment in public spaces (UN Women, 2019) |
| **Reproductive Rights:** |
| - 214 million women lack access to modern contraception (WHO, 2020) |
| - 25 million unsafe abortions occur annually (WHO, 2020) |
| **Economic Inequality:** |
| - Women earn 23% less than men globally (ILO, 2020) |
| - 70% of women work in informal or precarious jobs (ILO, 2020) |
| **Education and Healthcare:** |
| - 132 million girls out of school worldwide (UNESCO, 2020) |
| - 1 in 5 women lack access to healthcare (WHO, 2020) |
| 3 |
| **Conflict and Humanitarian Crises:** |
| - Women and girls disproportionately affected by conflict, displacement, and humanitarian crises |
| - 70% of refugees are women and children (UNHCR, 2020) |
| **Legal Protections:** |
| - 46 countries lack laws protecting women from domestic violence (UN Women, 2020) |
| - 18 countries allow marital rape (UN Women, 2020) |

Women's safety demands a transformative approach: intersectional empowerment, community-led initiatives, and policy reforms tackling root causes, not just symptoms.

Research and interventions on security in cities has also highlighted the fact that women feel more unsafe and insecure than men. It has been widely recognised that this sense of insecurity affects women's everyday life, restricting their personal freedom and access to public and private spaces in the city associated with employment, health, education, and political and recreational facilities. While all women might face safety and insecurity concerns, women in low-income communities in developing countries are considered to face. (Moser 2012)

## II.    TYPES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN GLOBALLY

| 1. **Physical Violence:** |
| --- |
| - Domestic abuse (e.g., intimate partner violence) |
| - Sexual assault (e.g., rape, molestation) |
| - Acid attacks (e.g., Bangladesh, India) |
| - Female genital mutilation (FGM) (e.g., Africa, Middle East) |
| Indian example: The Nirbhaya case (2012) – a brutal gang rape in Delhi that sparked widespread protests. |
| International example: The #MeToo movement (2017) – a global movement against sexual harassment and assault, starting in the United States. |
| 2. **Emotional/Psychological Violence:** |
| - Verbal abuse (e.g., name-calling, insults) |
| - Emotional blackmail |
| Indian example: The case of Hadiya, a Kerala woman who faced emotional abuse and forced conversion to Islam. |
| International example: The case of Britney Spears, an American singer who faced emotional abuse and conservatorship. |
| 3. **Sexual Violence:** |
| -Rape (e.g., stranger rape, acquaintance rape) |
| - Sexual harassment (e.g., workplace, public) |
| - Gaslighting |
| - Stalking (e.g., online, offline) |
| - Online sexual exploitation (e.g., revenge porn, sextortion |
| Indian example: The #MeToo movement in India (2018) highlighted sexual harassment cases in Bollywood, media, and other industries. |

International example: The Harvey Weinstein scandal (2017) – a series of sexual assault allegations against the American film producer.

4. **Economic Violence:**

- Financial abuse (e.g., controlling access to money)

- Property rights denial

- Economic exploitation (e.g., forced labour)

Indian example: The case of Lakshmi Agarwal, an acid attack survivor who faced economic abuse by her husband.

International example: The case of forced labour in Qatar (2020) – migrant workers faced economic exploitation and abuse.

5. **Digital Violence:**

- Online harassment (e.g., trolling, cyberbullying)

- Revenge porn

- Sextortion

- Online stalking

Indian example: The case of Dhanya Rajendran, a journalist who faced online harassment and trolling.

International example: The case of Gamergate (2014) – a controversy surrounding online harassment of women in the gaming industry.

6. **Institutional Violence:**

- Systemic violence (e.g., police brutality, judicial bias)

- Healthcare violence (e.g., forced sterilization)

- Education violence (e.g., discrimination, harassment)

Indian example: The case of Rohith Vemula, a Dalit student who faced institutional violence and discrimination at Hyderabad University.

International example: The case of police brutality against African Americans in the United States (e.g., George Floyd, 2020).

7. **Cultural Violence:**

- Honor killings (e.g., Pakistan, India)

- Dowry-related violence (e.g., India)

- Forced marriages

- Female infanticide

Indian example: The case of Qandeel Baloch, a Pakistani woman who faced honor killing by her brother.

International example: The case of forced marriages in Afghanistan (2020) – women faced cultural violence and oppression.

8. **Medical Violence:**

- Forced sterilization

- Denial of medical care

- Medical experimentation without consent

Indian example: The RG medical case (2024) - a resident doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata was raped and murdered, highlighting the issue of medical violence against women.

International example: The case of forced sterilization of indigenous women in Canada (2019) - a report revealed widespread medical violence and abuse.

### III. CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS IN WOMEN SAFETY

Violence against women is a complex, pervasive issue affecting millions worldwide. Despite efforts to address it, women and girls continue to face significant risks. Understanding the individual, relationship, community, and societal factors that contribute to this issue is crucial to developing effective prevention, intervention, and support strategies, and creating a safer, more equitable world.

**Individual Factors**

1. Gender: Being a woman or girl increases the risk of violence and abuse.

2. Age: Younger women and girls are more vulnerable to violence and abuse.

3. Socioeconomic status: Women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to experience violence and abuse.

4. Education: Women with lower levels of education are more vulnerable to violence and abuse.

5. Disability: Women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence and abuse.

**Relationship Factors:**

1. Intimate partner violence: Women in abusive relationships are at higher risk of violence and abuse.

2. Family dynamics: Women from dysfunctional families or those with a history of violence are more vulnerable to violence and abuse.

3. Social isolation: Women who are socially isolated or have limited social support networks are more vulnerable to violence and abuse.

**Community Factors:**

1. Cultural and social norms: Communities with patriarchal norms and attitudes that condone violence against women increase the risk of violence and abuse.

2. Lack of community resources: Communities with limited resources, such as law enforcement, healthcare, and social services, can increase the risk of violence and abuse.

3. High crime rates: Communities with high crime rates increase the risk of violence and abuse.

**Societal Factors:**

1. Patriarchal society: Societies with deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and norms increase the risk of violence and abuse against women.

2. Gender inequality: Societies with significant gender inequality increase the risk of violence and abuse against women.

3. Lack of policies and laws: Societies without adequate policies and laws to protect women from violence and abuse increase the risk of violence and abuse.

4. Media representation: Societies with media representation that objectifies or degrades women increase the risk of violence and abuse.

**Other risk factors include:**

1. Substance abuse

2. Mental health issues

3. Previous experiences of violence or abuse

4. Being a refugee or migrant

5. Being LGBTQ+

## IV.    EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Global women's issues have far-reaching, devastating consequences, affecting every aspect of women's lives, perpetuating poverty, poor health, social isolation, and economic dependence. These issues hinder economic growth, entrench harmful norms, and undermine human rights. Urgent collective action is needed to address these problems and create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. Some of the consequences include:

**1.Physical and Mental Impacts**

Physical and emotional harm: Violence, abuse, and exploitation can lead to physical injuries, mental health issues, and emotional trauma.

**2.Social and Economic Impacts.**

Social isolation: Women who experience violence or discrimination may become socially isolated, leading to reduced social support networks.

Poor health outcomes: Limited access to healthcare, inadequate reproductive health services, and exposure to violence can lead to poor health outcomes.

Limited access to education and employment: Discrimination and bias can restrict women's access to education and job opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty.

Reduced economic growth: Gender-based discrimination and violence can hinder economic growth, as women's contributions are undervalued or marginalized.

Political disenfranchisement: Women's exclusion from political decision-making processes can perpetuate gender-based discriminations.

**3.Long Term Consequences**

Intergenerational trauma: Trauma experienced by women can be passed down to future generations, perpetuating cycles of violence.

Human rights violations: Women's rights violations can undermine human rights and fundamental freedoms.

## V.    SOLUTION AND STRATEGIES FOR SAFETY PURPOSES

Addressing women's and girls' issues requires a collaborative, multifaceted approach that tackles root causes, not just symptoms. By combining education, economic empowerment, policy reform, community mobilization, and technology, we can create a comprehensive framework for progress that prioritizes women's voices, promotes gender equality, and fosters inclusivity. Together, we can unlock women's and girls' potential, driving transformative impact and shaping a brighter future.

Some specific strategies for promoting women's safety include the following (extracted from *Mehrotra 2010, Women in Cities International 2010, and UN-Habitat 2008*):

• Develop women's networks and partnerships: Women's networks and partnerships include collectives, NGOs, forums, and virtual communities that operate at different (international, national, local, community) levels. They work on a range of issues related to women's safety such as education, employment, health, and gender-based violence. They focus on a variety of issues such as knowledge production and exchange, community mobilisation and advocacy, public education, mediation, and capacity-building. Prominent networks and partnerships on women's safety include women in Cities International, Red Mujeres y Habitat, the Huairaou Commission, and jagori.

• Guarantee women's right to the city: Approaches aim to strengthen women's 'right to the city', thereby empowering them. This includes helping them to improve their levels of civic participation that provide them with a greater feeling

of security and safety. A rights-based approach to women's safety highlights the fact that women should have the right to access land and housing, be protected from homelessness and forced eviction, have the right to freely and safely move within cities, and receive access to basic services such as water, sanitation, and hygiene. In Asia, for instance, the women's network Jagori is an organisation with a rights-based approach that focuses on water and service provision for women. In order to ensure the right to free and safe movement in cities, many cities have launched women-only buses and taxi services.

• Women's safety audits: Women's safety audits are one of the major methods of promoting women's safety. They rely on participatory tools, similar to participatory rural appraisals, in which a group of women walk through a physical environment, evaluating how safe it feels to them and identifying solutions of increasing safety. This approach is used world-wide by women's groups to improve women's safety.

• Gender-responsive budgeting: Similar to participatory budgeting, gender-responsive budgeting is used by municipalities in many countries to sensitise elected officials about the specific needs of women. Involving women in municipal budgeting processes increases their capacity to participate in public decision-making processes.

•Economic development for women: Many policy and programmatic initiatives aim to generate economic opportunities for women, such as providing them with training to increase their chances of employability, ensuring that jobs match women's specific needs, and recognising that women should receive economic support in the informal sector.

## VI.     CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES

Real change for women and girls requires effective solutions. This collection of global case studies showcases successful initiatives, offering lessons and inspiration for advancing gender equality through collective action and innovation.

International:

1. Rwanda's Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Program: A comprehensive program that has reduced GBV cases by 50% through community mobilization, education, and legal support.
2. The Global Fund for Women: A organization that provides grants and support to women-led organizations, advancing women's rights and gender equality worldwide.
3. UN Women's HeForShe Campaign: A global movement engaging men and boys in promoting

gender equality and ending violence against women.

Indian:

1. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for Women: A government initiative empowering rural women through microfinance, education, and entrepreneurship opportunities.
2. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP): A government program addressing declining child sex ratio and promoting girls' education.
3. One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme: A government initiative providing integrated support services for women survivors of violence.
4. Kudumbashree: A Kerala-based program empowering women through microfinance, entrepreneurship, and community leadership.
5. Apnalaya: An NGO working in Mumbai slums, providing education, healthcare, and livelihood support to women and children.
6. SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association): A Gujarat-based organization promoting women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship and microfinance.

These case studies demonstrate effective solutions and strategies addressing various aspects of women's empowerment and gender equality.

## VII.     CONCLUSION

In conclusion, violence against women and global women's issues are complex and interconnected problems that require a multifaceted approach to solve. Education, economic empowerment, policy reform, community mobilization, and technological innovation are crucial strategies for addressing these issues. Successful initiatives and programs, such as those in Rwanda, India, and globally, demonstrate the power of collective action and collaborative effort in advancing gender equality and empowering women. By learning from these examples and working together, we can create a more just and equitable world where women and girls can thrive, free from violence and discrimination. Ultimately, a sustainable future depends on the full participation and empowerment of women, and it is our collective responsibility to make this vision a reality.

To further fight the problems and provide women's safety day and night, a multi-faceted approach is necessary. This includes educating and raising awareness about gender equality and women's rights, supporting women-led initiatives, and encouraging male allies to become active advocates. Strengthening laws and policies, improving

public spaces with adequate lighting and surveillance, and increasing women's representation in decision-making roles are also crucial. Additionally, providing accessible resources like helplines and shelters, fostering a culture of respect, and leveraging technology like safety apps can enhance women's safety. Ultimately, a sustained and collective effort from individuals, communities, and societies is required to create a safe and equitable environment for women.

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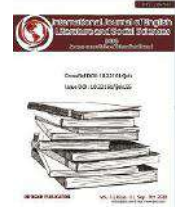
# A Contrastive Study of Qi Ahong's and Xia Yang's Chinese Versions of *And Then There Were None*

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*Abstract*— *In this thesis, two Chinese versions of And Then There Were None- a representative of detective novels, are selected for research. It aims to contrast and analyse Qi Ahong's and Xia Yang's Chinese versions from the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation, and study their translation methods and skills of detective novel. This thesis uses contrastive analysis method and bibliographic method to analyse these two versions from the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation. The results indicate that Xia Yang's version tends to communicative translation, while Qi Ahong's version tends to semantic translation too much, and sometimes even ignoring communicative function. However, in the practice of detective novel translation, both of these two translation methods should be utilized, and translators should choose the most suitable translation method according to different contexts. This paper provides a new perspective for the contrastive analysis of the Chinese versions of And Then There Were None, and puts forward a reference for the translation of detective novels. Moreover, the proposed translation method combining semantic translation and communicative translation helps to promote the improvement of Chinese versions of detective novels and contributes to boost the communication and transmission of world culture.*

*Keywords*— *And Then There Were None, Communicative Translation, Contrastive Study, Semantic Translation*

## I.    INTRODUCTION

This chapter is to put forward the relevant background and the structure of this thesis, aiming to present the necessity and significance of this research and the limitations of this thesis. It includes two parts: background, objectives and scope of the research.

Detective novel was not really popular in China before the Qing Dynasty, while it was highly developed in foreign countries, especially in many Western countries. At present, with the cultural transmission among countries, the popularity of detective novels in China has been increasing continuously. As the market of detective novels in China has become larger, readers have higher requirements for the translation quality of detective novels.

Translated versions of foreign detective novels in China are not as successful as the translated versions of other literary works. Both the numbers of translated versions and its researches are relatively few. Domestic researches on the translated versions of detective novels mostly analyse one translated version from a certain translation theory, such as reception aesthetics theory and functional equivalence theory. The number of contrastive study of detective novels on different versions are less.

*And Then There Were None* is a famous work by Agatha Christie ― a famous female detective novelist. It is a representative book among detective novels. Most of the studies on the translated versions of this book at home and abroad partly select only one version and analyzed it from one specific translation perspective. In order to better study the research status of this novel in China, this thesis

selects two popular Chinese versions of this book － Xia Yang's (2016) and Qi Ahong's (2008). And in this thesis, semantic translation and communicative translation are chosen as the reference standard. The primary task in the process of detective novel translation must be to make readers understand the ins and outs of the story. Semantic translation and communicative translation are of great guiding significance to the faithfulness and expressiveness of translation.

*And Then There Were None* has a profound influence on the development of detective novels. Up to now, it has been adapted into movies and dramas for many times. It is deeply loved by a large number of people. At present, there are seven Chinese versions of this book. The purpose of this study is to contrast and analyse the differences between the two versions from the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation. Semantic translation and communicative translation theory are widely used in the field of translation. This pair of translation theory plays an important theoretical guiding role in cross-cultural translation. Based on the two translation theories, this thesis contrasts the two versions and discusses the different translation skills used by the two translators. This thesis concludes that Xia Yang's version is inclined to communicative translation, while Qi Ahong's version is excessively inclined to semantic translation. However, in the practice of translation of detective novel, both of these two translation methods should be used, and translators should choose the most suitable translation method according to different contexts. However, because this study only chooses the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation, the scope of this contrastive study is limited. That makes the results inadequately to evaluate the English-Chinese translation quality of these two versions. This thesis intends to provide a translation reference for the research of detective novel's versions and promote the communication and dissemination of world culture.

## II.    LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Researches on Newmark's Translation Theory

Peter Newmark, a renowned translation theorist, had published many works on translation theory, such as *A Textbook of Translation* (1988), *About Translation* (2006) and so on. He had proposed a lot of translation theories. And his most outstanding translation theories are semantic translation and communicative translation. The following is the research status of Newmark's translation theory at home and abroad.

2.1.1  Researches on Newmark's Translation Theory Abroad

Here are some studies on Newmark's translation theory abroad. For example, Ailan DING held that Newmark's communicative translation theory requests the effect of the translated version on the target readers is equal to the effect of original text on the original readers as much as possible (Ailan DING, 2016:32). And the author putted forward three criteria for film translation. They are target-language-oriented, aesthetic, being consistent with the content of the film. In addition, there are also many researches on other aspects of Newmark's theory, such as medical and literary researches

2.1.2  Researches on Newmark's Translation Theory in China

There are numerous studies on Newmark's translation theory in China. For instance, Xu Jing putted forward that semantic translation and communicative translation had both similarities and differences.(Xu Jing, 2019:246) The best translation method should be a dialectical combination of semantic translation and communicative translation. Studying semantic translation and communicative translation can provide important reference for improving translation quality. Zhao Wei briefly introduced the meaning of translation and the importance of culture in translation. The thesis skillfully uses communication and semantic translation to solve such problems.(Zhao Wei, 2019:92) Therefore, translators can resonate with each other and pay more attention to culture in the process of translation.

2.2 Previous Studies on *And Then There Were None*

As to the studies of the Chinese translated versions of *And Then There Were None*, Tu Mengjue and Deng Tianwen took the Chinese versions of Wang Lili and Liu Wanyong as the research objects.(Tu Mengjue, Deng Tianwen, 2016:26) Based on the equivalence theory and combined with the writing characteristics of detective novels, they studied the expressive effect of these two versions from the aspects of proper nouns, scenery and character description, and putted forward three principles of detective novels. Cheng Yuhan and Feng Libo studied the translation of dialogue between the Chinese versions of Wang Lili, Liu Wanyong and Xia Yang from the perspective of reception aesthetics.(Cheng Yuhan, Feng Libo, 2018:112) However, most of the studies on the Chinese versions are focused on one Chinese version from different perspectives. There is a lack of contrastive study between its different Chinese versions, and there are fewer contrastive studies of different Chinese versions of *And Then There Were None* from the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation.

## 2.3. Studies on the Two Versions

### 2.3.1. Researches on Qi Ahong's Version

Ruan Xinbei made a detailed study on Qi Ahong's version of *And Then There Were None*. She analyzed the embodiment of translator's subjectivity in Qi Ahong's version. (Ruan Xinbei, 2017:72) This thesis holds that Qi's translation strategy is mainly alienation, and the translator's subjectivity is less reflected. Yang Ying believed that the reconstruction of gestalt images needs to be carried out on both aesthetic and linguistic aspects.(Yang Ying, 2018) She summarized some classic elements of detective novels as aesthetic images and analyzed in detail how to reconstruct aesthetic images in translation. On the linguistic level, the thesis applies the Gestalt Four Principles to study Qi Ahong's version, and analyzes the translation effects of translation methods under the guidance of Gestalt Principles with a large number of translation examples.

### 2.3.2. Researches on Xia Yang's Version

At present, there are few studies on Xia Yang's version at home and abroad. Only one typical study is listed here. Cheng Yuhan and Feng Libo studied the dialogue translation of And Then There Were None from the perspective of reception aesthetics, and studied the dialogue translation of characters in Xia Yang's version of this book from the perspective of translation theory of reception aesthetics.(Cheng Juehan, Feng Libo, 2018:112) They held that Xia Yang's version can better meet reader's expectation, but it still has some inadequacies.

## 2.4. Research Questions

At present, there are few studies on the translation of *And Then There Were None*. Most of the studies on the translation of this book in China are studied from different translation perspectives, while the contrastive studies on different versions are even less. From the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation, this thesis makes a contrastive analysis of Qi Ahong's and Xia Yang's versions of And Then There Were None, and provides guidance of Newmark's translation theory for the detective novel translation. Studying this detective novel from a brand-new perspective, this thesis provides innovative ideas for the translation of detective novels and promotes cultural exchanges among countries. Based on the present background, the researches of detective novels' versions are so significant. Through contrastive studies of foreign detective novel's versions, the existing problems of detective novel translation can be relatively more clear and easy to find. As for the translation theories this thesis chosen, a new perspective of detective novels' research will come forth.

## 2.5. Data and Method of the Research

The two versions selected in this thesis are Qi Ahong's version (2008) and Xia Yang's version (2016). Guided by Newmark's semantic translation theory and communicative translation theory, this thesis makes a detail contrastive study of the two versions of *And Then There Were None*. This paper chooses the aspects of culture, grammar and translation skills to analyse the two versions. By using the method of literature research, this thesis collects and sorts out relevant literature materials, analyses and sums up the core content of them. By the method of induction, this thesis summarizes the different applications of the two versions in using semantic translation and communicative translation, and offers an appropriate use of these two translation theories.

## III. NEWMARK'S SEMANTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION

Peter Newmark did not agree entirely with the translation principle of functional equivalence. He thought that it was so difficult to achieve functional equivalence. Therefore, he putted forward a pair of translation concepts — semantic translation and communicative translation, and advocated that different translation methods should be chosen according to different text types.

On the basis of Newmark's book — *A Textbook of Translation*, the definitions of semantic translation and communicative translation are as follows. Semantic translation bears similarities on faithful translation. Both of them are loyal to the original text. But semantic translation is prone to the meaning. Sometimes it will give way to the essential meaning rather than the form. Communicative translation attempts to be accepted and understood by the target language readers. It has a tendency to present the exact contextual meaning of the original text.(Newmark, 1988:46)

## 3.1. Contrast Between Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation

In fact, semantic translation and communicative translation are the applications of communication and semantics in translation field. They are two different aspects of language application. The differences between semantic translation and communicative translation lie in that semantic translation pays more attention to preserving the form of the original text and fitting the language structure and language features of the original text as much as possible. It aims at translating while preserving the form of the original text. However, communicative translation is not confined to the form of the original text. It pays more attention to whether it can convey the meaning of the

original text to the greatest extent and the transmission of information. As these two words literally mean, semantic translation is inclined to the semantic features such as forms and structures of the original texts while communicative translation focuses on the communicative efficacy. Semantic translation can enable translators to restore the semantic structure of the original text through translation, and maintain the beauty of word choice and cultural charm of the original text. While Communicative translation mainly reflects the liberation of the original text, gives full play to the advantages of the translation and presents the original text at a higher level. According to the language culture of the target text, translators can adjust the word order structure and change some words of the original text to the maximum extent acceptable to the readers.

## 3.2. Relation Between Semantic and Communicative Translation

Although semantic translation and communicative translation focus on different language aspects, they are all aim at presenting higher quality translations, and they are not completely contradict. In the process of translation, it is not necessary to choose a specific translation method to complete the whole translation, but to judge when semantic translation method tending to be more suitable and when communicative translation method tending to be that. Competent translation can be obtained by the comprehensive application of these two translation methods.

## 3.3. Analysis of the Applicability and Guidance of the Two Translation Theories

Semantic translation and communicative translation are suitable for almost all texts. *And Then There Were None* is a detective novel. According to Newmark's proposals for adopting different translation methods for different types of texts, it is best to use communicative translation method to translate detective novels. From the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation, this thesis makes a thorough and comprehensive contrastive analysis of the two versions of *And Then There Were None*. In this contrastive study, the differences between the two versions are analyzed with communicative translation as the guiding theory and semantic translation as a supplement.

## IV. THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TWO CHINESE VERSIONS

4.1. Contrastive Analysis of the Two Versions in Syntax Level

(1) In the corner of a first-class smoking carriage, Mr Justice Wargrave, lately retired from the bench, puffed at a cigar and run an interested eye through the political news in *The New Times*. (Agatha Christie, 1939: 1)

A. 在头等吸烟车厢的一个角上，新近退休的法官沃尔格雷夫先生正坐着抽雪茄，并饶有兴致地阅读《泰晤士报》上的政治新闻。（Qi Ahong, 2008：1）

B. 瓦格雷夫法官先生刚刚退休。此刻他正坐在一等车厢的吸烟室角落里，一边吸雪茄，一边饶有兴致的读《泰晤士报》上的政治新闻。（Xia Yang, 2016：1）

This sentence is the first sentence in the first chapter of this book. It is a long complex sentence containing places, character and the character's actions. Contrasting the two versions, Qi followed the principle of semantic translation and translated this sentence according to the original word order. In Xia's, however, the background of the character in the original sentence is brought to the beginning of the sentence to form a single sentence, and then the rest of the information is merged into one sentence and placed behind it. By contrast, Qi's translation is full of too much information in one sentence, which leads to scattered information and too long sentences. However, Xia's version puts the background information in front of each other and forms sentences separately, so that the sentences can be read fluently and the serial actions of the character are smoother. As this sentence is the first sentence at the beginning, putting the character in front of each other and forming the sentences alone will deepen readers' impression, better introduce story character and highlight key points.

(2) On the way across he had chatted to the boatman — a local man. (Agatha Christie, 1939: 28)

A. 在乘船过来的时候，他和船工——是个本地人——聊了聊。（Qi Ahong, 2008：30）

B. 坐船上岛之前，他和一个本地船夫聊了一阵。（Xia Yang, 2016：32）

The original text of this sentence uses dashes to add some explanation, and Qi's version also retains these dashes. Xia's version does not use dashes, but divides the content of this sentence into two short sentences by a comma. In the translation of this sentence, Qi still kept the sentence structure of the original text as much as possible according to the semantic translation method. But the Chinese structure is different from the English structure, in order to keep the dashes, she could only put the content after the dash in the middle of the sentence and used two dashes to take the content after the dash in the original text, that is, "是个本地人", as a parenthesis. In the whole version, Qi translated this kind of sentence with reserved

dashes most of the time. However, this form of parenthesis is rarely used in Chinese. By contrast, Xia Yang used the method of communicative translation, did not deliberately retain the original sentence structure, but putted the content after the dash before the noun as an attribute, which made the sentence more fluent.

(3) After all, people don't like a Coroner's Inquest, even if the Coroner did acquit me of all blame. (Agatha Christie, 1939: 4)

A. 毕竟人们并不喜欢搞验尸，即使验尸官说这一切都与我无关！（Qi Ahong, 2008：4）

B. 谁都不愿听到死因审讯这类话，就算验尸官已经帮我开脱了所有罪名，想起来还是后怕！（Xia Yang, 2016：4）

In the original sentence, "a Coroner's Inquest", the noun is translated into the verb "搞验尸" in Qi's version, while in the Xia's version, it is translated into "死因审讯这类话". The two translators had different understandings of "a Coroner's Inquest" in the original text. According to the understanding of the original text, the author prefers the latter. In the second half of the original text, Qi translated it as "即使验尸官说这一切都与我无关", which was too colloquial. Xia translated it as "验尸官已经帮我开脱了所有罪名". It's more concise and easy to understand, and more in line with communicative translation. However, Xia also translated "想起来还是后怕". But actually there was no corresponding content in the original sentence. It is inappropriate for the translator to infer the psychological activity of the character according to the context, thus increasing needless information.

(4) I think there is really an opening for a place where there is good plain cooking and a nice old-fashioned type of person. (Agatha Christie, 1939: 7)

A. 那里有上好的粗茶淡饭，有个很古板的人，我觉得这会是一个地方有个新的开端。（Qi Ahong, 2008：8）

B. 在我这里，你可以品尝到清淡的饮食，与那些气质高贵古典的人交往。（Xia Yang, 2016：8）

In the translation of this sentence, Qi still mainly used semantic translation method that translated every word in the original sentence. However, the back part of the sentence, "我觉得这会是一个地方有个新的开端", was not translated fluently, and Qi's translation of "a nice old-fashioned type of person" was not appropriate to translate as "有个很古板的人." Its meaning should be "那些气质高贵古典的人." in Xia's version. Xia Yang still used communicative translation, which expressed the meaning

of the original sentence according to the reading habits of the target readers. But she omitted to translate "I think there is really an opening." The author thinks this sentence can combine the advantages of both translation, and translate as "我觉得来这里是品粗茶淡饭，交贤雅之士的好机会。"

(5) The house was there facing south--low and square and modern-looking with rounded windows letting in all the light. (Agatha Christie, 1939: 23)

A. 那栋别墅坐北朝南--呈低矮的正方形，为采光设计的圆拱形窗，颇具现代气派。（Qi Ahong, 2008：25）

B. 那栋别墅坐北朝南，正好可以从南方看清楚，房子不高，方方正正的，很有现代气息，窗户是圆形的，屋内的采光非常好。（Xia Yang, 2016：26）

In the original sentence, dashes are still used to supplement explanations, and Qi still translated according to semantic translation. She retained dashes, but not completely copying the sentence structure of the original sentence. The second half of the sentence was divided into two clauses with commas according to meaning groups. Xia still adopted communicative translation method, which did not follow the word order of the original sentence, but took better transmission of information as the primary translation principle. According to the reading habits of the target readers, this sentence was divided into seven clauses with commas. However, "正好可以从南方看清楚" in Xia's version was translated too subjective, while there was no corresponding content in the original text. It is not appropriate to add much information that is not in the original text.

4.2. Contrastive Analysis of the Two Versions in Discourse Level

(1) Young Almer Robson, the American millionaire, had actually build the place. Spent thousands on it, so it was said. Every more to luxury... (Agatha Christie, 1939: 9)

A. 这个地方是那个美国百万富翁杨•埃尔莫•罗布森修建的。据说花了几百万。人世间有的豪华。（Qi Ahong, 2008：10）

B. 年轻的美国百万富翁埃尔默•罗布森确实在岛上盖了那栋别墅，而且是花重金修建，极尽奢华。（Xia Yang, 2016：10）

This paragraph consists of three sentences in the original text. Qi's version still follows the semantic translation method. Qi retained the sentence structure of the original text and translated it into three corresponding sentences according to the original word order. However, the three sentences in the source passage are actually related. According to the language habits of the target

language, the meaning groups with the same subject are usually combined into one sentence. This is the case with Xia Yang's version, which tends to fit the reading habits of the target readers as much as possible. She tried to make equal effects as the translated version to the target readers as the source text to the source readers. That is the principle of communicative translation.

(2) His hand was shaking. His shoulder sagged. He looks suddenly 10 years older. (Agatha Christie, 1939: 39)

A. 他的手也在发抖。他的肩膀耷拉下来。他好像一下子老了 10 岁。（Qi Ahong, 2008：42）

B. 他双手发抖，肩膀塌了下来，好像一下子老了 10 岁。（Xia Yang, 2016：44）

In this section, Qi still used the semantic translation method. The original text has three sentences to describe the state of the character. Qi retained the original sentence form and translated them into three sentences respectively. She kept the paragraph structure and sentence structure of the original text. In this way, she could restore the style of the original text to a greater extent for target readers. However, this kind of structure in Qi's version is not common in Chinese. In Chinese, it is more accustomed to combining several sentences with same subject and similar sentence structure into one sentence. That's how Xia translated this paragraph. She merged these three sentences together, changed the original sentence number into a comma, putted forward a common subject, and translated it into one sentence. According to the language habits of the target language, Xia Yang's version is more suitable. Though the original text used three sentences to render the character's weak state to a greater extent, it will be very blunt and to move this kind of original structure directly.

(3) Ten little soldier boys went out to dine; One choked his little self and then there were Nine.

Nine little soldier boys sat up very late; One overslept himself and then there were Eight.

... (Agatha Christie, 1939: 27)

A. 十个小兵人，外出去吃饭;一个被呛死，还剩九个人。

九个小兵人，熬夜熬得深;一个睡过头，还剩八个人。

...（Qi Ahong, 2008：29）

B. 十个小士兵，出门打牙祭，不幸噎住喉，十个只剩九。

九个小士兵，秉烛到夜半，清早叫不答，九个只剩八。

...（Xia Yang, 2016：31）

This song is the soul of the whole book, which almost sums up the story clue of the whole book. It comes from Mother Goose's Nursery Rhyme. Qi's version still uses semantic translation, which basically corresponds to each other and expresses the original meaning completely. Xia's version is not limited to the words in the original text. She translated this passage according to its own understanding and Chinese poetry style. As this passage is a nursery rhyme, it requires a little more than the translation of ordinary texts, rhyme. And because most of the audience of nursery rhymes are children, the translated version should be easy to understand. As for rhymes, it is obvious that Xia Yang's version is more catchy contrasted with Qi's version. However, Qi's version is more easy to understand, which is more in line with the requirement that the audiences are children

## V. CONCLUSION

### 5.1. Major Findings

In this thesis, Qi Ahong's and Xia Yang's versions of *And Then There Were None* are selected to make a contrastive analysis from the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation, and to study the two translator's choice between semantic translation and communicative translation in the process of translation. According to the author's analysis, Qi Ahong's version prefers to use semantic translation. In the process of translation, she always tried to fit the semantic translation theory. Qi Ahong preferred to retain the words order, sentence structure and the language style of the original text to the greatest extent. But sometimes, few places are too equivalent to the original text, which leads to the situation that the sentences are not fluent. For example, dashes are used so many times in the original text of this article, but it is not used frequently in inserting information in Chinese. The sentence structure or paragraph structure of the version is exactly the same as that of the original sentence, which will make readers feel a little uncomfortable in reading that may create a feeling of cultural hindrance. However, Xia Yang preferred communicative translation and paid more attention to the reading experience of the target readers. Her version is more in line with the sentence structure and language order of Chinese. Readers of the target language will read more fluently and comfortably, just like reading a book whose original text is Chinese. However, there are also some sentences in the Xia's translation that give full play to the translator's subjectivity, and some omissions and additions are inappropriate. Both versions have their own advantages and disadvantages.

Actually, it is not necessary to choose only one of

semantic translation and communicative translation. Neither of the two versions adopts only one specific translation method, but different translators have different translation styles and different choices of translation methods. A truly high-quality version must not only use one of the translation methods, but should combine semantic translation with communicative translation, choose the most suitable translation method according to different contexts, and make the best use of the two translation methods.

5.2. Limitations

The research on the Chinese versions of *And Then There Were None* is limited in this thesis. It only chooses the semantic translation and communicative translation as the research direction to make a contrastive study of the two Chinese versions, which will have some limitations in terms of appreciation or criticism. And the research results are not enough to summarize the Chinese translation quality of these two versions. Hope there will be more contrastive studies on the translated versions of *And Then There Were None* from various angles in the future.

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# The Thematic Study of Psychogeography in Joseph Conrad's "The Heart of Darkness"

Salath Monica W

*Abstract*— *The geography and psych phony of the journey executed in the frame of the novella "The Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad has been discussed in the present paper identifying the physical journey into the African woods and the equally significant psychological journey conducted in the characters. This paper exposes how the geography of the African settings is entangled with the characters' thoughts and conflicts. In the analysis, the emphasis is made on such aspects as the Congo River, both, the European and the African contexts of the colonizers and colonized, and colonial engineering. The paper will discuss the specificity of the cable area and place as seen by Conrad and how that adds to the stories' meaning together with an analysis of the way colonialism reduces the human identity. Consequently, this research establishes how Conrad's work conveys the concept of psychogeography, particularly with respect to colonialism and its influence on mentality. Thus, in relation to the processes of discussing, the psychogeographic theory study offers new insight into the multilayered construct of environment and human subjectivity of consciousness.*

*Keywords*— *Geography, Psychogeography, Colonialism, African Setting, Human Identity*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Therefore, during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the British colonial and imperial consolidation is normally viewed as a period of strong European colonial invasion, economic integration, and cultural domination. Such eras are considered as the British Empire in India up to the highest level. One terrible deed of imperialism which took place during the period when the so-called `Age of imperialism' accompanied by the 'Scramble for Africa' was carried out- this divided Africa into colonies. It is was also evident that the colonial economy highly depended on the exploitation of African labor. Some African people were forced into demanding working environments in the mines, on plantations and building other structures. This British colonialism in Africa recast the African history and having created a diverse story that is greatly experienced in the post-modern African societies and the relations between the African continent and the rest of the world.

Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski also known as Joseph Conrad was a British writer of polish origin, and such aspects as imperialism, spirit and consciousness of the human being, and many other aspects of morality and internal contradictions. Some of his Notable works include are; novel of Lord Jim which revolves around the life of Jim, a young Englishman, who faced various existentialist crises on a voyage at sea. "Nostromo" was also his novel which is based done in the fictitious country in South America and there he shown politics, its corrupt form, imperialism and so on. There was another famous novel known as "The secret agent" – here calmly and vividly Scheiner described the problems of anarchism and spying. All his novels are characterized by schematic structure of the main plot and rather high degree of psychological depth of the characters.

Joseph Conrad a writer, was first and foremost a seaman and that is why his works include realistic scenes of sea and realistic outlook of seamen. His uncle whose name was Tadeusz Bobrowski suggested that should leave for France so that he could begin his career on the sea. He founded merchant marine in 1874. These are for instance being an ordinary seaman, an apprentice, a steward; others are third mate in a ship, second mate, first mate and eventually attaining the position of being a Captain of a Ship. This strategy of his helped him gone-through with life

at sea and to be able to include them into his novels perfectly well.

This was mainly brought out by the ways and manner he described the sea, the ships and the ports, which without doubt was grounded on the sea domain. Moreover, as a pariah, such places offered him a feel of the various cultures and the geographical nature, which was a typical aspect in his stories; they also offered realism and discovery which are feel that is still fascinating to the readers.

Heart of Darkness is a novel written by Joseph Conrad and was published in 1899 The main motifs in this story can be regarded as imperialism racism and the Dark side of society and people.

The plot of the novella is presented in the second narrative level. Problems of colonialism, isolation, people's essence, and insanity were demonstrated in the course of the novella. Conrad employed rich symbolism to evaluate such themes as the Conradian message in the story. Captain Marlowe, a seaman who in his story relates events throughout the play to a group of men in a small boat on the River Thames. He recalled his experiences on his sojourn to the Congo river in Search of Kurtz; an enigmatic ivory seller. The plot is traced from the desire for power and greed that resides in people's souls along to the colonization of Africa by Europeans.

## II.    METHODOLOGY

Psychogeography, a concept originated by Situationist International inside mix of Marxism and surrealism. It also looks at the influence of topographical environment on feelings and practices of populace. With refer to this thought, in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" it is possible to use to find out how the African setting influences Marlow and other characters, particularly Kurtz, along with the general mood of the entire story.

Additionally, the physical and mental scenes the movie portrays become deeper and grimmer as Marlow delves further into the heart of the Congo, mirroring the author's exploration of the dark areas of the human psyche. Primordial darkness of the woods, the river, and severe weather inhibited recognition as well as action, which corresponds to the feelings of warning and confusion in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" It is thus clear that the African scene is not just part of the played picture background, but as an active participant contributor to the picture. The waterway Congo is often depicted as a serpent-like constrain The Congo river is described as a "…mighty big river…resembling an immense snake with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country." (Conrad 18)

A physical and mental journey to the core of vagueness. It gets to be an image of Uncertainty and Smoothness. In the case of the Congo River, the meanders symbolize the uncertain and winding nature of Marlow's path. It too broaches the issue of the fluidity of the divide between the civilized and the savage, the sane and the mad. Historically, psychogeography can be defined as a crossing point of brain research, geology, and urban arranging. With psychogeography, one comprehends how one surroundings affects feelings, ways of behavior, and judgments.

It illustrates both the urban spectator who happily strolls the city while carrying its sights, sounds and energies "- nothing more than black shadows of disease and starvation limbs entangled, lying indistinguishably in the greenish haze." (Conrad 30) makes it clear that how the wild folds with their inaccessible and clandestine nature mirrors the often mysterious and, hence, frightening aspect of the human mind's landscapes. Just as effectively, psychogeography links up with such topics as colonialism and alienation. The colonisers treated the dark individuals as enemies and even made it a point to must carry a 'six-inch gun' with them to use on the local Africans.

The Colonisers assaulted the innate individuals mercilessly and slaughtered them unfeelingly. "I saw the black people run. A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that was all. (Conrad 27)

The colonial foundation built a genuine temperament in the novella. The physical investigation of Marlow into the woods of the African nation drove him to the crushed minds of African men. He saw Africans being treated more awful than anything around the world. He clarified their pitiable state where they were cuffed by hand chains.

> "Black rags were wound around their loins and the short ends behind waggled to and fro like tails. I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were connected with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking." (Conrad 28)

Taking the contrast between the European metropolis and the African bush, European civilization is portrayed as insignificant while the indicating Savage impersonations give primeval Western characterizations of the characteristic world. The differentiation points to the slim sleekness of civilization that pointlessly collapses in front of the vagueness. Marlow described the way in which they slipped past the colonisers without saying a single word. "They were within six inches of me without a glance, with those complete, death like indifference of the unhappy savages." (Conrad 28)

They imperialised the local individuals and unscrupulously traded in ivory and Marlow saw how his men took all the wealth of Africa Africa "…a stream of manufactured goods, the rubbishy cottons, beads, and beads, and brass wire sent into the depths of darkness, and in return came a precious trickle of ivory."(Conrad 31)

Mental showed that Segregation and Franticness can be found as motifs in the movie through Kurtz. Established in the womb of the wilds, Kurtz's station updates an original focus on the convergence of the two antithetical forms of topography: mental and actual.

His segregation from European society and submersion in the wild contributes to his plummet into franticness and ethical debasement. Kurtz's mother was half-English his father was half-French. In German the word Kurtz implies 'short'. When Marlow met Kurtz, he was out of commission and anticipated to offer assistance from his specialists. At one point his well-being condition got more awful and Marlow carried him to the specialist who portrayed Kurtz as "he was not much heavier than a child." (Conrad 100)

Through the eyes of Kurtz, peruses can get how mentally he was aggravated which drove him to pass. In his last minutes, Kurtz caught on to his unfeeling exercises towards the locals and figured out his botches. He expressed "The horror! The horror!" (Conrad 103) and died.

### III.     CONCLUSION

Using psychogeography to examine "Heart of Darkness" gives a nuanced understanding of how Conrad intertwines topographical settings with the mental and ethical ventures of his characters. This approach uncovers how the environment is not just a scenery but a dynamic member in forming the story and subjects of the novella. By looking at the exchange between put and mind, researchers can gain more profound experiences into the complexities of Conrad's work and its persevering significance to talks of human nature, colonialism, and mortality.

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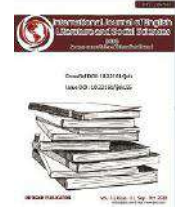
# Dissolution in Concordance –A Jolt to Mental Peace

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*Abstract— The Partition year 1947 was a seismic year whose after effects can be felt even today. The division of British India was poorly planned leading to drastic upheavals. There arose schisms and tensions amongst once harmonious populations. Earlier the people used to live as one family. They used to share not just a cultural gene pool and biological ties, but common kinship institutions too. When the Partition was announced, it all ends gloomily. Our own mothers, sisters and daughters were violated, as they were considered the mark of communal purity. Various authors have shown how women were the immediate recipients of this trauma, either enduring the loss and death of their husbands or by enduring the loss of their own virtue at the hands of rape and sexual violation. There was a heinous display of savage brutality. The partition is not the partition of territory but it is the partition of hearts and souls of the people.*

*Keywords— Partition, loss, silence, violence, trauma*

1947 was a landmark year in the history of the subcontinent. It was on June 3,1947 that the Viceroy Lord Louis Mountbatten, announced that independence would be brought forward to August that year, presenting politicians with an ultimatum that gave them little alternative but to agree to the creation of two separate states.

Pakistan – its eastern and western wings separated by around 1,700 kilometres of Indian territory – celebrated independence on August 14 that year; India did so the following day. The new borders, which split the key provinces of the Punjab and Bengal in two, were officially approved on August 17. They had been drawn up by a Boundary Commission, led by British lawyer Cyril Radcliffe, who later admitted that he had relied on out-of-date maps and census materials.

It was posed as a success. It was instilled in the minds of laymen that we were going to be free from the clutches of British rule after a long bad bumpy journey of around 200 years . It was thought that the making up of two diffferent nations- India and Pakistan, would be the safest option but the ill effects of the same were not even thought in the bad dreams. "The largest and most terrible exchange of population known to history" (Ice-Candy-Man 159). Partition affected the lives of people and shaped their future

as well; in the tense communal situation, people wanted to get their tools and weapons sharpened;

They created disharmony among the people by defining communities based on religious identities and providing political representation to them. This led to a gradual decline in the long-standing intermixed and syncretic culture of India. According to estimates, more than 15 million people were uprooted and close to 2 million were massacred as a result of massive communal violence. Partition was not just a division of political territory but a division of the people as they were separated from their homes, livelihood, family and friends. One of the greatest accounts of partition can be found in the form of Amrita Pritam's poem "Ajj Akhan Waris Shah Nu" (Ode to Waris Shah). Through this heart-wrenching poem, Pritam depicted the plight of the people, particularly women, who were faced with atrocities such as abduction, violence, rape, murder. Even in the novel *Pinjar*(1950), the same plight has been depicted. Pooro, the protagonist of the novel, had to undergo a lot of atrocities that once she felt that she "was neither one nor the other, she was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name" (25).

Communal violence kept escalating during those times. As many as one million civilians died in the accompanying riots and local-level fighting. Women and children were the major sufferers. Everyone was killing the other person just because he/she belonged to other religions. It seemed as if humanity had died in the souls of people. In *Train to Pakistan(1956)* by Khushwant Singh, it is depicted that people butchered each other even if they didn't want to. "One morning, a train from Pakistan halted at Mano Majra railway station…But somehow it was different. There was something uneasy about it. It had a ghostly quality." (93). The train was filled by the dead bodies. This triggered a sense of revenge and the story continues till today.

In a poem, *"Hamara Rakt"* (Our Blood), Sachchidanand Hiranand Vatsyayan Agyeya says:

> *yah idhar baha mere bhai ka rakt*
>
> *vah udhar raha utana hee laal,*
>
> *tumhaaree bahan ka rakt!*
>
> *bah gaya, mileen donon dhara*
>
> *jaakar mittee mein huee ek.*

He tries to convey that these identities are insignificant as ultimately all of us are the same species. But this is what was missing at that time of Partition. People forgot their humane nature acted as barbaric and irrational beings.

The pre-partition life was ephemeral but real. People loved each other irrespective of the religion. In most of the Partition novels, this is clearly described. In *Cracking India* when the fire of Partition had just triggered, still people were hopeful that they will be safe and they will safeguard their neighbours too. In the novel, Imam Din and later a Sikh Granthi said, "To us villagers, what does it matter if a peasant is a Hindu, or a Muslim, or a Sikh?. . .If needs be, we'll protect our Muslim brothers with our lives!" (p 56) . But later we see that how everyone turned to be an enemy. Even the lovers and admirers of Ayah turned to be her violators. They just considered her to be a prostitute and fulfilled their lust. Lenny after understanding the situation says, "Ayah is no longer just my all-encompassing Ayah - she is also a token- A Hindu" (93). We see how Ayah was 'wounded in the soul.' (185) Such kind of gruesome treatment was at large during Partition. Division on the basis of religion, a division that reverberates to the present day, remains a central question to grapple with.

Home is a symbol of identity for people. It is intricately woven by their sense of being. At the time of Partition, there were many miles long caravans of people going across the border. People at the time thought that the migration that was undergoing was for some short time span. They will get back to their homeland and ancestral homes after the situation is pacified and normalized. But

little did they know that all this would turn into a harrowing and traumatic experience for them. Their search for identity continued till their end. On a personal note, I have seen my grandfather getting upset if he was asked about partition. He was the one who lost his relatives and even father in the migration that took place from Lahore to India. What to talk about innumerable immaterial things and above all the memories of childhood!  It was such a worst traumatic experience for a Partition survivor. I could then find his face wet with tears. Today I realize that a weeping over past was grieving for the present time too.

The rioting and killing hadn't even stopped after independence; in the small localities in which people lived, if they had few remaining neighbours from other communities; from their windows, they would occasionally see smoke rising in the distance, and they would know that another neighbourhood had gone up in flames.  Large scale barbarity and irrationality overtook all other aspects at the time of Partition. The friendly neighbours turned into enemies and never left a chance to be violent against each other. Thomas Hardy wrote in his poem, The Man He Killed(1902)

> "I shot him dead because —
>
> Because he was my foe…
>
> Yes; quaint and curious war is!"

The same situation was seen during the Partition times. People were filled with rage, monstrosity and negativity.

Old hatred is still alive and well. The Kashmiri people remain colonised, killed, exiled, raped, tortured, incarcerated and, in an ignominious addition to the catalog, blinded by nasty little lead pellets sprayed on protesters crying for freedom.  Both countries often accuse each other of the agreed norms. There are numerous border skirmishes. These are the psychological dynamics that play out in the dispute over Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan claim Kashmir as if it were their ancestral property, and people on both sides feel a deep emotional attachment to it. As William Blake said, "it is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend". Whoever we are, it seems we can all feel a special kind of enmity for the enemies we most resemble – whether a sibling or a neighbour, we simply cannot accept "them" as "us" despite our obvious similarities.

There are various instances told by the Partition witnesses which have been recorded in the books, But still many remained buried in the silence of the people. Urvashi Butalia in her book, *The Other Side Of Silence* (1998) even talks about the people being silenced about their own missing women in the bloody upheaval. On the other hand, those missing women were most of the time not accepted by their own people. The most difficult task then for those

women was to pick up the broken pieces and build their lives once again, while being continuously haunted by the memories that were embedded in their minds. The harrowing and traumatic experience numbed them into silence again.

Fikr Taunsvi, the author of *The Sixth River* (2019) wrote a heart rendering description about India Pakistan Partition. No doubt she is a realist, yet his almost imperceptible and subtle irony, his heartbreaking bewilderment and anger at what he sees taking place around his beloved Lahore create an uncanny resonance across time:

> "I knocked on many doors despite knowing that all houses had been adorned with big locks. And apart from the lovelorn caws of the crows and the shrieks of hungry birds, I found nothing else. . .It seemed that the meanings of emotions, traditions, demands and claims had changed immediately upon winning independence. Why had such freedom been brought into existence? Was it only to free dharma and shastras that we struggled for three hundred years against foreign rule? Did we strive to move forward or only to go back by thousands of years? Did we call to freedom only for life to regress?" (n.p)

The Partition in concordance was actually a traumatic experience for the common people. They could not get away with even the rarest thought of it. Even after so many decades, the haunting memories are writ large in the conscious mind. It was a kind of failure for all of us. Since those times till today, our hourable government only pays attention towards market sizes and geo political advantage. And turn a blind eye to the great and mounting danger which people pose to each other.

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# The Role of Gender Studies in Shaping India's Approach to Empowering Underprivileged Children through Educational Innovations

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*Abstract*— *This paper can explore how India is enforcing innovative educational practices to enhance literacy issues and foster commission among depressed children in connected with gender studies. It can include conversations on their use of technology; community- grounded literacy enterprise, and acclimatized academic support programs. We've been working towards bridging the gap and icing that youthful girls across India admit essential coffers that help ameliorate their internal, physical, and emotional development. Demarcation issues in India are deep- embedded and rehearsed for generations, and that's why it requires long- term intervention, which we've been furnishing to underserved communities across India. CRY( Child Rights and You) is a top NGO in India working for depressed children, aims to produce a world where the girl child is celebrated and has access to equal openings to study, grow, and prosper as her manly counterpart.*

*Keyword*— *Gender, Demarcation, Inequality*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Gender studies play a pivotal part in shaping India's approach towards empowering depressed children, particularly through educational inventions. By addressing gender difference in education, these studies contribute to creating inclusive educational surroundings where both girls and boys have equal opening to succeed. The significance of icing gender equivalency in education is a significant focus, as it directly influences the social and profitable commission of marginalized groups. Programs aimed at adding educational access for girls not only enhance their tone- image and capabilities but also lead to broader societal benefits similar as bettered nutrition situations and detention in marriage age. Several enterprises have been enforced in India to bridge the gender gap in education. For case, the Taaron Ki Toli programmed aims to educate and empower adolescents by furnishing a platform for them to bandy and challenge gender morals. By fostering participatory literacy tests,

gender studies contribute to inventions in tutoring methodologies that address these societal issues. Non-governmental associations (NGOs) play a necessary part in promoting gender equity through educational programs. For illustration, CRY India has initiated systems that concentrate on raising mindfulness about gender equivalency and empowering girls through education and vocational training openings. Child Rights and You (CRY) is a top NGO in India working for depressed children started in 1979. It has been working towards creating happier and healthier springtime for further than four decades. With its headquarters in Mumbai, CRY has services in top metropolises in India Delhi, Bangalore, and Kolkata. Being the stylish child rights NGO in India, it's committed to doing everything it can to insure the rights of India's children – right to education, safety & protection, health & nutrition and participation. CRY is recognized as one of the most trusted NGOs in India. Through its 102 systems spread across 19 countries in India, CRY workshop on the issues of child education,

health & nutrition, child labor and child marriage. CRY NGO addresses the critical requirements of children by working with parents, preceptors, Anganwadi workers, communities, quarter and state- position governments as well as the children themselves to produce a sustainable change. Grassroots NGOs significantly contribute to empowering depressed children by engaging communities, championing for gender equivalency, and furnishing educational coffers. Through original sweats, they help bridge the gap between policy and practice, enabling better access to education for girls. These associations frequently unite with original communities to ensure that their enterprise is culturally applicable and effectively address the specific requirements of depressed children. The Indian government has honored the necessity of empowering depressed children through colorful programs and programs aimed at promoting women's rights, education, and equivalency. Campaigns like 'Beti Bachao,Beti Padhao'(save daughter, educate daughter) and the Right to Education Act emblematize a commitment to gender equivalency and aim to ameliorate registration and retention rates for girls. Gender studies play a pivotal part in shaping India's approach to empowering depressed children by pressing the unique challenges faced by girls and boys from marginalized communities. It shapes India's approach towards empowering depressed children by addressing social morals, inequalities, and educational difference that hamper availability to education, especially for girls. This knowledge can be used to develop targeted interventions and programs relating gender difference in gender studies reveals how deeply confirmed gender impulses and conceptions can limit openings for girls and boys. This understanding helps policymakers and program device design interventions that promote gender equivalency. Addressing gender-grounded violence among girls from marginalized communities is disproportionately affected by sexual violence, child marriage, and other forms of abuse. Gender studies exploration provides perceptivity into the root causes of this violence and effective forestallment strategies. Despite progress in promoting girls education in India still face walls to education. Gender studies help us understand these walls, similar as early marriage, domestic labor, and lack of womanish preceptors, and develop strategies to overcome them. Icing inclusive participation among children from marginalized communities frequently has limited voice in decision- making processes. Gender studies emphasize the significance of including girls and boys in conversations that affect their lives, icing their perspectives are considered. Building gender-sensitive communities produce a probative terrain for all children bears grueling dangerous gender morals and conceptions. Gender studies

exploration can inform community rallying and gets change communication strategies. Introducing gender education in the academy class is vital for fostering an understanding of gender issues among both boys and girls. It instills popular values of equivalency and liberty, icing that gender bias and power dynamics are openly bandied and critically anatomized in educational settings. By incorporating perceptivity from gender studies, India can develop further effective and indifferent programs to empower depressed children and produce a more just and inclusive society.

Gender inequality creates a cyclical effect on education in India, where inadequate access to quality education for girls perpetuates poverty and societal underdevelopment perfecting girl's educational attainment is consummate as it impacts unborn generations, leading to better health profitable stability, and social commission among women. Gender inequality and education are deeply intertwined, with each buttressing and immortalizing the other. This complex relationship has far-reaching counter accusations for individualities, societies, and husbandry. Gender inequality impacts education in several ways. Limited access to education among girls and women frequently face walls to education due to factors like early marriage, gestation, ménage chores, and artistic morals that prioritize boy's education. Discriminative practices under gender- poisoned classes, tutoring styles, and assessment can hamper girls learning and achievement. Addressing deeply bedded patriarchal values and easing mindset changes among both men and women is essential for advancing gender equality. Educational institutions have the eventuality to play a transformative part by bedding assignments of equivalency and respect in their classes, which can shift societal comprehensions and discourage violence against women. Sexual importunity and violence among girl children who attend academy may witness importunity and violence, creating a hostile literacy terrain. A deficit of womanish preceptors can lead to gender conceptions being corroborated in the classroom and can limit part models for girls. Really, gender demarcation in the society is a grave concern, and a host of particular, societal and artistic aspects are at the core of this development. Gender inequality in India bandied by some includes poverty, child marriage, poor medical health, lack of mindfulness and patriarchal morals etc.

## II.          RESULTS

- Poverty

Poverty stands as one of the primary motorists of gender inequalities. According to the World Bank roughly 70 of the world's impoverished population is womanish. Poverty

restricts access to education, healthcare, and profitable openings, thereby buttressing a vicious cycle. Recent checks indicate that poverty situations in India have significantly dropped over the once decade. The estimated poverty rate dropped from 21 in 2011- 12 to roughly 8.5 in 2022- 24, illustrating remarkable progress in poverty reduction. India has effectively  excluded extreme poverty, with only 2.2 of the population living below the World Bank's $ 1.90 poverty line and a headcount  rate( HCR) of 2 when  exercising the same benchmark. This follows a broader trend where the rate of extreme poverty saw a substantial decline from 12.2 a decade agene checks

indicate notable differences in poverty rates between pastoral and civic areas. For case, pastoral poverty has reportedly dropped significantly with the HCR falling from 24.8 to roughly 8.6, while civic areas endured a reduction from 13.4 to around 8.4. Also, around 248 million people in India reportedly escaped multidimensional poverty grounded on a report by NITI Aayog, reflecting an 18 decline in the share of the population considered multidimensional poor, dropping from 29 to 112. Still, this figure has been met wit by some economists, who question the methodology employed to determine these statistics.
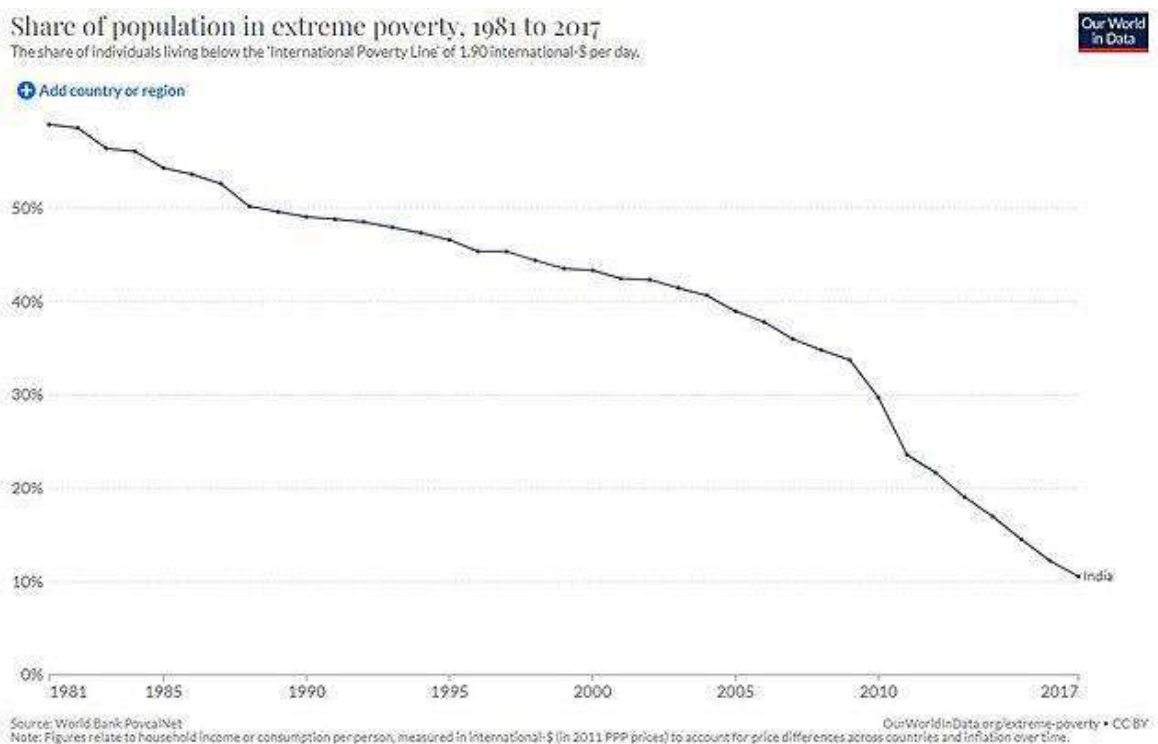


Poverty rate in India:

| | |
|---|---|
| Extreme Poverty Rate | 0.8% in 2019 |
| Multidimensional Poverty Rate | 14.96% of the population |
| People Lifted Out of Extreme Poverty | 271 million from 2005-2016 |
| Rural Poverty Rate | 11.6% in 2019 |
| Urban Poverty Rate | 6.3% in 2019 |

• Child Marriage

Child marriage is another intimidating aspect of gender inequality, disproportionately affecting girls. UNICEF estimates that 12 million girls are married before the age of 18 every time. Similar practices hamper their particular development and immortalize gender difference across

generations. Lack of education is one of the crucial causes of gender inequality that significantly exacerbates the problem. India accounts for about 33 of global child marriages, with roughly 27 of girls anticipated to be married before the age of 18 in 2023. Despite in child marriage a decline from 49.4 in 1993 to 22.3 in 2021, a significant number of underage marriages continue to  do, affecting one in five girls and one in six boys. Although statistics indicate intimidating rates of child marriages, factual reported cases remain disproportionately low, with only three cases registered daily nationwide, despite roughly 4,442 marriages being every day. The frequency of child marriage varies across countries, with Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal flaunting advanced cases, where at least 40 of youthful women were married before the age of 18. UNESCO reports that 132 million girls are out of academy encyclopedically, with lower access to

learning openings than boys. Right to education is pivotal in empowering girls to make informed choices, pursue

careers, and challenge societal morals.

## One in two women (age 20-24 years) in six states continue to get married before legal age of marriage

Lowest Himachal Pradesh: 9.1%
Highest Bihar: 68.2%

| Per cent | |
|---|---|
| | 9.1 - 19.5 (7) |
| | 19.6 - 24.6 (7) |
| | 24.7 - 37.6 (7) |
| | 37.7 - 51.8 (7) |
| | 51.9 - 68.2 (6) |
| | Missing Value (1) |

Source: DLHS, 2007-2008
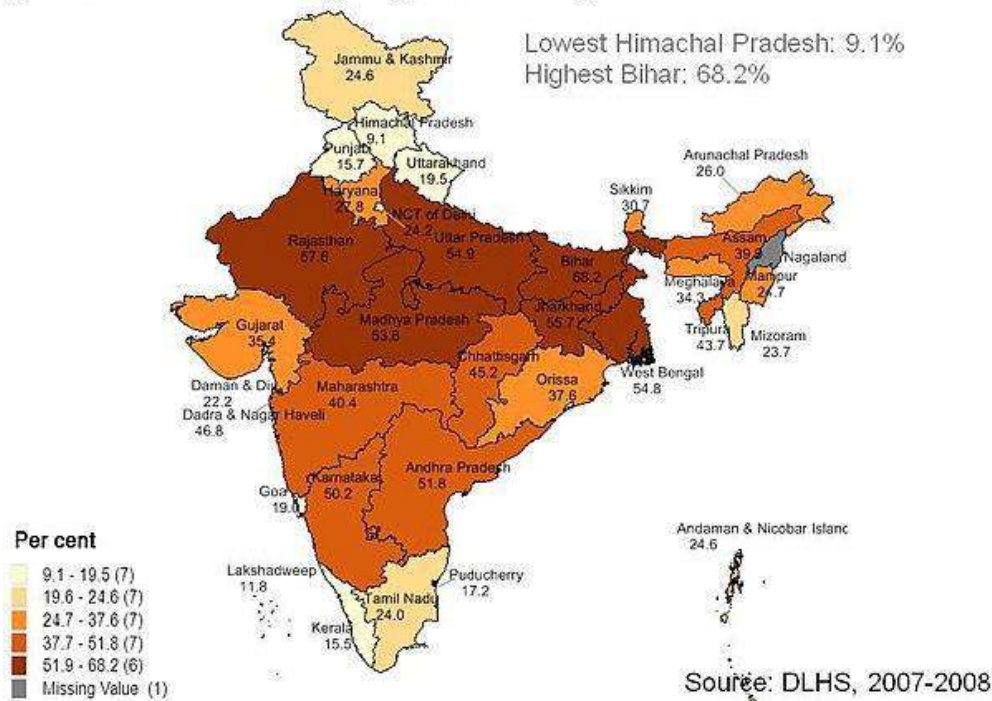
Child Marriage in India:

| | |
|---|---|
| ...ata | Reported a decline in child marriage rates since 2001 |
| ...hallenges | Ongoing legal challenges and political discussions regarding ... laws |
| ...tus | Outlawed in 1929 |
| ... Age | Increased to 18 for females and 21 for males in 1978 |
| ...atives | Haryana's Apni Beti, Apna Dhan program to delay marriages |

• Poor Medical Health

Poor medical health also plays a vital part in maintaining gender demarcation in the society. In regions with shy he a substantial portion of healthcare charges are paid directly by individualities, with out-of-fund expenditures counting for roughly 42.06 of current health expenditure in 20191. This fiscal burden frequently leads to disastrous health expenditure that can hang a ménage's capacity to maintain an introductory standard of living healthcare installation; girls face advanced motherly mortality rates, limited access to family planning, and health-related impulses. A substantial portion of healthcare charges are paid directly by individualities, with out-of-fund expenditures counting for roughly 42.06 of current health expenditure in 20191. This fiscal burden frequently leads to disastrous health

expenditure that can hang a ménage's capacity to maintain an introductory standard of living. The private healthcare sector is responsible for the maturity of healthcare services in India, with about 70 of civic homes and 63 of pastoral homes counting on private installations for their healthcare needs1. Still, this reliance is compounded by high costs, leading numerous families into debt for medical charges, which disproportionately affects the poorer parts of the population. Families in lower income classes face severe challenges in penetrating quality healthcare, and a significant bit is forced to vend or adopt means to go hospitalization1. Roughly 40 of rehabilitated individualities face lifelong debt or poverty due to medical charges.

Healthcare system in India:

| Healthcare Providers | Around 55% of Indians receive their healthcare from private providers (rural: 52%, urban:61%) |
|---|---|
| Heath care Spending | Out-of-pocket expenses make up 58.78% of healthcare spending, which amounts for 3.8% og GDP |
| Hospital Stays Cost | INR 22,031 in urban regions and about INR 15,937 in rural areas are paid for out-of-pocket |

• Lack of mindfulness & Patriarchal morals

Patriarchal morals are deeply bedded within Indian society, homogenized through laws, customs, and rituals. These morals mandate that men have precedence in penetrating coffers across colorful spheres, including family, request, and society at large. The family structure in India generally reflects these patriarchal testaments, with a significant maturity of homes headed by men. Only 15 of homes are womanish-headed, indicating the dominance of manly authority in domestic settings. Likewise, upon marriage, women are traditionally needed to live with their misters and their in-laws, buttressing the control wielded by manly family members. These patriarchal morals lead to gender inequality, affecting women's status, profitable openings, and access to education. Women in India frequently face restrictions grounded on these morals, which are justified by artistic beliefs that prioritize manly lineage and places within society. For case, sons are seen as essential for continuing the family lineage and performing ancestral rituals. Lack of mindfulness and hardwired patriarchal morals further contribute to gender inequality. When societies immortalize gender conceptions and demarcation, it becomes grueling to break free from the impediment of inequality. Patriarchal morals hold back numerous girls from seeking for their dreams by entering a quality education, medical installations and overall mindfulness for their well- being. To address gender inequality effectively, we must attack these connected causes of gender inequality and work towards establishing sustainable change patterns that will successfully annihilate this vicious cycle of gender inequality. The future of educational inventions for empowering depressed children in India hinges on prostrating being challenges similar as deep- confirmed gender impulses and demarcation. Nonstop sweats in gender studies and community engagement are essential to foster surroundings where every child can thrive and contribute to the nation's progress.

## III.    DISCUSSION

The findings from colorful studies align with government reports indicating a broad decline in both pastoral and civic poverty situations, furnishing a harmonious narrative of enhancement in living standard across India. Expansive data and analysis emphasize the progress India has made in reducing poverty situations, emphasizing not only the elimination of extreme poverty but also significant declines in broader poverty measures. Still, ongoing scrutiny of methodologies ensures a nuanced understanding of the profitable geography. Child marriage significantly hampers development and exacerbates issues similar as poverty, gender inequality, and poor health issues among youthful girls, making it a significant concern for social programs. The effectiveness of laws similar as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 is under scrutiny due to low conviction rates and dragged court cases, pressing the need for better enforcement. Access to healthcare also starkly varies between civic and pastoral areas. Pastoral populations face logistical walls and a failure of good healthcare professionals, leading to reliance on informal providers who may warrant formal medical training. In discrepancy, civic areas have better access but still grapple with high costs and unstable service distribution grounded on socio-economic factors. Overall, the poor medical health geography in India is marked by high out- of- fund charges, reliance on a privatized system, shy public services, and significant fiscal burdens placed on families, particularly among the economically underprivileged. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive reforms concentrated on perfecting access, quality, and affordability of healthcare services across the nation. There's notable variation in the intensity of these patriarchal morals across different countries in India, as well as changes over time. The India Patriarchy Index, which quantifies these morals, demonstrates that unsexed social positioning continues to parade significant difference across geographical regions and socioeconomic groups. In summary, the patriarchal morals in India are characterized by manly dominance in domestic and societal structures, immortalizing gender difference that has profound counteraccusations on women's lives. Understanding these morals is pivotal for addressing and perfecting gender equivalency in India's complex artistic geography.

## IV.    CONCLUSION

In conclusion, gender studies are necessary in shaping a comprehensive approach to empowering depressed children in India. Through educational reforms, community engagements, and government enterprise, a true change can be realized that not only uplifts girls but

also benefits society as a whole. To address the complex relationship between gender inequality and education, a multi-faceted approach is demanded. Commission through education equips girls and women with knowledge, chops, and confidence to challenge gender morals and conceptions. Expanding access to education insure that all girls have equal access to quality education is pivotal. Challenging gender conceptions promote gender-sensitive classes and tutoring styles can help break down dangerous conceptions. Supporting girl leadership provides openings for girls to develop leadership chops can empower them to changes. Educated women are more likely to have better health issues for themselves and their children. Educated women have stronger leadership quality and more likely to share in leadership places and contribute to decision-making processes. Adding the number of womanish preceptors can produce positive part models for girls and profitable independence can lead to increased earning eventuality, enabling women to come financially independent and make their own choices. Addressing gender- grounded violence produce safe and probative literacy surroundings is essential for girl education. By investing in education and promoting gender equivalency, we can produce a more just and indifferent world for all.

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# Modern Poetry: An Overview

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*Abstract*— *Modern Poetry presents the modern consciousness in modern idiom. It is a break from the Romantic tradition of thought, feeling and utterance prevalent at the turn of the century. This is brought out starkly in T.S. Eliot's essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' with its declaration that poetry is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion; it is not an expression of personality but an escape from personality. This Impersonal theory of poetry differentiates between the man who suffers and the mind which creates. Modern Poetry in assessing the changed dynamics of the machine age, rapid industrialization and advance in technological progress, urbanization, the advent of Darwinism, the impact of Marx, Nietzsche, the psychoanalytical theories of Freud and Jung, Einstein's theory of Relativity, brought about a veritable storm of progress of ideas, and multiple perspectives on the world. In response, when poetry rallies to Ezra Pound's call to make it new, Modern Poetry presents new aesthetics with dazzling innovation of subject and stylistics.*

*Keywords*— *imagism, innovation, modern consciousness, modern idiom, objective correlative.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The first half of the twentieth century saw a revolution in poetic taste in England. The poet was no longer a singer of sweet verses who used conventional romantic imagery to convey self-indulged personal emotion. Rather, he was the explorer of experience of any shade and who used language in a more complex, allusive and intellectual way. The new movement began with a revolt against every kind of verbal imprecision and lushness. 'Imagism' was a poetic movement between 1912-1917, influenced by the theory of T.E. Hulme and was a revolt against what Ezra Pound called the "rather blurry, messy…sentimentalistic mannnerish" poetry at the turn of the century. Imagism abandoned conventional poetic materials and versification, was free to choose any subject and to create its own rhythms or 'Free Verse'. It proved to be the beginning of Modern poetry; it was "the first Modernist movement in English poetry", states David Perkins in *A History of Modern Poetry*. Ezra Pound born in Idaho, America, shifted to London in 1908, it being the literary capital of the English- speaking world: "London….is the place for poetry" he said. London was the place to hone and master this "complete art" and to establish poetic reputation in both England and the United States of America. Edith Sitwell's *Wheels*, founded in 1916, challenged Georgian poetry and was a bugle call for English poetry to create a distinctly Modernist movement.

## II. DISCUSSION

F.R. Leavis in *Revaluations* states that Modern poetry is the poetry of "actuality". It is in contrast to Nineteenth century poetry with its dreamy lyricism, as evident in the words of O'Shaughnessy:

> "We are the music-makers, / And we are the dreamers of dreams" (*Ode;*1874)

and as manifest in Tennyson's *The Lotus Eaters*. F.R. Leavis condemns Shelley as having "a weak grasp of the actual".

Lawrence Durrell in *A Key to Modern Poetry (1952),* brings out the "**Great Divide**" between these two ages of poetry by comparing and contrasting Tennyson's *Ulysses* and T.S. Eliot's *Gerontion.* Both are old men and both have a sense of History, though Gerontion cynically refers to "the cunning passages of history". Tennyson's Ulysses has faith and optimism:

> "To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield". In contrast Gerontion feels alienated, uprooted and

pessimistic: "I have no ghosts"; "We have not reached conclusion / When I stiffen in a rented house."

The 'Great Divide' is evident in W.B. Yeats poetry itself: in *Coole Park and Ballylee* (1931) he writes of his early dream poetry and the awakening into the harsh political realities of Ireland and the world:

"We were the last romantics--- took for theme / Traditional sanctity and loveliness…/ But all that is changed, that high horse riderless". Yeats discards his romantic "coat/ Covered with embroideries" to be "walking naked" and will "wither into the truth" (*A Coat; The Coming of Widom with Time*).

The ethnic Black poet, LeRoi Jones' words: "We want poems that kill" ---- could form the Epigraph of Modern poetry. The language has more edge and bite, prosaic subjects are commonplace, for eg; ---the spider in the bath tub is the subject matter of Roy Fuller's poem *The Image*, where the spider, an ugly unwanted creature signifies the ugliness and unhappiness of life in the modern times. There are startling titles and subjects for eg; Jarrell's *Eighth Air Force* and *The Woman in the Wahington Zoo*; Lowell's *Skunk Hour* and *For the Union Dead*; Stephen Spender's *Come Let Us Praise the Gas Works* is 'austerely modern' in its reference to Nazi brutality.

Modern poetry mirrors the despair, disillusionment, loneliness and isolation of man, the spiritual barrenness and sterility of the times. T.S. Eliot's masterpiece *The Waste Land* (1922) is the epic of modern times. W.H. Auden's 'wasteland' is his poem *The Age of Anxiety* (1948) and gives classic utterance to the dominant emotions of fear and anxiety typical of the times. 'Fear' is the paralyzing emotion of Prufrock in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*: "I was afraid"; "Do I dare?"; "how should I begin?" and he is never able to frame his "overwhelming question". Philip Larkin in *Wants* expresses the "desire for oblivion" as the world has become unbearable. Lawrence Whistler in *A Form of Epitaph* questions modern man's "purpose of visit" or the meaning of life and answers "barely ascertained". Louis MacNeice in *Prayer Before Birth* laments that man has become a "lethal automaton", "a cog in a machine", an unthinking, unfeeling monster. In *Bagpipe Music* he paints the sordidness and lovelessness of the world as the mother callously asks the midwife to take away her newborn babe saying: "I'm through with overproduction". In *Gerontion* the old man is "waiting for rain" or regeneration and hope, but "Christ the tiger" comes not to redeem, but to condemn. This terrifying situation is reflected everywhere by a "wilderness of mirrors". Jack Clemo in *Christ in the Claypit* finds Christ not in the church but in the claypit, cast there by the "facile praise/False to the heart" of modern man who has lost all faith in divine benevolence. Yeats' *The Second*

*Coming* prophecies the coming of the anti-Christ because "the falcon cannot hear the falconer", or be guided by the Messiah, and presents the Apocalyptic modern. Edwin Muir's *The Labyrinth* symbolizes man in quest of God and salvation.

This barrenness and sterility find supreme exposition in *The Waste Land*. The poem has an epic sweep, is complex and allusive, drawing on a great variety of both Occidental and Oriental myth and symbol; it is a long poem in five sections linked together by a profound emotional pattern and a 'music of ideas'----'*The Burial of the Dead*', '*A Game of Chess*', '*The Fire Sermon*', '*Death by Water*', '*What the Thunder Said*'. Eliot's Wasteland finds salvation in the message of *The Upanishads* : "Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata" meaning 'Give, Sympathize, Self- control'. This would lead to peace or "Shantih, Shantih, Shantih". In *Four Quartets*, Eliot deals with Christianity and Hinduism and evolves a 'creative theology' where God is the "still point" and man is at "a point of intersection of time and the timeless". Eliot's search for a mystic centre started with *Ash Wednesday* where he explored the dark night of the soul under the guidance of St. John of the Cross, and achieved its most individual expression in *Four Quartets*.

**The "Impersonal theory of poetry"** advocated by Eliot in his essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent* has been an influential trend in Modern poetry. Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* preferred to talk about the poet first and then the poem, a preference characteristically Romantic. But Eliot distinguishes between "the mind which creates" and "the man who suffers". He contradicts Wordsworth when he states "poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" (*Tradition and the Individual Talent*). Eliot presents emotion through the **"objective correlative"** so as to distance the merely personal and achieve 'impersonality'. In his essay *Hamlet and His Problems,* Eliot calls Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* an "artistic failure" because it lacked the 'objective correlative', that is, "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion". The Epigraph of *Prufrock* typifies the hellish situation that Prufrock suffers because of his diffidence and anxieties and becomes somewhat neurotic. The triviality of his life is objectified in the self-acknowledgement: "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons". His self-contempt is given through the 'objective correlative' of "I should have been a pair of ragged claws/Scuttling across the floors of silent seas". In *Ash Wednesday*, the passage from struggle to despair to hope is given through the passage of a staircase. Thus 'Literary modernism' encompasses a number of avant-garde works that were attempting to move

beyond traditional practice and conventions in the impulse to shape literature and to 'make it new'.

*The Waste Land* (1922) was the classic of the Modernist movement and resembled an avant-garde documentary film with its vivid impressions of contemporary city life, a cinematic montage, its juxtaposed images, scenes and fragments of conversation. Pound hailed it as "the justification of our modern experiment, since 1900".

**Ambiguity and Obscurity** is of essence to Modern poetry as set out by William Empson in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930). *The Waste Land* has quotations from six different languages and a reference to thirty-five authors. Ezra Pound in *The Pisan Cantos* has Chinese allusions. Prufrock's "overwhelming question" is never framed and becomes an enigma.

The **use of myth** is a significant aspect of Modern poetry. *The Waste Land* is an interweaving of stark realism, symbolism and the mythical---- creating an allusive, somewhat bewildering and plotless complex of thought and feeling ----all together, conveying the music of ideas to present the anxiety- ridden, sterile and aimless life in this urban wasteland where people are experiencing a living death. It broke the fixed association of poetry with the beautiful, the agreeable, the genteel and the ideal. Its heterogenous fragments, elliptical juxtapositions mirrored the new reality of a world torn asunder by the harsh and grim realities of Industrialization, urbanization, War, the new anthropological, scientific and psychological perceptions about human life, impact of technology, loss of religious faith and identity crisis—'-how the human spirit was wounded in modern times'. Yet the interweaving of the symbolic and the mythological enable Eliot to present "the sordidly realistic and the phantasmagoric" where the past melts into the present, where the crowd on London Bridge recalls Dante's Limbo. *The Waste Land* attributes the angst of modern life to its alienation from myth. Eliot praised Frazer's *The Golden Bough* to the work of Freud as "throwing its light on the obscurities of the soul from a different angle". *The Waste Land* uses the myth of the Fisher King as delineated by Frazer, as the myth of dying and reviving god, its association with fertility rites and vegetative myths. Myth integrated primitive man with the natural world, with fellow human beings, with the past and the future and with the divine, bestowing his world and life with significance, anchoring him with moral, religious and psychological validity. Since myth wells up from the depths of human nature, to lose contact with such powerful resources is to lose emotional vitality and succumb to a dry and barren emptiness. In his essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, Eliot explains Tradition as : "the historical sense… not only of the pastness of the past, but

of its presence… a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together". No poet or artist has "his meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists". This "mythical method" set up the negotiation of the contemporary with antiquity and endowed poetry with a visionary depth in Yeats and Eliot. Reviewing Joyce's *Ulysses,* he stated how myth was "a way of controlling, of ordering …the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history"; how 'Psychology…ethnology, and *The Golden Bough* have bestowed a "mythical method" which will enable "making the modern world possible in art". Eliot's critical essays on poetry paid serious attention to a close analysis of poetic method and formal qualities of verse and were followed with great zeal in England and America. Eliot's *Selected Essays* is a collection of his best pieces and he enjoyed the status of "an oracle" on the literature of his times writes Perkins.

## III.    HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The **Georgian Poets** of the 1900's dealt with homely topics and valued simplicity and emotional directness. Georgian lyricism is aptly defined by Robert Lynd as "Beatrice born under a dancing star"--- for example: In *Arabia,* Walter de la Mare writes of "dim silked, dark haired musicians/ In the brooding stillness of night" ; in *Cargoes*, the "Quinquireme of Nineveh" brings "a cargo of ivory/And apes and peacocks/Sandalwood, cedarwood and sweet white wine". Edward Marsh's anthology, *Georgian Poetry,1911-12*, announces this movement in poetry. Marsh coined the term "Georgian" and published 5 anthologies of Georgian Poetry, between 1912-1922. Some important poets were— Abercrombie, Brooke, W.H. Davies, Monro, Masefield, Drinkwater, Walter de la Mare, Squire, Shanks, Turner, Freeman. Middleton Murry in the *Athenaeum*, Dec., 5, 1919 criticized them for their "false simplicity"; there is "nothing disturbing" about their poetry and they worship "trees and birds". Inspired by the English Romantics the Georgians were nature poets, treating Nature as in the Wordsworthian belief of it being the "guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul/ Of all my moral being". They rebelled against Victorian "rhetoric", and like the Edwardians before them, they reacted against the 'fin de siecle'; drew inspiration from contemporary poets like Hardy, Yeats and Synge; they disliked the noisier side of Edwardian poetry – Kipling, Chesterton, and Noyes, but continued with the traditional attitude of cultivation of the 'agreeable' and the 'beautiful', yet preferred a tightening of the loose and slipshod Edwardian narrative style. Georgian poetry was traditional with an easy and smooth popular style, a

cautiously optimistic tone; though some of them had experienced the horrors of War, yet it did not alter their mindset. They had none of the shock effects, dislocation and dissonance typical of the Modernists. Their poetic feelings were wholesome, kindly, compassionate and compromising, "capable of a civilized, complex balance and charm that has been rare since", writes Perkins.

War Poetry: English poets of the First World War began as Georgians, but their poetry changed gradually as they experienced shock and moral outrage at the horrors of war.

The **World War I poets** like Rupert Brooke romanticized war: "If I should die, think only this of me:/That there's some corner of a foreign field/That is forever England". Nationalistic feeling, patriotism and heroic death on the battlefield are prized values. But Sigfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen write of the harsh and grim realities of war. Owen wrote: "my subject is war, and the pity of war. The poetry is in the pity". This is to be found in his poems, especially *Futility, Anthem for Doomed Youth* and *Insensibility* which presents cynicism about War: "Men are gaps for filling/ Losses who might have fought/Longer, but no one bothers." Though there is not a very significant connection between War poetry and the first Modernists -- Pound, Eliot and others-- since their line of development moved in a different trajectory and they adopted traditions completely different from those of the Georgians and War poets. Yet the War poets with their shocking descriptions, satire, invective and bitter irony widened the possible tones and subjects of poetry. War poetry and the War itself prepared an audience for the High Modernist poetry of the 1920's when the Modernists voiced disgust, stark realism, horror, satire and black humour, as well as a spiritual questing atmosphere of literature in the post- war period.

The **World War II poets** could not romanticize war at all because of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Edith Sitwell wrote *Dirge for the New Sunrise*, "dirge" or song of lamentation at the "new sunrise", the intense, searing heat of the atomic mushroom of destruction. Man with his "murderous brain/….conceived the death/Of his mother Earth, and tore/ Her womb, to know the place/ where he was conceived".

**Imagism,** a poetic movement between the years 1912-1917, influenced by the poetic theory of T.E. Hulme, sought to present an image that is hard, clear and concentrated as in the famous lines of Ezra Pound, its pioneering guru: "The apparition of these faces in the crowd; /Petals on a wet, black bough" (*In a Station of the Metro*). Pound saw the Imagist poem as a complex in which "painting or sculpture seems as if it were just coming over into speech". He saw *Des Imagistes,* published in 1914, as a collection to promote this new poetry. Imagism has been described as "the

grammar school of modern poetry, the instruction and drill in basic principles", writes David Perkins. Precision of phrase wrought with metaphor, free verse, the use of idiomatic and colloquial language, the rejection of poetic diction and 'rhetoric'---are its essential features. Imagist poetry, inspired also by the Japanese 'Haiku', suggests short free-verse impressions of places, objects, human interactions with a consciousness of craft and technique, controlled and reticent evocation of emotion and the significantly insightful. The Imagist poem was considered the most accessible way to the "modern" and to "make it new" as Pound exhorted the poets of his times. Their subjects were not the conventional ideas of beauty, love, death or God; instead, the focus was on "Hedges", "Leaf Prints", "Fog", and "Meeting-House Hill"---- often containing wry humour and evoking complex feelings. Such poems displaced the Romantic nature lyric with new perspectives of the modern consciousness. Influential names associated with Imagism are those of Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell (*Some Imagist Poets* 1915-17), H.D., D.H. Lawrence, William Carlos Williams, John Gould and Richard Aldington.

T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* becomes the harbinger of Modern poetry. A vision of the apocalyptic modern is presented in W.B.Yeats' *The Second Coming.* **Eliot and Yeats dominate the modern poetic movement**. Eliot's "Objective Correlative" as well as the emotional-intellectual complex in Yeats' poetry are a modernistic rehabilitation of Donne and the Metaphysical School of Poetry of the 17th century. In 1900 Yeats wrote 'The Symbolism of Poetry' wherein he expressed his belief in inspiration, imagination, magic and mystical transcendence, a belief in a shared human mind and memory or the 'Spiritus Mundi' and the 'Anima Mundi'. Pound in his poem 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' rues the absence of 'the sublime' in the twentieth century's preoccupation with mass consumerism mass media and mass culture, where beauty and transcendence have faded away. Pound in *The Cantos*, having 120 sections, is akin to another modern epic poem, namely, Eliot's *The Waste Land*,---both are concerned with the disintegration of modern civilization.

**Social and political unrest** finds expression as in Yeats' *September 1913*, *Easter 1916,* and *The Second Coming* which reflect the Irish political turmoil and the World Wars; in W.H. Auden's *September1,1939* and *Spain*; Stephen Spender's poem *Not Palaces an Era's Crown* reflect Communist ideology : "No man shall hunger/Man shall spend equally".

Modern poetry's **experimental and innovative aspect** is to be witnessed in the '--isms' that influenced it ---Imagism, Symbolism, and others. "On or about December 1910

human character changed" stated Virginia Woolf in her essay *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*. The London Art exhibition of 1910 entitled 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' curated by Roger Fry, her fellow member of the Bloomsbury group, shocked many art enthusiasts who witnessed such Abstract and experimental works. Visual and Fine Art was blazing a new path and creating new ones ---Impressionism/Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Vorticism, Surrealism, Dadaism and Futurism. Modernism moved away from traditional Victorian representation and depiction of the world to focus on aesthetics of representation--- language, form, narrative strategies and perspectives on a rapidly changing world.

Cassirer defines a symbol as the "actualizing of inarticulate experience in an apprehensible form". The **Symbolist Movement** in France began with Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* (1857) and continued by such major poets like Rimbaud, Verlaine, Mallarme and Valerie. English and European literature since World War I has been a notable era of Symbolism. The important practitioners are--- Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Dylan Thomas, Hart Crane, Wallace Stevens and others. Eliot's *The Waste Land* employs symbolism of the elements—Air, Water, Fire, Rock. Yeats' 'Tower' stands for truth; Byzantium symbolizes the 'Artifice of Eternity'; 'gyres' denote the cycles of history.

Eliot becomes 'minor industry' after the 30's and Modern poetry witnessed movements like 'Pure Poetry', 'The Movement Poets' and 'Confessional Poetry'.

**"Pure Poetry"** of Middleton Murry and Swinburne sought to communicate its experience in an instance like music in keeping with their belief "poetry is akin to music". They wrote poetry 'unaltered' by any allusions whatsoever.

D.J. Enright in *Poets of the 1950's* writes of the group of poets known as **"Movement"** and who rejected the neo-romanticism of the 1940's. They sought to cleanse poetry of the 'dead spots' of Allusion and valued the neatness and pithiness of the great Augustan figures—Dryden and Pope. The 'Movement' poets are ---Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis, William Empson, Thomas Gunn, Donald Davie who also wrote *Purity of Diction in English Verse* (1952).

**Confessional Poetry** of American poets---- Slyvia Plath, Robert Lowell, John Berryman, Anne Sexton, Theodore Roethke and Alan Ginsberg deals with the poet's self intimately, and sacrifices aesthetic distance between self and utterance. Plath's *Fever 103* frankly confesses her suicidal tendencies. **'Confessionalism'** influenced famous English rock artists like Madonna, Peter Gabriel and Morrissey.

British poetry in the late 1970's, 1980's and 1990's adopted a self-consciously energetic manner in reaction to uneasy political developments and economic stress of the time. A. Alvarez called for a 'new seriousness' in British poetry--- likening it to an American poetry industry instead of treating it as an art. The **'Martian School'** is associated with Reid and Raine. Reid describes '**Martianism**' as "a parish matter". Craig Raine's poems establish a parochial typicality—'The Butcher', 'The Barber', 'The Grocer', to suggest a sense of community, domestic environments, the rural village milieu, and 'global concepts' were obscured. **'New Generation'** poetry is associated with Carol Ann Duffy and Simon Armitage. They cultivated a 'class-free', easy accessibility, 'a man-of-the-people' attitude. For Duffy, 'voice is an index of moral health'; characters are diagnosed by the words they speak: "She didn't shit, she *soiled* or *had a* soil/and didn't piss, *passed water*. Saturday night,/ when the neighbours were fucking, she *submitted*/*to intercourse* and, though she didn't shit cobs then,/later she *perspired*. Jesus wept. Bloody Nora. *Language*!" (*Selling Manhattan*;1987).

**Modernist 'Little Magazines'** played a central role in promoting this new aesthetics of poetry of the early twentieth century. While many favored the modernist male canon, others included the emerging discourses like Anarchism and Feminism. It was "the golden age of the literary manuscript" writes D. Van Hulle. These magazines created a platform for the dazzling experimentation, the new idiom, the newness of urban culture and perceptions, and focused on the literary value of the avant-garde. The pioneering spirit of the little magazines brought out the best in Anglo-American interfusions. Some important magazines providing an outlet to the work of new poets --- *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*(1912), *The Dial*(1916), *The Little Review* (1914), *The Seven Arts*(1916), *BLAST*(1914), *The Criterion*, *The Egoist.*

## IV.    CONCLUSION

Yeats declared: "All art is…. an endeavor to condense as out of the flying vapour of the world an image of human perfection". In 1930, Edmund Wilson questioned: "Is Verse a Dying Technique?" But with so much experimentation the possibilities on the human landscape are immense as Malcolm Bradbury suggests in his book *Possibilities* (1973).

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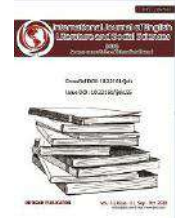
# Communicating through Grief: The Effects of Writing in Victorian and Gilded Ages

Dr. Cristina Guarneri

*Abstract*— *Grief is a complex emotional response to loss, often associated with the death of a loved one. However, there were many ways that it was expressed. Mourning stationery, mourning cigarettes, hair wreaths, and mourning rings, on the more expensive end, were objects used to signal a public display of grief, but writing had a profound influence on the Victorian and Gilded Ages, but even in death, there was money to be made in death during the Victorian and Gilded Ages. The world of commerce was quick to recognize the money to be made from this unexpected and unprecedented run on all things funeral. This economic foresight triggered a surge in British manufacturing. As the production of mourning tea sets reveals, taking tea and thinking about death were two cultural practices that could be done simultaneously. An important legacy that remained in mourning was letter writing and stationery during the Victorian and Gilded Ages, which was based on the writer and recipient of expressive papers, and has been maintained as a tradition through modern times as a form of expression and healing. As mourning became more expressive, handwritten notes and letters reached peak popularity during the second half of the 19th century and became fashionable for people as being characterized by having an elegant simplicity.*

*Keywords*— *Writing, Gilded Age, Victorian Age, Grief, Stationery*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Grief is a complex emotional response to loss, often associated with the death of a loved one. However, it can also arise from other significant life changes, such as the end of a relationship, loss of health, or a change in life circumstances. It is a deeply personal process, with no right or wrong way to grieve. While grief is often associated with feelings of sadness, it can also manifest in a range of other emotions, including anger, guilt, fear, and even relief. Writing is an expressive means for mourning and has been found through the use of tea, dress, and letter writing; along with the socioeconomic status of the person in mourning.

## II. TEA AND MOURNING

Victorian mourning, when done properly, seeped into every aspect of daily life, including teatime. During a period of great social and economic change, catalyzed by the Industrial Revolution, tea and mourning were two things that were able to unite the Victorian populace across every socioeconomic level. According to Julie E. Fromer, author of *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England*. "Tea crossed class lines, appearing at the humblest suppers and gracing the table of Queen Victoria, creating a universal English habit." As with the varying levels of tea taking, the practice of mourning took on different levels of extravagance depending on the social status of the person in mourning.

To mourn publicly in the Victorian Era was to mourn expensively. Wealthy widows, the lodestars of outlandish mourning rituals, could be expected to closely mimic Queen Victoria's infamous mourning practices. A wealthy widow mourned her husband for a period of two years following his death. She would be outfitted in a monochromatic wardrobe of raven, drab and without an ounce of shine, otherwise known as "widows' weeds," during the first year of this period. This attire was coupled with a strict withdrawal from social frivolities. The second year of her mourning saw a gradual lightening of attire; the black dress was eventually replaced with eggplant, mauve,

and dark grey fabrics. Yet even after her two dedicated years to outward mourning, a widow might continue to mourn her husband by hosting an annual dinner in honor of his death and memory, as Chris Woodyard details in *The Victorian Book of the Dead*.

The poor widow, while not able to afford such displays of luxury, saw to it that she would not to be excluded from this cultural practice. There was paramount importance to mourning: failing to mourn properly was taken to mean that her marriage was invalid. In the case that she could not afford an expensive mourning gown, the poor widow would have dyed one of the dresses she already owned. Such a dress would also come in handy for any future deaths she might be expected to mourn for, such as for one of her young children, an event that was as probable as it was tragic: half of all children born in the early nineteenth century would die before the age of 10, as Thomas W. Laqueur soberly reveals in *The Work of the Dead*. In addition to attire, a myriad and plentitude of mourning objects were accessible on a variety of economic levels.

Mourning stationary, mourning cigarettes, hair wreaths, and mourning rings, on the more expensive end, were objects used to signal a public display of grief, but writing had a profound influence, but even in death, there was money to be made in death during the Victorian and Gilded Ages. The world of commerce was quick to recognize the money to be made from this unexpected and unprecedented run on all things funeral. This economic foresight triggered a surge in British manufacturing. Mass production of every kind of ephemera to commemorate Prince Albert, including "plaques, busts, plates, handkerchiefs, and even special mourning tea sets," commenced. As the production of mourning tea sets reveals, taking tea and thinking on death were two cultural practices that could be done simultaneously. The dead were never erased, for the Victorians. Their memory was kept alive through these mementos long after their bodies had been buried under the ground.

These two seemingly dissociate practices have made the Victorians' legacy stand the test of time. Teatime is synonymous with British cultural identity and heritage, and as the Death Positivity movement gains traction in the United Kingdom and in the United States, historians, death professionals, writers, and artists are looking to the Victorians for guidance when it comes to doing death 'properly,' and working through grief.

## History of Paper in Mourning

Perhaps the most Victorian of all the Victorian letters is mourning stationery. Death and especially early death was a common occurrence in the 1800s, and mourning the dead was a way of life during the Victorian era. Being in mourning not only dictated what you wore and did and didn't do, as it determined what type of letters you sent. Mourning stationery had a black border around the edge of the paper and the envelopes. The distinctive envelope served a couple good uses. It notified the letter carrier of its somber and important contents, which encouraged extra care and protection during transit. Similarly, it gave the recipient some warning of the news it held, giving time to sit or find privacy before reading. It was an art form, shrouded in strict etiquette and common practice for many middle and upper-class men and women. This post sets aside most of the etiquette and briefly outlines what Victorian era stationery actually looked like and what it was used for, especially the color of paper.

The color of paper had changed over the decades. Earlier in the Victorian period, colored and lightly tinted and scented papers were fashionable, and mostly, if not exclusively, used by women. Floral embellishments, fancy finishes, and edges lined in gold, silver, or other colors were also in trend in the earlier years but fell out of fashion in favor of simple family crests and monograms. By the 1890s, embellishments were considered to be in bad taste for most circumstances. One thing that everyone seemed to agree on, no matter the year or occasion: high quality plain white or cream paper in a nice thick weight was always the most elegant choice. Lady Gertrude Elizabeth Campbell, Etiquette of Good Society stated in 1893, that "there is a fashion in letter-paper and envelopes which is ever varying as to size and shape, sometimes small, at other times large; now oblong, now square; but one thing never alters, and that is the desirability of using good thick paper and envelopes, whatever the shape may be." For personal correspondence, note-paper was used. For either men or women's stationery, the best letters were kept simple, with the focus on high-quality paper and excellent penmanship. One author goes as far as to say both paper and envelopes should be of fine quality. It conduces to fine penmanship, and perhaps inspires the writer with fine thoughts.

Envelopes, no matter what style of letter or note paper was used, the envelope must always match. Sometimes two envelopes were used; the inner envelope would be made of the same paper as the letter, and the outer protective envelope would be a bit hardier stock, sometimes in a buff color. Envelopes were sealed with wax up until the end of the century, and while women could use a variety of colors such as gold or blue, men could only use red. Black wax was used if the writer was in mourning. By the end of the 1800s, gummed envelopes replaced the need for wax. Black ink was always used, and by the end of the century, anything else was seen as distasteful. Some earlier passing trends allowed for women to write in colored inks, with

violet being a popular choice for some time. Quill pens were not as common as steel pens, but they were still used by some of the more talented writers. The stub pen was also viewed as a good choice for someone with the skill to wield it gracefully. The type of pen used wasn't nearly as important as the neatness, elegance, and grace of the penmanship.

### Mourning Stationery

Perhaps the most Victorian of all the Victorian letters is mourning stationery. Death and especially early death was a common occurrence in the 1800s, and mourning the dead was a way of life during the Victorian era. Being in mourning not only dictated what you wore and did and didn't do, as it determined what type of letters were sent. Mourning stationery had a black border around the edge of the paper and the envelopes. The distinctive envelope served a couple good uses. It notified the letter carrier of its somber and important contents, which encouraged extra care and protection during transit. Similarly, it gave the recipient some warning of the news it held, giving time to sit or find privacy before reading.

The Mourning Stationery Envelope is an example of a black bordered mourning stationery envelope. However, mourning stationery wasn't used just for death announcements, it was also used for all letter writing the bereaved did in the year or two after their loved one's death. Even the thickness of the black border could indicate important information about the loss. In some cases, the closeness of the relationship between the writer and the deceased would be conveyed through the width of the border. For example, a mother mourning the loss of a child would have a thicker border than if she were mourning the loss of a cousin. In some cases it conveyed to the reader how much time had passed since the death occurred, starting with a thick border early in the mourning period, and gradually thinning out over the course of the year or years. However, these social rules varied over time and geographically, and eventually gave way to most people using simple, thin bordered stationery for all mourning purposes.

Within American history, letter writing became popular during the second half of the 19th century and was due to three main factors. Literacy rates were higher than ever, mail could be delivered quickly across large distances thanks to the newly completed rail system, and the invention of the postage stamp made sending mail more affordable to all classes. After the turn of the century, much of the stationery that people used was plain and uniform, and greeting cards and postcards started to gain popularity. Over time, telegraphs, radio, and the telephone made letter writing as a primary method of passing news obsolete,

except during war, where letter writing remained very popular throughout the 20th century.

For these reasons, it's clear that the Victorian era was truly the pinnacle of letter writing, at least in American history. Though letter writing today is certainly not the most efficient way to spread news or make an announcement, it has certainly stood the test of time. We still often send wedding invitations, birth announcements, letters of condolences or congratulations, and birthday cards in the mail with care. When we do take the time to handwrite a friendly note or quick letter, it is always received as something special. The physical nature of the notecard, the quality of its paper, the writer's distinct penmanship, and the fact that it's the only copy in the world just like it, all make the reading experience more personal, and more special and unique, which was found to be true during the Victorian and Gilded Ages.

### The Letter Edged In Black
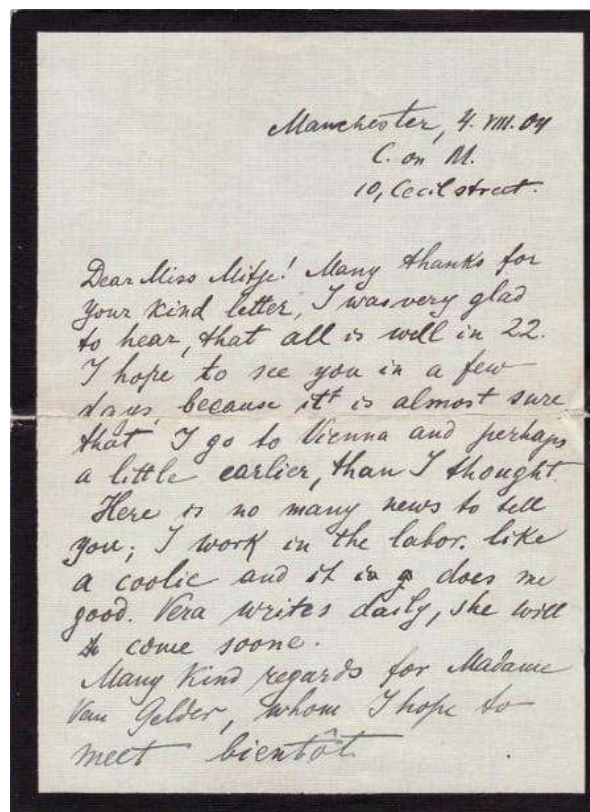


*Fig.1: Thick black line around mourning stationery.*

Letter writing and stationery during the Victorian and Gilded Ages was based on the writer and recipient of expressive papers known as Mourning Stationary. Its border signified an important sociological phenomenon. These marked papers were immediately identifiable by a black border surrounding the page, and were often accompanied by a black-bordered envelope. The recipient would instantly understand that the sender is in mourning. Though this

practice has its origins in the seventeenth century, it became popular in the Victorian era and remained in vogue for much of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century. As the mourner would begin to write on such special paper with a thick black border around his or her stationery, which would narrow over time.

By 1921, in her Book of Etiquette, Lillian Eichler Watson maintains that white stationery was "correct for all occasions, and mourning is not an exception." If one were to opt for a black-bordered mourning, stationery, she opines, it ought to be narrow; a border nearly an inch wide is "in bad taste." When it comes to thank-you cards, she echoed the Victorian idea of lessening the border during the morning period, or keeping it consistent, but narrow, until it was discarded altogether.
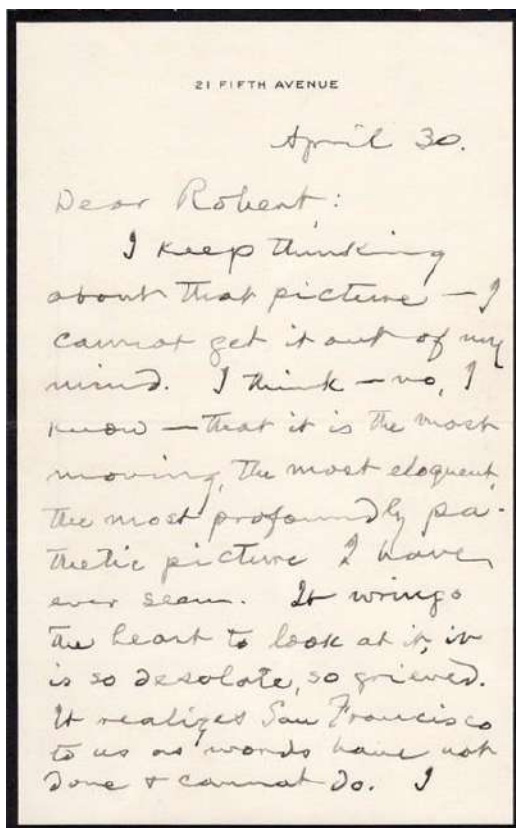


*Fig.2: A thin black line around mourning stationery.*

Black borders around print have been a powerful signal of bereavement in American culture since the nineteenth century. Not being confined to personal correspondence, nineteenth century newspapers would run death announcements with a border of black. Tellingly, Mark Twain explains in this letter that he can't deliver a "light and nonsensical speech" to be printed in the paper, along with the "black bars of mourning" on the occasion of President Garfield's death. Indeed, Hattie Nevada's 1897 song, *The Letter Edged in Black*, has been covered by many

artists throughout the years, preserving the idea of a black-edged letter or envelope as a portent of bad news or mourning well after the custom had fallen out of favor in the United States.

Mourning stationery, especially envelopes, were very common during the Victorian Period. During this time, the recipient of the letter had to pay in order to receive it. These mourning envelopes, with black trim around all of the edges, served as a message to the recipient that someone had died and that they needed to find the money to pay for the letter. Consequently, many people of the lower reaches could not afford to pay for their letters. As time progressed, writing had changed in its customs and conventions that led from being a traditional means of communicating and expressing to a modernized tradition.

**Modern Day Writing**

The Victorians used an array of customs and conventions that included black-edged stationery during an era of high mortality. Writing helped them to get through frequent bereavements. Since the Victorian and Gilded Ages, that are valuable to the customs of the Eighteenth and Nineteen Centuries. Even in an age of texting, email, and social media a handwritten letter of condolence is still recognized as an indispensable and time-honored way of conveying thoughts and good wishes to a person in mourning. The act of writing, choosing stationery, the use of pen and ink, and addressing the envelope sends a strong message of concern and empathy, as condolence letters are essential. Guided and detailed writing can not only help us process what we've been through and assist us as we envision a path forward; it can lower our blood pressure, strengthen our immune systems, and increase our general well-being.

Writing is a form of expressive writing that has been shown to heal us. It is a certain kind of guided, detailed writing can not only help us process what we've been through and assist us as we envision a path forward; it can lower our blood pressure, strengthen our immune systems, and increase our general well-being. Expressive writing can result in a reduction in stress, anxiety, and depression; improve our sleep and performance; and bring us greater focus and clarity.

These effects of writing as a tool for healing are well documented. Pennebaker and Evans, studied the impact of a certain kind of writing on mental health. Since then, over 200 research studies have reported that "emotional writing" can improve people's physical and emotional health. In classic studies, subjects who wrote about personal upheavals for 15 minutes a day over three or four days visited doctors for health concerns less frequently and reported greater psychological well-being. In a 2009 study, a six-week writing intervention increases resilience,

and decreases depressive symptoms, perceived stress, and rumination among those reporting trauma in the past year. Thirty-five percent of the participants who began the program with indicators of likely clinical depression ended the program no longer meeting this criterion.

Writing as an intervention may seem counterintuitive, since writing is viewed as being about negative experiences has a positive effect, narrating the story of a past negative event or an ongoing anxiety "frees up" cognitive resources. Since trauma damages the brain tissue, but that when people translate their emotional experience into words, they may be changing the way it is organized in the brain.

Writing matters, both personally and professionally. In a moment still permeated with epic stress and loss, we need to call in all possible supports. Those who've suffered profoundly, whether they've lost income, loved ones, well-being, may not wish to chat about it casually with coworkers for fear that those who didn't experience that level of loss and are now rushing to parties and vacations can't relate. The difficulty of expressing of emotion out loud can be readily given a voice through writing, since it allows for the writer to avoid processing what had been experienced in life. Writing minimizes the impact of the most profound traumas and crises of our lives. Healing is essential to our collective wellness, and expressive writing has already proven to be a tool for enhancing well-being in teachers and other full-time workers.

According to a July 2020 writing study by researchers Emily Round, Mark Wetherell, Vicki Elsey, and Michael A. Smith, a course of "positive expressive writing," meaning writing specifically about intensely positive experiences over three consecutive days, not only reduced "state anxiety" immediately post-writing but improved work-related well-being and job satisfaction four weeks later. Researchers call for further work on the effects of expressive writing on organizational outcomes suggests that writing may even enhance work quality and creativity in the workplace. "Creativity is a basic human response to trauma and a natural emergency defense system," writes Louise DeSalvo in *Writing as a Way of Healing: How Telling Our Stories Transforms Our Lives*, a book that famously draws on the myriad scientific studies about the efficacy of using writing as a restorative tool that was recognized since the Victorian and Gilded Ages.

## Writing That Heals

Expressive writing has changed since the Victorian and Gilded Ages. It is expansively defined as writing that helps us make sense of our thoughts and emotions. Established writers know this intuitively. Expressive writing can take myriad forms, including journaling, memoir, poetry, even opinion or thought pieces, but *what* you write matters less than *how*.

The most healing writing, according to researchers, must follow a set of creative parameters. Most importantly, it can be just for you. It must contain concrete, authentic, explicit detail. The writer must link feelings to events, on the page. Such writing allows a person to tell a complete, complex, coherent story, with a beginning, middle, and end. This made writing beneficial in both the Victorian and Gilded Ages and even now. In the telling, such writing transforms the writer from a victim into something more powerful: a narrator with the power to observe.

The difference between a victim and a survivor is the meaning made of the trauma. Following the Holocaust, for instance, many survivors wrote accounts of their experiences. Victor Frankl, whose 1946 book *Man's Search for Meaning* was written over a period of nine days, was originally published under the title *A Psychologist Experiences the Concentration Camp*. This type of immersive, reflective writing process can help us piece ourselves back together after even the most unimaginable times. In writing our stories, we retain authorship over our lives.

Writing has long been recognized as a form of therapy. It provides a safe space for expressing emotions, exploring thoughts, and making sense of experiences. When dealing with grief, writing can serve as a powerful tool for healing and growth. Writing allows for the expression of emotions that may be difficult to verbalize. It can provide a sense of release, helping to alleviate the burden of unexpressed feelings. Furthermore, writing can help to organize chaotic thoughts, providing clarity and perspective in the midst of grief.

## Benefits of Writing during Grief

Writing during grief can have several benefits. It can help to process and understand emotions, provide a sense of control, and facilitate healing and growth. Let's explore these benefits in more detail. Writing can help to process and understand emotions. Grief can bring a whirlwind of emotions that can be confusing and overwhelming. Writing provides a space to explore these emotions, helping to make sense of them and understand their source. It can provide a sense of control. Grief can often feel like a chaotic and uncontrollable process. Writing provides a means to navigate through the grief journey at one's own pace. Lastly, writing during mourning in the Victorian and Gilded Ages facilitated healing and growth. By expressing emotions and exploring thoughts, writing can lead to insights and revelations that can promote healing. It can also foster a

sense of connection with the deceased, helping to maintain a sense of their presence and influence in one's life.

Grief is a deeply personal and profound journey, one that can be overwhelming and isolating. However, writing can serve as a powerful tool to navigate this journey, providing a space for expression, exploration, and healing. Whether through journaling, letter writing, poetry, or storytelling, writing can help to process emotions, provide a sense of control, and facilitate healing and growth.

## III.    CONCLUSION

Death is a universal experience, yet the way we mourn and commemorate the departed. It is an inevitable part of life. Funeral traditions have been an integral part of human culture for centuries, serving as a way to honor and commemorate the lives of those who have passed away. These customs provide solace and closure for grieving families and communities. However, just like any other aspect of human civilization, funeral traditions have evolved over time, adapting to societal changes, cultural shifts, and advancements in technology have changed not only grief, but how grief has changed communication through writing, which is both therapeutic and empowering for individuals as far back as the Gilded Ages and has progressed over the years.

During the Victorian era (1837-1901), mourning rituals reached their peak in terms of elaboration and formality. The death of a loved one was seen as an occasion for public display of grief and respect. Mourning attire, such as black clothing and veils, was worn for an extended period to signify mourning. Elaborate funeral processions and memorials became common, and the practice of sending sympathy cards gained popularity.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, grieving women generally wore heavy black outfits that included veils and bonnets; sometimes there were necklaces, or bits of jewelry that contained the hair of the deceased. Both male and female mourners often used special stationery with black borders for correspondence helped readers to signify the depth of the writer's mourning and at what stage, a heavy black edge identified as the early stages of mourning. A thin black thin showed that mourner was in a later stage of mourning. Over time, the borders would narrow, to show readers that the bereaved party was slowly recovering. Today, writing has taken a different tone through the use of Legacy Writing. During the Gilded Ages, it was tradition to wear black for one year, and to use mourning stationery for that year.

The importance of writing as a means of therapeutic expression has remained a timeless tradition for people. Writing, as an expressive tool, was invaluable not only today in communicating thoughts and feelings, but also during the Victorian and Gilded Ages as a social etiquette and common practice for many in the middle and upper-class.

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# Impact of Western Thought in English Literature

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*Abstract*— *Western philosophy has been expressed and developed historically through a rich and varied process documented in English literature. The intellectual movements that influenced English literature from antiquity to the present are carefully examined in this essay. The formation and development of religious themes were greatly influenced by medieval Christian philosophy, while ancient Greek and Roman philosophies served as an inspiration for the themes and materials of literary works. Philosophy and literature were combined by the Renaissance humanism movement to symbolize humanity's quest for the human spirit. Philosophy is specifically conveyed in literature through themes such as nature, reason, and self-awareness, to name just a few. Certain literary genres and philosophical systems also have a lot in common. By promoting dialogue and interaction between literature and philosophy, interdisciplinary research will expand our knowledge.*

*Keywords*— *Philosophy, Thought, Renaissance, Humanism, Relationship.*

It's a fascinating topic to study how English literature presents and modifies Western thought. Western philosophers' ideas have shaped literary production's basic ideas and expressive techniques since antiquity. They have also contributed to the development and reform of literature. From the era of Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece to the contemporary philosophers Nietzsche and Heidegger, philosophical concepts have been portrayed in English literary works in a multitude of complex and different ways. By examining the embodiment and transformation process of Western philosophy in English literary masterpieces, we can gain more insight into the fundamental ideas that underpin creative creativity as well as the relationship between philosophy and art. Throughout the classical era, classical Greek philosophy had a significant influence on English literature. Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle have had a profound and wide-ranging influence on the development of English literature because of their rich subjects and resources for later creative works.

Because of their concepts, which cover politics, morals, ethics, and more, English literature is deeply infused with moral and ethical quandaries. Socrates' meditations on moral ethics and his exploration of human existence have been infused into English literature. Plato's conception of an ideal state and metaphysical philosophy, which generated literary discussions and conflicts between idealism and actuality, set the groundwork for Aristotle's theory of tragedy. This affected the way that theatrical literature progressed. Roman philosophical ideas, which are reflected in political, legal, and ethical frameworks, have had a significant influence on English literature.

Literary works often contain deep discussions on politics, morality, and social ethics. Shakespeare's dialectical examination of virtue and power in "Hamlet" and Virgil's understanding of honour and duty in the epic "Aeneid" are two examples of this. Classical age philosophy not only gave English literature a deep conceptualization but also a timeless relevance and purpose. They promoted imaginative analyses and portrayals of morality, compassion, and idealism, and they pushed writers to take into account social realities and human life. These ancient philosophical concepts not only had a significant influence on English literature during the classical era, but also continue to do so on the ideation and creation of contemporary literary works.

The Middle Ages saw a vast deal of Christian thinking circulate and be contemplated, which had a significant impact on English literature. The theological

imagination in "The Divine Comedy" and the religious allegories in "The Canterbury Tales" led to an increase in religious themes in English literature. "The Canterbury Tales," one of Chaucer's most well-known compositions, is a collection of stories that highlight the values and religious beliefs of the time as well as the attention society gave to them. Dante's "The Divine Comedy," which depicts Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven and delves deeply into religious faith and redemption, highlights the importance of Christian philosophy in mediaeval literature.

Medieval English literature, such as hagiographies and Biblical story adaptations, frequently include theological discussion aspects, demonstrating the profound influence of medieval intellectual thought on writing. These works reflect the theological and cultural context of their time, as well as Christian religious ideals and examine questions of religion and human existence. The Middle Ages' Christian philosophy had a profound and wide-ranging influence on English literature, improving its subjects and content and offering a vital framework for the creation of later literary masterpieces. These works not only transmit religious traditions but also provide a great deal of intellectual illumination and had a big influence on later literary and philosophical developments.

The Renaissance brought about a deeper merger of philosophy and literature, with the rise of humanist philosophy that placed a strong emphasis on individual freedom and dignity. Humanist themes abound in English literature, from the plays of Shakespeare to the writings of the Renaissance. The basic ideas of humanism, which explore the idea of free choice while praising human morality and knowledge, exhibit this trend. You can find instances of these conversations in "Paradise Lost." The philosophical concepts of the ancient and Middle Ages have had a deep and wide-ranging influence on English literature. Their addition of deep intellectual content and cultural background to English literature resulted in significant alterations in literary expression as well as people's comprehension and interpretation of literary works. Since the Renaissance, the humanist literary tradition in English literature has continued and expanded. Each era's philosophical ideas and literary works came together to form a vibrant and rich cultural legacy that provided a solid foundation for later, timeless, and ever-evolving literary and philosophical growth.

Themes of existence and self-awareness are frequently explored in English literature. As an example of the tension and struggle that modern people have between their own selves and society, the protagonist of Susan Sontag's novel "White Noise" contemplates deeply on her own self-awareness and the state of existence. Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" also examines the nihilism and

loneliness of the individual in modern society through the transformation of the protagonist. English literature frequently reflects concepts of reason and enlightenment. Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" highlights the tension between reason and passion and serves as an example of the rationalist principles of the Enlightenment, which favoured the exercise of individual reason and freedom without being restricted by societal conventions.

The themes and subjects of literary works have been strongly influenced by the natural philosophers of antiquity who attempted to use reason to explain the workings of the world. Jonathan Swift reexamines rationality in "Gulliver's Travels," where satire on politics and society is prevalent. The worship of reason and science during the Enlightenment led to a critique of human nature and society. Topics like contemplation and a love of nature became more valued in human emotions and imagination with the rise of Romanticism.

In 19th-century pragmatic writing, investigations of human nature and realistic depictions of social circumstances were increasingly prominent. Postmodernists and existentialists investigated the questions of human existence and purpose in the 20th century. Literary masterpieces that questioned reality, such as Sartre's "The Outsider" and Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," demonstrated this. These changes not only show how people's worries about life, the world, and the self varied depending on the historical setting, but they also show how philosophical concepts are generated, absorbed, and critiqued in literary works. Literary works possess unique intellectual substance and cultural context due to the philosophical currents of each age, which enhances literary expression and facilitates readers' comprehension and interpretation of the works. The close and varied relationship between philosophy and literature has grown with the rise of globalization and interdisciplinary studies. Many literary works now combine traditional literary techniques and themes with philosophical concepts to tackle increasingly abstract and complex subjects. In modern poetry and fiction, philosophical subjects like identity, human existence, and moral dilemmas are regularly covered. For example, David Foster Wallace's "Infinite Jest" explores human nature and free will in addition to delving extensively into issues of meaning and comprehension. Louis Gardner's book "Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid" is analogous. Many philosophers also express their beliefs through literature. Writers contribute to making philosophical theories more real and relatable to readers' everyday lives by interpreting them via narrative and character development. Classic novels like Jean-Paul Sartre's "The Flies" and Albert Camus' "The Stranger" eloquently express deep insights about human life and volition. This new

conversation between philosophy and literature not only improves the style and content of literary works, but it also expands the channels and readership for the transmission of philosophy. Together, they make up an essential part of contemporary society, providing a richer and more varied context for profound conversations about life, meaning, and value. Studying philosophy and literature together opens up more opportunities and is becoming increasingly respected in the field of English literature. By combining knowledge from philosophy, literature, history, sociology, and other disciplines, it illustrates the close connections between human mind and culture and makes it possible to understand the philosophical concepts that underlie literary works more thoroughly. Multidisciplinary studies improve literary work interpretation and comprehension while broadening the breadth and depth of philosophical inquiry. Analyzing philosophical issues in literary works can help one get a deeper understanding of the numerous ways that philosophical concepts are expressed in literature and how they impact society and culture. This rigorous research approach provides new perspectives and avenues for the exchange and understanding of philosophical concepts, as well as helping us to see the deeper meanings present in literary works. Interdisciplinary research helps us understand the relationship between philosophy and literature. As long as society and culture are changing, multidisciplinary research will be essential to solving today's societal problems. By providing new intellectual inspiration and methodological support for the advancement and development of human civilization, it improves scholarly collaboration and interchange across various areas.

Interdisciplinary research opens up a great lot of space and potential for in-depth study of human cognition and culture by promoting new paths for cooperation and interaction between philosophy and literature. Interdisciplinary study develops human culture as a crucial element in the development of literary and creative works in our country, helps us better comprehend the philosophical foundations of literary works, and encourages collaboration and academic interaction across disciplines.

English literature's portrayal of the evolution of Western philosophy paints a comprehensive and historically detailed picture.

From the enlightenment of ancient Greek philosophy to the legacy of medieval Christian philosophy, humanism in the Renaissance, and finally the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Realism, and Modernism, philosophical ideas have influenced the development and expression of English literary works in different ways throughout history. This evolutionary process demonstrates how literary works

incorporate, analyze, and reinvent philosophical ideas. In contrast to historical settings, it also represents evolving concerns about life, the world, and the self. Ancient philosophical subjects and sources influenced literary works; Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages influenced the development of religious themes; and Renaissance humanism integrated philosophy and literature in its search for the human spirit.

Literary works widely address a range of philosophical topics, such as self-awareness, reason, and nature. Many philosophical schools and literary styles are closely tied to one another. The evolution of Western philosophy in English literature not only shows the reciprocal influence of philosophical concepts and creative writing, but it also offers a historical account of ideological exchange. This historical journey provides meaning and priceless allusions to literary works while also fostering human intelligence and cultural transmission. Technology advancements will open up a wider venue for literary and philosophical discourses that include cross-cultural and transnational understanding.

Subsequent research endeavours may delve deeper into the correlation and impacts between philosophy and literature, augmenting our comprehension of their mutual influence. Furthermore, examining how philosophical ideas are transported and modified across cultural boundaries in literary works can be made easier by beginning with a more broadly defined cultural and social background. This kind of research will not only expand our understanding of the relationship between philosophy and literature, but it will also provide new insights and theoretical foundations that will influence contemporary society and human civilization.

## CONCLUSION

Western concepts have long been incorporated into English literature. Every age of history has had a significant influence on literature, from the philosophical movements of today to the influence of ancient Greek philosophy. These pieces not only provide an essential means of deciphering human thinking and value concepts—a crucial function in today's society—but also capture the cultural atmosphere and spirit of the times. Further understandings and insights will come from interdisciplinary research in the future, and there will be an even deeper integration of philosophy and literature. We think that by continuing research and discussion to gain a deeper understanding of people's inner lives, these initiatives will promote the prosperity, continuous development, and strengthening of philosophy and literature in contemporary society. We hope that these projects will contribute to the increased role of philosophy and literature in modern society.

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# Phonetic Integration in Google Dictionary: Shaping English Pronunciation from the TESL Students' Perspective in Universiti Selangor

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*Abstract— This study investigates the influence of phonetic integration in Google Dictionary on English pronunciation from the perspective of TESL students at Universiti Selangor. The study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive design to determine if there is a link between how often TESL students use Google Dictionary and how well they pronounce words. It also examines how different features of Google Dictionary affect their pronunciation skills. The sample comprised 120 students from the Foundation in TESL, Diploma of Education (TESL), and Bachelor of Education (TESL) programs. Data was collected through a survey administered via Google Forms and analysed using SPSS with descriptive statistics. The instrument demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.951 across 22 items. The result indicated that Google Dictionary is an effective tool for pronunciation learning and positively impacts TESL students. It helps the students improve their English pronunciation. The phonetic features integration in Google Dictionary significantly aids TESL students in enhancing their pronunciation skills. This study highlights the importance of utilising digital tools in language learning and suggests that educators should encourage students to use such resources to support their pronunciation practice.*

*Keywords— pronunciation, TESL, phonetics features, digital tool, Google*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of phonetics into digital platforms has emerged as a potentially effective method for enhancing language skills. According to Nasim et.al. (2022), researchers hypothesised that the use of digital technology tools could enable students to improve their pronunciation abilities more effectively than traditional instructional approaches. This hypothesis underscored the impact of digital tools, such as Google Dictionary, on the English Language skills of students enrolled in tertiary education programmes as well as primary and secondary education.

Undergraduate students frequently encountered difficulties with pronunciation accuracy, which could impede both their academic and professional performance (Sattar & Algamdi, 2023). Moreover, Khalid et al. (2023) identified that ESL students often make pronunciation errors due to a combination of phonological and psychological factors, despite the availability of digital tools. This research focused on Google Dictionary as a tool for phonetic integration to examine its potential to address these issues and enhance linguistics competence among students of English as a Second Language (ESL) and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The study found that Google Dictionary proved to be an effective tool for improving pronunciation in Universiti Selangor (UNISEL) context.

## 1.1 Problem Statement

The problem lies in a lack of understanding of how TESL students in Universiti Selangor perceive the use and efficacy of phonetic integration in Google Dictionary for enhancing their English pronunciation. There is a lack of knowledge about how these students view phonetic features in online dictionaries, such as Google Dictionary, for language learning and speech practice. This gap in understanding impedes educators and administrators from making informed decisions on effectively incorporating phonetic aids into English pronunciation instruction courses.

## 1.2 Research Gap

The research into the use of Google Dictionary's phonetic features to influence English pronunciation remains limited, particularly for TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) students in Universiti Selangor (UNISEL). The widespread availability of smartphones and internet access has facilitated language learners' use of free, readily accessible dictionaries, thereby supporting their academic pursuits, notably in learning English (Collins, 2016). Nonetheless, there is a knowledge gap in understanding the perceptions and attitudes of TESL students in UNISEL regarding the effectiveness of Google Dictionary's phonetic features in enhancing their pronunciation skills. This gap hinders our understanding of the extent to which TESL students rely on Google Dictionary for pronunciation guidance, as well as their satisfaction with and perceived efficacy of the service's phonetic features. By completing this study, we get to know how phonetic assistance in Google Dictionary helped the TESL students to improve their pronunciation skills and got a piece of knowledge to enhance the language practices in UNISEL and within Malaysia's broader educational context.

## 1.3 Research Objective

This research aimed to pursue two primary objectives: Initially, it seeks to determine the extent to which frequent use of Google Dictionary influences the English language. The pronunciation abilities of TESL students are impressive. Consequently, it seeks to analyse the impact of various features integrated into the Google Dictionary. The dictionary focuses on the pronunciation competence of TESL learners.

## 1.4 Research Question

1. Does the frequency of TESL students using Google Dictionary affect their English pronunciation?
2. What is the impact of Google Dictionary features on TESL students' pronunciation?

## 1.5 Significance of Study

This study has significant implications for both language learners and educators because it addresses a notable gap in understanding the influence of phonetic integration within language tools such as Google Dictionary on English pronunciation. Perez (2014) suggested that digital dictionaries have the potential to be beneficial for students who are practicing and seeking to strengthen their English pronunciation skills. ESL teachers find it essential to employ freely available resources to teach appropriate pronunciation without making the learning process too complex for students (Sinta et al., 2021) as this Google Dictionary is a free online tool. This study offers information on the effectiveness of tools for ESL teachers, students, and researchers looking to enhance their methods for teaching and mastering pronunciation skills. This research can immediately aid ESL learners, particularly tertiary students in TESL programmes in UNISEL and other higher education institutions in Malaysia, by improving their pronunciation and efficient communication.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Previous Study

#### 2.1.1 Suprasegmental Features

Suprasegmental features in speech are essential components of phonetics that extend beyond individual phonemes (consonants and vowels) to impact larger linguistic units such as phrases, words, or syllables. While segmental features concentrate on the distinct sounds within words, suprasegmental features shape spoken language's organization and perception. Key aspects of suprasegmental features include prosody, stress, intonation, and rhythm. Prosody encompasses the rhythm, stress, and intonation of speech, contributing to the natural flow and emotional tone of spoken language (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2021). The emphasis on certain syllables or words, known as stress, plays a crucial role in distinguishing meanings and ensuring clarity in communication (Schaefar et al., 2023). Intonation involves the rise and fall of pitch throughout a sentence, which is essential for conveying questions, statements, and emotional nuances (Gick, 2022). Rhythm pertains to the pattern of sounds and silences in speech, necessary for maintaining a natural and comprehensible flow (Hirschfeld et al., 2023).

According to recent research, focusing on suprasegmental features significantly enhances the clarity and comprehensibility of English speech. Prosody, stress, and intonation contribute to making speech more

understandable to both native and non-native speakers. Proper application of these features helps listeners process and interpret speech more effectively, thereby aiding communication (Gick, 2022; Schaefer et al., 2023). Mastery of suprasegmental aspects also improves overall speaking proficiency, allowing speakers to convey meaning more effectively, control their emotional tone, and produce language patterns that sound natural (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2021).

In the context of language learning, integrating suprasegmental training into educational programmes can offer significant benefits. For TESL students, this involves emphasising stress patterns, intonation, and rhythm in instructional activities. Teachers can provide practical exercises and feedback to help students improve these aspects of their speech. Moreover, teachers can utilise educational technology like Google Dictionary, which offers phonetic transcriptions and pronunciation guides, to demonstrate and practice suprasegmental features (Collins, 2023). Audio pronunciations available through such tools can assist the students in understanding and applying these features effectively. Assessments of speaking skills should also include an evaluation of suprasegmental features in addition to segmental pronunciation to provide a comprehensive measure of students' speaking abilities (Schaefer et al., 2023).

Overall, focusing on suprasegmental features is crucial for developing clear and effective English speech. Enhancing these aspects contributes to better pronunciation, reduced accents, and improved overall speakings proficiency, making it an essential area of study and practice for language learners.

2.1.2 Online Dictionaries

According to Mahbub (2020), technology is inextricably linked to the learning styles of our students in the twenty-first century; it is an integral part of their daily lives and provides them with limitless educational experience and knowledge that enables them to compete globally. Digital technology has brought variety of tools designed to help with phonetics integration, providing learners with exceptional resources to improve their language abilities. Online dictionaries are useful tools for practicing and enhancing pronunciation, especially for learners at an intermediate level. Yusof et al. (2022) emphasised the usefulness of online dictionaries for instantly reproducing word pronunciation in audio format and providing quick access to phonological transcription instructions in written material. According to Yusof et al. (2022), online monolingual dictionaries offer users diverse learning experiences by giving thorough linguistic information,

including grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation characteristics.

Due to globalisation, the integration of classroom technology in education has sped up language learning, necessitating the use of online and e-dictionaries in pronunciation training, particularly for intermediate-level learners. Sattar and Alghamdi (2023) highlighted the growing significance of e-dictionaries in helping intermediate students appropriately pronounce phonemes during speech, which aids in faster language learning in today's educational environment. Roach et al. (2011) emphasised the usefulness of online dictionaries that include pronunciation guides tailored for intermediate learners to improve pronunciation via the auditory perception of word pronunciations.

Modern electronic and online dictionaries enable English learners to visually perceive, auditorily stimulate, and model the pronunciation of any given word in a matter of seconds. According to Metruk (2017), who stated in the study that dictionaries typically offer the pronunciation of the two most widely taught pronunciation varieties, such as BBC pronunciation, which is the standard British pronunciation, and General American pronunciation, which is the standard American pronunciation, Students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have the advantage of auditory exposure to the pronunciation of words and phrases in their desired dialect, enabling them to discern the fundamental distinctions between accents such as those found in BBC English and General American (GA).

2.1.3 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Miqawati (2020) did a study called 'Pronunciation Learning, Participation, and Attitude Enhancement through Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), to see if this way of teaching worked to improve English pronunciation, get more people involved, and make people feel better about using technology to learn. The research involved thirty students enrolled in an English Study Programme Politeknik Negeri Jember pronunciation course, who participated in collaborative classroom action studies. The results highlighted the significant impact that MALL, particularly the resources and exercises included in the Tflat coursework, had on enhancing students' pronunciation learning experiences. Furthermore, the research unveiled the potential of MALL to foster active student participation in classroom exercises and enable them to track their own educational advancement.

Online dictionaries are an essential component of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Juwita et al. (2020) suggested that using a smartphone may substantially transform teaching and learning methods, serving as an

engaging tool to motivate students to enhance their speaking abilities rapidly. Online dictionaries, or e-dictionaries, are tools students can easily access from their mobile devices. These include e-dictionaries, which are available online, and dictionary apps, which are available on most hand-held devices and mobile phones. This provides learners with instant access to pronunciation guidelines, definitions, and sample sentences, improving language learning and pronunciation abilities using portable digital devices. These dictionaries provide learner with a wide range of linguistic materials, including audio pronunciations, to enhance their language learning efforts, and they are accessible on different platforms. The incorporation of phonetics into user-friendly online resources like Google Dictionary aligns strategically with MALL principles, enhancing the instructional environment for language learners.

Developed nations are increasingly employing computers in language-learning contexts. Haider (2013) describes the integration of computers and English Language Teaching (ELT) using various terms, such as Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning (ICALL), Computer-Enhanced Language Learning (CELL), and Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), with Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), being the most commonly used term. Furthermore, the classroom uses CALL because of its numerous advantages (Haider, 2013, p.205). In their study, Kumar and Madhavi (2012) evaluated the benefits of utilising a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) lab. Pronunciation Power 2 and the Cambridge Advanced Learners' programmes used in this investigation.

**2.2 Framework (Theoretical Framework)**

The theoretical framework underpinning this research is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), originally devolepd by Fred Davis in the late 1980s. TAM has become a foundational thory in the field of information systems, particularly regarding how users come to accept and use new technologies. According to this model, two primary factors influence an individual's intention to use a particular technology: their perceived ease of use and its perceived usefulness. The model posits that these perceptions significantly shape an individual's attitude towards the technology, which in turn impacts their actual usage behaviour.

In this study, the focus is on TESL students and their engagement with Google Dictionary as a tool for improving their English pronunciation. Applying TAM to this context, the study examines how students' perceptions of the dictionary's usability and effectiveness influence their likelihood of integrating it into their language learning practices. According to TAM, if students find Google Dictionary to be both simple to use and beneficial for enhancing their pronunciation skills, they are more likely to incorporate it into their learning routine.

Perceived usefulness, as defined by Tao et al. (2020), refers to the extent to which individuals believe that using a technology will enhance their performance in a particular task. For TESL students, this means that the perceived value of Google Dictionary hinges on its ability to support pronunciation improvement, provide relevant examples, and offer other features that contribute to their language learning objectives. Similarly, perceived ease of use pertains to how effortless the students find the technology to operate. Students are more likely to use the dictionary frequently if they perceive it as user-friendly.

When we examined the alignment of the survey questionnaires with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), we identified several items that closely aligned with TAM's core constructs: perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU). The TAM framework asserted that technology's ease of use and usefulness significantly influence an individual's acceptance and usage. This alignment is critical when assessing Google Dictionary's effectiveness in enhancing English pronunciation among TESL students.

2.2.1 Section B: The Frequency of TESL Students Using Google Dictionary and Its Effect on English Pronunciation

Several questionnaires in this section relate directly to TAM's constructs. For instance, the questionnaire "I have used Google Dictionary" addresses the basic level of engagement with the technology, which is crucial for understanding its usage pattern. Similarly, the questionnaires "I often use Google Dictionary" and "I use Google to practice or improve my pronunciation every day" measure the frequency of use, indicating the perceived usefulness of the tool. These questionnaires help measure how frequently the students engage with the dictionary, a factor that can influence their perception of its utility in improving pronunciation.

The statements "I know what a Google Dictionary is" and "I have an online dictionary app on my phone" reflect the students' awareness and accessibility of the technology, which indirectly impacts their perceived ease of use. Questionnaires such as "When I look up a word in the Google Dictionary, I frequently check its pronunciation" and "I like using Google Dictionary" offer insights into the students' attitudes towards the ease of use and their perception of its benefits. These items align with TAM's focus on understanding how user engagement with technology shapes their perceptions of its ease of use and usefulness.

## 2.2.2 Section C: The Impact of Google Dictionary Features on TESL Students' Pronunciation

This section delves into how specific features of Google Dictionary influence pronunciation skills, aligning closely with TAM's concept of perceived usefulness of the technology by giving questionnaires like "The online Google Dictionary can help me improve my pronunciation by listening to the word's sound" and "The online Google Dictionary is an effective tool to improve my pronunciation skills." These items assess how well students believe the dictionary supports their pronunciation improvement, a key aspect of TAM's focus on perceived utility.

Items like "When I check a word's pronunciation, I look at both the pronunciation and the accent" and "I frequently repeat a word's pronunciation after listening to the pronunciation audio" also reflect on the perceived effectiveness of the technology features. They gauge how students utilise specific features of Google Dictionary to enhance their pronunciation, thus providing insights into the perceived benefits of these features.

Furthermore, questionnaires such as "I like the online Google Dictionary as a reference for learning English" and "The Google Dictionary I use helps me learn English pronunciation" are indicative of the overall perception of usefulness and satisfaction with the technology. These statements help determine how well students perceive the dictionary as a supportive tool in their language learning process.

In summary, TAM's constructs are largely consistent with the survey questions about the frequency of use and impact of Google Dictionary on pronunciation. They effectively capture students' perceptions of ease of use and usefulness, providing a comprehensive view of how these factors influence their engagement with the technology. This alignment is essential for understanding the role of Google Dictionary in enhancing English pronunciation skills among TESL students at Universiti Selangor.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design/Approach

The approach of this research was a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. In research, a quantitative approach with a descriptive design is a methodology that uses numerical data collection to characterize a behaviour or phenomenon. This strategy typically employs observational methods, surveys, or questionnaires to collect data that can be statistically analysed to make inferences about the population under study. A quantitative survey involves a large-scale survey to collect data. In this

instance, we obtained our results with greater precision across a wider population (JMander, 2022).

The target population for this quantitative research method was the TESL students of the University Selangor, whom we surveyed using questionnaires. A structured questionnaire served as a useful tool for gathering data from a large number of participants. By utilizing a well-designed questionnaire, we were able to capture an all-round of responses and ensure that the data collected was comprehensive and representative of the TESL student population.

Furthermore, the use of a quantitative approach enabled us to analyse the data using statistical methods, providing a more objective and precise understanding of the relationship between Google Dictionary usage and English competence among the TESL students. The statistical analysis allowed us to identify patterns and correlations within the data, offering insights that could be generalised to the larger population of TESL students at the University Selangor. Overall, the quantitative approach with a descriptive design provided a robust framework for exploring the research questions and achieving the objectives of this study.

### 3.2 Sampling

In the context of research, sampling was the process of choosing a group of people or objects to represent a wider population. The choice of sampling method depended on the research question, resources available, and the population being studied. Due to the large number of students at the University Selangor, the sampling design for this study was systematic sampling. According to Smith (2020), systematic sampling provides a systematic and unbiased approach to selecting samples from a population, thereby ensuring representative results. The sample size for this research study consisted of 100 to 130 students who were currently enrolled in the Foundation, Diploma, or Degree in TESL program at the University Selangor. We readily gathered data from a large population of students by using a systematic sampling technique.

### 3.3 Instrument

The instrument of this study was a survey. A survey is a systematic method of collecting data from a specific population or sample by asking individuals a series of standardized questions. Surveys are intended to gather data on attitudes, opinions, behaviors, demographics, and other variables relevant to the research objectives. This instrument enabled researchers to quantify and analyse responses in order to reach conclusions and insights about the topic under investigation. In this study of TESL students at the University Selangor, we created a survey

instrument with a set number of questions aimed at determining their understanding and perceptions of using Google Dictionary to improve pronunciation skills.

## 3.4 Data Collection

Data collection in this research was the process of gathering information or observations that were relevant to the research objectives. It was a critical step in the research process that entailed collecting data from various sources or subjects to answer research questions, test hypotheses, or achieve research goals. In this study, questionnaires served as the primary data collection method. After completing the questionnaire phase, the goal was to compile all the collected data and evaluate it using the fixed variables established for the study.

The questionnaire included questions designed to obtain quantitative data about students' perceptions and experiences with Google Dictionary's phonetic integration features. The questionnaires for the survey were adopted and adapted from two key articles: "The Influence of Online Cambridge Dictionary Toward Students' Pronunciation and Vocabulary Mastery" by Rosita Ambarwati and Berlinda Mandasari, and "The Use of Electronic Dictionaries for Pronunciation Practice by University EFL Students" by Rastislav Metruk. These articles provided a basis for developing the survey items to ensure they were relevant and effective for the study's objectives.

The data collection process involved administering the questionnaires to the selected TESL students at the University Selangor. The responses were systematically recorded and compiled, ensuring that the dataset was comprehensive and suitable for subsequent analysis. The compiled data were then evaluated using the fixed variables established for the study, providing insights into the students' experiences and perceptions of the phonetic integration features in Google Dictionary.

## 3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis primarily used descriptive statistics to investigate students' perceptions and experiences with phonetic integration in Google Dictionary and its impact on their pronunciation. The primary analytical tool for the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires was descriptive statistics. Students' responses about how they felt and experienced phonetic integration in Google Dictionary were summarized using descriptive statistics like mean (average), median (middle value), mode (most common value), standard deviation (spread of data), and frequency distributions. The data were analysed using SPSS Statistics software, which facilitated the calculation and interpretation of these descriptive statistics. This

analysis provided an overview of students' attitudes, preferences, and usage patterns related to the tool.

## IV.    RESULT AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 Findings

This section addresses the research questions by presenting the findings and discussing the insights derived from the research data. The researchers employed a structured questionnaire to capture the data, dividing it into two sections: the first contained 10 Likert-scale questions, and the second included 12 Likert-scale questions. The results of the initial section of the questionnaire, which consisted of 10 Likert-scale questions, are as follows:

*Table 1: The Frequency of Using Google Dictionary Influences the English Pronunciation*

| NO | Questionnaires | M | MD | Mode | SD | Range |
|----|----------------|---|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | *I can live without the internet.* | 2.76 | 3.00 | 3 | 1.216 | 4 |
| 2 | *I have used an online dictionary.* | 4.20 | 4.00 | 5 | .904 | 4 |
| 3 | *I like using online dictionaries.* | 4.07 | 4.00 | 5 | .994 | 4 |
| 4 | *I have an online dictionary app on my phone.* | 3.04 | 3.00 | 2 | 1.399 | 4 |
| 5 | *I know what a Google Dictionary is.* | 4.22 | 4.00 | 5 | .989 | 4 |
| 6 | *I have used Google Dictionary.* | 4.24 | 4.00 | 5 | .987 | 4 |
| 7 | *I like using Google Dictionary.* | 3.96 | 4.00 | 5 | .999 | 4 |
| 8 | *I often use Google Dictionary* | 3.96 | 4.00 | 4 | 1.048 | 4 |
| 9 | *When I look up a word in the Google Dictionary, I frequently check its pronunciation.* | 4.14 | 4.00 | 5 | .955 | 4 |
| 10 | *I use Google Dictionary to practice or improve my pronunciation every day.* | 3.82 | 4.00 | 5 | 1.137 | 4 |

\*The N = Valid 120 respondents

The questionnaire answers provide valuable insights into the digital habits and preferences of TESL students at Universiti Selangor. The data reveals a significant reliance on the internet, as indicated by a mean score of 2.76 (SD = 1.216) for the statement "I can live without the internet". This suggests that most students consider the Internet essential and cannot imagine life without it. The respondents widely utilise online dictionaries, as indicated by a high mean score of 4.20 (SD = 0.904) for "I have used an online dictionary" and a mean score of 4.07 (SD = 0.994) for "I like using online dictionaries." This suggests a strong liking for these digital resources.

Notably, the presence of online dictionary applications on students' smartphones exhibits greater variation, with an average score of 3.04 (SD = 1.399). Despite the widespread use of online dictionaries, not all students have instant access to them through mobile applications. There is a significant level of awareness and use of Google Dictionary when it comes to specific technologies. The statements "I know what a Google Dictionary is" and "I have used Google Dictionary" both received high mean scores of 4.22 (SD = 0.989) and 4.24 (SD = 0.987), respectively. In addition, students have a positive attitude toward using Google Dictionary, as indicated by a mean score of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.999. Furthermore, they regularly employ this tool, with a mean score of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 1.048.

Moreover, the results emphasise the significance of Google Dictionary in improving speech and pronunciation skills. The average score for the statement "When I look up a word in the Google Dictionary, I frequently check its pronunciation" was 4.14 (SD = 0.955), suggesting that pronunciation elements are an important aspect of its usage. The statement "I use Google Dictionary to practice or improve my pronunciation every day" had a mean score of 3.82 (SD = 1.137), indicating that a substantial proportion of students incorporate this tool into their daily learning regimens.

*Table 2: The Effects of Diverse Features Incorporated into the Google Dictionary on Pronunciation*

| NO | Questionnaires | M | MD | Mode | SD | Range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I am familiar with the Google Dictionary application. | 3.69 | 4.00 | 4 | .994 | 4 |
| 2 | The online Google Dictionary can help me improve my pronunciation by listening to the word's sound. | 4.19 | 4.00 | 5 | .919 | 4 |
| 3 | When I check a word's pronunciation, I look at both the pronunciation and the accent. | 4.03 | 4.00 | 5 | 1.025 | 4 |
| 4 | When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check the British pronunciation. | 3.91 | 4.00 | 4 | 1.045 | 4 |
| 5 | When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check the American pronunciation. | 3.58 | 4.00 | 3 | 1.089 | 4 |
| 6 | When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check both British and American pronunciations. | 3.84 | 4.00 | 5 | 1.004 | 4 |
| 7 | I frequently repeat a word's pronunciation after listening to the pronunciation audio. | 4.22 | 4.00 | 5 | .891 | 4 |
| 8 | The online Google Dictionary is an effective tool to improve my pronunciation skills. | 4.20 | 4.00 | 5 | .904 | 4 |
| 9 | After learning words using an online Google Dictionary, I can pronounce them easily. | 4.09 | 4.00 | 4 | .917 | 4 |
| 10 | The online Google Dictionary can influence my pronunciation skills in a better way. | 4.12 | 4.00 | 4 | .927 | 4 |
| 11 | I like the online Google Dictionary as a reference for learning English. | 4.18 | 4.00 | 5 | .923 | 4 |
| 12 | The Google dictionary I use helps me learn English pronunciation. | 4.18 | 4.00 | 5 | .907 | 4 |

*The N = Valid 120 respondents

The questionnaire responses provide useful insights into the effectiveness of the Google Dictionary application in enhancing pronunciation skills among TESL students. The results indicate a high level of familiarity with the application, with a mean score of 3.69 (SD = 0.994) for the statement "I am familiar with the Google Dictionary application". Respondents believe that the application helps improve their pronunciation by allowing them to listen to words, as shown by a high mean score of 4.19 (SD = 0.919) for the statement "The online Google Dictionary can help me improve my pronunciation by listening to the word's sound".

When checking pronunciation, respondents tend to look at both pronunciation and accent, reflected in mean score of 4.03 (SD = 1.025) for the statement "When I check a word's pronunciation, I look at both the pronunciation and the accent". There is a notable preference for British pronunciation (mean score of 3.91) for the statement "When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check the British pronunciation" compared to American pronunciation (mean score of 3.58) for the statement "When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check the American pronunciation". Many users check both British

and American pronunciations, with a mean score of 3.84 (SD = 1.004) for the statement "When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check both British and American pronunciations".

Repeating a word's pronunciation after listening to it is a common practice among users, with a mean score of 4.22 (SD = 0.891) for the statement "I frequently repeat a word's pronunciation after listening to the pronunciation audio", which likely helps reinforce correct pronunciation. Respondents view the Google Dictionary as an effective tool for improving pronunciation skills, indicated by a mean score of 4.20 (SD = 0.904) for the statement "The online Google Dictionary is an effective tool to improve my pronunciation skills", and report being able to pronounce words more easily after using it, as reflected in a mean score of 4.09 (SD = 0.917) for the statement "After learning words using an online Google Dictionary, I can pronounce them easily". Users believe the application positively influences their pronunciation skills, as shown by a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.927) for the statement "The online Google Dictionary can influence my pronunciation skills better". There is a strong preference for using the Google Dictionary as a reference for learning English, with a mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.923) for the statement "I like the online Google Dictionary as a reference for learning English". Overall, respondents find the application helpful for learning English pronunciation, reflected in a mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.907) for the statement "The Google Dictionary I use helps me learn English pronunciation".

This study provides significant insights into how students use Google Dictionary to improve their English Pronunciation based on the data from Table 3:

*Table 3: The Percentage of Using Google Dictionary Influences the English Pronunciation*

| NO | Questionnaires | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I can live without the internet. | 16.7% | 27.5% | 30.0% | 15.0% | 10.8% |
| 2 | I have used an online dictionary. | 1.7% | 2.5% | 15.0% | 35.8% | 45.0% |
| 3 | I like using online dictionaries. | 3.3% | 2.5% | 18.3% | 35.8% | 40.0% |
| 4 | I have an online dictionary app on my phone. | 12.5% | 33.3% | 15.8% | 14.2% | 24.2% |
| 5 | I know what a Google Dictionary is. | 4.2% | 0.8% | 12.5% | 34.2% | 48.3% |
| 6 | I have used Google Dictionary. | 4.2% | 2.5% | 6.7% | 38.3% | 48.3% |
| 7 | I like using Google Dictionary. | 2.5% | 3.3% | 26.7% | 30.8% | 36.7% |
| 8 | I often use Google Dictionary. | 3.3% | 6.7% | 16.7% | 37.5% | 35.8% |
| 9 | When I look up a word in the Google Dictionary, I frequently check its pronunciation. | 2.5% | 3.3% | 14.2% | 37.5% | 42.5% |
| 10 | I use Google Dictionary to practice or improve my pronunciation every day. | 4.2% | 10.0% | 20.0% | 31.7% | 34.2% |

*Strongly Degree = SD, Disagree= D, Neutral = N, Agree = A, Strongly Agree = SA

The findings suggest a mixed reliance on online resources for pronunciation aids. Specifically, 30% of the respondents feel neutral about living without the internet, while a significant proportion (43%) could not agree that they could live without it, highlighting the essential role of online tools in their daily academic and personal lives.

Usage of online dictionaries is quite prevalent, with a majority of the respondents (80.8%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have used an online dictionary. This trend continues with the specific use of Google Dictionary, which 81.2% of the participants acknowledged using. The preference for Google Dictionary is clear, as 67.3% like using it, and a similar proportion find it helpful regularly.

The frequency of using Google Dictionary also ties directly into its practical benefits for pronunciation. Approximately 80% of the participants agree or strongly agree that they frequently check the pronunciation of words when using Google Dictionary. More importantly, 57.9% use Google Dictionary specifically to practice or improve their pronunciation every day.

These findings indicate that Google Dictionary is not only a frequently used tool among TESL students at Universiti Selangor but also a critical resource for enhancing their English pronunciation and integrating phonetic learning effectively into their language acquisition process. This suggests that digital dictionaries, particularly Google Dictionary, play a substantial role in the phonetic integration of English language learners, facilitating ongoing improvements in pronunciation and overall linguistic competence.

*Table 4: The Percentage Distribution of the Impact of Google Dictionary Features on TESL Students' Pronunciation*

| NO | Questionnaires | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I am familiar with the features of the Google Dictionary application. | 2.5% | 8.3% | 29.2% | 37.5% | 22.5% |
| 2 | The online Google Dictionary can help me improve my pronunciation by listening to the word's sound. | 2.5% | 1.7% | 14.2% | 37.5% | 44.2% |
| 3 | When I check a word's pronunciation, I look at both the pronunciation and the accent. | 3.3% | 4.2% | 18.3% | 35.0% | 39.2% |
| 4 | When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check the British pronunciation. | 3.3% | 5.8% | 21.7% | 35.0% | 34.2% |
| 5 | When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check the American pronunciation. | 4.2% | 10.0% | 33.3% | 28.3% | 24.2% |
| 6 | When I check a word's pronunciation, I usually check both British and American Pronunciations. | 1.7% | 5.8% | 31.7% | 28.3% | 32.5% |
| 7 | I frequently repeat a word's pronunciation after listening to the pronunciation audio. | 2.5% | 0.8% | 13.3% | 39.2% | 44.2% |
| 8 | The online Google Dictionary is an effective tool to improve my pronunciation skills. | 2.5% | 0.8% | 15.0% | 37.5% | 44.2% |
| 9 | After learning words using an online Google Dictionary, I can pronounce them easily. | 2.5% | 1.7% | 17.5% | 40.8% | 37.5% |
| 10 | The online Google Dictionary can influence my pronunciation skills in a better way. | 2.5% | 2.5% | 15.0% | 40.8% | 39.2% |
| 11 | I like the online Google Dictionary as a reference for learning English. | 3.3% | 0% | 15.0% | 39.2% | 42.5% |
| 12 | The Google dictionary I use helps me learn English pronunciation. | 2.5% | 0.8% | 15.8% | 37.5% | 43.3% |

*Strongly Degree = SD, Disagree = D, Neutral = N, Agree = A, Strongly Agree = SA

Based on the survey results, it is evident that a significant majority of TESL students find Google Dictionary to be a valuable resource for improving their pronunciation skills. A substantial 60.8% of respondents reported being familiar with the features offered by Google Dictionary, indicating widespread awareness and usage among the participants. Moreover, an overwhelming 81.7% of students believe that the audio feature of Google Dictionary plays a crucial role in enhancing pronunciation, as it provides clear and accurate examples of word pronunciation. This high percentage underscores the effectiveness of auditory learning in refining pronunciation skills.

In terms of pronunciation consideration, 74.2% of participants indicated that they take into account both pronunciation and accent variations when using Google Dictionary. This approach reflects a comprehensive learning strategy aimed at mastering the nuances of spoken English. Approximately 69.2% of students tend to check British pronunciation and 52.5% check American pronunciation, a significant 64.2% consult both British and American pronunciations. This dual preference highlights the application's versatility in accommodating different English accents and regional variations.

Additionally, a notable 83.4% of respondents reported that they frequently repeat word pronunciations after listening to the audio provided by Google Dictionary. This practice is crucial for reinforcing correct pronunciation patterns and improving retention of vocabulary.

Furthermore, 78.3% of participants find it easier to pronounce words correctly after using Google Dictionary, suggesting that the application not only aids initial learning but also boosts students' confidence in spoken English. Lastly, a significant 79.2% believe that Google Dictionary positively influences their overall pronunciation skills, indicating a strong endorsement of its educational value.

**4.2 Discussion**

The study's findings offer valuable insights into the digital behaviours and preferences of TESL students at Universiti Selangor. The significant reliance on the internet, as indicated by the low average score for the capacity to function without it, emphasises the critical importance of digital connectivity in contemporary schooling. Shahroom and Hussin (2018) emphasised the era of IR 4.0, which aligns with the observations made in the source. The findings confirm that having access to the internet is not only a convenience but a requirement for modern learners.

The fact that the participants used and liked online dictionaries a lot backs up what Metruk (2017) said about how important they are for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The findings from this study corroborate the perspective that digital dictionaries are essential for language acquisition, as the offer students' convenient access to definitions, translations, and pronunciation assistance. Nevertheless, the fluctuation in the accessibility of online dictionary applications on students' mobile devices unveils a novel discovery. This suggests that despite the widespread recognition of online dictionaries' usefulness, challenges like device compatibility or budgetary constraints could hinder their accessibility.

Google Dictionary's widespread recognition and regular usage demonstrated its popularity and efficacy as an educational resource. This conclusion aligns with Singleton's (2016) research, which examined the extensive utilisation and advantages of electronic dictionaries among individuals learning a new language. The popularity of Google Dictionary and its frequent use for verifying pronunciations highlight its significance in improving pronunciation abilities, a crucial component of language acquisition. This study provides comprehensive insights into how students use Google Dictionary on a daily basis to improve pronunciation, a topic that widely recognised as important in digital dictionaries.

The study validates the critical importance of online dictionaries and the internet in contemporary language instruction while also identifying distinct usage patterns and preferences among TESL students at Universiti Selangor. The disparity in the availability of dictionary applications and the intricate use of Google Dictionary to improve pronunciation provide novel insights into the role of digital learning aids in language teaching. These observations can guide the creation of more focused teaching materials and approaches to improve learning results for TESL students.

## V.    CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigated the influence of phonetic integration in Google Dictionary on the English pronunciation skills of TESL students at Universiti Selangor. Through a comprehensive quantitative approach, the research revealed several significant findings. Firstly, the frequent use of Google Dictionary has a positive impact on TESL students' pronunciation abilities. The integration of phonetic features within the dictionary, such as audio pronunciations and phonetic transcriptions, plays a crucial role in helping students understand and practice correct pronunciation. These features enable students to discern subtle differences in sounds, leading to a marked improvement in their overall pronunciation accuracy.

Moreover, the study highlighted the high regard TESL students have for Google Dictionary as a pronunciation practice tool. The ease of access, user-friendly interface, and the reliability of information provided by Google Dictionary contribute to its frequent usage among students. This, in turn, makes it an effective resource for enhancing their language skills. The findings underscore the importance of digital tools in modern language learning, emphasizing that tools like Google Dictionary can significantly aid in the development of pronunciation skills when used consistently and effectively. The positive perception and frequent use of Google Dictionary by

students suggest that such digital tools are indispensable in the current educational landscape, particularly in language learning contexts.

Expanding on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for future research and practical applications. Firstly, educators and curriculum developers at Universiti Selangor and other institutions should consider integrating digital tools like Google Dictionary more extensively into their language learning programs. This integration can provide students with consistent and effective practice opportunities to improve their pronunciation skills. Additionally, training sessions and workshops can be organised to familiarise both students and teachers with the advanced features of Google Dictionary, ensuring they can make the most of the available resources.

Future research should focus on exploring the impact of specific features within Google Dictionary, such as the speed feature and lip movement animations, on pronunciation enhancement. Investigating the effectiveness of these advanced features can provide deeper insights into how digital tools can be optimised for language learning. For instance, the speed feature could help students practice speaking at different paces, improving their fluency and comprehension. The lip movement animations, on the other hand, could offer visual cues that complement auditory information, aiding in the accurate production of sounds.

Moreover, longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the long-term benefits of using Google Dictionary and similar digital tools in language learning. These studies could track students' progress over extended periods, providing valuable data on the sustained impact of digital pronunciation aids. Additionally, comparative studies could be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of Google Dictionary against other digital and traditional pronunciation tools, offering a broader perspective on the most effective methods for pronunciation training.

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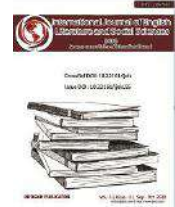
# Truth and (Mis)Information in the High-Tech Empires: Case Study: *Cosmopolis: a novel*, by Don DeLillo

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*Abstract— Our contemporary time is marked by an endless flow of data that is exchanged between nations, companies, and individuals at a nanosecond timescale. All this data flow, which Katherine Hales calls "information overload", is facilitated by the spread of computer software and digital devices that have colonized every corner on the globe. Today no secret is hidden; information is available and access to it is getting liberated from the confines of the enclosed files. Entrepreneurs, decision-makers, politicians, researchers and even common people, to mention just a few categories, each has built some kind of a digital fortress that secures its data and transmits only the information that suits its interests to the (digital) world. Yet, high-tech empires are no more than a double-edged weapon that (mis)informs not only consumers and adversaries but also the high-tech owners themselves. While high-technologies have been viewed as a sign of extreme knowledge, power and wealth, they have in fact deprived humans of their natural 'humanity' one way or another. More than that, instead of providing absolute knowledge as they are supposed to do, they hide the dark truth and what they really provide is no more than a mere illusion. Taking the example of Don DeLillo's Cosmopolis: a novel, this novel envisages the influence of high-technologies on the contemporary Man and exposes the double facets of the computer and wireless networks. Through the protagonist Eric Packer, DeLillo portrays the digital world from different perspectives and lays bare the inconveniences of high-technologies as they eventually turn out to hide the 'truth' instead of revealing it to their owner. Indeed, the protagonist's blind trust in his high-tech empire was caused by misinformation rather than by objective recognition of the concrete world that surrounds him. In Cosmopolis: a novel the author warns his readers that it is wiser to keep a certain amount of doubt and criticism while dealing with Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality.*

*Keywords— capitalism, high-technologies, (mis)information, power, virtual reality*

The contemporary world is ruled by empires. Yet, these empires are not territories which are governed by an emperor or empress. Today, it's rare to find the conventional empires coexisting within the global transformations that have turned the world into a reduced space whose inhabitants share to a certain extent the same life-styles, mindsets, customs and traditions. The present empires are no more than "large industrial organization[s] with many ramifications, esp [..] multinational corporation[s]" (dictionary.com, n.d., Definition 1) which are owned or controlled by one person or group of people.

Predefined by the capitalist economic system and the sophisticated high-technologies, these multinational corporations have created a bridge between their owners and their consumers; this bridge is 'wired' by 'wireless networks'. Computers, high-tech devices and gadgets, the Internet and Artificial Intelligence, all of them have been playing a crucial role in collecting, exchanging, saving and transferring all kinds of information between individuals, corporations, and nations. As a consequence of the high-tech revolution and the globalization of the capitalist system, postmodern societies have undergone continuous

renovations that reshape people's views of their own lives. To epitomize the condition of the new millennium's individuals, Don DeLillo presents the dilemmas of both capital owners and common citizens in a cosmopolitan information-based society.

But first of all, what does the term 'information' refer to? Generally speaking, "information" is usually explained as the synonym of "news, facts, or knowledge" or "facts or details about a person, company, product, etc." (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d., Definition 2). It may also connote "news or knowledge [that is] received or given" (yourdictionary.com, n.d., Definition 3); therefore information does not consist of a one way transmission of 'facts' but also the exchange of everything via multiple trajectories. Also, it is "knowledge acquired in any manner; facts; data; learning; lore" (ibid); this means that regardless of the medium used, the process of data or ideas alters the individual's perception of the world. This perception is regularly updated as far as the person interacts with people, nature, objects, narratives, mass-media, or the surroundings. With reference to computers, "information" refers to "any data that can be stored in and retrieved from a computer" or generally describes "[p]rocessed, stored, or transmitted data" (ibid). The computer's central processing unit is compared to the human's brain; then, information storage and processing is the typical function of both of them. From another perspective, in a 'posthuman' era, information has to be 'disembodied'. The idea of the "erasure of embodiment" (Hayles, 1999, p. 4) is the key concept advocated by posthumanist thinkers. "In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals" (Hayles, 1999, p. 3). From a capitalist perspective, data values financial profit. Undoubtedly, the contemporary world has witnessed global transformations that bring together opposing powers: those of information ownership and knowledge manipulation from one side and those of the flow of capital and commodification of knowledge from the other side. Hence, Delillo depicts the modern Man's approach to 'information' through his *Cosmopolis, a novel*.

Published in the eve of the third millennium, that is to say in 2003, DeLillo's *Cosmopolis, a novel* exposes the pitfalls of being too dependent on 'information'. Because of the "information overload" (Hayles, 1999), the contemporary individual struggles to have adequate command of what he 'knows' and seeks to transform his 'knowledge' into wealth, power and eternity. Don DeLillo's story delves into the intricate and often perplexing relationship between information and new technologies, offering a thought-provoking exploration of the impact these elements have on the individual and society as a whole. This narrative anticipates the profound influence of technology on contemporary life and paints a surreal yet eerily familiar portrait of a world saturated with information.

*Cosmopolis, a novel* is structured as a story within a story. The main story is told from a third person point of view; its protagonist is Eric Michael Packer, 28-year-old billionaire who lives in a luxurious apartment in a skyscraper located in a wealthy area of Manhattan. The main events of the story take place in his high-tech equipped limousine; a car that symbolizes the blurred boundaries between the physical space and the 'spaceless' cyberspace where the notion of 'limits' does not exist. Eric Packer is the employer who owns assets as well as information; he believes that he is 'all-knowing' and because of his great knowledge he should be the only source of information, the manipulator of his employees' minds and therefore the one who creates their 'reality'. As far as the secondary story is concerned, it represents the opposite side of the coin; in other words, the version where an ordinary individual, who is deprived of knowledge and wealth, tells about his reality and how he has been victimized by the capitalist system. The secondary story is entitled 'Confessions of Benno Levin'; narrated from a first person point of view, the story represents Richard sheets (the double of Benno Levin), a 41 year-old fired employee who tells how he is deeply influenced by his employer – or more precisely his idol: the employee reads about his leader, stalks him, learns from him and becomes obsessed by his character and achievements. The protagonist of the secondary story is deprived of information and knows only what his employer allows him to know: Richard Sheets has been informed through the person who holds power: "I loved the cross-harmonies between nature and data. You taught me this." (DeLillo, 2003, p. 200) Because of his lack of knowledge, he is prevented from realizing his dream of following his idol's footsteps and becoming wealthy; he is even deprived of his job and his 'identity'. Feeling useless and incompetent, Richard Sheets decides to kill Eric Packer; and this, therefore, has given him a sense of achievement.

At the heart of *Cosmopolis* lies the pervasive presence of the Information Age. The protagonist, Eric Packer, is a master of the financial universe who embarks on a surreal odyssey across New York City in a stretch limousine. As Packer navigates the city's overcrowded streets, he is driven in dream-like vehicle equipped by the latest technologies; a car that is both as a mobile office and a living space. The story of *Cosmopolis, a novel* highlights how an entrepreneur whose last day in his life summarizes what he has built throughout his lifetime and how he has

lost everything because of a fatal interpretation of the information he has acquired. Eric Packer's obsession with money, numerals, and the most advanced technologies has allowed him to build a high-tech empire, a territory that possesses and processes information of any kind: "He absorbed this material in a couple of long still seconds" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 11). He uses his senses to detect and learn about everything: "Once you'd looked, there was nothing else to know" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 11); in fact, the verbs 'look', 'see', 'notice' and 'watch' reiterate throughout the novel. In addition to using his senses, Packer is curious to know more from others through direct speech; he also 'talks' to everyone, except with his bodyguard 'Torval' because communication between them is through codes: "He coded a word to Torval up front" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 16), or through gestures and body language which implies the absence of direct communication between them. In *Cosmopolis*, DeLillo constructs a narrative that reflects the evolving nature of language in the digital age. The characters communicate in a disconnected style, reminiscent of online discourse or text messages. The novel's language mirrors the fragmented and fast-paced nature of contemporary communication, capturing the essence of a society immersed in a constant stream of information.

Eric Packer surrounds himself by knowledgeable workers. The role of his bodyguard, Torval, is to get information about potential threats and to ensure his employer's safety. As for the Chief of Technology, Shiner, he is in charge of the company's website and secures Packer's technology from hackers. The Currency Analyst, Michael Chin, has an advanced degree in mathematics and economics and controls the status of the currency. Jane Melman is his Chief of Finance who supervises the market and the consumers' expenditure. Packer enjoys the mental exchanges with his Chief of Theory, Vija Kinski, who theorizes about everything including technology, economy, social movements etc. He finds theorizing about any idea alluring and exciting for his mental wellbeing. For instance, one of his Chief of Theory's suggestions is that "[w]e need a new theory of time" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 86); appreciating this very idea, Packer confirms what the modern entrepreneurs believe: i.e. time equals money.

In addition to the employees who provide him with the requested information, Packer collects more and more data from a variety of sources. Starting from the city of Manhattan itself, it is a place where all sorts of information reside: it is a multicultural city where different cultures and different people representing a rich source of backgrounds and knowledge coexist. Manhattan also symbolizes the vastness of space and extreme prosperity since the giant corporations and owners of capital are established there. With its numerous skyscrapers, Manhattan reflects a complex architecture, power and highness of status; it is the symbol of manhood for an entrepreneur like Packer. Besides the city, the protagonist has equipped his limousine with the latest high-technologies and screens that enable him to access the Internet, surf websites, and check what is going on around him through 'spycams'; those spy cameras do not only record what happens around the car but also predict the future. The car is where Packer spends most of his time doing everything, including work; it shows how the boundaries between means of transport, means of entertainment and work are blurred. It is also a fortress that protects its passengers from criminal attempts and has the most advanced security systems that prevent hackers from stealing data. More than that, the protagonist wears a special cristal watch that tells the time, works as a camera that records what happens nearby, and forecasts what will happen to its owner. To expand his knowledge, Packer does not hesitate to read whatever comes in front of his sight: from books, to advertisements, to poems; ironically, he constantly compares the poems he reads to the poems his wife writes.

Undoubtedly, Eric Packer is a man of great knowledge: he knows a lot about currency conditions and market deals; he has learned how to transform data into concrete wealth that manifest in his well-equipped apartment located in an astonishing skyscraper, his rarely found possessions, and especially his very special vehicle, the limousine. The protagonist has a "mechanical mind" (Crane, 2016) that works like a computer's central processing unit; he thinks about minute details and analyzes every idea that his memory could recall or any image that might be caught by his sight. Knowing everything, from what happens in the exterior world and the role of global systems to the working of his body cells and organs, Packer is convinced that his mental power, his technological fortress and his financial status would secure him from threats or even let him fulfill his dream for eternity. The novel, indeed, presents a hyper-realistic vision of a world dominated by screens, data, and constant connectivity that transorm the 'natural humans' into 'posthumans'.

The protagonist is first depicted as a sleepless man who has been depending on sedatives and hypnotics that have lost their effect through time. His inability to sleep is explained by his computer-like brain that continuously processes old and new information at a nanosecond timescale. "Every act he performed was self-haunted and synthetic. […] There was only the noise in his head, the mind in time" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 1). Eric Packer's brain is not a usual one, it has evolved and is programmed to store and assimilate numerals and alphabetic codes. He gathers

information not only from what he reads in books, websites and screens, but also from 'noticing' and scrutinizing everything surrounding him and from listening to what others say. He may be described as the kind of 'posthuman' that marked the transition phase between human condition and the machine. For him, "Freud is finished, Einstein's next" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 1). Packer views himself as a genius whose great knowledge ensures his power and dominance over the world.

Power is represented through financial wealth, property, and knowledge. It is both exposed through concrete objects, abstract numerical data that pertain to the owner's currency investments, or even from his own image broadcast by mass media. Packer's status as a wealthy and powerful individual magnifies the impact of his actions and decisions. The media's portrayal of him as a 'larger-than-life' figure contributes to the distortion of reality, blurring the lines between truth and fiction. Power is hardly gained and easily lost. Eric Packer has experienced a journey on his last day in his life from the First Avenue where skyscrapers, the symbol of power and manhood reside, to the Eleventh Avenue where decaying buildings and poverty predominate; this journey in an influential person's life unveils the truth behind the alluring face of high-technologies and capitalism. They do not only claim control over the future and the new world order, they also sacrifice the lives of the majority for the sake of the minority. DeLillo uses Packer's wealth and status to explore the interconnectedness of global financial systems. The protagonist's relentless pursuit of information reflects the hyperactive nature of financial markets, where milliseconds can make the difference between success and failure. Information is what the capital holder provides: "He thought of the people who used to visit his website back in the days when he was forecasting stocks, when forecasting stocks was pure power, when he'd tout a technology stock or bless an entire sector and automatically cause doubling in share price and the shifting in the world views […]" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 75). Packer's obsession with predicting currency fluctuations and market trends mirrors a modern society's growing dependence on information for financial success and control.

In Delillo's novel, information and cultures are digitized and commodified. For the protagonist, "Property is no longer about power, personality and command. It's not about vulgar display or tasteful display. It no longer has weight or shape. The only thing that matters is the price you pay" (DeLillo, 2003, p.78). Even time is commodified since entrepreneurs see that time equals money: "It's cyber-capital that creates the future" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 79). Data, on the other hand, becomes a more real human

attribute that an individual's existence and success depend on:

> In fact data itself was soulful and glowing, a dynamic aspect of the life process. This was the eloquence of alphabets and numeric systems, now fully realized in electronic form, in the zero-oneness of the world, the digital imperative that defined every breath of the planet's living billions. Here was the heave of the biosphere. Our bodies and oceans were here, knowable and whole. (DeLillo, 2003, p. 24)

For business people, it's data and information that create and define the identity of humans; human beings are no more than units of data that can be manipulated and used in one's favor.

Due to the dominion of high-technologies on humans' lives and way of thinking since the computer machine as we know it today has been upgraded in the mid-twentieth century, scientists, researchers, economists, and intellectuals of any kind have admitted the role which high-tech devices and the World Wide Web have been playing in altering humans' life-style, decision-making and fate. Advocators of the new technologies see that:

> the computer […] was an icon of progress, autonomy, and individual empowerment. […] Businesses, initially overtaken by the fast pace of innovation in digital technology, also began to adopt computers in large numbers to carry out a wide range of tasks from record-keeping and accounting to inventory control, production, and advertising. (Connor, 2004, p. 139).

Emerging in an era when the capitalist system has imposed its regulations on the world, high-technologies have allowed the spread and appropriation of this system's values at a global level. "Globalization, [which is the] integrated circuitboard of contemporary capitalism" (Connor, 2004, p. 130) has facilitated the transition of mass-mediated societies to the third millennium. It is behind the creation of what is called "information society" which is defined according to "technological", "economic", "occupational", "special" and "cultural" criteria as well as the "theoretical knowledge/information [which] is at the core of how we conduct ourselves these days" (Webster, 2006, p. 8). Thus, humans are being prescribed, united and at the same time separated by information.

Delillo's *Cosmopolis* represents the shape and functions of the information society in the new millennium. "An information society" consists of "a society in which the creation, distribution, diffusion, use, integration, and manipulation of information is a significant economic,

political, and cultural activity" (igi-global.com). The contemporary individuals' behavior, drives and perception of their reality are nurtured by the quality and the amount of information they are exposed to; and the ones who decide which type of information that needs to be diffused to the common individuals are no more that big entrepreneurs, wealth holders or distributors and owners of high-tech giants. An information society is basically defined according to certain criteria: "technological", "economic", "occupational", "spatial", or "cultural" and essentially when "theoretical knowledge /information is at the core of how we conduct ourselves these days" (Webster, 2006, p. 8). Deciphering the contemporary individuals' tendencies could help businesses influence social trends to let them work in their own favor, and hence make more profit and ensure stable economic empires.

Going back to Don DeLillo's novel, it epitomizes the influence of high-technologies on the contemporary Man – whether it is an affluent individual of any kind or a common citizen struggling to survive in a world abiding by the rules of the capitalist system. The new millennium's generations are destined by (mis)information. The author of *Cosmopolis, a novel* shows the impact of both the capitalist economic system and the information and communication technologies on individuals of different social groups. On the one hand, there are the wealthy groups that comprise the entrepreneurs, asset owners, bank investors, software entrepreneurs, or head of states whose power emanates from their great knowledge about their domains and their ability to manipulate information to make it work for their own interest; on the other hand, there are the ordinary people who work for them or the consumers who pay them for their products or services. The second category of people is helplessly doing what the wealthy groups want them to do. They are deprived of their will to decide and prevented from acquiring enough knowledge about what's really happening to them or to the world in which they live. Information is in fact prescribed and transferred through cultural and social communication

> [n]ot only through a technological regime but also through the circulation of rhetorical tropes between wider cultural domains, technologies emerge in both design and social meaning. Cultural metaphors act as influences on technological designs (for example, computers should act like the mind) that then, in turn, influence larger cultural realms (for example, the mind should act with the instrumentality of a computer). (E. Day, 2001, p. 11)

What the author of this novel reveals is not only the importance of knowing how to control data and the other people's decisions, but also the misleading nature of information itself. Also, what has been considered as facts can turn into a destructive delusion.

While Packer is surrounded by a barrage of information, *Cosmopolis* also explores the paradoxical sense of disconnection that arises from this inundation. The novel questions whether the constant flow of data truly connects individuals or, in fact, creates isolation. Packer's quest for information distances him from the tangible realities of life, emphasizing the dehumanizing effects of technological saturation. DeLillo raises cautionary flags about the consequences of unbridled technological progress. The novel suggests that the relentless pursuit of efficiency, speed, and information can lead to a loss of humanity. Packer's detachment from the consequences of his actions, facilitated by technology, highlights the potential dangers of being insulated from the real world. From another standpoint, a close scrutiny of the plotline and of the themes of the novel suggests that the more individuals struggle to stay in touch with humanity and maintain human attributes the more likely they witness economic troubles, psychological unrest, sense of insecurity and constant threat to their survival.

The absence of doubt and the risks of being misinformed due to the blind trust in high-technologies are the main causes of the protagonist's fatal end. Initially, Packer believes that knowledge eliminates doubt: "Doubt? What is doubt?" [He said,] "There is no doubt. Nobody doubts anymore" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 31). For him, computers and the free access to unlimited amounts of data can grant him enough certainty and allow him to gain control over everything. Even his Chief of theory has misled him with her assumptions: "Doubt. What is doubt? You don't believe in doubt. You've told me this. Computer power eliminates doubt. All doubt rises from past experience. But the past is disappearing. We used to know the past but not the future. This is changing" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 86). Because he blindly trusts her, he fails to interpret the 'paralanguage', i.e. the facial expressions and the ironic tone, of his chief of theory. He *couldn't know* that what is speculative does not necessarily become concretized.

On the other side, the narrator of the secondary story is suspicious of everything surrounding him, except for his employer's knowledge. Richard Sheets calls himself 'Benno Levin'; he is 'doubtful' of his own identity, his abilities and his knowledge of the world. For him as a failed man, everything is doubtful. he told Eric: "I'm helpless in their system that makes no sense to me. You wanted me to be a helpless robot soldier but all I could be

was helpless" (DeLillo, 2003, p.195). Yet, because he has constantly followed him, this ex-employee turns out to know more about his employer than the latter has known about himself.

New technologies and mobile devices can be a source of information as well as a source of mis-information. In order to keep track of every detail and learn about the latest actualities, Eric Packer carried a WAP phone that provided him with immediate online access to information; finding that it was easy to borrow more and more money to beat the yen, he did not listened to the warnings of his chief of finance and his currency analyst; instead, he proceeded with his uncalculated actions till he lost all his fortune. In order to save his capital from permanent loss, he created an online fake bank account to appropriate his wife's identity then stole her money; therefore, he illegally misused his knowledge and turned his back to ethical manners. Another instance of mis-information is revealed when Packer failed to take the messages behind the social protest movement seriously; he just saw "something theatrical" (DeLillo, 2003, p.99) about it. He was upset when a man burned himself; but the only excuse he reached was that his chief of theory "had been wrong" in that "the market was not total. It could not claim this man or assimilate his act" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 100). Here, Packer epitomizes the capitalist entrepreneur who cares only about self-interest and financial growth, at the expense of the innocent common individuals.

Another side of mis-information lies in how information is perceived and interpreted. For example, his bodyguard used the most recent version of weapons that relied on voice recognition to shoot. Since he didn't know the code and his voice didn't match, Packer deceived his bodyguard; pretending that he wanted to test the gun, he ordered his chief of security to utter the code while he (the employer) targeted him (the employee). The employer killed the person who was supposed to keep him secure because he felt that his presence threatened his own sense of power and manhood. Furthermore, When he "made a phone threat" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 56) to the company, the antagonist Richard Sheets did not take his act seriously; yet, the company's security officials did. Ironically, they failed to identify the source of threat although they already had his record as an ex-employee; on the other hand, Sheets made his claim come true when Packer was sent by his fate to his enemy's building. Eliminating the capitalist representative was the key for the survival of the ordinary man.

From the illustrations of Eric Packer and Richard Sheets, it is noteworthy that transmitting, sharing and learning information in the age of high-technologies and the global

capitalist system necessitates maintaining balance; otherwise the consequences may be incurable. While Sheets has his syndrome: "The Korean panic attack" that resulted from holding in his anger for long years, Packer has a complex called "Icarius Falling" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 202), alluding to a Greek mythology whose lesson was "not to fly too close to the sun" and the need to maintain "balance, equilibrium, and moderation" (Ancarola, 2024). Packer's fatal mistake made him bankrupt; he failed to maintain balance: "You were looking for balance. Beautiful balance, equal parts, equal sides. I know this. I know you. But you should have been tracking the yen in its tics and quirks. The little quirk. The mishap. [Benno said]" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 200). DeLillo skillfully uses misinformation as a distorting mirror, reflecting the fractured nature of truth in the novel's universe. Packer's quest for information becomes a journey through a hall of mirrors, where reality is elusive, and facts are malleable. In short, the novel raises poignant questions about the reliability of information sources and the susceptibility of individuals to manipulation.

To conclude, *Cosmopolis: a novel* stands as a prescient exploration of the intersection between information and new technologies in the 21st century. DeLillo's narrative serves as a cautionary tale, urging readers to critically examine the impact of technology on their lives. As we continue to struggle with the escalating role of information in our society, this novel remains a relevant and thought-provoking work that challenges us to reflect on the consequences of our technological pursuits. In *Cosmopolis*, *a novel* Don DeLillo paints a vivid portrait of a society trapped in the labyrinth of information and misinformation. The novel urges readers to confront the disorienting effects of living in an era where truth is elusive and misinformation abounds. As we struggle with the complexities of the digital age, *Cosmopolis* remains an accurate and inspiring exploration of the challenges posed by the blurred boundaries between reality and illusion in our information-driven world.

Information is a double-edged sword, it can be constructive or destructive. Indeed, the commodification of information may lead to the commodification of the human being; then ethical issues might be raised. Maintaining balance is vital: no profit would be reached without the 'inclusion' of most social groups. Besides, information and communication technologies were developed and transmitted to most nations through a double-faceted process: by revealing the right to free access to information for each individual in any corner in the world, and by hiding the attempts of different users to breach the private life, business plans, or secret files that concern only the owner of the information. High-
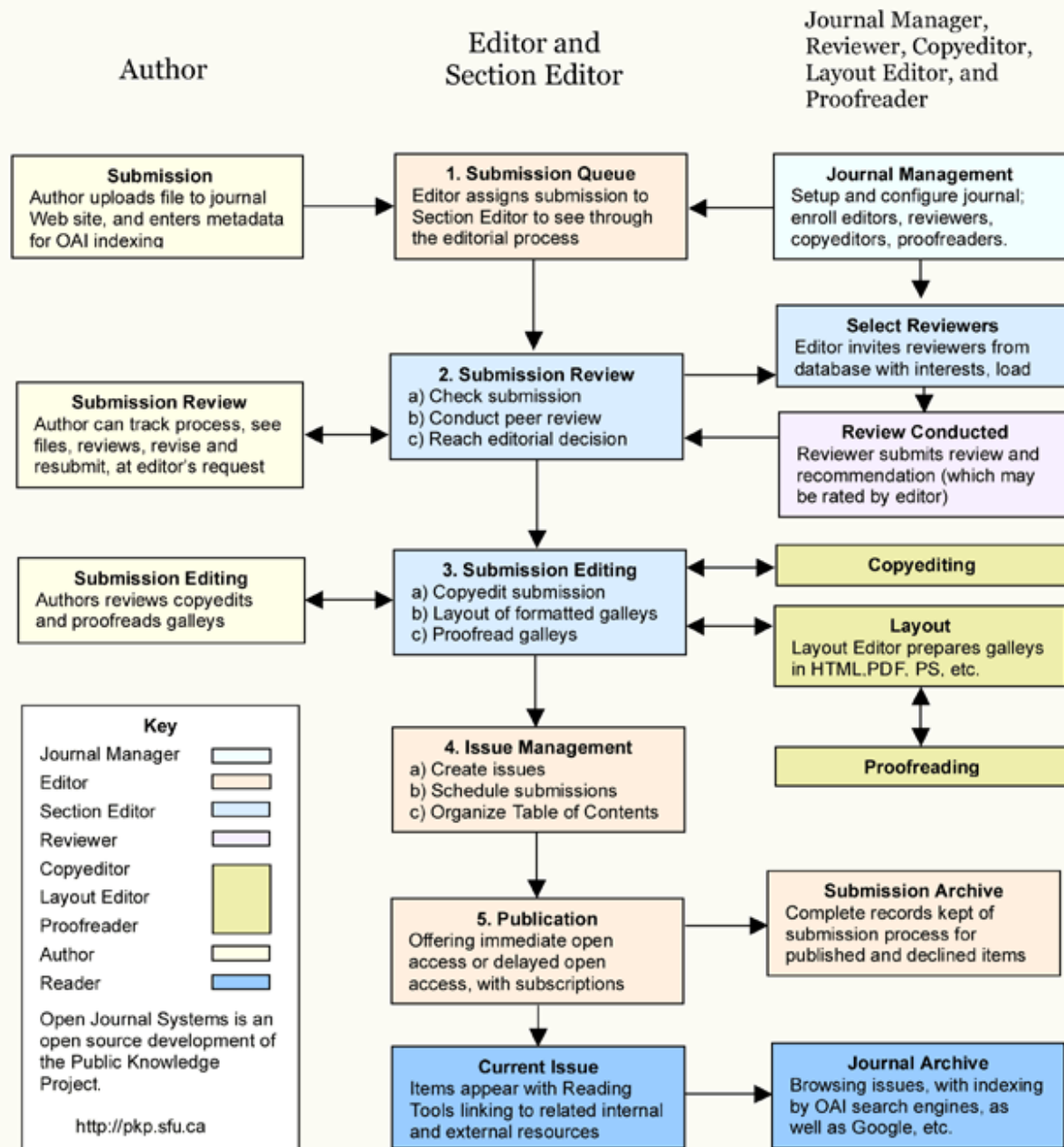
technologies have certainly established an empire that holds absolute control over both their creators and users; yet, despite these sophisticated components and services, and even if Artificial Intelligence and capital have claimed authority of the contemporary world's economic systems, it is through the right handling of information that individuals may maintain balance. (Mis)nformation in an empire where high-technologies and ICTs prevail can be both (mis)instructive; being aware of this is vital for self-security and for preserving one's existence in a world that is shaped, transformed and maintained by an infinite amount of data.

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# OJS Editorial and Publishing Process

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**Journal Management**
Setup and configure journal; enroll editors, reviewers, copyeditors, proofreaders.

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Author can track process, see files, reviews, revise and resubmit, at editor's request

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b) Conduct peer review
c) Reach editorial decision

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Editor invites reviewers from database with interests, load

**Review Conducted**
Reviewer submits review and recommendation (which may be rated by editor)

**Submission Editing**
Authors reviews copyedits and proofreads galleys

**3. Submission Editing**
a) Copyedit submission
b) Layout of formatted galleys
c) Proofread galleys

**Copyediting**

**Layout**
Layout Editor prepares galleys in HTML,PDF. PS, etc.

**4. Issue Management**
a) Create issues
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**Proofreading**

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