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Dr. Manoj Kumar

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that we present this issue of the International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS). As an esteemed peer-reviewed journal, IJELS is dedicated to advancing scholarly research and fostering intellectual dialogue in English literature, Education and Social Sciences.

Our journal is a dynamic platform for academics, researchers, and practitioners to share their insights and findings. This issue encompasses a diverse range of topics, reflecting the multifaceted nature of our disciplines. From in-depth literary analyses to innovative social science research, our contributors provide valuable perspectives contributing to the broader understanding of cultural and social phenomena.

At IJELS, we are committed to upholding the highest academic rigour and integrity standards. Each submission undergoes a meticulous peer-review process, ensuring that only the most original and impactful research is published. Our editorial team, comprised of experts from around the globe, works diligently to maintain the quality and relevance of our journal.

We are particularly excited about the current issue, which includes groundbreaking studies and thought-provoking articles that challenge conventional wisdom and open new avenues for exploration. We believe these contributions will inspire further research and foster meaningful discussions within the academic community.

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.

Thank you for being so committed to scholarly excellence.

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Vol-9, Issue-6, November - December 2024
(10.22161/ijels.96)

Artificial Intelligence (AI): A Review of Its Uses and Impacts in English Language Teaching and Learning

Author: Rahim Uddin Choudhury, Md. Mokbul Hossain, Mohamed Elboussairi Salih Elhaj Mohamed, Mohammad Mazedul Huq Talukdar

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.1](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.1)

Page No: 001-008

Humanitarian Perspectives and Materialism in Sudha Murty's Dollar Bahu and House of Cards

Author: Aayushi, Dr. Sonam Kamboj

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.2](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.2)

Page No: 009-013

Exploring the Theme of Motherhood as portrayed in Top Girls and Fen by Caryl Churchill

Author: Mahmoud Fakhry Osman Hassan

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.3](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.3)

Page No: 014-020

Engaging English Language Learners through Gamification and Serious Games

Author: Aayushi, Dr. Sonam Kamboj

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.4](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.4)

Page No: 021-027

Deciphering the Politics of Language in Select Poems: A Contemplation

Author: Madhushri Kallimani

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.5](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.5)

Page No: 028-031

The Factors Influencing Continuous Intention to Adopt E-commerce Recommender System: The Mediating Role of Trust in Technology in Henan, China

Author: Yang Zhao, Ooi Chin Lye

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.6](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.6)

Page No: 032-037

Exemplification of History and Historical Fantasy in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh

Author: Shaik MD Thameem Basha, S. Nancy Margret

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.7](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.7)

Page No: 038-040

الدعاء مخ العباداة : Pragmatic Study of Supplication in Prophetic Hadiths

Author: Huda Ala'a Jabour, Abbas Lutfi Hussein

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.8](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.8)

Page No: 041-053

Women's Dowries and Marriages in Shakespeare's Plays

Author: Xiaoling Zhu

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.9](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.9)

Page No: 054-061

Post-Traumatic Growth in Bisham Sahni's Tamas: An Exploration

Author: Gopinath Khutia

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.10](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.10)

Page No: 062-063

Tailoring Science News Reporting for Audience Engagement: Effective Writing Strategies

Author: Shiv Shankar Das, Srimaya Rath

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.11](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.11)

Page No: 064-070

Wilsonianism in U.S Foreign Policy: A Review

Author: Anton Korshenko

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.12](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.12)

Page No: 071-074

Echoes of Colonialism and Identity Crisis: A Postcolonial Analysis of Hayao Miyazaki's Spirited Away

Author: Poulami Banerjee, Navreet Sahi

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.13](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.13)

Page No: 075-078

A Gynocritical Reading of Carol Ann Duffy's The World's Wife

Author: Brinda Samanta

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.14](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.14)

Page No: 079-081

THE CHAOTIC KAFKA: Devouring the Absurdism in Gregor Samsa's transformation

Author: Tamanna

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.15](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.15)

Page No: 082-084

Preoccupation and Absence of Desire: Voyeurism and Caste in Samskara and Kusumabale

Author: Sanmitha Snehan

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.16](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.16)

Page No: 085-090

Unveiling the Layers: Exploring Identity and Maternity in Suniti Namjoshi's The Mothers of Maya Diip

Author: Vasundhara Laspal, Barkha Rautela

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.17](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.17)

Page No: 091-093

Comparative Insights into the Changing Patterns of Cropping Intensity in Haryana

Author: Ashish

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.18](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.18)

Page No: 094-102

The Struggle for Reconciliation: Trauma and Memory in Abdulrazak Gurnah's By the Sea

Author: Ms. Khushboo Thakur, Dr. Navreet Kaur Sahi

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.19](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.19)

Page No: 103-112

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in English Education: Trends and Developments

Author: S. Abdul Jabbar

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.20](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.20)

Page No: 113-116

African American Women Writers Before Reconstruction: Tackling Socio-Political Changes Through Their Words

Author: Paridhi Bhutra

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.21](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.21)

Page No: 117-126

Religion is absolute in Kannada literature

Author: Puttaswamy

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.22](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.22)

Page No: 127-129

Daily poet Dr. K.S. Nisar Ahmed

Author: Puttaswamy

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.23](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.23)

Page No: 130-133

Exploring Male Chauvinism and Gender-Based Violence in Someone Like Her: A Psychoanalytic Feminist Critique

Author: Azhar Shah, Dr. Rafiq Nawab

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.24](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.24)

Page No: 134-143

The Modernist Novel: An Overview


Author: Kokila S. Mathur

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.25](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.25)

Page No: 144-152

National Security Strategies and Ideological Continuity: The U.S. From Truman to Trump: A Book Review

Author: Artyom Papyan, Julia Grebenstein

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.26](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.26)

Page No: 153-156

A Bibliographic Analysis of United Nations Integrated Missions


Author: Jyothisson George

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.27](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.27)

Page No: 157-164

An Analysis of the International Communication Discourse on Beijing “Rural Revitalization” Strategy

Author: Weina Li

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.28](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.28)

Page No: 165-176

Identity and Transformation in King Lear: From King to Beggar

Author: Ajit Mondal

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.29](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.29)

Page No: 177-182

Unlocking Opportunities: The Socioeconomic Impact of Quality Education

Author: Masoom Ali

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.30](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.30)

Page No: 183-186

Binayak Bandyopadhyay’s Sambhabami (A Collection of Bengali Poems): A Postmodern Appraisal

Author: Ayan Kanti Ghosh

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.31](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.31)

Page No: 187-192

Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Female Image Construction in China Daily: A Case Study of Reports on Female Astronaut Wang Yaping

Author: Rui Liu

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.32](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.32)

Page No: 193-202

The Struggle to Stay Alive: A Comparative Study of the Survival Strategies in Cormac McCarthy's The Road and Emily St. John Mandel's Station Eleven

Author: Seema Tiwari, Dr. Mamta Bisht

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.33](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.33)

Page No: 203-208

A Socio-Economic Study of Hansawas Khurd Village of Charkhi Dadri District

Author: Amita Kumari

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.34](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.34)

Page No: 209-217

Students' Attitudes toward Learning English among Senior High School Stem Students in Siocon District, Division of Zamboanga Del Norte: Basis for Proposed Intervention Program

Author: Jonilyn M. Busca-Monteroso, James O. Baes

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.35](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.35)

Page No: 218-226

Revealing Depth: The Significance of the Holocaust Genre in Understanding Conceptual Metaphor through The Tattooist of Auschwitz and The Librarian of Auschwitz

Author: Pakthima Supanchaikul

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.36](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.36)

Page No: 227-232

From Mimicry to Mockery: A Reading of Upamanyu Chatterjee's IAS Novels

Author: Chandrima Das

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.37](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.37)

Page No: 233-238

"Unseeing Truths: Gandhari's Blindness as Narrative Prosthesis in The Curse of Gandhari" by Aditi Banerjee

Author: Athira S.

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.38](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.38)

Page No: 239-241

A Spectacle of Suffering: Disability, Euthanasia and Posthumanism in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Guzaarish

Author: Chitra Pachouri

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.39](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.39)

Page No: 242-246

The Politics of Decolonization: Addressing Eurocentrism in Politics and Policy

Author: Shahid Ul Haq Wani

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.40](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.40)

Page No: 247-249

A Study on the English Translation of Names of Cultural Relics: A Case Study of Cultural Relics Excavated from the Liangzhu Site

Author: Jin Jiabei

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.41](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.41)

Page No: 250-252

Multimedia-Based Instructional Materials and Students' Learning Achievement in Literature

Author: Crispher P. Manginyog, Cristobal M. Ambayon

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.42](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.42)

Page No: 253-260

CNN and BBC Shaping the Opinions in Different Countries: A multi-dimensional descriptive commentary related to security, military and diplomacy

Author: Ramazan Safa, Mohammad Barati

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.43](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.43)

Page No: 261-271

Vulnerable or/ and resistant: Transgender Worlds and Constructions of Identity

Author: Bulbul Gupta

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.44](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.44)

Page No: 267-271

School Heads' Leadership Skills and Teachers' Work Engagement in the Department of Education: Evidence from Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte

Author: Yleonah Mar B. Largo, Shirley G. Bellino, Leynie Boy G. Bellino, Leo C. Naparota

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.45](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.45)

Page No: 272-282

The Impact of Online Harassment on Women's Societal Development

Author: D. Geetha

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.46](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.46)

Page No: 283-285

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 and the Capacity of Government to Governance in Local Governments

Author: Sarmila Bagale

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.47](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.47)

Page No: 286-293

Ideologies of a Chauvinist: A Study on the Personal vs Social Dichotomy in When I Hit You, Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife

Author: Vinaya Peter

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.48](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.48)

Page No: 294-297

Fragmented Lives: Analyzing Genocidal Trauma and the Plight of Abducted Women during the Partition in Select Indian and Pakistani Short Fiction

Author: Shradha Gupta

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.49](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.49)

Page No: 298-305

Do Bodies Without Organs Feel Shame? An Affective Approach of Identity Crisis in Gene Luen Yang's American Born Chinese

Author: Zicong Fan

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.50](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.50)

Page No: 306-315

Beyond the Elite Gaze: A Comparative Study to Unveil the Subaltern Voices Through Gurdial Singh's The Last Flicker and Rohinton Mistry's A Fine Balance

Author: Randeep Kaur, Mahesh Arora

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.51](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.51)

Page No: 316-320

Memory as Counter Narrative: A Subaltern Ramayana

Author: Sreekala.B

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.52](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.52)

Page No: 321-325

Tracing the voices of Resistance: Representation of tormented Girlhood in select Novels of Dickens

Author: Kyamalia Bairagya

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.53](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.53)

Page No: 326-332

Gandhian Thought in Rajarao's Kanthapura

Author: Dr. N. Solomon Benny

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.54](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.54)

Page No: 333-335

Reflection of Ecocriticism in Indian Poetry

Author: Dr. Kiran Mani Tripathi

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.55](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.55)

Page No: 336-341

The Changing Dynamics of Indian Education for Holistic and Multidisciplinary Development: A Literary Review of NEP 2020

Author: Monika Chaudhary

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.56](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.56)

Page No: 342-345

Adaptation of Management Students' Interpersonal Communication in the Learning Process during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Author: Abdul Rahman, Vania Utamie Subiakto, Farid Hamid Umarela

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.57](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.57)

Page No: 346-353

Identity Politics and Dehumanisation in Manjula Padmanabhan's Harvest and Mahesh Dattani's Dance Like a Man

Author: Suraj Soni, Dr Vipin Pal Singh

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.58](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.58)

Page No: 354-358

An archetypal post modern lover as depicted in the poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Author: Sona Sharma

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.59](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.59)

Page No: 359-362

Sex of Things – An exploration of Bill Brown's things through the lens of gender

Author: Nivedita Chatterjee

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.60](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.60)

Page No: 363-369

Breaking the Silence: A Quest for Self in Shashi Deshpande's The Dark Holds No Terror

Author: Israt Jahan Nimni, Refat Sultana Jahan

 DOI: [10.22161/ijels.96.61](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.96.61)

Page No: 370-375



Artificial Intelligence (AI): A Review of Its Uses and Impacts in English Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract— Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the imitation of human thought processes by a computer system to behave in a human-like manner. As a key factor of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, AI is transforming education by facilitating more accessible and customized learning experiences. To explore the cause of the rising integration of AI in education, this article analyses the latest literature and AI tools employed in the industry to comprehend the role of AI in English language teaching and learning. This study uses a qualitative research method to collect and analyse fifty citable, recently published scholarly writings available at the Google Scholar database. The data is synthesized and examined through content analysis techniques to summarize and integrate key information for precise and accurate results. The results suggest that AI fosters a supportive environment, provides rich materials according to the learner's proficiency, career goals, and personal interests, significantly upgrading the teaching and learning experience in ELT. Despite its limitations and challenges, the role of AI in education is going to expand with the development of technology offering even more innovative approaches and tools to enhance both teaching practices and learning outcomes in the field of English language education.



Keywords— Artificial Intelligence (AI), AI Applications, AI-powered tools, Digital Learning, Learning English

I. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has witnessed a crucial advancement in technology and transmitting information through text, images, and sound. Research and experiments are ongoing to develop new technologies that make human tasks and activities easier. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is among the emerging technologies that provide a valuable opportunity to enhance English language skills. With various learning tools available, students can grasp English more rapidly. AI-driven ELT

apps provide students with a diverse range of resources to support their learning. These technologies include tools like Google Translate, Text to Speech (TTS), Orai, ELSA, English ABLE, Chatbots, Duolingo, Neo platform, and others. By employing methods suitable for computers and mobile devices, these intelligent systems can replicate human-like intelligence and decision-making processes.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a type of computational creativity that has attracted considerable attention because of its rapid development and advancement (Anantrasirichai

& Bull, 2022). To foster creativity in computers, numerous artificial intelligence technologies have been introduced. According to Rahman and Rahman (2009), Artificial Intelligence (AI) develops software that filters knowledge and performs various autonomous functions, such as computation and student search. Artificial Intelligence (AI) produces "intelligent" technology, such as computer systems (online platforms) and computerized machines (robots) that function and react similarly to the human brain (Karsenti, 2019). Artificial Intelligence (AI), also referred to as Machine Intelligence, is the type of intelligence exhibited by machines that aims to replicate the natural intelligence demonstrated by humans. In other words, AI refers to the integration of human-like intelligence into machines, enabling them to carry out tasks. According to Mehrotra (2019), Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of computer science focused on analyzing and developing intelligent machines and applications.

Artificial Intelligence can comprehend certain aspects of human intelligence, including speech recognition, language understanding, decision-making, and visual perception. There is a growing demand for AI to develop expert systems and address complex challenges, such as recognition and natural language processing (Devi et al., 2020). AI as a language tutor provides relentless, personalized training by delivering extensive feedback and scaffolding activities essential for achieving fluency, all in a low-pressure environment where learners feel more comfortable taking risks and making mistakes (Fitria, 2021). The significant promise of AI is its potential to accelerate the development of language skills.

Artificial Intelligence—which includes machine learning, intelligent search, and natural language processing—can effectively advance the reform of English teaching and learning (Wang, 2019). According to Ribeiro (2020), Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching (ELT) offers the most practical and effective approach for English language teachers to incorporate into their teaching practices. English is a widely spoken language that follows a structured grammatical framework. Therefore, ESL/EFL (English as a Second/Foreign Language) students often find it extremely difficult to master English language.

Walker et al. (2007) emphasized the significance of utilizing AI applications to create written texts, enhance students' abilities in sentence construction and text development, and practice writing and reading skills. Similarly, Lotze (2016) noted that using AI applications aids in the development of English language skills and communication abilities through the use of intelligent dialog boxes. Mukhallafi (2020) cited that language

development processes are enhanced by various intelligent resources, including dialog and discussion windows, communication tools, text generation programs, and information extraction tools. These resources contribute to the development of reading comprehension skills.

II. METHOD

This section outlines the methodologies used in the current review of the relevant literature. It covers the research design, including the sampling of research materials, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures employed in synthesizing the review.

2.1. Research design

The current study uses a qualitative research design, specifically content analysis, to find out the uses and impacts of AI in teaching and learning English. Content analysis is defined by Fraenkel et al. (2011) as the study of any written material found in books, essays, newspapers, novels, articles, recipes, music, political speeches, ads, and images. Therefore, the review of literature in this paper is based on recent research articles and academic sources, as the researcher synthesizes relevant information from these sources to find out the results of this study.

2.2. Research materials sampling

The articles for the literature review were gathered from the Google Scholar database, focusing specifically on recently published and citable documents. A systematic search strategy was used in the month of July to August 2024 to collect research papers, relevant scholarly articles, conference presentations, and other academic sources. Fifty scholarly publications were chosen based on specific criteria, with a focus on titles related to the use of Artificial Intelligence in English language teaching and learning. The summary (abstract), results, and conclusion of each article were reviewed to select those that met the criteria of the investigation.

2.3. Data collection procedures

The data collection technique used in this investigation is documentation, which involves gathering information on relevant topics or factors from books, journals, research articles, and other academic sources to evaluate the concepts and hypotheses based on the existing literature. Additionally, only articles that provide full papers were selected and carefully read, understood, and interpreted to extract the core content presented by the researchers. From each source, useful information was extracted, such as the author(s), year of publication, study goals, techniques employed, significant results, and implications for teaching and learning English. This

approach ensured that significant insights and findings from each study were thoroughly captured.

2.4. Data analysis

The literature was reviewed using the thematic analysis method to find common themes, developments, and perspectives. Key themes might include the efficiency of AI tools for language learning, the impact of AI on language assessment, and the implications, difficulties, and future prospects. A comprehensive review of the subject was done by applying content analysis techniques, summarizing and integrating the information from the specified sources to get precise and accurate results.

2.5. Precise inclusion and exclusion criteria

A well-defined set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was devised in order to choose pertinent material for the review. The criteria included recently released research works, peer-reviewed materials, English-language publications, and a specific focus on the use of AI in English language teaching and learning with exclusion of articles from newspaper, commercial sites, nonacademic writings, and out dated research findings.

2.6. Critical evaluation

The chosen literature was critically examined in order to determine its quality, accuracy, and relevancy of each source. The evaluation took into account a number of parameters, including the sample size, collection techniques, research methodology, constraints, and the study's overall benefit to the subject.

2.7. Synthesis and interpretation

The results from the chosen sources were combined and analysed to create a rational narrative for the literature review. The review emphasized the most significant findings, arguments, and impacts that come from integrating AI into teaching and learning of the English language.

2.8. Discussion and conclusion

The discussion section offers an in-depth analysis of AI's impact on English language teaching and learning, covering the identified themes, challenges, and potential future directions. The conclusion highlights the key findings, synthesizes the literature, and provides recommendations for future research and practice in the field.

2.9. Limitations and gaps

The limitations of the chosen studies as well as the overall literature review procedure is acknowledged and discussed. The possibility of biases is taken into account, including language and publication prejudice. The

literature's shortcomings are also noted, indicating areas that need more investigation and further study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings and provides an in-depth discussion based on a thorough study and analysis of the relevant literature in the field.

3.1. Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching and Learning

Digital platforms have made learning and teaching English easier, and AI technology now offers opportunities to further enhance English language skills. Combining technology with language literacy is an effective strategy to increase global competency. As a result, applying AI technology would improve teaching and learning of foreign languages (Yingsoon, 2021). According to Mukhallafi (2020), applying AI in the field of education enhances the organization, arrangement, and selection of content. It also broadens instructional methods and educational pathways based on students' proficiency levels. Additionally, it improves instructional strategies and assessment techniques by tailoring self-study processes and emulating intelligent and expert systems as stated by Ghafar et al. (2023).

AI plays a significant role in delivering various types of information and enhances the effectiveness of the English learning process. The availability of diverse learning technologies makes it easier for learners to grasp what the teacher has explained. Students also benefit from the convenience of learning without needing direct interaction with teachers. Some vital roles played by AI in the field of English language teaching and learning are discussed below.

3.1.1. Transforms learning environment

AI transforms English learning environments, making immersion learning possible. Learning becomes more immersive and visually engaging by integrating and processing data such as images, audio, and text within intelligent devices. Through the human-computer interface, students can interact with AI, which boosts the authenticity of language environments. According to Wang et al. (2023), Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the ability to significantly improve adult learners' English proficiency by creating a personalized environment that is tailored to their individual needs, career goals, and language proficiency.

3.1.2. Promotes the efficiency of teaching and learning

AI maximizes the efficacy by providing an authentic conversational platform for teachers and learners

of English. It helps students become more proficient in both written and spoken English as well as in comprehension. Teachers find it convenient to present customized contents with the help of audio-visual aids keeping students active and engaged for a longer time. AI's profound knowledge of the cultures and customs of diverse English-speaking countries can be used to build significant connections with students. By integrating this cultural knowledge into lessons, AI can make learning English more engaging and relatable, which can considerably boost students' motivation and interest in mastering the language.

3.1.3. Develops practical skills

AI helps students develop stronger practical skills in English language learning. To successfully integrate AI into English Language Teaching (ELT), it is essential for both teachers and students to become proficient in using these systems and solving problems quickly. As AI continues to play a larger role in teaching and learning English, it enhances students' and teachers' ability to develop and apply practical skills in real-world scenarios.

3.1.4. Makes learning user-friendly and specific

AI-based educational programs are designed to be user-friendly and tailored to meet the specific needs of learners. These AI-driven teaching tools align the learners' contextual demands with their educational goals, ensuring a more personalized and effective learning experience. Effective English language teaching and learning must be aligned with the learners' precise standards and explicit expectations. If the learners' needs are not taken into account, the teaching process becomes ineffective.

3.1.5. Offers superior content

AI applications offer superior content with unlimited choices in accordance with individual needs and interests. The development of high-quality teaching and learning resources that address all facets of language acquisition—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—is now possible with artificial intelligence.

3.1.6. Provides immediate feedback

AI provides an immediate feedback system, enhancing the language learning process. Various AI-driven models can be developed specifically for learning English, allowing students to receive real-time feedback on their progress. In AI-based educational systems, the technology can be utilized to assess and analyse students' input based on their specific needs. AI can evaluate students' performance comprehensively by grading, providing reviews, cross-verifying information, and delivering in-depth presentations, ensuring that their achievements are measured from multiple perspectives.

3.1.7. Transforms the role of teacher

The teacher's role as a director and guide is transformed by AI-based technology. While it is difficult to completely remove the teachers from the teaching process or replace their role, AI alters how teachers function in English Language Teaching (ELT). Rather than eliminating the teachers' presence, AI shifts their role, allowing them to focus more on guiding and supporting students in a more dynamic and technology-driven environment. Teachers should continue to guide and support students, even with the integration of AI-based applications.

3.1.8. Allows global connectivity

The AI system allows significant global connectivity breaking linguistic and cultural barriers, connecting people worldwide through its digital platform. With so many AI-related educational systems available, students worldwide have endless possibilities to learn and gain new experiences, resolving time and space constraints. It allows remote access using facial identification, voice recognition, and tracking of students' mobility. AI-driven solutions can magnificently monitor and control students' activities globally.

3.1.9. Supports students' learning styles

Students' learning styles are supported by the AI learning platform, which gives them the opportunity to highlight and repeat difficult ideas as well as participate in engaging activities that align with their interests. AI-driven educational apps are developed to facilitate English teaching and learning experience according to the individual needs, learning styles, and proficiency levels.

3.1.10. Delivers customized course materials

AI applications provide customized course materials fulfilling the desires of the learners. Making the learning process more efficient and relevant, the course materials are generally created to target the knowledge and skills that students wish to acquire. With an emphasis on student-centred customization, the courses are tailored to each student's own learning preferences and areas of interest, giving them a more active role in directing their own educational path.

3.2. Challenges and limitations of AI in English language teaching

Although AI plays a significant role in developing and enhancing the teaching and learning of English, it is not without its challenges and limitations. Some crucial factors are outlined below.

3.2.1. Lack of human touch

The absence of human interaction in AI systems is its most significant flaw. Students receive their education through computer-generated content. They cannot feel the close connection a teacher can develop with them in person. They might not receive the comprehensive instruction, feedback, and inspiration that come from a human teacher.

3.2.2. Inaccurate data analysis

The excellence of AI systems is highly dependent on the data they are trained on. If the training data is biased, the AI system is likely to reinforce these biases, producing unfair and discriminatory results. As a result, AI can only be as intelligent or successful as the data you feed it. Therefore, the intelligence or effectiveness of AI can't be achieved without providing perfect, impartial, and accurate data.

3.2.3. Data security and privacy

The issue of data security and privacy is a major concern in delivering relentless, personalized training through AI in education. AI systems need large amounts of data to operate efficiently, including sensitive details about students' academic records, personal information, and behaviour. Therefore, it can't be assured that the given information will remain intact and secured in future and there will be no unauthorized access in the system.

3.2.4. Technical requirements

Another significant barrier to AI integration is technical requirements, particularly in remote or under-resourced areas. Implementing AI technologies typically demands substantial investment in infrastructure, such as high-speed internet, advanced hardware, and continuous technical support. Schools in low-income regions or developing countries may not have access to these resources, putting their students at a disadvantage.

3.2.5. Cultural sensibility

In AI-generated lessons, cultural sensitivity is a major challenge. Cultural differences might not be fully understood by an AI system. It may make comments or use phrases that are appropriate in one culture but considered inappropriate in another. It might have trouble understanding ideas that differ greatly between nations, such as humour or sarcasm.

3.2.6. Ethical concerns

Ethical concerns, for example privacy issues and over-reliance on AI, can hinder students' ability to think critically and solve problems. When students rely on AI-generated answers and solutions, their ability to think judgements and solve problems independently may

decrease over the time. They may face a critical situation due to any breach of sensitive data related to their family, education, or behaviour.

3.3. AI Technologies used in ELT

AI technology is being utilized widely in English Language Teaching (ELT) to help learners by generating coherent, grammatically correct texts, analysing language, and offering remedial exercises. Some of the most important AI technologies used in English language learning are mentioned below.

3.3.1. Google Translate

It is a free tool offered by Google that provides increasingly precise and natural-sounding translations by utilizing cutting-edge natural language processing technology, such as neural networks and machine learning. Students can use it to convert English words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs into their mother tongue and vice versa. It is a useful free tool for learning correct pronunciation and to verify the spelling of words that appear incorrectly.

3.3.2. Text-to-Speech (TTS)

It is an assistive technology that converts digital text into spoken words. With just a single click or tap, text on a computer or digital device can be transformed into audio using TTS technology. TTS is an excellent tool for both children and adults who struggle with reading. However, it can also help with writing, editing, and staying focused. Nearly all personal digital devices, such as PCs, cell phones, and tablets, are compatible with TTS and any type of text file, including Word and Pages documents can be read aloud.

3.3.3. English ABLE

It is a grammatical assessment-based learning environment that guides instruction from a range of sources (such as formative and summative assessments) by applying assessment expertise (Zapata-Rivera et al., 2007). English ABLE refers to an exam-focused learning environment aimed at helping English language learners (ELLs) master English grammar. Using a TOEFL CBT job library, English ABLE creates fresh sets of better assignments targeted at certain ELL component abilities. Packages designed to help students master various aspects of English grammar are also available in a flexible, scaffolded learning environment.

3.3.4. Orai

It is an AI-powered tool that helps users practicing presentations and receiving immediate feedback on lacking areas for development. Orai is a fun and user-friendly tool that offers a quick, self-guided way to improve public

speaking skills. With the help of Orai students receive immediate feedback on communication metrics such as energy, speaking tempo, energy-enhancing words, facial expressions, clarity, use of pauses, and overall confidence. Based on their communication requirements and goals, students can complete engaging, interactive sessions. According to Suryani et al. (2019), Orai is an app designed to improve students' English speaking abilities.

3.3.5. ELSA

The English Language Speech Assistant (ELSA) is a fun and practical tool designed specifically to help learners improve their English-speaking communication abilities. The AI system developed by ELSA is created with the use of voice recordings of English speakers with different accents. This distinguishes ELSA from the majority of other voice recognition techniques by enabling it to identify the speech patterns of non-native speakers (Tamala et al., 2023). This software assesses pronunciation and fluency and provides quick, in-depth feedback. This makes it possible for students to recognize and pick up the proper pronunciation fast enabling a two-way learning process. For instance, users can pronounce specific English words or sentences, and the system will analyse their speech and offer corrective feedback.

3.3.6. Chatbots

According to Nghi et al. (2019), chatbots is a type of artificially intelligent conversational system that is designed to speak with computers and humans autonomously. Chatbots make learning English more effective and interesting by offering 24/7 accessibility, individualized instruction, immediate feedback, and interactive learning. The basic chatbot function begins with the user's message and the Chatbot, using Natural Language Processing (NLP), interprets the message by referencing the current database (Haristiani, 2019). The use of chatbots as a good learning tool, particularly for learning English, has been revealed by a number of earlier researches like Nghi et al. (2019) and Afrianto et al. (2019).

3.3.7. Duolingo

The most well-known language learning software in the world, Duolingo, is a fun and free tool that offers short, bite-sized language courses in over 40 languages (Shortt et al., 2023). Students might practice speaking, reading, writing, and listening in order to improve their vocabulary and grammar. The customization that Duolingo provides is an additional advantage. With tailored practice and feedback, the platform adjusts to each student's unique learning needs, allowing them to progress at their own pace.

3.3.8. Neo+

It is a tried-and-true learning tool that meets the learners' English-fluency objectives by combining online self-study with one-on-one coaching. Both young learners and adults can use Neo+ to study on their mobile devices whenever they choose, even just a couple of times a week, in short sessions of 30 to 45 minutes. The AI used in the Study Application of Neo+ continuously examines user behaviour and data to deliver content that automatically changes as users advance. Neo+ gives users the same advantage of having a professional personal tutor to help them learn English more quickly. Users can use the powerful speech recognition feature of the Neo+ Study Application to educate themselves to pronounce words correctly until they can speak English fluently (Perez & Triastuti, 2022).

3.4. Gaps and future directions

One limitation of this study is its reliance solely on secondary sources, like published articles and research reports. These sources may contain inaccuracies or misinterpretations, which could unintentionally contribute to the dissemination of biased or incorrect information. Although current research provides valuable insights into AI's contribution to English language learners' skill development, many gaps and opportunities remain for further research. To investigate the long-term influence of AI on language learners' ability, longitudinal research is necessary, even though most studies have focused on the short-term consequences of the technology. Furthermore, additional study is required to determine the optimal methods for using AI technologies into language training. Zhang et al. (2020) stress that in order to optimize the advantages of AI technologies in language learning situations, pedagogical techniques combining AI with successful teaching methodologies must be taken into account.

IV. CONCLUSION

With the rise of digital platform technologies, computers and smartphones have the potential to expand access to a broader global audience and enhance the use of artificial intelligence. In particular, digital learning tools rely heavily on customized content. An adaptive system powered by big data and Artificial Intelligence is now available, allowing us to tailor English learning methods to each user's specific needs and schedules as claimed by Ali (2020). The review underscores the crucial role of AI in language teaching and learning, highlighting its numerous advantages. These findings are valuable for educators looking to incorporate AI into their classrooms.

On the basis of an extensive analysis of the scholarly literature, the current research highlights and recommends the following important points:

4.1. AI technologies, including speech recognition systems and virtual tutors, have proven to be effective in enhancing learners' speaking and pronunciation abilities. Learners who received AI-driven feedback showed marked improvements compared to those who did not as observed by Ahmad et al. (2023).

4.2. Integrating AI into language learning environments brings pedagogical advantages by customizing instruction and fostering learner autonomy. Adaptive learning platforms and AI-powered chatbots deliver personalized feedback, practice opportunities, and individualized learning paths, resulting in greater engagement and improved language proficiency.

4.3. To further address privacy, security, bias, and transparency issues in AI-driven language learning, extensive ethical frameworks and guidelines are required. To protect learners' rights and advance equitable access to high-quality language learning opportunities, it is crucial to ensure the appropriate and ethical deployment of AI technologies as they continue to advance.

4.4. There are still gaps and areas that need to be investigated in spite of the encouraging results. The long-term effects of AI on language learners' competency require longitudinal research. To find the best integration tactics and pedagogical techniques that blend AI with successful teaching methodologies, more research is recommended.

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Humanitarian Perspectives and Materialism in Sudha Murty's *Dollar Bahu* and *House of Cards*

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Abstract— On the contrary to the humanitarian values presented in Sudha Murty's works, novels like "*Dollar Bahu*" and "*House of Cards*" emphasize their difference with materialism. Firstly, in "*Dollar Bahu*", a choice has to be made between her enjoyment in India or seeking wealth in the US and thus portrays Western materialism. Lastly, in "*House of Cards*", the weak-minded greed and materialism lead to the compromising of morals and relationships and, therefore, call out more for compassion. The present research paper explores the cosmopolitan sensibility and global humanitarian perspectives present in some selected novels by Sudha Murty, such as *Dollar Bahu* and *House of Cards*. Using a description, interpretative, and analytic approach with library research, the paper critiques Murty's views concerning materialism, the deterioration of moral values, and regaining human morals. The analytical overview emphasizes important humanitarian themes represented by characters and love stories, selflessness, responsibility, and ethical values. Murty's writings can be viewed in the light of reflection about how materialism clashes with moral values in today's society and the need to return to humanitarian ideals in this globalized world.



Keywords— *Sudha Murty, Dollar Bahu, House of Cards, English Literature, Materialism*

I. INTRODUCTION

Sudha Murthy is a prolific writer, writing in Indian English Literature. She has written many books on varied themes ranging from childhood to old age, on men and women, on children, on family life, on art and culture, literature, on customs and tradition, rituals, ethical values, ideal life, student hood, on humanistic issues, predicament of women, identity crisis, issues related to rural women and urban women. Social issues such as the devadasi system, poverty, illiteracy, unequal wealth and power structure, starvation, subaltern issues then issues related to family, human relationships, societal expectations, socio-cultural upbringing, travel experiences, lessons learnt from life, issues related to vulnerable position of a women, the challenges, tabulations, crisis, arising within the family and outside the family, students unrest, their problems, issues of unwed mothers, professional women, career

aspirants, simplicity amidst, abundance of wealth and position.

Sudha Murthy is an Indian novelist, social activist, and philanthropist from Shiggon, Haveri District, North Karnataka, born on August 19, 1950. She is a co-founder of Infosys Company and chairs the Infosys charitable NGO. Born into a rather conservative Brahmin Madhwa Kannadiga family, she is ardently dedicated to empower women and socially marginalized people through kindness and philanthropy. Among her siblings, there is an astronomer, a gynaecologist, and a founder of the Deshpande Foundation.

1.1. House of Cards

House of Cards is such a novel that, due to the uniqueness of plot and the characters, stands out from all others. People don't think about what it would mean for their relationships in life since they know it; realism is more important. It's not only Mridula and Sanjay but many

truthful and "apparently" educated persons who have done terrible things.

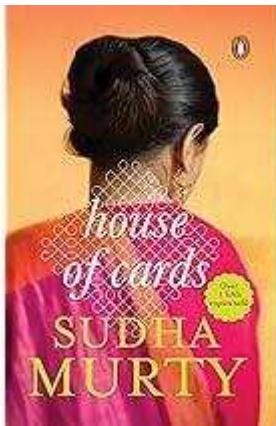


Fig.1: *House of Cards* by Sudha Murty

It was when her protagonist, Mridula, came into the world that her father chose the aptest name for her. because that is really impressive. She was a good student and her mother Rukuma Bai revealed to all that Mridula's good qualities were inherited from her side. She was more or less content with whatever she had in her life before her marriage. Considering everything, nothing mattered to her. She was a free bird who didn't have to do anything. Her teachers were telling her to study either engineering or medicine. Bheemanna was different from all the people. Moreover, this difference shows that opportunity begins at home, which is a very important message to any girl from the middle class who determines to stand on their own two feet. Bheemanna is a father who gave Mridula a choice to decide what she wanted to do in her life. That's why she had to select her future line of work also. Now it's a vital turning point to end male domination and inequality over women. De Beauvoir's effort to provide freedom to women points out that women have to look for themselves and make decisions for themselves. Mridula is intelligent, creative, and caring so she was the best thing in society. She learned that she valued people as well as animals from Mridula and Bheemanna. She even acted like youngsters and took Mridula to the banks of a river when she was only six months old, much unlike the contemporary world, where money is an obsession.

1.2. Dollar Bahu

In *Dollar Bahu* by Sudha Murty, the values of wealth and those within the family are debated against the changing Indian socioeconomic fabric in which this story occurs. For instance, on one hand, there is Gauramma, the mother-in-law, surrounded by her two daughters-in-law- Vinuta, a simple and devoted homemaker, and Jamuna, the "dollar bahu," who lives with her wealthy husband, Chandru in the US. Gauramma, the matriarch, grows more and more taken

up by the wealth and the life Chandru and Jamuna lead outside, particularly attracted to the American dollar. Jamuna, who was like an elder sister to Vinuta, was one of the better daughters-in-law in her books.

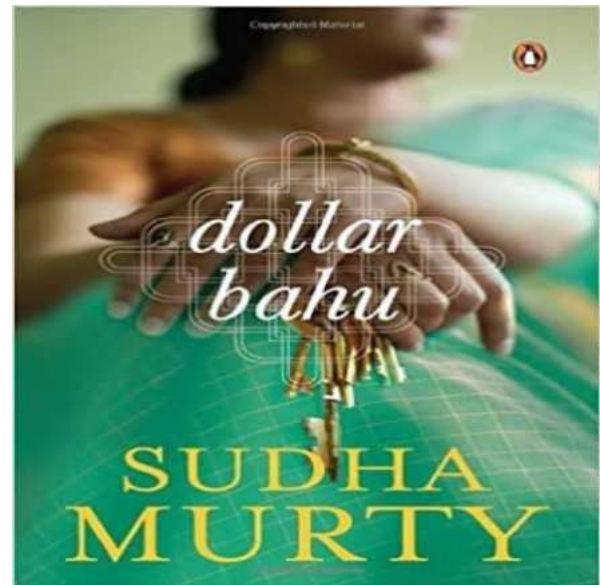


Fig.2: *Dollar Bahu* by Sudha Murty

As Murty reflects, favoritism towards Gauramma and the focus of the family on wealth brings about divisions in the household. The book elucidates the emotional turmoil Vinuta undergoes when she feels unappreciated and compared much more often than not to Jamuna, even though she makes sacrifices. A pivotal shift is introduced with Gauramma's trip to the United States; Murty allows Gauramma to come to terms with a reality that life in another country, far from India, is not all rosy tints. She learns that it is not money that can replace the warmth and love of relationships, or the peace of a simple life. *Dollar Bahu* is therefore ultimately a critique of a society that increasingly drowns in its craze for money and status, highlighting instead the importance of deep human relationships, sympathy, and the emotional depth that exists in wonderful bonding within family.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rode, Ashok Arzoo (2016) The integration of Hindu myths and legends has been handled in the novel *Gently Falls the Bakula* by Sudha Murthy. This study highlights how Murthy weaves the traditional mythological stories into those of the characters' private lives, using such cultural tales to make deeper the morality and spiritual conflicts the protagonists have. These myths, according to Rode, are not background elements but serve the function of illustrating themes of sacrifice, love, and identity by

contributing an essential cultural perspective to the novel's contemporary narrative.

Devi, Aruna G. and Vijaya Lakshmi, K. (2018) Paper The paper revolves around the theme of domestic violence in Murthy's *Mahashweta* and explores how the character Anupama fights with her own patriarchal society. Focusing on the psychological and emotional abuse that Anupama suffers, the paper attempts to highlight the social stigma and silent suffering of women in abusive marriages. The authors bring to the fore how Murthy exploits the story of Anupama's journey to change the context of larger societal issues such as gender inequality and domestic violence and portray her as a symbol of resilience.

Kavya, P. S. S. L. (2017) analyses leadership principles as embodied by Anupama in *Mahashweta*. The paper underlines how despite personal and societal crises around her, Anupama succeeds to portray strength, resilience and leadership, in that vein serves as a role model for female empowerment. Kavya contends that Murthy portrays the character of Anupama as an independent woman who defies what people expect from her as an un-conventional version of success, and has portrayed her as an emblem of determination and will.

Rode, Ashok Arzoo (2016), In another work, re-states the relevance of Hindu myths and legends on *Gently Falls the Bakula*. He posits that "myths make for allegories, all over again, of character conflict and choice--here involving love, duty, and self-fulfilment." Rode emphasizes how Murthy uses myths and legends in such a manner that the cultural past and the present are so integrated together that the characters' experience is commonly contextualized and grounded in fact.

Vadhana, D. Chandra and Grace, Danish Shakina, S. P. (2017) Focus on theme personal ambition and its effects on relationships in *Gently Falls the Bakula*. Their work explains the intention of the primary characters: their dreams and aspirations, especially professional success, broke down the emotional relationship. Vadhana and Shakina argue that Murthy effectively portrays the tension between personal goals and the demands of relationships, which can illustrate how societal expectations can shape the choices of the individual to affect interpersonal dynamics.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research paper is conducted using descriptive, interpretive, and analytical research approaches. The library approach is also used to gather pertinent information for this paper.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Sudha Murthy's worldwide sensibility towards improved efficacy of global humanitarian viewpoints is demonstrated by the chosen novels—*Dollar Bahu*, *Gently Falls the Bakula*, and *House of Cards*—and their emphasis on moral principles and human values. In an effort to revive humanitarian perspectives on a global scale, her textual analysis echoes her worries about the decline of the humanitarian approach and the prioritisation of immorality over ethics. Every piece of writing that Murthy writes that explores human sensitivity and strives for mankind's well-being is built upon her compassion for humanity, which she possesses as a philanthropist. The various abstract forms of humanitarian viewpoints—emotions, love, human values, ethics, spirituality, duties, etc.—are examined and discussed in Sudha Murthy's selected works, which serve to show the humanitarian perspectives worldwide.

4.1 Dollar Bahu

In today's postmodern environment, *Dollar Bahu* is a critique of materialism and hedonism that lead to the loss of humanistic perspectives. Through the novel's characters, it also examines the worries about people's shifting perspectives. Humanity, love, caring, helpfulness, unselfish sacrifices, affection, wishes, duty, and a sense of social commitment are just a few of the many facets of global humanitarian perspectives that are covered. Murthy has also attacked the hedonistic and immoral behaviour of contemporary men, who appear to be to blame for the decline of human values worldwide. In the chosen novel, Murthy's social commitment to reviving humanitarian viewpoints demonstrates her genuine human compassions. The *Dollar Bahu*'s portrayal of certain individuals demonstrates the realisation of human values, which is a hallmark of humanitarianism.

Sudha Murthy's book *Dollar Bahu* examines how money affects society and how individuals like Gouramma, Chandru, and Jamuna are exploited. The narrative centres on an Indian family in Bangalore, whose patriarch, Shamanna, is a philanthropist and Sanskrit instructor. Girish and Surabhi, the family's children, emulate their mother Gouramma's pragmatic and hedonistic ways. In order to live a happy and peaceful life, Shamanna counsels his family to adopt humanitarian viewpoints. The book also emphasises the value of interpersonal connections over financial belongings, since Gouri, a foolish character, is shown to be in awe of the dollar. Gouri adds to the enchanted woodland in spite of her foolish actions. The narrative emphasises the harsh truths of the world's society, where individuals like Gouramma and Jamuna are made slaves to wealth and personal belongings.

4.2 House of Cards

House of Cards is a great example of Sudha Murty's philanthropic work; the novel's protagonists and antagonists both demonstrate the importance of humanitarian principles. It paints a realistic image of modern life, where people have grown petty, self-centred, and pragmatic. One of the best examples of teaching moral values and compassion is shown in this piece. It is a criticism of how people have evolved from idealists to realists, from being unselfish to being greedy, from being nice to being cruel, and from having spiritual principles to having material values.

The female protagonist Mridula, her father Bheemanna, Narasinga Rao, and Jaya are the primary vehicles for the portrayal of humanitarian perspectives. Sanjay and Mridula's story, told in House of Cards, is captivating. They view life from different perspectives. Mridula was brought up in a spiritual and environmentally conscious environment in her hometown of Aladahalli. She inherited her father Bheemanna's spiritual traits; he is an elderly man with a humanitarian perspective. In spite of life's inevitable difficulties, he tells Mridula to hold on to these beliefs. She takes after her father in his desire to help the less fortunate in her neighbourhood. As a result of her father's humanitarianism, Mridula is shown as a strong and determined character with a tremendous capacity for empathy. Hospitality to friends, relatives, and villagers is the best way to show Bheemanna's humanitarian views. He tells his daughter not to bottle up her feelings but to talk about them. It demonstrates his understanding of human existence —

Do you know why God gave humans the ability to speak while denying animals this ability?

Mridula would childishly reply, 'To talk.'

No, kid. Not merely to converse. It's also for sharing. Therefore, you must share your delight and struggles with others whenever you experience them. However, consider all the animals—those unfortunate creatures are unable to even express their struggles to others. They must endure it by themselves. Remember, Mridula, you have to remain open at all times. Avoid hiding. It is sinful to hide.

Throughout her life, Mridula has adhered to the viewpoints that she inherited from her father. Despite being aware of Sanjay's physical deformities, she accepts his marriage proposal and marries him. It demonstrates her empathy as a person. She marries him because she is aware that he is a poor doctor. Although Sanjay was also raised in a tiny community, he attends different schools outside of it. After his father passed away, his mother raised him. His mother is a local moneylender who enjoys making money

exclusively. As a result, she educates him to be frugal and to appreciate money. He receives a lower pay as a doctor at the Bombay government hospital. He is greatly impacted by city life.

In her home village, Mridula teaches at a government school as well. She is moved from her village to Bangalore in order to care for Sanjay, who left Bombay to work in a government hospital there. Like his classmates, Sanjay hopes to grow up and eventually open his own hospital. At first, Mridula disagrees with his choice, but she eventually agrees to help him launch his care home. She learns that Sanjay now aspires to become wealthy and to have all of his pals. Sanjay loses sight of the true goals and responsibilities of his job when he becomes overly preoccupied with his work. He pursues material luxury and wealth, which separates him from Mridula. Because of her humanitarian views, she always tries to encourage him and support him in any challenging situation. However, Sanjay is making money illegally and unethically, which goes against her humanitarian approach concept. She chooses to leave his home of manufactured worth, where human compassion and love are out of place, as a result. Her conversations demonstrate how her humanitarian ideals have empowered her.

No, I never felt like I belonged to you or your family, even though I spent 25 of my most significant years with you. I remain an outsider. I've fulfilled my obligation to you both. As a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law, I have performed all of my responsibilities. I want to live my life for me now. I have my village, my work, and my school. You no longer need to be concerned about me. Sishir and you are welcome to come see me at any time.

In order to avoid being destroyed by the influence of fake values in Sanjay's home, she must decide to leave him. She prepares to give up her marriage in order to value her humanitarian viewpoint, which is the most important element of House of Cards.

Sanjay's father, Narasinga Rao, is a humanitarian who instills a respect for human values in both his wife and son. He counsels Sanjay to connect two islands in relationships and communicate genuine sentiments, but Sanjay adopts his father's pragmatic and hedonistic methods, which causes him to become isolated and lose his wife. Another character, Neha, counters Sishir's hedonistic outlook by highlighting the value of caring for one another. Sishir changes and respects his mother as a result of realising the importance of values and being impacted by Neha's insight. The book emphasises how humanitarian viewpoints have triumphed over

antihumanitarian beliefs, finally conquering humankind's challenges.

As a result, *House of Cards* is a literary landscape of humanitarian viewpoints from around the world that is strongly influenced by cosmopolitan sensibilities.

V. COCNLUSION

In short, the novels such as *Dollar Bahu*, *Gently Falls the Bakula*, and *House of Cards*, by Sudha Murthy are poignant reflections on the anxiety of the world going frantic in the mad pursuit of materialism vs. humanitarian values. Through her characters, she has tried to bring out the ideals of high living, love, and sacrifice from the bad pursuit of wealth and status at the cost of personal and moral integrity. The study therefore reveals that works from Murthy are attempts at inspiring a better life where commitment to the people, concern for what is virtuous, and nurturing of human relationships become more than mere economic success so as to create a society more humane and sensitive to living relationships.

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Exploring the Theme of Motherhood as portrayed in *Top Girls* and *Fen* by Caryl Churchill

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Abstract— This paper examines the theme of motherhood as portrayed in Caryl Churchill's plays: *Top Girls* (1982) and *Fen* (1983). By delving into the nuanced exploration of motherhood within these works, this paper aims to shed light on the complex and multifaceted nature of maternal experiences, while also analyzing the social, cultural, and political contexts that shape these representations. Through a close reading of the plays, this paper elucidates the diverse perspectives on motherhood presented by Churchill. Moreover, this paper situates Churchill's exploration of motherhood within the broader socio-political landscape of the time. It considers the feminist movements and debates surrounding reproductive rights and motherhood in the late 20th century, as well as the socio-economic realities that shaped women's experiences. By contextualizing the plays, this research paper provides a comprehensive understanding of how Churchill's works engage with the theme of motherhood as a lens to comment on the complexities of gender, power, and social expectations.



Keywords— Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*, *Fen*, Motherhood

I. INTRODUCTION

Top Girls depicts the challenges faced by women in balancing their professional ambitions with their familial obligations. The protagonist, Marlene, embodies the dilemma of modern women torn between the desire for career success and the societal expectations of nurturing and motherhood. By examining Marlene's character and her relationships with other female characters in the play, this paper explores the tensions and contradictions surrounding the concept of motherhood in the context of a patriarchal society.

In *Fen*, Churchill delves into the lives of working-class women in a rural English community. The play examines the impact of poverty, limited opportunities, and societal constraints on these women's experiences of motherhood. Through an analysis of various characters, such as Val and Nell, this paper explores the ways in which motherhood becomes a site of struggle, resilience, and resistance for these women. It investigates how

Churchill highlights the intersecting issues of class, gender, and motherhood, offering a nuanced portrayal of the challenges faced by marginalized women.

II. ANALYSIS

This paper offers a detailed analysis of Caryl Churchill's plays: *Top Girls* (1982) and *Fen* (1993), in relation to the theme of motherhood. By examining the characters, their relationships, and the socio-cultural contexts, this paper provides valuable insights into the ways in which Churchill grapples with the intricacies of motherhood, shedding light on the challenges, contradictions, and possibilities inherent in women's experiences of maternity.

Caryl Churchill, a renowned British playwright born in London in 1938, is highly regarded in the theatrical world. Following World War II, her family moved to Montreal, Canada, in 1948. Churchill later returned to

England and pursued her studies in English at Oxford University. It was during this time that she wrote her debut play, titled *Downstairs*, in 1958. After marrying David Harter, a barrister, Churchill became a mother to three sons and settled in the suburban areas of London. In the 1960s, she began her professional writing career, primarily focusing on radio plays. In order to keep a balance between her family and career, Churchill wrote more than “forty-five plays for radio, stage, and television” (Diamond 285). Churchill's plays not only delved into the complexities of women's roles, but also offered critical commentary on British politics. This is particularly reflected in her works from the 1980s, such as *Top Girls* (1982), *Fen* (1983), and *Serious Money* (1987), where she expressed her socialist viewpoints. Through these plays, Churchill explored social issues and examined the intersection of gender and politics from her distinct perspective. According to Mary Luckhurst, Churchill became “the great icon of second wave feminism in the British theatre” (18).

Churchill raises questions about the roles of women. By portraying a diverse range of female characters and exploring their individual successes, Churchill criticizes the prevailing social and economic norms and their impact on women. These societal expectations have a profound effect on people's identities. According to Sian Adiseshiah, motherhood, which is often influenced by these societal norms, “can define the identity of not just women with children but all women (135). Churchill's exploration of these themes challenges traditional notions of gender and highlights the significant influence social standards can have on personal identity.

The issue of domestic work, which is an area that few women are able to escape, has been a topic of discussion and debate in Marxist-feminist circles. Heidi Hartman reinforces the argument that women receive low wages, and this economic reality pushes them to marry. Once married, they are expected to primarily take on domestic responsibilities, while “men benefit ... from both higher wages and the domestic division of labor”. Women's childcare and household duties in the private sphere further contribute to their disadvantaged position in the job market. The divisions of labor, both inside and outside the home, reinforce a hierarchy based on gender. Hartman believes: “The present outcome of the continuing interaction of two interlocking systems, capitalism and patriarchy”(141). The combination of women's roles in the workforce and in the family creates a strong economic and ideological system that perpetuates their subordination in both spheres, at home and in society.

The concept of motherhood as an ideological construct plays a significant role in understanding the characters of Marlene in *Top Girls* and Val in *Fen*. In *Feminist politics and human nature*, Alison M Jaggar states that both Marlene and Val attempt to break free from “the pervasive and suffocating ideology of the family,” which “sentimentalizes mother love as the highest, because the most self-sacrificing, form of love”(153). However, both characters struggle to navigate this challenge successfully, albeit to varying degrees. Val's failure is absolute, leading to her tragic death. Unable to live without her children or her partner, she ultimately takes her own life with Frank's assistance. Val finds it impossible to redefine her identity beyond the narrow confines of motherhood and marriage, feeling trapped in a limiting role that weighs her down, as she expresses, “it's like thick nothing. I can't get on. Makes my arms and legs heavy” (*Fen* 172). Val's desire to form relationships outside the traditional family unit threatens to undermine that unit, and she faces criticism and condemnation from her community for attempting to do so. The notion of private ownership of children, where parents, particularly mothers, bear exclusive responsibility for the care and upbringing of their children, serves as the specific context in which Angela's fraudulent motherhood is upheld, and Val's actions are viewed as deplorable. This context reinforces the perceived importance of traditional motherhood and the societal expectations placed upon mothers, making it difficult for Val to escape the confines of this role without facing severe judgment and rejection.

Women who work are affected by their gender, which plays a role in how they are perceived. Despite gaining more independence by participating in the job market, many women face double exploitation, both at work and at home. According to Zillah Eisenstein: “ideology adjusts to this by defining women as working mothers”(29). Society's emphasis on motherhood distorts women's identities as workers. This influences the types of jobs women typically take on, such as teachers, caregivers, cleaners, nurses, and office workers, which often reflect their roles as wives and mothers. Nancy Chodorow states that when women do work in manufacturing, “it is generally in the production of nondurable goods like clothing and food, not in ‘masculine’ machine industries like steel and automobiles”(91). This means that women are less likely to be seen as independent workers with their own interests, unlike men from working and middle-class backgrounds who are often motivated by pay, career prospects, and job conditions. Instead, women's work is often considered unessential economically, as it is assumed that they supplement male wages, or ideologically, because it is believed that work does not

contribute to their self-worth or dignity. Society has traditionally confined women's productivity and creativity to their ability to give birth, often at the expense of their involvement in other cultural and economic spheres.

Top Girls premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in London on August 28, 1982. The play consists of three acts, and all the characters are women. The acts are not presented in chronological order. Act One takes place on a Saturday night at a restaurant, where Marlene hosts a dinner party. Historical and fictional women gather to congratulate Marlene on her promotion at the Top Girls employment agency. Act Two is divided into three scenes, also presented out of chronological order. Scene One is set on the following Monday at the office, where Marlene interviews a job applicant named Jeanine. Scene Two takes place in Joyce's backyard, Marlene's older sister, on the previous day, Sunday afternoon. Joyce's daughter, Angie, and her friend Kit hide in a shelter they created. Scene Three returns to Monday morning, preceding the events of Scene One. This scene includes Angie's visit to Marlene at the employment agency. Act Three is set one year before Act Two. Marlene visits Joyce's home, and they engage in arguments concerning their parents, Angie (who is Marlene's biological child), and British politics. Throughout the play, Caryl Churchill weaves together these non-chronological scenes to explore themes of female achievement, family dynamics, and political ideologies.

The first act of *Top Girls* showcases paradoxes and contradictions in the way the dinner party guests engage with their own experiences of motherhood. Pope Joan challenges traditional notions of pregnancy and childbirth, dismissing labor pains as a stomach issue until she realizes that "the baby just slid out on to the road" (TG 71). The libertarian pleasure derived from demystifying the clichéd idea of childbirth, accompanied by jokes and laughter from the others, creates a moment of anarchic delight that resonates with both the actors and the audience. Yet, "the cardinals won't have known where to put themselves" (TG 71). Thus, the consequence of committing such a cardinal sin, as expressed by the statement "women, children, and lunatics can't be Pope" (TG 69) is a brutal punishment. Joan concludes her story: "they took me by the feet and dragged me out of town and stoned me to death" (TG 71). It becomes evident that Joan is executed because she challenges the male-dominated role of the Pope and subverts the authority of the father. However, her denaturalization of pregnancy and childbirth and her exposure of the fragility inherent in the sex/gender construct also make her subject to criticism. The silence that typically follows Joan's disturbing speech

in the theater reflects the lack of adequate responses to such misogynistic violence.

In this act, there is a shift from an uncompromising judgment of motherly behavior in public discourse to a more ethically nuanced portrayal of motherhood. The initial shock at Patient Griselda's acceptance of having her children taken away competes with the mitigating circumstances of her required obedience to her husband, even though it was a "chosen" obedience. Nijo, who can relate to this experience, understands Griselda's decision, acknowledging that her husband was her whole life. This contrasts with Marlene's dismissal of Walter as "bonkers" and Gret's labeling him as a "bastard," which, while critical of Griselda's obedience, clearly place the blame on Walter. Isabella's diplomatic response attempts to delve deeper into the matter by questioning the impact it had on Griselda's well-being, while still focusing on her welfare. "I can see you were doing what you thought was your duty. But didn't it make you ill?" (TG 77) It becomes evident that some of the women demonstrate significant complicity with sexist systems, such as Griselda consciously accepting her husband's authority and Nijo willingly participating in the Emperor's patriarchal order. However, the prevailing characteristic of the interactions between these women is the attempt to understand and connect with the emotional complexities of motherhood, rather than simply passing judgment on maternal behavior.

The "tough women," Win and Nell, also represent a rejection of motherhood and domestic life. Nell is against the idea of conforming to traditional gender roles, refusing "to play house, not even in Ascot" (TG 102). Nell's rejection of motherhood aligns with her masculine focus on the hard sell. She says: "I can sell anything, I've sold in three continents, and I'm jolly as they come but I'm not very nice" (TG 115). Win, on the other hand, finds it more challenging to embrace the individualistic mindset promoted by the employment agency. After returning from America, she experiences a period of psychological instability, saying: "I came home, went bonkers for a bit, thought I was five different people" (TG 119). Her attempt to live a life outside the confines of domesticity and motherhood does not go smoothly. Both women struggle to establish a sense of autonomy that goes against the expectations and narratives surrounding motherhood. The characterization of Win and Nell revolves around their endeavor to navigate the complexities of autonomy and independence outside the realm of motherhood, highlighting the challenges they face in breaking free from maternal discourses.

Fen portrays the countryside and working-class situations, which set the backdrop for Marlene's family and community in the play *Top Girls*. This setting is something Marlene manages to break free from. This play presents a glimpse of a culture that combines agriculture, femininity, and the working class. Through this, it highlights the limited opportunities available to these women in feminist and socialist politics to understand and confront their own oppression.

Fen presents a diverse range of motherhood representations, with multiple generations of mothers shaping the family dynamics for Val and her children. However, similar to *Top Girls*, the exploration of motherhood is not the central focus. Instead, it is portrayed as part of a female-specific network of social relationships that trap women in a cycle of poverty. This cycle combines contradictory emotions such as affection, love, happiness, pain, frustration, and misery. Val's predicament, which is the heart of the story, starkly challenges Marlene's belief in "choice" by demonstrating that Val fails to find fulfillment and happiness whether she remains within or steps outside the realm of motherhood. Val's desperate reaction to the lack of meaningful options available to her resonates with the unbearable nature of the ending of *Top Girls*.

The various portrayals of motherhood in *Fen* reveal the significant influence of societal discourses surrounding motherhood on women's identities. May, for instance, upholds the tradition of self-sacrifice in motherhood, expressing regret at leaving her daughter Val. She says: "I'd never have left you, Val" (*Fen* 160). Angela, on the other hand, exhibits abusive behavior towards her stepdaughter Becky, demonstrating a sadomasochistic mix of cruel rejection and intimate connection. Their initially antagonistic interaction eventually turns into shared laughter. Angela says to her, "Becky, why do you like me? I don't want you to like me" (*Fen* 184). Margaret, who turns to alcoholism after the death of her young daughter, finds redemption through a divine sign from God. The request for more jam by Mavis's son, which coincidentally matches the initials of Margaret's name (M) and Jesus (J), convinces Margaret that she has been religiously called. This poignant moment is reinforced by her friend Alice and the affirmation from the Baptist women's meeting, who acknowledge the legitimacy of the "sign." Shirley, a fifty-year-old grandmother with a sixteen-year-old granddaughter, shares her experience with Val while taking care of one of her baby grandchildren, highlighting the expectation placed on mothers to prioritize their children and sacrifice personal freedom. She says to Val, "you expect too much Val. Till Susan was fifteen I never went out" (*Fen* 169).

In both plays, women who do not have children are portrayed in various ways that emphasize the absence of motherhood. In *Top Girls*, Isabella exhibits a conventionally masculine desire for travel and adventure, and she is aware of how this affects her gendered identity. She takes great care to present herself as feminine and says: "I always travelled as a lady and I repudiated strongly any suggestion in the press that I was other than feminine" (*TG* 62). Her frequent mentions of her sister, Hennie, whom she refers to as her "own pet" (*TG* 65) hint at a displaced maternal connection that serves as a substitute for traditional motherhood. The interviewees in the employment agency, Jeanine and Louise, are also depicted in relation to motherhood and marriage. Marlene assumes that Jeanine will eventually have children, and this assumption influences her consideration of Jeanine's employment options. On the other hand, Louise "passes as a man at work" (*TG* 106) and implies that she is single and childless. She expresses her dedication to her job, stating that "I've lived for that company, I've given my life really you could say because I haven't had a great deal of social life, I've worked in the evenings" (*TG* 105-6). The power of motherhood to shape identity is highlighted, leading the audience to perceive Louise's work as a surrogate family for her.

In *Fen*, Angela embodies the characteristics typically associated with the archetypal wicked stepmother. The ideology of motherhood, which is influenced by the connection between biology, nature, and social behavior, marginalizes and undermines the stepmother's place within this identity. She is constantly reminded of her biological "fraudulence" as she attempts to fulfill the role of an authentic mother, all the while being judged on her ability to do so. The stepmother finds herself caught in a cycle between the reminder of her illegitimate status as a mother and the pressure to perform a motherly role towards her partner's child. The significance of fairytale characters, such as the wicked stepmother in *Cinderella*, resonates deeply in society. These characters are some of the first social roles imparted to children, and they contribute to the categorization of stepmothers as deviant women, making them vulnerable to attack. In fact, there is a faint echo of the historical witch hunts in Becky's response to Angela's abusive behavior. "I'll tell someone. You'll be put in prison, you'll be burnt" (*Fen* 154). This also brings to mind Mary Daly's discussion of the breaking of the mother/daughter bond, where daughters were encouraged to inform on their mothers during witch trials and witness their execution by hanging or burning.

The exchange between Angela and Becky highlights Angela's inability to meet the unrealistic expectations placed upon stepmothers:

BECKY: Can I sit down now, Angela?

ANGELA: No, because you asked. Drink it standing up. And you didn't

call me mum.

BECKY: You're not, that's why.

ANGELA: Wouldn't want to be the mother of a filthy little cow like you.

Pity you didn't die with her (*Fen* 153).

Despite Angela's responsibility for caring for Becky, she does not receive the same level of respect and recognition that biological mothers often do. The authority and power that biological mothers possess within the household are absent in Angela's role as a stepmother. This lack of authority leads to a profound sense of disempowerment for Angela, which unfortunately contributes to the mistreatment and abuse of the teenage girl.

In *Fen*, Nell stands out as a more positive and progressive character compared to her counterparts. She manages to maintain an autonomous identity outside the traditional realms of motherhood, which is a partial success. Unlike the ambitious and career-oriented women like Marlene, Nell, and Win, Nell aligns herself with the collective rather than individual pursuits. She exhibits genuine concern for her fellow workers and the broader community, in contrast to the emphasis on motherhood and family that May and Shirley prioritize. However, Nell faces challenges and suffers due to the isolation that arises from deviating from deeply ingrained expectations of women's behavior. Her femininity is even questioned by the children, Becky, Deb, and Shona, who speculate whether she is a man or a "morphrodite". The significance of Nell's choice not to participate in the expected roles of marriage and motherhood becomes starkly apparent as the girls turn against her, wielding a garden hoe and expressing their hostility, saying they want to kill her because she is horrible. This moment highlights the harsh consequences Nell faces for not conforming to societal expectations of marriage and motherhood. Despite her positive attributes and concern for others, she becomes a target of aggression, emphasizing the challenges and backlash that women who reject traditional gender roles can face.

Marlene, in contrast to Val, achieves success as a businesswoman. Yet, this success comes at a cost, as Marlene transfers her responsibilities as a mother to her sister and neglects both her sister and her own

daughter/niece. Her visit to them after six years reflects the behavior of an absent father who tries to compensate for his lack of involvement by giving presents. It is notable that Marlene suppresses this part of her life, likely to avoid the criticism and condemnation that Val experiences in *Fen*. When asked if she has a sister, Marlene responds with a somewhat dismissive tone, saying "yes, in fact" (*TG* 56). Additionally, Nell, inquiring about Marlene's family, mentions that Marlene never talks about them, further emphasizing the absence of familial bonds in Marlene's self-representation. She asks: "What's she got, brother, sister? She never talks about her family" (*TG* 120). Marlene's self-presentation deliberately excludes her familial connections, and this extends to a broader repression of the personal sphere. While the audience learns about Win's weekend with her married lover and Nell's romantic flings, Marlene's dinner party celebration is depicted as a fantasy, and it is implied that she spent the weekend alone. The erasure of motherhood from Marlene's identity seems to be accompanied by a more general avoidance of personal relationships and a focus on her professional success. This portrayal suggests that Marlene has prioritized her career and individual aspirations over familial ties and personal connections. By suppressing her role as a mother and distancing herself from the personal sphere, Marlene attempts to create a self-image that aligns more closely with the traditional expectations of success and ambition in a male-dominated professional world.

Val and Marlene challenge the ideologies of motherhood from different political perspectives. Val struggles to conform to the insistence on the exclusive nature of love and the expectation of self-sacrifice that is often associated with motherhood. She yearns for emotional connections that extend beyond the boundaries of the family unit and seeks a more inclusive and non-competitive form of love. However, her desire for affection and love outside of traditional family structures is portrayed as problematic within the context of the play.

VAL: Can't you give me a hug without Jesus?

ALICE: Of course not, we love better in Jesus.

VAL: I'd rather take valium (*Fen* 176).

In contrast to her own mother, Val attempts to break free from the cycle of self-sacrifice and martyrdom that characterizes their relationship. She expresses her hopes for her daughter, "Shona, when you grow up I hope you're happy" (*Fen* 185). She aims to instill a sense of individual fulfillment and personal well-being rather than perpetuating the self-negating expectations placed on women. Val's struggle to adapt and accept the prevailing norms and expectations of female behavior is evident in her inability to get used to how things are. This internal

conflict ultimately leads to her tragic decision to take her own life, highlighting the profound sense of tragedy that can arise from the oppressive and self-negating expectations placed on women and mothers in society. Both Val and Marlene's challenges to the ideologies of motherhood reflect the complex and often conflicting pressures women face in navigating their roles as mothers and individuals within societal norms. While Val seeks a more inclusive and emotionally fulfilling form of love, her inability to reconcile her desires with societal expectations leads to tragic consequences.

Marlene's decision to distance herself from her family is influenced by her adherence to Thatcherite values. She assures: "I believe in the individual" (TG 138). She aligns herself with individualism, proclaiming her belief in the power of the individual as an explanation for her political allegiances. She rejects the idea of conforming to the traditional working-class lifestyle saying:

I know a managing director who's got two children, she breast feeds in the

board room, she pays a hundred pounds a week on domestic help alone and

she can afford that because she's an extremely high-powered lady earning

a great deal of money(TG 134).

Marlene's aspirations for a different life lead her to invest in a right-wing discourse that promotes notions of personal adventure, monetarism, and the ideals of the "free world." Ironically, while rejecting motherhood, Marlene seeks fulfillment through the pursuit of a political ideology that aligns with conservative ideas regarding motherhood, gender roles, and the family. Furthermore, when faced with Joyce's accusation that Marlene's success would not have been possible if she had kept her daughter, Angie, Marlene's response underscores the inherent challenges and obstacles faced by working-class single mothers. It highlights the systemic barriers that make it extremely difficult for women in such circumstances to achieve personal and professional success. Marlene's departure from her family and rejection of motherhood exemplify the complexities and contradictions that arise when personal aspirations clash with societal expectations, class dynamics, and the limitations imposed by conservative ideologies. Her story sheds light on the nuanced and challenging choices that women, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, often face in their pursuit of personal fulfillment and success.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, through the analysis of Caryl Churchill's plays: *Top Girls* and *Fen*, this paper has delved into the theme of motherhood, offering a nuanced exploration of its portrayal. By examining the diverse female characters and their relationships, as well as the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they exist, a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of motherhood has been attained. *Top Girls* challenges societal expectations and scrutinizes the impact of social and economic norms on women's identities. The play depicts the struggle of balancing professional ambitions with the responsibilities of motherhood, highlighting the tensions faced by women in a patriarchal society. In *Fen*, Churchill provides a glimpse into the lives of working-class women, shedding light on the intersectionality of motherhood, class, and gender. The play showcases the resilience and resistance of these women as they navigate poverty, limited opportunities, and societal constraints. It emphasizes the struggles faced by marginalized women and the ways in which motherhood becomes a site of both challenge and strength.

In essence, Churchill's plays, *Top Girls* and *Fen*, provide a thought-provoking exploration of the theme of motherhood. Through diverse characters, intricate relationships, and critical analyses of social contexts, Churchill challenges established norms and offers a multifaceted portrayal of motherhood. Her works invite reflection on the complexities, contradictions, and possibilities inherent in women's experiences of maternity, fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between gender, power, and social expectations.

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Engaging English Language Learners through Gamification and Serious Games

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Abstract— This project investigates the creative blending of gamification and serious games in a way that encourages ELL engagement in the classroom. Such a belief exists that teachers can create a good learning environment that fosters the acquisition of language, as well as the active engagement of pupils, by tapping into elements of game design to foster community among learners. The current study provides a taxonomy of the key benefits and drawbacks in applying serious games and gamification for teaching English. By considering the SWOT analysis of the application of the two singular, game-based approaches to learning a language like English, student opinions are gathered by using the Delphi method. This study produced an ordered list of critical adoption and entry factors to consider while gamifying the process of learning English. Discussion of these problems led us to identify other elements. We then proceed to discuss the importance and implications of the potential and difficulties associated with gamification and serious games in the context of our results.



Keywords— Engaging English Language Learners, Gamification, Serious Games, SWOT Analysis, Teaching English

I. INTRODUCTION

The development in digital technology has brought a significant transformation to the educational scene with creative opportunities for improving the learning opportunities. Some of these technologies include serious games and gamification, which have received promising attention from ELLs. Gamification is the use of game design elements in a context that is not a game, while serious games are designed with a specific learning goal in view. Both approaches tap into the intrinsic motivation that games naturally engage: the social interactions, competition, and achievements that will make them especially effective for ELLs, who so often confront obstacles in learning language. This traditional method of education can be turned into a very exciting and effective learning environment for English Language Learners by the implementation of gamification to instruction in the traditional classroom. Teachers may use leaders' boards, badges, and points to ensure that the students are

motivated and feel accomplished. A gamified language learning program may provide rewards for completing tasks or achieving levels of particular competence to enable further continued study. This encourages students to take risk, utilize their language skills, make mistakes, and learn from them without fear of failure since it also enhances motivation. Serious games, specially designed for second language acquisition, offer a unique opportunity for ELLs to take part in authentic situations where they can purposefully exercise their skills. Simulations of real-life issues give students opportunities to discuss, deal with problems, and make decisions that oblige them to use their language skills. For instance, for role-playing games, the ability to improve speaking and listening skills can be facilitated by situating students in realistic situations in the use of a restaurant or inquiring for directions. With this kind of experienced learning, apart from teaching vocabulary and practicing grammar, cultural competency is developed, which is often the

missing component in language learning that classroom environments completely overlook.

Gamification and serious games also promote collaborative learning, another component of language learning. A few of them are intended to be played in a team or group as social interaction and peer learning is promoted. Cooperative games offer ELLs opportunities to place language skills in a safe space that they can exchange ideas, negotiate meanings, and give each other feedbacks. While improving language skills, this social component also builds self-esteem and instills a sense of belonging, especially for people who would otherwise feel as though they are learning something entirely new-and perhaps alone.

Gamification of a method, and serious games, can provide the opportunity to interact with the students in a revolutionary manner. Teachers can build a collaborative, dynamic, and culturally competent learning environment that fosters language acquisition through the motivational elements of games. If educational institutions are still using technology to perfect their teaching methods, adding gamification and serious games to English language courses can really revolutionize student learning and make language acquisition more fun and efficient.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Prakash and Rao (2015) Elaborate how gamification may transform learning environments, especially with regard to IT administration. The authors assert that gamification can be a great motivator for the students, create teamwork, and inculcate a sense of competitiveness while undertaking the learning process. The paper discusses several gamification strategies that can greatly enhance the outcomes of learning and motivation through leader boards, badges, and point systems. As such, this theory-to-practice bridge was something the authors insisted upon in presenting case examples of successful gamification in IT courses. Their conclusions are that curriculum gamification can indeed ensure an effective contribution towards better retention as well as an energized learning environment.

Ishaq et al. (2022) In their paper, Serious Game Design Model for Language Learning in the Cultural Context, they offer a serious game design model for language learning in cultural contexts. That kind of study underlines the importance of contextually relevant information in serious games and, in addition, enhances the ways through which cultural components could help enrich language learning results. To establish an engaging learning process, the authors provide a framework on serious game design, which includes scenarios that are interactive, linguistic barriers, and cultural anecdotes. Their model, which

justifies alignment with instructional objectives of the gaming mechanics, lies in pedagogical ideas. It focuses on how serious games would elevate language proficiency and cultural sensitivity to appreciate further the educational process. For example, the authors present empirical evidence of pilot studies showing how their approach improves engagement and language skills among learners.

Kim and Lee (2015) presents an overall framework providing insight into how gamified learning environments actually work. It examines the dynamical model pointing to game dynamics, educational objectives, and learner motivation. The authors examine several variables that might influence the effectiveness of gamification, such as learner characteristics, design of game features, and the educational setting. They then explore mathematically the effects that various techniques in gamification will have on student engagement and achievement. The study states that effective gamification is likely to increase intrinsic motivation and better understanding about the course content. The authors further specify that the approach should be used by educators and instructional designers with the help of optimizing gamified learning experiences to successfully meet learning objectives.

Buckley and Doyle (2017) in this research study, the authors investigate how individual differences in personality traits and learning styles can affect gamification. Using the prediction market paradigm, the authors analyze how learner attributes interact with gamified aspects. In the light of findings, there appears to be some evidence pointing towards the fact that perhaps a one-size-fits-all approach would not prove to be best when it comes to gamification; rather, customized techniques for gamification can enhance the engagement and performance of students. According to authors' evaluation of the learning styles, the gamification designers need to be flexible while designing the gamification. It includes changeable rewards, feedback, and difficulties that one has to tackle. This researcher asks the educational community to consider the individual learner profiles while designing learning through gamification and emphasizes personalization in gamification.

Ricardo (2017) explores the idea of introducing serious games as a combination with CLIL. What the author conveys here is that serious games can indeed span the gap between language learning and academic content by offering students an entertaining means to achieve both proficiency in language, subject matter expertise simultaneously. Ricardo identifies critical design elements such as cooperation, authenticity, and interactivity that enhance the learning process through a qualitative

investigation of several serious games. The paper brings case studies from contextualized scenarios-challenging the learner to apply their language abilities in real-world settings-showing how serious video games might assist with language acquisition. The findings highlighted an increase in language ability and topic understanding with a boost in motivation and engagement arising from CLIL-gaming.

Roth, Schneckenberg, and Tsai (2015) based on their article, "The Ludic Drive as Innovation Driver: Introduction to the Gamification of Innovation," the authors present the notion of a ludic drive as an innovation driver. This study analyses how companies might develop an innovative culture by using gamification, which exploits people's naturalistic drive toward play and discovery. The authors argue that the introduction of game elements into an innovation process can improve creative capacities, cohesive capacities, and solving capacities in teams. The text offers a model for applying gamification concepts to stimulate creative problem-solving and illustrates examples of successful applications in different organizational environments. The results reveal the flexibility of a gamified approach toward encouraging organizational creativity and adaptability in a competitive environment while engaging human beings.

III. METHOD

In order to close the newly identified study gap, we identified potential challenges and opportunities that Azad Institute of Engineering and Technology (AIET) Collage may encounter when using gaming in relation to English language preparation. To generate fresh ideas for a preliminary exploratory analysis, we conducted a SWOT analysis with students from the School of Computer and Information Science. The purpose of this SWOT analysis is to outline the possible advantages, challenges, possible results, and risks of gamification in the teaching of English as a second language.

The SWOT analysis provided a well-thought-out arrangement of elements that could assist Azad Institute of Engineering and Technology (AIET) college in evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of gamifying English language instruction. These components can help raise employees' knowledge of the risks associated with working in a gamified workplace and educate them about its advantages. We considered the following questions in order to handle these SWOT investigation classes:

- **Strengths:** In your perspective, what are the main benefits of gamification and serious gaming?

- **Weaknesses:** In your perspective, what are the main drawbacks of gamification and serious gaming?
- **Opportunities:** What possible benefits could serious gaming and gamification have for English language learners?
- **Threats:** What possible risks do gamification and serious games present in the context of learning English?

The Delphi approach served as the framework for our exploratory study. Delphi studies are frequently utilized in data framework research when space experts need to agree on a place where thought age is required.

3.1. The Participants

Students from the Azad Institute of Engineering and Technology (AIET) College of Computer and Information Science were asked to participate in our examination in October 2023. They were instructed to oversee a SWOT analysis of serious games and gamification that was analogous to presenting English as an unknown dialect. Table 1 shows the examination members' financial situation.

Table 1: Data on Participant Demographics

Study Data	
Total participants	54
Youngest participant	27
Oldest participant	31
Male participants	47
Female participants	11
Game Experience	Very often

3.2. The Brainstorming Process

The members were approached for a few exercises that comprised the conceptualizing system throughout the course of 360 minutes. The research plan and methodology are summarized as follows:

- Understudies were instructed to brainstorm independently on the four SWOT topics following an introductory presentation on gaming and its "serious" applications.
- After being divided into four subgroups, understudies were told to condense, elucidate, and arrange all of their thoughts into unique statements based on one of the four issues. A facilitator assisted with this task for each part. The strategy was to rework unclear concepts, remove superfluous ones, and group related ideas together.
- Following that, every student re-enlisted as a group. The facilitator of each subgroup gave a brief

introduction and explained to the group which arguments had been selected for each of their topics.

- Next, using a 10-point Likert-type scale, where a score of 10 indicated a very vital declaration and a score of 1 indicated a very un-huge attestation related with each of the four SWOT subjects, students were asked to freely and confidentially judge the pertinence of each statement.
- In order to encourage discussion about the findings (suggestion by suggestion), allow ideas to be changed on an individual basis, and make the evaluation standard deviations more agreeable, the vote-based scores were then distributed to all participants in a free gathering organization.

We had an open discussion about the conceptualizing results with like-minded friends for ninety minutes. We expected them to elaborate and provide more clarity on how they understood the importance of the explanations and how they contributed to the success of game-based English language learning. A summary of the main questions addressing these trends was created to aid in the conversation.

IV. RESULTS

A total of 170 concepts were submitted by understudies to the basic gathering in order to generate fresh concepts that aided distinguish the four SWOT analysis sections. According to the conceptualizing system, the concepts underwent more refinement, investigation, and naming. Following the collection of the material, the SWOT analysis's general conclusions were reviewed and revised in an attempt to make the statements clearer. We next asked the participants to respond to a few targeted questions regarding the statements in order to ensure that concepts are thoroughly examined and explained:

1. Were the statements that surfaced misclassified as opportunities and strengths or as threats?
2. Do the claims that are made make sense and are relevant to gamification and serious games?
3. Are the findings unique to a certain serious game?

We collected the data and organized it into four tables (SD = Standard Deviation) after carefully considering our options.

Table 2: Strengths

Strengths	Mean	SD
An atmosphere that is stimulating, demanding, and thrilling	10.5	0.75
Continuing the attempt to learn	9.68	0.98
Speaking, writing, listening, and reading are only a few of the abilities that are needed for language practice.	9.76	0.70
Increasing the responsiveness of the pupils	9.11	0.80
Increasing the student's motivation for achievement	9.71	1.37
Increased involvement of students in the classroom	9.37	1.07
emphasizing language use as opposed to language itself	10.3	0.28
Particular language content needs to be studied, practiced, or revisited.	9.3	1.18
Improving Student Performance	10.4	0.47
Changing the classroom routine	8.98	0.59
Engaging pupils in conversation, participation, and enjoyment	10.60	0.52

The initial conceptualization of the area section led to the identification of pertinent strengths by the members. The need for "a persuading, difficult, and thrilling climate in the mean to reach out" in their homerooms was initially addressed by understudies. They looked at the positive connections between this kind of air and their desire to learn. Members emphasized the gamified interaction's significance as a break from the typical language-learning process. An important aspect of teaching English was the focus of their attention. In this instance, learning will be

improved by an extra educational opportunity. Understudies will be able to work together, communicate, and enjoy themselves more as a result.

The understudy will become more reactive and less worried as a result. According to the participants' responses, this kind of learning will help them focus better and rekindle their drive for success. Lastly, gamification and serious games stimulate students' curiosity while fostering a sense of community and involvement. The necessity of using a ludic environment to practice, assess,

and enhance language skills including speaking, writing, and listening was emphasized by understudies. Students'

presentations could benefit from this kind of educational assistance.

Table 3: Weaknesses

Weaknesses	Mean	SD
Lack of comfort as a result of varied levels of rivalry among pupils	8.16	2.02
Frustration brought on by a misunderstanding of the game	6.72	4.57
The game's overarching class vibe is insufficient.	7.40	2.50
Due to the ludic ambiance, there is a lack of control in the lesson.	5.55	2.70
Discipline concerns as a result of the ludicrous general atmosphere	5.72	3.06
Distraction from the game's true aim without learning	9.06	1.60
Perceiving game-based learning as useless, a waste of time, childish, and immature	5.20	3.12

Weaknesses were the next topic discussed during the brainstorming session. A few drawbacks of gamification and serious gaming for language learning were noted by the participants. Due of their rivalry, students have previously observed that they are unlikely to feel completely at ease in ludic situations and that, should they lose the game, they may feel depressed, distracted, or disappointed. Students will become distracted from the game's true objective if "the game didn't match their prerequisites then again if it's inadequate with regards to

the general energy of the class," as distinct understudies have diverse learning patterns. Students also complained that "hard discipline issues and impel nonattendance of control" would result from the relaxed atmosphere. "Puerile, energetic, pointless or even a waste of time" is another way they describe gamified games and cycles. Understudies eventually raised the concern that playing in a ludic environment may make them forget the game's primary goal and "be occupied from learning without accomplishing the genuine reason behind the game."

Table 4: Opportunities

Opportunities	Mean	SD
Continuous self-education	9.28	2.96
Students are evaluated on a continuous basis.	9.12	2.10
Complete independence for acquiring knowledge	9.61	2.53
There is no gender or social prejudice.	9.62	2.52
Increasing the margin of error with no negative consequences	9.89	2.29
Increase classroom enjoyment and delight by establishing a pleasant learning environment.	10.40	2.80
Learning through many educational methods	9.22	2.77
Connecting education to real-world and practical applications	10.57	2.97
Providing pupils with an appropriate and limitless range of tasks	9.12	2.56
Inspiring pupils to uncover their own sources of learning motivation	10.22	2.68
Student engagement	7.65	4.10
Redirecting students' interests	8.06	3.25
Make education meaningful and memorable for the student.	10.34	3.35

During the third brainstorming session, participants identified a few potential applications of gaming and gamification in English language instruction. Understudies found that students may routinely learn self-learning and assessment with a possibility of correctly encountering

when they are in ludic situations. This was the most significant finding. Furthermore, understudies will have every chance to comprehend thanks to the ludic mood. Participant feedback indicates that gamified learning resources and games "allow students to express their ideas

with almost no fear or shyness or unfavourable consequences." They insisted that there would be no discrimination or social segregation on the basis of orientation in this educational setting. As a result, understudies will feel more at ease while learning, which will boost their dedication and productivity. Games and gamified learning materials will undoubtedly promote happiness and provide a lovely, cozy learning environment. Understudies will be more motivated to learn and involved in study hall activities. According to understudies, they believe that language classes are more like machines and that using highly innovative teaching resources doesn't better suit their needs. They may also help students discover their own passion for learning and foster their creativity. In addition to attracting understudies and expecting them to advance, these new learning tools "will also get and redirect students' thought and interest to their language course." "These new materials have the potential to make us exceptionally focused and more connected to our work," someone says. "They could make the informative communication seriously engaging, outstanding, and leave improved impact on our spirits so courses will be a depiction of satisfaction without stress or weakness," said another student. Finally, the members argued that the game would make the "created automated learning keener with new ages" possible. They argue that some of the current exhibiting tools, such as the writing board, chalk, and video projector, should be replaced by truly cutting-edge equipment or initiatives.

Table 5: Threats

Threats	Mean	SD
Negligence has resulted in lower grades.	7.65	3.99
lowering class values	7.28	3.52
Excessive losing motivates people.	9.40	3.32
boredom and lack in learning	7.72	3.81
High reliance on machine reliability	9.48	3.78

The potential of gamification and serious games as English language learning aids influenced the last stage of the conceptualizing movement. Understudies identified a number of concerns and believed they warranted careful consideration. First, they added a bet that class values and stamps would be degraded as a result of the usage of ridiculous teaching materials. Participants really indicated that gamification and gaming could promote irresponsibility and diminish the advantages of education. One student remarked, "I think the homeroom will be crazy and the teacher won't be able to control what they are doing, so it will be hard to deal with a playing study

hall." Additionally, social loafers will profit from the existing situation, and the instructor is unable to recall them. The second possibility that playing video games could lead to fatigue and disruption was the subject of sub studies. A lot of people also raised the concern that gamification and gaming can lead to an unhealthy dependence on technology.

V. CONCLUSION

Gamification and serious games represent a lively approach toward language learning that manages to cover the diverse demands and interests of contemporary students by engaging ELLs. The significant potential of gamified tactics in transforming the conventional setting of language learning into an engaging and interactive one, which fosters cooperation and active engagement, demonstrates the findings of this study. Game mechanics and game elements teachers employ to elicit motivation, alleviate anxiety levels, and enhance vocabulary acquisition might serve as a means of shaping an attractive environment for students. Major benefits and opportunities identified in our analysis make in-class gamification and serious games worth considering. On the contrary, it outlined several risks and disadvantages that need to be addressed to be managed. This is the first exploratory research into this research program. We look forward in the future to conducting a quantitative study to investigate the relationship between students' performance and the critical success aspects of using ludic learning resources.

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Deciphering the Politics of Language in Select Poems: A Contemplation

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Abstract— *Language and the issues related with the language, have always been relevant in the history and contemporary times. Language is not merely a method of communication but rather an epitome of existence, identity and culture. While language and culture are interdependent, all the aspects connected to language pave a trajectory for the growth and death of a particular language. Language is a social, political and psychological construct. Today, though the world is still struggling hard to cope with the language of power and politics, English, we are witnessing the language debates persistent in countries of diversity and vernacularity. In the history, though English was introduced as a colonial weapon, today it has transformed as a language of survival, status and hegemony. Language has a wide scope of introspecting itself through the lens of caste, identity and hybridity. The mother tongue and the other tongue have always been in rivalry signifying the fight for existence. This paper will discuss the different debates on language, politics of language constructed in the Indian society on different platforms of culture. In order to present the vivid dimensions, the poems “Which Language should I Speak?” by Arun Kamble, “Language” by Sananta Tanty and “Search for my Tongue” by Sujata Bhatt are chosen.*



Keywords— *Language, identity, politics, cultural hegemony, and colonial influence.*

The Politics of Language

Since evolution language has been an integral part of our lives, culture, identity and existence. The development of language over the eras has transformed us into more sophisticated social animals. The history of language represents the establishment of various languages on the basis of regionality, culture, explorations, trade, commerce, migrations and colonization. Gradually, over the years and generations, the world has witnessed the rise and fall of various languages where some languages were cannibalized and some other could survive. Languages survive when they are in use and vogue. Most of the languages are obsolete as there is no community to communicate in that specific language. These languages belong to the minority culture. The languages of the majority and power, survive as they are placed in the center, whereas the minority in the periphery. The purity of language is another issue to be related to the growth and survival. The juxtaposition and amalgamation of languages

could destroy the authentic purity of languages and would lead to the death of a minor language. The hybridity in the languages could hinder the purity of a specific language when a dominating language is merged with a non-dominating language.

The debates over the politics of language are dependent on the concepts of identity, caste and alienation. Language exists in culture and community, suffers because of diversity and deteriorates when overpowered. In the contemporary times, there are many issues connected to language as the language is influenced by gender, identity, alienation, religion, class and caste. The issues of regional languages versus the national language are prevalent in present times to witness. In the countries of multiculturalism like India, the question of national language will always persist as every state has its own regional language. No language can be declared as national as it is not spoken by the majority. Language is resisted according to the majority and minority culture, individual

and community. The language of the minority communities survives through the individuals, as their identity wholly rests on the language they speak. Language and identity are interrelated aspects. We identify ourselves as individuals, through the society and belong to it. To endorse,

It is the individual who is most concerned with identity: the individual is directly affected by socio-cultural conditions – all of those listed above and more – and who feels an immediate connection with them, indeed, who either ‘identifies’ with them or not. And, of course, it is individuals who collectively make up a community, and who are therefore primary; there is no community without the individual. (Pugh 4)

Every individual might struggle through the linguistic otherness and be othered when one fails to embrace the main language positioned in the center or power. An individual, speaking English has more identification and recognition than the individual speaking several regional languages. The issue here is not just about the language of binary oppositions and regionality, but also about the identity wars between the genders denoted by the language. If the language of the center and periphery are antagonistic, so are the languages of men and women. Women are hardly heard and listened to whereas the voice and language of the men dominates and is accepted as commands to be followed. We have several examples of words being generalized and applied to the other genders commonly. Words like mankind, chairman/men, president, actor, man Booker and proverbs like Manners maketh a *man*, Practice makes *man* perfect, etc., showcase the politics of language in the matters of gender. The male/female differences in language are ample. To note,

Other studies have identified systematic male-female differences in many languages. These range from differences in vocabulary, differences in linguistic forms (e.g. phonology, morphology and syntax) to whole communicative styles, e.g. politeness, directness, etc. However, alleged differences in male and female speech represent only part of the picture. Scholars must also look at how men and women are spoken about, and how ways of speaking and acting fit into cultural beliefs about the roles of women and men. Gender stereotypes are sets of beliefs about the attributes of men or women, e.g. men are stronger and more aggressive, women are passive, talk more than men, etc. Stereotypes are often associated with and not easily separated from other salient variables such as race, class, culture, age, context, etc. Stereotypes about how men and women speak

reveal insights into our attitudes about what men and women are like or what they are supposed to be like according to the norms of a particular culture. Many languages have proverbs and sayings that indicate gender hierarchies in which men are more highly valued than women, and women are stereotyped as stupid, overly talkative and fickle. (Romaine 3)

Among the many issues of language, alienation from mother tongue is considered as one of the prominent. The problem of alienation from language leads to identity crisis and is the major aspect of diaspora. The exile and alienation at homelands during colonization were also due to the imposition of English language. The sense of belongingness with to mother tongue being shattered, the migrants were often traumatized, as their identity was in stake. The experience of being silenced and muted was torturous for the migrants. To substantiate,

One repeatedly encounters poignant stories of having to forget one’s language in order to assimilate or acculturate to a new environment. Sadly, this forgetting often includes losing one’s roots. As powerfully said by Benjamin Baez, losing his original language meant losing, the intimacy associated with Spanish and the closeness to my family and past it allowed. I lost, essentially, all the ‘sights and sounds’ associated with my native language. This loss of language, which inevitably leads to loss of cultural identity, carries with it many dangerous implications. In the words of the renown linguist, Joshua Fishman, when we take away the language of a culture we take away, its greetings, its curses, its cures, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its rhymes, its proverbs, its wisdom, and its prayers. (Rovira 4-5)

Another issue related to politics of language is caste. The interference of language with the caste is a societal, cultural and historical concept. In the societies like India, caste plays a predominant role. An individual is observed through the lens of caste and caste is a yardstick to measure one’s identity, status and caliber. Every religion and caste have its own cultural influence over the language. Relation of the language with the Subalterns and Dalits reveals, the issues of language in the lower strata of society. The questions on the language and speech of subalterns and Dalits have been debated in the academia, even after their voice and silence being represented, the issue is still relevant and prevalent in the present. The language of the Dalits and Dalit literature has its own linguistics to follow,

which is widely different from the mainstream narratives and unjustifiable in translation. To quote,

Language serves a greater purpose than just a means of communication. For a vast majority of Dalits, who may not have access to formal education or training in language, their ability to express and interact with the world in their own language offers a valuable insight. The lack of a formal language training gives the freedom to conceptualize and frame ideas which the written word may not be able to capture sufficiently. Dialects and variants of mainstream languages are more commonly spoken by the lesser numerous groups, which may also be backward or lower castes in composition. In an attempt to get these voices out into the mainstream, many researchers and scholars have attempted to translate literature written by Dalit authors from their regional language to other languages. While the idea of translating a piece of work is noble, some of the challenges of translation need close attention. The linguistic vocabulary of Dalit scholars is located in their personal experiences and occupations marked by their caste status. The world of the Dalits has never been a part of mainstream society; they lived on the periphery, outside of the village society. Many a times Dalit writers derive words from the dialects they speak, thereby in mainstream translation one cannot find the analogy between the source text and the target text. (Ingole 41)

The issues of politics in language with reference to caste, identity and alienation have also been represented in Indian English literature. The poems chosen here depict an individual's experiences on language and denote the trauma and frustration.

“Language” by Sananta Tanty

The poem “Language” by Sananta Tanty portrays the crisis of identity in a very sarcastic manner. Sananta Tanty is a poet from Assam who belongs to the downtrodden community. The poem highlights the poet's struggle for identity through language, connectivity to nature and society. At the beginning lines of the poem, he denotes about the language, his father and mother have given him. “The language my father gave me I stored in my mother's womb/and the language my mother gave me I stored in Earth's womb./ So the anatomists have declared that/ I do not have a language.” (Tanty, lines 1-4)

The beginning lines of the poem reveal how the poet is connecting language with earth and womb of the mother. The languages here are explained as the language of the father and mother and he stores it in the womb of

mother and earth. This notifies how the poet is connecting language to his parents and mother earth and that language is acquired from the womb of the earth and mother. The next lines are sarcastic as he depicts that the anatomists do not realize this fact that the language is not on the tongue but is developed in the womb even before the birth. The poet here, throws light on how language is not just what we speak but to what we belong to. He stresses on the truth that our identity is through language. In the next stanza he refers to the language board and requests the board to consider him as a man and that he belongs to the whole world. The poet expresses that the world should not be divided by the languages and that no language is superior or inferior. Language is a deposit of community which has to be passed from one generation to another. The problem and politics of the language board and the anatomists are sarcastically presented and they are the one, who impose rules on the language of individuals and community. The poet is a socialist and condemns capitalism, believes in courtesy, aesthetics and independence. He mocks the linguists and anatomists who protest that he doesn't have a language. The subtle protest of the poet can also be witnessed, who ironically sheds light on the issue of politics of the language practiced by the language boards.

The next poem is “Search for My Tongue” by Sujata Bhatt is a poem to be critiqued from the angle of diaspora as she highlights the pain and trauma of losing her mother tongue in the foreign land. In the opening lines of poem, she expresses her pain of having two tongues in her mouth, one mother tongue and another foreign. This poem illustrates the dilemma of using two languages together which is impossible for the poet. She feels that her mother tongue will rot and die since she doesn't use it but she cannot spit it out. The frustration and helplessness of using the other tongue are realistically portrayed by the poet in the below lines.

“I thought I spit it out/but overnight while I dream, /it grows back, a stump of a shoot/grows longer, grows moist, grows strong veins,/it ties the other tongue in knots,/the bud opens, the bud opens in my mouth,/it pushes the other tongue aside./Every time I think I've forgotten,/I think I've lost the mother tongue,/ it blossoms out of my mouth.” (Bhatt, lines 15-24)

The issue related to language in the poem is about identity crisis. Language denotes identity. The concept of language in diaspora represents many angles as the migrants have to cope with new culture, food, society and language. They have to accept a secondary citizenship and the idea of being othered. In the above lines the poet reveals that she cannot deny the language that lives within her, as it blossoms and ties all other tongues. The diaspora represents

the issues of language and politics of the primary language. The language of the migrants cannot be placed in the mainstream and is positioned in the periphery. The major languages spoken by majority will always find a space in the center and of the migrants in margin. However, the poet concludes explaining that she cannot reject her language because if she does, she is rejecting herself. This poem represents the problems of language in diaspora and how it is not just about the displacement of a migrant but also of a language.

The poem “Which Language should I Speak” by Arun Kamble is yet another poem on dilemma, caste and language politics. In this poem, the poet is questioning the choice of language that is presented to him. Being a Dalit, the poet follows the language of his grandfather which is his tradition. As his grandfather says, “You whore-son, talk like we do. Talk, I tell you” (Kamble line 6), the poet has imbibed the language of his grandfather’s tradition. However, the poet is also rectified by his brahmin school teacher at school, who picks the words through the vedas and reprimands the poet to speak correctly. The poet here is showcasing the binary oppositions of language and their platforms. His dilemma is obvious as he cannot forego his tradition to which he belongs and simultaneously cannot reject the teachings. However, the poet indicates the differences of language by presenting the two platforms of caste and language in society. This dilemma of choosing the language is also the politics that can be contemplated on the platform of caste. Dalits have their own vocabulary and expression which is different from the other communities. The language of the Dalits and their literature is realistic and therefore rude and raw. They cannot represent their stories in the flowery language of the upper castes. Their language cannot be replaced through imposition or enforcement. Therefore, when the so-called upper caste scholars impose their language on the Dalit writing it is the politics of language being practiced by them. The poet’s dilemma here is deliberate and justifiable.

To conclude, the language and politics around the language will always remain an issue in the game of hegemony. The poems discussed here contemplate on the vivid aspects of language, which explore connection to alienation, identity and caste with reference to hegemony. No language can survive if it is not nourished by the speakers. We only need an inclusive society which embraces difference and tolerates every language without comparison and distinction.

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The Factors Influencing Continuous Intention to Adopt E-commerce Recommender System: The Mediating Role of Trust in Technology in Henan, China

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Abstract— *The exponential growth of e-commerce in Henan, China necessitates a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the continuous intention to adopt recommender systems, a crucial tool in enhancing online shopping experiences. This research aims to fill a knowledge gap in the Chinese e-commerce landscape, specifically in Henan, by investigating the unique cultural, social, and economic factors shaping user behavior. Building on a comprehensive literature review, the study identifies cultural orientation, privacy concerns, and user experience as critical drivers of recommender system adoption. Trust in technology emerges as a mediating factor influencing users' continuous intention. The primary objectives are to investigate the factors impacting continuous intention to adopt recommender systems and examine the mediating role of trust in technology. The anticipated findings will not only contribute to the broader understanding of consumer behavior in a rapidly growing digital market but will also provide practical recommendations for businesses to optimize their recommender systems, ultimately fostering increased sales in the Henan's e-commerce landscape.*

Keywords— *Consumer behavior, Continuous intention, E-commerce, Recommender systems, Trust in technology*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic and thriving landscape of Chinese e-commerce, characterized by unprecedented sales figures on events like Singles' Day, and the nation's undisputed global market dominance, the integral role of recommender systems is underscored (Liu et al., 2021). To help customers locate, comprehend, and get information about a product, the recommender systems generates a taxonomy. The recommendation approach increases the efficacy and efficiency of e-commerce applications, resulting in improved customer experience and services (Coussement et al., 2021). Strong evidence was discovered by researcher Li et al., (2022) internet shoppers leave their shopping carts and walk out of site. It is therefore

evidently crucial to look at how personalisation affects consumers' propensity to make purchases when they shop online. In addition, this research will assess how customer purchase intention in the context of online purchasing is impacted by cultural orientation, privacy concerns, and purchase experiences personalisation.

1.1 Background of Research

In recent years, e-commerce has experienced an extraordinary growth in China (Gao, 2023). Recommender systems play a crucial role in e-commerce by helping consumers find products that match their preferences and past behaviors. Therefore, understanding of Chinese consumer's e-commerce adoption behavior has attracted increasing attentions from both marketers and academia

(Gao, 2023). The research addresses this critical gap by delving into influential factors such as cultural orientation, privacy concerns, and user experience, aiming to provide a comprehensive perspective on the intricacies of continuous adoption.

Henan province presents a distinct scenario where challenges, including low trust levels, data sparsity, language barriers, and cultural nuances, act as formidable barriers to the effective functioning of recommender systems (China Briefing, 2022; Quach et al., 2022; Kowalczyk, 2018). For example, trust is a significant factor in e-commerce adoption. In Henan, as in many other regions, consumers skeptical about the security of online transactions and the authenticity of products. This low level of trust can hinder the effectiveness of recommender systems, as users may be reluctant to engage fully with online platforms or share personal data that is crucial for accurate recommendations (Zhou, 2022).

1.2 Research Problem

Recommender systems rely on large volumes of data to function effectively, in less urbanized areas or among demographics that are late adopters of technology, there is insufficient data on consumer behavior (Di Palma, 2023). This data sparsity makes it difficult for algorithms to generate accurate and personalized recommendations, reducing the overall effectiveness of the system. Besides, while Mandarin is the official language of China, there are significant linguistic variations across the country (Di Palma, 2023). In Henan, local dialects and variations in language use can pose a challenge for recommender systems that are primarily designed to operate in standard Mandarin. This can lead to misinterpretations and less relevant recommendations, affecting user satisfaction and engagement. Last, consumer preferences and behaviors are deeply influenced by local culture (Sun et al., 2023). Henan, with its rich history and traditional values, may have different shopping habits compared to more cosmopolitan areas like Beijing or Shanghai (Sun et al., 2023). For instance, Henan consumers prefer products that align with traditional Chinese medicine practices or local culinary tastes.

Additionally, family-oriented purchases and products that emphasize cultural heritage could be more popular in Henan. This study not only identifies these challenges but also seeks to unravel their impact on system effectiveness and user adoption. By probing into the mediating role of trust in technology and scrutinizing privacy concerns (Hu et al., 2010; McKnight et al., 2004), the research aims to offer nuanced insights into continuous adoption and system optimization. In essence, the paramount importance of this study lies in its potential to enrich understanding of

recommender system adoption in the vibrant Chinese e-commerce landscape. By responding to these critical gaps, the research aspires not only to contribute academically but also provide practical strategies for e-commerce businesses to optimize their operations in Henan. These insights can help e-commerce platforms design better user experiences, improve customer trust and satisfaction, and ultimately increase their market share in this distinctive region.

1.3 Research Gaps

There are several critical research gaps in the existing literature on recommender systems in the Chinese e-commerce landscape, specifically in Henan province. Firstly, most studies focus on initial adoption and acceptance rather than sustained use of recommender systems (Liu & Ding, 2022). Existing research often highlights technological aspects and initial consumer reactions, with less attention to long-term engagement (Liu & Ding, 2022). Many studies take a general approach to e-commerce behaviors, missing the specific factors influencing continuous use of recommender systems. The increasing complexity of recommender systems has outpaced academic research on long-term user interaction and satisfaction (Yao et al., 2022). Additionally, the rapid changes in the Chinese e-commerce market necessitate ongoing research into factors affecting continuous adoption, such as trust and habit formation (Yao et al., 2022).

Secondly, research often generalizes cultural factors across China, overlooking regional differences like those in Henan with its distinct cultural heritage and consumer behaviors. While privacy concerns are well-documented, there is limited research on how these concerns vary in different Chinese regions, including Henan, where local cultural attitudes may impact data sharing. Also, studies tend to focus on technological aspects without fully exploring how cultural context in Henan affects user interactions and satisfaction with recommender systems.

Thirdly, the study aims to address unique challenges prevalent in the Chinese e-commerce landscape, such as low trust levels, data sparsity, language barriers, and distinctive cultural differences, and their consequential impact on the effectiveness of recommender systems. Existing studies often examine these challenges in isolation or focus on broader e-commerce trends without delving into their specific effects on recommender systems. Therefore, there is a need for targeted research that explores how these unique challenges intersect and influence the performance and user acceptance of recommender systems in the context of Chinese e-commerce, particularly in regions like Henan province.

Addressing this gap is essential for developing tailored strategies to optimize recommender systems and enhance the overall e-commerce experience for Chinese consumers.

Lastly, the dynamics of privacy concerns and the mediating role of trust in technology has not been thoroughly investigated (Wang et al., 2022), pointing to a critical gap in understanding its influence on continuous adoption and the overall effectiveness of recommender systems in the Chinese market. This gap includes the limited focus on continuous adoption, with existing research predominantly examining initial adoption rather than factors influencing sustained use (Wang et al., 2022). Studies often address broad trust issues like privacy and security concerns but do not specifically explore how trust in recommender systems affects their effectiveness. There is also insufficient research on how trust in technology varies across different regions and cultures within. The research aims to fill these gaps and contribute valuable insights with practical implications for optimizing e-commerce strategies in Henan province and beyond.

1.4 Research Questions

How does Cultural Orientation influence the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems in Henan, China?

How do Privacy Concerns impact the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems in Henan, China?

What is the effect of User Experience on the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems in Henan, China?

Does Trust in Technology mediate the relationships between Cultural Orientation, Privacy Concerns, User Experience, and the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems in Henan, China?

1.5 Research Objectives

To examine the relationship between Cultural Orientation and intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems in Henan, China.

To examine how Privacy Concerns influence continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems in Henan, China.

To examine the impact of User Experience on continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems in Henan, China.

To examine the mediating role of trust in technology between Cultural Orientation, Privacy Concerns, User Experience and continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems in Henan, China.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current literature on the impact of continuous intention to adopt recommender systems in Henan province is limited (Liu, et al., 2021), creating a notable research gap. While recommender systems have gained widespread use in e-commerce, there is a lack of comprehensive studies focusing on the Henan region, particularly examining the influencing factors of cultural orientation. For example, significantly fewer data points show up in the scatter plot for Henan, suggesting limited research or data collection efforts in this region (Zhang & Meng, 2023). Compared to other regions (e.g., Beijing, Shanghai), which have a denser distribution of data points, Henan appears underrepresented, highlighting a research gap. Also, the data points for Henan exhibit high variability and inconsistent patterns, indicating potential issues with research robustness or uniformity in methodologies (Zhang & Meng, 2023).

2.1 Cultural Orientation

According to Earley, culture is defined as '*the individual-level manifestations of shared meaning systems that are learned from other members of the society.*' (Earley, 2002, p. 273). Similar to this, Johansen (Cloud, 1998) defined '*culture as a collection of shared values and beliefs among members of the same community which act as a guide for those members' behaviour.*' Also, according to Hofstede (1984), '*culture is the collective mind-programming that distinguishes members of one group from those of other groups.*' In a previous research, Hofstede (1984) classified any national culture into five distinct groups. These include uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity, collectivism, and long-term orientation. Hence, culture is an important player in the discussions of e-commerce studies (Rabayah et al., 2021). This study is focused on how these cultural factors lead the user trust in technology, and affect when recommender system in e-commerce is adopted in Henan, China.

2.2 Privacy Concerns

Personalization also has been found to be of significant value to users, by reducing time and effort, promoting better service matching, and encouraging the best possible customer experience (Knijnenburg et al., 2012). However, users could be hesitant to take benefit of the conveniences that sophisticated personalised technology (Culnan, 2000) brings about since these benefits always involve some privacy cost. The "privacy-personalization trade-off" is a term used to describe this issue (Chellappa & Sin, 2005). According to researcher Li et al., (2023) use privacy calculus theory to explain the privacy paradox, which involves users logically evaluating the net value received

from information disclosure while accounting for their privacy concerns and associated privacy loss. In an online environment, trust is closely linked to privacy, and consumers heavily depend on the trustworthiness of an online vendor when sharing personal information (Soleimani, 2021). Studies have also shown that trust may greatly mediate the impact of privacy assurance practices on users' privacy concerns at the institutional level (Guo et al., 2021). According to another research (Kaili & Kapitsaki, 2022), privacy coping techniques (such as giving users control) might assure users that their information would only be accessed and used with their consent, hence increasing users' perceptions of the service provider's trust and finally resulting in a decrease in privacy fear.

2.3 User Experience

Due to the technical property of recommendation systems, previously identified problems have mainly been solved technically, such as through research on algorithms. However, some results (Liu & Wang, 2023) may be counterintuitive if looking at recommenders from the user experience perspective. Researchers, from the user's perspective, have initiated the examination of system effectiveness and evaluation standards (Pu et al., 2012). However, it is more challenging for recommenders to improve the user experience due to major user interface limitations on recommender systems in e-commerce, such as lack of trust in technology (Gallego et al., 2013). According to Gavalas et al., (2014), evaluating the efficacy and usefulness of recommendation systems requires taking into consideration user experiences. Other researchers have backed this similar concept. Researchers (Yu & Huang, 2020) suggested that rather than how quickly or accurately the results would be generated, the main issue when creating any efficient recommender system was figuring out how people would respond to and adopt the new technology. Applications wise, a user preference oriented collaborative recommendation algorithm was put out, where user preferences were included and shown to be helpful in improving the effectiveness of the recommendation system (Gao et al., 2014). This study will increase awareness of new challenges and opportunities faced by recommenders system in e-commerce from the users' perspective by looking at multiple factors that might affect the quality of the user experience.

III. HYPOTHESIS

H1: Cultural Orientation positively influences the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems.

H2: Privacy Concerns negatively impact the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems.

H3: User Experience positively influences the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems.

H4: Trust in Technology mediates the relationship between Cultural Orientation and the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems.

H5: Trust in Technology mediates the relationship between Privacy Concerns and the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems.

H6: Trust in Technology mediates the relationship between User Experience and the continuous intention to adopt e-commerce recommender systems.

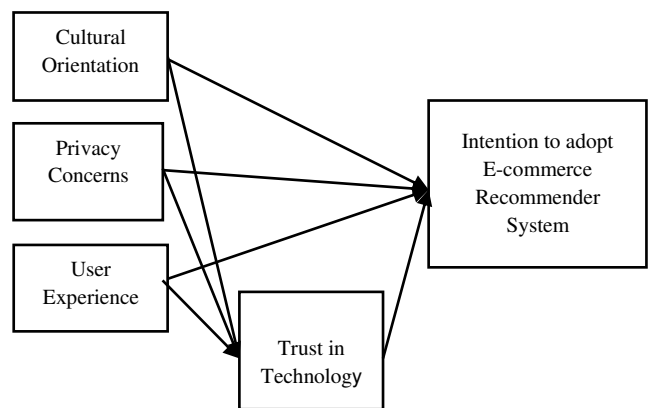


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework

IV. CONCLUSION

The expected outcomes of this research include practical recommendations for enhancing recommender systems in e-commerce platforms, leading to increased user engagement and satisfaction. This research will also contribute to the academic literature by providing insights into the factors influencing the continuous use of technology in a specific regional context.

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Exemplification of History and Historical Fantasy in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh

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Abstract— Amitav Ghosh has won many accolades for his fiction that is keenly intertwined with history. His fiction is characterized by strong themes that may be sometimes identified as historical novels. His themes involve emigration, exile, cultural displacement and uprooting. He illuminates the basic ironies, deep-seated ambiguities and existential dilemmas of the human condition. He, in one of the interviews, has observed, "Nobody has the choice of stepping away from history" and "For me, the value of the novel, as a form, is that it can incorporate elements of every aspect of life-history, natural history, rhetoric, politics, beliefs, religion, family, love, sexuality". Amitav Ghosh's success as a historical novelist owes much to the distinctiveness of his well-researched narratives. He remarkably manifests a bygone era and vanished experiences to life through vividly realized detail. The novels are largely set against the backdrop of major historical events such as the Swadeshi movement, the Second World War, the partition of India, the communal riots of 1963-64 in Dhaka and Calcutta, the Maoist Movement, the India-China War, the India-Pakistan War and the fall of Dhaka from East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. While focusing upon all his novels the paper aims at examining and elaborating Ghosh's historical touches and their implications. The paper also investigates the narrative techniques employed in his novels.



Keywords— Amitav Ghosh, Novels, History, Culture, Family, and Sexuality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ghosh's novels are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *In An Antique Land* (1992), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), and *The Hungry Tide* (2004). *The Shadow Lines* won the Sahitya Akademi Award and *The Calcutta Chromosome* won the Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1997. In 2007, he was awarded the Padma Shri by the Indian government. Ghosh's fiction has exhibited a remarkable geographical spread taking in for his novel, *The Circle of Reason* India, the Gulf region and Algeria; for *The Shadow Lines* India, Bangladesh and the United Kingdom for *In An Antique Land* India, Egypt and Africa; for *The Calcutta Chromosome* India and the United States; and *The Glass Palace* Burma, India and Malaya.

The cultural space for most of Ghosh's characters is huge. It is a vast borderless region with its hybrid languages and practices which circulate without national or religious

boundaries. Ghosh marked his debut as a creative artist with *Reason*. Its French edition won him the Prix Medici Etranger, one of France's most important literary awards. *Reason* is about history's victims, who are forced into exile by events beyond their control. It is a complex tapestry of stories of individuals whose lives overlap, pull apart, and separate. It is a story of obsession – obsessive rationalism that some embrace as science and others ridicule as insanity and obsessive manhunts. It is a detective story, a story of exile, a travelogue, a women's rights tract, a Marxist protest, a plea for humanistic camaraderie and so on. Commenting on the novel, Hanif Kureishi in "A Feast of Words" says that "*The Circle of Reason* is a huge, ambitious novel with a crowd of characters and themes, set in a number of countries, India, Yemen, Egypt and Algeria. It is like an immense pot into which scores of more or less random ingredients have been thrown" (40). It is a novel of exile/restlessness. In it, people from the old world are trying

to cope with the new one as Ghosh weaves four strands: “the social, the social economic, the political and the metaphysical”. (Sengupta, “An Allegorical Tom Jones” 29). It is a novel which weaves together nations and continents. It unites people of different nations. Claire Chambers in “Historicizing Scientific Reason in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*” says that “*The novel is ostensibly a bildungsroman describing the journey of Alu, a Bengali orphan, from the obscure village Lalpukur in Calcutta [...]. It incorporates elements of the picaresque, the novel of ideas, the thriller of the detective novel (with Assistant Superintendent of Police, Jyoti Das, trailing an alleged extremist, Alu, through several continents) and the Hindu epic*” (36).

The main narrative of the novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, involves a re-examination of the history of late nineteenth-century malaria research by a possibly deranged Calcutta-born man named Murugan (he is also known as Morgan) who works for an international public health company called Life Watch and uses an Americanized slang register, which characterizes him as a diaspora subject. Murugan has had a life-long obsession with the history of malaria research, which has led him to the conviction that Ronald Ross, the British scientist who was awarded the 1902 Nobel Prize for Medicine for his work on the life-cycle of the malaria parasite. Murugan believes that a secret history has been erased from the scribal records of the colonial society and medical historiography more generally. He has devoted himself to uncovering the hidden truth. In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, the Web assumes much the same role as weaving in Ghosh's earlier work, functioning as a synecdoche for the interpenetration of cultures.

The Shadow Lines is a narrative of three generations – the narrator’s Bengali family in pre-partition Dhaka and Calcutta and their English friends, the Prices whose histories encompass both world wars, the left Book Club and shades of contemporary London. It also sets out to illuminate the absurdities of borders and frontiers, the lines of disillusion and tragedy. It may be taken as the novel which includes the search for identity, the need for independence the difficult relationship with culture, and the rewriting of colonial past. It also includes issues of identity, freedom, and cross-cultural contradictions in the backdrop of communal violence. In *The Shadow Lines*, chronologically, the narration begins in 1939 when there was the outbreak of the Second World War and India was passing through colonial rule. The narrator was not born then. The narrator met May Price when she came to Calcutta on a visit. The next time the narrator met her was seventeen years later when the narrator visited London. However, the novel takes these seventeen years from the year 1962 to 1979 as the effective background of *The Shadow Lines*

against which Ghosh deals with postcolonial situations, cultural dislocations and anxieties and interprets the issues of fractured nationalities in close and telling encounters. The themes include immigration, cultural assimilation, friendship across borders, and adjustment to the altered face of the world. In *The Shadow Lines*, the opening section ‘*Going Away*’ introduces its characters – the narrator’s family of his grandmother, his parents, his grandmother’s sister Mayadebi, her diplomat husband, and her three sons; Jatin, an economist with the UN, Tridib; the narrator’s uncle and mentor, Robi, and her grand-daughter, Ila (Jatin’s child) who is always away with her parents. The narrator’s grandmother is a product of the past. She has within herself an unflinching faith in the sanctity of political freedom. She is an example of the historical forces and an understanding of the present. So, it becomes an autobiographical novel or a family saga /chronicle.

In An Antique Land is woven around the history of Egypt in the eleventh century. It was published in 1992. It is a subversive history. It is written in the form of a traveller’s tale/travelogue. It is packed with anecdotes. It provides magical, intimate insights into Egypt from the Crusades to Operation Desert Storm. It abounds in stories and also examines relations between the Indians and the Egyptians, Muslims and Jews, Hindus and Muslims. It is historicity in fiction. It looks at history from the angles of postcolonialism. It juxtaposes the characters of the twelfth century. It also deals with the time of Ghosh’s life and reveals two different civilizations India and Egypt with diverse cultures of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism. In *Land*, Ghosh begins his account in Lataifa, the little Egyptian village where he stationed himself as an Oxford University graduate student in anthropology. Doctor Aly Issa, a Professor at the University of Alexandria, has brought Ghosh to the home of Abu Ali. It is there that he rents a room during his stay in Egypt. Ghosh does not especially relish living there, since Abu-Ali, in his mid-fifties is a somewhat overbearing small businessman. Ghosh describes him as “*profoundly unlovable*” (AL 23) but recognizes him as someone who prompts a rather fearful respect from the villagers. After a while, Dr. Issa arranges for Ghosh to move out of Lataifa to Nashawy, a larger town. Ghosh left Egypt in 1981, and it was not for another seven years that he could again turn his attention with any seriousness to investigating Abraham Ben Yiju and his slave. He had learned some Arabic to communicate with his hosts. He had also spent time learning Judaeo-Arabic, a colloquial dialect of medieval Arabic written in Hebrew script that Ben Yiju had used. To his surprise and relief, he found that the dialects spoken in Lataifa and Nashawy in the twentieth century were not that remote from the “sounds” he was reading on Ben Yiju’s pages. He learns that Ben Yiju

had lived in a Roman fortress nicknamed "Babylon" situated in the southern section of Cairo referred to as Old Cairo or Masr, called by some "the mother of the world" (AL 80). It is also known as Masr al-Qadima, Masr al-Atiqa, and Mari Gargis. Fustat served as Egypt's capital for more than three centuries. Fustat today is attached to the metropolis as an immense rubbish dump. The Ottoman Empire had reduced it in importance, and then the Indian Ocean trade that had made Fustat significant was supplanted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by European navies.

CONCLUSION

Ghosh throughout his diverse and generally composite oeuvre attempts to find connections between seemingly unrelated subjects. Ghosh's fiction challenges the artificial shadow lines that have been erected to separate nations from their neighbours, fact from fiction, and academic disciplines from each other. His interrogation of boundaries accords with the preoccupation with hybridity, in-between spaces, and diasporas in postcolonial debate. He is concerned with highlighting filiations and connections which go beyond the (neo) colonial relationship, such as the persistence of pre-colonial trade connections between the Indian subcontinent and the Arabian Peninsula or the existence of an Indian Community in Burma, which was almost entirely erased by nationalism/colonialism.

The perception of history evolves from the novel and Ghosh never attempts to bulldoze history into some other preoccupation. History retains its historicity, as a process which hinges on characters who are representative of important historical tendencies-whether it is Balaram the idealist bhadralok, or Bhudeb the lumpen Congressman who unnervingly talks of mass media and straight lines, or even Damanhourli the one-eyed fantasy of the fledgling bourgeoisie. History is refracted through different mediums: in the first part through ideas on science and change, and in the second section, through the Damanhourli story, as a narrative from which earthy lessons are to be drawn. The difference in historical understanding corresponds to the distinction between an intellectually cosmopolitan culture and a more rural one. Being memory, history is fashioned by the way people collectively look at their inheritance.

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الدعاء مخ العبادة: Pragmatic Study of Supplication in Prophetic Hadiths

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Abstract— *The dual nature of supplication as both expressive and directive speech acts presents a challenge in understanding how religious language conveys feelings like trust, hope, and confidence while invoking a higher authority. Thus, this paper attempts to investigate the pragmatic behavior of supplication in Arabic Prophetic hadiths. Based on Searle' (1969, 1979) model of speech acts, 25 Prophetic hadiths are selected to be pragmatically analyzed in terms of a mixed research method. The findings reveal that expressive acts manifest emotional pleas for strength and forgiveness, while directive acts focus on requests for divine help. This in turn highlights the dual function of supplication, as it serves both personal reflection and an appeal for action from God. This entails that Prophetic hadiths tend to evince morals and spiritual guidance.*



Keywords— *supplication, expressive-directive, speech act, Prophetic hadiths*

I. INTRODUCTION

Supplication is a religious and social act which takes in social dimensions and religious considerations. In this sense, it displays specific pragmatic and linguistic propositions grounded in cultural and social backgrounds. It is a self-effacing entreaty in which Muslims beg and entreaty Almighty Allah for assistance, thankfulness and submission. Thus, it implies both expressive and directive illocutionary acts which designate the emotional status of the supplicant and at the same time proposes to get the hearer to do something, according to the application of the petitioner.

Psychologically, supplication enables Muslims to express themselves both emotionally and expressively, as they generate a path for articulating faintness and looking for provision from the Almighty Allah. From another perspective, supplication encourages community harmony and reinforces Muslims' faith in Allah. Practically, supplication is seen as an act in which Muslims emotionally express themselves and also request Allah for a thing. Hence, this paper is intended to investigate the pragmatic behavior of supplication as found in the Arabic Prophetic hadiths. It aims at identifying supplication as

and directive speech act. In other words, the performance of supplication in the hadiths involves personal emotions and also communicates the purpose of attracting divine intervention. In terms of Searle's (1969, 1979) and Kareem's (2009, pp.10,18) felicity conditions of supplication and felicity conditions of *munajat*, 25 Arabic Prophetic hadiths have been selected to be pragmatically analyzed utilizing a mixed-method approach (involving both qualitative and quantitative procedures). The upcoming pages are devoted to the presentation of theoretical background including a survey of supplication as a social-religious concept and speech acts theory focusing on supplication as an expressive-directive act.

Research Question

This paper sets out to give answer to the following question:

"How and why does supplication utilize expressive-directive speech acts in Arabic Prophetic Hadiths?"

Supplication: General Remarks

The term 'supplication' is identified as an act that involves social dimensions as well as religious considerations. It has linguistic implications that are rooted

in many cultural and social backgrounds. It is a humble prayer in which a Muslim requests, begs and pleads Allah for help, gratitude, or submission. In this respect, it corresponds to expressive and directive speech acts, which indicate the emotional status of the supplicant and intends to get the listener to do something, according to the request of the supplicant.

From the standpoint of psychology, supplication makes for a fundamental coping mechanism that allows us to cope both emotionally and psychologically, and creates a pathway for expressing weaknesses and seeking support from others. From a sociological perspective, it promotes social unity and strengthens the believer in faith especially during times of distress and crisis. Since supplication is not only an undeniable concept related to the study of the religion and culture of Muslims, it is also one of the practical manifestations of a certain belief in which the function of supplication is realized in a religious discourse community through a speech act. Therefore, it seems here that a pragmatic study of supplication in terms of speech acts theory might develop a better understanding of supplication regarding language, culture, and spirituality and bring forth a more comprehensive view regarding religious discourse.

Prophetic Traditions and Invocation

The prophetic hadiths stress that supplication is a core part of worship, indicating how close someone becomes to Allah through prayer, with all other actions stemming from this connection. Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of dua as an act through which a person surrenders their ego, becoming humble and submissive before Allah. Many hadiths encourage frequent supplication, highlighting that Allah responds to genuine invocations. As reflected in the Prophetic hadiths embodying, the Prophet's way of life piety in supplication requires sincerity of intention, humility, and perseverance in seeking what one asks for. Consider this Prophetic hadith:

"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ، وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ، وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ."
(الزرقاني، 2012، p.17)

["O Allah! I seek refuge in You from worry and grief, from incapacity and laziness, from cowardice and miserliness, from being burdened by debt and from being overpowered by (other) men."]

Importance of Supplication

Supplication is the soul of both personal piety and community worship in Islam. It refers to the act of appealing or requesting shelter, assistance, and blessings from Allah. This practice was exemplified by Prophet

Muhammad in various situations, including morning and evening prayers, during travels, in times of illness, and in both favorable and adverse circumstances. Supplication is not restricted to particular situations but is encouraged at all times as an expression of the believer's continuous dependence on Allah.

Supplication (as a form of prayer) functions as a spoken act that merges deep emotional expression with requests for action, serving a vital role in both humanly and heavenly communication. It serves as both an expressive and directive speaking act, revealing the speaker's inner emotions towards a greater moral authority, whether divine or otherwise, while prompting the recipient to undertake the requested action .

It is often known that requests are culturally and contextually appropriate for their intended recipient. In religious situations, supplication serves as a human theophany, enabling believers to engage directly with God or other transcendent beings. In Islam, it denotes a direct connection between the believer and Allah, exemplifying humility and dependency. In religious traditions, prayers often emphasize petition, wherein believers request divine intervention for personal issues or convey appreciation.

Psychologically, supplication serves as a mechanism for stress and emotional regulation, facilitating vulnerability and the pursuit of external assistance. It fosters relationships between individuals, communities, and deities, aligning them with shared interests and value. Supplication can occur through vocal expressions, such as spoken requests, or through physical gestures like bowing, kneeling, or raising hands, often accompanied by specific words to invoke divine remembrance. Despite variations across cultures, the practice of supplication underscores a universal human need to seek assistance, express gratitude, and connect with transcendent beings.

Speech act of Supplication

In terms of pragmatic notion, supplication can be characterized as an illocutionary act by which the speaker performs an action by articulating a plea or request. Supplication, or pleading, is a type of prayer in which one party humbly or earnestly requests another party to provide assistance, typically to alleviate a distress or to endure an act of hostility while expressing reverence. It may also constitute an imperative, soliciting a response from the contacted individual to intervene or assist. Speech act theory posits that language functions as an autonomous action; prayer serves both as an emotional expression and a means to motivate individuals to take action. Searle elaborated on Austin by classifying speech acts, such as directives, which attempt to induce a listener to perform some act.

Supplication, a form of prayer or request directed towards God, is often classified as an illocutionary speaking act. It signifies soliciting assistance from a superior authority or influential individual, which is an official request on their part. Here, supplication can be described as an expressive speaking act by which the speaker communicates their emotional state, including fear, hope, or despair. Expressive words are more intimate and disclose one's emotions, whilst the other primarily functions as a prayer, reflecting humility, deficiencies, or readiness. When an individual prays for aid, they are not simply voicing discontent but acknowledging their fragility and dependence on a power beyond themselves. Then, supplication is an emotional act that combines fear of judgment with a desire for salvation, illustrating its intrinsic expressive quality .

As far as supplication is involved, directive and expressive speech acts are often interwoven. This dual aims to elicit a response from a higher authority while conveying personal sentiments. Islamic prayers exhibit a deep connection and surrender to God, serving both a prescriptive role (asking assistance) and an expressive purpose (demonstrating humility). This combination of duties makes prayer an effective means of communication among many religious traditions .

Supplication, in this respect, is a category of speech act that requires specific environmental conditions, known as felicity conditions, to be effective. These criteria must be fulfilled for the speech act to achieve its intended purpose. Prayer requires sincere intent, separate from random requests or demands and typically must be incorporated into a socially accepted practice (e.g., religious institution) to attain legitimacy. Exhibiting sincerity is crucial for anyone seeking acceptance in Islamic prayer. Prayer will be ineffective in fulfilling its intended aim if he lacks sincerity.

In summary, speech act theory can help see that supplications are both directive and expressive acts. Viewed as either request for divine intervention or declarations of personal piety, supplications mirror the proper and dual appetite that language serves: conveying needs, feelings of reverence toward a higher authority.

Supplication: Expressive-Directive Act

Expressive speech acts, according to Searle (1969), are utterances in which the speaker publicly communicates his/her emotional attitudes towards their propositional content by congratulating someone or through other more explicit illocutions like apologizing and giving thanks. Supplications are not mere expressions of emotions; it also has terrible emotional plea for a cause. In supplication, the question was posed in a tone that

conveys a blend of pleading emotion, accompanied by an undercurrent of fear or hope. motive for persuasion of formality is based on appeal to mercy. It is likely seeking reconciliation, protection guidance from higher entity to take common action its often cannot restore. On the other hand, directive speech acts are performed with the aim of obtaining a specific perlocutionary effect from the hearer, "the speaker is trying to get the hearer to do something" (Searle,1969, p.66). Hearer has to do something in order to follow the instructions.

Prayer is directed to higher authority (Allah). In Islam, it refers to a form of prayer made by the person, however, in general terminology, supplication means in each situation flame on personal need and spiritual guidance. This invocation is the very stuff of rituals, but in religious contexts more specifically signified; it makes transparent what function each speaker aims to fulfil: one addresses a higher power for help. The conception that prayer is both expressive and directive hinges on the blurriness of the line between expressing self-emotions, feelings or desire and directing a follower to take specific action. Another way of saying this is that it describes embodied speech acts within varied religious landscapes .

Islamic supplication shows a supplicant's modesty, religiousness or devotion on one side; however, there is some secular aspect of purpose fulfillment in another case. This dual operation of supplications indicates that speech acts convey the emotional condition of the speaker, and extract a response or action from either human or divine listeners. Bach and Harnish (1979) essentially suggest that the felicity requirements for the initiation of supplication encompass the speaker's desire and capacity to execute a promise, expressive and directive preconditions, as well as religious invocations. The execution of supplication depends on fulfilling these requirements, enabling the illocutionary process to operate as planned.

Religious invocations, predominantly characterized by a closeness between the speaker and the divine, are significantly more immediate. The effectiveness of the speaker's words is contingent upon his own emotion. In essence, it is the manifestation of heart and mind through prayer, or as Bach and Harnish (1979) elucidates, the necessity of expressive-directive speaking acts emotion is intertwined with intention. This speaking act, whether a religious prayer or personal request, relies on emotion and feeling for effectiveness; subsequently, acting on these feelings will facilitate efficient communication and human bonding.

Felicity Conditions of Supplication

Searle (1969) defines felicity conditions as specific appropriateness rules governing speech act behavior. He elaborates on what makes utterances felicitous or acceptable. In addition to grammatical and semantic rules, Searle emphasizes the importance of psychological factors, particularly the relationship between speaker and listener, in achieving a felicitous act. He identifies four essential felicity conditions required for a successful speech act. In the context of supplication, these conditions outline the prerequisites for an intentional communicative act between the actor, the supplicant, and the recipient (Allah). Based on Searle's (1969, p. 66-67) felicity conditions for directives and Kareem's (2009, pp.10,18) felicity conditions of supplication and of *munajat*, the following conditions can correspond to aspects of invocation (supplication) within Islamic worship.

1. Propositional Content Condition: The prayer must be a proposition related to a future action or need that the supplicant requests from Allah, such as forgiveness or sustenance.
2. Preparatory Condition: The supplicant must have faith that Allah possesses the power and willingness to fulfill the request.
3. Sincerity Condition: The supplicant earnestly seeks the realization of the request, holding the conviction that only Allah possesses the power to effectuate it.
4. Fundamental Requirement: The petitioner must articulate the request as a supplication, soliciting divine intervention or aid. Moreover, Islamic doctrine emphasizes that supplications are legitimate when they stem from sincerity and humility. A prayer ought to emanate from a heart imbued with devotion, rather than serving just as a perfunctory routine.

II. METHODOLOGY

This section delineates the essential principles that form the foundation of data analysis. The text commences with elucidating the notion of data collection and selection, specifying whether the research adopts a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods paradigm.

i. Data Collection

Data collection is an essential component of research technique, entailing the methodical acquisition of

information pertinent to addressing research inquiries. The selected data is concerned with natural speech which is drawn from real-world communicative events offering insights into the genuine use of language. The data of the study comprises Prophetic sayings focusing on supplication as a form of monologue between humans and the divine. Twenty-five instances of supplication drawn from Arabic Prophetic Hadiths are selected to be the data of the study. The data collection process emphasizes the analysis of religious expressions, particularly examining supplications as examples of emotive and goal-directed speech acts within religious contexts.

ii. Method

The study used a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative procedures to systematically examine the pragmatic behavior of supplications in the Prophetic hadiths. Qualitatively, the pragmatic analysis involves the identification, description of the act of supplication, eliciting the linguistic devices used to realize this act and the function behind the use of these devices. Quantitatively, the frequencies and the percentages of the components of the pragmatic analysis are calculated and summed up in tables and figures. By conducting a numerical process, this study is able to quantitatively corroborate the qualitative results through the selected data on the prevalence of individual phrases or structures in supplications.

iii. Model of Analysis

The analytical model investigates supplication through a four-level framework, considering cultural context, pragmatic behavior and linguistic realization and function. Level 1 concerns theoretical background which is sought to help readers understand the historical, spiritual, and cultural significance of each supplication. Level 2 identifies supplications as expressive (emotional), directive (action-oriented), or expressive-directive (combination of emotion and request) based on linguistic markers, thereby expanding the original speech-act role. Level 3 tackles felicity conditions to identify directness through sentence types and lexical choices reflecting the emotional state and intention of the supplicant. Level four looks at the linguistic realization of the supplication — its syntactic, semantic and figurative realization of supplication. Consider the proposed model suggested for the pragmatic analysis of supplication in Arabic Prophetic hadiths.

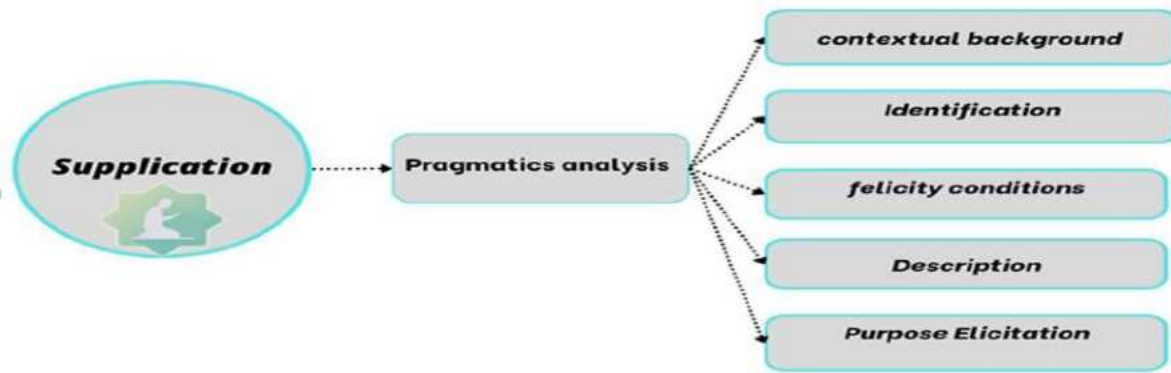


Fig.1: Model of Analysis

Analysis of Prophetic Hadiths

Twenty-five hadiths of supplications are selected to be pragmatically analyzed in accordance with the above model. With respect to the scope of the paper, three representative examples of the analyzed hadiths are presented hereunder.

Text 1

"اللَّهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ أَرْجُو فَلَا تَكُنْ لِي نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ"

(التنوخي, 2011, p. 28)

[“O Allah, I seek Your mercy. Do not leave me to myself even for the blinking of an eye and correct all my affairs; there is no god but You”.]

According to Abu Bakrah, supplication for anguish is a prayer that seeks relief from profound worry and grief, emphasizing exclusivity and rejecting expecting compassion from others. It emphasizes the need for divine guidance from Allah and the supplicant's total dependence on Him. This supplication serves as an example of Tawheed, the practice of directing one's attention towards Allah through acts of worship, love, respect, submission, fear, and hope. An alienation from Allah can lead to restricted and discontented lives, but authentic contentment comes from an open and responsive heart. The statement "There is no god but You" conveys a profound plea to Allah, emphasizing a connection between the speaker and the Creator marked by modesty, humility, and complete reliance on God's compassion and direction (بن الحارث, 2024; اسلام ويب, 2005).

The hadith emphasizes the importance of relying on Allah for guidance and rectification in life. It combines expressive and directive components, symbolizing dependence on Allah and acknowledging that human effort alone is insufficient. The prayer acknowledges Allah's supreme power in supervising all affairs and urges the

speaker to avoid reliance on themselves. It acknowledges the limitations of human nature and the potential for deviation from divine guidance. The prayer combines belief and modesty with explicit appeals for divine assistance, addressing both individual and broader aspects of existence. The hadith fulfills two main purposes: expressive and directive. The invocations "O Allah, I seek Your mercy" and "Do not leave me to myself even for the blinking of an eye" convey a profound feeling of susceptibility and reliance on Allah.

Structurally, this Prophetic hadith is realized in a compound-complex sentence consisting of four clauses connected by coordinating conjunctions **و** (so+ and). They all take the declarative function to convey related but distinct ideas, such as a supplication asking for mercy and guidance. The verse is composed of several declarative clauses followed by direct pleas to God. The first part, "اللَّهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ أَرْجُو" ("O Allah, I seek Your mercy"), establishes humility and dependence. The second part, "فَلَا تَكُنْ لِي نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ" ("Do not leave me to myself even for the blinking of an eye") is a directive plea, begging Allah not to abandon them. The third plea, "وَأَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ" ("correct me all my affairs") seeks divine intervention in managing every aspect of life, reflecting the speaker's belief in divine oversight. The final statement, the acknowledgment of "لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ" ("There is no god but You"), affirms faith, acknowledging Allah as the sole source of power and mercy.

Lexically, the term **اللَّهُمَّ** (O Allah) signifies supplication and develops a tone of entreaty. Moreover, the term **رَحْمَتَكَ** (mercy) emphasizes God's infinite benevolence and readiness to grant pardon, so reinforcing the necessity of supplication and acknowledgment of His supreme power. The speaker's phrase "نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ" ("even for the blinking of an eye") serves as a hyperbole

intentionally utilized to emphasize their complete and utter dependence on Allah.

Text 2

"تَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ وَدَرْكِ الشَّقَاءِ وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ وَشِمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ" (المناوي، 2018، p.312)

[*"Seek refuge in Allah from severe calamity, being overtaken by misery, evil destiny, and the triumphant mockery of enemies".*]

The Prophet (PBUH) uttered this hadith in order to invoke safeguarding from grave trials and challenges. This prayer pertains to the most integral aspects of existence, faith and the afterlife. The aim is to obtain safeguarding against both physical and moral sufferings, as well as against being overwhelmed by suffering, punishment, and the malevolence of judgment. Seeking sanctuary from the malevolence of judgment does not conflict with attaining satisfaction with Allah's command, as it is an integral component of His command and volition (اسلام ويب، 2001).

The hadith functions as an expressive-directive, reflecting the deep care of Prophet Muhammad for the comfort of his followers in both material and spiritual aspects. It expresses compassion for the challenging circumstances experienced by individuals, including major disasters, sufferings and ridicule from adversaries. Moreover, it conveys human susceptibility and reliance on divine safeguarding, therefore transforming supplication from a mere individual plea into a communal manifestation of belief. The directive function serves as a distinct and explicit instruction, urging believers to actively pursue sanctuary in Allah. This hadith combines both purposes by articulating a common human experience and guiding a religious reaction, urging believers to acknowledge their spiritual link to Allah and beseeching for safeguarding.

Structurally, this hadith is realized via a simple imperative sentence highlighted by the use of the imperative verb "تَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ" (*Seek refuge in Allah*). Through this simple imperative structure, the Prophet (PBUH) wants to urge/direct Muslims to seek the protection of Allah. In fact, he urges them to follow the Path of Allah, underscoring the significance of the situation and the necessity for refuge from the difficulties, hence generating a feeling of immediacy and emphasis on the all-encompassing quality of the difficult circumstances.

Lexically, the statement referring to supplication employs the expression "الله" (*Allah*) as the only one to who people must resort in times of conflicts and difficulties. It suggests a solicitation for divine safeguarding or aid, a manifestation of prayer, an appeal to

a superior entity for support or advance. The supplication is distinguished by a parallel arrangement of challenges realized by " مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ وَدَرْكِ الشَّقَاءِ وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ " (*severe calamity, being overtaken by misery, evil destiny, and the triumphant mockery of enemies*).

Text 3

"اللهم انفعني بما علمتني وعلمني ما ينفعني وزدني علما ، الحمد لله على كل حال ، وأعوذ بالله من حال أهل النار."

(المصرف ، 2001 ، p.16)

[*"O Allah, benefit me with what You have taught me, and teach me what will benefit me, and increase my knowledge. All praise is due to Allah in every condition, and I seek refuge in Allah from the inhabitants of the Hellfire".*]

The text underscores the significance of information, namely religious knowledge, in the life of a believer. It promotes the pursuit of knowledge that is advantageous for both religious existence and the hereafter, requesting Allah to enhance knowledge, and emphasize the need of acquiring knowledge above mere deeds. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recommended that Muslims seek an augmentation in knowledge, since it facilitates a more intimate connection with Allah. Furthermore, the hadith emphasizes the need of obtaining religious knowledge, as it enables individuals to reach higher spiritual levels and empowers them to fight temptations and evil (اسلام ويب، 2007).

In Islamic teachings, the hadith is a compilation of prayers seeking knowledge, benefit, and protection. The expressive role of language is to communicate the feelings, desires, or personal sentiments of the speaker. Within this hadith, the speaker conveys appreciation and deep respect towards Allah, admitting their dependence on Allah for knowledge and safeguarding, and seeking advantageous knowledge and protection from Hellfire. As for the directive function, this hadith urges people to pursue guidance in their daily behavior, education, and spiritual development. It promotes direct action, including soliciting Allah's assistance in acquiring and implementing positive information, actively pursuing greater understanding, expressing thanks, and seeking protection from the repercussions of the afterlife. The expressions "benefit me with what You have taught me, and teach me what will benefit me" advocate for the pursuit of practical knowledge, ongoing development, and humility. The expression "I seek refuge in Allah from the inhabitants of the Hellfire" advocates for safeguarding against adverse repercussions. The hadith functions as a guide for adherents in their spiritual path.

Structurally, the hadith comprises compound sentences. Compound sentences are formed by the use of coordinating conjunctions و (and), as in "اللهم" "اللهم بما علمتني وعلمني ما ينفعني وزدني علما" ("O Allah, benefit me with what You have taught me, and teach me what will benefit me, and increase me in knowledge"). The hadith is typically written in the imperative mood, which is employed to issue commandments, make requests, or provide supplications. The initial segment of the hadith is in the imperative mood, when it is specifically requesting benefits, knowledge, or improvement from Allah. The second section is in the declarative mood, consisting of a factual statement and expressing praise for Allah under all situations. Incorporating both the imperative and declarative moods, the hadith is a thoroughly comprehensive and highly effective religious document.

Lexically, the hadith comprises lexical elements that pertain to supplication, اللهم (O Allah) and أَعُوذُ (seek refuge); they convey the specific action of making a supplication or prayer. They represent the act of offering or reciting a prayer to Allah for assistance, direction, and safeguarding. The plea "اللهم بما علمتني وعلمني ما ينفعني" "اللهم بما علمتني وعلمني ما ينفعني" ("Benefit me by that which You have taught me, and teach me that which will benefit me") exemplifies parallelism, since the phrase structure reflects itself, therefore highlighting the mutual connection between knowledge and benefit. By establishing a rhythmic and balanced appeal, this figure of speech amplifies the rhetorical persuasiveness of the supplication.

To sum up, the results of the selected twenty-five Prophetic hadiths are presented in Table 1.

Table: Overall Results of the Selected Data

No	Supplication	Supp. Via SA	Syntactic Level		Lexical Items	Figure of Speech
			Sentence Type	Sentence Mood		
1	"اللَّهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ أَرْجُو فَلَا تُكَلِّني إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ" <i>"O Allah, I seek Your mercy. Do not leave me to myself even for the blinking of an eye and correct me all my affairs; there is no god but You."</i>	plea	Compound-complex	declarative	اللهم O Allah رحمت mercy	hyperbole
2	"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْمَنَّانُ بَدِيعِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ." <i>"O Allah! I ask You by virtue of the fact that all praise is due to You; there is no god except You, the Bestower, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, O Possessor of Majesty and Honor, O Ever-Living, O Self-Sustaining."</i>	request	complex	declarative	اللهم O Allah	parallelism
3	"تَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ وَنَزْكِ الشَّقَاءِ وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ وَشِمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ." <i>"Seek refuge in Allah from severe calamity, being overtaken by misery, evil destiny, and the triumphant mockery of enemies."</i>	Urge / direct	simple	imperative	الله Allah	parallelism
4	"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ، وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ، وَغَلْبَةِ الرَّجَالِ." <i>"O Allah! I seek refuge in You from</i>	Request / beg	simple	declarative	اللهم O Allah	parallelism

	worry and grief, from incapacity and laziness, from cowardice and miserliness, from being burdened by debt and from being overpowered by (other) men."					
5	"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ زَوَالِ نِعْمَتِكَ، وَتَحَوُّلِ عَافِيَتِكَ، وَفُجَاءَةِ نِقْمَتِكَ، وَجَمِيعِ سَخَطِكَ" "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the disappearance of Your blessings, from the change of Your protection (from me) and from suddenness of Your punishment, and from all of Your wrath."	plea	simple	declarative	اللهم O Allah اعوذ بك Seek refuge in you	parallelism
6	"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجَبِينِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ أُرَدَّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ" "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from miserliness, and I seek refuge in You from cowardice, and I seek refuge in You from reaching the age of senility, and I seek refuge in You from the trials of this world, and I seek refuge in You from the torment of the grave."	Request/ beg	compound	declarative	اللهم O Allah اعوذ بك I seek refuge in you	parallelism
7	"اللهم اغفر لي ذنبي كله دقه وجله وأوله وآخره وعلانيته وسره." "O Allah, forgive all my sins, minor and major, first and last, and those that are visible and hidden."	plea	simple	imperative	اللهم O Allah اغفر Forgive	parallelism
8	"يا مقلب القلوب ثبت قلبي على دينك" "O Turner of hearts, stabilize my heart in Your faith."	request	simple	imperative		Metaphor/ repetition
9	"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى وَالتَّقَى وَالعِفَاتِ وَالعِفَى" " O Allah, I ask You for guidance, piety, chastity, and self- sufficiency".	request	simple	imperative	اللهم O Allah اسأل Ask	parallelism

10	"اللهم اغفر لي، وارحمي، واهدني، وعافني، وارزقني وارفعني" <i>"O Allah forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, support me, protect me, provide sustenance for me, and elevate me."</i>	Request/ Plea	Compound	Imperative	اللهم O Allah اغفر Forgive ارحمي Displaying mercy اهدني Seeking counsel عافني Seeking health ارزقني Engaging in provision	Parallelism
11	"رب قني عذابك يوم تبعثك عبادك" <i>"My Lord, save me from Your punishment on the day You resurrect Your servants."</i>	Request/ beseech	complex	imperative	ربي My LORD قني Save me	synecdoche
12	"اللهم اهدني وسدني، واذكر بالهدى هدايتك الطريق، والسداد سداد السهم" <i>"O Allah! Direct me to the Right Path and make me adhere to the Straight Path."</i>	beg	compound	imperative	اللهم اهدني Direct me	repetition
13	"اللهم اكفني بحلالك عن حرامك وأغنني بفضلك عن سواك" <i>"O Allah, make Your lawful provisions sufficient for me so that I have no need for Your unlawful ones, and enrich me with Your blessings so that I need no one but You."</i>	plea	compound	imperative	اللهم اكفني Make me sufficient اغني Enrich me	parallelism
14	"اللهم الهمني رشدي، واعني من شر نفسي" <i>"O Allah, inspire me with my right guidance, and protect me from the evil of my desires."</i>	request	compound	imperative	اللهم O Allah	Metaphor/ parallelism
15	"اللهم إني أعوذ بك من غلبة الدين، و غلبة العدو، و شماتة الأعداء" <i>"O Allah, I seek refuge in You from being overwhelmed by debt, from the overpowering of my enemies, and from their gloating."</i>	Request/ petition	simple	declarative	اللهم O Allah اعوذ بك Seek refuge in you	Metaphor/ repetition

16	"اللهم اني اعوذ بك من قلب لا يخشع, ومن دعاء لا يسمع, ومن نفس لا تشبع, ومن علم لا ينفع, اعوذ بك من هؤلاء الاربعة"	request	complex	declarative	اللهم O Allah اعوذ بك Seek refuge in you دعاء prayer	Parallelism/ repetition
17	"اللهم انفعني بما علمتني وعلمني ما ينفعني وزدني علما ، الحمد لله على كل حال ، وأعوذ بالله من حال أهل النار."	request	compound	Imperative/ declarative	اللهم O Allah اعوذ Seek refuge	parallelism
18	"اللهم اني اعوذ برضاك من سخطك, وبمعافاتك من عقوبتك, واعوذ بك منك, لا احصى ثناء عليك, انت كما اثنيت على نفسك."	ask	compound	declarative	اللهم O Allah اعوذ Seek refuge	parallelism/ repetition
19	"اللهم جنبني منكرات الاخلاق, والاهواء, والاعمال, والادواء"	Plea/ beg	simple	imperative	اللهم O Allah	parallelism
20	"اللهم اني اعوذ بك من شر ما عملت ، ومن شر ما لم أعمل"	Plea/ request	simple	declarative	اللهم O Allah اعوذ بك Seek refuge in you	Repetition/ parallelism
21	"الدعاء مخ العبادة"	assertion	simple	declarative	دعاء supplication
22	"لا يرد القضاء الا الدعاء ولا يزيد في العمر الا البر"	belief	compound	declarative	الدعاء	parallelism

	"Nothing but supplication averts the decree, and nothing but righteousness increases life."				supplication	
23	"ما من احد يدعو بدعاء الا اتاه الله ما سأل او كف عنه من السوء مثله ما لم يدع باثم او قطيعة رحم" <i>"No one calls out a supplication unless Allah brings him what he has asked or averting from him an equivalent evil, as long as he does not supplicate for sin or the severance of family ties."</i>	request	Compound-complex	declarative	دعاء supplication سأل asked	repetition
24	"ليس شيء اكرم على الله من الدعاء" <i>"There is nothing more beloved to Allah than supplication"</i>	request	simple	declarative	الدعاء supplication	hyperbole
25	"لَا تَدْعُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ وَلَا تَدْعُوا عَلَىٰ أَوْلَادِكُمْ لَا تُؤَافِقُوا مِنَ اللَّهِ سَاعَةً يُسْأَلُ فِيهَا عِزَاءٌ مِّمَّنْ يَسْتَجِيبُ لَكُمْ" <i>"Do not invoke curses on yourself or on your children. You may encounter a moment when Allah answers your supplication and your prayer might be granted."</i>	caution	compound	imperative	لا تدعوا Invoke curses الله Allah دعاء supplication	parallelism
Detailed Frequencies		Request 14 Plea 7 Urge 1 Direct 1 Beg 4 Beseech 1 Petition 1 Ask 1 Assertion 1 Belief 1 Caution 1	Simple 11 Compound 9 Complex 3 Compound-complex 2	Imperative 12 Declarative 14	اللهم O Allah 17 اعوذ بك seek refuge in you 7 supplication 5 Allah 2 الله اغفر forgive 2 اسأل Ask 2 اهدني direct me 2 رحمت mercy 1 ارحمني displaying mercy 1 عافني seeking	Parallelism 17 Repetition 7 Hyperbole 2 Synecdoche 1 Metaphor 3

				health 1 ارزقني engaging in provision 1 ربي my LORD 1 قني save me 1 اكفني make me sufficient 1 اغني enrich me 1 دعاء prayer 1 يدعو call 1 لا تدعوا invoke curses 1	
Total frequencies	33	25	26	48	30

III. FINDINGS

This expressive and directive roles of supplication in Arabic Prophetic Hadiths entails that supplication is performed in terms of engaging with the divine, promoting humility, reliance, and introspection. The analyzed texts underscore vulnerability and dependence on divine intervention. Arabic Hadiths accentuate explicit moral and spiritual guidance, harmonizing personal requirements with communal and religious duties. The writings exhibit syntactic characteristics, use compound-complex phrase patterns to convey nuanced meanings. The declarative and imperative moods assert religious doctrines and promote devout behaviours, with the imperative mood being particularly prevalent in Arabic literature. Lexical research reveals unique phraseology, Arabic Hadiths utilize idioms like "اللهم" (O Allah) to preserve a supplicatory tone. Figurative language is prominent in prophetic Hadiths, augmenting spiritual and emotional involvement. The results emphasize common human experiences in pursuing divine aid, with vulnerability and humility as essential elements.

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Women's Dowries and Marriages in Shakespeare's Plays

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Abstract—This paper explores the intricate relationship between women's dowries and marriages as depicted in Shakespeare's plays, situating the discussion within the context of the Elizabethan Age. It examines the role of fathers in securing dowries, the implications for prospective husbands, and the agency of brides themselves. While their views on dowries may differ, dowries do bring different outcomes (whether or not they can secure a successful and happy marriage) to different people, and these reflect the dependent social and economic status of the women in that period. While some characters like Cordelia and Helena manage to assert their value beyond material possessions, many others remain trapped in the socio-economic constraints of their time. As such, Shakespeare's plays serve as both reflections and critiques of the social structures that governed women's lives during his time, which can be used to supplement historical data.



Keywords—Dowry, Elizabethan Age, Marriage, Shakespeare's plays, Women's status.

I. INTRODUCTION

In reading Shakespeare's plays, one will inevitably notice a phenomenon that might be fashionable in today's society: marriage or pre-marriage contract. And one will be astonished at people's directness when negotiating the terms of the contract, especially regarding dowry in his plays. This paper will first make a survey of the studies in this field, then try to paint a literary picture of the dowry-marriage relationship in Shakespeare's plays, and conclude with some analyses of women's social and economic status in the Elizabethan Age.

Studies on dowry and marriage are mainly conducted from the historical angle and within an Italian setting. Molho (1998) explores the deception and marriage in Renaissance Florence, including in his paper the fact that the guardian of a young, nubile woman deposited Dowry Fund in the dowry insurance scheme office. Guzzetti (2002) talks about dowries in the fourteenth century Venice; Queller and Madden (1993) discuss the fathers, daughters and dowries in late Medieval and Early Renaissance Venice; Labalme and White (1999) explain how to and how not to get married in sixteenth century Venice. These three papers all mention the average and

highest values of dowry from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, especially the dowry inflation.

Pearson (1967) depicts the Elizabethan domestic life (including their marriages) with Shakespeare's plays as her main source of information. Ranald (1979) details the marriages portrayed in Shakespeare's four plays, among which dowry forms an important part. Simms (2016) specifically analyzes dowry in three Shakespeare plays, displaying that the dowry negotiations and agreements are the most important component of the patriarchal structure of marriage depicted in Shakespeare's plays. Jacobs (2001) intends "to compare and contrast the very different literary reactions to a common stimulus: the successive metamorphoses of the marriage law from the thirteenth century all the way up to the middle of the eighteenth." (p. vii) Bunker (2003) explores how Shakespeare and Middleton portray a range of patriarchal behaviors that related to marriage and money, especially the marriage-making negotiations and explicit financial considerations that affected inheritance practices and land distribution from the 1530s throughout the 1620s. Dynes studies the marriage and family in early Elizabethan drama, with Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* being a typical

example. Dolan (2011) focuses particularly on new research on rates of marriage in early modern England, on married women's agency, will, and work, and on same-sex attachments. They treat literary texts as their subjects, trying to depict the social realities reflected in literary works. However, their emphases are either on marriage law, or on marriage and family, or set in a limited number of Shakespeare plays. This paper will adopt the same approach, but focus on the dowry-marriage relationship displayed in a far larger number of Shakespeare plays and strive to provide a panoramic picture of the dowry system in the Elizabethan Age.

II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN'S DOWRIES AND THEIR MARRIAGES

Before our discussion begins, one thing must be made clear: although Shakespeare's plays are set in different milieus, like Italy, France and Vienna, they reflect the English matrimonial law in the Elizabethan Age. "What Shakespeare is doing, in other words, is transferring the English canon and civil law of marriage to Vienna without concerning himself with legal anachronisms." (Ronald, 1979, p. 78)

A dowry (in a broad sense) consists of two parts: the dowry (in a narrow sense) and the jointure. The dowry is an amount of money, goods, and property the bride brings to the marriage. It can also be called her marriage portion. The jointure is an agreement by the groom's family to guarantee specific money, property and goods to the bride if her husband dies before she does, aside from or in addition to what is in his will. Both parties in a marriage contribute to the dowry. Stone, a leading historian in the field of social and family history, believes that this dowry system "governed the structure of the English family at all levels of the propertied classes from the sixteenth century on through the nineteenth century." (1977, p. 88) This section will explore the relationship between women's dowries and their marriages from three aspects, namely, for the bride's father, for the future husband, and for the bride herself.

2.1 For the bride's father

It was the father's responsibility to provide dowries for his daughters, and "T[t]heir marriages would also depend on the dowries their father could provide". (Pearson, 1967, p. 211) "Among the most honorable deed in a noble man's life was providing for the proper marriage of his daughters. A noble father unable to provide suitable dowries would suffer dishonor, blame and embarrassment." (Queller & Madden, 1993, p. 704) Therefore, Stone (1977) believes, "the dowry system, and the cultural obligation to marry off the girls, meant that daughters were a serious economic drain on the family finances". (p. 89)

If a father died, it was the male family member's duty to prepare a dowry, as can be seen in *Measure for Measure*: Mariana's brother died at sea, and her dowry was lost. "This monetary disaster is perhaps just as devastating to Mariana, since without the promised family money, she loses her fiancé, the 'well-seeming' Angelo." (Tedrowe, 2003, p. 155) Spiro (2020) also concludes that their [Julietta and Mariana] marriages are delayed or cancelled because of complications with their dowries. (p. 101)

She should this Angelo have married; was affianced to her by oath, and the nuptial appointed: between which time of the contract and limit of the solemnity, her brother Frederick was wrecked at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman: there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in his love toward her ever most kind and natural; with him, the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry; with both, her combinate husband, this well-seeming Angelo. (III, i.)

In the royal family, the King, as a brother or uncle, usually provided dowries for his sisters or nieces. In *King John*, he gave his niece Blanch a huge dowry that "shall weigh equal with a queen" (II. i.) and married her to the French prince, Lewis, as a way to solve international disputes. In *King Henry VI*, 3, King Lewis XI agreed to marry his sister Bona to Edward, he said,

Then, Warwick, thus: our sister shall be Edward's;

And now forthwith shall articles be drawn

Touching the jointure that your king must make,

Which with her dowry shall be counterpoised. (III. iii.)

Clearly, there was a marriage contract concerning the dowry and jointure.

Accordingly, it was the father's privilege to bargain with his daughter's wooers for a higher dower or jointure. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the father Baptista was eager to get rid of his shrewish daughter Kate, he did not haggle over terms of the marriage contract. When Petruchio asked: "... if I get your daughter's love / What dowry shall I have with her to wife?" (II. i.), Baptista immediately gave a seemingly satisfactory offer: "After my death the one half of my lands, / And in possession twenty thousand crowns." (II. i.) Although Baptista did not ask for more, the wooer Petruchio gave a generous jointure:

And for that dowry, I'll assure her of

Her widowhood, be it that she survive me,

In all my lands and leases whatsoever:

Let specialties be therefore drawn between us,

That covenants may be kept on either hand. (II. i.)

Soon the contract was settled between the father and the wooer even without the daughter's being notified. But with his outwardly docile daughter Bianca, Baptista acted quite differently. "By weighing his daughter's beauty, age, and sex appeal, a father could establish the price for her hand based on what the market at the time would bear." (Tedrowe, 2003, p. 3) Since Bianca had more than one wooer, he decided to sell her marriage to the highest bidder:

Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part,

And venture madly on a desperate mart. (II. i.)

'Tis deeds must win the prize; and he of both

That can assure my daughter greatest dower

Shall have my Bianca's love. (II. i.)

From these few lines, we can conclude that, a dowry could be both a burden to and an opportunity for the father, depending on his financial status and whether his daughter was popular or not. In addition, provided that the dowry was properly settled, the bride's family could also benefit from her dowry. Just as Tedrowe (2003) said, "the bargaining he [Baptista] does for his daughters' dowry prices a direct consequence of one family's financial and social situation." (p. 254) "The father of the bride maintained or even gained additional honor or status by insuring that his daughters were properly dowered and married." (Queller & Madden, 1993, p. 704)

2.2 For the future husband

2.2.1 The larger dowry you have, the brighter your prospect of marriage will be

It is human nature to marry rich, so many examples can be found in this category. As in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio came purposely to look out for a wife, who, nothing discouraged by these reports of Kate's temper, and hearing she was rich and handsome, resolved upon marrying this famous termagant, and taming her into a meek and manageable wife. The following lines clearly displayed his intention and resolution:

... and therefore, if thou know

One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife,

As wealth is burden of my wooing dance,

Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,

As old as Sibyl and as curst and shrewd

As Socrates' Xanthippe, or a worse,

She moves me not, or not removes, at least,

Affection's edge in me, were she as rough

As are the swelling Adriatic seas:

I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;

If wealthily, then happily in Padua. (I. ii.)

In this same play, one of Bianca's wooer, Hortensio, when she proved unresponsive to his love, decided to settle for "a wealthy widow ... a lusty widow now, / That shall be woo'd and wedded in a day." (IV. II.) Notice that, in his mind, "lusty" and "wealthy" are interchangeable adjectives, equally belonging to the widow; nothing else is required to make her both desirable and attainable. (Jacobs, 2001, p. 141)

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio, who had already spent all his own money and hoped to pay off his debts by marrying an heiress, claims, "but my chief care / Is, to come fairly off from the great debts." (I. iii)

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, "from the beginning of his wooing, Claudio seems to be a young man with his eyes set on marrying a rich wife." (Ranald, 1979, p. 74) Before his wooing, he asked Don Pedro, "Hath Leonato any son, my lord?" Don Pedro answered, "No child but Hero; she's his only heir." (I. i.) Then he confessed that he had liked Hero even before he went to war.

2.2.2. Dowry lost, marriage lost

In 2.2.1 we have talked about Mariana's example, here is another one from *King Lear*. When King Lear tested his three daughters' love toward him, he was dissatisfied and annoyed by his most beloved daughter Cordelia's answer, "... I love your majesty / According to my bond; nor more nor less." (I. i.) After beseeching Cordelia to mend her speech a little and getting no improved reply, Lear deprived her of all her dowry, and distributed it to his two sons-in-law, leaving with Cordelia her truth and pride as the dowry, "Let it be so; thy truth, then, be thy dower" "Cornwall and Albany, / With my two daughters' dowers digest this third: / Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her." (I. i.)

As Burgundy, one of Cordelia's wooer, learned of Lear's actions, he restated his interest in only what Lear had offered him. He still expected to receive Cordelia along with her dowry, "Royal Lear, / Give but that portion which yourself proposed, / And here I take Cordelia by the hand, / Duchess of Burgundy." (I. i.) As soon as Lear informed him that she no longer carried a dowry, he dropped the idea of marrying her and said, "I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father / That you must lose a husband." (I. i.)

2.2.3. "She is herself a dowry." (*King Lear*, I. i.)

Miracles sometimes did happen. The king of France, another wooer of Cordelia, rescued her from her misery after Burgundy refused to marry her, but only after speaking to

Lear. When he first heard of Cordelia's banishing, he thought that it was strange that the one who he loved the most would do something so monstrous as to be stripped of his benevolence. After speaking to Cordelia and listening to what she said, he realized that she had spoken the truth and still loved Lear the most. In his noble sense, he regarded Cordelia's virtues as the most valuable, and took her in.

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!

Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:

Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.

Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect

My love should kindle to inflamed respect.

Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,

Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:

Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy

Can buy this unprized precious maid of me. (I. i.)

The same thing happened in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Fenton was first attracted to woo Anne by Page's money, as he himself confessed, "thy father's wealth / Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne". However, his seduction took a strange turn, when he came to realize that Anne was "of more value / Than stamps in gold or sums in sealed bags; / And 'tis the very riches of thyself / That now I aim at." (III. iv.)

In *All is Well That Ends Well*, upon hearing Bertram's refusal to marry Helena, the king declared: "If thou canst like this creature as a maid, / I can create the rest: virtue and she / Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me." (II. iii.) Obviously, in the king's eye, Helena's virtue was her own dower.

2.2.4. For the sake of securing dowry

In *Measure for Measure*, Claudio and Juliet's marriage contract was a "true" one (I. ii), but "their consummated contract is a union that in English law would be valid but irregular, arising from a 'true contract' *de praesenti* made in secret between the lovers, but not ratified by public ceremony *in facie ecclesiae*." (Ranald, 1979, p. 78) Due to the lack of public ceremony, Claudio was considered to have committed fornication, therefore was imprisoned and nearly sentenced to death. Why did he risk his life by not getting married? The fact was that Claudio and Juliet were to be married, but problems with Juliet's dowry delayed the wedding. They wanted to secure the safety of her dowry, lest it should be deprived of as happened in Cordelia's case, if her friend was not in favor of their marriage.

Thus stands it with me: upon a true contract

I got possession of Julietta's bed:

You know the lady; she is fast my wife,

Save that we do the denunciation lack

Of outward order: this we came not to,

Only for propagation of a dower

Remaining in the coffer of her friends,

From whom we thought it meet to hide our love

Till time had made them for us. (I. ii.)

2.3 For the bride herself

Although it was mainly the father's obligation to prepare a dowry, the bride herself could win a dowry for herself. In *All is Well That Ends Well*, Helena, confronted with the huge gap in both social and financial status between her beloved Bertram and herself, was determined to rely on herself and take advantage of the king's disease,

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,

Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky

Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull

Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull. ...

... The king's disease--my project may deceive me,

But my intents are fix'd and will not leave me. (I. i.)

She cured him with her father's special prescription and demanded a special gift from the king: a husband. The king let her choose from his noble bachelors,

Fair maid, send forth thine eye: this youthful parcel

Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,

O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice

I have to use: thy frank election make;

Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake. (II. iii.)

On hearing Bertram's refusal, the king offered her a noble fame and a huge dowry that was at least equal to Bertram's estate,

If thou canst like this creature as a maid,

I can create the rest: virtue and she

Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me. (II. iii.)

Take her by the hand,

And tell her she is thine: to whom I promise

A counterpoise, if not to thy estate

A balance more replete. (II. iii.)

With her determination and the help of this dowry and the king, she finally obtained her marriage.

In this same play, Diana won herself a dowry by helping Helena to gain her conjugal rights and finally get

her husband back. But Diana's willingness to help came from Helena's generous offer and her trustworthiness.

Take this purse of gold,
And let me buy your friendly help thus far,
Which I will over-pay and pay again
When I have found it. (III. vii.)
... after this,
To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns
To what is passed already. (III. vii.)

Apart from Helena's offer, the king also told her to "Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dowry." (V. iii.)

III. SOME INFERENCES FROM THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN'S DOWRIES AND MARRIAGES

While it is an endless and arduous task to address women's economic and social status, this paper will make some tentative inferences about it from the above-discussed relationship between women's dowries and marriages, as a corroboration of previous research literature and supplementary data to historical ones.

3.1. Women's economic position

In the patriarchal household, it was the responsibility of the male family members to provide dowries for the female members. So a woman was dependant on her father or brother(s) for dowry before marriage, and her husband or father-in-law for jointure thereafter. As quoted in 2.1, "daughters were a serious economic drain on the family finances." (Stone, 1977, p. 89) And in order to build and keep large landed estates intact, or to be exact, to protect patrilineal identity, landowners preferred to give their daughters cash (usually installments) and moveable goods as dowries rather than land. Chamberlain (2002, p. 76) argues that "it is threat of patrilineal loss, ..., which haunts the text of *King Lear*." "For with her marriage, Cordelia carries away English land and with it obscures Lear's patrilineage." (ibid, p. 182) Hence his love test and Cordelia's being deprived of dowry. Although a woman could win herself a dowry by her virtue, her good deed, or her intelligence, as in Helena's and Diana's case in *All is Well That Ends Well*, these were just few exceptions. Even so, they were relying on the king to give them dowries. And "any emphasis on romantic love as an incentive for marriage was, at least for the underprivileged classes, complicated by the severe economic depression of the last decades of the sixteenth century. The inability to raise money for dowry portions left many couples unable to wed as they desired."

(Dynes) A case in point was Mariana in *Measure for Measure*.

Whereas a woman had few means to contribute to her dowry, she was supposed to have her dowry and jointure at her disposal. But this was not always true. During the marriage, she was said to have this right, but as early modern culture was resolutely hierarchical, with women, no matter what their wealth or rank, theoretically under the rule of men, then actually she had little freedom to dispose her property. Legally, a woman's identity was subsumed under the protection of her male protector; "In early modern England, 'woman' was articulated as property not only in legal discourse but also in economic and political discourse. Economically, she is the fenced-in enclosure of the landlord, her father, or husband." (Stallybrass, 1986, p. 127) "Once married, the bride had no legal control over her money, portables, or land that she brought into the marriage." (Bunker, 2003, p. 26) An example of this belief was expressed in *The Taming of the Shrew*, when Petruccio, newly married to Katherine, claimed "She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house, / My household stuff, my field, my barn, / My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing" (III. ii.)

Stone (1977) maintains that, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a woman's dowry or marriage portion "went directly to the father of the groom, who often used it himself as a dowry in marrying off one of his own daughters." (p. 88) Chamberlain (2002) also found that "T[he] marriage portion was then used by the groom's family to provide for its daughters, to pay debts and to purchase land." (p. 171) An example can be seen in *the Merchant of Venice*, where Bassanio hoped to pay off his debts by marrying an heiress: "but my chief care / Is, to come fairly off from the great debts." (I. iii)

This can also be further illustrated by the work women can do in the society. During the marriage, "Women often held considerable power within their own households, overseeing the labour and education of their children and servants – as does Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*. Women did venture out in public, asbut this is perhaps where Shakespeare is most conservative, for he limits his representation of women's economic labor to that of household servants, tavern-keepers, bawds, and prostitutes." (Traub, 2003, p. 131) In *All is Well That Ends Well*, Diana's mother, the widow, was a tavern-keeper; in *Measure for Measure*, Mistress Overdone was a prostitute and also a bawd.

After the husband was deceased, the wife fully owned her dowry and jointure, and "could hope to enjoy equality in disposing of her person or property". (Palliser, 1992, p. 73) She could choose to remarry or to stay in widowhood and enjoy her wealth. In the Elizabethan time, many widows

chose the latter. In Shakespeare's plays, there were altogether more than thirty widows, only eight remarried. In *Measure for Measure*, after disclosing Angelo's hypocrisy and cruelty, the Duck deprived him of all his possessions and bestowed them to Marina, as a way to test her love and sincerity, "And choke your good to come; for his possessions, / Although by confiscation they are ours, / We do instate and widow you withal, / To buy you a better husband" (V. i.) This can be seen as another attestation of women's economic dependence on men. Since women had few means to make money, and the jointure was the only money a wife was automatically entitled to from her husband's estate, it would be safe for both the father and husband to ensure the money needed for her later life.

After her death, her property would go to her heir or go back to her parental family; if her husband survived her, then part of her dowry would go to him. This can be regarded as a way for women to contribute to family and society, but it simply cannot alter her social status

3.2 Women's social status

Stone (1977) claims that within the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century family, "marriages were arranged by parents and kin for economic and social reasons with minimal consultation of the children." (p. 117) Examples of this kind abound in 2.1, among which Blanch in *King John*, Bona in *King Henry VI, 3*, and Cordelia in *King Lear* proved to be "useful in cementing political connections". (Ibid, p. 89) Being a dependant and a tool, women enjoyed no social status.

As to what constituted suitability for marriage, Pearson (1967) finds that emphasis was placed upon "equality in rank, age, and worldly possessions." (p. 297) As discussed in 2.3, Helena in *All is Well That Ends Well*, tried to bridge the huge gap both in social and financial status between her beloved Bertram and herself by relying on the king's bestowal, who, on hearing Bertram's refusal, offered her a noble fame and a huge dowry that was at least equal to Bertram's estate.

A woman could inherit her father's property, but not his rank and fame, as W. R. Dynes puts, "the economic and political rhetoric fashioned women as essentially symbols of either their husband's or their father's position and possessions, capable of transmitting status between the generations but unable to enjoy it themselves." Her social status was mainly decided by her chastity. "Chastity ... was, after a woman's economic position, the most important determinant of her social status." (Traub, 2003, p. 130) "In all social classes a woman's chastity was her chief dowry", "chastity had taken on the value of property." (Pearson, 1967, pp. 216; 284)

The ideology of chastity, constraints against female

speech, and women's confinement within the domestic household are summarized by the phrase "the body enclosed", which refers simultaneously to a woman's closed fanny, closed mouth, and her enclosure within the home. (Stallybrass, 1986) In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the reason for Katherine's difficulty to get a husband and her father's eagerness to get rid of her was her shrewish words and behavior. This represented a threat to the masculine society, thus she must be tamed. Barbaro writes in his treatise *On Wifely Duties*: "It is proper ... that not only arms but indeed also the speech of women never be made public; for the speech of a noble woman can be no less dangerous than the nakedness of her limbs." (Ibid, p. 127) Then it is easy to understand why Portia must be disguised as a man to appear in court; Olivia, to serve her beloved Duke; and Rosalind, to go into exile.

Women's chastity, defined as virginity for an unmarried woman, and monogamous fidelity for a married woman, has always been the plot of Shakespeare's play. In *All is Well That Ends Well*, Helena boasted of her virginity before the royal bachelors, "I am a simple maid, and therein wealthiest, / That I protest I simply am a maid." (II. iii) In *Hamlet*, Laertes warned his sister Ophelia about Hamlet's intentions:

Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire. (I.iii.)

Much Ado About Nothing can be the representative of this type. On the marriage ceremony, Hero fainted after being wrongly accused of infidelity by her betrothed, Claudio, who desired not just to break off his engagement to her but to humiliate her. This was taken for dead, which was welcomed by her father who claimed that "death is the fairest cover for her shame / That may be wished for" (IV. i.). Claudio did not express grief for her death until he was compelled to do so, and then marked his repentance by submitting to marry a "copy" of Hero sight unseen, insisting that he would do so even "were she an Ethiop" (V.iv.), one of many references in Shakespeare to a racialized standard of beauty. When, at the end of the play, Hero emphasized that a part of her had died – "One Hero died defiled" – she acknowledged that something was irreparably lost even as the lovers were reunited. It is another Hero if not another Claudio who got married now, and she came to life by the restoration of her chaste reputation. In this play, Hero's alleged crime, according to

Dolan (2011), “was only a felony – a crime punishable by death – for queens” in the 16th and 17th centuries. “It was not legally, morally, or socially clear exactly what one should or could do with a woman who had sex outside of marriage. What happens to Hero might be viewed as wishful thinking: a woman who is unchaste would simply drop dead.” (p. 629)

Among the married wives, Alice in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was envied and suspected by her husband Master Ford, who, after learning of Falstaff's intrigues to seduce her, immediately disguised as Master Brook, designed a plan to induce Falstaff to attempt his wife's virtue, and even provided funds for him. He complained about “the hell of having a false woman” (II. ii.), as he believed that uncontrolled sexuality represented a threat to social order.

Among widows, as mentioned before, in Shakespeare's plays, only eight, out of more than thirty widows, remarried. Keeping the wealth was one reason, remaining chaste might be the other. A widowed wife should stay loyal to her late husband by not getting remarried and devoting herself to the rearing of children and the maintaining of household. If not, her fate would be doomed to death or misfortune, as happened to Shakespeare's eight widows. Gertrude's remarrying Claudius, was noted by all people at the time for a strange act of indiscretion, or ruthlessness, or worse. Hamlet condemned his mother, “you have my father much offended.” (III. iv.) Disturbed by the relationship between Hamlet and Claudius, She drank up a bowl of poisoned wine the king had prepared for Hamlet, and immediately died.

Despite all these voices, we did hear few different ones. As discussed in 2.2.3, “She is herself a dowry”, two noble men and the king did utter some respect for Cordelia's, Anne's and Helena's virtue. And Portia was appreciated by men for her intelligence. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Baptista employed two schoolmasters to teach his daughters, “for I know she taketh most delight / In music, instruments and poetry, / Schoolmasters will I keep within my house, / Fit to instruct her youth.” Although his purpose was mainly to raise their prices in marriage bargain, surely there existed an emphasis on women's education. This displayed a rising concern for a woman as a human being, not just as an ornament, a dependent, or a property.

IV. CONCLUSION

By surveying existing scholarly work on dowries, particularly those focused on historical and Italian contexts, this study aims to provide a nuanced literary analysis of how dowry negotiations reflect the social and economic status of women in the Elizabethan Age based on Shakespeare's plays. While individual characters like

Cordelia, Helena, and Diana demonstrate the potential for agency, the prevailing societal structures often limited their choices and freedoms. This exploration of women's roles highlights a complex tapestry of economic dependency, societal expectations, and emerging individualism. Shakespeare's works serve as a critical lens through which these themes can be examined, revealing both the constraints placed on women and the subtle ways they navigated their social realities. This duality reflects broader societal tensions regarding gender, power, and identity, making it a rich area for further study and discussion.

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Post-Traumatic Growth in Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*: An Exploration

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Abstract— *The Partition of India in 1947, one of the most violent episodes of the 20th century, deeply influenced literary expressions across the Indian subcontinent. Bhisham Sahni, an eminent Hindi writer, witnessed this event and wove its legacy into his writing. His works, particularly Tamas, delve into the traumatic experiences surrounding Partition, yet also reveal unexpected dimensions of resilience, compassion, and growth amidst chaos. This article studies the concept of post-traumatic growth as manifested in Sahni's Tamas, specifically focusing on how his characters evolve through trauma. The article draws on the theory of post-traumatic growth (PTG) to uncover the complex interplay of loss, healing, and moral resilience in Tamas.*



Keywords— *growth, Partition, resilience, Tamas, trauma.*

INTRODUCTION

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) describes positive psychological changes experienced after trauma. This growth does not negate the suffering caused by trauma; rather, it signifies an individual's capacity to find meaning, purpose, or new perspectives in its aftermath. Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) has defined as "the positive psychological change that comes about as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances" (Akhtar 30). PTG is more than mere recovery; it is a transformative process through which individuals find "higher well-being" and "deeper meaning" in life, emerging from their adverse experiences with a renewed outlook.

Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*, a seminal work capturing the horrors of Partition, presents a tapestry of traumatized individuals who simultaneously reveal profound resilience and potential for growth. Sahni's engagement with trauma in *Tamas* goes beyond depicting the darkness of the Partition; it demonstrates an almost instinctive human capacity to reframe adversity, forming a distinct narrative that echoes the core elements of PTG.

Partition as Trauma: The Context of *Tamas*

The Partition of 1947 has been a major theme in South Asian literature. Most critical analyses focus on trauma, violence, and body politics. Other key themes include nationalism, history, memory, film, and narrative techniques. Partition literature is deeply rooted in the agony, displacement, and identity crises faced by millions. Sahni's *Tamas*, which narrates the harrowing experience of Partition, draws readers into this historical trauma. The characters in *Tamas* do not just endure violence; they are deeply scarred by it, enduring losses that disrupt their sense of security and belonging. Sahni's *Tamas* is emblematic of collective trauma, with its characters representing individuals from varied social and religious backgrounds. This diversity enables Sahni to explore trauma's unique, yet universally human, consequences.

Sahni's Narrative and Post-Traumatic Growth

Sahni's portrayal of trauma is not one-dimensional; it is grounded in the resilience and adaptive changes that emerge from it. Tedeschi and Calhoun, pioneers of PTG research, argue that "while trauma disrupts an individual's worldview, it can also provide opportunities for growth by altering self-perception, relationships, and

philosophical beliefs" (5). The transformation of Sahni's characters aligns with this framework, as they often find themselves redefining core values, embracing inclusivity, and reaffirming a shared humanity. This growth is particularly evident in the empathy that characters develop toward each other, bridging divides even amidst chaos.

Self-Perception and Agency

PTG is often accompanied by shifts in self-perception, where individuals gain a renewed sense of agency and resilience. In *Tamas*, characters like Nathu, the sweeper who unwittingly becomes a catalyst in the communal unrest, embody this shift. His initial shock and despair gradually transform into an awareness of his societal role and identity. Nathu's transition from innocence to awareness is emblematic of the resilience that often surfaces amidst trauma. Although Sahni does not portray Nathu as an overtly heroic figure, his quiet persistence and self-awareness underscore the subtle ways trauma redefines personal agency.

Shifts in Relationships and Community

PTG also reflects shifts in relationships, often increasing empathy, compassion, and a greater appreciation for close relationships. This relational growth is evident in Sahni's portrayal of Harnam Singh, the local leader, who witnesses and suffers atrocities but ultimately realizes the importance of communal harmony. His response to trauma encapsulates the potential for reconciliation and empathy, drawing upon communal bonds that supersede religious and ethnic divides. By portraying Harnam's growth from a passive onlooker to a proactive advocate for peace, Sahni illustrates the PTG theme of improved interpersonal relationships in the face of shared suffering.

Transformation of Philosophical and Spiritual Beliefs

One of the core dimensions of PTG is the transformation of philosophical beliefs. Characters in *Tamas* often undergo a spiritual awakening, finding deeper meaning in suffering. For example, the religious leader, Shah Nawaz, initially staunch in his beliefs, develops a nuanced understanding of faith as he grapples with the horrors surrounding him. His journey reflects a PTG-related spiritual shift, characterized by humility and inclusivity. Sahni's portrayal of Shah Nawaz reflects how the trauma of Partition acts as a catalyst for embracing universal values, transforming rigid ideologies into an inclusive spiritual framework.

Sahni's Narrative Technique and PTG

The narrative style in *Tamas* further amplifies the theme of PTG. Sahni uses realism and empathetic descriptions to allow readers to emotionally connect with his characters. His storytelling is interspersed with moments

of quiet reflection, symbolizing resilience and growth. Rather than dwelling solely on despair, Sahni highlights the capacity for endurance, faith, and renewal. His characters' reflections provide insight into their evolving values and perspectives, making *Tamas* not just a novel of trauma, but one of hope and rebirth. Sahni's focus on post-traumatic growth not only offers a counter-narrative to the Partition's devastation but also presents readers with a vision of reconciliation and transformation.

CONCLUSION

Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* is a poignant exploration of trauma and post-traumatic growth. Through his characters' journeys — Nathu, Harnam Singh, and Shah Nawaz, Sahni illustrates the potential for resilience and moral growth amidst profound suffering. Instead of staying victims of the surrounding violence, they experience deep personal changes. They find ways to rise above their suffering. This positive change is an example of post-traumatic growth, and a deeper understanding of themselves and others. Sahni's work not only bears witness to the horror of Partition but also illuminates the strength, compassion, and resilience that can emerge from such profound adversity. By highlighting these elements of PTG, *Tamas* becomes more than a recounting of historical trauma; it serves as a testament to the indomitable spirit of humanity.

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Tailoring Science News Reporting for Audience Engagement: Effective Writing Strategies

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Abstract— Science news reporting plays a critical role in fostering public understanding of complex scientific concepts. But it often struggles to engage diverse audiences. This paper explores effective writing strategies that enhance audience engagement in science journalism. It identifies key elements that make science reporting more accessible and appealing. Writing strategies such as simplifying jargon, using narrative techniques, incorporating human interest stories, and connecting scientific developments to real-world applications are highlighted. Additionally, the use of visuals, analogies, and interactive digital elements is discussed for their role in enhancing comprehension and retaining reader interest. By offering insights into successful writing approaches, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to make science news more inclusive and relevant to a broader audience, particularly in an era of information overload and scientific scepticism.



Keywords— Science News, Narrative Techniques, Appeal, Audience Engagement

I. INTRODUCTION

The relation between science and society is of tremendous importance to humankind. Science acts as a key driving force for socio-economic success. Therefore, establishing a solid relationship between science and society is of paramount importance. Science communication strives to bridge the gap between the two by making sure science-based information is spread far and wide. It has been defined by Burns et al. (2003) as “the use of appropriate skills, media, activities, and dialogue to produce one or more personal responses to science”. Further, they said that such responses are based on the AEIOU analogy. They are Awareness, Enjoyment, Interest, Opinion Formation and Understanding. According to Fischhoff and Scheufele (2011), the interrelated tasks that science communication must perform are:

-Identify the science most relevant to the decisions that people face.

-Determine what people already know.

-Design communications to fill the critical gaps (between what people know and need to know).

-Evaluate the adequacy of those communications.

From the COVID 19 Pandemic, to Climate Change, subjects of scientific importance have a direct impact on the wellbeing of the public. The importance of social distancing to prevent the spreading of Coronavirus and the role of human activities in causing climate change is not lost on the population witnessing the horrors of the pandemic or that of the deteriorating climatic conditions. The significance, therefore, of timely and effective awareness is pivotal to ensure the wellbeing of the masses. Any understanding of these subjects by the masses could be credited to science reporting. Be it breaking down complicated scientific studies for the benefit of the public, simplifying jargon, or effectively communicating why one should care about something and how, science reporting has a huge role to play in the scheme of things. However, with great powers

come great responsibilities. The trust of the masses that are not likely to be invested in scientific developments, relies almost entirely on the effectiveness and accuracy of the communication. However, when factors like misinformation, sensationalisation interfere with the practice of science reporting, the stakes are high and the damages are difficult to manage. Hence, science reporting single-handedly gets the responsibility for spreading awareness, combating disinformation, aiding informed decision making, enhancing scientific literacy among the masses, thus bestowing it a critically important position in journalistic reporting.

Neil deGrasse Tyson, an astrophysicist and science communicator who shot to fame with “Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey (2014)” dissects the practice of science communication and its evolution through ages for “Big Think” in “Science journalism has a problem” on YouTube platform. While talking about the importance of effective science reporting based on his past experience, he remarks how the lack of fundamental awareness among the science reporters have made the public question science and scientists. It is well known that the value of balance in journalistic writing is considered important and hence preaches shedding light on both supporting and opposing opinions as well as a 360-degree coverage. However, Tyson points out that the practice of putting opposing views in science and scientists for the journalistic value of balance is highly flawed and unsought for. Putting forth the example of climate change, Tyson states that the studies that support the occurrence of climate change are far more in number as well as in evidence than that of the scientific studies that oppose it. Therefore, giving the same prominence in space to opposing views in science could be hugely misleading and unreliable. This sets the specialisation of science reporting apart from other disciplines in journalistic reporting. And, while the science journalists have the responsibility to understand how to present science reports, the responsibility of verifying and deciding what to report also lies in their purview of their specialised work.

An instance of misinformation downplaying the discipline of science reporting was brought to the forefront by Science Journalist, John Bohannon in 2015. Bohannon ran a randomised real study that was flawed intentionally to show how easy it was to turn scientifically unsound studies into headlines. The study was on the consumption of chocolate and its impact on weight loss. And although Bohannon admitted the study to be fake, to his dismay, this study was picked up by news outlets like Huffington Post and Daily Express. According to Bohannon, the journalists picked the story and mostly without ever contacting him regarding the study. The instance proved just how easily something that seemed to be backed by science found a place in the

headlines of prominent publications. This stated the importance of verifying the credibility of the studies, the researcher, the institution to fund the research, the publisher, so on and so forth to ensure that there is no vested interest in the research. Additionally, the study by Bohannon also looks into flawed science reporting is, to a huge extent, click-bait reporting with very little to do with the facts and the thumbnails or title descriptions.

Distinguishing sound science reporting from questionable science reporting requires a strong basis of scientific literacy among the citizens. Something else that requires a reliable scientific temper and literacy among the citizens is the translation of scientific findings to information that could be actionable for the masses. During the COVID 19 pandemic, for instance, the science reports sought the help of public health experts and virologists to explain the impact of vaccination. Effective communication in the context has the potential of spreading awareness, driving impact, and fighting panic and paranoia leading to vaccine scepticism. Clear intent behind the reports could help foster public trust immensely and lead efficiency in aiding decision making and bringing behaviour change.

1.2. Importance of Effective Writing Strategies in Science Reporting

When it comes to effective science reporting, though the practice has been thriving since decades, the process of communication has evolved significantly and rapidly. Gone are the days where illustrations were for the sake of aesthetics and poor-quality graphics did the job to compliment a story. In the age of digitization, it has become increasingly important to enhance the visual storytelling accompanying a science story. New Zealand’s Stuff for instance, works on the visual storytelling in its science reports with interactive graphs, stunning visuals, illustrations to effectively drive the impact of a story. Further, visual stories require something more still to make the story engage with its audience. The process of discovering a phenomenon, the process of capturing a science story also helps a story go beyond the report into minute details of a story. The prominence of visual storytelling, therefore, reaffirms the need to enhance the engagement while reporting for science.

Science reports, like any other area of journalistic writing, requires context setting and simplification of an occurrence to convey its relevance. And given that the stories have a significance in the day-to-day lives of the masses, clarity and simplicity in the reports is critical to communicate scientific findings and happenings. Apart from simplification, the public also relies on science reporters to make sense of events and their impact on the public by interpreting concepts.

In science news writing, use of analogy acts as a vital tool to bridge the gap between complex scientific concepts and the general public. By comparing unfamiliar ideas to everyday experiences, they make the abstract or technical information relatable and easier to understand. For example, by describing a black hole as a cosmic vacuum cleaner, helps the non-experts grasp the concept of gravitational pull of a black hole. This enhances engagement as it allows readers to form mental models of phenomenon that they cannot see or experience. This technique simplifies the intricate details, provides context and clarity while maintaining the integrity of the information. Science communicators by using analogy can captivate their audience and foster a deeper appreciation for science.

Similarly, human interest stories are invaluable in science news reporting as they make complex topics more relatable by focussing on real-life experiences. They create an emotional connection with the audience where the narrative motivates action and generates empathy. By humanising research, it shows the real-world impact of scientific developments on individuals or communities. For instance, a story that features the transformation of the life of a farmer by adopting precision farming techniques to conserve water and increase crop yields puts a human face on science.

Lastly, along with attracting the audience's attention, engaging them with a report, the task of a science report is to concisely put forth an occurrence with its impact on the society at large while also keeping the science intact. Therefore, it becomes of importance to distill science reports, understand underlying message and fundamentals of science findings, and convey them in digestible pieces. Only thorough reports could do with producing crisp concise pieces for non-science readers.

Hence, all these considerations together build the base for effective science reporting that is capable of presenting scientific developments while making sense of it in the larger context relevant to the society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bernal, J.D. (1939) served to draw the connection between the scientific studies of the day and age in the context of its society and science's contribution towards a society. The work explores the subject in two parts. While one part of the book deals with the then scenario of science and its contributions while the other looked into the potentials of science towards a more organised future. The book looks into the impact of science while studying the interconnectivity between science and industry. Further, the emphasised the need for the scientists to collaborate with the policy makers so as to achieve greater benefits. Bernal's work is considered to be an important work among the early

interdisciplinary studies of science, sociology, philosophy, history, etc.

Daniel S. Greenberg (1967) in his book, "The Politics of Pure Science" critically studies the research policy of the U.S. after World War II. He puts forth the process in politics that plays a part in the funding of science by the government and states that the politics in the field is like that of any other. His work remains an important study about the relationship between government, science, and society.

Hansen, A. (1994)'s study on "Journalistic Practices and Science Reporting in the British Press" intended to delve into the journalists and their characteristics while specialising in medicine, science, and topics related to science and the practice of journalism for the British National Press. The study looks into the practice of a professional such as the process of news gathering, verification, presentation with emphasis on factors like credibility and accuracy. The study also looks into the challenges in science reporting, the understanding of science reporting and journalism by the public, and the ethical issues and consideration in the field.

While, Boykoff, M. T., & Boykoff, J. M. (2004) in their work "Balance as Bias: Global Warming and the US Prestige Press" looked into how the US Prestige Press and their adherence to the norms of balanced reporting led to bias in the coverage of global warming and climate change, Boykoff, M. T., & Boykoff, J. M. (2007) in the study, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms: A Case-Study of US Mass-Media Coverage" explored the impact of journalistic practices in science communication on the audience perception. The study emphasised on how the journalistic coverage was often found to be insufficient and caused miscommunication which in turn affected effective communication between the science community and the public.

Brufiel, G. (2009)'s article looks into the steady decline in traditional practices of science journalism and the bloom in science blogs instead. The study explores how there has been an increase in democratisation in the information owing to the internet paving way for diverse voices contributing to the practice of science communication. However, he also points out concerning trends in the reliability of such information in the lack of professional sources.

Nisbet MC, Scheufele's study "What's next for science communication? Promising directions and lingering distractions" focuses on the engagement of the public with science and technology by the help of communication. Important considerations like the importance of crafting science communication in a way befitting the audience's beliefs and their values were emphasised through the study.

A closer study into the varying communication strategies that could propel the public to engage with science related issues helped understand the engagement levels. Moreover, media influence, and implications of science communication in the process of making policies was also explored by the study.

Allgaier, J. (2019) in his study “Science and Environmental Communication on YouTube: Strategically Distorted Communications in Online Videos on Climate Change and Climate Engineering,” studies the information on climate engineering and climate change available on the Youtube platform to analyse if their stand supports or opposes the scientific consensus on the subject. The study finds that the majority of the videos oppose the scientific consensus while promoting conspiracy theories on the subject. Additionally, the view count on the videos that support the scientific consensus match that of the opposing stand’s view count suggesting equal public exposure to both the types of videos. This highlights the need for analysing the content critically while understanding the challenges in the medium.

Schafer and Fahrick, B.’s study “Communicating science in organisational contexts: toward an “organisational turn” in science communication research” looks into understanding the communication of science to the public by reviewing communication science’s empirical evidence. The areas that their study explores are the structure of research in the field, the role of the communicators who belong to the field, the portrayal of science through digital media, news media, and online platforms, and the effect and use of science communication for the public.

Dunwoody, S. (2021) in her Chapter, “Science journalism: Prospects in the digital age” looks into the evolution for science journalism and studies the challenges that exist for traditional media at the face of rise in digitization of the platforms. Her suggestion towards the practice is to adapt to the developments in new media to enhance the control on the dissemination of information. Sharon also emphasises on the need of enhancing the production of high-quality journalism to combat misinformation and issues.

III. MECHANICS OF WRITING

Information is the crux of all communication but when it comes to science communication, the criticality and sensitivity of the information relies heavily on the means of communicating for the successful relaying of the messages. It is important for science reporting to have skilled presentation attuned to the science community and the public needs to foster informed decision making, enhancing public trust and engagement with science. This brings forth the need for established norms and especially norms that do

not limit science communication forcing inaccurate delivery of the information. Therefore, these norms and ideals in science reporting are required to be factors that are universally acknowledged by science reporters and the stakeholders in science communication.

There is no second opinion required to acknowledge that the practice of simplification is necessary in science communication. For it is only with the help of analogies and metaphors that one can communicate complicated scientific concepts. However, respecting the thin line that separates simplification from oversimplification is necessary to effectively convey ideas. Simplification of concepts risks possible oversimplification by stripping the conceptual accuracy for the sake of clarity.

Finding human connections to make stories drive emotional impact and resonance is yet another factor necessary to engage the audience in the report. It is much more effective to report on a breakthrough that has a direct impact on a life rather than simply reporting the breakthrough. Humanising them would be successful in communicating the relevance of an occurrence in their lives. Additionally, showing the relevance of a scientific phenomenon or occurrence in the day-to-day lives of the masses can help the audience perceive the importance in a larger context. For instance, the coverage of climate change has suffered the consequence of being interpreted as a far-off event with little or no consequence to the human population in the past. It is only when the impact is covered on a closer geographical location or that of an evident consequence closer home, climate change is looked at with a modicum of vigilance.

Another means of enhancing effective science communication is to communicate ideas with a problem-solution framework in consideration. A problem-solution approach helps break down a complex problem for the benefit of the audience while giving them a closer look at the scientific process of solving it. Additionally, when the entire process is presented through a suitable narrative, the story could effectively bridge the gap of the understanding towards scientific inquiry. An instance could be taking the problems created by the use of single use plastic and coming up with a solution for the same. Moreover, the potential in the use of dramatisation and visualisation in the narrative remains unnoticed. Just because science has far-reaching consequences and is looked at with a serious connotation does not necessarily suggest that the presentation be serious. The use of dramatisation in stories of discoveries and scientific achievements like reaching the Southern Point with Chandrayaan 3 highlights human emotions involved in such pursuits. Additionally, the use of visual elements become essential to demonstrate the workings of a project that falls beyond the scope of understanding of common

masses. Further, the use of graphs and figures also help enhance the impact of a scientific coverage for individuals with good scientific temper and literacy.

Employing a speculative or forward-looking approach for enhancing engagement and effectively communicating the urgency. Although focused on present day studies, science communication is deeply rooted in the study of possible implications of events and occurrences in the future. Therefore, leveraging the insights of the different implications and consequences of varying events, science communication can effectively attract the attention of its audience wishing to know the future course of possibilities. Additionally, putting things into perspective could effectively communicate the urgency of discoveries and phenomenon.

Lastly, debates and topics concerning analytical and deeper understanding with personalization in crafting messages could enhance the impact of science communication in the lives of its audiences.

3.1. Narrative Styles:

Now, after taking care of the various approaches for effective communication from the aforementioned paragraphs, it is imperative to pay attention to the narrative style. The narrative defines the relevance of a story highlighting why one should care about a scientific breakthrough and how exactly is it going to affect them. It is understandable if the science content is of great significance but it will only go so far if the narrative fails to put forth why the story is of importance for the reader. Therefore, opting for the right narrative in storytelling doesn't only effectively communicate the essence of the story but also goes a long way in facilitating engagement with a story. Among the different types of storytelling are narrative storytelling, descriptive storytelling leaning more towards creating explanatory writing, conversational narrative, creating listicle-oriented science communication, and so on and so forth.

'Narrative Storytelling', to begin with, humanises stories to the extent that science coverage gets a personal touch with anecdotal or case story-based stories. In such storytelling the scientists involved in a breakthrough may get to share their challenges that inherently have a human touch. Similarly, when it comes to 'Descriptive Storytelling', the science stories are broken into easy to follow and step by step explanations. 'Question and Answer' for a narrative to communicate science remains equally effective. Often witnessed in presentations, question and answers serve to answer the dominant queries one might have regarding a subject. Moreover, this narrative picks the scientists' minds on how they would like to communicate an idea instead of a science reporter doing the job.

Similarly, 'Listicles' is yet another approach that is growing popular effectively making the communication crisp and concise by producing digestible pieces of science reports. And while 'Opinion Pieces' have a separate fan base in all of journalism due to the candid presentation of a story, they are equally relevant in science reporting. Lastly, owing to the rapid digitisation of communication, 'Interactivity and Immersive Narrative' in the presentation not only enhances the engagement but are equally sought for the sake of clarity in explaining complex concepts.

3.2. Headlines in Science Reporting

While being the first element of a news report to engage with the audience, headlines play a significant role summarising what the report has in store for its audience. When it comes to science reporting, it becomes increasingly critical to look into if the headline represents an accurate and relevant account while it deals with its primary most important task, i.e. to effectively employ its power of attracting attention. Because, when it comes to science reporting, the relevancy of the headline communicates the quality of the report. To set the audience up for something and to not deliver accordingly is a let-down that all forms of communication ought to avoid, let alone science communication.

3.3. Lead in Science Reporting

Second to the headline alone, the lead is the deciding factor for the audience to follow a science story any further. After the headline, the job to retain the attention of the audience and justify the headline lies on the lead. Therefore, not only does the lead reveal the core message and build credibility along the lines, it also encourages the attention of the audience further with clarity and relevance. The lead, hence, piques curiosity, shows how the story fits in the broader context, engages and gives reasons good enough to tread further.

3.4. Visual Storytelling in Science Communication

Visual Storytelling in the advancing day and age has become critical in science reporting. Be it infographics, charts, images, understanding a complex concept like that in science communication without any visual aid becomes a daunting task. Therefore, they not only increase the ease in the task but also are necessary for science reporting to effectively communicate to the audience. Simplification of complex data, aiding enhanced retention in the audience, and engaging audience are a few functions that Visual Storytelling quite effectively adds to. However, to be put to use, visual communication needs to have clarity, accuracy, it should be easy to interpret, and importantly avoid oversimplification for the audience. A few types of visual storytelling could be as follows:

Infographics: Presenting the combination of text and visuals, infographics effectively convey complex data in a simple yet attractive way while effectively summarising large amounts of information into small digestible content. Flowcharts, timelines, diagrams, etc. are a few examples of infographics that can be used in science communication.

Data Visualization: Using effective visual representations of quantitative data, trends, and patterns, data visualisation makes the data easy to interpret and understand. Bar graphs, heat maps, pie charts, scatter plots are a few examples of data visualisation.

Illustrations and Diagrams: Diagrams and Illustrations are age old to depict information pictorially. Especially helpful in instances where there seems to be an evident lack in reference and the imagination of the audience needs help. Molecular structures, diagrams, models are few instances using illustrations.

Animation: This kind of visual representation is a boon actualized by the evolution of technologies. Instances requiring a pictorial representation in the movement use animations for the same. Cell division, climate change progression are a few phenomena that can make use of animation to effectively convey the message.

Photography: Photojournalism remains to be an extremely impactful means of reporting something and that does not differ in case of science reporting. Real life examples in science reporting have no substitute at par with as much impact.

Motion Pictures or Videography: Audio-visual storytelling offers limitless possibilities in science reporting. From video essays, interviews, coverage of events, documentaries, the utility of videography knows no boundaries and hence, can be of immense value in science reporting.

Geospatial Visualisation: Geospatial visualisation can effectively make use of geographical data to show trends, developments across a specific location. These visualisations can help understand the pattern of change in a given time period and hence, help understand a phenomenon better. Spread of diseases, climate change maps, biodiversity in a geography, global science data pattern are a few occurrences whose pictorial representation in the form of geospatial visualisation could be effective.

Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality: Owing to the rapid developments in technology, augmented reality and virtual reality open up a new world of possibilities for science reporting. With the possibility of immersive experiences, interacting with science and exploration in scientific understanding can aid in the smooth transfer of

information and knowledge and much better reception in the audience.

IV. CONCLUSION

In an age where there is abundance of information and which is readily accessible, it often becomes overwhelming for the audience. Tailoring science news reporting by employing effective writing strategies can foster audience engagement. Science communication must put priority on clarity, relevance and storytelling to capture readers' attention. Simplifying complex scientific concepts without diluting their essence helps bridge the gap between experts and non-experts, enabling a broader audience to grasp and appreciate scientific developments. The integration of human-interest elements, such as real-world implications and personal narratives, enhances the relatability of science news, making it more engaging. Visual aids like infographics and videos further improve understanding, breaking down intricate ideas into digestible pieces. Additionally, interactive content, where audiences can engage directly with the material, creates a more immersive experience, fostering curiosity and deeper involvement. Tone and language must also be carefully considered to match the intended audience's knowledge level while maintaining journalistic integrity. Writers must ensure that the reporting remains accurate and evidence-based, balancing accessibility with credibility. A combination of clear communication, relatable narratives, and interactive engagement tools is essential for capturing and sustaining audience interest in science news, ultimately enhancing its socio-economic impact.

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Wilsonianism in U.S Foreign Policy: A Review

An Analytical Study of the U.S Philosophical Wilsonian Root in Foreign Policy

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Abstract— The book, “Do It as Wilson says”¹, examines the enduring impact of Woodrow Wilson’s idea on American foreign relations from the perspective of Wilsonian precepts as an American principle in international politics. In other words, the text authored by Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Mobin Karbasi integrates historical studies and modern political theory. This reveals that Wilsonianism has been the only framework for American diplomacy throughout the twentieth century until now. This review will cover the book’s structure of the content, central arguments, methodological contributions and the way it contributes to the attempts of repositioning the liberal internationalism and American foreign policy scholarship.



Keywords— Foreign Policy Analysis, U.S foreign policy, multilateralism, Democracy.

Literature Studies

Description: This book examines the interplay of key U.S. foreign policy doctrines, with a central focus on Wilsonianism. The following review of the book approaches U.S. foreign policy through the lens of liberal internationalism, emphasizing its evolution and practical application.

Structural Overview and Methodological Approach

Published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, the book offers a detailed exploration of Wilsonian foreign policy, dividing its contents into parts that scrutinize its philosophical underpinnings, ideological framework, and real-world manifestations. It starts with a discussion of Wilsonianism, distinguishing it from the other traditions of U.S. foreign policy — Hamiltonianism, Jacksonianism², and Jeffersonianism. This transparent structural organization provides readers clarity on the ideological lenses that converge, and at times clash, in determining US foreign policy. In terms of methods, the work of Dehnavi

and Karbasi is generally descriptive-analytical which is primarily based on historical sources³, presidential statements, reviewing the literature on policies. Relied on primary and secondary sources, including political memoirs, archival data, and scholarly commentary⁴ which adds strength and credibility to their arguments. The authors navigate many different historical and contemporary sources that allow the reader to understand how aspects of Wilsonianism evolved and what ideas were responsible for its evolution.⁵

A) Central Themes and Theoretical Analysis

The book’s thematic depth offers valuable insights into Wilsonianism’s principles and their practical consequences. Each major theme explores both the motivations and ramifications of Wilsonian policies, establishing the authors' position that Wilsonianism is not only an idealistic framework but also a deeply influential force in U.S. geopolitical strategy; besides, the book also sheds light on the recent discrepancies arising from the hard politics of the

¹ Do it as Wilson says: Ellias Aghili Dehnavi, Mobin Karbasi; August 11, 2020

² Clarke, M., & Ricketts, A. (2017). Donald Trump and American foreign policy: The return of the Jacksonian tradition (page 368-370)

³ The Covenant of the League of Nations | The United Nations Office at Geneva. (n.d.). The United Nations Office at Geneva.

⁴ Jefferson and Jackson in the Front Seats: US Foreign Policy under Trump: Jan Niklas Rolf; March 2017

⁵ Thompson, J. A. (2010). Wilsonianism: the dynamics of a conflicted concept.

world and different geopolitics; the city on the hill or the lantern in the chaotic waters can't no longer be solely looked upon from a Wilsonian perspective; this philosophy has experienced a metamorphosis and transfigured into something of a more practical phenomenon.⁶

1. *Wilsonian Mission: Global Democratization and Moral Leadership*

According to the authors, Wilson domination emerges as the second New World ideology owing to its globalization of American national interests. Wilsonianism holds that the United States possesses a duty to pursue democracy everywhere and protect human rights. This book explores further the idea postulated by Wilson that the US can and should be the world's foremost champion of freedom. In this regard, Wilson and his contemporaries in the Democratic Party eloquently articulated their visions through such speeches as the Fourteen Points as to why America had a moral obligation to be a liberating force in the world. Thus, the authors argue that Wilson's beliefs were deeply embedded in other administrations, enabling them to restore and initiate politically motivated actions aimed at establishing democratic regimes in numerous countries beginning from Europe after the First World War through Iraq and Afghanistan in the twenty first century.⁷

2. *Ethics and Legal Foundations in U.S. Foreign Policy*

A prominent focus in the book is an emphasis on morality and international law, in the sense that the authors say it is a form of Lackan idealism. Wilson's concept of international relations is perhaps best illustrated in his intentions to see the League of Nations formed. This reinforces his linear argument where international order based on rules is an ingredient of stable peace. The authors' critique in this case is the shortcomings which this idealistic approach manifests, especially its over-emphasis on fairness and justice without considering the intricacy of global and area interests, and its resultant political effects.

B) Index Analysis

1. *Rejection of Realpolitik and Embrace of Collective Security*

In contrast to the 'Realist' doctrines, Wilson repudiated the classical "balance of power" and rather endeavored in constructing a world order based on collectivism and international peace.⁸The authors elaborate on this theme by

analyzing Wilson's establishment of the League of Nations and his aspiration for a permanent international structure that would prevent conflicts because of reliance on collective economics rather than realpolitik. This principle, according to the authors, was reemphasized in subsequent multilateral initiatives including the UN and NATO where Wilson believed that peace can be attained through joining forces and not through brawls.

2. *Wilsonianism and Interventionism across Administrations*

The passage studies to what extent Wilson's ideals have been understood and modified by presidents of the United States, including Clinton, Bush and Obama. According to the authors, Wilsonianism's moral dimension allowed leaders to create justification for interference in the lives of others. For example, they view Clinton's promotion of international democratization and respect for human rights, Bush's wars in the name of democracy or many-sided internationalism of Obama as Wilson's principles in other forms. This commentary accentuates how Wilsonianism has enabled and limited presidents of the United States at the same time by providing moral burdens while still containing pragmatic demands.

3. *Wilsonianism's Tension with "Isolationism" and "Realism"*

The authors delve into the persistent issue of U.S. foreign policy – the dichotomy of Wilsonianism and its idealist aspiration and the realist stance of isolationism or unilateralism.⁹Although Wilsonianism favors involvement in international relations, the book contends that its interpretation often proved to be at odds with the American streak of isolationism, especially in times of economic or military expansionism. The authors look at instances and periods during which such tension arose – for example, post-Vietnam war and post-Iraq withdrawal, as these moments of restraint show the boundaries of Wilsonianism in American foreign policy.

C) Scholarly Contributions and Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy Discourse

Dehnavi and Karbasi add value to the understanding of academic discourses on liberal internationalism by conceptualizing Wilsonianism as a sophisticated tradition where ethical idealism is complemented with practical

⁶ Dehnavi, E. A. (2024b). The Trump Doctrine: Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 26–28.

⁷ Principles and positions of US foreign policy against terrorism: Ellias Aghili Dehnavi, Seyed Mohammad Tabatabaei; November 2021

⁸ Dehnavi, E. A., & Fiedler, R. (2024a). Adventures of Two Captains' Trilogy and U.S Exceptionalism in their Foreign Policy: Manifestation of Think Tanks in a literary work. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 9(3), 277–281.

⁹ Foreign Policy of the 50 Stars: Different Angles of the U.S Foreign Policy: Ellias Aghili Dehnavi; February 16, 2021

intervention¹⁰. As detailed in the article, engagement in foreign policy based on moral considerations has its advantages as well as its risks, and this enables Wilsonianism to be understood as a central notion within international political liberalism. This perspective also enables them to place Wilsonianism in historical context and understand its present-day relevance as it influences the current debates on issues like humanitarian intervention and the promotion of democracy.

D) Broader Implications for Contemporary Geopolitics

The Wilsonian ideology might not be a leading philosophy/school of thought when it comes to analyze the greater image of the geopolitical events and rivalries in different parts of the world; especially those in which the U.S plays a crucial role; this can be the U.S regions of influence (i.e., Middle East, East Pacific, East Asia) or the rivalry equations that are prominent for the American Foreign Policy (U.S-China rivalry) for the aforementioned cases, the democratic core aspects of Wilsonianism won't be effective and highlighted; rather, the feasible facets of Military and economic mercantilism are more concrete factors to be studied.¹¹

1. Critical Reflections on Wilsonianism's Paradoxes

Consequently, Wilsonism is indeed a distinctive school, but accepting its specific character also means being ready to accept its contradictions, especially those that appear to affect the values that its advocates espouse. They bring up the issue of attempting to democratize a country by means of military intervention, which has the potential of eroding the core objectives it seeks to attain.¹² Also, Singh and Wood remark that Wilsonianism has been abused in capitalist America for the purpose of securing permission to go against its very basics such as sectional coups against democratic regimes that do not support capitalist US; Such skepticism makes the case for Wilsonianism stronger as the recognition of its importance does not assume that the case for its effectiveness, as a viable model of peace, work properly in all situations.¹³

2. Limitations of Wilsonianism in Practice

The book's focus on the limits of Wilsonianism in the context of geopolitics is insightful. It is observed that sometimes Wilson's belief in the World Organizations has

not been effective with state aggression¹⁴; for instance, the League of Nations inability to stop the oncoming of the World War II. Also, the authors explain that the Wilsonian approach towards collective security is not always the case with real politics, particularly in areas where American interventions brought about long drawn and counterproductive wars. It further adds strength to their argument that Wilsonianism is an ideal at best which in reality has to deal with power politics intricacies.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

Do It As Wilson Says is an important work which thoroughly explains the Wilsonianism as a concept and how it has influenced the foreign policy of the United States. In analyzing Wilson's ideals and their manifestation in different administrations, the authors provide a useful contribution to both history and policy. This book expands the boundaries of understanding the core values underpinning American foreign policy and urges people to perceive ethical issues surrounding diplomacy in the context of high globalization and low ideology.

In brief, the authors manage to project Wilsonianism as a well-defined set of ethics and just the right impulse for American expansion. This book is important for practitioners, researchers, and students in the field of international relations who want to appreciate the moral considerations, historical legacies and practical factors that motivate U.S. presence in global affairs.

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¹¹ Dehnavi, E. A. (2020). The reasons for the decline of American hegemony and its impact on China's regional policies in the Middle East.

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Echoes of Colonialism and Identity Crisis: A Postcolonial Analysis of Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*

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Abstract— *Spirited Away*, a Japanese animated fantasy film written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki in 2001 brings to the audience a story of a young girl, Chihiro who along with her parents enter into the world of spirits. The film narrates a story of disruptive identity, language, and belonging of the protagonist, Chihiro and echoes themes of cultural displacement and colonization. This paper will analyze the film and the journey of the individuals into a colonized space, where conventional identities are suppressed within a dominated cultural landscape. This paper will delve into an argument where the film will be analyzed from the perspective of postcolonialism, where Chihiro's experiences in the spirit world reflect the tussle of the colonized people dealing with distorted identities, language, and complicated notion of belonging. Chihiro's arrival into the spirit world corresponds with the encounter of the colonized individual with the culture of the colonizer, where the transformation of her parents into pigs paralleled with the dehumanization and compromise of identity of the colonized. Chihiro's renaming as Sen, language as a tool of control, and disturbing their sense of belonging highlights the colonial imposition on humans in the world of the spirits. The bathhouse in the film is symbolic of the colonized space where the identities, languages of the colonized are constructed and contested. The paper will also try to analyze how the protagonist takes up the journey towards self-discovery and reclaims her identity, culture, and autonomy in the midst of oppression.



Keywords— Postcolonial theory, identity, culture, animated film, spirit world

In the realm of Japanese cinematic storytelling, Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli have contributed animated films that are loved by audiences worldwide. Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (2001) captivates the audience through its nuanced narrative, breathtaking visuals, and minutely crafted characters. Beneath the film's glory lies the exploration of themes that contribute to the complexities resonating with human experiences. This paper delves into ways the film can be critiqued from the postcolonial perspective, examining how the spirit world in *Spirited Away* is a colonized space highlighting experiences of the colonized people by the spirit world or the colonizers. Chihiro, the protagonist's experiences in the spirit world reflect the difficulties faced by the colonized individuals who are forced to adapt to the colonizer's cultural practices.

From a postcolonial point of view, the paper argues how the colonized individuals fight against distorted identities, sense of belonging, and language. Through the film's narrative, the paper analyzes the allegory of colonialism where the identities are constantly constructed and contested. The paper argues how the transformation of Chihiro's parents into pigs is parallel to the dehumanization of the colonized by the colonizers. The paper discusses Chihiro's journey toward self-discovery, and how the reclamation of her identity serves as a metaphor for the difficulties faced by the colonized people during the assertion of autonomy amidst colonial domination.

The film opens with Chihiro and her family traveling to their new home in a new town against Chihiro's

wish. On their way, they discover a way to an abandoned place that takes them to a deserted place with stalls full of food. Upon eating the food for the supernatural creatures, Chihiro's parents turn into pigs leaving Chihiro as a human body. While she explores to get help, she meets Haku who offers her help and introduces her to the bathhouse, a place for the supernatural, which is the only place where finding a job would break the spell and help re-enter the "human-world" (Reider 5). In the bathhouse, she is forced to change her identity, renamed as Sen, adjusting to the rules and practices of the spirit world. As Chihiro navigates the spirit's realm, she encounters spirits like Yubaba, at its center, Kamaji, a boiler man who keeps the bathhouse running, Lin, Chihiro's spirit friend, and No-Face, a mysterious spirit. Along with Haku, she embarks on a journey to bring her parents back to the human body and safely return to the human world. Undergoing various challenges, she saves her family, finds her identity, and leaves for their new home.

The themes of postcolonialism are central to the analysis of the film *Spirited Away*. The theory emerged in the mid-twentieth century examines the cultural, social, and political legacies of colonialism and further understands how colonialism has shaped identities, impacted societies of colonized people, and disrupted the cultures original to them. Central to postcolonial theory is the colonizer-colonized relationship that tends to explore the exercise of power imbalance and dominance over the colonized, through identity erasure, coercion, displacement, and a lost sense of belonging.

In the film, the postcolonial themes and the colonizer-colonized relationship are navigated through Chihiro, a young girl transported to the world of spirits or the bathhouse, run by Yubaba that serves as a colonized space, where the colonized are exploited through labor. The spirits realm represents the colonizer exercising dominance over the colonized. Chihiro, forced to work in the bathhouse, adopts the colonizer's practices and identity, symbolizing the colonized. Lastly, the film subverts the relationship, as Chihiro challenges Yubaba's power as she asserts her autonomy. To understand the construction and contestation of identities in the postcolonial space by the colonizers, the film's narrative is broken down into several points to illustrate the ways of colonization.

Chihiro's encounter with the spirits in a different realm marks displacement and disorientation in her character which parallels the experiences of the colonized individuals in a space that gives them a new identity, introduces new cultural norms, and imbalances the power dynamics. Chihiro's journey into the spirit world is not only a physical movement but an exploration of identity in the

psychological and cultural aspects. The imposition of a new culture identity, and language on Chihiro reflects displacement into a world that recognizes her as inferior and different. In a postcolonial context, the colonizer's cultural values are upheld over the colonized values. Similarly, the bathhouse is presented as a space where human customs are seen down by the spirits, thereby, creating a divide that portrays Chihiro's sense of alienation.

Central to postcolonialism, Othering examines the construction of the colonized as subjects of difference. The moment Chihiro steps into the spirit world she is perceived as Other and a marginalized subject. This Othering illustrates her treatment as inferior in the already established order. When she enters the supernatural world and begs for work from Kamaji, the boiler man, she is denied of work, and is also asked to not take the work appointed to someone else. He comments, "If they don't work, the spell wears off" (28:25) which signifies the colonial control over the colonized. In the bathhouse, Chihiro is positioned at the bottom and his statement reassures the boundaries between Chihiro and the inhabitants of the spirit world. The notion of Othering is evident when her parents unaware of the different world consume the food meant for the spirit world, leading to their transformation into pigs. This act is significant for the colonizer's dominance over the colonized as they failed to understand the colonizer's culture. The colonized individuals were perceived as less human by the colonizers when they refused to conform to their practices and customs. By reducing Chihiro's parents to animals in the film, the inhabitants of the spirit world exhibit them as inferior, needing control. In colonial conditions, this dehumanization demonstrated exploitation, as it portrayed the colonized as undeserving of autonomy and power.

In the film, the bathhouse represents the colonized space, ruled by Yubaba controlling not only the operations in the realm but also the lives of the workers. This space reminiscences the forced labor established in the colonial periphery. Therefore, the domination and oppression lead to the erasure of the identity of the colonized subjects in the colonial space. Upon entering into Yubaba's world, Chihiro is renamed as Sen. Renaming emerges as a tool of control, within the colonized space, reflecting the colonizer-colonized relationship. This act is an embodiment of colonial control echoing an erasure of the former identity and connection with a new identity. The loss of Chihiro's identity baffles her, thereby, making her presence within the other realm ambiguous. The dominance and renaming in the bathhouse makes it a space where those in power redefine identity. Chihiro finds herself in a space where her identity as Chihiro does not exist and the new identity imposed on her is not fully integrated. This in-betweenness reflects Bhabha's idea of liminality and hybridity, where the

colonized subject is stuck in between two worlds, emphasizing the tension between the two. As Chihiro starts living as Sen, her memory of her former identity fades, reflecting the colonized individual's experience of identity erasure. The act of diminishing the name Chihiro, where Chi meant "thousand" and hiro meant, "to seek" to Sen which meant "one thousand" symbolizes swiping a part of her identity that screams exploration and discovery (Sarmin 4).

The notion of unhomeliness, as coined by Bhabha, is an aspect of hybridity. "Bhabha's Notion of Unhomeliness in J.M.Coetzee's *Foe: A Postcolonial Reading*" states, "Unhomeliness is an emotional state: unhomed people don't feel at home even in their own homes because they don't feel at home in any culture and, therefore, don't feel at home in themselves" (107). When Chihiro is identified as Sen in the bathhouse, she feels disconnected from home, and her new identity constantly unsettles her. This hybrid identity imposed on her leaves her in a liminal space that makes her feel alienated within both realms.

The workers within the bathhouse are bound by strict rules, emulating the hierarchical structure existing within colonial domination. Chihiro's assigned menial tasks in the spirit world echo the power dynamics where tasks like cleaning floors and serving guests are designated to lower ranks of people in society and are expected to work relentlessly to remain in the working system. This aspect highlighted through Yubaba's expectation from Chihiro in the film, emphasizes on tireless work by Chihiro to stay in the bathhouse. Therefore, establishing a dependency of the colonized individuals reflects colonial power dynamics, where colonized people are forced to believe in their inefficiency without the colonizer's support.

Each character's identity is shaped to suit the role within the rigid hierarchical structure of the bathhouse. Lin, one of the workers, has accepted the oppression yet reflects moments of rebellion, while guiding Chihiro in the bathhouse. Her attitude reflects her internal struggle, and her situation between assigned roles and her desires. When Chihiro first enters the bathhouse, she is viewed with suspicion by the bathhouse workers, including Lin. Soon she readily helps Chihiro to escape the bathhouse, bring her parents in human form, and get back to the human world. This underscores her attempt to protect Chihiro, making an effort to defy Yubaba's strict hierarchical control. Lin protects Chihiro in the bathhouse against the existing power dynamics. Lin's forgotten identity embodies the fragmented identity the colonized individual faces, with subtle acts of kindness towards Chihiro, representing an identity shaped by suppression and a desire for freedom.

On the other hand, Haku's forgotten identity as the Kohaku River spirit parallels the colonial experience, where colonized individuals lose connection with their original identity. Yubaba constructs Haku's identity according to his needs and desires, thereby, controlling his past and future. Haku, disconnected from his origin, suffers the traumatic effects of personal erasure. He transforms himself into a dragon under Yubaba's order, thereby losing his identity further and reducing him to a creature of utility. This results in the commodification and dehumanization of colonized individuals who are appreciated only in use by the colonizers. Despite being a river spirit, Haku goes through psychological trauma imposed on him through colonization.

Throughout Chihiro's journey in the bathhouse, Haku is instrumental in helping Chihiro reserve her identity. His constant persisting nature helped Chihiro to hold onto her name to resist the colonizing force of the spirit world. Haku encouraging her to remember her identity demonstrates his loss and symbolizes an attempt by the colonized to preserve their identity even when Haku's has been erased. Haku assists Chihiro on her way back to the human world and shares his wish to unchain her from the bathhouse. Haku's character represents the notion of unhomeliness through his fragmented identity as Haku and his original identity as a river spirit. He also functions within a space where his origin haunts him within the bathhouse. Therefore, Haku's alienation from an imposed identity disconnects him from his origin and creates a sense of estrangement from himself.

Chihiro's journey in the film also epitomizes a colonized individual's journey towards reclamation of identity and self-discovery, underlying the existing complexities in the colonizer-colonized relationship. In the spirit world, Chihiro encounters Yubaba who attempts to reshape her identity as Sen and exploits her as forced labor. Imposing a new identity and suppressing her autonomy, renaming is considered a colonial mechanism, severing her connection with the colonized culture, values, and customs. Chihiro's response to the changes becomes a metaphor for resistance and reclamation of self in postcolonial situations. Chihiro initially faces fear and disorientation in the bathhouse, but gradually asserts her agency against the bathhouse's demands without submitting herself under their control. She perceives her identity as Sen as a state of temporality while she formulates her path toward freedom. This temporary state signifies resistance where she conforms to the colonizer's rules outwardly but keeps herself connected to the original identity, thereby subverting the colonizer's intention to erase it.

Throughout her journey, her alliance with other characters reflects the postcolonial solidarity and collective

resistance. Characters like Haku or Lin defied their prescribed roles to help Chihiro symbolizing the way colonized subjects find ways of resistance even under severe oppression. With Haku's guidance, she understands the importance of remembering her name, and memory. He comments, "If she steals your name, you'll never find your way home," (48:54) signifying the importance of remembering the origin. Therefore, through mutual support, the film portrays a reclamation of autonomy in a postcolonial setting, where experiences of subjugation are shared that empower individuals to challenge the colonizer's influence. Haku also recalls his identity at the end and says, "I have my name back" (1:58:38). This realization marks liberation from Yubaba's dominance.

Towards the film's end, Yubaba confronts Chihiro and asks her to identify her parents from the pig's group to free them. Chihiro demonstrates her confidence in her memory and identity and claims that none of the pigs are her parents. Despite, Yubaba's attempt to erase Chihiro's identity, she holds onto her sense of belonging and earns her freedom from the colonizer. As soon as she brings her parents to human form, she retains her connection with her past culture and customs. The retention in the human world embodies the journey of the colonized individuals who reclaim their identity by asserting their cultural memory against the colonizer's attempt at deletion. In conclusion, Chihiro's journey from disorientation to self-discovery exemplifies a postcolonial narrative of resilience in the face of colonization.

In conclusion, Chihiro's journey serves as an allegory for the struggles of colonized individuals to reclaim their culture, autonomy, and identity under oppressive control. The spirit world, with its rigid hierarchies, dehumanizing transformations, and renaming power exemplifies a colonial structure where identity is constructed to fulfill colonizer's purpose. Chihiro's ability to resist complete colonial domination, remember her identity, and bring her parents back to human form demonstrates her power of self-knowledge as tool of resistance. The film provides a narrative to the audience of discovery that reflects postcolonial struggle of identity retention in a system that seeks to suppress colonized autonomy and culture.

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A Gynocritical Reading of Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife*

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Abstract— Carol Ann Duffy is an award-winning Scottish poet who mainly talks about women in her poetry. Her poetry also engages such topics as gender and oppression, expressing them in familiar, conversational language that made her work accessible to a variety of readers. The collection where her feministic approach becomes clearer is *The World's Wife* (1999), where she destabilizes myth and history by giving women their own voice. In this piece of writing, she destabilizes the phallogocentric tradition of writing. In this particular poetry collection, she gives voice to the overlooked female figures. In this particular poetry collection, Duffy uses the original story lines, but the messages are changed. In Duffy's version the portrayal of women is quite different. In the original version, women were stereotypically described as always being weak, ignorant and incapable. Duffy's version is totally contrary to the original one. The purpose of this paper is to subject select poems of Carol Ann Duffy to a gynocritical study and to present a fascinating glimpse of the feminist perspectives.



Keywords— feministic approach, female identity, gynocritical, oppression, phallogocentric tradition

I. INTRODUCTION

Drawing on the gynocritical theory of Elaine Showalter, this paper attempts an exhaustive study of the prominent themes of Carol Ann Duffy. Gynocritical study is the study of feminist literature written by female writers inclusive of the exploration of female authorship, feminine images, feminine experiences, feminist ideology and the history and development of female literary tradition. Gynocritics, a socio-historical investigation that studies literature by focusing on the historical background, themes, genres, and the structure of literature by women, frames a method of analyzing literature created by women. It provides models of interpretation fashioned on female experience, abandoning male interpretative theoretical models. According to Elaine Showalter, the literature and theory produced by men focus only on what men think women should be like rather than fathoming women's feelings and subjective consciousness. Elaine Showalter argues for the construction of knowledge based on unique female experience—not the knowledge as it is produced by men

keeping in view only their own stature in society. Women should be the creator and consumer of this knowledge. Showalter uses the term gynocriticism to denote this knowledge. Unless we use the language of women writers, it is hard to speak about women's struggles with any degree of precision. The gynocritical study examines feminist literature written by female writers. It is the study of the female's inner consciousness. Showalter's reflections of gynocritics have been taken as the conceptual framework for this paper.

II. CAROL ANN DUFFY AND *THE WORLD'S WIFE*

The World's Wife first published in 1999 talks about the position of women in a society. It deals with significant issues that deals with the plight of women. Duffy destabilizes the traditional myths. In this particular poetry collection, she destabilizes the phallogocentric tradition of writing. In this particular poetry collection, she gives voice to the overlooked female figures. Duffy uses the original

story lines, but the messages are changed. In Duffy's version the portrayal of women is quite different. In the original version, women were stereotypically described as always being weak, ignorant and incapable. Duffy's version is totally contrary to the original one. In this collection, Duffy takes characters, stories, histories and myths which focus on men, to present them anew for us to look at not only the women that were previously obscured behind the men, but important events in history from a female perspective. *The World's Wife* as the name itself suggests talks about the wives of famous personalities. Duffy also tries to portray how these wives would behave if they existed at all. *The World's Wife* exclusively focusses on the woman characters. Duffy longs to build a society that is free of ill-treatment of female, enhancing equality among people. In consequence, we see that so many of her poems illustrate the voice of the neglected and humiliated women. The Western societal and historical traditions have long been male-centred, i.e. this society highlights on men's activities. (Hashim,2017, p. 332) Duffy shows that the title *The World's Wife* refers to a world which is dominated by the males and women are only the wives. Women are characterized as the wives of famous men; they have no identity. The women in society are known through the identity of men. However, in the collection, Duffy explores the wives as more than wives. She proves through her poem of the collection that women also have their own freedom and self-identity. They are equally significant and wonderful as their husbands or male counterparts. (Ali,2024, p.61)

III. EXPLORING GYNOCRITICISM IN *THE WORLD'S WIFE*

Gynocriticism as the name itself suggests, aims to create a separate branch of 'women's poetics'. Gynocriticism is the study of women's writing. The term gynocritics was coined by Elaine Showalter in 1979 to refer to a form of feminist literary criticism that is concerned with women as writers. There are thousands of women across the globe who have been trying to express their voice either in the form of prose, poetry or verses. Gynocriticism has also given rise to female creative expression. The entire theme of gynocriticism is predicated upon the fact that women need to be established as authors. Women's writing needs to be prioritised to develop a separate branch of Women's literature. Gynocriticism is the branch of feminist criticism that focuses on women's art. Elaine Showalter in *Towards a Feminist Poetics* and *Feminist Criticism in Wilderness* aims to develop two distinct categories in feminist criticism: (a) the women reader as a consumer of literature and (b) the woman author, the producer of literature.

(Mukhopadhyay,2016, p.47). *The World's Wife* is an exploration of feminine identity. The women in these poems, whether real or mythical are given a voice that they have been denied in traditional narratives. *The World's Wife* mainly talks about the negligence of women particularly the wives of famous historical characters. This particular work by Carol Ann Duffy makes an attempt to explore the identities of women who have often been overlooked. The traditional binaries of masculinity and femininity inherent in Western epistemology thrive on the deeply entrenched hierarchisation of male over the female. Femininity is traditionally conceived as the 'other' in patriarchal societies, as men have dominated the public sphere. Beauvoir emphasises that, in order to perpetuate patriarchal ideology, men have always assumed the position of 'universal subject', denying women autonomy and agency. She underlines the reality that women are complicit in the continuation of patriarchy. (Mukhopadhyay,2016, p. 31).

In this particular poetry, Duffy uses the original story lines, but the messages are changed. In Duffy's version the portrayal of women is quite different. She rightly analyses the poems from a female framework, as the theory of gynocriticism suggests. In the original version, women were stereotypically described as always being weak, ignorant and incapable. Duffy's version is totally contrary to the original one. For instance, in "Little Red Cap", Duffy gave the silent girl the right to speak for herself by telling people she is emotional but also rational, intellectual and brave enough to struggle with what she hates.

In *The World's Wife*, Duffy is trying to give voice to the unheard female voices. Her poems give voice to a multitude of characters. Duffy also endows her characters with intelligence and an agency of their own. In this particular poetry collection, Duffy manipulates well known texts to induce a sense of pain caused by patriarchal oppression. This poetry collection explores the presentation of liberated women. *The World's Wife* is a modernized narration of famous myths and fables retold through the perspective of a liberated female voice, depicting feminism through cleverness and humour.

For example, in 'Mrs Aesop', she presents the character in a tone that is suggestive of her anger. In this particular poem, we get to see that Mrs Aesop is annoyed with her husband. The lines also suggest that she has suffered a lot throughout her marriage and has found the experience painful. Duffy wants us to feel sympathy for Mrs. Aesop as she suggests that they never actually get to go out and that she is constantly ignored by her husband, there is no mention of her, only of animals from his tales, in the rest of the stanza. She says,

Going out was worst. He'd stand at our gate, look, then
 leap;
 scour the hedgerows for a shy mouse, the fields
 for a sly fox, the sky for one particular swallow
 that couldn't make a summer. The jackdaw, according to
 him,
 envied the eagle. Donkeys would, on the whole, prefer to
 be lions.
 (Duffy)

We feel anger towards Aesop because of his cautious nature ('look, then leap') that goes against the lively and humorous character of his wife. His obsessive behaviour also means that he ignores her when they are meant to be going out. Poems like Mrs Darwin, Mrs Sisyphus deal with almost the same theme. Both the men shown in these poems seem to be obsessed with their work, which leads to the negligence of their wives. In "Mrs Lazarus", the character Mrs Lazarus describes her life without her husband. Duffy shows in this poem the loss of love and the inevitable temporary nature of a relationship. Carol Ann Duffy in this particular poetry collection rightly talks about giving voice to women who have been neglected. She has rightfully portrayed women who talk about loneliness and longing when their husband is away, thereby challenging the romanticized image of a faithful wife. They are indeed protagonists of their own lives. They are complex, multifaceted individual, each with their own desires, fears and aspirations.

IV. CONCLUSION

Carol Ann Duffy has rightfully contributed to the field of gynocriticism through her text, *The World's Wife*. Duffy also uses satire to challenge the traditional gender roles. The poetry collection not only focusses on the female figures but also on the male figures and their negligence towards their female counterparts. Duffy depicts through her poems the complex realities of women's lives throughout history. Duffy also rightfully exposes the power structures of the society through the use of satire in her writings.

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THE CHAOTIC KAFKA: *Devouring the Absurdism in Gregor Samsa's transformation*

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Abstract— This paper delves into the existential and absurdist themes in Franz Kafka's 'Metamorphosis', unravelling the protagonist's transformation as a metaphor for alienation and societal rejection. Through a critical lens, it examines the existential plight and identity crisis that arise in a world devoid of meaning, challenging conventional perceptions of humanity, purpose, and self.

Keywords— Franz Kafka, Kafkaesque, Metamorphosis, Absurdism, Literature, societal rejection, capitalism, Gregor Samsa



"The Kafkaesque describes an indescribable sense of menace."

- Adam Thirlwell

1915, the year that brought into the world of literature, one of the finest pieces of magic-realism with an allegorical tale of Gregor Samsa's uneasy transformation into a 'gigantic insect'. One can find the true essence of Kafkaesque in this novella - the feeling of entrapment in a distorted, fantastical yet too real world, Metamorphosis is like a nightmare we are trying to wake up from.

Gregor Samsa, the protagonist was a commercial traveller, who awoke one morning to find himself turned into a vermin - Kafka offers texture to Gregor's transformed body and the struggles that come with it - *'his numerous legs... pitifully thin.. waved helplessly..'*, *'however violently he forced himself towards his right side he always rolled onto his back again'* (Kafka, 3) - the reader can't help but pity this helpless creature. The third person limited narrative used in Metamorphosis gives a close perspective of the thoughts and emotions of Gregor as he is affected by this change and pushed into isolation. Although there is a physical change that has upturned Samsa's world, Kafka's choice to give more space to his thoughts and not his appearance creates a connection with the mind of the reader. Samsa is not affected so much about his physical change as much as he is obsessed by his job roles and parents debts.

While exploring his thoughts, Samsa is suddenly reminded of the time, an anxious representation of the passing of time that symbolizes the tyranny of time in this fast paced, capitalistic world. One can read between this text the guilt associated with personal time that an individual desires and the growing apprehensive uneasiness within Samsa's mind about his inability to perform what was normal. There is a strong irony in how despite being free from his routine, he is still an embodiment of being stuck : becoming highly relatable in a world that is governed by deadlines and tenures, that strips one of the joys of living in the present as the dark cloud of what the future holds is always looming. The urgency created by time was what motivated Gregor to move after his transformation and the tower clock striking three in the morning was the last sound he heard before his death.

Gregor was the sole breadwinner of the Samsa house, and his utilitarian purpose is not limited just to his workplace. While one would expect the consequence of his turning into a different creature as him losing his earning capabilities, his job, Gregor's value as a member of the family also denigrates. There is transference of power and importance from Gregor to his sister. The amount of food that she feeds her brother becomes inversely proportional to the power she assumes as a 'contributing' part of the family - new to Gregor's change his sister makes more efforts to

feed him 'to find out what he liked she brought him a whole selection of food.' (Kafka, 22) which progresses to treating Gregor as a burden, '...before she went to business, hurriedly pushed into his room with her foot any food that was available.' (Kafka, 40) The food Gregor is fed becomes a reflection of his treatment by his family, his isolation starts from physicality and extends to behavioral aspects.

The absurdity of the story lies in the contradictions employed by Kafka which become irresistible to ignore. Gregor's physical change comes as an obvious shock to the entire family, initially they are scared of what he has turned into which could also mark the respect they held for him in his human form, but as they start getting used to his monstrous presence, it does not bring them to empathize with his situation, instead the more comfortable they get with Gregor's appearance, the more he seems to become invisible - 'To be sure, no one was aware of him.' (Kafka, 45) Kafka emphasizes on the horrific reality of human nature, that humankind is bound to witness the departure of humanity, in how even Gregor's family becomes a reason for his downfall. Their insensitivity towards Gregor invokes the question of whether Metamorphosis is his worst nightmare, Gregor's deep dark fear that if he were to ever become deprived of the ability to provide for his family, would they dispose of him altogether? - A question that possibly bothers the minds of the working population on whom millions of families rely. Metamorphosis is undoubtedly Kafka's critique of the soul-sucking impacts of Capitalism and how it treats an individual no less than a vermin. It is the timeless allegory of humans being reduced to their purpose of contributing to the economy, a world divided by class and the ever-running rat race to the top of this class hierarchy. Modern society has isolated one human from another; in a competitive world, individualism has created a void in the meaningless lives of the people and attempts are made to fill this void not by coming together but by economic accomplishments.

Affected by Gregor's Metamorphosis, the family members try to find various ways of availing income, one such consequence is Gregor's father being employed as a banker's assistant. Gregor on seeing his father in uniform is reminded of the easy, laid-back life his father used to live before his transformation - 'the man who used to lie wearily sunk in bed whenever Gregor set out on a business....whenever he wanted to say anything, nearly always came to a full stop and gathered his escort around him?' (Kafka, 35). The uniform is used initially as a symbol of pride, respect and dignity, in one instance Gregor looks at a photograph from his past life in the military - 'directly across on the opposite wall hung a photograph of Gregor from the time of his military service; it was a picture of him as a lieutenant, as he, smiling and worry-free, with his hand

on his sword, demanded respect for his bearing and uniform.' (Kafka,15) The uniform worn by Gregor's father undertakes different meanings as the story steers ahead, at first his father looks sharp but then it starts to look overused as he 'persisted in keeping his uniform on even in the house' (Kafka, 38), reflecting on both the father's old age and his exhaustion, as opposed to the easy life he led before. His frustration with Gregor is a result of this change, the 'uniform' itself undergoing changes talks of a deeper meaning that the text holds in how Gregor's Metamorphosis changed the lives of all the family members, how their feelings towards him changed with his lacking utility and how they chose to easily move on with their lives after Gregor's demise as if it was a burden lifted off their shoulders.

The characteristic affected most in Gregor is his movement, as a human Gregor had a very busy life provided he was a 'commercial traveller', movement was a part of his job description. The metamorphosis did not just make him a bug, but a gigantic one in a small apartment, hence restricting his movement to the maximum. In the first chapter, Gregor is consciously making all possible efforts to put himself into movement, but this gradually declines. As the story progresses, Gregor stays still and quiet, doomed to isolation. In the description of his death, Gregor realises that he is now 'unable to stir a limb' (Kafka, 50), his movement has come to a stop. This movement is a direct representation of working life. The working class are highly affected due to the stoppage of any movement, be it technology, conveyance or their own limbs; and so was the Samsa family. Due to his transformation, there is a breakdown of communication between Gregor and his family members. While the voice changes entirely, it is also reflective of the fact that there is a gap, an inability to express what Gregor is going through and equally reciprocating that inability is the ignorance of the family, their insensitivity towards Gregor and lack of efforts to understand Gregor. Even with the mention of his father, his voice is referred to as - 'If only he would have stopped making that unbearable hissing noise!' (Kafka, 18), there is no attempt by Kafka to humanize Gregor's father; the strains of their purely utilitarian relationship are found in how he views his father. His constant hissing, bickering and also the reason that leads to his death, is purely a reflection of Kafka's personal life. 'It is crucial to know the facts of Kafka's emotional life when reading his fiction. In some sense, all his stories are autobiographical.' (Thirlwell, 11) There is a need in Gregor for his father's validation but there is no attempt at sympathizing with his character.

Events leading to the end of the story establish Gregor as a character doomed to exile, a modernist individual repressed by society, so alienated that he is

unable to deal with reality. The lack of a realistic plot, strange characters, and allegorical aspects - all lead to the enigma of this imaginary narrative that leaves the reader stupefied. The rotting apple stuck in the back of Gregor is a direct reflection of how the society and his family have stabbed him in his back and left him to rot and die. His unproductivity in a capitalistic world led to his downfall, in not just the loss of his job and his status as a breadwinner, but also as a significant part of the Samsa family. His physical state is exactly the treatment he is subject to despite his human history, derivative of the meaning that this fast-paced world moves on too quickly, and values a man only in relation to his contribution in the society. Kafka encourages thought-provoking interpretations of this mysterious tale and none of them could prove to be wrong. A reader expects the Metamorphosis of a character, hoping that Gregor might finally wake from this brutal nightmare and prove everything to be just a dream, but instead we see the metamorphosis of all characters in relation to how Gregor's change affected them. A selfish, harsh reality is brought to surface, where our protagonist, a victim of capitalization, is subject to dehumanising behaviour and alienation from the society, unable to prove his worth to even his loved ones, unable to move altogether, faced with complete stagnation - *'And what now?'* (Kafka, 50) passes away. To summarise the genius of Kafka, is to measure the vastness of the universe. *'He is therefore a genius, outside ordinary limits of literature, and a saint, outside ordinary limits of human behaviour.'* (Thirlwell, 11)

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Preoccupation and Absence of Desire: Voyeurism and Caste in *Samskara* and *Kusumabale*

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Abstract— The paper explores the different forms of desires in the novels *Samskara* (1976) and *Kusumabale* (2015). In *Samskara*, there is a preoccupation with the theme of desire and the form and narration of the novel imbibe a voyeuristic male gaze. The valorisation of inter-caste relations is performed through this voyeuristic male gaze where desires of upper caste men are manifested through women, they either become the objects of desire or disgust. Their wives, the upper caste women, are portrayed as unattractive while the lower caste women are objects of the upper caste men's erotic fascination. Through the feminist lens of Laura Mulvey's theory of male gaze, I analyse how women lack any conscious agency in the novel as they are limited to their bodies, and caste determines the desirability or the lack of it. In comparison, the portrayal of inter-caste relations in *Kusumabale* does not involve any explicit articulation of desire and the narrative does not cater to any form of voyeuristic gaze. Instead, the novel portrays the deadly consequences of inter-caste relations which often leads to violence. The novel becomes the exact inverse to everything that *Samskara* tries to achieve be it through form, thematic style, or narration.



Keywords— caste, gender, desire, voyeurism, male gaze.

I. INTRODUCTION

Desire is one of the crucial manifestations of an individual's interiority. It manifests itself in different forms be it lust, greed, or gluttony. Attempts at fulfilling or discarding it, has been one of the biggest motives in philosophy as well as literature. There is a general notion that desire is a vice and should be repressed. This notion of desire has been one of the major driving forces of many religions as well. U.R Anantha Murthy's novel *Samskara*¹ (1976) deals primarily with this question of desire and its consequences. The novel is set in the fictitious village Durvasapura where the death of the rebellious Brahmin, Naranappa creates a crisis in the community. The Agrahara gets divided on the question of who would perform the final rites of Naranappa, and even questions the dead man's 'Brahminhood'. Life comes to a standstill for the

community and the protagonist Praneshacharya, perceived as the epitome of Brahmin virtues, who is entrusted with the task of finding solution for the problem and eventually ends up questioning himself. His mortal self undergoes a tumultuous transformation and through it surfaces his repressed desires. With the help of different critical essays, I look at how the novel's narration is preoccupied with the theme of desire, focusing on how the inter-caste sexual relations bring about a modern subjectivity. I also explore the portrayal of women in the novel as objects which either fulfil or weaken desire. The valorisation of inter-caste sexual relations is presupposed in the absence of any conscious agency for women who are involved. The form and genre of the novel also pinpoints this preoccupation and the mode of invisibility it gives to caste and gender issues, which is distinct from Devanoora Mahadeva's novel *Kusumabale*² (2015) which defies the form that Murthy

¹ Tr. from Kannada by A.K Ramanujan. OUP, Delhi, 1976.

² Tr. from Kannada by Susan Daniel.

develops in his novel. *Kusumabale* resembles a folk narrative style, with its setting in a village where the story unfolds in episodes through the explication of relationship dynamics between the upper-castes and lower-castes. The plot spans through three generations of an upper-caste family while parallelly accounts a lower caste narration where the relation between Kusuma, an upper-caste woman and a Dalit youth Channa that eventually leads to his murder. Although this plot is not exactly narrated, this sets the basic frame for the whole novel. Being a complex novel, with plethora of characters and nuances involved, it is very difficult to summarise the novel in a single summary. In comparison with *Samskara*, what makes it interesting is the fact that, as far as the form, theme, and narration are concerned, *Kusumabale* is the exact inverse. And from this comparison, it can be ascertained how, in *Samskara*, desire is permeated through the power structures and the narrative becomes voyeuristic as a result.

II. PREOCCUPATION OF DESIRE IN SANSKARA

Anantha Murthy faced many criticisms after publishing the novel as he was accused of portraying Brahminism in disparaging light. The work emerged as a realistic novel for its close portrayal of a realistic caste society and its problems. In the translator's note to the novel, A.K Ramanujan calls it a "religious novella about a decaying Brahmin colony in a Karnataka village, an allegory rich in realistic detail" (ix). Ramanujan deliberately emphasises the novel as allegorical to reduce the effects of controversies surrounding the realistic portrayal and bring in the right perspective to read the novel (Mukherjee 166). Ramanujan further explains in the 'Afterword' that although the novel has a realistic setting and satisfies the social setting of the time and delves into the mundane life of the inhabitants of the Durvasapura Agrahara, however, it does not wholly retain the form of realism (143). He opines that the major dilemma regarding the cremation of Naranappa could be easily solved by ritual modifications and offerings, and that the novel exaggerates on this part. The vultures and crows would never touch a plague-ridden rat as depicted in the story. This is the reason why he makes the distinction of placing the novel somewhere between the coordinates of realism and allegory. Mukherjee also agrees upon this argument that the novel does not exactly satisfy the criteria for realism and finds it as "an illustration of the kind of mutation that a western form has undergone in India" (167). While the

novel partially becomes realistic, it also partially criticises the caste system.

The novel is set in three parts which is further divided into minor sections. It starts with the news of Naranappa's death and how the Agrahara depends on Praneshacharya—the protagonist of the novel and the most revered Vedic scholar amongst the brahmins—to decide who would cremate the departed. The overall narrative is easily comprehensible and the narration is mostly in third person but intercuts to first person when a character's subjectivity needs to be established. This becomes common when the novel becomes complex from the middle portion. Pandya calls this as Free Indirect Discourse³ where the third person narration goes back and forth between character's consciousness:

The kind of free indirect discourse used in these passages with a third-person narrator who is really another self of the first person allows the novelist the facility to present his character's thoughts without using awkward narrative devices like monologues or the omniscient author's narration of the characters in innermost thought (141).

This can be prominently seen when Praneshacharya's dilemma is depicted in the last part where he undergoes self-catharsis. This technique also allows more freedom from conventional structuring, which often restricts the narrative flow, and enhances the readability of the narrative, allowing the reader to understand the character's mind without any distraction of double quotes or paragraph breaks. Characters are developed in the narrative through detailed descriptions and flashbacks, so that the reader is acquainted with an overall picture of the character's behaviour and attitude. It also familiarises the reader with the settings. The narrative becomes voyeuristic as various manifestations of desire erupt in the form of avarice, lust, and gluttony. For instance: when Chandri, the lower-caste mistress of Naranappa, keeps her gold for the cost of the rituals, Garudacharya, Lakshmanacharya, and their wives are consumed by greed and desire to possess it (Murthy 9). Dasacharya, the hungry Brahmin represents the greed for food who would not miss any meal free of cost. He is described as: "What was lust to Naranappa, hunger was to Dasacharya" (34). He even breaks the ritual code, to not eat until cremation, as he was unable to keep his hunger and runs off to the Parijathapura where Manjayya serves him delicious *uppittu*. Another noticeable thread is the choice of words which underline the sexual overtones in the

³ The author borrows the term from J.P Houston

novel. This is particularly seen in the descriptions of Brahmin houses in the Agrahara and Naranappa's house. While the other houses in the Agrahara uses flowers such as parijata, jasmine, ember, mandara etc. for rituals, the latter grew strong fragrant night queen bush which attracted snakes and the flowers blooming out of it found place on the knots of Chandri's hair: "As if that weren't provocative enough, right in front yard [Naranappa's] grew a bush, a favourite of snakes, flower unfit for any god's crown—the night-queen bush. In the darkness of night like some raging lust, pouring forth its nocturnal fragrance. The Agrahara writhed in its hold as in the grip of a magic serpent-binding spell" (14). Words like 'provocative', 'night', 'snake', 'serpent', 'darkness', 'forest', 'magic', 'lust', and 'writhe' create a tension in the narrative which predicts the events to happen. Not only does the descriptions confine to distinguishing particulars of the surroundings but it also demarcates the characters to categories as well. The first instance of voyeurism occurs when Durghabhata's ogle at Chandri and his imaginations score to his wildest fetishes of descriptions from Vatsyayana's manual of love to the Matsyagandhi in Ravi Varma's painting (8).

Women characters are clearly put into two distinct categories: lower caste, and upper-caste brahmin women. While the Brahmin women are described as unattractive, weak, barren, and sexually inactive, the lower caste women are described as attractive, sensual, and fertile and even compared to 'warm earth' due to their dusky complexion. These gestures try to differentiate the women in terms of their physical attributes and sexual drive. Shripathi is a person who tries to emulate the rebellious Naranappa and he distinguishes how both women differ:

Which brahmin girl, cheek sunken, breast withered, stinking of lentil soups, which brahmin girl was equal to Belli? Her thighs are full, when she is with him she twists like a snake coupling with another writhing in the sands. [...] Not utterly black-skinned, nor pale white—her body the colour of the earth, fertile, ready for seed, warmed by an early sun (36).

The words 'cheek sunken', 'breast withered', 'pale white' and 'full', 'colour of earth', 'fertile' etc. indicate how women are categorised as objects which either fail or satisfy the affects of pleasure. The words 'snake' and 'writhe' recur in these descriptions. These words imply even Praneshyacharya's relationship with his wife Bhagirathi and the lower-caste mistress Chandri suggesting two forms of desire. Bhagirathi is an 'invalid' woman who is paralysed and needs assistance with even daily tasks. Acharya marries

her deliberately as an act of renouncing worldly pleasures: "This invalid wife is the sacrificial altar for my sacrifice" (74). The marriage, for him, becomes an act for attaining *moksha*⁴ by rejecting all forms of pleasure in an unconsumable relationship. The desire here is to achieve goodness and is identified as *shreyas* of the Katha Upanishid concept (Pillai 142), and Acharya brims with compassion serving his ailing wife and repressing his physical needs. While Chandri can be seen as the desire for pleasure, known as *preyas*, and intercourse with her fulfils and triggers all the hidden desires in him and thus unveils a new world. There is tension between both forms of desires. Praneshacharya saw himself as a person of high moral status as opposed to Naranappa or his former friend Mahabala, who live by the principles of pleasure. He has a desire to control Naranappa and to bring him to the right path when he recalls a past conversation with him. He does not excommunicate Naranappa as he took it as a challenge to reform him instead. Eventually, he realises that his desire to control Naranappa comes from his disappointment with his former friend Mahabala who abandoned his studies to visit a brothel instead (98). Even his desire for goodness stems from his egotistical notion to not be like Mahabala. However, his sexual encounter with Chandri breaks his ambition and he faces a dilemma.

The sexual encounter between Praneshacharya and Chandri towards the end of the first part of the novel becomes a crucial turning point for the story. The author constantly builds the narrative to this climatic point. The events before and after the encounter becomes clearly defined. Pandya talks about how the encounter is placed in the novel and the effects it yields: "The past and the future are arranged on either side of this incident so neatly that it is raised into one of the most well-moulded climactic points in all fiction. Before this, Praneshacharya was a sedate, self-respecting, self-satisfied Acharya. After this, the very foundation of all that he was and all that he stood for becomes questionable" (139). The narrative and the time changes around this event, and the author deliberately creates it, precisely to point out the significance attached to the incident when an ascetic breaks his pledge and gives into the world of pleasure. As Pandya points out, Praneshacharya is a transformed man and can no longer go back to his ascetic lifestyle. The third part of the novel perfectly captures his state of mind. The process of his change, his dilemma, and his constant questioning of what he stood for in the past, he is overwhelmed by a sudden influx of emotions and thoughts. Through the sexual encounter, his senses are triggered and he gains a renewed understanding of the sensory world. When he comes back

⁴ Salvation

and tends to his wife, for the first time he feels disgusted by her figure: "...he noticed her sunken breasts, her bulbous nose, her short narrow braid and they disgusted him" (74). His perception of beauty changes and he exhibits an ability to distinguish between what is considered as beautiful and what is deemed as unattractive. Thus, he uses Bhagirathi and Chandri as objects through which he attains the desires of goodness and pleasure respectively. All the women characters in the novel are denied of a conscious agency and become mere tools through which men access their desired values.

Another manifestation of desire is Praneshacharya's recital of erotic puranas which is popular and eagerly received among the young brahmins of the Agrahara. His way of narrating the stories with perfect enunciation and tone causes the young men's fantasies to grow abound and they are consumed by the adrenaline rush for desire. It can be also observed that Praneshacharya's endeavour is to limit his repressed sexuality within the boundaries of texts. In a past conversation with a drunk Naranappa, Praneshacharya remembers how he was accused of inciting a young man into adultery: Shripathi's intercourse with Belli, the outcaste woman, after he is aroused by desire, hearing Acharya's recital of the beauty of Kalidasa's Shakunthala. He sees her by the river and the rest is left to be assumed by the reader. This assumption is what Sharon Pillai finds in her essay as problematic where the woman's consent is predetermined by her caste and her body: "The inconsequentiality of Belli's volition in what transpired on the riverbank to Shripati, to Naranappa, and indeed to Praneshacharya, underlines her complete invisibility as an autonomous subject within the worldview of the novel" (137). Her speech is also curtailed by Shripati who merely sees her as an object of sexual pleasure. When Belli talks about her fear of her neighbours dying and rats coming to her hut, she fears about demons possessing the people. Shripathi does not utter a single word and keeps quiet, his thoughts are open to the reader: "Belli was alright for sleeping with, she was no good for talk" (Murthy 40). Shripati even treats Belli as his own possession and hopes that he only possess her, but, however, Praneshacharya's eyes had somewhere in the past fell upon her breasts and she is recalled in one of his feverish fantasies (79). Belli and Chandri represent the lower-caste women subjected to the whims of the upper caste men. According to Mukherjee, the depiction of low caste women as sexual objects is a common trait in Indian novels:

Chastity, satitva, and penance for widows cannot be the values of a class that does not have the economic means to enforce them, and apparently this freedom adds to the

uninhibited naturalness of the lower-caste women. But the formation of a stereotype is

not a simple process. The easy availability of lower-caste women may also have imbued them with a greater erotic aura in the male imagination (172).

Pillai calls this 'easy availability' as a euphemised term for institutionalised sexual exploitation of lower-caste women by upper-caste men (136). In *Samskara*, the lower caste women are represented as objects which fulfil the upper-caste man's desire. Women also becomes the entry point to their modern subjectivity and a tool to break free from the rigidities of tradition. The novel as a form gives access to the effects of eroticism strategically placing sexually 'available' lower-caste women as its objects. Laura Mulvey's theory of male gaze helps to understand how women are viewed as passive but erotic objects of male phantasy, where through camera lens voyeuristic gaze is projected to the audience in cinema (11). Similarly, the narration in the text, like that of the camera lens, portrays a voyeuristic male gaze where the women characters are perceived as passive objects of male desire or disgust, where caste defines the desirability or the lack of it. The choice of words used to describe the women's body further accentuates the lecherous male gaze.

III. ABSENCE OF DESIRE IN KUSUMABALE

In comparison, the novel *Kusumbale* becomes an inversion of all that *Samskara* stands for in terms of form, structure, narration, and theme. When it comes to the form, *Kusumbale* aligns close to the folk narrative where there is a lack of temporal framework, or a sense of narrator as there is an infusion of folk tales. It is difficult to place the novel in a historical context but it narrates the story of three generations of a family. A plot summary is given in the first chapter and the rest is revealed through discontinuous episodes. The novel as a form dissociates itself from a modernist realist novel like *Samskara*. Reality is blurred as inanimate objects are personified, for example: the narrative starts with the gossip of the lamp spirits or *jothammas* from each house (Mahadeva 7). There is also a cot which is given an autobiographical voice and speaks to Somappa, an upper-caste man (13). Another comparison is the description of women's characters where there are only brief descriptions of women's bodies and there are no explicit details and sexualisations as observed in *Samskara*. There is a description of Kusuma sleeping: "Every now and then beads of sweat on her forehead would break and drop from her face. Glued to all the sweat her hair, it too didn't move" (12). The description omits any explicit sexual connotations. Another description is of Kempri, an

untouchable who is ogled by men on a march called by Dalit Sangh: "...her saree hitched above her knee, her peacock-lace petticoat showing; and wearing a toe ring so pretty you could kiss it with your eyes! Looking at the body gleaming with turmeric paste, a few men in the march gave themselves away" (103). Even though Kempfi's description has a sexual undertone, which also captures the subtle notions of the male gaze, unlike in *Samskara*, the account falls short of becoming voyeuristic. The novel does not differentiate the bodily appearance in terms of caste as depicted in *Samskara* nor does it have any explicit articulation of desire as well. There is no site where sexual desire is consumed or depicted. The inter-caste relation between the untouchable Channa and upper-caste Kusuma, daughter of Somappa, is only revealed to the reader through the form of rumours of Jothammas; there is no scene where they interact at all in the narrative and there are no indications of a romantic relationship. However, it suggests an inversion of the sexual relation depicted in *Samskara*, between the upper-caste men and the lower-caste women, with no direct depiction. The roles of gender and caste interchange here. When the jothamma of the fisherman's house possesses the body of Kuriayya, an untouchable man, during the meeting of the Dalit Sangh, he rants on explaining why caste oppression is justified as the result of the history of untouchable men taking upper-caste men's wives and daughters (97). Somappa's father Yaada itself is rumoured to be fathered by a bonded labourer which is the reason why he and his mother is kicked out of the Brahmin's house. This sort of inversion becomes a retelling of bastard culture created by upper-caste men exploiting lower-caste women, a common theme recurring in modern novels. However, it is through the object of women that defines action for men. The least manifestation of desire that occurs in the novels is when the Brahmin woman Bhagavathy gets repelled and aroused when seeing Amasa, an untouchable thief who steals women's sarees during the menstrual days (81). Even though her body gets aroused thinking of being in Amasa's embrace, it is an involuntary reaction than a feeling of sexual desire. Nagaraj talks about the difference between the two novels' depiction of inter-caste relation: "Like *Samskara*, this novel too argues the belief that the contact between the sexes is the only effective way of destroying the caste system. The consequences of such contact are socially more real here, and they result in a ghastly murder [Channa's]" (228). Sexual relations are crucial in dissolving the criteria of caste as it is a result of a sexual act between two persons belonging to a homogenous community. In a way, caste controls the life of the individual and identity is determined at birth and the person has no choice as it is pre-given. Nagaraj opines that *Samskara* is more preoccupied with metaphysical part of

breaking the tradition while *Kusumabale* reflects the reality of such events. He says realism can only deal with untouchability as a theme. The life of untouchables however remains outside the purview of realism. Mahadeva, in an interview with Peter Nazareth, distinguishes the differences between the subject in *Kusumabale* as Dalits but it is not necessarily about them (Namma Banavasi & Mahadeva, 2015). He attempts to convey their presence in the novel without overtly addressing them. He wants the characters in the story to assert their own voices rather than manipulating the characters to articulate something he desires. This is evident from his writing style where it is visible that any forms of interpretations, feelings of sympathy or romance is difficult to sustain.

IV. CONCLUSION

Kusumabale becomes a challenge to modernist novels like *Samskara*. In *Samskara*, The primary focus centres around the decadence of Brahminism which inspires to go beyond the confines of the rigid traditions. However, it conveniently overlooks the oppressions created by the system towards the lower castes. The novel is caught between the eroticism of inter-caste sexual relations and metaphysical dilemma that the upper-caste protagonist achieves from it, thus blurring out the crucial problems of caste and gender structures operating in a caste society. While *Kusumabale* omits any voyeuristic gaze and does not feature any explicit articulation of desire, even though it portrays a jarring account to the realities of inter-caste relations that often lead to fatal repercussions to the people involved.

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Unveiling the Layers: Exploring Identity and Maternity in Suniti Namjoshi's *The Mothers of Maya Diip*

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Abstract— This paper investigates the intricate layers of Identity and Maternity in Suniti Namjoshi's poignant novel, *The Mothers of Maya Diip*. A critical exploration of the text unravels the complex web of relationships, cultural norms, and personal narratives that shape the protagonist's journey. By examining the intersections of feminism, queer identity, and motherhood, this analysis reveals how Suniti Namjoshi's work challenges traditional notions of love, family, and belonging. Ultimately, this study demonstrates the novel's powerful portrayal of the self as a multifaceted and dynamic entity and its enduring resonance in contemporary discussions of Identity and Maternity.



Keywords— Identity, Maternity, Personal narrative, Feminism, Motherhood

Identity refers to the complex concept of self, encompassing multifaceted attributes that define an individual, including one's values, experiences, beliefs, relationships, and affiliations. Identity can be personal, which contains unique experiences and personal traits that distinguish one person from another. Identity can also be social, which includes group memberships and roles that shape our sense of belonging and connection to others. Identity can also be cultural, with shared norms, customs, and traditions, which define a collective heritage. Erik Erikson, a prominent psychologist, remarks that- "Identity is the sum total of all the identifications we have made, the sum total of all the roles we have played" (Erikson 161). Identity is characterized by its constantly evolving dynamic nature, influenced by interactions with the surrounding environment and others. In this context, maternity refers to the roles and experiences associated with motherhood, encompassing not only biological motherhood but also social, emotional, and cultural aspects of nurturing and caregiving. Feminist scholar Adrienne Rich writes, "Maternity is a relation, not an identity" (Rich 39). Maternity shapes our sense of self, values, and beliefs, influencing our relationships, and is deeply intertwined with our identity. The intersection of maternity and identity forms the focal point for exploration in this paper, revealing

the complex ways in which experiences of motherhood shape our sense of self. Sociologist Sara Ruddick states, "Maternal identity is a relation between a woman's sense of self and her experience of mothering" (Ruddick 34). This intersection highlights the dual nature of maternity, constraining and empowering our sense of identity while defining our places within the world and shaping our understanding of ourselves. This intersectional dynamic, which explores the interconnectedness of Maternity, Identity, and cultural heritage, is exemplified in 'Mothers of Maya Diip' a novel by Suniti Namjoshi, an acclaimed Indian-born writer and poet. Born 1941 in Mumbai, India, Namjoshi has had a distinguished career spanning multiple fields. She served as an officer in the Indian Administrative Service and held academic positions in both India and Canada. Since 1972, she has been affiliated with the University of Toronto's English Department and resides in Devon. (Namjoshi) Namjoshi's literary career spans over two decades, with over 20 published books. Her impressive work collection includes poetry collections like "Poem" (1967), "Poems of Govindagraj" (1968), and "More Poems" (1971), novels like "The Conversations of Cow" (1985), "The Mothers of Maya Dip" (1989), and short stories like "Feminist Fables" (1993). Known for her provocative and

innovative works, Namjoshi explores themes of identity, lesbianism, feminism, mythology, and post-colonialism.

Building on the intersection of Maternity and Identity, Suniti Namjoshi's novel "The Mothers of Maya Diip" (1989) presents a powerful exploration of these themes in a visionary utopia created by women, for women. This novel is divided into three parts, systematically introducing, describing, and concluding this visionary society's aftermath. Through this structure, Namjoshi masterfully examines the complex interplay between motherhood, identity, and community, offering a thought-provoking critique of patriarchal norms, power dynamics, and societal expectations. K.S. Vaisali, in her article, "Mothers in a Conflict..." observes that

"Namjoshi uses 'parody' as a strategy to articulate a caricature of the patriarchal construct of the image of femininity, which involves both the rejection and subversion of its requirements. Wit, humour, satire, irony, and parody become her major tools. Deconstructing the logic of 'normality,' they strip the veil of familiarity from normality to reveal its cruelty, perversity, and unnaturalness."(K.S. Vaishali)By caricaturing traditional feminine ideals, Namjoshi highlights their artificiality and absurdity.

"The Mothers of Maya Diip" unfolds on the mystical island of Maya Diip, a place steeped in enigma and legend. At the heart of this tale are the mothers, an ensemble of complex and diverse characters, each weaving her unique thread into the rich tapestry of the island's history. These women, linked by the shared experience of motherhood, navigate the intricate pathways of longing, love, and loss. The current paper focuses on a matriarchal society and the characters' journey to this unique setting, offering a subtle exploration of sexuality and identity. Suniti Namjoshi's characters often feature humans and animals living together, blurring the lines between species. This narrative technique is evident in "The Mothers of Maya Diip," where humans and animals coexist as characters, sometimes sharing identical perspectives and experiences. Two characters, the Blue Donkey and her friend, Jyanvi, embark on a journey to a mysterious matriarchal society at the invitation of Rani Saheb, a ruler of a maternal island named Maya Diip. Blue Donkey is dubious about the existence of such an island as "there were rumours...that a matriarchy did exist, but no one was quite sure whether it was historical fact, a legend or a dream."(5). They were hosted by Saraswati at Bombay Airport. Jyanvi instantly falls in love with Saraswati; she

finds her- "Arms, legs, and limbs/ the curve of (her) throat" (7) attractive, but she stops herself from expressing herself in the initial meeting. The connection between Saraswati and Jyanvi later creates a ripple effect of conflict on the island. In Maya Diip, motherhood is essential to achieve adult status and to decide the status of the mother/citizen. Factors like bearing a girl child, being a biological mother, and adoption determine the identity of the mother, being lesser or Grade A, and respect in society. Being a mother of a boy brings disrespect and denounces the status of a mother. Rani Saheb, the ruler of the island, is a "Grade A mother three times over (that was the maximum), she was the product of a Grade A mother three times over, she had magnificent teeth, an excellent appetite, she was always clad in green, and she always prevailed, or, at least, she frequently did" (9) Although a matriarchy, the power relations work the same as patriarchy on this island. Through the eyes of characters Blue Donkey's and Jyanvi's experiences, the story highlights the societal importance of motherhood and the intricate power dynamics it entails. The roles and societal structures underscore the importance of motherhood and the complexities of achieving status within this system. Jyanvi has feelings for Saraswati, making her struggle to navigate the societal expectations around relationships. Jyanvi delivers a poetry recital, revealing her inner turmoil and confusion regarding her relationship with Saraswati. The reaction to her poem reflects the societal norms and expectations, and Jyanvi is left feeling isolated and misunderstood. Her condition portrays the intricate dynamics of a society where maternal roles indicate status, identity, and personal relationships are intertwined with societal expectations. Jyanvi faces the consequences of her views on children and motherhood in a matriarchal society. She is placed in a therapeutic cell, signifying society's disapproval of her beliefs. The Blue Donkey visits her, explaining the gravity of her situation and how it has offended the core values of the Mayans. Jyanvi's poem is interpreted as an affront to motherhood. A special hearing was arranged to determine her fate. During the hearing, Jyanvi's previous status as a Grade C mother is questioned, and she struggles to articulate her role in a patriarchal society, which is foreign to the Mayans. The Mayans find her experiences and perspectives perplexing, highlighting the cultural differences and misunderstandings. Eventually, the Matriarch assigns Jyanvi the role of a personal servant and Grade C mother to Gagri the Good, the Matriarch's granddaughter. This development led Jyanvi to seek solace in a walk along the beach with Saraswati, which naturally became a discussion about motherhood and the societal structure. Jyanvi expresses her frustration with the unfair distribution of money and societal roles, particularly her forced role as a caretaker for Gagri the Good. Saraswati tries

to ease Jyanvi's concerns, but Jyanvi is adamant in her disdain for the societal expectations of motherhood. Jyanvi's struggle with her role and her relationship with Saraswati intensifies. She is conflicted between her desire for Saraswati and her frustration with the obligations of being part of Saraswati's life, especially regarding mothering responsibilities. This conflict reveals Jyanvi's inner turmoil as she grapples with societal norms, her identity, and her feelings for Saraswati. It ends with a symbolic request by Jyanvi for the potted rose from her cell, signifying her desire for freedom and independence from societal constraints.

Jyanvi, still struggling with her role in this society, represents a poem at the Matriarch's behest. Her story, subtly critiquing the societal norms around motherhood, initially displeases the Matriarch but eventually leads to her appointment as the Matriarch's Personal Poet. This event symbolizes a turning point for Jyanvi, acknowledging her talents and offering her a path to reconcile her identity with societal expectations. Jyanvi's struggle with her role and her relationship with Saraswati intensifies. She is conflicted between her desire for Saraswati and her frustration with the obligations of being part of Saraswati's life, especially regarding mothering responsibilities. The Matriarch's decision to name Gagri and Saraswati as successors sparks a power struggle among her daughters, revealing deep-seated conflicts. The family's tension escalates, leading to the Matriarch's arrest. Meanwhile, Saraswati worries about her daughter's welfare. Shyamila and Pramila confront the Matriarch, demanding a reconsideration of the succession, but she remains firm. This confrontation underscores the struggle between traditional and new aspirations as each character grapples with identity and the future of their matriarchal society. Eventually, the Matriarch announces her abdication and plans to return to the forest, leaving her daughters stunned. Saraswati and Jyanvi form an unlikely bond as they navigate the power vacuum of the Matriarch's abdication. Saraswati initially seeks to become the next Matriarch for the sake of her daughter, Sona, but Asha's claim on behalf of her daughter, Gagri, sparks tension. As the Blue Donkey prompts them to decide on a new Matriarch, Saraswati, and Jyanvi engage in a heartfelt conversation. Saraswati, recognizing Jyanvi's growth and selflessness, surprisingly offers her support if Jyanvi chooses to reign. Jyanvi, initially hesitant and feeling unfit, is swayed by Saraswati's words and the Blue Donkey's encouragement. Despite knowing the mothers of Maya may not accept her, Jyanvi agrees to take on the role, with Saraswati promising that as Gagri's Guardian and her Consort, the mothers would accept her. Their exchange showcases a deepening trust and understanding between Saraswati and Jyanvi as they put aside their differences and

work towards a common goal. Despite initially seeking the throne herself, Saraswati's willingness to support Jyanvi highlights her growth and selflessness, while Jyanvi's acceptance of the role demonstrates her newfound confidence and willingness to lead.

Hence, this transformative moment encapsulates the novel's nuanced exploration of Identity, Maternity, and power dynamics. Ultimately, *The Mothers of Maya Diip* systematically unpacks the intricate relationships between these concepts within its matriarchal framework, revealing the complex interplay between personal identity, maternal relationships and communal expectations. The complex interactions of Mothers, Rani Sahiba, Saraswati, and Jyanvi, showcase the diverse facets of feminine experiences, the performance of identity, and the challenges inherent in motherhood and maternity.

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Comparative Insights into the Changing Patterns of Cropping Intensity in Haryana

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Abstract— "Cropping intensity" refers to the practice of producing many crops in one agricultural year in the same location. A greater percentage of the seeded area is cropped more than once when cropping intensity is increased. A number of factors, such as the availability of modern agricultural equipment, fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, and better irrigation systems, can lead to a rise in cropping intensity. Nonetheless, the average cropping intensity increased from 167.42% in 1990–1992 to 183.17% in 2022–2023 over the preceding three decades. Furthermore, the primary goal of the study is to examine the temporal perspective and geographic variance of the changing pattern of cropping intensity in the state's different agroclimatic zones. The findings indicate that the cropping intensity scenario is suitable in every agroclimatic zone, with the exception of the central one. The improved use of arable land and the increase in yield per hectare, which showed the progress of agriculture, were the overall results of these advancements.



Keywords— Technological Advancements, Green Revolution, Cropping Intensity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The foundation of India's economy, agriculture is always changing due to a variety of variables like socioeconomic dynamics, technical improvements, and climatic unpredictability. Since the Green Revolution, Haryana, one of the nation's most important agricultural states, has served as a hub for agricultural innovation. The agrarian environment of the state has seen significant changes throughout time, which has led to a critical analysis of its patterns of cropping intensity. The small land holdings, the kind of soil, the unpredictable monsoon rains, and the combination of irrigation infrastructure have all had an impact on the aerial distribution of cropping intensity. Since the reform, the state has witnessed a number of changes in how agricultural land is used, such as the setting up of irrigation systems, improvements in agricultural technology, and the profitability of different agricultural enterprises. The "new agricultural strategy" has made intensifying farmland use a top priority in an effort to bridge the widening gap between global population growth and food security.

One important measure of agricultural production and land utilisation efficiency is cropping intensity, which is the ratio of the gross cropped area to the net sown area (Stefan Siebert, 2020). Deciphering the intricacies of agricultural practices and creating plans that support sustainable land use require an understanding of the differences in cropping intensity (Hayami et al., 1971). With the title "Variations in the Cropping Intensity Pattern in Haryana: A Comparative Analysis," this study delves deeply into the many factors that influence the cropping intensity landscape throughout Haryana's several zones.

Significance of the study: -

This research contributes to both academic knowledge and real-world applications in the fields of agricultural and regional development, which makes it extremely important for a number of reasons.

1. **Resource Management:** Understanding cropping intensity patterns helps in efficient management of essential resources like water, soil, and fertilizers, which are crucial in a water-stressed state like Haryana.

2. *Economic Impact:* Analyzing cropping intensity can reveal potential areas for enhancing agricultural productivity, impacting the livelihoods of farmers and contributing to the state's agricultural economy.
3. *Environmental Implications:* Intensive cropping often leads to soil degradation, reduced fertility, and other ecological impacts. Studying these variations helps in assessing the environmental sustainability of current practices.
4. *Regional Development:* Comparing cropping patterns across different regions can aid in identifying disparities, allowing for targeted interventions to uplift underperforming areas and promote balanced agricultural growth.
5. *Policy Formulation:* The findings from such an analysis provide valuable insights for policymakers to design region-specific agricultural policies and support programs that optimize cropping patterns.

Objectives of the Study: -

- i. To analyze spatial and temporal variations in cropping intensity across different regions of Haryana.
- ii. To identify factors influencing cropping intensity patterns and recommend region-specific strategies for optimizing agricultural practices.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods technique is used in this study to examine cropping intensity in Haryana. The Department of Economics and Statistical Affairs, Panchkula, Haryana, provided the secondary agriculture data that served as its secondary source. The current study examined the differences in cropping intensity in Haryana throughout two time periods, using data collected at the district level from various government publications issued by the Department of Economics and Statistical Affairs. An average of the data for three consecutive years at each point in time has been used to avoid anomalies brought on by annual weather fluctuations. The collected data is processed and analyzed to create tables and maps. Making maps has been done with ArcGIS software.

A formula has been used to calculate the cropping intensity which is as follows: -

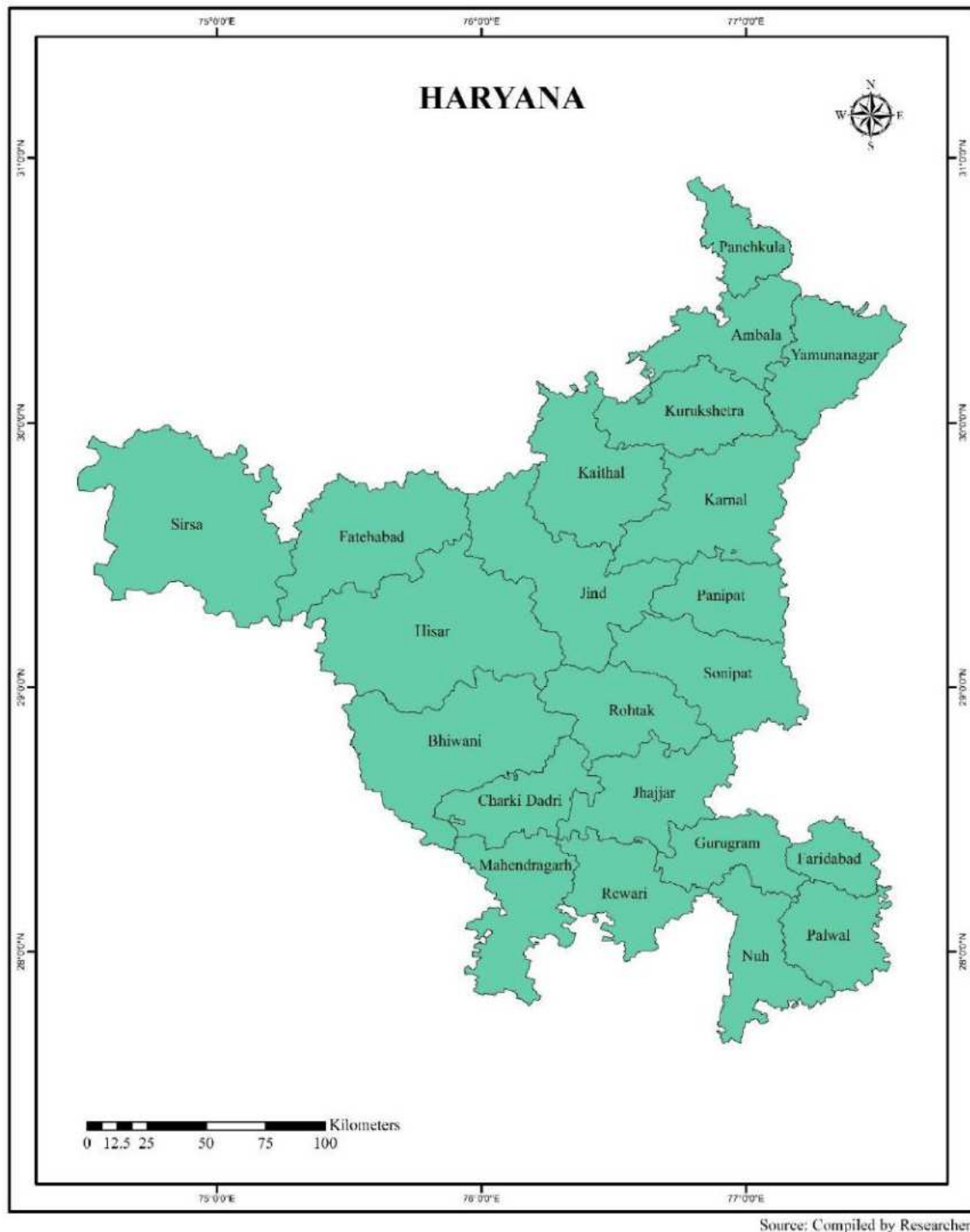
$$\text{Cropping Intensity} = \frac{\text{Total Cropped Area}}{\text{Net Sown Area}} * 100$$

Study Area

Haryana, a northwestern state of India, is characterized by its rich agricultural heritage, geographical diversity, and historical significance. Established on November 1, 1966, following the reorganization of the erstwhile state of Punjab, Haryana has since evolved into a key agricultural hub, contributing significantly to the nation's food production. Geographically, the state is landlocked, bordered by Punjab to the north and west, Himachal Pradesh to the northwest, Uttarakhand to the northeast, Uttar Pradesh to the east, and Rajasthan to the south and southwest. Its proximity to the national capital, Delhi, enhances its economic and strategic importance. The current study is focused on the state of Haryana, which is situated between coordinates 27°39' and 30°55' N and longitudes 74°28' to 77°36' E. With a total size of 44212 sq. km, the State of Haryana occupies 1.4% area of the country. The soil richness and geography of the State are remarkably diversified. The administrative structure consists of 154 towns, 6841 villages, 143 Community Development Blocks, 22 districts, and 95 tehsils (Statistical Abstract of Haryana, 2022-23)..

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The collected data has been examined to provide insightful findings, which are presented in the results and discussion section. The findings, which give a summary of three decades of cropping intensity in the state of Haryana, are highlighted in the results. Following that, a critical discussion of these findings concerning the study's goals follows. A thorough grasp of the research's breadth is provided by the exploration of the results' ramifications as well as the acknowledgment of any study limitations. This volume's overall goal is to thoroughly analyze the study's findings and add to the current conversation in the pertinent academic or professional sector.



Agro-Climatic Zones of Haryana: -

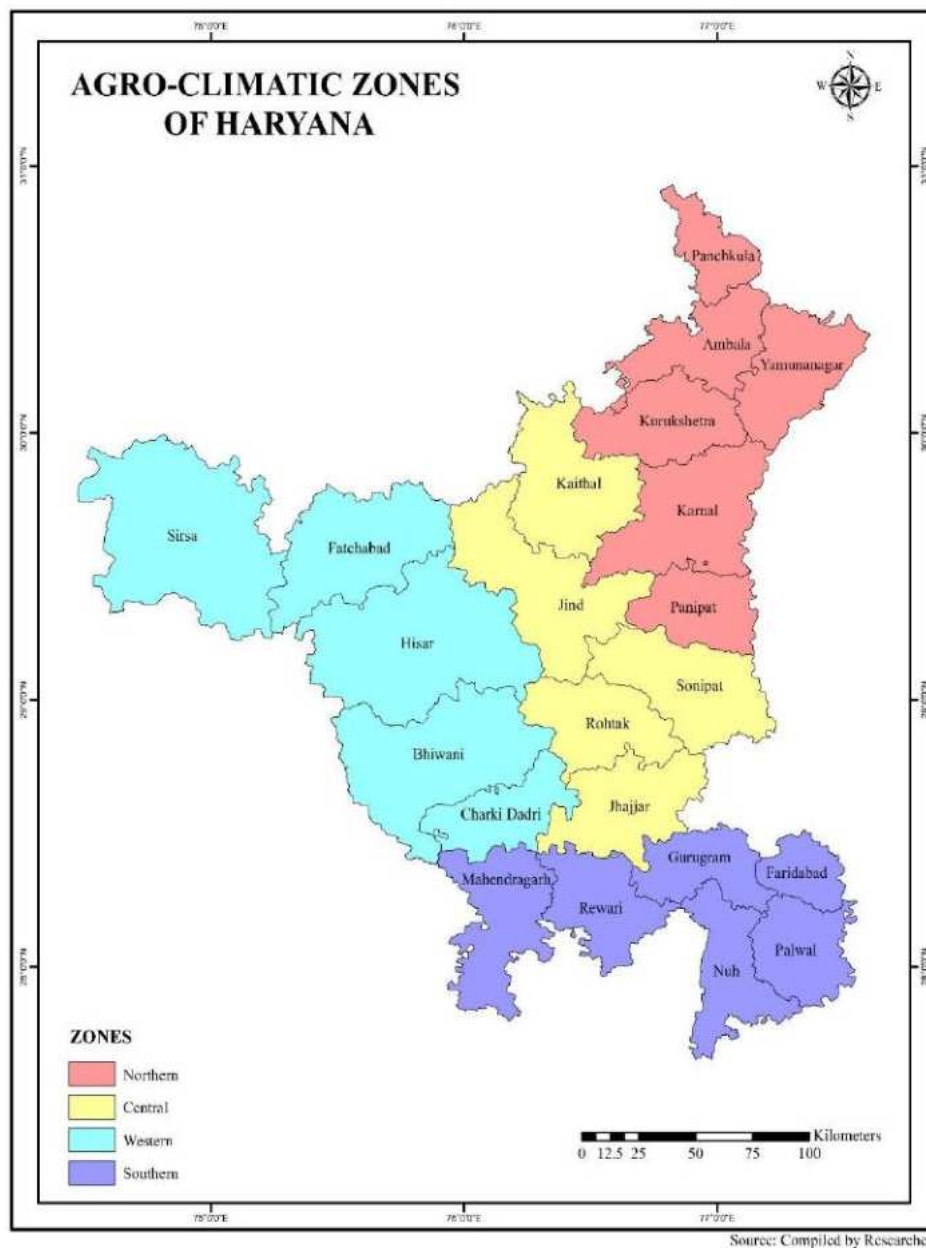
The soil and climate in a specific area mostly dictate the cultivation pattern and crop output. Zoning is a tool used in land-use planning to separate areas with similar growth potential and boundaries. A particular geographic

region can be classified into one of two zones. To facilitate data analysis and improve the study's applicability for planning and research on agricultural growth, Haryana has been divided into four uniform agro-climatic zones, which are as follows:

Table No. 1: Agro-Climatic Zones of Haryana

Sr. No.	Zones	Districts
1	Northern	Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Panipat
2	Central	Kaithal, Jind, Sonipat, Rohtak, Jhajjar
3	Western	Bhiwani, Hisar, Fatehabad, Sirsa, Charkhi Dadri
4	Southern	Faridabd, Gurugram, Rewari, Mahendragarh, Palwal, Nuh

Source: Economics of Farming in Haryana, 2020-21



Source: Compiled by Researcher

Characteristics of Agro-Climatic Zones: -

Haryana’s division into four agro-climatic zones—Northern, Central, Western, and Southern—reflects its diverse agricultural landscape shaped by varying climate

and soil conditions. The **Northern Zone**, including districts such as Panchkula, Ambala, and Karnal, has abundant rainfall and fertile soils, ideal for high-yield crops like wheat, rice, and sugarcane. The **Central Zone**—Kaithal,

Jind, and Rohtak—has moderate water resources and robust irrigation systems that support staple crops like wheat and pulses. The **Western Zone**, which includes Bhiwani, Hisar, and Sirsa, is drier, relying on irrigation for crops suited to semi-arid conditions, like cotton, wheat, and mustard. Lastly, the **Southern Zone** (Faridabad, Gurugram, and Rewari) experiences arid and semi-arid conditions, where water scarcity necessitates drought-resistant crops such as bajra (millet), mustard, and pulses. This zonal structure allows for tailored agricultural practices and efficient resource management across the diverse conditions of Haryana. Promoting the development of crops like pulses

and pearl millet, although irrigation is still crucial. A semi-arid environment with moderate temperatures prevails in the central zone, which includes Rohtak, Sonipat, Jind, Kaithal, and Jhajjar. Thanks in great part to canal irrigation, crops including wheat, rice, and sugarcane flourish there. Reliance on irrigation, a variety of crop cultivation, and the use of intensive farming techniques are characteristics shared by all zones, demonstrating Haryana's resilience to a range of agroclimatic circumstances. The following are some traits of the sub-zones that make up the Trans-Gangetic Zone.

Table No. 2: Characteristics of Sub-Zones of Trans-Gangetic Zones

Sub Zone	Districts	Rainfall (in mm)	Climate	Soil	Crops
Plain	Kurukshetra, Karnal, Jind, Sonipat, Rohtak, Faridabad, Panipat, Kaithal Gurugram, Palwal, and Nuh	720	Semi-arid to Dry Sub-humid	Alluvial	Wheat, Rice, Maize, Sugarcane
Foothills of Shivalik & Himalayas	Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar	1000	Semi-arid to Dry Sub-humid	Calcareous	Wheat, Rice, Maize, Sugarcane
Scarce Rainfall Arid Region	Hisar, Fatehabad Sirsa, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, Rewari, Mahendragarh	360	Arid and extremely arid	Calcareous, Sierozemic, Alluvial, Desert	Wheat, Cotton, Gram, Bajra, Rice

Source: Planning Commission of India

Cropping Intensity in Haryana: -

Cropping intensity in Haryana, a critical measure of agricultural productivity, reflects the extent of land utilization and plays a significant role in food security, economic growth, and sustainable farming practices. Haryana's cropping intensity stands at an impressive 184%, well above the national average, with farmers generally cultivating more than one crop on the same plot annually. However, this intensity varies considerably across its four distinct agro-climatic zones—Northern, Central, Western, and Southern—each with unique environmental conditions affecting cropping patterns, resource availability, and agricultural practices.

The **Northern Zone**, comprising districts like Panchkula, Ambala, and Karnal, enjoys favorable climatic conditions with abundant rainfall and fertile soils, allowing for a cropping intensity above 200%. Here, irrigation from rivers like the Yamuna supports a double-cropping pattern dominated by wheat in the Rabi season and rice in the Kharif season.

In contrast, the **Central Zone**, covering Kaithal, Jind, and Rohtak, has moderately favorable conditions supported by strong irrigation infrastructure, resulting in a cropping intensity between 180% and 200%, with wheat,

rice, and pulses as the primary crops. The **Western Zone**, including Bhiwani, Hisar, and Sirsa, has semi-arid conditions and lower rainfall, which require intensive irrigation, primarily from canals, to support crops like cotton, wheat, and mustard. This region's cropping intensity ranges from 150% to 170% and emphasizes water-efficient and resilient crops, although water scarcity remains a major challenge.

The **Southern Zone**, covering Faridabad, Gurugram, and Rewari, is the most arid region with the lowest cropping intensity, between 120% and 150%, as farmers mainly grow drought-resistant crops like bajra (millet), mustard, and pulses, suitable for the limited water availability and harsh climatic conditions. In addition to agro-climatic factors, the intensity in each region is influenced by soil health, irrigation infrastructure, and government policies promoting sustainable practices. However, intensive cultivation, particularly in the Northern Zone, has led to groundwater depletion and soil degradation, raising concerns about long-term sustainability.

Understanding and managing these variations is essential for Haryana's agricultural planning, allowing for tailored resource allocation, infrastructure development,

and policy implementation to balance productivity with environmental sustainability across the state's varied landscape. In summary, Haryana's cropping intensity reflects both opportunities for increased productivity and challenges in resource management, and it highlights the importance of sustainable agricultural practices that adapt to each zone's unique conditions for long-term resilience and growth.

Spatial Pattern of Cropping Intensity: -

The cropping intensity index showed a geographical variety during the fiscal year 2022–23, ranging from the lowest value of 129.41 percent in Gurgaon district to the maximum value of 200 percent in Panchkula district. All the districts have been categorized into the following groups to examine the state's geographical disparities in cropping intensity.

Table No. 3: Category-wise Cropping Intensity, 1990-91

Cropping Intensity (%)	Categories	Number of Districts	Districts Included
Above 190	High	3	Karnal, Sonipat, Jind
170-190	Medium	3	Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Hisar
Below 170	Low	10	Ambala, Yamunanagar, Panipat, Rohtak, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Rewari, Mahendragarh, Bhiwani, Sirsa

Source: Department of Economic and Statistical Analysis, 1990-91

Table No. 4: Category-wise Cropping Intensity, 2022-23

Cropping Intensity (%)	Categories	Number of Districts	Districts Included
Above 190	High	13	Panchkula, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Panipat, Kaithal, Jhajjar, Sonipat, Palwal, Jind, Hisar, Fatehabad, Sirsa
170-190	Medium	7	Charkhi Dadri, Faridabad, Gurugram, Nuh, Rewari, Rohtak, Bhiwani,
Below 170	Low	2	Ambala, Mahendragarh

Source: Computed by Researcher from Statistical Abstract, 2022-23

Between 1990-91 and 2022-23, Haryana's cropping intensity saw notable shifts across districts. In 1990-91, only 3 districts (Karnal, Sonipat, Jind) had a high cropping intensity (above 190%), whereas by 2022-23, this category expanded to 13 districts, including Panchkula, Yamunanagar, and Hisar. Medium-intensity districts (170-190%) increased from 3 to 7, with districts like Bhiwani and

Rewari joining. Low-intensity areas (below 170%) decreased significantly from 10 to only 2 districts, now limited to Ambala and Mahendragarh. This change indicates overall improvements in agricultural practices, irrigation, and resource availability across Haryana, enhancing cropping intensity in many regions.

Table No. 5: District-wise Cropping Intensity, 1990-91, 2022-23

Sr. No.	Districts	Cropping Intensity	
		1990-91	2022-23
1.	Ambala	165.75	150.33
2.	Panchkula	-	218.18
3.	Yamunanagar	157.14	194.01
4.	Kurukshetra	189.21	202.75
5.	Karnal	217.42	193
6.	Panipat	135.48	197.91
7.	Kaithal	170.23	203.06

8.	Rohtak	123.73	174.45
9.	Jhajjar	-	192.50
10.	Sonipat	195.35	206.41
11.	Jind	200	203.57
12.	Faridabad	155.80	178.78
13.	Palwal	-	193.06
14.	Gurugram	154.78	170.33
15.	Mewat/Nuh	-	171.81
16.	Rewari	154.69	174.60
17.	Mahendragarh	167.95	151.89
18.	Bhiwani	153.40	174.82
19.	Charkhi Dadri	-	182.14
20.	Hisar	178.04	200.30
21.	Fatehabad	-	195.11
22.	Sirsa	159.52	192.36

Source: Department of Economic & Statistical Affairs, 1990-91, 2022-23

- Data not available

The map and table compare the cropping intensity across various districts in Haryana for the years 1990-91 and 2022-23, showing how agricultural practices and land use have evolved. The maps illustrate the spatial distribution of cropping intensity, categorized into three levels: low (0-170%), medium (170-190%), and high (190-217% in 1990-91, and 200-218% in 2022-23). The table further details the exact cropping intensity percentage for each district, showcasing shifts in productivity, which reflect advancements or declines in farming practices, irrigation, and resource management in different parts of Haryana.

In 1990-91, the cropping intensity was generally lower across most districts, with only a few districts like Karnal, Sonipat, and Jind reaching high levels (above 190%). These districts, located in central and northern Haryana, benefitted from fertile soils and better access to water resources, which supported a higher cropping intensity. Meanwhile, districts such as Panipat, Rohtak, and Faridabad displayed relatively low cropping intensity (0-170%), suggesting limited water availability, lesser infrastructural support, or soil conditions that were less favorable for intensive cropping. Many districts, particularly in southern and western Haryana, faced challenges related to arid conditions and water scarcity, which contributed to their lower productivity.

By 2022-23, significant improvements in cropping intensity can be observed across several districts, reflecting

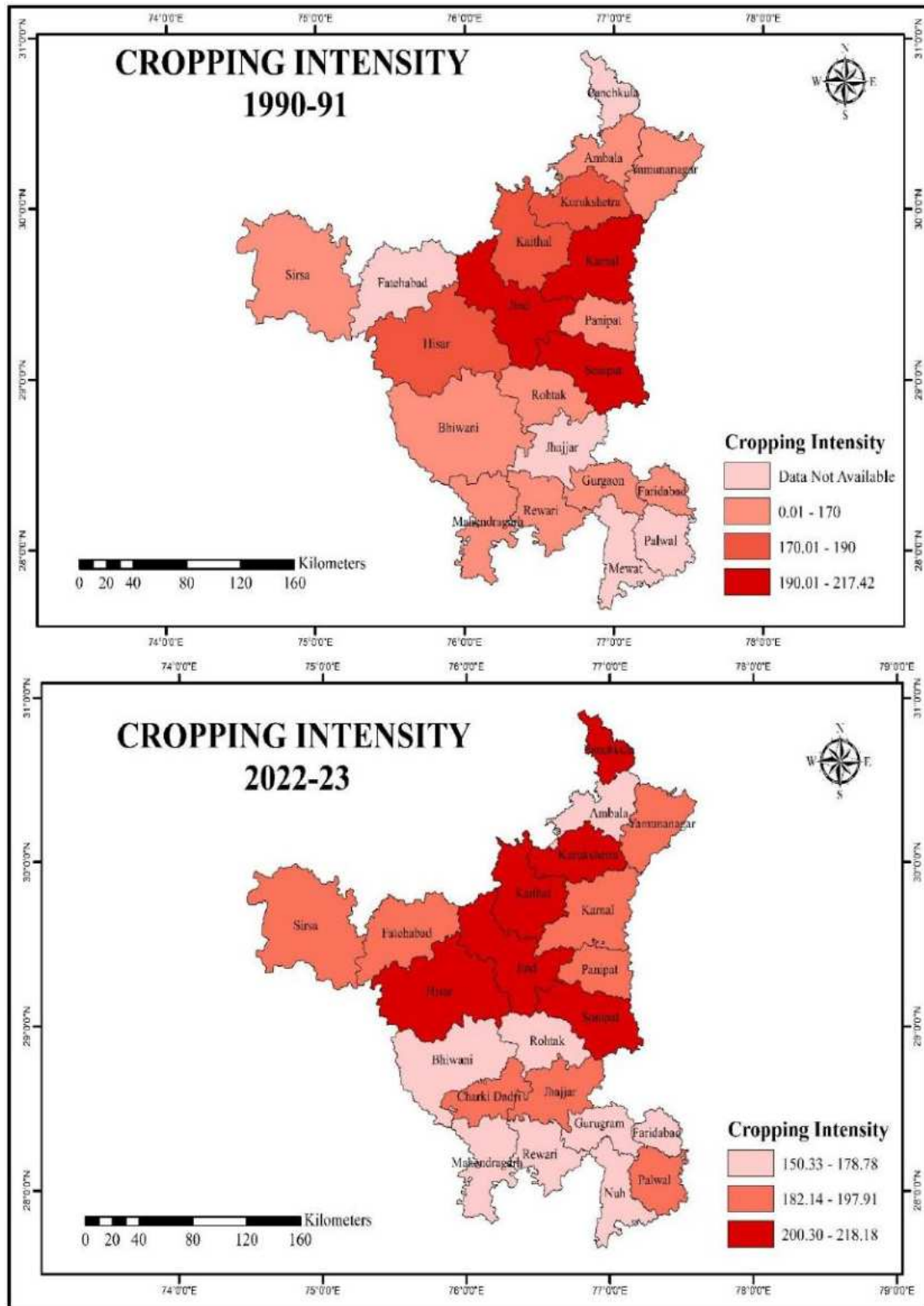
advances in irrigation, agricultural practices, and policies that have bolstered productivity. For instance, Panchkula, which did not have data in 1990-91, registered the highest cropping intensity at 218.18% in 2022-23. Other districts like Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, and Kaithal also saw substantial increases, reaching or surpassing 200% cropping intensity. These improvements suggest enhanced agricultural infrastructure and irrigation systems, especially in regions with previously moderate productivity. Meanwhile, districts like Ambala and Mahendragarh experienced a decline in cropping intensity, indicating potential challenges with resource depletion or limitations in agricultural expansion.

The southern and western districts, traditionally lower in cropping intensity, also witnessed moderate improvements. For instance, districts like Bhiwani and Rohtak increased their cropping intensity, moving from the low to medium category. Newer data for districts like Charkhi Dadri and Nuh also reflect moderate productivity levels, indicative of improvements in water management and adoption of crop varieties suited to local conditions. However, some areas, such as Mahendragarh, saw a decrease in cropping intensity, possibly due to declining groundwater levels or insufficient irrigation facilities. This variance across regions underscores the importance of localized agricultural policies to address specific challenges related to soil health, water availability, and climate.

Overall, the table and maps together highlight the dynamic changes in Haryana's agricultural landscape over

the past few decades. The increases in cropping intensity in many districts indicate successful interventions and advancements in agricultural practices, but areas with declining intensity or stagnation suggest the need for sustainable approaches. Policymakers and agricultural

experts can leverage this data to focus on regions that need better infrastructure, sustainable water usage practices, and resilient crop varieties, ensuring balanced agricultural development across Haryana.



Source: Compiled by Researcher

IV. CONCLUSION

The analysis of cropping intensity in Haryana from 1990-91 to 2022-23 reveals notable shifts in agricultural productivity and resource management, influenced by advancements in irrigation, infrastructure, and policy support. Districts like Karnal, Sonapat, and Jind, which initially had high cropping intensities, have benefitted from fertile soil and water access, leading to sustained productivity. The significant improvement across districts such as Panchkula, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, and Kaithal suggests successful efforts to enhance agricultural infrastructure and irrigation systems, pushing their cropping intensities to or above 200%. These advances reflect effective policy and resource allocation that bolstered farming practices in previously moderate-intensity regions. However, the decline in districts like Ambala and Mahendragarh signals challenges, possibly from resource depletion or limited expansion options, highlighting the importance of sustainable practices and localized interventions.

Southern and western districts, traditionally limited by arid conditions, have shown moderate improvements, indicating successful water management and adaptation of crop varieties to local conditions. Still, certain areas continue to face challenges that need targeted solutions, such as groundwater depletion or insufficient irrigation infrastructure, as seen in Mahendragarh. The data overall underlines the evolving agricultural landscape in Haryana, where increased cropping intensity across many districts points to beneficial developments, yet the decline in some regions signals the need for careful resource planning and resilience-building measures. Policymakers and agricultural experts can use these insights to prioritize support for sustainable water use, resilient crop choices, and infrastructure enhancements tailored to regional needs, fostering balanced growth across Haryana's diverse agricultural zones.

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The Struggle for Reconciliation: Trauma and Memory in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea*

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Abstract— Abdulrazak Gurnah, a Tanzanian-British Nobel Laureate, is a celebrated name in modern literature. His sixth novel, *By the Sea* (2001), delves into the aftermaths of migration and displacement, particularly highlighting the impact of imperialism on native culture and identity. In the novel, Gurnah explores the complex interplay between trauma and memory in the context of migration and displacement. The novel's central characters, Omer and Latif, are both marked by experiences of trauma, and their struggles to reconcile these experiences with their present lives are a major theme of the work. At the heart of the novel's exploration of trauma and memory is the idea that memory is a site of ongoing struggle and negotiation. Both Omer and Latif are haunted by memories of their past, which exert a powerful influence on their present lives. For Omer, memories of his childhood in Zanzibar are deeply intertwined with the trauma of his father's death, while for Latif, memories of his time in prison are a constant source of anguish. Gurnah's novel suggests that acculturation is inherently traumatic, as it involves a rupture with one's past and the need to forge a new identity in a foreign land. However, the novel also suggests that memory can be a powerful tool for healing and reconciliation. By revisiting the past and confronting their traumas head-on, both Omer and Latif can find a measure of peace and acceptance. Through an analysis of the novel's characters and their struggles with memory and trauma, this research paper explores how trauma and memory impact the experiences of migrants and refugees, and how cultural sensitivity and awareness can inform trauma healing practices.



Keywords— Migration, Displacement, Imperialism, Trauma, Identity, Memory

INTRODUCTION

In the year 2021, the Nobel Prize for Literature, the much-coveted award was bestowed upon the Tanzanian-British novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah. The Swedish Academy's award speech to Gurnah encapsulates the significance of his literary oeuvre "for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the Gulf between cultures and continents". Born in the year 1948, on the little-known island of Zanzibar located in Eastern Africa, he arrived in England as an asylum-seeker at the tender age of eighteen years. Gurnah served as a professor of postcolonial literature at the University of

Kent for a long period. He has published ten novels and several short stories. The long list of full-length novels includes *Memory of Departure* (1987) followed by *Pligim's Way* (1988) and *Dottie* (1990). His novel *Paradise* (1994) was short-listed for the Booker Prize and Whitbread Prize. His other published works include *Admiring Silence* (1996), *By the Sea* (2001), *Desertion* (2005), *The Last Gift* (2011), *Gravel Heart* (2017) and *Afterlives* (2020). Gao Xing puts all the thematic elements of Gurnah's literary works in a nutshell when he makes the following observations, "The state of migratory mobility and the imagined life in other lands became his interest. Migration, displacement, loss, frustration and loneliness became constant

themes in his writing. (Gao203). There is no doubt, that Gurnah's works are replete with the themes of exile, migration, childhood suffering and abandonment. The renowned literary critic and novelist were constrained to abandon his home town as a youngster and taking inspiration from his own life experiences, his stories are an attempt to retell the stories of young protagonists who are abandoned, sold to slavery or auctioned off to early and forced marriages.

By the Sea (2001) by Abdulrazak Gurnah explores the nodal elements of flight, exile, alienation, and the psychological mark of being a colonial subject and then the citizen of a fledgling, chaotic postcolonial country. The situation in *By the Sea* involves two protagonists, namely Saleh and Latif who come together in exile in a small English city near the sea far away from the East coast of Africa where they once resided. They share a very personal, intertwined and painful history and at the very centre of the novel lay their discussion about that history. Through his protagonists Gurnah questions and interrogates if reconciliation is possible. The answer lies in the fact that this is possible only if both parties are convinced and have experienced enough life to acquire some wisdom. This is remarkable and reflected in Saleh's conversation. The story is about the loss of prized possessions, identity, a house and family.

Trauma and memory hold key positions in the discipline of postcolonial studies as both open new avenues for the in-depth understanding of the experiences of the colonized and marginalized communities. Both these concepts become emblematic which represent and highlight the psychological and emotional scars left by colonialism and its aftermath as well as how these memories shape and influence collective identities, cultural narratives and historical understanding. In the discipline of postcolonial studies, trauma is understood in terms of a response to violence, displacement and oppression experienced by the colonized communities. Colonial systems inflicted physical, psychological and cultural harm on individuals and communities which continues to resonate across generations.

Postcolonial scholars examine how colonial trauma disrupts identities, leading to fragmentation, alienation and dislocation. For example, Frantz Fanon's masterpiece *The Wretched of the Earth* delves deeply into the psychic trauma of colonization and its huge impact on both the colonized and the colonizer.

Abdulrazak Gurnah's mesmerizing novel, *By the Sea*, serves as a captivating exploration of the profound themes of trauma, memory, and the unyielding pursuit of reconciliation. Set against the evocative backdrop of

Zanzibar's colonial legacy, Gurnah weaves a tapestry of deeply nuanced characters whose lives intertwine amidst the haunting echoes of personal and collective traumas. Through their stories, Gurnah invites readers to embark on an introspective journey, delving into the complexities of healing and the power of memory in the face of historical injustices.

In *By the Sea*, Gurnah masterfully captures the intricate nature of trauma, exposing its far-reaching consequences on individuals' emotional landscapes. The novel delves into the psychological and emotional impact of trauma, unravelling its ability to fracture identities, engender feelings of displacement, and instil a profound sense of loss. Gurnah's characters bear witness to the weight of personal traumas that haunt their present lives, magnifying the challenges they face in reconciling with their pasts and forging a path towards healing.

Memory emerges as an indispensable companion to trauma in Gurnah's exploration. By delving into the intricate interplay between trauma and memory, the novel illuminates memory's transformative power. It becomes a vessel through which individuals strive to make sense of their experiences, connect with their identities, and navigate the complexities of reconciliation. Gurnah's nuanced portrayal of memory as both a repository of pain and a source of hope underscores its role as a guiding force in the characters' arduous journeys towards healing.

To fully grasp the profound impact of trauma and memory, it is imperative to consider the historical and socio-political context within which the novel unfolds. Zanzibar's colonial legacy, rife with the remnants of slavery and colonialism, forms a backdrop that shapes the characters' experiences. Gurnah skillfully navigates this landscape, unveiling the lasting effects of historical traumas on both individuals and communities. By immersing readers in the complexities of these historical injustices, the novel invites us to reflect on the enduring struggles faced in reconciling with the past and moving towards a future marked by understanding and forgiveness.

Through the struggles of the characters, most notably Salim, *By the Sea* illuminates the deeply personal and collective dimensions of trauma. Salim's journey becomes emblematic of the larger societal quest for reconciliation. As he grapples with personal traumas within the context of his community's collective trauma, Gurnah paints a vivid picture of the intricate dynamics at play when confronting historical injustices and seeking healing. The novel encapsulates the delicate balance between personal healing and the pursuit of collective

reconciliation, highlighting the challenges, complexities, and ultimately, the potential for growth and redemption.

Gurnah's narrative techniques and symbolism further enrich the exploration of trauma and memory in *By the Sea*. Through fragmented narratives and multiple perspectives, the author skillfully mirrors the fragmented nature of memory itself, offering glimpses into the characters' fractured sense of self and the dissonance they grapple with. Symbolism and metaphor serve as poignant vehicles for capturing the characters' innermost struggles, hopes, and aspirations. Gurnah's literary prowess imbues the novel with a lyrical beauty that resonates with readers, inviting them to embark on an immersive and transformative journey of self-discovery.

In a global context where societies grapple with their histories of trauma and reconciliation, *By the Sea* offers valuable insights. By examining the novel's themes and narrative strategies in comparison with other postcolonial literary works, we can glean essential lessons for healing initiatives and addressing historical injustices. The nuanced portrayal of trauma, memory, and the intricacies of forgiveness in the novel provides valuable perspectives.

The opening of the novel sets the tone for Saleh's exile and his fractured identity. As a refugee seeking asylum in England, Saleh reflects on his past, his loss of family, and the alienation he experiences:

I have lived through most of the disasters and betrayals of the late twentieth century: political fraud, deceit, institutionalized cruelty, terrible inhumanity visited on my people, and now exile. So now I feel like I am dead already, a hollow man... I have lived in these dead years for so long I no longer know how to find joy, or feel trust (Gurnah 5).

This passage demonstrates Saleh's trauma stemming from historical and political upheavals, as well as the loss of trust in people and institutions, underscoring the erosion of his identity. Saleh's identity is further fragmented by his forced departure from Zanzibar, his homeland, where colonial violence and local betrayals rendered him an exile: For years now, I have lived with the memory of what was once my home, and I cannot describe to you the sadness of knowing that I can never go back. (Gurnah 17).

Here, the trauma of losing his home becomes intertwined with his sense of self, suggesting that identity is deeply tied to place. The sense of being permanently dislocated creates a profound existential wound.

Trauma and Memory

The past is always there waiting to ambush you. Trauma comes back in dreams, in the reflection of water, in the taste of salt on the tongue (Gurnah 72).

Trauma is a deeply complex and multifaceted experience that can have profound and lasting effects on individuals. It encompasses a range of psychological and emotional responses to highly distressing or life-threatening events. Traumatic experiences can result from various sources such as violence, abuse, natural disasters, war, or witnessing traumatic events. Understanding trauma involves recognizing its far-reaching impact on an individual's mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

Trauma can have a significant psychological and emotional impact on individuals. It may lead to symptoms such as anxiety, depression, dissociation, nightmares, flashbacks, and intrusive thoughts. Individuals who have experienced trauma often face challenges in regulating their emotions, experiencing heightened levels of fear, anger, or emotional numbness. These responses can interfere with their daily functioning and relationships, creating a profound sense of vulnerability and distress. Trauma acts as a disruptive force, shattering an individual's sense of safety, stability, and continuity. It can rupture one's worldview and challenge their fundamental beliefs about oneself, others, and the world. Trauma disrupts the natural processes of meaning-making and sense of self, leading to a fragmented and disorienting experience of reality. The effects of trauma can extend beyond the immediate aftermath of the event, persisting long-term and influencing an individual's thoughts, behaviours, and relationships.

Memory plays a crucial role in the experience and aftermath of trauma. Memories of traumatic events can be vivid and intrusive, leading individuals to relive the trauma through flashbacks or nightmares. However, memory also serves as a vital tool for survival and adaptation in the face of trauma. Memory serves as a tool for survival by enabling individuals to learn from past experiences and make informed decisions in the present. In the context of trauma, memory helps individuals to recognize and avoid potential dangers, increasing their chances of self-preservation. Memories of traumatic experiences may activate heightened vigilance, preparing individuals to respond effectively to threatening situations.

Memory also plays a pivotal role in the construction of identity. Traumatic experiences shape individuals' sense of self and influence their perceptions of the world

around them. Memories of trauma can become integrated into an individual's narrative, shaping their understanding of who they are and how they relate to others. These memories can have a profound impact on self-esteem, self-worth, and the development of personal beliefs and values.

Postcolonial literature often explores the interplay between trauma and colonialism, shedding light on the lasting impact of historical injustices and oppressive systems on individuals and communities. These literary works delve into the traumatic experiences endured by individuals living under colonial rule, examining the psychological, emotional, and social consequences of colonialism. Postcolonial literature provides a platform for articulating and grappling with the complex layers of trauma, memory, and identity.

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* offers a compelling representation of trauma within the postcolonial context of Zanzibar. The novel explores the traumatic legacy of colonialism, slavery, and the struggles faced by individuals and communities in reconciling with their past. Through his evocative storytelling, Gurnah delves into the psychological and emotional impact of trauma, unravelling its disruptive force on the characters' lives. *By the Sea* serves as a poignant example of how postcolonial literature can illuminate the intricacies of trauma, memory, and the quest for reconciliation within the context of historical injustices.

In *By the Sea*, Abdulrazak Gurnah explores themes of trauma, displacement, and exile, particularly through the experiences of his protagonist, Saleh Omar. The novel depicts both individual and collective trauma, often related to the impact of colonialism and forced migration.

Saleh, an elderly asylum seeker from Zanzibar, begins the novel as a character who refuses to speak upon his arrival in England. His silence is not only a literal state but also a metaphor for the unspeakable trauma he carries from his past. He notes, I have no desire to explain my words, nor to speak the words they want to hear (Gurnah 1). His silence represents his internalized trauma, his reluctance to relive the past, and the difficulty of articulating his experiences of loss and betrayal.

The novel describes Saleh's loss of family and identity due to the political turmoil in Zanzibar. After his property is seized and his family disintegrates, Saleh reflects on his alienation: I had been hollowed out by loss. I had lost the way of telling, and in so doing I had lost myself (Gurnah 145). This sense of "hollowing out" is a recurring metaphor for the emotional and psychological

toll of displacement, where the trauma of losing loved ones and home is coupled with the erasure of identity.

Saleh's trauma is intertwined with the betrayal he experienced at the hands of his friend, Hussein, who swindled him out of his business and property. This personal betrayal compounds the trauma of losing his homeland and is a microcosm of the broader historical injustices wrought by colonialism. Saleh explains the depth of his betrayal: In the face of his betrayal I was mute, as I was in the face of everything else (Gurnah 157). His inability to speak in the moment reflects the overwhelming nature of his trauma.

The novel portrays migration not as a resolution to trauma but as a perpetuation of it. As Saleh settles in England, he reflects on his fragmented sense of self, exacerbated by his status as a refugee: There are no words for it in any language, the desolation of being without a place in the world. I know this feeling will be with me forever (Gurnah 212). His exile from Zanzibar is not just a physical displacement but a psychological burden, where the past continues to haunt his present.

These examples from *By the Sea* illustrate Gurnah's nuanced portrayal of trauma, highlighting how personal and collective experiences of loss, betrayal, and displacement leave enduring scars on individuals.

In *By the Sea*, trauma and memory are intricately intertwined, with memory serving as both a source of pain and a potential path towards healing. Gurnah's narrative skillfully navigates the characters' fragmented memories, revealing their attempts to make sense of the past and reconcile conflicting emotions. Through the characters' experiences, the novel highlights the challenges and complexities of navigating trauma and memory, inviting readers to reflect on their understanding of these themes and their significance within postcolonial contexts.

In *By the Sea*, Abdulrazak Gurnah explores how trauma and memory are deeply intertwined, particularly through the experiences of the novel's protagonist, Saleh Omar. The narrative delves into the ways in which traumatic memories continue to haunt those who have experienced loss, displacement, and exile. Below are key examples of how trauma and memory are intricately linked in the novel:

Saleh frequently reflects on his past, his memories steeped in trauma and regret. His recollections are fragmented, and his attempts to reconstruct his life are filled with pain. He remarks, I am back again in the world I was once part of, but my life in it is only a story I tell, a memory I turn over in my mind, a fragmentary history which is no longer truly mine (Gurnah 87). This passage

reveals how his memories are incomplete and fraught with the trauma of losing his home and identity. His past is no longer a coherent narrative but a disjointed set of traumatic memories that he struggles to make sense of.

Saleh's memories are often painful, and he is reluctant to revisit certain moments from his past. His trauma is not only rooted in events but in the act of remembering itself. He observes, The past is an ache, a sharp pain that dulls only with forgetting, but that will not go away (Gurnah 124). This statement captures how trauma lingers in memory, refusing to be fully forgotten and continually resurfacing, causing emotional distress. Saleh's trauma is exacerbated by his inability to escape the memories that haunt him.

Despite the pain, memory also becomes a crucial tool for survival for Saleh. In his exile, his memories are all that remain of his former life, even if they are traumatic. He reflects, There is no escape from the past. It returns in glimpses, sometimes a name, a smell, a touch, and with it comes the ache of the loss (Gurnah 202). Here, memory serves as both a source of trauma and a means of holding on to his sense of self. The past is inescapable, and his memories, no matter how painful, are essential to his understanding of who he is.

Throughout the novel, Gurnah emphasizes how trauma alters memory, making it difficult to distinguish between what is real and what is distorted by pain. Saleh reflects, I have lived too long with the memories of what I have done and what I have failed to do, and they have become a part of me, as real as my skin (Gurnah 165). This statement reveals the pervasive nature of trauma, as the memories of past events are not only inseparable from his identity but also physically embodied. Trauma distorts memory, blending the lines between past and present.

Trauma and Identity in *By the Sea*

In Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea*, the protagonist Salim experiences personal traumas that deeply shape his identity and journey towards reconciliation. Salim's trauma is rooted in a series of profound losses and betrayals. The sudden death of his mother and the subsequent abandonment by his father leave him in a state of emotional turmoil and profound loneliness. These experiences of loss and betrayal not only shape Salim's understanding of relationships but also impact his perception of self-worth, leading to a deep-seated sense of insecurity and vulnerability.

Salim's trauma fuels his quest for self-understanding and the search for a coherent sense of identity. His traumatic experiences and the ensuing emotional struggles compel him to question his place in the world and grapple with his worthiness. As Salim

navigates through memories, he seeks to reconstruct his fractured identity, wrestling with the effects of trauma on his sense of self.

By the Sea intricately explores the interplay between personal and collective trauma, highlighting how individual and collective identities are shaped by historical injustices. The novel foregrounds the burden of historical injustices, such as slavery and colonialism, on the characters and the broader community. The weight of this collective trauma lingers in the background, influencing the characters' perspectives, relationships, and the possibilities for reconciliation. The historical injustices endured by the community become a shared source of pain, perpetuating a collective struggle for healing and a quest for justice.

The characters in *By the Sea* grapple with how historical trauma influences their individual and collective identities. The scars of colonialism and slavery shape their understanding of self and their place in society. The novel explores how trauma can both fragment and forge identity, as characters negotiate their relationship with the past and seek to reconcile the conflicting aspects of their history.

Memory emerges as a constructive force in the characters' journeys of reconciliation, offering glimpses of empowerment and opportunities for growth. In *By the Sea*, memory serves as a source of empowerment, enabling characters to confront and understand their traumatic experiences. Through memory, individuals reclaim their agency and gain insights into the root causes of their pain. Memory becomes a tool for survival, empowering characters to challenge oppressive narratives and seek paths towards healing and reconciliation.

Memory plays a pivotal role in shaping narratives of reconciliation in the novel. By revisiting and reconstructing memories, characters engage in a process of meaning-making and truth-seeking. Memory becomes a catalyst for dialogue, understanding, and the potential transformation of relationships. It serves as a vehicle through which characters navigate the complexities of their past, opening up possibilities for reconciliation and the forging of new identities.

Throughout the novel, Saleh struggles with his inability to communicate freely in English, a language that is both imposed by colonial power and essential for survival in his new life:

I spoke a few words of English then, but not many. Even now, I find that it takes an effort to follow conversations, to recognize the inflections and changes of tone in speech, and to put sentences

together in the way that they do (Gurnah 53).

This linguistic barrier reflects not only the trauma of displacement but also the challenge of reconstructing identity in a new cultural context. Saleh's struggle with English symbolizes the struggle to navigate a foreign, hostile environment while grappling with an unstable sense of self. Trauma in *By the Sea* is also rooted in the colonial history of Zanzibar. Saleh's personal history is tied to larger political betrayals that forced him into exile:

We lived among traitors, who collaborated with the colonial powers, and those who knew only their greed. In their eyes, we were of no value except to serve their ambitions. When I think of those days, I am consumed by a kind of cold anger, a pain that never leaves me (Gurnah 84).

Here, Gurnah emphasizes the collective trauma experienced by colonized peoples, with betrayal by local elites amplifying the wound inflicted by colonialism. This historical betrayal reverberates in Saleh's identity crisis, affecting his perception of himself and others.

Narrative Techniques and Symbolism in *By the Sea*

Abdulrazak Gurnah employs narrative techniques that encompass multiple perspectives and fragmented narratives, adding layers of complexity to the exploration of trauma and memory. By presenting the story from different characters' perspectives, Gurnah allows readers to gain insights into the diverse experiences and subjective realities of the characters. This narrative technique gives voice to the complexity of trauma, highlighting the unique ways in which individuals interpret and process their traumatic experiences. It emphasizes the multidimensionality of trauma, showcasing its impact on various aspects of characters' lives and relationships.

The fragmented narratives in *By the Sea* mirror the fragmented nature of memory itself. Gurnah presents memories as disjointed fragments, reflecting the characters' struggle to piece together their pasts and make sense of their traumatic experiences. The fragmented structure reinforces the challenges of reconstructing personal and collective histories, underscoring the dissonance and gaps in their recollections. This technique invites readers to engage actively in the process of piecing together the narrative, mirroring the characters' efforts to reconcile their fractured memories.

Symbolism and metaphor play significant roles in *By the Sea*, offering deeper layers of meaning and

inviting readers to interpret the narrative through metaphorical lenses. Gurnah employs symbols to represent trauma and healing throughout the novel. The sea, for instance, serves as a powerful symbol of both liberation and entrapment. It represents the vastness of memory and the depths of trauma, highlighting the characters' need to confront and navigate their painful pasts. The sea also becomes a symbol of hope and possibility, suggesting that healing and reconciliation can emerge from the depths of trauma.

Metaphors are employed to convey the complexity of memory and the challenges of reconciliation. The intertwining of memory and forgetting is depicted through metaphors like the tangled roots of trees or the intricate patterns of a tapestry. These metaphors capture the intricacies of memory, emphasizing the difficulty of disentangling painful recollections from the process of healing. They illustrate the interplay between remembering and forgetting, suggesting that reconciliation necessitates a delicate balance between confronting the past and moving forward.

By employing rich language and vivid imagery, Gurnah effectively conveys the emotional trauma experienced by the characters. The author's lyrical prose amplifies the intensity of the characters' emotions, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the depths of their suffering. Gurnah's careful choice of words and vivid descriptions elicit visceral responses, capturing the rawness and impact of trauma on the characters' psyche.

Literary devices, such as storytelling and narrative itself, become vehicles for exploring memory and reconciliation in *By the Sea*. Through the act of storytelling, characters share their memories, unravel their traumas, and attempt to make sense of their pasts. Literature becomes a transformative force, offering solace, understanding, and a means of navigating the complexities of memory and reconciliation. Gurnah's novel emphasizes the power of storytelling and literature in preserving and reclaiming collective memory, forging connections between the past and present, and fostering empathy and understanding among readers.

In *By the Sea*, Gurnah's narrative techniques and symbolic representations contribute to a rich and nuanced exploration of trauma and memory. Multiple perspectives and fragmented narratives capture the diverse experiences of characters, while symbolism and metaphor deepen the layers of meaning. Literary devices serve as vehicles for conveying emotional trauma and highlighting the transformative power of literature itself. Through these narrative techniques and symbolism, Gurnah invites

readers to delve into the complexities of trauma and memory, ultimately offering insights into the process of healing and reconciliation.

The sea is one of the central symbols in the novel, representing both freedom and entrapment. It serves as a boundary between Saleh's homeland and his exile, as well as a metaphor for his sense of isolation and displacement. The sea was a shifting thing, restless and relentless. It had a sound that was familiar but disquieting, as if it never wanted you to feel settled (Gurnah 39).

The sea symbolizes the constant sense of unease and instability that characterizes Saleh's life in exile. While it separates him from his homeland, it also holds the promise of movement and escape. This dual symbolism reflects the contradictory emotions of hope and despair that accompany displacement.

Perfume and incense appear throughout the novel as symbols of memory and connection to Saleh's past. Early in the novel, Saleh smuggles a carved wooden box containing incense into England, which becomes a physical link to his homeland. I had opened the box with trembling hands and taken out a small lump of ambergris. The smell was like everything from before, from a time when there was beauty in the world (Gurnah 21).

The scent of the incense evokes memories of Saleh's past life, embodying the lingering connection to his homeland. At the same time, it represents the distance between his past and present, as the fragrance is fleeting, like the memories he is trying to hold onto.

The carved wooden box that Saleh brings with him from Zanzibar is a recurring symbol of his heritage and identity. It contains items of personal significance, including incense, which link him to his past. I clung to the carved box, my only possession, the only thing I had left of my home and the life I had lived there (Gurnah 11).

The box symbolizes the remnants of Saleh's former life, encapsulating his history and identity. However, it is also a source of mystery, as its contents are not fully revealed until later in the novel. The box thus symbolizes the hidden, repressed aspects of his past, which he carries with him but cannot fully access or articulate.

The novel also plays with the symbolism of names and identity. Saleh adopts the name Rajab Shaaban Mahmud when he arrives in England, distancing himself from his true identity. This renaming reflects the shifting, unstable nature of identity in the context of exile. It was a

small matter of papers and passports, of another man's name (Gurnah 18).

By adopting a new name, Saleh attempts to create a new identity, yet the trauma of his past continues to haunt him. This change of name becomes symbolic of the larger theme of identity as something that is fluid and fractured by the experiences of exile and displacement.

Throughout the novel, there is a recurring motif of silence, representing the characters' inability or unwillingness to speak about their traumas. Saleh and Latif, in particular, often remain silent about the full extent of their suffering, underscoring the ineffability of trauma. There are many things I cannot say. They choke me when I try, so I remain silent (Gurnah 62).

This silence is symbolic of the emotional and psychological barriers that prevent them from fully articulating their experiences. It reflects how trauma often resides beyond language, as the characters struggle to find words for their pain.

The Quest for Reconciliation in *By the Sea*

The burden of the past weighs heavily on us, but it is through the acknowledgement of that burden that we can begin to heal (Gurnah 45). Within the narrative of *By the Sea*, the quest for reconciliation is intimately connected to the themes of forgiveness and healing. The novel explores the transformative power of healing as a crucial step towards reconciliation. Characters in *By the Sea* grapple with the impact of trauma on their lives and relationships, seeking avenues for personal and collective healing. Healing is portrayed as a necessary process that allows individuals and communities to confront their past, confront their pain, and find ways to move forward. By engaging in healing, characters lay the groundwork for the possibility of reconciliation, both within themselves and with others.

The complexity of forgiveness is a central theme in the pursuit of reconciliation. *By the Sea* delves into the intricate dynamics of forgiving and being forgiven in the aftermath of trauma. The characters' experiences of betrayal, loss, and injustice create a tension between the desire for forgiveness and the emotional turmoil associated with it. The novel recognizes that forgiveness is a deeply personal and complex process, highlighting the challenges individuals face when trying to reconcile their traumatic pasts with the need to forgive.

By the Sea explores how trauma can profoundly impact relationships, complicating the path to reconciliation. The characters in the novel grapple with strained relationships and trust issues resulting from their individual and collective traumas. Trauma disrupts their

ability to form and maintain healthy connections with others, leading to fractured relationships characterized by mistrust, resentment, and emotional distance. The quest for reconciliation requires characters to confront these relational challenges, rebuild trust, and navigate the complexities of forgiveness.

The intergenerational transmission of trauma is also explored in *By the Sea*. Characters inherit the scars of historical injustices and struggle to navigate the impact of this trauma on their relationships. The novel examines how the legacies of colonialism and slavery reverberate through generations, shaping the dynamics between characters. The quest for reconciliation involves recognizing the interconnections between personal and collective traumas and actively working to break the cycles of pain and resentment within relationships.

By the Sea suggests that reconciliation necessitates a revisiting of the past to shape a better future. Acknowledgement and understanding of the past are integral to the process of reconciliation. The novel highlights the importance of confronting and reckoning with historical injustices, as well as personal traumas, to foster understanding and empathy. Through this process, characters gain insights into the complex web of circumstances that have shaped their lives and those around them. By acknowledging the past, they open the possibility for reconciliation, growth, and the potential for a better future.

Collective memory plays a significant role in the pursuit of reconciliation in *By the Sea*. The novel emphasizes the power of shared stories and narratives in preserving collective memory, challenging dominant narratives, and fostering a sense of belonging and understanding. By engaging with collective memory, characters in the novel contribute to the broader process of reconciliation, as they uncover hidden truths, confront historical injustices, and strive to create a more inclusive and just society.

In *By the Sea*, the quest for reconciliation intertwines with the themes of forgiveness, healing, relationship dynamics, and the revisiting of the past. The novel acknowledges the complexity of these processes and underscores the significance of collective memory in the pursuit of reconciliation. Through the exploration of these themes, *By the Sea* offers readers a profound meditation on the challenges and possibilities of reconciling with one's past, forging meaningful connections, and envisioning a more reconciled future.

The novel unfolds through a non-linear narrative structure, shifting between past and present, as Saleh Omar recounts his memories, interspersed with the events

of his current life in exile. This fragmented structure mirrors the fractured identities of the characters and their disrupted lives.

I cannot remember exactly how old I was when I began to steal books from my father's cupboard. It was sometime before I left primary school... I cannot remember all the books I stole, and I cannot tell you how long my father's rage lasted... (Gurnah 9).

By using memory as a narrative device, Gurnah emphasizes the way trauma distorts time. Saleh's inability to recall specific details represents his struggle to make sense of his fragmented past, which is constantly intruding into his present. The non-linear structure thus becomes a way to depict the disorienting effects of memory and trauma.

The novel is told primarily from the first-person perspective of Saleh Omar, with interspersed sections from the point of view of Latif Mahmud. This technique allows readers to access the characters' innermost thoughts and emotions, making their experiences of exile, displacement, and trauma more immediate and personal.

What is home? Is it where you live, where you were born, or where you come to rest? I have lost all three, and I have none now (Gurnah 55). This introspective first-person voice draws readers into Saleh's emotional world, as he grapples with existential questions of belonging and identity. The personal nature of this narrative technique deepens the impact of the themes of exile and alienation.

Storytelling plays a central role in the novel, both as a narrative technique and a symbol of the characters' attempt to reconstruct their identities. Saleh reflects on the power of stories and their capacity to reveal or obscure truths. This is how it was told to me, and this is how I will tell it to you. But the telling of it will change the story, will give it new forms and purposes (Gurnah 35).

This metafictional reflection on the nature of storytelling highlights the subjective nature of memory and narrative. It suggests that identity itself is constructed through the stories we tell, stories that are shaped by the act of telling. Gurnah uses this technique to explore how trauma and memory are filtered through personal narratives, where certain aspects are emphasized or suppressed.

Trauma and Reconciliation in a Global Context

By situating Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* within the broader context of postcolonial literature, a

comparative analysis can shed light on how trauma and reconciliation are explored in different literary works.

By comparing *By the Sea* with other postcolonial literary works, common themes related to trauma and reconciliation emerge. These themes may include the enduring legacies of colonization, the impact of historical injustices on personal and collective identities, and the complexities of navigating relationships and healing in the aftermath of trauma. Comparative analysis allows for a deeper understanding of how trauma and reconciliation are conceptualized across diverse literary traditions, expanding our insights into the universal aspects of these experiences.

Comparative analysis of different literary works offers diverse perspectives on trauma and reconciliation. It allows us to examine how different authors explore these themes through distinct narrative techniques, cultural contexts, and historical backgrounds. Through such analysis, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the various ways in which trauma is represented, the processes of healing and reconciliation, and the unique challenges faced by individuals and communities in different global contexts.

By the Sea and other literary works provide valuable insights and lessons for reconciliation processes, both within specific communities and on a global scale. Literary works that explore trauma and reconciliation can inform healing and reconciliation initiatives by highlighting the complexities and nuances of these processes. They offer insights into the emotional and psychological dimensions of trauma, the challenges of forgiveness and healing, and the importance of acknowledging historical injustices. By engaging with these literary works, practitioners and policymakers involved in reconciliation efforts can gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of trauma and the strategies needed for meaningful reconciliation.

Trauma and reconciliation are not limited to specific regions or communities; they have global implications. Comparative analysis of literary works can help address historical traumas in global contexts by fostering cross-cultural understanding and empathy. These works provide a platform for dialogue, allowing readers from different backgrounds to engage with diverse perspectives on trauma and reconciliation. By promoting a global conversation on these themes, literary works contribute to the collective effort of addressing historical injustices and fostering reconciliation on a broader scale.

In a global context, trauma and reconciliation are complex and interconnected processes that transcend

individual experiences and communities. By situating *By the Sea* within the broader context of postcolonial literature and engaging in comparative analysis, we can gain valuable insights into the universal aspects of trauma and reconciliation. Moreover, these literary works offer lessons and guidance for healing and reconciliation initiatives, contributing to the ongoing pursuit of justice, empathy, and understanding in our interconnected world.

In conclusion, Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* is a testament to the indomitable human spirit in the face of trauma and the relentless pursuit of reconciliation. Through his vivid exploration of trauma, memory, and the complex interplay between personal and collective histories, Gurnah invites readers to navigate the labyrinthine paths of healing, forgiveness, and self-discovery. *By the Sea* stands as a beautiful and poignant testament to the struggles, resilience, and hope that resides within us all as we strive to reconcile with our past and forge a better future.

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Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in English Education: Trends and Developments

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Abstract— *The emergence of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a paradigm shift in English Language Teaching (ELT). Due to the rampant use of mobile devices, there has been an influx of language practice resources anytime and anywhere for the language learners. This article reviews the growth and reliance of MALL in English teaching, its advantages, disadvantages, and why it has the potential to change the normal classroom learning. It is aimed at actual trends and case studies shedding light on mobile apps, social networks, and other technologies that facilitate language learning. The article presents some suggestions on how to adapt MALL in the teaching of the English language for improved results and as a response to the needs of the current generation students.*



Keywords— *Benefits of MALL in English Education, Innovative MALL Applications in English Education*

INTRODUCTION

Mobile assisted language learning MALL has in recent years become a focal area in the teaching of English language. The last few years saw an emergence of smart phones, tablets and other portable devices open new opportunities for learners and educators. Mobile learning allows learners to learn English in different settings than a classroom setting, at their own time preference, and in settings that they can customize as well as engage them through interactivity. Since language education integrates technology in learning, MALL has emerged as a popular method of teaching and learning English.

MALL is included in a more extensive approach called technology integrated language learning where students' performance and motivation are enhanced by mobile applications, games, podcast, and many other trends based on technology. The following article focus on the incorporation and modern use of MALL in developing English as a second language education by analyzing its advantages, difficulties, and prospects for stimulating the development of a richer language acquisition process.

Defining Mobile Assisted Language Learning:

MALL stands for Mobile-assisted language learning is a concept through which language learning is supported by means of mobile technology. MALL comprises a broad range of tools, including mobile applications, electronic-books, audio-video factHaves and social networks. These tools make it possible for learners to learn language, take quizzes, practice interactively and communicate via the Internet on the go. (Hashim, Yunus, Embi, & Mohamed Ozir, 2017). MALL tools that could be used to teach English include Duolingo, Babel, Memrise, and HelloTalk that provides language lessons, Flashcards, Speaking and Listening and Interaction, and Culture swap, respectively. These resources are intended for learners of different level, from A1 to C2 and allow learners to use English in various ways in interesting contexts.

Benefits of MALL in English Education:

Accessibility and Flexibility: Accessibility can be considered one of the key advantages of MALL alongside with specifying what it possibly requires. Mobile learning makes it possible for students to learn English at their own

natural environments at any time reducing on the compartment that comes with classical segmentary learning. Students can use the given language during spare time or any moment they find they are free for instance during the time they are waiting for a bus or any appointment for that matter Making learning thus more flexible and time not limited. (Okumuş Dağdeler, 2023)

Personalized Learning Experience: Sometimes, the mobile learning systems may have learnt basis, use procedural knowledge, get to know the techniques that may be deemed appropriate in response to the learner’s level of mastery, relative competency and areas of difficulty. This enables learners to move forward based on a predetermined sequence of activities and allow self-paced learning concentrating on specific skills where learner has challenges, reinforcement to take place through repetition and gaming. (Carolina, Nuraeni, Supriyatna, Widiati, & Bahri, 2020).

Immediate Feedback and Assessment: Some forms of the MALL also offer immediate feedback after a quiz or an exercise to enable the learners’ correct mistakes as they learn them. This immediate response promotes the learners motive and makes sure the learners get reinforcement of their language skills, all the time.

Engaging and Interactive Learning: MALL tools utilize components of tutorial media, including video, games, and audio clips to enhance learning. Some of the approaches used in implementing gamification in leaner include use of points, badges and leader boards; If well implemented, then learners will be motivated to continue with their learning since they will be able to grasp the different languages.

Challenges and Limitations of MALL:

Technological Limitations and Access: However, as observed the mobile devices are fairly common, not all learners will be able to access the required device or even connectivity as a few individuals mentioned. In most of the areas, learner may encounter challenges in form of; lack of appropriate internet connection, inadequate devices to support the use of MALL tools. (Shaheen, Soomro, & Ali, 2024).

Distractions and Lack of Focus: Mobile devices are many a times flexible but at one point they may act as a cause of distraction to learners. Challenges Such concerns make mobile-assisted learning less effective since learners can be attracted to other activities e.g., social networks, games, etc.

Limited Speaking and Pronunciation Practice: MALL tools are very useful for reading, writing and especially for vocabulary activities however, they may not be as effective for Speaking and Pronunciation activities. Many apps can contain a voice recognition feature, however, these apps do

not include the customization to be an essential help in attaining the enhanced speaking ability. (Ali, Shaheen, & Soomro, 2024).

Lack of Social Interaction: MALL is a social process by nature, and it is a disagreement that utilising technology in the learning process results in the absence of face-to-face communication with the target language speakers as well as peers. While using applications like HelloTalk and Tandem the quantity of practice with native speakers is immense, but there is no practice in speaking that can help develop conversation skills.

Classroom strategies:

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has revolutionized English education by integrating technology into traditional teaching methods. (Bozkurt & Karakaya, 2022) With the growing accessibility of smartphones and apps, learners can now engage in language practice anytime and anywhere. The following strategies outline practical ways to incorporate MALL into the English classroom effectively.

Strategy	Description
Vocabulary-Building Apps	Use apps like Duolingo or Quizlet to help students acquire and revise English vocabulary effectively.
Interactive Grammar Tools	Usage of apps like Grammarly or Sentence Builder to teach grammar interactively.
Speech Recognition Practice	Utilize tools like Elsa Speak to improve pronunciation and fluency through speech feedback.
Listening Activities	Integrate podcasts or audio stories to enhance listening skills (e.g., BBC Learning English).
Collaborative Writing Platforms	Use Google Docs or Padlet for group writing tasks and peer reviews.
Digital Flashcards	Generate digital flashcards for quick vocabulary and concept reviews.
Gamified Learning	Practice language learning games to keep students engaged (e.g., Kahoot, Quizizz).
Mobile Dictionaries	Encourage use of apps like Merriam-Webster or Cambridge Dictionary for word exploration.
Chatbots for Practice	Use AI chatbots for conversational English practice (e.g., Replika, ChatGPT).

Video-Based Learning	Assign YouTube videos or mobile-accessible tutorials for visual and auditory learning.
Mobile Writing Prompts	Deliver creative writing prompts via apps like Evernote or Notion
Real-Time Polls and Quizzes	Usage of apps like Mentimeter for instant class feedback and engagement.

These strategies create a stimulating learning environment through which teachers take care of all kinds of learner needs. MALL not only encourages independent learning but also builds up students' confidence and proficiency in the language, as their resources are customized to fit each individual's needs, interactive, and real-time.

Innovative MALL Applications in English Education:

Many new innovative use of MALL applications have been adopted for their effectiveness in supporting students' language learning in a creative fashion. For instance "Duolingo" is an application where a learner is awarded points each time he or she completes lessons on grammar, parts of speech, sentence formation, and or vocabulary among others. "Babbel" has conversation orientation, and it has pertinent lessons which cover all aspects of language application. Memrise utilizes spaced repetition strategies to ensure the user remembers each word that he or she has learned for the longest time.

For instance, those who use flashcards prefer the "Anki" while others prefer "Quizlet" to revise their English language vocabulary. Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube can also provide more open learning contexts in which ELs must follow the native speakers, watch videos in English, and comment and/or interact live. (Stockwell, 2022)

The Role of Teachers in MALL Integration:

In correlation, while mobile learning provides so much to students it is useful for teachers to direct students in the use of mobile learning in their learning activities. Teachers also guide students on which mobile applications are most suitable for learning, and how they can be used best. They also can set up assignments or project though which students have to use MALL tools and have to share with the class their progress.

Moreover, teachers can take advantage of the use of mobile devices as a way of continuing the lessons taught in class through the use of mobile based activities that enhance the face to face contact. This approach enhances the use of both formal learning methods and the usage of mobile learning.

CONCLUSION

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a promising avenue, in general and especially in the schooling of the English language, in particular. First, the accessibility, flexibility and specificity of the MALL has the possibility to revolutionize the way learner acquire and practice English. As with any teaching aid, there are complications associated: limited technology and the possibility the student becomes distracted; however, the benefits the student is involved, gets immediate feedback, and can learn at any time and place make MALL a worthy tool for both student and teacher. This necessity is all the more awesome with technology since through MALL, there are indications that technologies in teaching English will continue to be revolutionized. The use of mobile learning can benefit educators to keep up with the significant development in technological aspect by incorporating the mobile learning tools in teaching learning process.

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African American Women Writers Before Reconstruction: Tackling Socio-Political Changes Through Their Words

A Comparative Analysis of Harriet Jacobs and Phillis Wheatley

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Abstract— *The Reconstruction in the US (1865-77) is a period set apart by critical social, political, and economic changes. The years preceding that were an agitated period in American history. During this time, African American women scholars essentially impacted the discussion about orientation, race, and personality. This thesis is a comparative report on two of these eminent writers: Harriet Jacobs and Phillis Wheatley. It utilizes qualitative analysis to look at their individual perspectives and distinct narrative styles in the literary productions of the mentioned writers. Also, I will be reviewing literature surrounding the effects of these works on discussions regarding socio-political incidents, for instance, the Civil War. Through looking at primary materials, scholarly data sets in the spheres of gender and race studies within the particular time span, and carrying out an in-depth comparative examination of content, the aim of this thesis is to contribute towards a more extensive and holistic comprehension of American literary legacy.*



Keywords— *Harriet Jacobs, Phillis Wheatley, African American, Women Writers, Reconstruction*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the history of the United States, the revolutionary years immediately after the Civil War, roughly from 1865 to 1877, are referred to as Reconstruction (Foner). Restoring the South's economy, social structures, and infrastructure while attending to the constitutional legitimacy and rights of recently liberated African Americans was the primary objective of Reconstruction (Foner). Significant legislative and constitutional changes were put into place during this time, such as the 13th Amendment's abolition of slavery, the 14th Amendment's grant of citizenship and equal protection under the law, and the 15th Amendment's voting rights provided to African American men ("Civil War Amendments (Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments)"). However, the pre-Reconstruction era was a crucial period in the literary and cultural history of African Americans. Black men and women of this era defied social norms and channelled their views, emotions, and ideas into works of literature despite the difficulties presented by slavery and racial discrimination. Most African Americans

prior as well as post the Civil War, were prohibited from gaining the ability to read and write. Despite that, a significant number of the African American population learned to read and write, contributing to the growing canon of their literature. Within this already tumultuous environment, African American women's literary progress was a symbol of resiliency and resistance.

Although the term "feminism" was not coined until the latter part of the 19th century, African American women's actions, which incorporate what we could today call feminist beliefs, have been a major influence since the early days of American history. This thesis is a comparative study between two such women during the 19th Century: Harriet Jacobs and Phillis Wheatley, who used their narratives to drive the socio-political discourse.

Harriet Jacobs used her words to bring to light the heinous realities of slavery and the sexual abuse faced by enslaved women. Her writings were primary evidence of African American women's resilience and willpower against racial as well as gender discrimination.

This study does a close in-depth analysis of her book, *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (published in 1861), which continues to serve as a harrowing account of the harsh reality of slavery yet the unfaltering determination of survival. Jacobs emphasizes the intersecting oppressions caused by race, gender, and sexuality with the help of her first-person narrative, and underlines the challenges that African American women encountered in their quest for freedom.

Phillis Wheatley, the first African American woman to publish a book of poetry, released *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* in 1773 (“Phillis Wheatley”). Wheatley's poems explore topics of liberation, faith, and humanity as a whole, by reflecting on her time as an imprisoned woman and her profound faith in Christianity.

The main research questions which this thesis deals with are as follows:

1. What narrative techniques did Jacobs and Wheatley employ to advance their political agendas and social justice goals?
2. How do Harriet Jacobs' autobiographical narrative and Phillis Wheatley's poetry anthology converge yet are distinct in their portrayal of the experiences of African American women pre-Reconstruction?
3. How did these writers navigate their way through challenging societal expectations versus conforming to the norms so as to reach a bigger audience?

This thesis will provide insight into the ways in which these female authors utilised literature and writing styles as tools for change and emancipation by writing about issues such as gender, race, and slavery. It will also examine how their works affected the literary and cultural climate pre- as well as post-Reconstruction. Even though prose and poetry are two different writing genres Jacobs and Wheatley were determined to challenge the prevalent sociopolitical and racial injustices and advocate for the dignity and rights of African American women.

Finally, the conclusion of this thesis contends that Phillis Wheatley and Harriet Jacobs' works are timeless testaments showcasing the strength, creativity, and autonomy of African American females. A close analysis of their writings is helpful not only for the exploration of the spectrum of their creativity but also for understanding the significance of the opinion of these authors in discussions of social justice, gender, and race issues during the contemporary era. This comparative research could provide a substantial addition to our knowledge of how African American women writers used writing to confront and traverse the repressive social and political conditions pre-

Reconstruction. It will further aid in developing a deeper comprehension of the multifaceted ways in which 19th-century writers paved the way for future generations of writers and activists.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilises both primary as well as secondary research.

Primary data

My research analyses the original copies of *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet Jacobs and *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773) by Phillis Wheatley, both released during a period when slavery was extremely prevalent in the United States. Both of these authors are prominent personalities in African American literary history, hence an ideal pair for a comparative analysis of women authors of African descent during this period. Along with that, my selection of their respective texts exemplifies the variety in their literary works, as demonstrated by the lyrical poetry of Wheatley and Jacob's compelling narratives.

Through close reading and comparative textual analysis of *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, this research looks into the topics, literary techniques, and rhetorical devices that the writers employed when referring to the socio-political shifts in 19th-century America. Furthermore, Jacobs and Wheatley's contributions to American literature and society have endured because the topics and challenges they tackled in their writings are still pertinent today.

The analysis of *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* will focus on the use of pseudonyms in writing, apart from traditional literary analysis.

Secondary data

It uses a qualitative comparative approach to holistically analyse the literary and historical importance by integrating a combination of primary source analysis, literary criticism, historical scholarship, and digital resources. By juxtaposing the two primary texts, it further aims to determine the ways in which Jacobs' stories and Wheatley's poems address common themes like resistance, gender, religion, agency, and the interconnectedness of these identities to unearth nuanced insights. One of the most significant components of the analysis will also comprise literary criticism, which will be investigated through critical essays, academic papers, and literary remarks around the disciplines of African American studies and gender studies, that shed light on these writers' works.

As a strategy to situate the writings of Harriet Jacobs and Phillis Wheatley within the larger socio-historical environment before Reconstruction, the research will make use of historical information. The abolitionist movement, the Civil War, the experiences of individuals who were subjugated to slavery, the fight for women's rights, and the cultural environment that affected African American women writers at this period are all going to be addressed. Along with researching about what influenced the narratives and poems of Jacobs and Wheatley, this paper will analyse the impact of Harriet Jacobs and Phillis Wheatley's works on the literary and socio-political surroundings too.

Apart from looking at primary texts, the study will explore any alternate or revised versions, and archival materials related to the literature by utilizing a variety of digital and archival resources. Examples of digital resources that offer access to a range of textual works, including historical narratives, essays, novels, poetry, and stories, are digitized collections, online archives, and scholarly databases. By utilizing these resources, the study will interact with unique materials and offer an extensive understanding of these writers' creative works.

Furthermore, it draws upon insights from critical theory, particularly the feminist and critical race theory. Within the context of feminist theory, this research explores how Jacobs and Wheatley navigate the intersections of race and gender in their poetry and story. It additionally highlights African American women authors' attempts to establish their agency and subvert prevailing myths of womanhood by looking at how they negotiate the patriarchal systems of enslavement and society. Along with that, critical race theory presents an angle that enables us to analyse the ways in which Jacobs and Wheatley address racial oppressive structures and describe the realities faced by African American realities in the time period. This method provides a closer look into the numerous ways in which their writings oppose white supremacist ideology, push against racial stereotypes, and promote racial equality and fairness.

For analysing the qualitative data, methods like narrative analysis and meta-ethnography can be used. "Narrative analysis is a qualitative analysis method focused on interpreting human experiences and motivations by looking closely at the stories (the narratives) people tell in a particular context" (Al-Saraf). "Meta-ethnography is a method for combining data from qualitative evaluation and research, especially ethnographic data, by translating concepts and metaphors across studies" ("Meta-Ethnography").

Chapter 1: Background of Harriet Jacobs and the Power of Narrative in 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'

Trigger Warning: The following chapter contains mentions of sexual assault and harassment. This may be a sensitive topic for some readers. Please proceed with caution.

The objective of this chapter is to delve into the life and literary journey of Harriet Jacobs. It further analyses her first-person narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

To provide more context about the author, Harriet Ann Jacobs was born in Edenton, North Carolina, in 1813 into the cruel reality of slavery due to the 'partus sequitur ventrem,' which was a legal doctrine mandating that in the case of enslaved children, the status passes down through the mother not the father (Morgan 3-4). Her parents, Delilah and Daniel Jacobs, were both enslaved. Her mother passed away while she was young, and she was sent to live with her maternal grandmother, Margaret Horniblow, who gave her reading and writing lessons. With a nationwide restriction on teaching slaves, this early teaching was noteworthy and rare (Yellin). She was bequeathed to Mary Matilda Norcom when she was just 11 years old, which resulted in experiencing difficulties under her de facto master, Dr James Norcom. A frequent occurrence for enslaved women, Jacobs suffered constant sexual harassment by her master. She opposed this abuse by developing a relationship with a white attorney named Samuel Tredwell Sawyer, with whom she had two children. Part of the purpose of the alliance was to deflect Norcom's attempts strategically (Andrews).

Harriet Jacobs was raised under harsh circumstances, yet she became a forceful and persuasive voice against slavery. As documented in this book, in chapters XVII "The Flight" (Jacobs 145) and XVIII "Months of Peril" (Jacobs 150), the author records her escape from Dr Flint (an alias for "Dr Norcom") and how she had to remain in a confined attic for seven years with restricted contact to the outside world, to avoid her master's constant efforts of recapturing her. Chapters XXX "Northward Bound" (Jacobs 237) and XXXVI "The Hairbreadth Escape" (Jacobs 268), discuss the narrator's challenging escape to the North as she makes her journey to New York City in 1842. There she met notable feminists and abolitionists, like William Lloyd Garrison (Korb) and Frederick Douglass as mentioned in his own autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* and these interactions inspired her to write about her experiences. The influential piece *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, written by Jacobs and published in 1861 under the alias Linda Brent, exposed the interplay of gender and racial discrimination by documenting the sexual assault that

slave women endured. This narrative provided a nuanced indictment of the brutal effects of slavery, especially on women and children, besides being a personal narrative. The publishing firm Thayer & Eldridge, who were renowned for publishing abolitionist pieces (Donlon), agreed to publish a manuscript about a slave narrative, especially within the context of how difficult it was for African Americans to get published in this period.

The autobiography is not just a work of fiction or a usual diary, but intricately crafted. In this personal account, Linda Brent covers her experiences in detail from when she was a child with no care regarding her status as a slave till her road to getting freedom. The author uses several aliases in the narrative such as Aunt Martha and Mr. Sands. She frequently uses hyperbole to describe situations, such as her cover in the attic (Jacobs 173) which goes into detailed description to evoke a sense of claustrophobia in the reader. Understanding Jacobs's familial background is paramount in comprehending such intricacies, as it can be utilized as a foundation for analysing the text as well as interpreting her experiences within the larger context of slavery in the antebellum South.

Yellin, in her paper *Harriet Jacobs's Family History*, rectifies the information about Jacobs's father being a slave of Dr. Andrew Knox apart from being a carpenter named Daniel (765). The change reveals the author's intentional structuring of her autobiography and her deliberate choice of narrative techniques. By correcting this historical error, Yellin highlights the subtle control Jacobs had on her story — for instance the intricacies she chose to integrate or omit out of her account.

By using the surname Jacobs instead of Knox, the writer does the deliberate act of detaching oneself from her enslaver's authority and control over her life. Although she had no control over her enslaved status, she was continually developing her own story while utilizing her voice as an author. Using her paternal last name rather than the enslaver's can be analysed as an extension of using pseudonyms, for example, Jacobs using the alias of 'Linda Brent' in the novel. The reason behind using this pseudonym was to save Jacobs and her family from the retaliation of her previous slave masters, especially Dr. James Norcom, who harassed and exploited her sexually (Thompson). As mentioned earlier, this distance created between the author and the audience is somewhat of a "double consciousness" (Yi 12) — a term coined by W.E.B. Du Bois regarding the internal dispute that African Americans go through because of the racial prejudices in a predominantly white society ("Double Consciousness") — would've expanded boundaries and allowed her to write about her experiences and perspectives more candidly.

The use of a pen name is particularly significant when publishing about sensitive topics like sexual harassment and exploitation, especially within the context of enslaved America. Her first impression of Dr. Flint's house is described as an atmosphere with "cold looks, cold words, and cold treatment" (Jacobs 18). The repetition of the word "cold" provides a powerful example of the dehumanizing impacts of institutional tyranny, encapsulating the mental and emotional toll of slavery. As the narrator's encounters with Dr. Flint progress, in the initial chapters, her tone is marked by that of apprehension and vulnerability. Jacobs compares his gaze with that of a predator looking at its prey, but worse (63) and then overtly writes "(t)here was nothing I dreaded as much as his presence" (120). This sense of helplessness is evident in the face of Dr. Flint's authority because of this feeling of watching and scrutinizing.

The reader experiences a visceral reaction towards Brent's sense of powerlessness, which triggers feelings of sympathy and compassion. The presence of a continual sense of surveillance and inspection marked the daily lives of women who were held as slaves. The broader themes of authority and helplessness, present in the narrative, are exemplified by these quotations.

Doherty further delves into how Flint "demands his victim's willing complicity, favouring psychological, not physical, pressure" (84). This psychological manipulation is another one of the central themes in the novel. Dr Flint adopts psychological conduct including coercion, gaslighting, and emotional manipulation besides physical assault to keep his victims under his control. An example of this is:

You obstinate girl! I could grind your bones to powder! ... You are blinded now, but hereafter you will be convinced that your master was your best friend. My lenity towards you is proof of it. I might have punished you in many ways. I might have had you whipped till you fell under the lash. But I wanted you to live; I would have bettered your condition. Others cannot do it. You are my slave. (Jacobs 91)

By using imagery, Jacobs presents a more nuanced and authentic portrait of what she experienced. The readers can sympathize with her anxiety, concern, and perseverance amidst this apparently overwhelming peril. This emphasis on the psychological repercussions of slavery calls for awareness of the human cost of slavery, which goes beyond just physical harm. He claims that despite his unrelenting abuse and exploitation of Brent, his "lenity" for her is

evidence of his purported camaraderie and kindness. The purpose of this gaslighting is to undermine Brent's sense of autonomy and reality, making it harder for her to challenge his authority.

This theme of manipulation also fits into the broader historical context of the 19th Century, especially the Abolitionist movement. Vivid descriptions of such harrowing experiences, as portrayed in works such as *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, served as primary evidence for influencing and mobilizing public opinion against the institution of slavery change by invoking feelings of compassion and empathy in readers and stressing on the immediate need for social change.

Revisiting the theme of Dr. Flint's manipulation, it isn't just limited to people he has enslaved but also his wife, Mrs. Flint. She is revealed as a naive anxious person who refuses to accept her husband's lewd deeds. Since she is portrayed as a product of 19th century Victorian She worries about her dignity and self-image, thus instead of confronting her husband, she projects her frustration upon Brent. The narrator describes herself to be "an object of her jealousy, and consequently, of her hatred" (Jacobs 53). As chapter VI progresses, Mrs. Flint's paranoia becomes more evident as she gets the author to "sleep in a room adjoining her own" (53-4) and goes to the extent of even "whisper[ing] in my [Brent's] ear, as though it was her husband speaking" (Jacobs 54). These insecurities indubitably arise from her status as a woman in a patriarchal society, where her husband's earnings and character play an integral part in establishing her value and position in society. This leads to emotions of insufficiency and animosity as a result of Dr. Flint's adultery and predatory tendencies towards Brent, jeopardizing Mrs. Flint's sense of security and dignity.

Mrs. Flint's character is the epitome of the social dynamics of the antebellum South during the time period. Analysing through the lens of feminist critical theory, although as a relatively wealthy white woman, she occupies a position of privilege, the gender conventions and norms impede her agency and autonomy. Nevertheless, Mrs. Flint's compliance with her husband's exploitation of slaves, such as Linda, exposes the manners in which women perpetuated the upholding of oppressive regimes inside and outside the confines of their homes. However, her character does eventually change to tricking her husband instead (54), which can show instances of agency, deconstructing the notions of women's subservience.

In the case of Linda Brent, or Harriet Jacobs, "the issues of class and race alter one's experience of gender, just as gender alters the experience of class and race" (Biswas 567). While Mrs. Flint, a white woman, is presented as the

embodiment of purity and virtue, Brent is commodified and sexualized. Her body and soul have been claimed "as a right" to rule over (Jacobs 60) by her master and even if she wants to get married her lover has to "buy her" (Jacobs 58). She falls on the bottom rung of the ladder, in the domains of race, gender, as well as caste. Another example of this is the overlapping power dynamics of gender and race hinder her efforts to turn down her enslaver, Dr Flint's, sexual overtures since she must deal with his patriarchal authority and simultaneously his racial privilege, which are central themes in the novel. This theme will be further delved into in the forthcoming chapters.

This chapter has demonstrated a profound exploration of the themes and literary devices, especially the imagery, in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Being an enslaved African American woman, Linda's intersectionality emphasizes the multifaceted ways that racism and sexism influence her oppression and autonomy. Her attempts to negotiate the interconnected dynamics of patriarchy and white supremacy highlight the difficulties black women had in claiming their dignity.

Chapter 2: Background of Phillis Wheatley and her Voice Through 'Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral'

The last chapter examined the background of Harriet Jacobs and an in-depth analysis of her account *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. This chapter explores Phillis Wheatley's personal history and a close examination of her poetry collection *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. This chapter will carry forth looking into the themes which were explored in the previous chapter but through a poetic lens.

Phillis Wheatley Peters, born around 1753, is often recognized as the first African American to have published a book of poems, and the third American woman ("Phillis Wheatley"). Captured by slave traders at a young age, she was sold to the Wheatley family upon her arrival in Boston (Luebering). However, along with working for the Wheatleys', Phillis also got the opportunity to read and write (Wheatley 6), which was rare for an enslaved person. With her first poem published in 1767, which gained her exceptional prominence, Phillis Wheatley published her first collection of poems in 1773 called *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* ("Phillis Wheatley"). The collection consisted of thirty-nine poems covering themes from religion to race. The publishing of the book was financed by the then Countess of Huntingdon, Selina Hastings, in London as colonial printing was quite uncommon and a microscale industry in North America (Mulder). Even though the poet doesn't centre her poems around slavery, it is conspicuous that her social identity as

an enslaved woman plays a role in what she writes (Luebering).

Wheatley's poetry was often inspired by religious and philosophical concepts during the Enlightenment, which was the period "of intellectual inquiry and discovery that stretched roughly from 1680 to 1820" (Winterer). Her writings were deeply intertwined with her Christian faith while utilizing classical analogies, exhibiting her interdisciplinary intellectual foundation and engagement with the intellectual discourse.

In one of her extremely well-known poems, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (Wheatley 18), wherein Wheatley uses her religious perspective to argue for the inherent unity and equality of all humankind, a notion which is considered to be a radical departure within a context which is deeply fractured by race and slavery. An example of this is "Remember, *Christians*¹, *Negros*, black as *Cain*², / May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train." (Wheatley, lines 7-8) — the poet directly addresses Christians in these lines, particularly calling out the slave owners, as she reminds them of their religious responsibilities and the fundamentals of Christianity i.e. equality, compassion, and redemption for all its followers. As Loving says, it is "an effort to underscore the inconsistencies between Christian principle and Christian practice" (73). Furthermore, by italicizing "Christians", "Negroes", and "Cain" there is a rhetorical linkage which is established as it links religion with the people of African heritage, along with the biblical allusion of Cain. The inclusion of Cain is rather interesting since he was perceived "to be the originator of evil, violence, or greed" ("Cain") and adding his name alongside that of people with African identities and the colour "black" can be interpreted as Wheatley highlighting the pervasive racist stereotypes of black skin being intrinsically inferior or nefarious. In this poem itself, lines 5-6, the poet writes how "Some view our sable³ race with scornful⁴ eye, / 'Their colour is a diabolic die.'" further emphasizing the dehumanising of people with dark skin in the eyes of white people, which not only is passive but actively undermining. By utilising the rhetorical strategy of direct quotations in the latter line, the bigotry is showcased without any filter. It also creates a distance from the author's voice, as there is a clear separation established between her perspective versus the societal views. The use of "die" can be interpreted as a double entendre, referring to 'dye' as a noun or the verb 'to die', the initial one

insinuating a sense of unchangeableness and the other carrying negative connotations about blackness. Wheatley establishes the foundation for her ultimate theological argument, which targets and critiques racist paradigms within her own religion.

The eighth line of the poem "questions Christian dogma regarding the power of baptism to remove sin" (Loving 73). The term "refin'd" implies a process of purification, possibly referring to baptism in this context, suggesting that African Americans can achieve moral and spiritual refinement too and are worthy of the same chances for atonement as other fair-skinned Christians. Wheatley invokes spiritual imagery in the final line when she mentions "th' angelic train" which can be interpreted as a train ascending to heaven, subtly contesting the dominant ideology surrounding slavery and reiterating the Christian teachings. The profound irony also emerges in knowing how a group, in this instance Christians, take pride in identifying with a moral and spiritual high ground yet adhere to such unjust prejudices. This poem serves as a mirror to their hypocrisy, urging them to align their actions with the Christian beliefs that they uphold.

Additionally, we must acknowledge the progression of the poem from the writer expressing her affirmation of faith in line 3 ("That there's a God / that there's a *Saviour* too:") to criticising the followers of her religion in the final lines. This can be misinterpreted to be viewed as Wheatley problematizing Christianity when the two issues are separate, i.e. "her gratitude for redemption and her condemnation of slavery" (McBride 386). Her denunciation of slavery is evident in the first line itself where she employs euphemism in expressing her gratitude for being brought to America, calling it a display of "mercy". The reader can sense the irony as the poet's kidnapping from Africa and being coerced to experience the horrors of slavery were far from what is considered merciful. The use of "*Pagan*⁵ land" (line 1) to describe Africa is intriguing as Wheatley engages with the dominant colonial discourse which portrays Africa as an uncivilized continent. The enslavers, or the majority of the society, were exposed to this prevailing Eurocentric viewpoint about Africa. This line shows the author situating her own experience within the broader context of compulsory conversion to Christianity amongst African Americans, invoking sympathy among the readers. However, in the next line, Wheatley transitions to a personal testament of her

¹ The word 'Christians' looks like 'Chrifiants' in the original print due to the use of the long s (l), which was a typographical style.

² The firstborn son of Adam and Eve, who murdered his younger brother Abel. Being a farmer, he was double-cursed by God — he will be more cursed than the earth, which will withhold its

produce from him, and in addition he is to be a ceaseless wanderer (Genesis 4:11–12).

³ Long s (l) used in original print.

⁴ Long s (l) used in original print.

⁵ Derived from the Latin word 'pagus'; someone from a Pagan land means belonging from a 'village' or 'district'.

faith by writing how Christianity “Taught my benighted soul⁶ to understand” (line 2), affirming her acceptance of spiritual awakening and salvation. Although fairly short, this poem is a powerful analysis of the intersection between religious belief, identity, and the barbarity of slavery.

The reason behind doing a close analysis of this poem is because it covers most of the themes which are present throughout the collection of *Poems*. Religion and faith are the predominant themes in several poems as they often reflect Wheatley’s devotion to the Christian faith. Such works addressed topics of contemplating salvation, divine providence, and spiritual enlightenment. Another example of this, apart from “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (Wheatley 18), is “To the University of Cambridge, in New England” (Wheatley 15-16). The conclusion of the poem says,

Improve your privileges while they
stay,
Ye pupils and each hour redeem, that
bears
Or good or bad report of you to heav’n.
Let sin, that baneful evil to the soul, (lines
21-4)

Apart from the author encouraging students to utilize their educational opportunities, she also advises them to exercise moral and spiritual discernment. By highlighting the effects of sin on the soul, she urges the kids to live by virtue and high morals. Alongside academic pursuits, the poet equally prioritizes the significance of following Christianity and abiding by its teachings. Although not stated very explicitly, Wheatley mentions her experiences as a slave, subtly challenging the issues of racial prejudice and the institution of slavery. “To the Right Honourable William,” (Wheatley 73-5), for instance, lines 15-17 say, “No more, *America*, in mournful strain / Of wrongs, and grievance unredress’d complain, / No longer Shall thou dread the iron chain,” which although has a hopeful tone, reveals the realities of slavery. “The iron chain” (line 17) serves as a powerful use of imagery, of actual slaves in iron clads and chains, as well as a metaphor for freedom from the figurative chains of oppression and injustice. By directly addressing and italicizing “*America*” in line 15, Wheatley draws attention to the personification of the country creating an atmosphere of urgency and making the appeal for justice and freedom more poignant.

A theme, however, which wasn’t present in “On Being Brought from Africa” but is still prevalent in some other poems is that of the power of nature and the sublime.

Frequently, Wheatley delves into the enigma and beauty of nature, evoking feelings of wonder and fascination by using vivid imagery. She uses the natural environment as a setting for her liberation on human experiences. An example in the collection *Poems* is “An HYMN to the Morning” (Wheatley 56-7). The poet personifies Aurora, “the Roman goddess of dawn” (“Goddess Aurora”), by saying that the deity “demands my song” (line 4). This advancement of the morning to a divine status does not only showcase dawn as the most powerful time of the day but also exhibits it to be a sentient presence which should be honored through poetry. Wheatley extends the use of personification and imagery in lines 7-8, “The morn awakes, and wide extends her ways, / On ev’ry leaf the gentle zephyr plays;” which creates the visual splendor of the light spreading into dawn and the morning breeze rustling the leaves. Such evocative imagery used by Wheatley ignites a sense of awe and gratitude amongst the reader for nature, which has been created by God.

The titles of the poems in the anthology are rather interesting and deliberate as well since they guide the reader on how to approach a specific poem. The majority of the titles begin with “To”, or “On” which is a direct address to either a person, institution, or even an incident. By employing such prepositions Wheatley personalizes the poems further and offers insights into her relationship with the directed subjects and her perspectives on certain events. She also often addresses influential figures, for instance, the Earl of Dartmouth, or social issues like slavery to make her work both intimate as well as befitting the larger public discourse. Titles beginning with “An” mostly discuss principal and broader themes such as the divine nature or universal notions. It projects a personal yet contemplative tone, which addresses a higher godly power and audience.

Hence, this chapter has revealed the different themes which Wheatley covered in her poems. Through utilizing several literary devices and biblical references, the poet effectively intertwines her perspectives on religion with her experiences as an enslaved woman.

Chapter 3: Intersecting Journeys: Comparing Jacobs and Wheatley

The previous chapters delved into the individual historical and literary backgrounds of Harriet Jacobs and Phillis Wheatley. Although both of their experiences and interactions with the socio-political scenario were distinct in their own ways, their writing styles and themes did intersect in some ways. This chapter explores the ways in which the portrayal and experiences of African American women overlapped and diverged in the writings of both

⁶ Long s (f) used in original print.

authors. Even though the literary forms are distinct — Jacobs’s being an autobiography and Wheatley’s a poetic anthology — they successfully use their works to reach the audience and make them aware of the circumstances enslaved individuals lived in.

Firstly, both the writers utilise first-person narrative in their own ways. Even though Jacobs uses a pseudonym, her narrative seems to directly approach the reader and encourage them to understand the situations she is going through in order to consider the larger implications of slavery on African Americans, specifically women. She consistently uses the first-person singular pronoun “I” in an attempt to put the reader in her shoes. There are heartrending instances described in detail such as in Chapter XXXII, “The Meeting of Mother and Daughter” (Jacobs 249-53) wherein her daughter asks her ““Mother when will you take me to live with you?”” (Jacobs 252) at the age of nine, which highlights the struggles African American women faced as their identities did not only constitute of their race but also influenced by their gender, for instance in Jacobs’s case maternally. Karcher identifies how Harriet “baring her sexual history as an unwed slave mother” reveals the diverse effects of slavery on women (787). “Women writers responded more boldly to the challenge of overcoming voicelessness and speaking the unspeakable” (Karcher 787), which is prevalent even while using an alias.

Although Wheatley isn’t extremely explicit about her encounters with slavery, she used allegorical writing and formal structures to defy racist stereotypes against black people, making her writing appealing to the white audience as well. Her poems usually condemned the institution of slavery through a religious perspective, which gathered the interest of elite and religious groups. According to Yellin, the “color line” and its “adherence to the rules of decorum” (57) constrained African American women authors to express themselves entirely. However, by tailoring her poems to the taste of a white Christian audience, Wheatley manages to successfully navigate such restraints. As mentioned in the previous chapter, she effectively incorporates her critique of slavery by referring to Christianity. In her poem, “To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth” (Wheatley 73-5), she says “...Wonder from whence my love of *Freedom* sprung, / ...I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate / Was snatch’d from *Africa*’s fancy’d happy feat:” (lines 21, 24-5). By using the imagery of being “snatch’d”, Wheatley uses her traumatic memory of being taken away forcibly from Africa to plea for the freedom and liberation of America. She also uses an oxymoron with “fancy’d” to increase the emotional effect of her experience. By using a rhetorical question in line 21, it emphasizes Wheatley’s advocacy for liberation.

Similarly, even Jacobs mentions Christian beliefs to denounce slavery. She highlights the hypocrisy of Christian slaveholders who practice the faith while executing diabolical acts on their slaves. For example, the author talks about how Mrs. Flint “was a member of the church; but partaking of the Lord’s supper did not seem to put her in a Christian frame of mind” (Jacobs 22) accentuating the juxtaposition of Flint’s religious faith with immoral behaviour towards slaves. This line, akin to how Wheatley emphasizes what it is to be a ‘true’ Christian, forces the reader to re-evaluate what Christianity actually is: a faith which promotes equality or perpetuates it? Jacobs doesn’t generalize the false piety of all the Christian slaveholders as she mentions a young lady who “taught her slaves to lead pure lives and wished them to enjoy the fruit of their own industry” (Jacobs 77). Despite Jacobs’s frequent contestation against slavery and slaveholders in order to support her advocacy for freedom, the author remains authentic and shows a nuanced narrative which induces complexity in the narrative.

In terms of how the writers challenged and conformed to societal expectations, both Jacobs and Wheatley used classical and formal narrative styles to some extent. Wheatley used the long s (ſ) in most of her poems in the anthology as previously analyzed, whereas Jacobs also used it frequently, for instance in the title of chapter XXIV “The Candidate for Congress” (Jacobs 189) and chapter XXIX “Preparations for Escape” (Jacobs 225). This ‘s’ was “developed in the court of Charlemagne in order to provide a uniform and legible form of writing” (Ticak). Apart from this showing the background in education for both the authors, it shows the adherence to the literary traditions of their time period.

On the other hand, unlike typical literary works and due to the gravity of the subjects they discussed, the use of rhetorical appeal was very prevalent in both works in order to evoke certain emotions in the readers. There is often a direct address which puts their accounts on a pedestal where immediate action should be taken. The issues that they address often fit into the broader discourse about slavery, particularly for Jacobs as she discusses the experiences which intersect with her identity as a slave as well as a woman — sexual exploitation, fracturing familial bonds, etc.

Therefore, this chapter looks into the several ways in which Jacobs’s and Wheatley’s stories converge through utilizing several literary techniques, yet they are distinct. It further discusses how they navigated their way through societal expectations in order to make their voices heard.

III. CONCLUSION

Harriet Jacobs and Phillis Wheatley's works served as instruments for the advocacy of socio-political reforms and exposed the harsh realities of slavery. In a broader context, these narratives shaped the Abolitionist movement i.e. the social movement with the objective of ending the slave trade and the institution of slavery ("Abolitionism"), which eventually led to Reconstruction.

Their works do not align with solely one social identity but showcase the significance of intersectionality that wasn't present in the works of most African American male authors. In order to make their writings effective and reach a broader audience, both authors employed various narrative strategies. Jacobs used a first-person autobiographical narrator with an alias, the three appeal methods of ethos, pathos, and logos — ethos is the credibility of the narrator in order to make the reader trust them, pathos targets the emotive state of the reader to make them empathize or sympathize, and logos refers to the logical arguments that appeal to the sense of reason ("Pathos, Logos, and Ethos") — which served as firsthand evidence for the monstrosities of slavery. Alternately, Wheatley's poetry employed classical allusions, religious imagery, and formal poetic forms to challenge moral integrity and argue for spiritual liberty with regard to slavery. This thereby challenged the ethics of her target audience by appealing to their religious beliefs. Furthermore, Wheatley's success as a poet in such a tumultuous time period is also inspiring and presents her as a role model for the generations to come, including the contemporary period.

Although the two writers decided to opt for their individually unique approaches to advancing socio-political reforms, their works coincide in their underlying aim of condemning slavery and advocating for the equality of African American people, especially women.

Even though a significant amount of scholarship exists on Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents* and Phillis Wheatley's *Poems*, this thesis provides a close and detailed comparative analysis of the writings of two most prominent African American published female authors before the Reconstruction period. It uncovers the common themes and literary techniques which improves our understanding of how and why their works became so influential. Moreover, the time period that is examined in this thesis i.e. pre-Reconstruction, is a period which is less explored academically even though it was a crucial time. It places Jacobs and Wheatley within the broader literary canon and offers a multifaceted understanding of their works.

This thesis serves as groundwork for multiple future research, for instance comparing works of classical

African-American women writers with those of contemporary ones. Furthermore, there can be exploration around how these writers, if they did, engage with bigger global discourses about abolition and women's rights.

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Religion is absolute in Kannada literature

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Abstract— Religion, human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of especial reverence. It is also commonly regarded as consisting of the way people deal with ultimate concerns about their lives and their fate after death. In many traditions, this relation and these concerns are expressed in terms of one's relationship with or attitude toward gods or spirits; in more humanistic or naturalistic forms of religion, they are expressed in terms of one's relationship with or attitudes toward the broader human community or the natural world. In many religions, texts are deemed to have scriptural status, and people are esteemed to be invested with spiritual or moral authority. Believers and worshippers participate in and are often enjoined to perform devotional or contemplative practices such as prayer, meditation, or particular rituals. Worship, moral conduct, right belief, and participation in religious institutions are among the constituent elements of the religious life. The subject of religion is discussed in a number of articles. For treatment of major and historical religious traditions.



Keywords— literature, transmattions, social being, society, Religion, humanistic life values.

INTRODUCTION

Every literature of every language also has its own unique heritage. Kannada literature is no exception. Since the writer is a social being, society is the target of literature. A person's speech, behavior, attachment, cooperative living, friendly thoughts and so on are all steps to a successful career. A person should know these and follow them. Otherwise, Karubi will have to spend his whole life watching the days of others. In recent times, this survey has generally been left out. The service of the literary medium is significant in many measures to correct the man who lives without social awareness. Its work is not finished until it realizes once and throws up its hands that its work is done. It's a moving medium all the time. It is also a public truth to speak. Bhava is alive and well. A successful life can be seen only by following them. The application of life values in literature is as ancient as the creation of literature. Pampa, Runnaradiyagi Basavanna Allamaprabhu, Akkamahadevi, Chennabasavanna, Prathikki Marayya, Prathikki Lakkamma etc. and these exemplary values of life have grown and stood strong even

in modern literature. Thus the main purpose of every creative literature was the same, which was unmistakable.

It is possible in this literature to correct the twists and turns of mankind. Pampa said, 'The human race is itself a treasure'. It is the same with all human behavior. Although his nature seems to have said that much, on the other hand, all human beings are the same. It seems to have declared that there is no discrimination. But the purpose then has changed a lot today. The main effect is that everyone is the same, everyone is the same. Clashes between caste, religion and rituals are common. If you look at it like that, Pampa predicted and emphasized to the mankind in the 9th century keeping in mind the life, stupidity and selfish desires of the people of the next 21st century. It is noteworthy that Rana, another poet, thought about good and bad. The hero of the Mahabharata has preached the message to the people that they should live in harmony without consuming the money. It is also an indication that women will be respected and the society will progress.

Nagachandra, named as 'Abhinava Pampa' in Kannada literary history, brought 'Malini Prasanga' to change Ravana's evil mind. There was hope in them that

the next generation of mankind would learn wisdom by looking at them as an example of those who had already taken a wicked path. Both literature and society have repeatedly insulted what has been learned as bad. He should be allowed to change his thought processes. From that his other life begins. His inner self is revealed even to a mortal.

Although man has progressed scientifically, he has remained behind in the matter of faith. Mothers, Gods, Gurus, Elders, Reverend Ones said something like this. There is a special fear, a devotion to the unseen forces in his remote corner. Vachankaras, Shivsharans went out after discovering the core of such hypocritical people and the solidity of loyalty. A person's internal and external rituals should not be pretentious and should be pure inwardly and outwardly. Always wish the best for others. One should have the knowledge not to do evil even if it is not good by oneself. Even then those invisible forces that he believed in and are believing in will agree. As far as the individual is concerned, faulty conduct can burn a person's personality to insignificance. Therefore, the preceptor satirized the hypocritical hypocrisy of man by saying that what is the fruit of Japava, what is the fruit of penance, if there is excessive quality pollution. Akkamahadevi, who shines as an unworthy gem in Anubhava Mantapa, is a rare personality.

What is the fruit of a tree without shade?

What is the result of wealth without kindness?

What is the benefit of having a cow?

What is the result of form without quality?

What is the result of being separated and not having a heart?

What is the result of me being without your knowledge?

Channamallikarjuna

She spoke truth to the world through her words. She did the work of warning the world that whatever man has is the result of not knowing the way of good behavior.

Both Shiva Sharan Sharaniyas and recent poets worked to explore the various possibilities of reality. He wrote by comparing his writing to equal society and the future. Bharata tried to conquer the glorious Bharata world and won. But Bahubali was the one who declared that no one has as much as he who has conquered the world, and Mahadasa will not have it for all time. On the other hand, Ratnakaravarni sacrifices everything and wins himself in defeat rather than in victory. Baahubali, who claimed to be the greatest of all, is quite a modern model. Like Basavanna's, the personality grew beyond all castes and

religions. Meru is a revolutionary personality who is always and universally welcomed by everyone. No animal except a human animal can kill an animal of its own species. "Don't steal, don't kill, don't lie" to such a low-minded animal. Do not steal other people's money or things. Do not kill another's mind and character. Don't lie for your own sake. These are fatal to Sachcharityraya. In his inner self, man is living by believing in selfishness, lies, deceit, frauds and pleasing people by being a follower and a follower of all. That is the actual truth. All, if not all, are preoccupied with trying to please the other. It is true that even a fool cannot function without profit. Today's narrow mindedness was satirized by Basavanna. Realizing exploitation, injustice, tyranny, illegality, fraud, fraud, hypocritical devotions, he developed a spirit of opposition to them and protested against them through his verses.

While mental peace is supreme, it is unfortunate to live in mental turmoil. 'Toleration is Paradharm' but today even its stench does not touch man. They can't tolerate each other and are always with each other. Due to this, Pararotti's state of mind also fluctuates. He is not doing this unknowingly. Even though he realizes it, he is moving forward. This should be the point at which the Kali Yuga ends.

Man should always be active. He should work either for himself or for others. The same contented life. The same is useless. It is not a man-made kailash. He wanted a life full of happiness, peace and tranquility. If he is busy with one work after another, he will not have time to be angry, jealous or think ill of others. That is the real peaceful life. That is why Basavanna said 'Kayakave Kailasa'. The soul has no gender. A woman is not an illusion, a woman is not an untouchable, not a slave. She is the real goddess of mankind. Seeing a goddess like Parvati is the price of faith in the invisible powers one worships. It was through this that Shiv Sharanya tried to eradicate the discrimination between men and women. As in the Dasa Sahitya sect, Dasavarenya preached that 'Tallanisadiru Kandya Talu Manave everyone will be successful, there is no doubt about this' that atheism creates anxiety, disappointment, delusion and despair in man.

CONCLUSION

Religious absolutism is necessary and inevitable in the present age. Apart from the variation of worldly religion, another religion is Gwajalyamana. It should be preserved and nurtured. It is the religion of humanity. That religion is ever relative to the world, its extent is as wide as life itself. All the scriptures of Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and other religions also teach values of humanity. Because he is the guardian of discipline, isn't he? He needs himself. But

lately, he has thrown all these values into the air. They are alienating each other by developing regional, caste and religious narrow feelings. On the one hand he is honored as God, on the other hand woman is humiliated. She also does not feel like someone's mother, sister, elder sister. A man who does not imagine himself to be a wife to others is living in abjectness.

Even from the beginning of Kannada literature till now, humanistic life values have been sought. Literature is like Siddhauhadhi for the present. But their use should be careful. Because one who is literate guides. It is the work of all sympathizers to follow. They weed out the human mind and cultivate the ideals of a happy life and lead to a model life. Similarly, even if a man values modernity over tradition, he should not be seduced by it. The life that follows the life of the ancestors is meritorious and excellent.

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Daily poet Dr. K.S. Nisar Ahmed

[Nityōtsava kavi dā. Ke.Es. Nisār ahamad]

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Abstract— *Kokkare Hosahalli Shekh Haider Nissar Ahmed (5 February 1936 – 3 May 2020[1]) Was An Indian Poet And Writer In The Kannada Language. He Was Awarded The Padma Shri (2008) The Rajyotsava Award (1981) And The Pampa Award For His Work (2017). He Became A Household Name For His Work Nityotsava (Daily Celebration), Which Is A Poem About Karnataka, A Piece He Composed After Seeing Jog Falls. He Has Numerous Poems, Translations And Children's Books To His Credit. He Is Known For Using Simple Words That Resonate Deeply With The Public In His Literary Work. Nissar Ahmed Was Born In Devanahalli In Bangalore Rural. His Father Was A Government Employee. His Family Moved To Dodda Mavalli In Bangalore. He Grew Up In A Muslim Colony Which Had About 500 Muslim Families. His Father Admitted Him To A Kannada Medium School, With The Objective Of Easing The Path For Him To Secure A Government Job. Most Of The Children In The Neighbourhood Studied Urdu.*



Keywords— *literature, transformations, hosagannada literature, importance of modern poets*

INTRODUCTION

K.S. is famous as the poet of the daily festival. Nisar Ahmed is a favorite of Kannadigas, the people of Kannada nation and a legend of Kannada Saraswat world. True Kannadigas who breathed Kannada and Kannadana with all their hearts. His literary contribution to the Kannada Saraswat world is a living proof of this. Always active, he has expressed his passion and Sattiva anger in his writings. Although born in a Muslim family, Nisar is a true Kannada lover who assimilated Kannada. As he himself says, "I have learned each and every letter of Kannada by sweating" His hard work in learning Kannada and his love for Kannada can be understood by anyone. This is how Swami Vivekananda learned the French language in a unique way and surprised the French, Nisar Ahmed has earned the admiration of Kannadigas.

Although Nisar studied science, his heart was full of Kannada. He was a master of subsurface science by profession but was a Kannada literary man by inclination. Thus, as cultural thinkers of two different bases, healthy writers, who used Kannada to fulfill a daily festival in the

soil of this country. For him, the daily celebration is to first love this land that made him strong, similarly to build something new through the culture of this land, the language of nation building, and the longing to make the Kannada nation and language rich was always beating in his heart.

His father Sheikh Haider and mother Hamida Begum contributed to the development of celebrated poet Nadoja Nisar Ahmed. Nisar Ahmed was born on 5th January 1936. He grew up with four brothers and five sisters. Because "brothers and sisters are sharing the story they have heard, the moral framework within it, with their elder brother. In these stories, the stories of Hindus and Muslims are mixed, and it is interesting that the root of tolerance is mixed with the religion of their lives. Thus Nisar Ahmed always cherished his parents and sisters with love.

Nisar Ahmed, a well-known great poet, thinker and proud poet of Kannadigas, whose poem 'Jogada Siri' became the home of Kannadigas, has enriched the Akshaya Nidhi of Kannada by donating precious gems of his work to Kannada Saraswat literature for almost five

decades. Nisar's poems are what we immediately remember, but his other world beyond poetry is his prose writings, his valuable and varied prose writings, which are nearly a thousand pages long, attract the reader like a needle.

As poetry reached people's minds much faster than his prose literature, the first 12 voice scrolls he brought out were 'Nityotsava', 'Kavanotsava', 'Sumadhur' and 'Navollasa'. Especially 'Nityotsava' has brought popularity to Nisar. Today, wherever a Kannada festival is held, it is so publicized that it is incomplete without the singing of the Nityotsava Kavita. Also, from 'Manasu Gandhi Bazaar' to 'AravatteôĒdara Aisiri' and about 12 collections of poetry, his poetry spread throughout the country and abroad. His prose also slowly moved forward introducing Nisar's personality.

One of the leading writers of Kannada, Prof. K.S. There are many people who influenced Nisar Ahmed. Prominent among them are - G.P. Rajaratnam, MV Seetharamaiah, L. Gundappa, Vesee and others have caused Nisar to develop interest in Kannada.

Dr. Nisar Ahmed made his debut in the field of literature. His interest in poetry started at the age of 10, as if it were a bud that grew through poetry. A poem written about 'waterfall' was printed in a handwritten newspaper. In particular, he started writing Navodaya and Navya, absorbed the best aspects of both these poetic sects and without getting into any convulsions, he used the literary work in his poems in the light of his own thoughts and created his own mark in Kannada literature.

Nadoja Nisar Ahmed has not limited himself to poetry but has spread his talent in different genres of literature. As a critic of sensitive sensibility, a kind-hearted thinker, a beloved children's literature, a talented translator, a conscientious editor, he has brought out 21 poetry collections, 14 philosophical writings, 05 children's literary works, 05 translated works, 13 edited books and rendered his own unique service to Kannada literature. He has received numerous awards for his talent and valuable service. He is a poet, writer, critic, thinker, translator, and above all, he is a humane, simple, gentleman, great humanist, who has established himself in the hearts of Kannadigas without being impressed.

At the age of 13, the goddess of poetry sang to Nisar Ahmed, "Look at the bud that grows." His poetic life started with the poem 'Jalapata'. At the age of 15, Nisar edited a handwritten magazine called 'Vanasuma'. Nisar's mentor G.P. Rajaratnam and V. Sitaramaiah read Nisar's poems and brought out a book called 'Padyanjali'. Thus, after becoming active in the literary world, the first poetry collection 'Manasu Gandhi Bazaar' came out in 1960.

From here Nisar's literary cultivation continued continuously. His major collections of poetry are: Nenedavara Manalli (1964), Sumuhurta (1968), Samsham Idara Param (1970), Nanemba Parakeya (1972), Selected Poems (1974), Nityotsava (1976), Swayam Sevaya Gililu (1977), Anamika Anglaru (Anamika Anglaru). 1982), Collected Poems (1991), Navollasa (1994), The Sky Has No Limits (1998), Sixty-four Aisiri (2001), Comprehensive Lyrics (2001). Representative Poems (2002), Seemathitana Sirivanta Suggi (2007) may be prominently named.

It is common for a prose writer to write verse. But the care and caution that a poet has when writing prose is different. But Nisar longed for what he wrote to be strong and full of substance, so he turned to prose as well. Thus he wrote the prose lyrics 'Achhumechchu, itu Bari Bedagallo Anna'. He also translated Shakespeare's play 'Othello' into Kannada. He initiated the Kannada language by translating 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' into Kannada as 'Amma Achara and Me'. People went crazy when these experiments were brought to the stage. It was written by Kampu Nisar in Kannada so much that it was not a translation. It can be said that Nisar's literature here also succeeded in attracting literary lovers. The articles on 'Sufidharma', 'Some Philosophical Thoughts on Poetry', 'Pablo Neruda' are a testament to poet Nisar's sensitive sensibility and the translation of 43 of Neruda's poems into Kannada is admirable. Kuvempu, Masti, V.C. Introductory articles on famous Kannada writers like Adiga, Gokaka etc. are good. Apart from these, Nisar has also conducted a review. In the vein of his criticism, the meritorious points of criticism are included. Although he appreciates the essence of the work, he talks about it without trying to hide its shortcomings. Thus Nisar's review is serious. His critical stances are reflected in his articles 'Talking with Mana', 'Firangi Baiya Gubbajchi', 'Hodeya ie Mantu Gavakshi'.

Nisar, who binds the language in a wonder, has used the magic of words in his poetry. Thus, he has written honey poems in his creative writing and attracted poetry lovers. Also, his poems became famous as lyrical songs and in 1978, 'Nityotsava' became the first audio print and got popular recognition. Nisar became famous as a 'Nityotsava' poet. Later, the cassettes Navollasa, Sumadhura were released in the Gulf states of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, in the Karnataka association. Sir Mohammad Iqbal's poem 'Saare Jaham Se Accha' was translated into Kannada as 'India is our country' and made it popular. Although the Nisars started literary cultivation in the modern period, they did not escape the deep influence of Kannada Renaissance writers. Thus he created Kannada poems using the powerful ideas of the Renaissance. He

created a new enclosure for the modern in a new way. Kannada Nadu - language, nature, patriotism, urban image, satire, communal, harmony, culture and tradition, religion, country, race, father, son, generation, these took shape as multifaceted dimensions of Nisar's poetry.

“Kannada is not just a language
It means past
Water is not just water
That is Pavan Tirtha”

Nisar's fondness for Kannada Nadu - Nudi is special. Ketchu, who identified himself as an Indian even in his Bhakta Sanchal, was indeed a sojiga. "The land is ours, the water is ours, the people are ours" His poetic power had the quality of warning not only the literary lovers but also the people of the country about the struggle for freedom. Mammala is shocked to see the people who are innocent, helpless and susceptible to the sand words of the politicians in the political chaos of reality. Sarcastically saying 'sheep are sir sheep', 'its tail is that, and its tail is this is moose, lower your voice, lower your head, and warn us you who are raging' are always present in Nisar's poems. In Nisar's poems, we can see the poet's mind, which longs for all of us to fight consciously to uproot the barbaric stupidity that came from the past.

Nisar has not only composed poems but also got popular recognition. Hani Gavithas have been creatively created to capture different stages of life. His poem 'Kasi ilda kailasa kailasam kailasam' tells how much money is needed in human life. If there is money, Kailash can be seen before the eyes. He has shown that even Kailasam is unattainable if there is no money. In another poem of his, "Don't drink sendi andandaru Gandhi odane quitte sendi pattannivanu brandi", it is special that he has revealed the real picture of life by humorously portraying the inferiority of the people. Such structures, the spectacle of playing with sounds, is not created at once. It requires special expertise. It is no wonder that Nisars who have that talent stand in the ranks of Kannada poets.

Nisar seems to be as mature as he is in the art of composing poetry as well as in the genre of prose. His critical work 'It. Bari Bedagallo Anna' is a good example. In this work, the nature of criticism, the logic that a critic should have, an impartial attitude, some philosophical thoughts about poetry, deep experience perception, and the essential ideas of sensitive and sharp intellect can be found in this work.

Reviewing all these ideas, it can be seen that reviews of poetry of different poets, reviews of poetry collections of major poets have been reviewed. It may be noted that this work was awarded as the best critical work

by the Karnataka Sahitya Akademi. Nisar is proof that it is rare to find a poet as a good prose writer.

Nisar's seniors Harasida Highway (1992), Achumechchu (1995), Vichara Vihara (1998), Comprehensive Prose Writings (2002) in these works have masterfully tied the literary knowledge of many ideas found, experienced and understood in his life. Social, political, administrative, historical facts are conceptual aspects in this work. Also, his tendency to respect the great achievers who inspired Nisar is special considering that he wrote about famous influential people like Kuvempu, Masti, Shakespeare, Mother Theresa. It can be seen that Nisar, who became a master of translation, has also displayed his talent in children's literature. They are; Birds (1978), Rocks, Minerals (1978), Birds (1978), Rocks and Minerals (1978), Little Saints and Buds (1978) are important. Many ideas related to nature, environment, science and education are revealed in Nisar's children's literature.

Nisar is not only a poet, writer, critic but also an active editor and has earned a good reputation. Overview, Decade Chandan Quarterly (1974-83) Poems, Decade Review (1974-83), Decade Essays (1974-83), Decade Short Stories (1974-83), Ratna Volume, Masti's 'Chikaveera Rajendra' a critical works to name. In this, after taking over the presidency of Karnataka Sahitya Akademi during 1984-1987, Nisar's effort to enrich Kannada literature by framing many literary programs is commendable. 'Antarabhasha Kavigyantha', Ruwari of 'Vishwa Kannada Sammelana', Saludeepal took many editorial works like the foundation of the work and brought a new look to the academy.

Prof. Nisar Ahmed's literary field is very wide and varied in scope. Sriyutha's literature is different from other people's literature. Because, with Urdu being the home language, it is not easy for a science student to stand between these two different bases and make his mark in the Kannada base like "Ettana mamara, ettana kogile, ettanendetta samsanavaia". The way such a pure Achagannad Muslim brother can easily navigate the ocean of Kannada literature is very mystical. Besides, farming in Kannada is a challenge. So his literary achievement is remarkable.

One of the qualities of Nisar's poetry is Nisar Ahmed's sense of humor, who looks serious to see, the quiver of humorous arrows is full of words that bring a gentle smile to the reader, which makes his poetry more booming. Thus, even though all his works related to this land are with us, he is one of the people who raised Kannada to the Himalayas beyond us.

Nisar Ahmed is a teacher along with NCC. As an officer he instilled discipline, courage, adventure and patriotism in the students along with teachings. Also Kannada Meru actor Dr. Rajkumar was captivated by his simple gentleman and literary contribution. Kuvempu appreciated his poetry. Thus many Kannada stalwarts patted him on the back and encouraged him.

Nisar's tenure as the President of Karnataka Sahitya Akademi from 1984 to 1987 was the most important part of his life when he gave a new dimension and a new form to Kannada literary activities. Also, it is commendable that the Kannadigas honored him as the president of the 73rd All India Literary Conference held in Shimoga. It is admirable that he came to Mumbai as an invited speaker in 2011 and impressed Mumbai Kannadigas. Also in America, Abu Dhabi and so on, it is commendable that he has received the appreciation of all Kannadigas through his scholarly lectures in many countries and abroad.

CONCLUSION

Thus he excelled in poetry, prose, criticism, translation, rationalism, editing, adaptation, children's literary writings. Similarly, in social, religious and literary contexts, it is said that "what you have is not like you", but what we have is not like us, but it is admirable that it is a bridge between everyone. Dr. Nadoja, who received many statuses, honors and awards through his writings, brought respect to the Kannada language and the Kannada language in the country and abroad, and flew the flag of Kannada fame everywhere. K.S. Although Nisar Ahmed is not physically with us, he is literary in the hearts and minds of Kannadigas.

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Exploring Male Chauvinism and Gender-Based Violence in *Someone Like Her*: A Psychoanalytic Feminist Critique

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Abstract— This study examines Awaiz Khan's novel *Someone Like Her* (2023) from a psychoanalytic feminist perspective. It focuses on themes of male chauvinism, gender-based violence, and societal stereotypes. Male chauvinism is a superiority complex that violates a woman's dignity, and equality and subjugates her both physically and psychologically. It is based on the notion that men are regarded as superior gender to women. It is a concept that has been passed down through centuries and celebrated by society which creates a patriarchal system. Women have long been considered the 'weaker section' of society and subordinate to men. Man has perpetuated patriarchy through his physical force and used it for his own gain. Due to this inevitable superiority and subjugation of women, men tend to abuse them both physically and emotionally. The study adopts a qualitative method of analysis to explore how male chauvinistic attitudes lead to gender-based violence against the protagonist, Ayesha. It explores misogynistic maltreatment and examines the societal stereotypes that affect women's portrayal and treatment. Using Nancy Chodorow's and Juliet Mitchell's works as a theoretical framework, the research sheds light on how patriarchal structures and gender-biased norms merge to give rise to oppression and gender inequality. This study contributes to understanding the impact of literature in reflecting and challenging societal norms, advocating for gender equality, and empowering marginalized voices.



Keywords— Gender-Based Violence, Male Chauvinism, Patriarchy, Psychoanalytic Feminism, Societal Stereotypes

I. INTRODUCTION

“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”

(De Beauvoir, 2023, p. 283)

1.1 Background of the Study

Chauvinism means that one's gender is always superior to the other. Whereas, 'Male Chauvinism' refers to male domination in family or society in general and the power of men. Historically, men have regarded women as the 'weaker section' of society and subject to them (Sultana, 2012). Male chauvinism is a kind of patriarchy which is based upon the notion of domination over women. The term patriarchy describes the dominance of men in both public and private domains. Sylvia Walby (1990) defines

patriarchy “as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (p. 20). Moreover, men are generally considered the superior gender, a concept that has been passed down through centuries and celebrated by society, creating a patriarchal system. Women have long been considered the 'weaker section' of society and subordinate to men (Sultana, 2012). Male chauvinism manifests when women assert their independence or engage in activities that challenge the male's sense of self (Woods, 1976).

Women disproportionately endure the brunt of gender stereotypes that serve as a means through which patriarchy is perpetuated, significantly influencing the representation of male and female characters in literature over time.

However, women are increasingly becoming victims of sexual domestic abuse due to social inequalities (Jacobson, 2011). There are many causes behind these disparities, but patriarchy and male chauvinism are two of them.

The study focuses on the novel *Someone Like Her* (2023) which is set in the city of Multan, Pakistan. It is the story of a young twenty-seven-year-old Pakistani girl named Ayesha. She is an independent woman who is contented in her singlehood and works in a charity organization to help victims of domestic abuse. The still waters of her life are rippled when Raza, an affluent Multani man, enters her life. Soon he is obsessed and wants her in his life at any cost. He subjugates and oppresses her in various ways and eventually compels her to have an engagement with him, without her consent. Despite all the hurdles, she musters up the courage to refute him in the face but eventually faces the brunt of it when Raza douses acid on her face. Pelting acid and harassing her is not enough for him to pacify his wounded male ego he even chases her to London to further ravage and humiliate her. Ayesha faces the brunt of his wrath and victimization of patriarchal stereotypes.

The current study analyzes the selected novel from a psychoanalytic feminist perspective. According to Kristina Wolff (2007), "Psychoanalytic feminism is a theory of oppression, which asserts that men have an inherent psychological need to subjugate women" (p. 3). The origin of men's urge to dominate women and women's limited opposition to subjection is deeply embedded in the human mind. Experiencing oppression and biases in a patriarchal society is not limited to women from a specific region or era, but rather it is a "shared psychology" (Chodorow, 1989). Similarly, violence against women is prevalent in patriarchal societies, regardless of social class, religious beliefs, or level of education. Men use their physical power to assert their control over the more vulnerable women. Traditionally, there is a set of expectations for women and young girls regarding their behaviour. They are socialized to conform to the role of the 'good girl' who assists in household chores and exhibits qualities such as being well-behaved, obedient, and polite (Boudet et al., 2013, p. 42).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Women are regarded as the subordinate gender and maltreated, leading to the prevalence of Male Chauvinism. It is frequently observed that men are regarded as the superior gender, a belief that has been passed down through many generations and publicly embraced by society. Psychoanalytic feminism asserts that it is men's inherent need to subjugate and dominate women. It is due to this belief that women are subjected to gender-based

violence in the form of domestic abuse and marginalization in the patriarchal society. The ingrained societal stereotypes and male-dominated cultural norms constitute to subjugate and oppress women.

1.3 Research Objectives

- 1) Analyzing the male chauvinistic attitudes and behaviours and in what ways these result in gender-based violence in the novel.
- 2) To identify and examine patterns of misogynistic maltreatment directed towards Ayesha by Raza Masood.
- 3) Identifying prevalent societal stereotypes depicted in the novel *Someone Like Her* that affect the portrayal and treatment of the protagonist, Ayesha.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The current study holds significance because it explores a newly-published novel from a psychoanalytic feminist perspective. The study is of prime importance both academically and socially. Academically, it serves as an instructive source for students, scholars, and readers with an interest in literature, gender studies, and psychoanalytic feminist theories. Through exploration of societal stereotypes and victimization portrayed in the novel, the study has emphasized the broader impact of these means of oppression on social attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, the study encourages readers to critically assess and challenge ingrained stereotypes. It also motivates readers to show empathy towards characters experiencing oppression and strive to promote gender equality within their respective communities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Akram (2024) highlights that patriarchal standards constrain women through forced marriage as Leila's family-forced marriage exposes women's limited life choices. Forced marriages demonstrate women's weakness in societies obsessed with marriage. The story delves into the prevalence of domestic violence among women. The study also mentions that victims of domestic violence suffer from mental and physical anguish. It analyzes sexual abuse, highlighting women's vulnerability in a male-dominated culture. Violence against women exploits and dehumanizes them for masculine desires.

Khan *et al.* (2021) propound that feminism has emphasized challenges women face in male-dominated societies. Men and women were once biologically different. French feminist Simone de Beauvoir questioned the assumption that biological sex dictates gender identity.

Similarly, the study depicts the oppression of Afghan women due to the patriarchal structure of their society which limits their role. In *Thousand Splendid Suns*, Nana's character represents women's oppression in a male-dominated culture. She is brought to the level of an animal and Mariam is abandoned by her father and Jalil.

According to Malik *et al.* (2020), Ali's writing focuses on the marginalization of the female characters. *Twilight in Delhi* shows the influence of social circumstances on an individual's psycho-sexual development. The analysis of the novel demonstrates that South Asian women cultivate a distinctive and singular personality as a result of their socialization experiences. The narrative repeatedly shows how men have social and sexual privileges that women do not, raising a key question for readers to consider.

Rafiq Nawab *et al.* (2024) reflect on societal stereotypes in their study by asserting that social rules and conventions directed people of 19th-century European society. In *A Doll's House*, Henrik Ibsen attacks societal prejudices that restrict women to domestic roles, mirroring the greater limitations imposed by traditional societal structures. The play sheds light on the entrenched social standards that sustain gender inequality, constraining women's autonomy and personal development. Nawab (2024) points out that Nora must obey her husband and follow his opinions in all matters according to custom. This suggests that women must conform to traditional norms, preventing them from developing intellect and individuality. He says, "the norms, the conventions and the traditions thwarted individual liberty in a variety of ways" (Nawab *et al.*, 2024).

Rind & Larik (2016) shed light on the hardships faced by Pakistani women residing in Pakistan. The representation of women in Nadeem Aslam's oeuvre can be analyzed from a broader viewpoint. The novels offer a comprehensive depiction of the psychological, personal, social, and emotional challenges encountered by women. The challenges faced by women include honour killings, sexual abuse, kidnapping, alienation, marginalization, forced marriage, and injustice. Women face considerable challenges in a patriarchal and male-dominated culture.

Sharma (2015) traces elements of male chauvinism and patriarchy in Indian fiction by highlighting how Anand describes women's problems in Indian society in his work. The study reveals that a woman's only duties are cooking, cleaning, and satisfying her husband's sexual needs. The majority of the female characters in the novel endure the brunt of male chauvinism and the patriarchal system prevalent in conservative India. Ammu in the novel is a profoundly unhappy and unfortunate individual who endures suffering at every juncture of her life. Arundhati

Roy feels that social inequities, such as the exploitation of the poor by the rich and the abuse of women in patriarchal societies, are a major problem in modern India. This study aims to elevate downtrodden women who felt powerless to break free from the shackles of patriarchy.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Paradigm

The researchers have employed an interpretive research paradigm in conducting this study. The interpretive paradigm focuses on the subjective understanding of reality and facts based on individual experiences and with a backdrop of specific cultural context. The current study has adopted the interpretive paradigm to critically develop the understanding of the relevant data following both characters' and researchers' socio-cultural backgrounds.

3.2 Research Method

The current study has adopted a qualitative method in analyzing the text of the mentioned novel. The qualitative analysis of the text provides traces of male chauvinism and gender-based violence directed towards women in the selected novel. The textual analysis of the novel serves as the method for conducting this study. However, through textual analysis and qualitative approach, relevant excerpts and areas are explored in the selected novel.

3.3 Data Collection

The study has used both primary and secondary sources for data collection. The primary data has been collected from the novel, *Someone Like Her* (2023), in the form of excerpts, phrases, and sentences. The secondary data sources include relevant sections from books related to psychoanalytic feminism, views of psychoanalytic and feminist scholars, internet-based articles, research papers, journals and other relevant literature. The researchers have used LibGen, Google Scholar, and Anna's Archive to access the above-mentioned data sources.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

The study has used the theoretical framework of Psychoanalytic Feminism. Nancy Chodorow's *Feminism and psychoanalytic theory* (1989), and Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and feminism: A radical reassessment of Freudian psychoanalysis* (2000) are used as theoretical frameworks to conduct the research study. Only relevant sections have been consulted from these works and mostly secondary sources have been utilized to extract relevant data from the above-mentioned works. Psychoanalytic feminism asserts that men have an inherent inclination to subjugate women. Psychoanalytic feminism is founded on Freud's psychoanalytic theories. It asserts that gender is

not biological but rather focused on the psycho-sexual development of the individual (Ramsey, 2000). This theory claims that the unconscious mind, social, and cultural structures shape gendered identities and behaviors. Mitchell emphasizes the significance of Freud's contributions in unveiling the patriarchal ideology that both genders internalize and accept as 'normal'.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Beneath the Patriarchal Veil: Violence Begins at Home

“A woman's life isn't her own...Especially not in Pakistan” (Khan, 2023, p. 17)

The term patriarchy refers to a societal structure characterized by a hierarchy in which males are bestowed with greater opportunities than their female counterparts, who occupy subordinate positions and are deprived of fundamental rights. However, sociologists regard patriarchy as a social construct derived from the inherent biological disparities between males and females. This social organization considers women to be confined to domestic labour and limits their role as housewives, as it is believed that males are the primary providers for the family (Macionis, 2012, p. 332).

The deeply ingrained patriarchal values in the novel show the perception of a woman's independence as a direct challenge to traditional male authority and ego. Ayesha, being an independent girl, works for a charity organization, *Insaaniyat* (Humanity), where she works to help survivors of domestic abuse. Despite hailing from an educated family background, her father initially opposes her decision to work. He says, “Girls in our family do not work” (Khan, 2023, p. 10). It reflects a familial belief system within a patriarchal society in which the constraints imposed on women are regarded as an unchallenged norm and part of the family's tradition that is passed on between generations. Nancy Chodorow (1989) in her seminal work, *Feminist and Psychoanalytic Theory*, explains that culturally expected behaviours are not simply taught but inherited across generations and are externalized and perpetuated by the unconscious of the majority of men (p. 54). By preventing Ayesha from working, her father, Safdar Khan, not only asserts control over her public sphere but also over her autonomy, hence curtailing her independence.

Similarly, Raza Masood retorts to Ayesha regarding her job when she expresses her desire to work after marriage. She believes that she will continue working in her charity organization, an observation upon which Raza takes a jibe at her, “[w]omen in our family don't work, Ayesha. They

never have” (Khan, 2023, p. 66). According to Chodorow (1989), in most societies, men and women do not have a close personal relationship but rather based upon notions of power and dominance (p. 53). Therefore, women are perceived predominantly in terms of men's demands and expectations, rather than as independent individuals.

In an instance in the novel, Safdar shushes his wife, Ishrat, when she tries to take the side of her daughter. He gives her a shut-up call by saying, “I don't remember asking for your opinion, Ishrat” (Khan, 2023, p. 19). Safdar's dismissal of his wife's thoughts or his insistence on having the final authority shows that her voice is subordinate and her autonomy is constrained within the marriage. In the context of marriage, male silencing of women often manifests as control over decision-making, or emotional manipulation. These actions are rooted in the notion of 'symbolic violence,' as described by feminist sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2001), which refers to the subtle, often unspoken ways in which dominance is enforced without physical force. These situations may cause the male partner to fear that the woman's voice would disrupt the power balance (Benjamin, 1988). By silencing her, he preserves his dominance and psychologically suppresses her freedom. Chodorow (1989) quotes, “Men resent and fear women because they experience them as powerful” (p. 6).

4.2 Raza Masood: A Male Chauvinist Pig

“That is exactly how my world works...What I want, I get” (Khan, 2023, p. 43)

Raza Masood is a wealthy landlord and a spoiled brat of an affluent Multani family. He has a filthy past of indulging in debauchery and having been involved physically with multiple girls. It is through Neelum, her aunt, Ayesha meets with Raza at a wedding to ask for some charity for her organization. However, Raza agrees to offer some help but asks her for a coffee outside her workplace, something that Ayesha has never done, especially with her clients in the professional arena. Unfortunately, she has to agree because of the lucrative amount of thirty-million cheque that Raza wishes to offer to her organization. Getting this sumptuous amount would mean a world for her organization and could certainly ensure a pay raise for her.

Raza has enchanted all the people with his superficial efforts for philanthropy and his lavish lifestyle. When Ayesha refuses to dance with Raza upon request of Sabeena, she says, “[h]e doesn't ask just about anyone for a dance. This is the kind of chance every girl in Multan dreams of” (Khan, 2023, p. 26). Such is a charm he has created around himself and therefore, he considers himself a demi-god to possess whatever he desires. When Ayesha out of courtesy and strictly on a professional basis meets

him, Raza gets the monster inside him unleashed. He starts harassing her by texting and calling her incessantly afterwards the meeting. Upon straightforward rejection from Ayesha, he in a deprecating manner expresses his bitter-sweet and lustful feelings. "Sitting there with your boobs thrown out, what did you think was going to happen? Of course I fell for you." (Khan, 2023, p. 52). These objectifying remarks from Raza unveil a defense mechanism known as projection, where he projects his own desire and frustrations onto Ayesha, blaming her physical body and dressing for his internal sexual frustration. As Jessica Benjamin asserts male dominance often relies on denying mutual recognition in relationships, treating women as objects rather than subjective individuals (Benjamin, 1990).

However, instead of feeling any shame he proudly boasts that "[m]y family is one of the richest in Multan" (Khan, 2023, p. 52) and therefore she should consider herself the luckiest person in the city because he has chosen her. Raza's assertion serves as a strategy to diminish Ayesha's value and a ploy to compel her to acquiesce. Raza believes that his fortune makes him liable to achieve whatever he desires by hook or by crook. This chauvinistic attitude views economic power as an authority, marginalizing female individuality. Coria notes that male chauvinism uses economic supremacy to create a sense of superiority and subtly pressure women into submission to the man's judgments and expectations (Bonino, & Szil, 2006).

Subsequently, her fear grows as the situation exacerbates because she could have blocked his number and moved on but he was the most influential person in the city and had connections and Ayesha knew that. Although Raza expresses his desire to marry her, deep down she knows that "[h]er father would never willingly allow her to marry a misogynistic, controlling pig like Raza" (Khan, 2023, p. 53). It is something that provides solace to her heart and a sense of security but until she discovers that their family's agricultural lands have been seized by Raza because the other day she simply refused to him. Ayesha is in love with Saqib and she has always dreamt of spending her entire life with him. But Raza being a shameless adamant warns her that "[n]obody says no to Raza Masood" (Khan, 2023, p. 59). According to Bonino, men depict their psychological hostility to reveal their male chauvinism. A strategy that induces fear and intimidation through various gestures by which a man conveys to a woman that in case of any rebuttal, there should be strong repercussions (Bonino & Szil, 2006, p. 18). So seizing their lands was one of his ways to intimidate her family and compel Ayesha to comply with his command. Male chauvinists typically have an inflated sense of self-importance, reinforced by societal structures that reward assertiveness,

dominance, and competitiveness in men. These men experience narcissistic affliction when confronted with women who challenge their perceived authority, leading them to reassert control as a way of preserving their ego (Mitchell, 2000).

When Ayesha even agrees to marry him, of course, under compulsion and gets engaged to him, however, Raza tries to abuse and mistreat her. "You little bitch...I'd have kidnapped you and had my fun" (Khan, 2023, p. 85). Raza's behaviour demonstrates an ingrained compulsion to subjugate and belittle women to bolster his tenuous masculinity. According to Chodorow (1989), certain men derive unconscious gratification from dominating and subjugating others. By subjugating women, they satisfy their yearning for dominance and reinforce their self-esteem.

4.3 Patriarchy's Puppets: The Cultural Programming

"Men rule our world, like they always have, and always will" (Khan, 2023, p. 43)

Patriarchal cultures enable men to adopt attitudes and behaviours that sustain dominance over women. Socially created 'maleness' and 'femaleness' are gender identities and "a collective iteration manifested in culture, social structure and social organization" (Schippers, 2007, p. 87). Pakistani society expects women to be pregnant, raise children, care for parents and husbands, stay home, and be meek, passive, and dependent. However, in the beginning of the novel Ayesha's father objects to her working. Safdar's patriarchal mindset and male ego are revealed when he asks, "[w]hat will people say – that Safdar Khan Khakwani is now incapable of looking after his daughter?" (Khan, 2023, p. 10). The father's apprehension regarding public perception reveals the connection between his self-esteem and masculinity with his capacity to dictate his daughter's life. His worry is not merely based on paternal love and a sense of care for her but rather on his societal reputation and personal authority. This mindset exposes how men perceive women's independence as a peril to their identity and social standing.

From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, this need for society's approval shows a fragile masculine ego that depends on keeping traditional power dynamics in place. Jessica Benjamin examines how patriarchy depends on establishing a dichotomy between domination and submission, asserting that "the male figure must be dominant to maintain his sense of self" (Benjamin, 1988). Moreover, Safdar's male ego is further revealed when he proudly says, "Never let it be said that a Multani man cannot look after his family" (Khan, 2023, p. 11). This depicts the image of a conventional and patriarchal Pakistani society where a man's identity is staunchly

linked to his perceived dominance over women's behaviours, duties, and liberties. Moreover, Raza's character is also influenced by cultural standards of bigotry and biasedness against women. He humiliates Ayesha by asserting, "you'll be my mistress...[d]id you have dreams of becoming my wife...[y]ou are not fit to be anyone's wife" (Khan, 2023, p. 238-239). Raza's degradation of Ayesha is not merely a reflection of personal cruelty, but rather it shows deeply ingrained and culturally programmed patriarchal standards to see women as either virtuous wives or throwaway mistresses. Bhattacharya (2017) points out, "[g]endered norms are not simply a discourse but a set of everyday practices framed by a matrix of power relations" that continuously structure behaviour and social expectations (p. 185). These attitudes are both socially entrenched and psychologically ingrained, continuing a vicious cycle of subduing women.

4.4 Forms of Violence against Ayesha: Depictions in the Novel

"This world is very unfair on us women" (Khan, 2023, p. 266)

Patriarchal beliefs are assimilated into Pakistani society, ensuring the subordinate role of women. Patriarchal supremacy over women is perpetuated through institutionalized behavioural constraints, gender bias and violence. "Patriarchy incorporates all forms of exploitation" (Mitchell, 2000, p. 201). In Pakistan, violence is perpetuated through heinous practices such as honour killings, rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment, acid attacks, burnings, kidnapping, domestic violence, forced marriages, and torture. In the novel, Ayesha is subjected to both physical and emotional abuse and violence. She suffers the brunt of patriarchy and male chauvinism from various men in her life. She is compelled both by the inevitable circumstances created by Raza and her parents to eventually agree to marry him. After seizing their agricultural lands, he indirectly threatens her family and compels them to persuade Ayesha to marry him. Instead of taking the side of her daughter Ishrat tries to make her understand that "[a]ll you have to do is endure his touch for a couple of years. Men tire easily" (Khan, 2023, p. 56). In this way, her mother cajoles her into marrying him and she eventually agrees that "If marrying him will solve all your problems, I'll do it" (Khan, 2023, p. 64). Due to Ayesha's lack of consent, she is stripped of her autonomy and subjected to a forced marriage. The lack of consent from at least one of the parties is a defining characteristic of forced marriage.

However, she is also subjected to physical violence in the form of sexual abuse and harassment. Sexual harassment refers to deliberate, repeated, and unwelcome comments,

gestures, or physical actions of a sexual nature. The predominant victims of sexual harassment are women due to institutionalized hatred and a patriarchal mindset towards them. (Welsh, 1999). Similarly, Raza touches Ayesha inappropriately without her consent and makes her uncomfortable as he slides his fingers, "venturing inside her kameez, touching her bra strap" (Khan, 2023, p. 84). When society sexualizes and objectifies women to the extent that they become 'mere sites of fascination,' then men feel entitled to impose their sexual fantasies upon them, regardless of their consent. This mindset creates an environment where harassment is normalized as simply acting on what is deemed 'natural' or socially acceptable. On the occasion of the engagement ceremony, Raza molests her by harshly groping her waist and causing her extreme pain. When she is no longer to withhold the pain she sighs that "[y]ou're hurting me" (Khan, 2023, p. 92).

Likewise, in another instance when she comes to meet Raza upon her invitation to his friend's place, he extends his arm and starts "deliberately pressing it against her breasts" (Khan, 2023, p. 97). Ayesha also faces domestic violence in the form of physical and verbal abuse from Raza. There are several instances where Raza physically mistreats and mishandles her. When he suddenly appears before her in London, in all his rage, he puts "his fingers around her throat" (Khan, 2023, p. 232). According to Sultana, various forms of violence stem from a male-dominant system to dominate and oppress women. Such kinds of violence are deemed acceptable because of the heedless response of state authorities and the silencing or reluctant nature of women to raise their voices against it. This attitude may lead to more heinous kinds of domestic violence and rape that further exploits and socially subjugate women (Sultana, 2010, p. 10).

The core concept of sexual violence primarily centres on power rather than sexual desire and should be viewed as an aspect of gender stratification. Certain feminist theorists contend that men have historically employed rape and the apprehension of rape to assert dominance over women (Brownmiller, 1975). Likewise, Ayesha is repeatedly abused and raped by Raza when he kidnaps her in London. The novel quotes that "[h]e violated her three times that day" (Khan, 2023, p. 239). Rape and sexual assault are regarded as acts of vengeance or retribution in a patriarchal society. A prevalent misconception regarding rape attributes responsibility to women for allegedly provoking men's sexual desires by their provocative attire or behaviour, or for contravening societal norms (Roze, 2000). Contrarily, Ayesha did nothing to Raza apart from voicing her wish to choose Saqib over him. He malignantly says to Ayesha, "I'll keep raping you, and when I'm done, I'll have my servants rape you, and then

when they're done, I'll have my dog rape you too" (Khan, 2023, p. 247). He not only ravages her but also humiliates her by inviting his close friends to poke fun at her.

In patriarchal societies, rape and other manifestations of sexual violence against women are conspicuous as such acts enable men to assert and perpetuate their dominance and control over women. Angela Davis writes that "sexual coercion was . . . an essential dimension of the social relations between slave master and slave. This 'rape culture,' as it is now commonly known, outlasted the specific conditions of slavery" (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 187). Millett (2000) also asserts that "sexual domination is probably the most widespread ideology of our culture and provides its fundamental concept of power" (p. 25). Millet examines the fundamental theme of power, vividly exemplified by the central character, Raza. When Raza tries to subjugate and humiliate her by ravaging and sexually abusing her, in other words, he tries to exert his male power over her. In this way, it creates a master-slave relationship between Raza and Ayesha, hence treating her as a slave.

4.5 The Love That Burns: Raza's Vitriolage

"In Pakistan, a woman's appearance is her most valuable asset. It is also her honour. She must guard it with her life" (Khan, 2023, p. 119)

In a country where a woman's beauty and looks are frequently linked to her worth, damaging her face serves as a means of exerting complete control and diminishing her societal value. Acid attacks seek to cause not only physical injury but also to undermine a woman's social standing, self-assurance, and independence. Since gender-based violence refers to acts intended at women due to their gender. Acid attacks constitute a kind of gender-based violence, predominantly affecting women, and are frequently perpetrated as retribution for violating gender roles and constraints (Zia, 2013). Domestic violence, rejection of marriage proposals, sexual harassment, and other forms of rejection are the predominant reasons for such assaults (Ismail et al. 2020).

In the context of the novel, when Ayesha resists to advances made by Raza towards her, he in all his snobbishness becomes infuriated. She makes up her mind that she will not marry Raza, no matter what, and rejects his proposal, although initially agrees to him due to pressure from her parents. Particularly, romantic or sexual rejection is one of the most common causes for motivation to undertake such attacks of acid in many Asian countries (Calcini, 2022). This leads to a major face-off between them and Raza starts insulting her and calls her a *gushti* (a wanton woman). When the situation exacerbates, Ayesha suddenly winces as she feels a burning sensation on her

face, "Acid. She knew before it hit her skin...The acid splashed all over the right side of her face and neck..." (Khan, 2023, p. 103). She feels the liquid as if it is digging into her skin deeper and becomes numb for a moment and then the pain starts searing and she experiences the anguish that she has experienced never before. "Ayesha felt like something was eating her alive" (Khan, 2023, p. 103). She yells and bellows in agony at the top of her voice, yet it doesn't affect Raza by any means as he keeps on insulting her, calling her a *gushti* and vitriolage is something he believes she deserves. Nevertheless, by throwing acid on her face Raza knows that a woman's most valuable asset in a society like Pakistan is her physical beauty. He intends to humiliate and brand her for life, therefore acid is aimed at her face.

According to Calcini (2022), depending on the social context, vitriolage might have several meanings. It serves as a tool of control over the victim's life in Asian and South American nations where physical features are regarded as a significant means to search for a partner (p. 12). Zia (2013) notes that "[t]he woman's face is usually targeted in these attacks because a woman's worth is linked to her appearance" (p. 18). This is something Ayesha is also aware of as she asserts that "[n]othing else matters in Pakistan except for your appearance" (Khan, 2023, p. 195). In this manner, Raza tries to deprive her of her beauty and her physical features. According to Zia (2013), acid attacks are often perpetrated intentionally to disfigure victims by throwing or pouring acid across their faces and bodies. The motivation for these attacks is to cause substantial physical and emotional harm to the victim who has rejected their romantic or sexual propositions.

Since the felons recognize they will avoid repercussions after committing this grievous sin which further gives rise to these crimes and incites them to repeat their heinous actions. Similarly, Raza who has bereft Ayesha of her facial identity still doesn't pacify his misogynistic hatred. Ayesha flees to London to escape the cruel world of Raza but to her misfortune, he even chases her there and locates her. He confronts and mocks her that "[b]urning you with acid wasn't enough. My revenge was still incomplete" (Khan, 2023, p. 231). Calcini (2022) points out that the most frequent causes of vitriolage are revenge and jealousy. Raza has the audacity to pass such remarks even after shattering her entire life because he feels invincible due to his unpunished past actions. This unchecked hostility reflects a larger tendency of male chauvinism going unchecked that glorifies violence against women and promotes domination and control.

4.6 The Impact of Raza's Abuse on Ayesha's Identity

"Raza Masood had not only ruined her appearance, he'd wounded her soul too" (Khan, 2023, p. 123)

Ayesha's world is turned upside down after Raza abuses and throws acid on her face. It is not just the physical features that she has been deprived of but also her identity and inner self-confidence. As Calcini (2022) notes the intention of disfiguring a woman's appearance is to erase her identity. Therefore, Ayesha feels a severe identity crisis because from being a beautiful woman she has turned into an eerie creature in the eyes of people who stare at her just like an animal behind bars at a zoo. When she is in public, people are "watching her like she is an animal in the zoo" (Khan, 2023, p. 164). Ayesha can feel people's infiltrating gazes digging into her skin and that is why she loses her confidence and always escapes public gatherings and interaction with people. She complains, "I want to be treated like a normal human being [and want people] to treat me like a human and not an animal spotted in the zoo" (Khan, 2023, p. 173). In a recent study, it has been revealed that survivors of vitriolage endure perpetual societal discrimination due to which they feel ashamed and worry that others may stare at or ridicule them, and make them reluctant to leave their homes, hence subjected to perpetual isolation and loneliness (Mittal et al., 2024).

Due to constant alienation and victim blaming, her heart has grown weary of the world and her surroundings. She no longer feels the zest of life that she used to feel and nothing excites her as she abandons both her public and private life. In the process, she has grown suicidal as her mind is cluttered with suicidal thoughts because she cannot further endure the anguish and affliction that Raza has caused her. She starts thinking "how it would feel to slit her wrists and let the blood mix with water" (Khan, 2023, p. 240). This is how she wants to end her suffering by putting an end to her life once and for all. In this way, she feels she can escape the vicious cycle of abuse, pain, shame and guilt that have constantly been hunting her. A study conducted by Sharma (2022), explains that survivors of vitriolage who had a sense of isolation, feeling of guilt, shame and embarrassment post-attack had a greater tendency towards suicidal ideation and mental distress (Sharma et al., 2022).

However, the impacts of Raza's abuse are not only restricted to emotional and physical consequences but also have psychological repercussions. Ayesha is hallucinating about Raza and her inner demons don't leave her at rest even after leaving away her past in Pakistan and settling in London. The trauma of abuse and acid attack is ingrained in her mind and doesn't let her settle with Kamil in whom she finds another love and a true gentleman after being

abandoned by Saqib and ravished by Raza. In an instance when she was with Kamil she winced and "looked like she'd seen a ghost" (Khan, 2023, p. 212). It appears to be Raza – a ghost of him that is still haunting her, affecting both her present and future.

Acid attacks significantly impact the survivors and they face many psychological consequences, such as social isolation, suicidal ideation, and persistent trauma (Azam, 2014). It also shows her growing fear and apprehension that Raza, as a blemish of her past, is soon going to invade and destroy her life once again. The motivation behind an acid attack is not to cause death, but to inflict irreversible harm to the victim's face and body, resulting in both physical and mental distress. Since the psychological repercussions of acid attacks can be severe and enduring, certain victims may endure their psychological symptoms throughout their lives as they are constantly reminded of their tragedy by their scars and disability (Bollineni, 2011).

4.7 Societal Stereotypes: Gender, Honor, and Victimization

"A whisper is all it takes to condemn a woman for life"
(Khan, 2023, p. 17)

In a traditional society like Pakistan, the patriarchal culture is portrayed through gender stereotypes and victimization of women. The conception of man and woman – one being superior to the other – is constructed by these defined gender stereotypes and conventional roles assigned to women. Chodorow (1989) indicates, "Woman's oppression is located in her otherness" (p. 5). Gender stereotypes embody the societal standards to ensure appropriate conduct for men and women within a specific society. A woman who fails to conform to traditional gender roles within a culture is deemed an outcast or a fallen woman. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a fallen woman refers to "a woman who has lost her good reputation by having sex with someone before she is married." It's a label placed upon those women who violate societal and moral standards. It may be perceived as sexual transgression, or defiance of expected roles and stigmatize or exclude women who do not conform to the ideal of 'good girl.'

In the patriarchal culture of Pakistan, a man's and as well as a family's so-called honour is placed between the legs of a woman. The virginity of women is seen as a reflection of the family's honour, hence allowing men to assert dominance over women's bodies and lives. Likewise, Ayesha's mother is flabbergasted when Ayesha reveals to her, "I am not a virgin anymore" (Khan, 2023, p. 31). Her mother is shocked and bemoans that she has tarnished the reputation of the family and blemished the honour of her

father. Although Ayesha's transgression is unjustifiable here she voices an important notion that reveals the hypocrisy of the typical society. She raises an interrogative, "why does nobody question boys when they do the same thing?" (Khan, 2023, p. 31). Sexual behaviour is policed differently for men and women due to deep-rooted societal stereotypes that prioritize male superiority and control over women's sexuality. Subsequently, the same moral and social expectations are not imposed on men's sexual behaviour. Societal stereotypes known as 'sexual double standards' allow one gender more sexual freedom than the other or place more societal opprobrium on women than on men (Baumeister & Twenge, 2002).

Ayesha's portrait as 'a fallen woman' is incessantly portrayed by the author throughout the novel. Raza calls her a *gushiti* (wanton) woman and "the dirty little rakhail" (concubine or mistress) throughout the novel, pointing a finger at her character and sexuality (Khan, 2023, p. 257). In this way, he exercises his male chauvinistic power over her, to debase and humiliate her. In Pakistan, the notion of *Izzat* (honour) is frequently linked to women's conduct, particularly concerning sexuality and obedience. As Awais Khan (2023) aptly asserts "[h]ere, reputations are as flimsy as kites in the wind" (Khan, 2023, p. 52). Therefore, a woman's behaviour is often perceived as a reflection of her family's moral status, and her independence is constrained to prevent her from causing 'shame' to her family. Women who defy these conventions through their social interactions, or romantic preferences are frequently deemed dishonourable, inviting severe criticism, alienation, and violence. However, in the novel when a woman is brutally assaulted by her husband, one of the policemen mocks her by saying, "[s]he must have done something...[m]en don't just cut their wives' faces like this for no reason" (Khan, 2023, p. 12). In this way, the severity of the brutality is alleviated and hence shows victim-blaming. It is another harmful aspect of traditional stereotypes in Pakistan that the victim is blamed rather than seeking justice for them. According to an article, "[v]ictim blaming is any response that explicitly states or implies that the victim is to blame for the abuse they have experienced" (White, 2023).

Due to societal stereotypes marriage is depicted as the paramount objective for women. In the traditional Pakistani culture, an unmarried woman beyond her early 20s is often categorized as over-aged and regarded with a degree of pity or even skepticism. Ayesha is unmarried and gets the same treatment as she is often taunted by her aunt and mother that "[n]obody wants a girl over thirty here" (Khan, 2023, p. 23). The stigma associated with age frequently results in increased familial pressure, as parents have a societal obligation to guarantee their daughters'

marriage on time. This societal pressure to marry at a certain age marginalizes Ayesha, and she agrees to marry a misogynistic person like Raza. According to a study, *The Stigma of Singlehood*, Anne Byrne asserts that most of the respondents, who received other people's social opinions to get married, were largely women in their 20s and 30s age (Byrne, & Carr, 2005). Women are forever bound in the shackles of patriarchy as the novel quotes that "[o]nce you go to your husband's home, only your funeral should emerge from those gates" (Khan, 2023, p. 135). Due to this traditional and stereotypical mindset, men exercise their indubitable power and control over women which gives rise to instances of gender-based violence.

V. CONCLUSION

"A woman must be strong, but above all, she must also be patient. If she isn't, life will teach her the hard way"
(Khan, 2023, p. 271)

The ingrained patriarchal ideals and male-dominated mindset of society are the root causes of male chauvinism. Patriarchal society favours men and deems them superior to women which eventually results in the development of male chauvinistic beliefs. Psychoanalytic feminism is based on the same notions which assert that men have an inherent need to subjugate women. However, biasedness and hatred directed towards women foster gender-based violence. In the novel, *Someone Like Her*, Ayesha faces insurmountable anguish and afflictions in the form of domestic violence, harassment and sexual violation. She faces the brunt of defying the male-dominated structure of patriarchal society. After all the undulating and painful experiences in her life, she finally takes a stand for herself by mustering up the courage to raise a voice against Raza at the end of the novel. She presents a vignette of a phoenix rising from the ash and dawn breaking through the night. She shows sheer resilience and grit to confront Raza and finally file a police complaint against him with the help of police officer, Amna. However, the novel ends optimistically by providing justice to a battered woman in a male-dominated society like Pakistan. Raza despite having a high profile and connections gets arrested and penalized with severe charges. The novel ends on a dramatic note, with Ayesha receiving *Sitara-i-Imtiaz* (an honorary award) for her bravery. Unfortunately, in reality, the situation is contrary to that of Ayesha's eventual fate. In a society like Pakistan, it's unimaginable to even think of seeking or getting justice for a woman of rape and abuse victim. The system can only change if the deep roots of patriarchy are eradicated from society and the ingrained male-chauvinistic mindset is altered.

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The Modernist Novel: An Overview

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Abstract— The word ‘Modern’ derives from the Latin ‘modo’ meaning ‘current’ ‘new’ ‘contemporary’. With its emphasis on the new, the movement of Modernism encompasses radical ideas and emergent intellectual and pathbreaking ideas of Henri Bergson, Darwin, Freud, Marx, Nietzsche and Einstein from the end of the Nineteenth century until the Second World War. In keeping with the exhortation of its literary guru, Ezra Pound, to ‘make it new’, it set about to establish ‘the tradition of the new’, as articulated by the Art critic, Harold Rosenberg, producing art works which went against the grain of established traditions and conventions. The beginning of the Twentieth century was witness to a diverse variety of aesthetic representation in response to the machine age, to transformational technologies, rapid urbanization, migration to cities, to a world where traditional certainties had departed and the belief in the notion of history and civilization as inherently progressive was shaken to the core. ‘Modernity’ was described by Baudelaire in *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863) as the fashionable, transient, fleeting and contingent and as opposed to the eternal and the immutable. Literary Modernism is a literature of change and crisis, yet with an insistence on the power of Art to give shape to a world which has lost all stability and order. Yet from this nightmare of history, as depicted by Walter Benjamin, and a sense of fracture and dislocation, from the debris of the traditional world, rises the Eiffel Tower as a symbol of aspiration, a marvellous alloy of modern technology of metallurgy and human creativity.



Keywords— aesthetics, dislocation, ethical, experimentation, modernity, new

I. INTRODUCTION

The Twentieth-century Modern Novel has immense variety and complexity, bold experimentation and innovation to assess and confront the “heap of broken images” of Modernity and modern times. Conrad envisages the novelist’s task as rescue work carried out in the dark with cross gusts of wind swaying the action of a great multitude.

II. DISCUSSION

Following are some of the significant features of the Modern Novel:

Innovations of Story and Plot: In *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), E.M. Forster distinguishes between Story as “a narrative of events arranged in time sequence” or “life in time” and Plot or “life by values” and the traditional novel has both in proportion. In the Modern novel there are

subtle variations and mutations of both. Psychology having revolutionized the concept of man and life being “a luminous halo”, cannot be tailored to the rigidity of plot, story or clock and calendar time. In Virginia Woolf, story disappears as in *Mrs. Dalloway* it is about Clarissa Dalloway preparing for her party in the evening; in *The Waves*, Percival’s death highlights the sense of time, death and separation. In *The Ambassadors* by Henry James, plot is equated with a sense of mystery. *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce is significant for its experimental style: the ‘new way’ of telling a story takes the form of a discontinuous dream-narrative, with abrupt changes to character, character-names, locations and plot details. Joyce claims to be representing the night and dreams, and the book ends in the middle of a sentence and begins in the middle of the same sentence which gives a cyclic concept of time; the linguistic experiments include stream-of

consciousness, idiosyncratic language, multilingual puns and portmanteau words and is a vast verbal symphony.

Unusual Openings and Endings: The Modern Novel is like an incomplete sentence, whereas the traditional novel ended either in marriage or death, now dubbed by Forster as “idiotic” (*Aspects of the Novel*). There are unconventional openings in the Modern novel---- *Mrs. Dalloway* begins ‘in-media-res’; *The Waves* opens with a poetic interlude; *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* opens with a “moocow coming down along the road” and who meets “a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo”. There are unusual endings too----Lily Briscoe completing her painting in *To the Lighthouse*; Burlap beginning a new phase of villainy in Huxley's *Point Counter Point*; *Ulysses* ends with Molly Bloom going off to sleep and the unpunctuated monologue abruptly ceases; in Beckett's *Malone Dies*, Malone writes his own story with a pencil quarter of an inch long, and when the pencil is finished the novel ends mid- sentence.

Time: The concept of Time undergoes radical change under the influence of Henri Bergson, William James, Freud and Jung, and Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The modern novelist has frequently abandoned the traditional framework of clock and calendar time and space. This has been replaced by 'mind time', 'cyclic time', and 'existential time'. Quentin Compson in Faulkner's *The Sound and Fury*, questions the "round stupid assertion of the clock". Virginia Woolf asserts that "time shall be utterly obliterated" in her novels.

The French philosopher **Henri Bergson's** (1859-1941, Nobel Prize in 1928), concept of 'la duree' or durational or psychological time, laid stress on mental or 'mind time' which is natural whereas clock time is artificial. Bergson stressed on memory and intuition and spoke of life as a flux and a spiritual force, and that Reality could not be apprehended by the rational intellect alone.

Freud laid the foundations of Psychoanalysis and he and **Jung** considered the unconscious as the mainspring of all human actions and motives. We come in contact with it in dreams and day-time reveries. Freud also spoke of the 'free-association' of ideas; how past events shaped the psyche and how reality exists in subjective apprehensions. **William James** coined the term 'stream- of-consciousness' to denote the Flux of the mind, its continuity and yet its continuous change. Einstein spoke of a time-space continuum.

Hence under the influence of these philosophers and men of science 'time' is revealed as heterogeneous and always in motion, fluid, ever-shifting, the past and present intermingle and things in it are indistinguishable. Hence the modern novelist experiments with story, plot and time-

space dichotomy. A neat story with a linear progression of time to suit a rigid plot framework seems no longer possible. The result is a dazzling experimentation such as 'mind time': “it took her five seconds in actual time, in mind time ever so much longer” writes Virginia Woolf in *Between the Acts*. A cyclic concept of time is expressed in *Finnegans Wake*; Thomas Wolfe in *Look Homeward Angel* writes what happened in “Crete 5000 years ago”, happened “yesterday in Texas”. In *The Web and the Rock*, Wolfe gives the metaphysics of time. ‘Existential time’ in the novels--- *The Outsider* by Camus; *Iron in the Soul* and *The Age of Reason* by Sartre, express the “residue of reality grasped in existence as lived”.

Thus, the sense of the passing and duration of time in the modernistic novel is subject to innovation in accordance with new or modern concepts.

If life is a flux, the ‘stream-of-consciousness’ novelists like Virginia Woolf seek “making of the moment something permanent”, to catch a “fragment of pure time in its pure state” in the words of Marcel Proust. Dostoevsky seeks to catch the “aura” of the moment of heightened sensory experience, the “moments of being” of Woolf. Faulkner wants to crystallize the meaning of the “arbitrary dial” and seeks to present in *Absalom, Absalom!* “forever crystallized instant” of these moments of heightened perception. James Joyce celebrates the moments of “epiphany” or “a sudden spiritual manifestation”, the most delicate moments of perception of the reality behind appearances. The psychic involutions, the delving into consciousness lead to vision and reveal the “mind’s conversation with life”, “the relation of the mind to general ideas and its soliloquy in solitude” (*Granite and Rainbow*: V. Woolf). Woolf delves into the “poetry of existence”, the wider question which the poet tries to solve---of our destiny and meaning of life. Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* seeks “the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race”.

Characterization:

The modern novel not only presents the despair, disillusionment and breakdown of the authority and religious values, but also successfully mirrors its complexities of mind and spirit. David Daiches in *The Present Age* (1958) states that the modern novel explores two themes – the **isolated modern man** and the need for meaningful relationships.

Sean O’ Faolain in *The Vanishing Hero* (1956) has noted the disappearance of the “Conceptual hero”. Instead of the traditional hero, there is the “aberrant” or the “**anti-hero**”: a man who instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, heroism, power and leadership in the face of fate, is petty,

ineffectual or passive. David Daiches writes “the modern novelist has returned to the hero as a fool, but without Cervantes’ affectionate undertones. One might call such a character the anti-hero”. Some examples are: Aziz in *A Passage to India* is hypocritical at times; James Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914-1915), vows to use “silence, exile and cunning” to defend himself, to fight what he rejects; Adam and Nina in Evelyn Waugh’s *Vile Bodies* (1930), Graham Greene’s Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), the Whisky Priest in *The Power & the Glory* (1940), the anti-heroes of Protest Fiction and the Absurd school.

The modern novel also presents **character in depth, not length**. Psycho-analysis has radically altered the conceptualization of character since it reveals how consciousness is an amalgam of all that we have experienced and continue to experience, and how experience is continually remolding the personality. Character is presented as a process not a finished state. This ‘turning inwards’ has been dramatically presented by V. Woolf in ‘Modern Fiction’: “on or about December, 1910, human character changed”. December 1910 was the time when the 1st exhibition of Post-Impressionist paintings was held in London. It declared that the painter was not a photographer but an artist. The delineation of “the atmosphere of the mind” is reflected in the works of Henry James, Henri Bergson, Edward Dujardin, Dorothy Richardson, Dostoevsky, Marcel Proust, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. James Joyce wrote: “I try to give the unspoken, unacted thoughts of people in the way they occur”. Since the material of any one consciousness are an enigma to the other, the conception of character is poetic – Rhoda in *The Waves* (V. Woolf) is “the nymph of the fountain”; Clarissa Dalloway is like a mermaid or a bird. Poetic prose becomes the medium to explore the subconscious as well as the unconscious. Leon Edel in *The Modern Psychological Novel* (1964) has called *Finnegans Wake* as “a great poetic novel, perhaps the greatest”.

The “point of view” or the relation in which the narrator stands to his story, as explained by Percy Lubbock in *The Craft of Fiction* (1926) is a dominant concern in the modern novel. Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) distinguishes between “showing” and “telling” or manner of presenting the narrative. In “telling” the authorial voice is evident, for example in *Moll Flanders* by Defoe; and “showing” or dramatic presentation as in Henry James’ *The Ambassadors*. James Joyce voices this objective, impersonal method of narration and the role of the novelist: “the artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork,

invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, pairing his fingernails” (*Portrait*).

The City occupies centre-stage in Modernism. Modernity is largely defined by urban experience; the modern “city comes to the foreground to make it a primary character, a complex living being” in the words of Peter Childs. With its crowds, consumerism, technology, architecture and fast-paced life, the city provides a wide range of experiences. It transformed modern writing by placing great demands on the means of representation. Malcolm Bradbury explains the experimental trait in Modernism “was an art of cities”. The city was “the locus of intellectual and artistic activity”, a place “for creativity...the place to be modern”, write Tew and Murray. Under the impress of industrialization and refashioning of human psychology, Simmel, the German sociologist (1858-1918), identifies three types of attitudes of the city dweller---the ‘blasé outlook’, the cloak of reserve (‘to prepare a face to meet the faces you meet’, famously articulated by Prufrock) and thirdly a desire for self-display, the Dandy. Baudelaire describes the modern man as a ‘flaneur’, an urban dweller and mover sauntering around the city soaking in the experience of “the ebb and flow, the bustle, the fleeting and the infinite”. The city itself provides new narratives, possibilities and stimuli for perception and creation. In *Street Haunting: A London Adventure* (1927), Virginia Woolf writes of the pleasures of “rambling the streets of London”. She becomes the ‘flaneuse’ or female stroller who sees the bright paraphernalia of the streets and then periodically withdraws into the interior spaces of the self to speculate boldly over the meaning and significance of experiences. After her morning stroll through the London streets to buy flowers for her party in the evening, Clarissa Dalloway returns home which was “cool as a vault”. Withdrawing “like a nun”, she felt “blessed and purified” to have an epiphanic experience :“this secret deposit of exquisite moments” of heightened perception into the meaning of life, the Bergsonian perception of life as a spiritual force. The ‘uncanny’, according to Walter Benjamin, was born out of the rise of the great cities in which human beings are strangers to each other and to themselves. Homelessness, ‘unhomeliness’ is a literal translation of the German word for ‘uncanny’. Simmel analyses how the city dweller receives a constant barrage of stimuli and this leads to the over-development of the rational faculty and under-development of the ethical and aesthetic one. The metropolitan type knows the mysteries of the atom but “has not peered into the recesses of his heart” writes Gary Day. Modern writers in trying to heal this schism innovate with new techniques and schema to catch the impressions of the individual mind in the flux of life. In so doing the

artist innovates and the '-isms' of modernistic writing evolve--the 'stream-of-consciousness', Symbolism, Dadaism, Cubism, Surrealism, Futurism, Vorticism etc. The Russian literary critic, Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), in *Art as Technique* asserts that art "removes objects from the automation of perception" and "exists so that one may recover the sensation of life".

III. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The development of the modern novel can be traced in 3 phases and presents a **fascinating kaleidoscope of '-isms', experimentation and innovation.**

The First phase of the Modern novel, from the last decades of the nineteenth century, (1881- 1914), includes prominent names like Henry James, Joseph Conrad, George Gissing, George Moore, H.G. Wells, John Galsworthy, R.L. Stevenson, Somerset Maugham, Samuel Butler and E.M. Forster.

The 'Naturalists' like George Moore and George Gissing study man in his environment and present a realistic 'slice of life' like their French counterparts Zola and Flaubert. In *A Mummer's Wife* (1885), Moore writes that a change in surroundings can change a man's physical and mental constitution over 2-3 generations. Gissing in *New Grub Street* (1891), explores the isolation of modern man.

Social critics like Samuel Butler in his *Erewhon* (1872) and *The Way of All Flesh* (1903, pub. posthumously) attacks sentimentalism prudery and repressive Victorian morality and stresses on self-determination, a modern ethical concern. H.G. Wells attacks modern commercialism in *Tono Bungay* (1909) and the educational impostures in *History of Mr. Polly* (1910). *Of Human Bondage* (1915) by Somerset Maugham is one of the most moving of accounts of loneliness of human life.

The Romancers like R.L. Stevenson author of *Treasure Island* (1886), *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), *Kidnapped* (1886), *Travels with a Donkey* (1879), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), writes the Novel of Adventure while Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), romanticizes and glorifies British rule and colonial enterprise.

The Regionalists – Arnold Bennet (*Anna of the Five Towns* (1902), *Clayhanger* (1910-18)), Galsworthy (*The Forsyte Saga*, 1906-21) and Wells delineate materialistic aspect of life, giving minute details of industrial provincial communities. They were dubbed as 'materialists' by Virginia Woolf.

Science Fiction and fantasy carves a niche for itself with H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and others.

Later Wells turned into a social critic with *Tono Bungay* (1909), and *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910).

The Innovators like **Henry James** and **Joseph Conrad** treat the novel as a serious art form, akin to a great poem or painting or sculpture. *The Art of Fiction* (1884), by Henry James ushers in the concept of the novel as a serious art form, where the novelist's occupation is "a sacred office" and whose work is "a history dealing with truth not 'making believe'"; and that "experience is an immense sensibility...the very atmosphere of the mind". Both, Henry James and Conrad are 'historians and connoisseurs of fine consciences' and delve into the psychological realism of character. Form and substance, the ethical and the aesthetic are inextricably fused in their novels. Henry James' *The Ambassadors* (1903), has a plot structure comparable to an hour-glass while that of *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), resembles a grand cathedral. The 'Prefaces' to his novels offer valuable insights into the aesthetics of the modern novel.

Some of Conrad's famous novels are *Lord Jim* (1900), *Heart of Darkness* (1902), *Nostramo* (1904), among others and bring in exotic locales, adventure and suspense in the encounter with the social, racial and psychological 'other'. *Heart of Darkness* has been described by John Batchelor (*The Life of Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography*, 1994) as "a deeply troubling modernist masterpiece"; by Michael Levenson (*Modernism*, 2011) as "the leading example of modern psychological fiction" where Kurtz, the white colonial in the Congo, "an emissary of pity, and science, and progress" in his greed for ivory descends to the region of subtle horrors. Ironically, like a God he presides over "the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation" and "unspeakable rites" with hints of cannibalism and indulges in an orgy of violence against the natives "in the gratification of his various lusts". In 'Preface' to *The Nigger of Narcissus*, Conrad writes "my task...is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you see". Further he states that Fiction must "aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music". He questions how a novel can aspire to the condition of Art; how can a work in prose carry, like poetry, "its justification in every line?". Conrad answers that it can be done with "the light of magic suggestiveness... over the commonplace surface of words" and "with a care for the shape and ring of sentences". Thus, Conrad will appeal to other 'temperaments' with a remorseless "fidelity" to the truth of emotions and sensations and bind them in a "solidarity" of understanding through an impressionistic appeal to the senses in order to represent the universality of human experience. Ian Watt has analyzed Conrad's narrative method as "subjective

moral impressionism” because the understanding sought is of an inward kind. Conrad was concerned with something larger and symbolic the “truth”, the meaning behind impressions. *Heart of Darkness* portrays the ‘Apocalyptic modern’. In Conrad’s words “a novelist is historian, the preserver, the keeper, the expounder of human experience”. Using a nautical metaphor, Conrad described his narratives, in *A Personal Record*, as “paper boats” that were “freighted” with technical innovation; further the artist “like the thinker or the scientist” seeks the truth and makes his appeal. Such experimentation and a devotion to the aesthetic and ethical make Henry James and Conrad leading figures of modernistic writing.

The Symbolist Movement finds great utterance in E.M. Forster’s novels *A Passage to India* (1924), *Howards End* (1910), *The Longest Journey* (1907). Forster rejects modern materialism – “the outer life of telegrams and anger” and seeks to build the “rainbow bridge” of personal relations built through the “secret understanding of the heart”. Mrs. Moore in *Passage to India* is in quest of the spiritual life and her journey to the Marabar Caves becomes traumatic. The Caves are the apex of symbolism, and are the ‘eternal womb’ from which humanity comes and the eternal tomb to which it returns. The echo in the caves “boum-ou-boum” is the ‘om’ of Hindu belief, the primordial sound after which creation came.

The novel in the First Phase has conventional elements of story, plot, and yet there are new technical innovations and experiments with time sequence as in Conrad and Henry James, and it also delves into the psychological aspect of character and reflects the new philosophies of the time. There is a consciousness of the split in fiction between the old and the new, as expressed in Henry James’ *The Art of Fiction*, a new focus on the aesthetics of the novel.

Cataclysm of War:

World War I and its representation in English fiction is celebratory of heroism and also mirrors the tragedy of war. John Buchan’s spy thriller, *Greenmantle* (1916), celebrates the ideal of heroism, the romantic notion of military prowess. *The Childermass* (1928) by Wyndham Lewis, uses fantasy to evoke aspects of the war’s social and political effects and upholds a charismatic “last Aryan hero”, Hyperides. But his World War II novel *The Human Age* rejects Hyperides and his Fascist ideology. Henry Williamson wrote a sequence of 15 novels, *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* (1951-1969), centred on World War I. It upholds the Aryan hero and delineates the experience of the ordinary soldier at the Front with the promise of a “land fit for heroes”. Yet there are other writers who delineate the harsh aspects of war. Rebecca West’s *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), is a rejection of modernity

and is the first account of shell-shock. Arnold Bennett’s *The Pretty Lady* (1918), is about civilian experience of London bombings. The male protagonist G.J. heads a charitable hospital. Wounded in a bomb blast he suffers concussion; looking for his walking stick in torch light, what he sees is a ghastly sight, the stark reality of “a child’s arm, with a fragment of brown frock on it...blood...stained the ground”. Pat Barker’s *Regeneration* trilogy (1991-5), traces the social and cultural transformations which came as a shock to the traditional order and war as futile and horrific.

World War II novels question the inadequacy of liberal humanistic values in the face of extreme brutality, violence and cruelty of fanatic ideologies: *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* (1956), by Angus Wilson; *Black Dogs* (1920) and *Atonement* (2001), by McEwan.

The Second Phase of the Modern Novel (1914-1935-39), is “the great experimental period of modern English literature” writes David Daiches in *The Present Age After 1920*; and further that the 1920’s is the “most fruitful period in the whole history of English Literature”. Virginia Woolf famously announced in a Cambridge lecture, 1924: “on or about December, 1910, human character changed”. Freud and Jung lectured in 1909 in the US and laid the foundations of psycho-analysis; the English translations were beginning to be available in 1910.

D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930), the pioneer of psycho-analytical fiction in England “represents the revolt against reason” writes Diana O’Neill. He rejects Christianity, materialism and intellectuality, the “priest of love” he believes in “worshipping with the body” and gives us the “shimmering protoplasm” of life itself. Lawrence expressed a “belief in the messianic possibilities of sexual liberation”. Associated as “a key figure in the history of antimodernism”, his characters are alienated individuals who try to find some redemption through fulfilling sexual and personal relationships. His works reflect modernism’s re-imagining of the sexual self. Some of his famous novels are *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* (1920), *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928).

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), picked up his pen and denounced the rot of modern civilization as in *Crome Yellow* (1921); in *Point Counter Point* (1928) he writes of “the wearisome condition of humanity”, “vainly begot”, “created sick” and “the very possession of a body is a cynical comment on the soul”, the “twentieth century successors were abortions”, living in an “atmosphere of hell”. In *The Brave New World* (1932) he presents a negative utopia in which everything is controlled by science. *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) has a message of non-attachment and Vedantic philosophy. Huxley experiments

with technique and gives the “musicalization of fiction”, presenting his narrative through points and counterpoints in the manner of a musician who can play many variations of the same theme.

The *Stream-of-consciousness* technique of fiction emerged between 1913-1915 with three novelists working simultaneously in exploring the psychic content of being. These were Marcel Proust in France writing *Remembrance of Things Past*, Dorothy Richardson in England writing *Pilgrimage* and James Joyce, an Irishman, writing *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This psychic involution, the voyages delving into the consciousness lead to vision or “epiphany” or sudden spiritual manifestation. This is represented through poetic prose and symbolism to reveal the “mind’s conversation with life” and “the larger questions which the poet tries to solve – of our destiny and meaning of life” in the words of Virginia Woolf.

James Joyce is a key figure of Modernism, so much so as to have the word ‘Joycean’ become a synonym for the exciting, the experimental and the new. *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* serialized in the modernist journal, *The Egoist*, from 1914 to 1915, is semi-autobiographical and “the single most important ‘kunstlerroman’ (or story of the development of the artist) in the twentieth century”. It employs prose in an imaginative and experimental manner so as to depict the growing sensibilities of the protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, from that of a young boy to his maturity as a young man who then decides to leave his native Dublin and to go to the continent and become a writer who aims to encounter the reality of experience: “to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race”. *Ulysses* (1922) has been described by Joyce as “an epic of everyday life”. It is a one-day-in-the city novel, as Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus crisscross Dublin on 16 June 1904. The mythical structure of the novel is based on Homer’s epic *Odyssey*. The French critic Valery Larbaud noted its “mass of notations, phrases, data, profound thoughts, fantasticalities, splendid images, absurdities, comic or dramatic situations” but the book “has a key” as the 18 ‘chapters’ are structured in correspondence with the adventures of Ulysses on his return from the battle of Troy. T.S. Eliot in his 1923 essay ‘*Ulysses, Order and Myth*’, applauded Joyce’s “mythical method” and in this method of parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity Joyce artistically orders and controls “the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history”. Joyce himself stated “I have opened the new way...In fact, from it you may date a new orientation in literature-the new realism;...a new way of thinking and writing has been started...previously writers were interested in externals...they thought only on one plane, but the modern theme is the subterranean

forces, those hidden tides which govern everything and run humanity counter to the apparent flood” (A. Power: *Conversations with James Joyce*, 1978; p. 64). *Ulysses* is one of the most influential accounts of ‘high modernism’. In *Finnegans Wake* (1939), Joyce stated his usage of “nightlanguage” of dreamlike state: “I sow home slowly now by own way, moyvalley way. Towy I too, rathmine”. He writes: “howmulty plurators made eachone in person?” The complexity and multitudinous impressions received by the mind dissolves into language of poetic aura, a halo, and gives “a sort of eternity to style” explains Leon Edel. The novel’s “middenheap” of extravagant linguistic play displays how “its subject is the nature of indeterminacy itself” writes Margot Norris (*Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*). It is considered as the first postmodern novel.

Dorothy Richardson set out to write ‘feminine realism’ and evolved a radical free indirect narrative technique in which “she must not interfere; she must not analyse or comment or explain...she must not be the wise, all-knowing author. She must be Miriam Henderson” writes Kime Scott. The focus is on Miriam’s perceiving consciousness, her various states of mind, her developing sense of selfhood, ideas and opinions vis-a vis the world around her. Richardson writes that “feminine prose...should properly be unpunctuated” to approximate the natural flow of thoughts. Miriam’s internal monologue is characterized by long passages of unparagraphed text, with punctuation and syntax flouting conventions. *Pilgrimage*, her 13-volume life work is built around a series of “luminous points” or intensities of perception.

Virginia Woolf declared: “I want to write a novel about silence, the things people don’t say”. In writing the *Stream-of Consciousness* novel, she makes silence speak by giving tongue to the complex inner world of feeling, thought and memory and establishing the validity of that world’s claim to the term ‘Reality’. In *Modern Fiction* she writes: “the mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms” of experience which are continuously remoulding the personality. It is the task of the novelist to record this “unknown and uncircumscribed spirit”, and “to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain”. Life is “not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end”. Reacting against the ‘materialists’ writers--Galsworthy, Bennett and Wells, she rejects the “ill-fitting vestments” of traditional Story and Plot. Like Bernard in *The Waves*, Woolf articulates: “I wish to go under, to visit the profound

depths ...to explore; to hear vague ancestral sounds". She desires there be "no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted sense". Further she desires to give the "essence of character, and the quality of experience without indulging in superficialities". Life is a flux and she seeks "making of the moment something permanent", a moment of heightened perception when the universe seems to have beauty and meaning, the Joycean parallel of 'epiphany' or "a sudden spiritual manifestation" and "it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies...the most delicate and evanescent of moments" (*Portait*). Virginia Woolf describes it as "this secret deposit of exquisite moments" that Clarissa Dalloway experiences; that Mrs. Ramsay, the feminine creator, does in *To the Lighthouse*; "ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough"; Bernard in *The Waves* experiences "the mystic sense of completion". Time, space and consciousness and their intriguing interplay are of central concern. In *A Sketch of the Past*, she writes how "behind the cotton wool" of limited perceptions and the quotidian of daily life, is hidden a "pattern", a paradigm of connection, of universal meaning and purpose, normally unseen or unnoticed. But in "moments of being" this cotton wool is lifted and repetitive, wordless rhythms are revealed: "what's behind things" (*The Voyage Out*). Woolf evolves the feminine sentence, in fact the androgynous mind as that of Shakespeare and Coleridge "the fully developed mind" which "does not think specially or separately of sex". Her novels render in poetic prose the "mind's conversation with life" (*Granite and Rainbow*).

The Third phase of the modern novel extends from 1939-1950/1970s, until the advent of Postmodernism. In the 30s & 40s social reality dominates the novel and the prominent authors and novels are as follows: Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies* (1930), *Decline and Fall* (1928); C.P. Snow's *Strangers and Brothers* (1940-1970); Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) dealing with 'lonelies', gun-running, drug smuggling and moral corruption; George Orwell's *1984*, and *Animal Farm*; William Goldings' *The Lord of the Flies* (1954) depicts evil and brutality in human nature.

The pioneers of **Women's Writing** and feminine consciousness are Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf. Richardson's Miriam Henderson is a fiercely independent New Woman. In the 13-volume Pilgrimage Richardson desired to create a woman-centric outlook and perspective on life, an experience left out of "all novels' and especially "these men's books". Woolf's writings, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), and *Three Guineas* (1938) are the high points of First-Wave feminism. The Suffragette

Movement rejected traditional Victorian roles for women and was successful in getting women the right to vote in the 1920's. Feminist writing of Second-Wave Feminism, has leading figures of Margaret Drabble and Fay Weldon and is concerned with issues of white, middle-class women. Margaret Atwood began writing in the Second - Wave and continued into the Third-Wave phase of feminism. Third -Wave feminism is associated with activists, writers and leaders—important names are those of Judith Butler, Rebecca West, Naomi Wolf. The feminist author Laura Bates established 'The Everyday Sexism Project' in 2012. It is a feminist campaign which began online utilizing the Internet to share stories of sexual assault and sexist bias and harassment experiences of women. Fifth-Wave feminism is more concentrated on changemaking on a large-scale. Peter Nicholls in *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (1995), states that Modernism is "inextricably bound up with a politics of gender". 'Feminisms' conditioned by diverse and unique cultural practices, all aspire for respect, inclusivity and equality.

Avant-garde writing presents absurd philosophy and protest fiction. The **literature of the Absurd** reveals existence as anguished and absurd: "cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" in the words of Eugene Ionesco, a leading figure of this movement. Famous authors and works are – Samuel Beckett : *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, *Watt*; Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, Thomas Pynchon's *V*, Gunter Grass and Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Martin Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961) is an important definitive work. Beckett's trilogy of novels—*Molloy* (1951), *Malone Dies* (1951) and *The Unnamable* (1953), along with *Watt* (1953) blend philosophical speculation, deadpan philosophical and gallows humour, a hypnotic use of repetition and unidiomatic English. Beckett's work explores and projects the human need to persevere in the face of difficulties and obstacles. In *Worstword Ho* (1983), he writes: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better". His attitude is hence not defeatist; his surreal conceits, experimentation with language and skepticism of unifying and grand narratives is an inspiration for postmodern writers like Donald Barthelme, Harold Pinter among others.

Protest fiction has voices from Harlem, described as the 'Mecca of the New Negro' by Alaine Locke (philosopher and educator) as for example----- James Baldwin's *Go Tell it on the Mountain* and *How Long the Train's Been Gone*. **The Harlem Renaissance** (1920's-1930's), had a transnational sweep reaching out to Africa and the wider European Black diaspora. Important names associated

with it are those of Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, C.L.R. James, Nella Larsen and Jean Toomer. They articulated racial difference in a modernized world.

The Avant-garde: Modernism especially in its first phase, was avant-garde or a movement at the forefront of change, the innovative, experimental, projecting radical views and effecting cultural change. But there are “recurrent dispositions in the recognition of the newness”, explain Tew and Murray. The question arises whether the term “late modernism” be applied to writing published after 1950, as Jameson puts it? Or should ‘modernism’ refer to texts published throughout the twentieth century? The modernist spirit and impulse continues to be expressed as in the works discussed below. The aspect of dislocation, cultural, political and ideological change and transformations provide the impetus to new trends and verbalization.

Such new writing presents the angst of the ‘**Angry Young Men**’ wherein the anti-heroes revolt against the evil and hypocrisy of upper and middle classes of society, have a disillusioned critical attitude towards post-war British society, a revolt against the accepted ideals and norms, excessive anger, sardonic humour, pride in lower-middle class manners, the rootless, lower-middle or a working-class male with a university degree are typical features of this writing. Some leading examples are: Kingsley Amis’s *Lucky Jim* (1954); *The Anti Death League* (1966); John Braine’s *Room at the Top* (1957) John Wain’s *Hurry on Down* (1953) Allan Sillitoe’s *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958).

Science fiction becomes a popular genre for ex; Alvin Toffler’s *Future Shock*, Arthur Koestler’s *The Lotus and the Robot*, Kurt Vonnegut Jr.’s *Cat’s Cradle* and Micheal Crichton’s *The Andromeda Strain*.

In recent decades such experimentation has reached a radical extreme. The Russian-American, Vladimir Nabokov writes “**involved fiction**”, a work whose subject is multi-layered and complex and involves its own author’s genesis and development, ex; *Pale Fire* (1962). The novel is a 999-line poem written by John Shade, a fictional poet; the Forward and a lengthy commentary and index is written by Shade’s neighbour and fellow academic, Charles Kinbote, but who is an unreliable narrator.

Anti-novels were written and brought into vogue, for example, by Alain Robbe-Grillet’s *Jealousy* (1957) which leaves out standard novelistic elements for the reference of the reader; in this novel we inhabit the fast- disintegrating mind of a jealous husband. *Connecting Door* (1962), by the British author Rayner Heppenstall is another example of this ‘**New Novel**’ where characters are vaguely

identified, the arrangements of events is casual and it has an ambiguous meaning. Other writers are the French ‘nouveau roman’ authors: Claude Simon, Marguerite Duras, Nathalie Sarraute, Michel Butor and Julio Cortazar, the writer from Argentina, famed for his masterpiece *Rayuela* (1963).

Jimmy Breslin and Tom Wolfe and Norman Mailer write ‘**Factoid**’ or ‘**New Journalism**’ or ‘**Creative nonfiction**’ which combines journalistic traits with fiction writing. Mailer wrote a biography of Marilyn Monroe, *Marilyn: A Biography* (1973). He has never met her, but he has ‘karmic’ existential similarities with her. He read biographies on her, watched her films, looked at her photographers and for the rest of it, Mailer said “I speculated”. His own biographer, J.M. Lennon, stated that Mailer saw “himself as a species of divining rod to explore the psychic depths” of famous personalities like Muhammad Ali, Pablo Picasso, Lee Harvey Oswald, among others. Other works by Mailer in this genre are *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (1968), dealing with 1968 political conventions; *Of a Fire on the Moon* (1971,) is about the Apollo 11 mission.

‘**Little Magazines**’ described by Michael Levenson as “micro-sociology of modernist innovation” were flourishing communities of artists as they provided a valuable platform for publishing ‘new’ writings of artistic modernism. These were---*The Little Review*, *Poetry*, *transition*, *Coterie*, *Poetry and Drama*, *The English Review*, *The Egoist* to name a few. *The Egoist* serialised Joyce’s *Portrait*, early extracts from *Ulysses*, W. Lewis’s *Tarr*. Under the aegis of *Modernist Journals Project* in US, and *Modernist Magazines Project*, UK, these are available online.

“**Janus-faced modernism**” thus presents the modern novel as mirroring and articulating realistically, the doubts, conflicts and frustrations of the disintegrating modern world and also the search for meaning and coherence in a confused valueless contemporary world.

The ‘**multivoicedness**’ of the English novel is highlighted by R.L. Caserio’s observation in *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*: “there is no way we can now delimit ‘English’ or ‘English’ fiction”. Raymond Williams in *Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism*, explains how many innovations in Art are due to the perceptions of different cultural milieu of the immigrants to the city. Commonwealth associations, the British Empire’s Anglophone legacy and diasporic affiliations also make for multicultural populations of the metropolis of today. Significant voices are those of Conrad, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Kazuo

Ishiguro, Timothy Mo, to mention a few. This makes the English novel “**the genre of realized alterity**”, writes Dorothy J. Hale.

IV. CONCLUSION

In *Surgery for the Novel--or a Bomb* (1923), D.H. Lawrence asks “Is the novel on his death-bed, old sinner? Or is he just toddling round his cradle, sweet little thing?”

Malcolm Bradbury in *Possibilities* (1973) poses the question: is the novel dead, dying or about to be reborn. The novel is co-extensive with life and with such dazzling innovations and experimentation, the possibilities are limitless.

In ‘*Craftmanship*’, written for a radio broadcast in 1937, Virginia Woolf drew attention on the continuity of past and present inherent in the medium of language: “words, English words, are full of echoes, of memories, of association... they have been out and about, on people’s lips.... for many centuries”. Language has unlimited possibilities to express the reality of existence, especially in fiction and she asks herself – “how can we combine the old words in new orders so that they survive, so that they create beauty, so that they tell the truth?”

Henry James tells us that “the house of fiction has...not one window, but a million” to be opened in answer to “the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will”; the novel’s architecture is a “transitive medium”, the form of realized alterity.

E.M. Forster described the novel as “sogged with humanity” while D.H. Lawrence calls it the “bright book of life”. The novel reflects life, in all its alterity the uncircumscribable spirit of mankind, and in the words of Lubbock its substance is “neither to hold nor to bind”. The genre gets a fresh lease of life with changing perspectives of times and the flux of life.

James Joyce, when asked by Arthur Power whether literature should be a record of fact or the creation of art, replied: “It should be life” and that “in my opinion there are as many forms of art as there are forms of life”.

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National Security Strategies and Ideological Continuity: The U.S. From Truman to Trump: A Book Review

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Abstract— *How can a nation so committed to be a leading democracy abroad struggle with inequality and unrest at home? The post-World War II era was significant for the U.S. and their powerful position in the world. By establishing significant security strategies primarily aiming to stop communism, evolved to even broader and stronger global ambitions. The transformation of U.S. strategic defense policies since World War II has profoundly shaped American foreign policy and influenced global politics. Following the most devastating war in the history of mankind, the U.S. authorities have faced numerous challenges such as the Cold War, the War on Terror, and other domestic problems while adopting new approaches towards national security and protecting its national interests. However, this pursuit of international dominance often revealed strong contradictions between America's global aspirations and its internal realities. In their monograph *From Containment to Americanism*, Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Mohammad Alizadeh Jamal successfully show the relevance of the U.S. and their national security strategies, focusing on the transition *From Containment to Americanism*. The authors employ various methodology methods, including analytical descriptive studies, interviews with experts, and extensive library research. This multifaceted approach enables a thorough exploration of how U.S. policies have evolved over decades, shaped by both internal ideologies and external pressures. By delving into the ideological framework of Americanism, tracing its roots to foundational U.S. documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The perspective presents Americanism as a rationale for promoting democracy and freedom abroad. Through careful analysis, the authors reveal the nature of U.S. foreign policy—one characterized by expansive global ambitions supported by ideological principles, often at the expense of addressing internal challenges. By examining the historical complexities of U.S. strategies and their implications for contemporary politics, *From Containment to Americanism* reflects on the balance between America's role as a global leader and the challenges it faces domestically.*



Keywords— *Containment, Americanism, National Interest, National Security, Foreign policy, foreign policy doctrines*

I. INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE SECTION

The examination of U.S. foreign policies has received abundant attention from scholars since the outset of the bipolar world order. Many researchers have contributed to our understanding of the topic, by analyzing the historical

events from differing theoretical methods. This literature section combines other renowned scientific works related to this monograph to explore the historical context, methodological techniques, final results, and opposing views.

One of the most prominent books by McMahon (2003), explores the Cold War from diverse theoretical frameworks. This book provides a complete summary of the chronological development of the period, also, this work analyzes this time, particularly from the perspective of constructivism. The period of the Cold War is seen as a battle of notions between the two superpowers, namely the U.S. as the leader of the capitalist world and the USSR as the leader of the communist world. The battle between these two ideologies went beyond the borders of the capitalist and communist states in Europe. This ideological conflict resulted in proxy wars, massive weapon production, and the most threatening nuclear arms race. Furthermore, utilizing the theoretical frameworks such as realism and the abovementioned constructivism, the author described the actions of the superpowers based on their self-identity and misperception of threat.

In addition, in the book by Cox et al. (2013), the authors' explore the foreign policies employed by the U.S. presidents by diverse methods, such as historical contextualization, comparative analysis, and theoretical frameworks. The authors' emphasize the ideas of American exceptionalism, democracy promotion, and American imperialism. They argue that these notions played a crucial role in the decision-making processes for foreign policies. Additionally, the authors' criticize the modernization theory used by the U.S. administrations during the Cold War. To be more specific, the authors' claim that overreliance on this theory resulted in not beneficial interventions for the U.S. since the theory neglects crucial aspects like social, cultural, and historical factors which play a huge role. However, during the period from Lyndon B. Johnson to Jimmy Carter's presidency the main focus of the U.S. policies was aimed at containment rather than human rights. From Jimmy Carter and then followed by Ronald Reagan the U.S. government emphasized the idea of promoting human rights as a countermeasure to communism. The end of the Cold War opened up new avenues for promoting democracy, marking a shift in both the ideological foundation and strategic direction of U.S. foreign policy.

The collapse of the USSR marked the beginning of a new era and replacement of the previous bipolar system with a unique unipolar world order led by the U.S. After the end of the Cold War, the national security strategies changed, and the main concerns became humanitarian interventions around the world, the war on terror, and the engagement of the U.S. with international institutions.

In the book by Chomsky (2007), the author highly criticized the actions taken by the U.S. authorities after the end of the Cold War. What I mean is that in this work,

Noam Chomsky claims that the military interventions in Iraq and Kosovo were done based on geopolitical objectives rather than concerns regarding human rights violations. Additionally, the author states that the War on Terror in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq was a means to expand the military presence of American forces around the globe by violating human rights and international law. Finally, Chomsky claims that the UN is unable to do its mission, which is the promotion of peace and stability, since it is being easily manipulated by the U.S. due to its military and economic hegemony. "The United States has been engaged in a systematic campaign to impose its will on the world, often under the guise of promoting democracy and human rights." (Chomsky, 2003).

Multiple methodologies have become prominent in study initiatives of national security strategies in the United States. For instance, McMahon (2003) employed case studies, qualitative analysis, and policy analysis to gather in-depth insights into the evolution of U.S. foreign policies. Similarly, in Cox et al. (2013), the authors' utilize theoretical frameworks, historical analysis, and interdisciplinary approaches. The methodologies employed in both works, despite their differing approaches, improve our understanding of the important events and developments from the Cold War period.

To sum up, the analysis of U.S. foreign policies shows a complicated interplay of ideological frameworks, historical contexts, and methodological techniques that have shaped the nation's international engagements from the Cold War to the present. The shift from a bipolar to a unipolar world order has not only changed national security strategies but has also stimulated critical evaluations of the causes behind U.S. interventions, underscoring the ongoing tension between the promotion of democracy and the pursuit of geopolitical interests.

II. DISCUSSION SECTION

Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Mohammad Alizadeh Jamal analyze the evolution of the U.S. National Security Strategies from the end of World War II to the Trump administration by detailing a progression of geopolitical, ideological, and economic policies. Through this comprehensive evaluation, the text undermines the self-perception of the United States as a global leader, promoting democracy and freedom worldwide. From Truman's "containment strategy" aimed at stopping the spread of communism to Reagan's more aggressive approach, a pattern emerges of America framing itself as both the *guardian* and *moral compass* of the global order. However, this approach has not been without its

contradictions and costs, as internal disparities and structural vulnerabilities still remain unaddressed.

This perception, as presented, is not without significant internal and external repercussions. For instance, Truman's containment policies were the beginning strategy for decades of Cold War conflict, symbolizing America's outward focus to counter ideological enemies like the Soviet Union. At the same time, internal effects, such as increased domestic tensions, show how foreign policy aimed at external ideological enemies can impact the nation internally, shaping American society political and cultural matters.

The text makes a crucial argument about the two-sided nature of U.S. policies: *while they assert America's role as a global superpower, they often tend to ignore domestic concerns*. For example, during Kennedy's presidency, his Alliance for Progress aimed to foster social and economic reforms in Latin America to deter communism. However, the authors suggest that this outward focus may hide social problems, showing a *repeated pattern in U.S. foreign policy*.

Additionally, during the post-Cold War period under Clinton, the absence of a clear ideological enemy led to more excessive globalization and liberal interventionism, as seen in NATO expansion and humanitarian missions. However, these policies arguably masked growing domestic issues and economic instability that would later culminate in a crisis. Yet, this period also revealed an American 'overconfidence', where international ambitions overshadowed potential structural vulnerabilities at home. The authors argue that America's self-image as a global "savior" often is two-sided, having confident leadership abroad while ignoring unresolved vulnerabilities domestically. This focus on external validation risks neglecting the pressing need for internal reform.

The Trump administration was a significant change, embracing an "America First" doctrine that prioritizes national economic and security interests over global leadership. The authors critique this as a shift away from traditional multilateralism, arguing that it weakened the U.S.'s soft power and global standing. While Trump's approach reflects the acknowledgment of the need to prioritize internal stability, it also shows the tension between nationalism and America's traditional role as an international unifier.

Could America's sense of identity be tied to always having an enemy? It's an interesting question the authors raise. By framing adversaries like the Soviet Union as existential threats, the U.S. has fostered internal social cohesion. However, as the authors suggest, this reliance on external threats risks creating a short-sighted focus that prevents

broader national self-reflection, especially in times of domestic upbringings.

The monograph also evaluates how the containment policy, particularly in the context of U.S. foreign strategy after World War II, was not only focused on military engagement, but also on economic and diplomatic efforts. This comprehensive approach shaped key alliances such as NATO. The authors critically examine how containment evolved over the decades, demonstrating that each administration adapted the policy to align with its specific goals, thus showing a continuity in American foreign policy strategy despite changes in the modern world. But is prioritizing international engagement over domestic governance a sustainable strategy for maintaining America's role as a global hegemon?

Furthermore, the authors discuss how deterrence theory and realist approaches shaped the U.S. Cold War policies. Deterrence theory, central to Eisenhower's "massive retaliation" policy, was supposed to prevent aggression through the threat of mutual destruction, maintaining nuclear balance. Realist approaches prioritize national interest and containment of Soviet influence, justifying interventions to secure U.S. hegemony. These strategies - containment, deterrence, and realism - were interconnected, with containment aiming to prevent communism, deterrence ensuring a forceful response, and realism driving global dominance.

Together, they demonstrated the U.S. as a superpower.

III. CONCLUSION

Through the evaluation, the authors emphasize that American foreign policy was not static but rather adaptable, with each administration interpreting these doctrines differently in response to contemporary challenges, thereby ensuring policy continuity across different eras. The monograph offers valuable insights to U.S. history, understanding the ongoing process of why understanding *americanism* became so important.

Americanism, as we understand it, explains a broad ideology that presents many underlying factors, which are crucial to analyze. By knowing American values, we understand the U.S. history better and clearer. The careful examination of the U.S. and how the security strategies evolved over time are an essential part of world history, as the United States influences the whole world with their principles.

However, in today's world, the emergence of non-traditional threats such as cybersecurity, global pandemics, and climate change is also important to discuss. These issues are reshaping U.S. dynamics and global

interactions, making it crucial to understand how they influence and challenge the traditional security paradigms discussed in the monograph.

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A Bibliographic Analysis of United Nations Integrated Missions

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Abstract— This paper gives insights into the bibliographic analysis of the integrated mission of the United Nations (UN) over the last two decades. The data were analysed using a visualization tool, VOSviewer, for bibliometric analysis to provide insights into the present research areas, and emerging trends related to the study and also to understand the gap in research and the trend of work and the future direction of work. The data were retrieved and fine-tuned from the Web of Science database during the period 2005-2024 for the present analysis. The methodology includes searching and screening for related articles in a Web of Science database, software selection and extraction of datasets, and lastly, analyzing the obtained results and patterns followed. This study also illustrates that the quantum of UN-related articles has increased in the last two decades by 11.29%. The significant contribution of Organizations among the UN agencies, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and among the Universities is the University of London. The visual overlay map of the co-occurrence of author keywords shows that keywords “United Nations”, “Co-ordination”, “management”, and “governance” are frequently occurring in the relevant published work. The results of the research area show that environmental sciences and ecology, veterinary sciences, public health and occupational health are the topics more focused for publication. The keyword occurrence map reveals that many topics are still not explored enough like terrorism, peace keeping and religiosity.



Keywords— United Nations, Bibliographic Analysis, mission, agency

I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) was formed in 1945 as a victor’s club, with a charter written by the leading Allied nations. The main goal of the UN set was to ‘maintain international peace and security’. Later, it became a forum for the world’s sovereign states to debate issues and determine collective courses of action. They are mostly involved in a wide range of important work, including refugee relief efforts, food delivery and security, election monitoring and democracy building, disease contaminants and immunizations, setting international safety standards for airline and maritime, etc. It is a complex, self-sustaining network of over a hundred subsidiary bodies, each with its own distinct objectives and areas of focus. As reflected in the UN directory, this intricate system is characterized by a web of power relationships, overlapping responsibilities, conflicting

goals, and political arenas. Despite the challenges in defining the specific mission of each body, they are all united by a shared commitment to the human rights framework, which strives to promote equality and dignity for all individuals (Fradejas-García and Mülli, 2019). At its core, this acts as a political body. However, the United Nations (UN) decision-making bodies have been overburdened with administrative work. Based on the meetings, economic analysis, and verbatim records and reports, there is a lot of duplication among different UN agencies. All the members agreed that the Secretariat should be restructured to function smoothly and economically in each section. The UN Secretary-Generals have established several high-level panels to encourage innovative ideas and accelerate reform efforts by national governments. Approaches by different agencies from different nations to

the UN reform vary widely. While some US policymakers, military strategists, and business leaders might see less necessity for the United Nations in a world they aim to control unilaterally, leaders from other countries hold different perspectives. They view a revitalized UN as a safeguard against the pressures of major powers and a way to address global issues through collective action. Reformers suggest that by focusing incrementally and simultaneously on key areas, it might be possible to balance the interests of both large and small nations through compromise. This could help avert the anarchy and relative powerlessness of the present system, which ultimately hinders the interests of both major and minor powers (Benedetti, 2009). As mentioned by Mackenzie (2015) in his report after 70 years of UN reforms, it is evident that the UN is not as good at adaptation and reformation. However, it can be said that the UN has always reflected the interests of the member states and governments and tried to adapt to the changing world. Although many reformations are widely incorporated in the UN agencies, the outreach to global research and academic circles seems very limited (David Mackenzie, 2015).

The majority of studies related to the UN focused on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the UN especially sustainable tourism (Niewiadomski and Brouder, 2024), sustainable life cycle management of chemicals (Zhang et al., 2024), emphasis on environmental sustainability (Zhenmin et al., 2019), clean energy (Singh and Ru, 2022), responsible consumption and production (Gunawan et al., 2020), protection of life on land and water (Zhang et al., 2021; Gulseven, 2020), importance of education and empowering of individuals (Agbedahin, 2019), peace keeping, terrorism, partnerships, human rights, health, space science initiative and many more. Based on the literature studies (Chopra et al., 2022), it has been noticed that the progress towards achieving SDGs is too far behind, and the research community globally may not achieve this target by the year 2030. It is also suggested by the research communities that for the given agenda of 2030, it is more suitable to have an evaluation halfway to check the efficiency of the progress of SDGs and evaluate the potential revisions needed for the same (Yumnam, 2024). Though the SDGs were set with equal significance, the research progress has shown a non-uniform distribution of focus for various objectives (Biermann et al., 2022). There is always a general tendency to blame the limited success rate of UN activities. This may be due to the lack of resources, and it may also happen due to a lack of coherent application of the resources already available. A few research articles are there based on lack of funding, lack of resources, etc. As more organizations are engaged in similar activities either independently or in parallel with UN

agencies, it is still greatly challenging for the member states to improve the tools required for several operations. Hence, the UN secretary-general urged the UN agencies to go for an integrated mission for achieving SDGs. Integrated missions are aimed to bring close the UN resources and activities together with state governments' needs and also ensure that it should be aligned with political, military, developmental and humanitarian sectors.

Despite the growing public awareness of the work of UN agencies and the urge for integrated missions for achieving SDGs, their recent research status, hot spots, and development of integrated approaches and their success are still not well examined. Hence, conducting a review particularly comprehending the UN's integrated missions, its current research status, the methodologies adopted for clustering, etc, is necessary. Taking these points into account, the study aims to do a bibliometric analysis focused on the progress and the research path in Integrated missions of the UN agencies from 2005 to 2024.

II. DATA AND METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

The data for the present bibliographic analysis were obtained from the Web of Science database over the last 20 years (2005-2024), which focuses mainly on the visualization of bibliometric maps from the VOSviewer software. The systematic analysis of the Web of Science database provides a bibliometric profile of UN-related research all around the globe in terms of research areas, institutions contributed, countries involved, publication records, collaborations, source of funding, etc. For the present bibliometric analysis, the authors have considered web of science research articles that were published in English language, which is maintained by Clarivate Analytics in London, UK. A manageable corpus of papers was retrieved by applying search string combinations, adhering to the procedures of systematic reviews in related domains. The study includes articles published up to 2024, as the database was accessed in July 2024. With the search criteria 'United Nations', 33,368 documents were found. The major keywords applied for downloading papers in Web of Science are — "Coordination" OR "Coherence" AND "United Nations" OR "System". By searching with these search strings, the authors obtained 1068 documents, and after examining and fine-tuning the downloaded papers, 62 articles were selected. The relevant 62 papers from the Web of Science database can be exported in different formats and for the present analysis it has been exported and saved as text file (.txt format), which included variables such as authors, year of publication, name of journals, institutions and their country situated, languages, research area, keywords used, and others. The saved data were then

imported into VOSviewer (1.6.15) software and Excel for further database analysis (Anjali and Remesan, 2023).

III. ANALYSIS AND VISUALIZATION OF DATA USED

The VOSviewer (Visualization of Similarities (VOS) viewer) software is used for the bibliographic analysis in the present study, which is user-friendly and compatible with any operating system platform, as described by Van Eck and Waltman (2017). In the VOSviewer window, the results can be visualized as networks, overlay maps, and density maps. The strength of the VOSviewer includes efficient analysis of research outputs and clustering. In this study, VOSviewer is used to identify the structure and evolution of a theme of research by conducting analysis of the database at various publication levels and science mapping. The database analysis encompasses the examination of scientific outputs, years of publication, type of documents, and organizations contributed for the research focused on the integrated mission of the UN and other related agencies. The study utilizes VOSviewer to create visual representations of

maps, which illustrate the intellectual structure of a research field through science mapping. These maps provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between bibliographic objects, includes Link strength, Keyword co-occurrence, Co-citation with sources and authors (Andersen and Swami, 2021).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To start with the analysis, a global survey has been conducted based on papers published in different countries and is shown in Fig. 1. The results show that the majority of the analyses were carried out by Switzerland, the USA, and England, followed by France, Italy etc. The colors in yellow indicate that those countries have recently published articles related to integrated missions. Scientific publications over the years show a growth in the number of publications ranging from 1 publication to 62 publications from 2005 to 2024 (Fig. 2). The regression analysis also indicates an exponential increase during the last two decades. An increase of 1.61% articles to 11.29% have been noticed during this time interval.

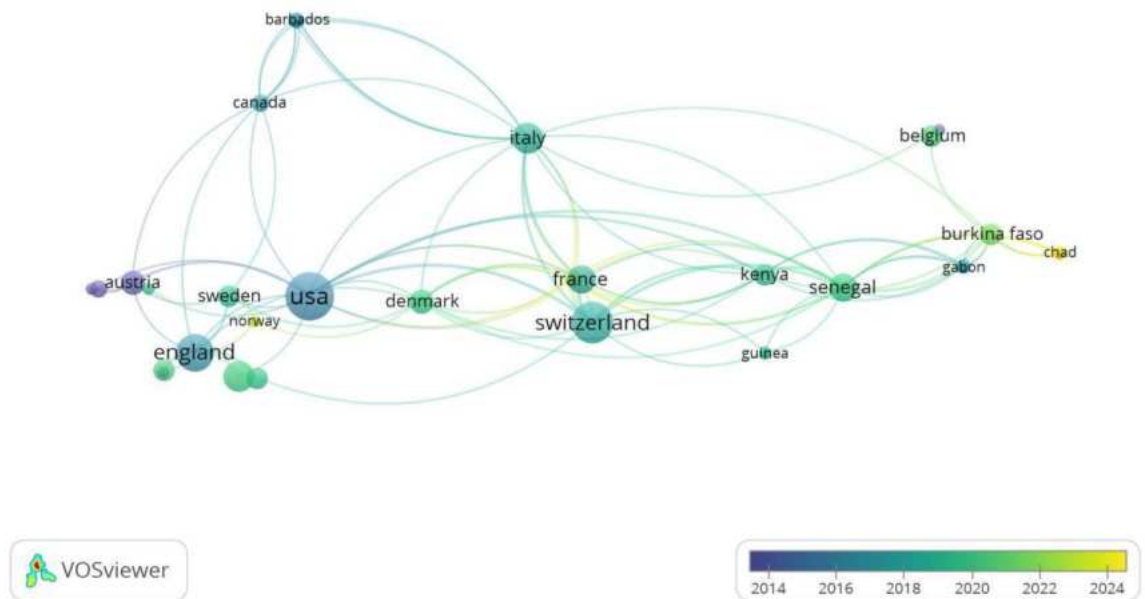


Fig. 1. Network visualization of countries during the period 2005 to 2024.

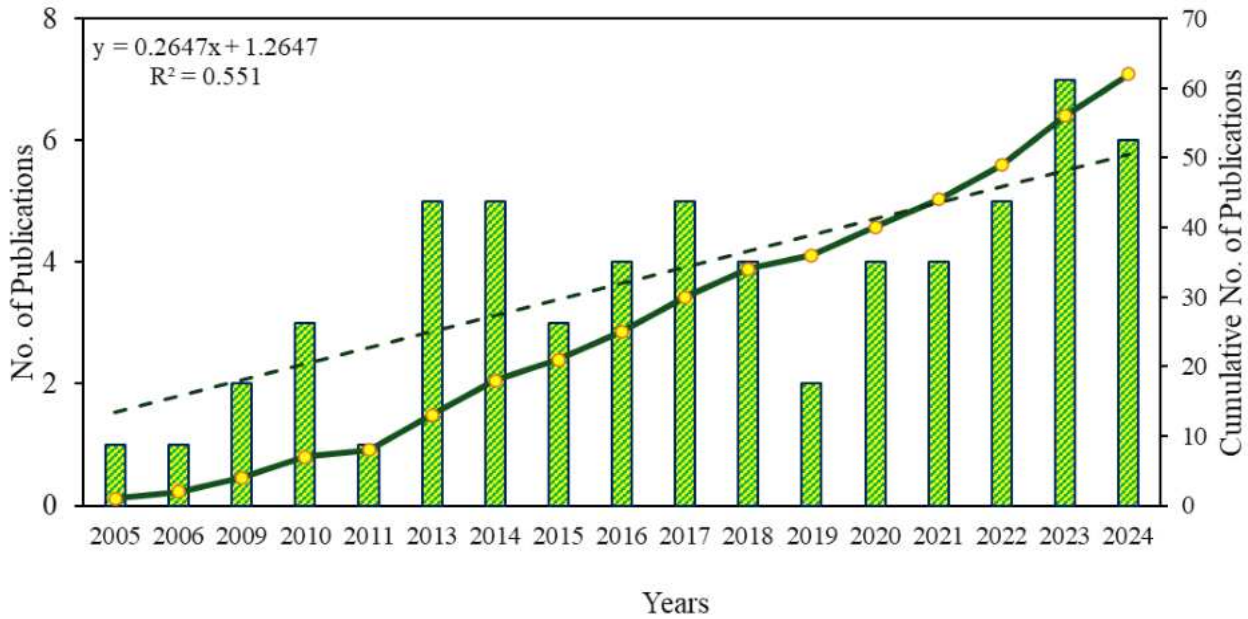


Fig. 2. Plot of number of publications published annually.

Fig. 3 discusses the top twelve disciplines that contributed to integrated mission-related studies of the UN. As per the search criteria, the publications related to the research area majorly include Environmental Sciences and Ecology, with 10% of documents followed by Veterinary Sciences (8%)

and Public, Environmental and Occupational Health (6%). The major limitations of bibliographic analysis are that it is possible only for published articles and cannot include other communications, reports, PhD thesis, etc.

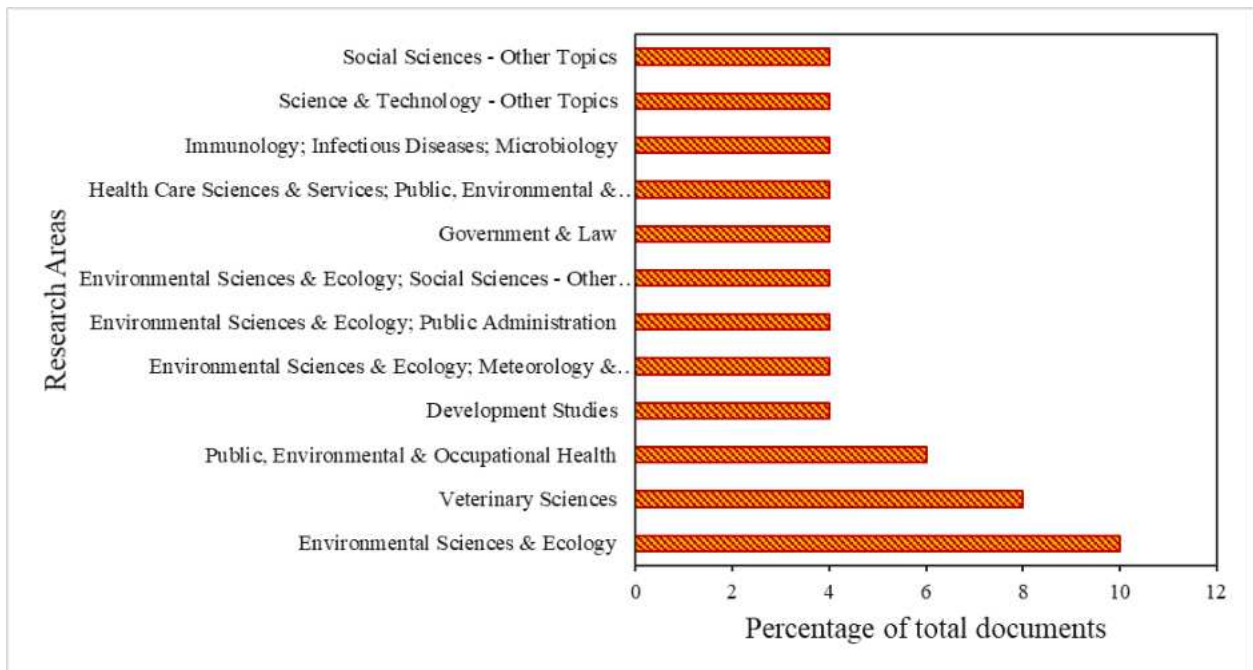


Fig. 3. Percentage of documents published in different research areas.

4.1 Analysis of Contributions by Institutions and Journals
 Around the world, 32% of the published papers are contributed by the UN agencies itself and the detailed

analysis is shown in Fig. 4. This includes the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Food Agricultural Organization (FAO), OCHA

Emergency Service Branch and OFF United Nations Special Coordinator Middle EAS. In that WHO and UNICEF contributed the majority of the integrated mission articles compared to the other UN agencies. Compared to

the non-UN agencies, the University of London published more publications, followed by the University of California, the London School of Economics and so on (Fig. 5).

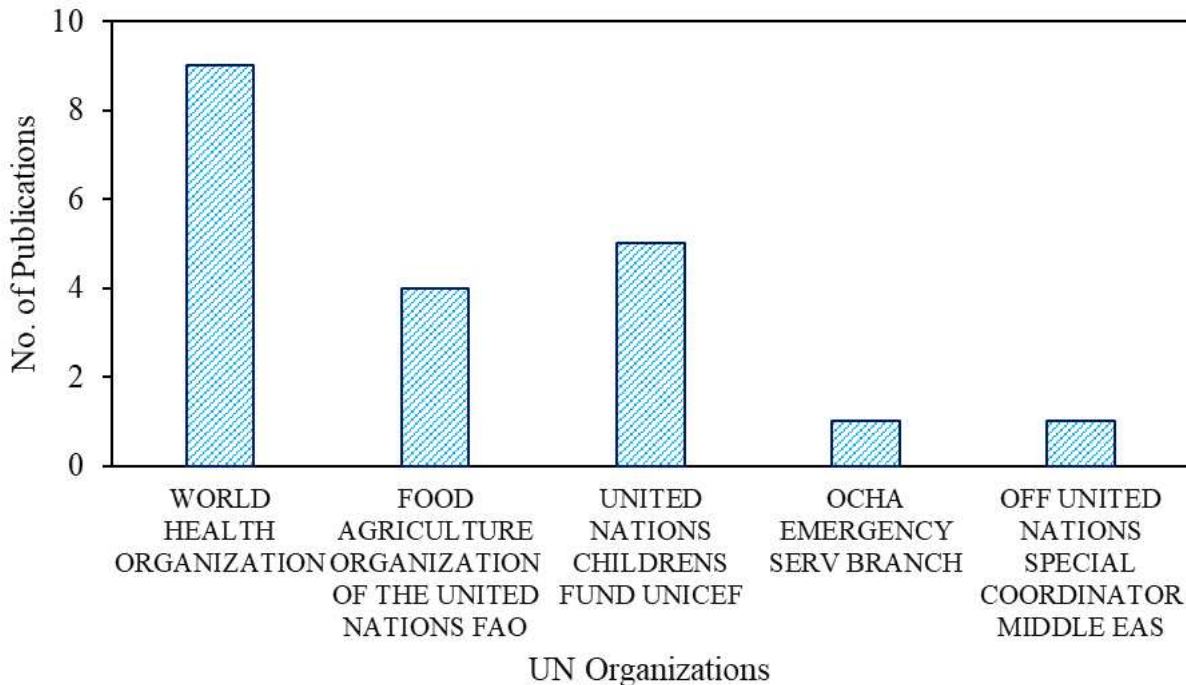


Fig. 4. No. of publications contributed by the UN organizations.

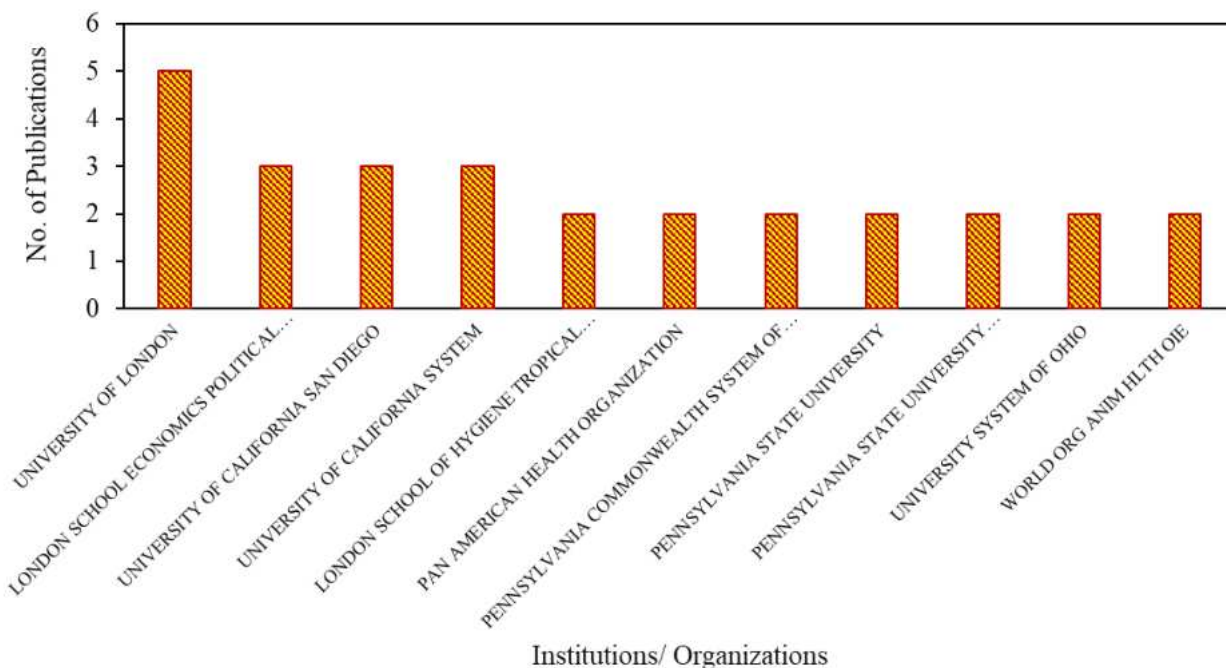


Fig. 5. No. of publications contributed by the Institutions worldwide.

Also, it is found from Fig. 6 that Revue Scientifique ET Technique-Office International DES Epizooties published

nearly 6.45% of articles, then BMJ Global Health, Clinical Policy, Disasters, International Journal of Health Planning

and Management, Journal of Infectious Diseases, Third World Quarterly journals with 3.22% of articles each. All other journals have 1.6% of the articles published. The authors have also plotted the citation reports of the selected articles, which are shown in Fig. 7. The citations from the

database of the Web of Science library refer to the articles' citation history. For the present analysis, the total number of citations of all the articles is found to be 1107, with an average citation per document of 17.85.

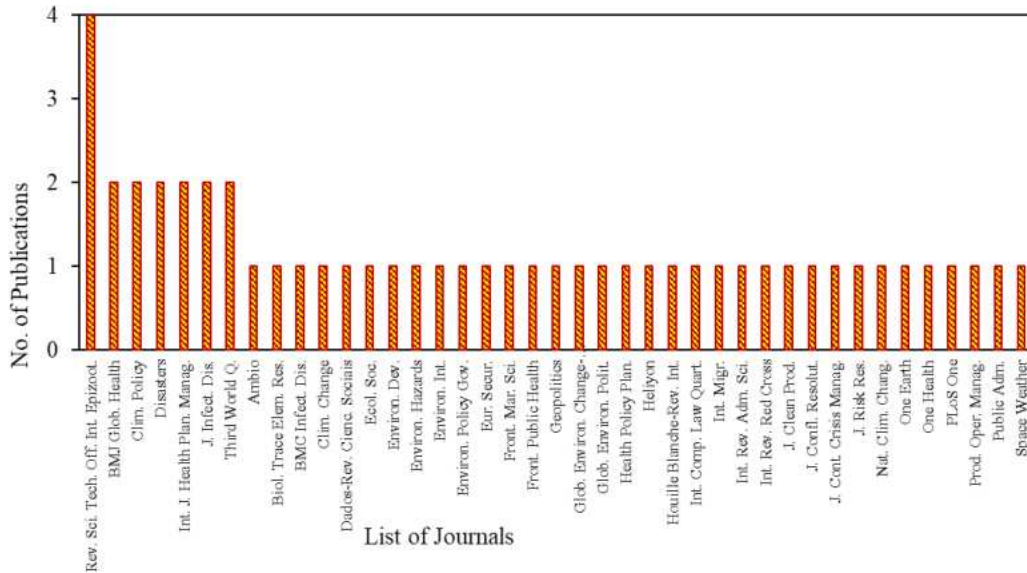


Fig. 6. No. of articles published in related journals during the period 2005-2024.

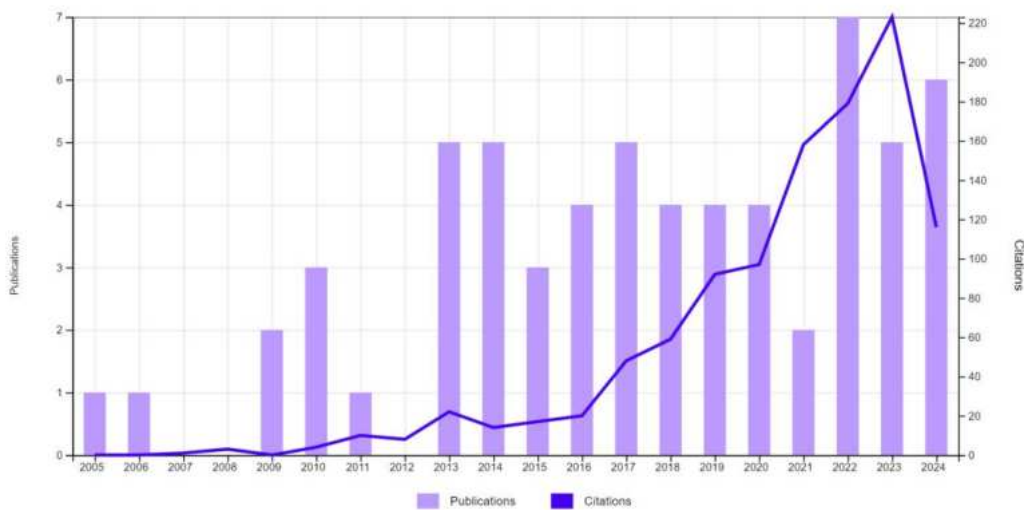


Fig. 7. Citation report of the articles published during the selected time period.

4.2 Co-occurrence network of all keywords

The co-occurrence network map of keywords displays the common keywords used in this field of study, with the nodes representing the frequently occurring keywords. In our analysis of the Web of Science dataset using VOSviewer, it is found that a total of 348 keywords co-

occurring is illustrated in Figure 8. The total links of 1888 are found with a link strength of 1913. According to the figures, the most recurring keywords are governance, United Nations, coordination, management and so on. The yellow and red color nodes indicate that these are the keywords used in the latest articles. This would give an insight of the latest research areas related to UN.

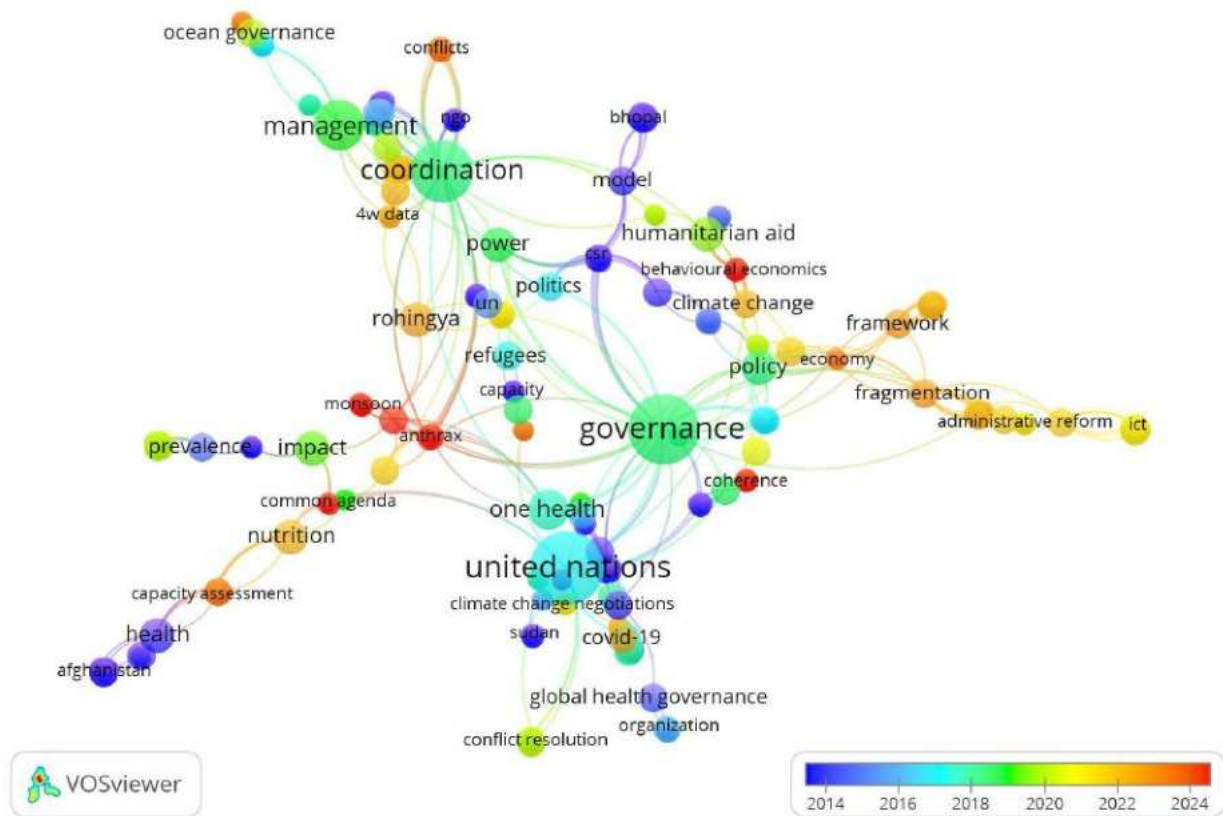


Fig. 8. Overlay visualization of the keywords co-occurrence used during the period 2005-2024.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The present bibliometric analysis provides insight into the progress and research pathway in integrated missions of the UN agencies from 2005 to 2024. The analysis have been carried out in the Web of Science database during this period using VOSviewer software. The analysis of the available database and linking were utilized to examine the data records related to the study of the UN-integrated mission for the last 2 decades. Post-analysis of this particular research result presents an outlook that includes the contributions of institutions, keywords, emerging research areas, and journals. Primarily, the results of data analysis showed an increase in the publication of 11.29% of papers in the time period 1995-2024. The WHO is the central UN agency, which contributes more number of related study to this field. The main research categories in this study include environmental sciences and ecology, veterinary sciences, public health and occupational health. The mapping of the results highlighted a co-occurrence of keywords and a co-citation of sources and organizations. The clustering of keywords demonstrated our understanding of the themes of work that have been widely explored by the research community. The most commonly

found keywords among the 384 author keywords includes United Nations, coordination, governance, and management. Presently, the bibliographic analysis can be done with an accepted database of Web of Science or Scopus, which may exclude contributions of non-peer-reviewed articles and unpublished reports. This limitation can be collated in our future work. Lastly, this study provide insights to an updated review of quantitative analysis happening to topics related to different missions of the UN to attain SDGs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author does not have any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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An Analysis of the International Communication Discourse on Beijing “Rural Revitalization” Strategy

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Abstract— This paper takes the English translation of the reports to the work of Beijing municipal government over the past seven years as data to conduct discourse construction research on the strategic content of “rural revitalization”. Result shows that the English version of government work report helps to build a specific discourse ecosystem, and to convey a voice internationally. Through the related information about the in-depth implementation and comprehensive promotion of the rural revitalization strategy in Beijing, which is based on local circumstances and can present the distinctive economic image of the capital, the report demonstrates the pragmatic style of the government and its people-oriented responsibility. The study helps to understand the discourse construction characteristics of political strategy in foreign communication, thus enabling the international community to better understand the planning, implementation as well as the distinctive achievements of that strategy, in order to better understand China through Beijing, capital as the window towards the world.



Keywords— discourse analysis, Beijing “rural revitalization” Strategy, report to the work of government, international communication

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Chinese history, rural civilization is the mainstay, and villages are the carriers with farming and reading as the distinctive national feature (Xi, 2013). As Chinese rural discourse is an essential part in the construction of China’s discourse, Chinese government has long recognized that the issue of agriculture, rural areas, and farmers is fundamentally related to the national economy and people’s livelihood. It is necessary to always make dealing with the “three rural issues” (agriculture, rural areas and farmers) a top priority in the work of government and implement the strategy of rural revitalization (Xi, 2017). Therefore, the strategy for “Rural Revitalization” was put forward against that context. As a national strategy, it was first proposed in 2019, aiming to address the issue of imbalanced and insufficient rural development. The strategy refers to the process of promoting rural economic, social, cultural and ecological progress through policy guidance and financial investment,

improving farmers’ living standards and well-being, and achieving coordinated urban-rural development.

In Today’s world, China takes an active part in the international affairs seeking to make contribution for world common prosperity, and other countries are willing to see the full picture of China. Therefore, in order to showcase a real, vivid and comprehensive China, it is of significance to improve international communication, to tell the story of China well, and to convey the voice of China well (Xi, 2021). That is an important task for China’s international communication capacity building. From the international communication perspective, understanding the development of Chinese rural areas helps to understand the development of China, As the transformation of Chinese rural areas has always been closely linked to national development, from the contract to households in Xiaogang Village in Anhui Province, signifying the start of reform and opening up, to the comprehensive achievement in building a moderately prosperous society in 2020 by eliminating absolute poverty

in China, so as to provide Chinese wisdom for global poverty governance. Therefore, the international communication of "rural revitalization" becomes an important component in the construction of both China's image and discourse, and is also inherently related to China's international communication capacity building.

As a national center for politics, culture, international exchanges, and technological innovation, Beijing, the capital city of China, has transformed from a life oriented society to a development oriented one. As early as during the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020), in accordance with the requirements of prosperous industries, livable ecology, civilized rural culture, effective governance, and prosperous living, a rural revitalization strategic plan was formulated, a three-year special action plan for the construction of beautiful countryside was implemented, and the improvement of village living environment was initiated to promote Beijing urban-rural integration and development. Thus it is necessary to integrate urban-rural and regional coordination into the overall coordinated development pattern of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, to enhance the quality and standard of urban-rural coordinated development and green development while ensuring ecological security.

High quality development calls for high-level international communication. As the government work report serves as a political text for governments at all levels to review the work of the previous year, and clarify the tasks and overall goals for the coming year, its English version is of great significance in international communication. The Report on the work of Beijing Municipal Government is a standard translation based on the work report on Chinese government, aiming at telling the outside world about Beijing's development and its strategic planning, allowing the world to better understand the city. Therefore, a study of the discourse construction of the "Rural Revitalization" strategy according to the English version of the Work Report, including characteristic vocabulary, keywords and their collocations, helps to understand the discourse construction characteristics of political strategy in foreign communication, thus enabling the international community to better understand the planning, implementation as well as the distinctive achievements of that strategy, in order to better understand China through Beijing, capital as the window towards the world.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Historical changes in the image of Chinese rural areas from a global perspective

Foreign scholars have long been interested in Chinese rural studies and they mainly conducted research on Chinese rural areas through field investigations and interviews. In 1914, Professor C.G. Pittmer from the Department of Social Sciences at Tsinghua University published "An Estimate of the Standard of Living in China", by conducting interviews with 195 farmers near Tsinghua Garden (Zou & Wei, 2022). American sociologist Daniel Harrison Kulp's book *Civics: An Inductive Study Socially Developed of the Elements of Community Welfare in China*, which was composed in 1925, focuses on studying the power structure of villages, becoming an access to understanding rural society in southern China in the 1920s (Kulp, 2006; Zhang, 2010). The American journalist Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China* and William Hinton's *Emancipation (Fanshen)* respectively recorded the process of CPC leading the revolution and rural land reform movement in the countryside in the genre of documentary literature (Zou & Wei, 2022). Before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, there were more than ten rural surveys conducted by foreign scholars, mostly based on villages for regional research, focusing on the development of social structure and agricultural technology (Li & Deng, 2009). After the reform and opening up late in 1978, Western scholars continued their inherent academic traditions, focusing on such research as rural reform and transformation in China, collective economy and rural governance, village governance and democracy, electoral system and citizen participation. However, as far as Western international communication research is concerned, the urban-rural binary opposition and the urban-biased Western centrism are deeply rooted.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the stories of barefoot doctors, rural teachers, and film projectors deeply rooted in the rural soil have caused a stir in the West (Zhao, 2016). During the time when China had just begun to reform and open up to the outside world, the "ten-thousand-yuan households" among farmers and the emerging township enterprises represented the initial success of the reform and opening up, and constituted the main content of the external communication about China's rural life (Zhao, 2016). With the advent of the online information society, live streaming and short video works about rural life have become popular on the internet. The spiritual role of rural traditions in constructing the subjectivity and relationship of rural communication is becoming increasingly prominent (Guan, 2021).

With China achieving the poverty alleviation on schedule in 2020 and succeeding in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, the development of Chinese rural areas has once again attracted global attention. As the social foundation of China, rural areas are

the main component of the concept of “Chinese Nation” (Xue, 1983). Fei Xiaotong, the famous Chinese sociologist, believes that from a grassroots perspective, Chinese society is of rural orientation (Fei, 1985). The countryside is the source of power in Chinese stories. Telling the story of rural China well and spreading the voice of rural China can help to explore and reshape the value of rural civilization within the view of global communication.

From the review, it can be seen that both domestic and foreign scholars mostly adopt a “bottom-up” and “people-oriented” paradigm in their research on Chinese rural areas, while there are still few studies on the communication characteristics through the textual analysis of government documents.

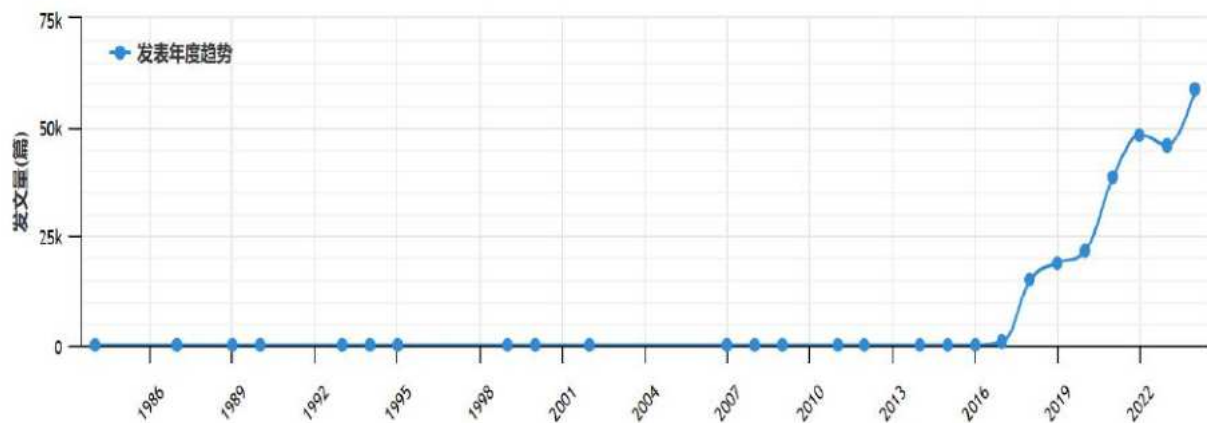


Fig.1: Trend of annual publications on “Rural Revitalization” (CNKI, 2024)

Domestic research on “Rural Revitalization” mainly focuses on the interpretation of strategic policies, including top-down policy recommendations on “rural governance”, “high-quality development”, and “rural tourism”. Based on the current situation of rural development in Beijing, Lu & Wei (2023) analyzed the core connotation of “rural revitalization” and proposed a precise promotion pattern for “rural revitalization” in the capital region. Some scholars have also explored specific revitalization approaches from specific rural cases (Yang, 2020; Cao et al., 2023; He & Li, 2023; Zhang, 2023). There are also textual analyses based on government work reports to explore the practice and future prospects of promoting rural governance under the strategy of rural revitalization. However, overall, those studies either offer grand calls and suggestions, or summarize experiences, good models, or reflect on theories based on ethnographic research in

2. Research on the strategy of “Rural Revitalization”

In the limited foreign literature accessible, though there are no such concept as “rural revitalization”, foreign research does pay attention to “rural development”, with focus on social and culture attention empowering rural economic development (Dent, 2007; Ursic et. al, 2024).

In regard to the related literature in China, according to CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), a Chinese academic platform, there is a steady increase in the publications on “Rural Revitalization” since 2017 (see figure 1). From Figure 1, we can see that there is a sharp increase from 2020 to 2022 with 48191 academic publications, mainly because of China’s achievement in the poverty alleviation and in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in 2020. It is estimated that there will be 58793 academic publications in 2024, reaching a new peak.

specific rural areas. There is a lack of research on the English translation of government reports covering the strategic content, and there is relatively little diachronic research in that field. Therefore, this study adopts the English version of the reports to the work of Beijing municipal government from 2017 to 2023 as data to study the discourse construction of the “rural revitalization” strategy mentioned in the text. The analysis of such aspects as characteristic vocabulary, keywords, collocation and concordance is conducive to understanding the characteristic discourse construction of political strategy in international communication, and thus enables the international community to better understand the planning, implementation, and distinctive achievements of that strategy, so as to better understand China through its capital.

3. Research on the English translation of government work reports

According to CNKI, the research on the English translation of reports to the work of Government mainly cover such hot spots as "government work reports", "translation strategies", "English translation", "Skopos Theory", "functional equivalence", "vocabulary with Chinese characteristics", "China English", as well as "discourse analysis". Those hot topics also change with the time. At the early 21st century before 2014, most research focused on translation strategies, mainly by applying the theories of Skopos and functional equivalence. For example, Huang (2015) used the full text of the "Report to the Work of Nanchang Municipal Government 2014" as the corpus to explore translation strategies for political register. Based on the linguistic characteristics and Skopos theory of political register, she proposed the corresponding translation strategies: revision, interpretation, literal translation with annotations, and conversion.

After 2014, the research focus shifted to language with Chinese characteristics, translation for international communication, and genre analysis. For example, Liu (2015) studied the English translation of the vocabulary with Chinese characteristics in government work reports from the perspective of relevance theory. The shift indicates that with the proposal to build a socialist cultural power at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party, China aims to enhance cultural soft power as its goal for cultural development, and strives to promote the process of Chinese culture going global, enhancing the influence of Chinese civilization on a global scale. While the research hot spots from 2016 to the present have been discourse analysis, and corpus-based diachronic research, for research on translated texts always include the study of translation principles, methods and translation skills. The research on translation methods mainly include communicative translation and semantic translation; There are also studies on different types of texts, such as political texts, expressive texts, and informative texts. The research methods used by scholars in the study are also different, mainly including critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. For example, Yin Jia (2019) analyzed government work reports from a interdisciplinary perspective of CDA, and based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of CDA she explored the three-dimensional framework for the study of international communication translation (translation, communication, social practice). the interdisciplinary perspective of which broke through the limitations of linguistic and textual analysis, by exploring from the perspectives of readers' acceptance and response, thus enriching the discourse

dissemination strategies for international communication translation.

In summary, the research hot spots in the English translation of government work reports include translation strategies, principles, methods, and skills. In recent years, the research on vocabulary with Chinese characteristics, genre analysis, and corpus-based CDA have become a trend for scholars interested in the English translation of government work reports. However, there is relatively little diachronic research in this field, with most of the corpora being government work reports with a duration of nearly three years, and in terms of the literature on reports to the work of local governments, there is no relevant research on the English translation of reports to the work of Beijing municipal government. Therefore, the present paper takes the English translation of the reports to the work of Beijing municipal government over the past seven years as the corpus to conduct discourse construction research on the strategic content of "rural revitalization", which bears certain innovative value.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The present study chooses the English version of seven reports to the work of Beijing Municipal Government from 2017 to 2023. We choose the 2017 report as point of departure because because the "Rural Revitalization" strategy was proposed in the Report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China held in October 2017. As the Beijing Municipal Government's report is annually released in January, the actual start of the planning and implementation of "Rural Revitalization" in Beijing should start in 2018. The 2017 report text can be used as reference for the international community to better understand Beijing's "Rural Revitalization" through the discourse construction of the English version of the government work report.

The "Extended Lexical Unit" framework proposed by Sinclair (2004) puts vocabulary and syntax at one level and conducts research from four aspects: collocation, class connection, semantic prosody, and semantic tendency. That framework provides certain guidance for using corpus linguistics in text analysis. Xin & Gao (2013) believe that corpus linguistics uses a series of techniques such as collocation, keywords, word lists, word clusters, distribution to reveal the structure and patterns of language use in order to identify significant features, which has greatly extended the scope of text analysis. The present paper adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, and uses corpus tools to analyze the English version text of Beijing Municipal Government Work Reports. The research steps are as follows:

Step 1: Build seven sub corpora (RE17-23) according to the year when the annual report was released, and use the corpus analysis tool AntConc to conduct a comparative analysis of the keywords, collocates as well as the concordance in the English version of the 7 reports.

Step 2: Extract the automatic abstracts and keywords for the textual content concerning "Rural Revitalization" in each sub corpus, by using the Platform for Media Language Resources Service supported by National Broadcast Media Language Resources Monitoring & Research Center (<https://ling.cuc.edu.cn/>)

Step 3: According to the relevant provisions in the Law of the People's Republic of China on Promoting Rural Revitalization, the specific implementation of the rural revitalization strategy consists of five aspects: industrial revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization, ecological revitalization, and organizational revitalization. Therefore, the present study will conduct

textual analysis based on those five dimensions, and make a diachronic exploration of the discourse construction related to the rural revitalization strategy.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An overview of data information about the English version of the Beijing Municipal Government Work Reports from 2017 to 2023 is shown in Table 1. According to Table 1, the word "rural" appeared most frequently in 2018, with a steady high frequency from 2018 to 2023. In 2021 and 2022, the frequency of "rural" in the report decreased to some extent due to the impact of the epidemic, causing an obvious decline in the rank in the 2022 annual report. However, in 2023, its frequency has rebounded to a new height, becoming the 14th high-frequency word.

Table 1: Data overview of the Corpora Re17-23

Time	Tokens (before and after using a stoplist)	Times (before and after using a stoplist)	Frequency of the word 'rural'	Rank of the Frequency 'rural'
2017	2135, 2025	11257, 7006	26	29
2018	2415, 2299	14029, 8631	40	21
2019	2464, 2346	13925, 8479	33	25
2020	2672, 2551	15628, 9959	35	27
2021	1959, 1846	10008, 6058	25	24
2022	1934, 1829	9073, 5433	17	39
2023	2163, 2047	12122, 7227	36	14

Through statistical analysis of the work report of Beijing Municipal Government, the foreign communication discourse about capital's "rural revitalization" strategy takes on the following characteristics:

1. A Steady increase in the frequency of communication to accumulate public attention

The author imported the English version of the government work report into the Divominer research database and obtained a word cloud (see Figure 2). According to Figure 2, apart from such stop words as those

functional words, "Beijing", which signifies the territoriality of the report, enjoys a high rank, followed by "development". The word "rural" is also in the focal position. Using the corpus retrieval tool AntConc, a keyword list was obtained from the 7-year government work report corpora (see Table 2 for the top 20 keywords list). The word "rural" ranked 19th in the corpus with 212 times, the keyness of which can be mutually demonstrated with the word cloud.

gathering the focus of attention from the overseas audience, and achieving the goal of international communication about major issues.

2. A Year-by-year implementation of the project with building a specific discourse ecosystem

The report to the work of government mainly includes a review of the work during the previous year and work plan as well as major tasks for the next year. The report is

translated based on criterion for translating the report to the work of Chinese government, with the aim of telling about the development of Beijing to the outside world, and allowing the world to have a better understanding about Beijing. Using the *Platform for Media Language Resources Service* supported by National Broadcast Media Language Resources Monitoring & Research Center (as is shown in Figure 3, we extract the automatically generated keywords and abstracts for the annual reports, which are shown in Table 3.



Fig. 3: Snapshot of Platform for Media Language Resources Service interface

Table 3: Overview of automatically generated keywords and abstracts of Re17-23

Time	Keywords	Automatic abstracts
2017	Beijing; implemented; improve; continue; development; deepen	We further deepened urban-rural integrated development. We continued to improve people’s life.
2018	Beijing; alleviation; deepened; implement; services; rural; plan	The city’s development was profoundly transformed in the assisted areas by implementing the rural revitalization strategy and implementing the three-year action plan for building ‘beautiful villages’ in targeted poverty alleviation and elimination. We will carry out effective projects of poverty reduction,
2019	Implement; continue; improve; encourage	We will continue to encourage the ‘Healthy Beijing’ initiative. Harmonize urban/rural development and rejuvenate the countryside
2020	Improve; continue; promote; pilot; rural; revitalization; integrated	We will improve the institutional arrangements for integrated urban-rural development. We will complete the ‘Three-year Action Plan on Building a Beautiful Countryside’.
2021	13th Five-Year Plan; 14th Five-Year Plan Beijing; modernize; improve; assistance; rural revitalization	We will make comprehensive progress in rural revitalization and modernize agriculture and rural communities.

2022	improve; implement; Beijing; promote; Rural; coordinate	We will promote balanced urban-rural development with more priority given to agriculture and rural communities.
2023	rural; revitalization; improve; integrate; R&D	Improve Beijing’s overall living environment; Make new progress toward common prosperity; we will take effective measures to integrate urban-rural development and strive for all-round progress in rural revitalization.

From Table 3 above, it can be seen that there are some commonly used, high-frequency words in the English version of the annual government work reports, such as the noun “Beijing” that indicates the territoriality of the report, and the verbs “improve”, and “implement” that express the goals of governance. On the other hand, the reports in different years also reflect different governance priorities, especially in the implementation of rural revitalization, which is advanced year by year with different specific tasks. Therefore it can help us work out the path of implementing the rural revitalization strategy in Beijing through the following keywords:

deepen (2017) — plan (2018) — encourage (2019) — improve, pilot (2020) — modernize (2021) — promote (2022) — revitalization, integrate(2023)

It can be seen that after China proposed the rural revitalization strategy in October, 2017, Beijing Municipal Government actively organized the implementation and carried out effective project for poverty reduction in 2018, placing the rural revitalization strategy in a prominent position, and formulating a three-year action plan for building “beautiful villages”. Then in 2019, the government continued to rejuvenate the countryside, encourage talents of all sorts to bring capital and skills to rural areas and start their own business, and harmonize urban and rural development. In 2020, the government gained experience from the pilot project to make it replicated in more places, and improved such institutional arrangements as the system and mechanism for integrated urban-rural development. Having making advancement in the three-year action plan on building a beautiful countryside, the government would make solid progress in building 152 demonstration villages under rural revitalization, so as to balance urban-rural development and make substantive progress in rural revitalization. In 2021, the government prioritized the development of agriculture and rural areas, drew up action plans for modernization, and promoted urban-rural integrated development, in an effort to make comprehensive progress in rural revitalization and modernize agriculture and rural communities. In 2022, the government promoted balanced urban-rural development with more priority given to agriculture and rural communities by pressing forward

with rural revitalization, comprehensive upgrading of agriculture, overall improvement of rural communities, and rounded development of rural residents, in an effort to modernize agriculture. By 2023, the government continued to build solid foundations for the work concerning agriculture, rural areas, and rural people so as to take effective measures to integrate urban-rural development and strive for all-round progress in rural revitalization.

Therefore we can see that the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy by the Beijing Municipal Government is carried out with goals, plans and pilot programs, which is addressed to the Capital’s reality concern, steadily advanced, and effectively promoted. Demonstrating from the overseas version of the report, Beijing government shows readers the practical implementation and promotion measures about the rural revitalization strategy. Through the co-occurrence of high-frequency keywords and the construction of specific discourse ecology, a reliable image of the leadership of the Party and the responsibility of the government, as well as a responsible image of overcoming difficulties to live up to the people can be presented.

3. A strategy based on local circumstances to present the distinctive economic image of the capital

The content about rural revitalization in the government work report can reflect the characteristic economic image of “keeping pace with the times and adapting to local condition”, as can be shown in the following two aspects.

On the one hand, according to the relevant provisions in the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Promotion of Rural Revitalization*, rural revitalization strategy can be classified into the revitalization in five aspects: that in industry, culture, ecology, talents and organization. Although the law was not officially introduced and executed until 2021, the rural revitalization strategy was actually based on the local circumstances as far as the capital’s industrial talents, geographical location, and ecological environment are concerned. The government has accurately and practically performed the corresponding industrial planning and policy promotion.

For example, in terms of revitalization in industry, multiple measures have been taken to improve the level of urban-rural integration with a focus on developing urban modern agriculture; In terms of culture, the government highlights Beijing’s “golden business card” as a historic and cultural city, coordinates efforts to build and inherit the three Cultural Belts, actively protects well-known traditional villages, preserves the rural flavor and culture of the capital, as well as improves the quality and service capacity of Beijing’s suburban tourism. As for ecological revitalization, The government has made active and prudent efforts to to improve the Eco-environment, and

made the ecological conservation areas models for green development, in order to build beautiful countryside with a favorable living and working environment. In regard to talent, the government has enhanced the training of basic-level officials and personnel, equipped farmers with technology, management skills, and practical techniques, given more support to rural education, so as to provide talent support for rural rejuvenation. In terms of organization, through reform and innovation, the government has explored the establishment of more effective and dynamic rural governance system. The specific realization in the five aspects is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Specific work for implementing rural revitalization mentioned in Re17-23

Aspect	Specific work for implementation
Revitalization in industry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will implement the national pilot project of new-type urbanization and develop small functional towns with characteristics. Focus on developing urban modern agriculture such as the modern seed industry, recreational agriculture and rural tourism. 2. Agriculture has been better integrated with the technology and service sectors. We will develop digital agriculture, agritourism, special agriculture, and forest farming, create more boutique homestay facilities, and improve the quality and performance of the rural economy. 3. We will modernize agriculture, developing modern urban agriculture. We will build strong farm brands and promote the golden brand of Beijing Premium Agricultural Produce.
Revitalization in culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will protect Beijing’s ‘golden business card’ as a historic and cultural city. We will coordinate efforts to build the Cultural Belts of the Great Wall, the Canal and the Western Hills, and intensify the overall protection and environmental improvement of historic and cultural attractions. We will actively protect well-known towns and villages as well as traditional villages. 2. We will make a municipal-level registry of villages with historical value and improve their preservation planning to help us remember history, culture and folk stories. 3. We will expand quality tour routes, pilot boutique hotels in suburban areas, and improve the quality and service capacity of Beijing’s suburban tourism. Rural development should be based on local circumstances and preserve the rural flavor and culture of the capital. Communities should be diversified and distinctive. We will provide guidance on the style, architecture and color of the rural communities.
Revitalization in ecology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The eco-compensation mechanism has been upgraded to improve the eco-environment. We will make active and prudent efforts to increase fiscal transfer to ecological conservation areas, and improve the diversified eco-compensation mechanisms. 2. We will ‘create 100 model villages and upgrade 1000’,...and make the ecological conservation areas models for green development. 3. We will improve the institutional arrangements for integrated urban-rural development. Build beautiful countryside with a favorable living and working environment. We will complete the ‘Three-year Action Plan on Building a Beautiful Countryside’.
Revitalization in talents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will improve policies and measures to encourage talents to innovate and build their career in rural areas, and encourage talents of all sorts to bring capital and skills to rural areas and start their own business. 2. We will enhance the training of basic-level officials and personnel, equip farmers with technology, management skills, and practical techniques, so as to provide talent support for rural rejuvenation. Rural residents will be provided with better training to help them find

- jobs and start businesses.
3. In order to expand the coverage of quality education resources, we will advance standardization in urban and rural schools for compulsory education, implement the rural teachers support plan and the special teaching posts plan. In key new towns and ecological conservation areas, we will build demonstration schools, and support rural schools. We will further narrow the gap between urban and rural schools, and between education in different regions and in different schools.
1. We will advance the reform in rural collective property rights system and collective economy organization system, deepen reforms in collective forest rights and state-owned forest farms.
2. Rural development should be based on local circumstances and preserve the rural flavor and culture of the capital. Communities should be diversified and distinctive. We will provide guidance on the style, architecture and color of the rural communities, and complete plans for about 1000 villages during the year (2019).
3. We will ‘create 100 model villages and upgrade 1000’.
4. We will find a long-term mechanism to eliminate relative poverty and build the capacity of low-income villages and rural households to help themselves.
5. Agricultural production will take on new forms to become more technology-driven, industrialized and market-responsive. We will encourage people with various skills to engage in agricultural innovation and build their careers in rural areas, and train a large number of farmer-turned entrepreneurs who understand technologies, have managerial skills and are interested in farming. We will organize training for new-type professional farmers.

On the other hand, apart from adapting to the regional characteristics, the report can reflect the modernization process of agriculture and rural areas in the capital in terms of time. The specific report presentation can reflect that the work of rural areas in the capital takes advantage of the national policy of “rural revitalization”, actively responds to the call of various national strategies, by the promotion and improvement in urban-rural integration, highlighting Beijing’s status as a historic and cultural city, and an emphasis on the high-quality development of village

industries in an effort to take the solid lead in advancing towards agricultural modernization.

4. A reflection of the unity and solidarity of social assistance with the precise and down to earth people-oriented approach

Using the corpus analysis tool AntConc, we get the collocates of the word “rural”, with top 10 words of the highest frequency in collocation being shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Top 10 collocates with “rural” in Re17-23

Collocates	Frequency	Freq (L)	Freq (R)
areas	40	0	40
residents	23	0	23
urban	20	20	0
households	17	0	17
development	16	0	16
revitalization	13	1	12
income	13	13	0
collective	10	0	10
land	10	0	10
construction	7	0	7

Those 10 high-frequency collocates can be roughly divided into three categories. The first category denotes the regional domain, including "areas", "urban", and "land"; The second is about the agent of the central word "rural", such as "residents", "houses", and "income", which are related to the rural revitalization strategy. Those three words designate the object of poverty alleviation and the goal of rural revitalization; The third category is the core of rural work: "development" and "revitalization". All the high-frequency words, together, can convey the message to readers that the Beijing municipal government is striving to help low-income households increase their income, and to take high-quality development as its

responsibility, through effectively improving the level of urban-rural integration, and solidly promoting the rural revitalization strategy. Therefore, an image of a reliable and down to earth government with people-oriented responsibility can be constructed. The purpose of the government's hard work is to promote high-quality and efficient agriculture, build beautiful villages with a favorable living and working environment, and help rural residents become affluent and prosperous farmers. Figure 4 is a semantic network diagram of the word "rural", which can be mutually confirmed with Table 5, thus together illustrating the findings above.

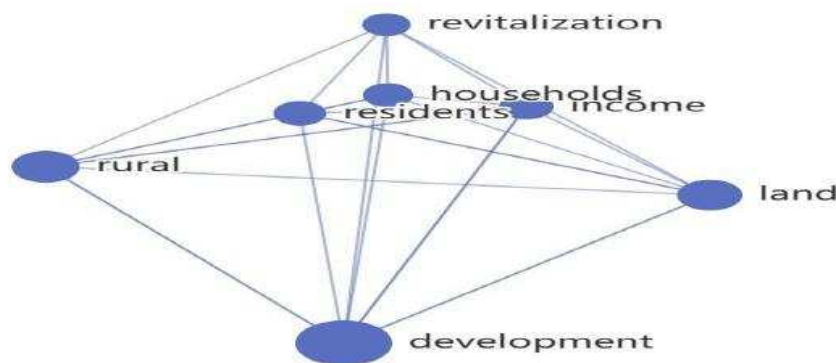


Fig. 4: Semantic network diagram of "rural"

V. CONCLUSION

International political communication, as an important component of international communication, has received widespread attention from researchers in recent years. As a highly authoritative political discourse, the English version of the report to the work of government plays a significant role in building a country's image in international communication. As the *Report on the work of Beijing Municipal Government* is translated based on the work report on Chinese government, it aims at telling the outside world about Beijing's development and its strategic planning, so that the world will have a better understanding about the capital city. Its English version can build a specific discourse ecosystem, and steadily increase the frequency of making a voice year by year, by writing about the in-depth implementation and comprehensive promotion of the rural revitalization strategy in the capital, which demonstrates the pragmatic style of the government and its people-oriented responsibility. It provides a good example for the external communication of the rural revitalization strategy, which is well worth studying. Future research needs to be more in-depth and content-specific, with a focus on how to concentrate more public attention through the co-occurrence of characteristic keywords and clusters in the

discourse, so as to understand in a deeper level that the path of rural rejuvenation in the capital should match the reality that Beijing is a big city with a small agricultural sector and has a small urban area and large suburban areas. Thus we can get and follow the inherent law of rural development characteristic of Beijing, and share Chinese wisdom with the world.

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Identity and Transformation in King Lear: From King to Beggar

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Abstract— *In Shakespeare's King Lear, the protagonist's journey from powerful monarch to vulnerable beggar serves as a profound exploration of identity and transformation. This paper examines Lear's metamorphosis, focusing on how his shifting sense of self reflects broader themes of authority, vulnerability, and human frailty. At the outset, Lear defines his identity through his royal power and relationship with his daughters, but his misguided decisions lead to his downfall, initiating a process of personal and psychological unraveling. The Fool and Lear's madness serve as pivotal moments, forcing him to confront the discrepancy between self-deception and self-awareness. Stripped of his kingdom and family, Lear's transformation into a beggar marks a profound shift in his understanding of identity. In the absence of external markers of power, Lear gains insight into his own humanity, recognizing the universality of suffering and the impermanence of authority. Ultimately, this paper argues that Lear's tragic transformation is not just a loss of status but an awakening to self-knowledge. His death, while tragic, represents the completion of his transformation, as he gains a deeper understanding of love, humility, and the fragility of human existence. Through this process, King Lear offers a poignant meditation on the nature of identity and its complex, often fragile, formation.*



Keywords— *Identity, Transformation, Authority, Vulnerability, Human frailty, Self-awareness, Madness, Power, Self-knowledge*

I. INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare's *King Lear* is one of the most profound explorations of human identity and transformation in the Western literary canon. At the heart of this tragedy lies the dramatic metamorphosis of its protagonist, Lear, who transitions from a powerful monarch to a vulnerable beggar, stripped of all external markers of identity. This transformation not only underlines the play's exploration of personal and political power but also reflects the fragility of human identity itself. Lear's descent into madness, his loss of familial loyalty, and his eventual death serve as the key moments in his journey toward self-realization, offering deep insight into themes of power, vulnerability, and existential crisis. At the beginning of the play, Lear's identity is firmly rooted in his role as king, a position that provides him with authority, control, and status. However, his decision to divide his kingdom among his daughters

based on superficial expressions of love sets in motion a tragic unraveling of both his power and his sense of self. Lear's identity is not simply a product of his external position but is deeply entwined with his relationships and self-perception. His blind trust in flattery, his inability to discern true loyalty, and his overwhelming pride all contribute to his initial failure. These aspects of Lear's identity, founded on vanity and ego, begin to crack as he faces betrayal and the loss of his kingdom, leading him to question the very nature of his self-worth. Shakespeare crafts a poignant commentary on the complexities of identity through Lear's interactions with his daughters and the Fool. The Fool, in particular, emerges as a key figure in the play, serving as both a mirror and a foil to Lear's identity. His sharp wit and pointed commentary expose the king's delusions and provoke moments of self-reflection. Yet, it is Lear's madness that becomes the most significant vehicle for transformation, allowing him to shed the

trappings of kingship and come face to face with his own vulnerability. The loss of authority and status forces Lear to confront not only his mortality but the deeper existential questions about the nature of selfhood. As he is stripped of his kingdom and family, he is left with only his bare humanity, leading to a radical reconfiguration of his identity.

This paper will explore how Lear's transformation is not merely a loss of external power but a profound internal journey of self-awareness. Lear's shift from king to beggar signifies a rupture between his previous self-conception and a more painful, yet authentic, recognition of his own limitations and humanity. The examination of Lear's psychological unraveling will be situated within the broader thematic context of the play, which addresses the nature of authority, familial loyalty, and the human condition. In particular, the paper will focus on the relationship between Lear's external identity as a ruler and his evolving internal understanding of self as he grapples with the vulnerability and impermanence of his power. Through this process, King Lear ultimately offers a poignant meditation on the nature of identity and its complex, often fragile, formation. It questions whether true self-knowledge can only emerge through suffering and loss, and whether such a transformation, though painful, leads to a deeper understanding of love, humility, and human frailty. This paper will argue that Lear's tragic journey reflects a universal tension between the external trappings of identity and the internal realities of the self, with his eventual death serving as the culmination of his transformation into a figure defined not by power, but by raw human vulnerability.

II. LEAR'S INITIAL IDENTITY: AUTHORITY, POWER, AND SELF-DECEPTION

At the outset of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the protagonist's identity is firmly anchored in his royal authority and the power that accompanies his position as monarch. Lear defines himself through his control over the kingdom, his relationship with his daughters, and his unquestioned ability to command loyalty and respect. However, this identity, while seemingly stable, is riddled with self-deception and emotional blindness, setting the stage for the profound transformation that will ultimately strip him of both his power and his understanding of self. Lear's sense of self is inextricably linked to his status as king. In Act 1, Scene 1, Lear's decision to divide the kingdom between his three daughters is motivated by his desire to retire from the burdens of kingship while still maintaining the outward trappings of power. He wishes to be rid of the responsibilities of governance but is unwilling to relinquish

the symbolic authority of his title. By seeking to divide the land based on the daughters' professions of love for him, Lear assumes that his identity as king will remain intact, even though he will no longer wield political power. This decision reflects a deep misunderstanding of the nature of authority—he believes that love, rather than the substance of rulership, will guarantee his continued position of respect and influence. In doing so, Lear is already laying the groundwork for his own downfall.

His identity as a ruler is also reinforced by his expectations of loyalty and obedience. Lear assumes that his daughters, particularly Goneril and Regan, will fulfill their obligations to him without question, as a reflection of their love. His demand for public declarations of affection in return for his inheritance further underscores his inflated sense of entitlement. Lear's misjudgment becomes evident when Cordelia, the daughter who truly loves him, refuses to flatter him with extravagant praise, instead offering a modest and honest declaration. Lear's inability to recognize genuine affection and his overvaluation of superficial expressions of love reveals his fundamental misunderstanding of his relationships and his identity as a father and king. Lear's need for validation through flattery is a form of self-deception that blurs his perception of both himself and others. He believes that his power and self-worth are bound to his authority, status, and the outward expressions of love from his daughters. This reliance on external validation makes him vulnerable to manipulation, particularly by Goneril and Regan, who deceive him with exaggerated proclamations of devotion. Lear's pride, his need to control his image, and his fear of losing authority cause him to misread the true nature of his daughters' affections. This self-deception, which is rooted in his rigid conception of authority and self-worth, causes him to make decisions that will ultimately lead to his emotional and psychological collapse.

Thus, Lear's initial identity is constructed from a combination of external power, familial relationships, and a deep-seated need for affirmation. His authority, however, is superficial and fragile, built more on the illusion of control than on any genuine understanding of his role as a ruler or father. His blind trust in flattery, his fear of loss, and his overvaluation of his status set the stage for the tragic events that follow. The transformation from this self-deceptive, authoritative figure to a broken, vulnerable man is central to the play's exploration of the complexities of identity and the perilous nature of relying on external markers of self-worth.

2. The Fool as a Mirror: Self-Recognition and the Seeds of Transformation
Lear's encounter with the Fool plays a pivotal role in his transformation. The Fool acts as a mirror to Lear, offering insight into the king's actions and attitudes. Although Lear dismisses the Fool as a mere jester, the Fool

functions as a truth-teller, using wit and irony to challenge Lear's perceptions of his own identity. The Fool's repeated reminders of Lear's foolishness—such as the famous line, "Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise"—push Lear to confront the gap between his self-perception and his reality. The Fool also serves as a contrast to Lear's declining authority, suggesting that wisdom and insight are not necessarily tied to power. This marks the beginning of Lear's journey toward self-recognition, as he begins to experience a shift from a self-assured ruler to a man whose identity is increasingly uncertain and fragile.

III. THE CRISIS OF IDENTITY: LEAR'S DESCENT INTO MADNESS

The pivotal turning point in King Lear occurs when the protagonist's identity collapses under the weight of betrayal, loss, and emotional turmoil, leading to his descent into madness. Lear's crisis of identity is not merely the loss of external power, but a profound unraveling of his self-conception. His journey into madness represents a moment of intense psychological fragmentation, as Lear's earlier understanding of himself as a monarch, father, and man of authority is shattered. It is in this crisis of identity that Lear begins to grapple with the tension between self-deception and self-awareness, and the play reveals the fragile nature of the self when external markers of identity, such as status and familial loyalty, are stripped away. Lear's descent into madness begins shortly after his decision to divide the kingdom and his subsequent rejection of Cordelia. His emotional and psychological breakdown accelerates as Goneril and Regan, the daughters to whom he has given power, begin to betray him. Their manipulation and disregard for his authority expose Lear to the painful reality that his identity as a king, and even as a father, has no lasting substance. His pride, once so firmly tied to his royal status, disintegrates as he faces the cruel rejection of his daughters. With the loss of his kingdom and the alienation of Cordelia, Lear finds himself confronted with a world in which he no longer holds control, no longer commands respect, and no longer understands the nature of his own identity.

The onset of Lear's madness is signaled in Act 2, when he begins to experience intense emotional confusion and vulnerability. His violent outbursts and erratic behavior reflect the deep internal conflict between the king he once was and the powerless old man he has become. The transformation is not just one of external circumstances; it is a deep, existential crisis in which Lear confronts the hollowness of his former self. He becomes increasingly aware of his own helplessness and begins to question the authenticity of his past decisions, particularly his misguided judgment of Cordelia. In a moment of clarity, he

acknowledges his mistakes and expresses regret for having banished his faithful daughter: "I did her wrong." However, these flashes of self-awareness are fleeting, and Lear's mental state continues to deteriorate. In the storm scene (Act 3, Scene 2), Lear's madness reaches its most intense expression. Stripped of his kingdom and standing in the midst of a literal storm, Lear also faces an internal storm—his existential struggle to make sense of his loss and his newfound vulnerability. The storm, both a literal and metaphorical force, mirrors the chaos in Lear's mind as he contemplates his own insignificance and the cruelty of the world. The famous lines "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!" exemplify Lear's emotional and psychological turmoil, as he rails against the forces of nature, fate, and his own self-deception. His madness is marked by a rejection of the social and natural order, symbolized by his call to the storm to rage uncontrollably.

The moment of madness marks a pivotal shift in Lear's character. As his rational faculties erode, Lear begins to lose the rigid identity that had once defined him. The chaos in his mind brings him closer to an authentic understanding of human suffering and the fragility of identity. The king who once sought to control every aspect of his life and reign is now, ironically, more in touch with the vulnerability and impermanence of the human condition. His madness, paradoxically, opens the door to self-awareness, as Lear begins to see the world and himself through a lens of raw humanity, no longer shielded by the illusions of power and authority. Lear's descent into madness is not merely a loss of sanity but a crisis of identity that reveals the deep psychological and existential challenges inherent in human nature. This breakdown of selfhood exposes the fragility of the self, suggesting that identity, especially one based on external markers of power and status, is always susceptible to collapse. Lear's madness thus represents a key moment in his transformation, where he moves from a delusional king to a man more aware of his own humanity, however painful that awareness may be.

IV. THE BEGGAR AND THE KING: RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITY IN SUFFERING

Lear's transformation from a king to a beggar is one of the most striking aspects of King Lear, encapsulating the play's central theme of identity and the profound shifts that occur when external circumstances crumble. Stripped of his kingdom, his power, and his family, Lear is forced to confront the most fundamental aspects of his identity, which are no longer tethered to his royal status. His descent into a beggar symbolizes not just a loss of material wealth but a deeper, existential transformation in which Lear is

compelled to rebuild his understanding of self. It is through suffering—both physical and psychological—that Lear’s fractured identity begins to reconstitute itself, revealing the complexities of human vulnerability and the fragile nature of selfhood. In the early stages of his downfall, Lear is unable to accept the loss of power and the disintegration of his former identity. As his authority crumbles, he clings to remnants of his former self, repeatedly asserting his dignity and entitlement. In Act 2, Scene 4, when Lear is turned away from Regan’s castle, he exclaims, “O, reason not the need! Our basest beggars / Are in the poorest things superfluous.” Lear’s inability to understand the necessity of his diminished position is a reflection of his refusal to accept the fragility of his former identity as a monarch. His journey into beggary, initially forced upon him, is a struggle that begins with resistance to the very notion of humility and suffering.

However, as Lear’s external trappings of power disappear, he begins to undergo a psychological and emotional shift. His experiences of abandonment and betrayal—first by Goneril and Regan, and later by the political forces in the kingdom—slowly strip away the protective armor of his kingship. In the absence of wealth, status, and authority, Lear is forced to confront his own humanity. The shift from monarch to beggar is not just a demotion in societal rank; it is a dismantling of the illusions of control and superiority that had previously defined him. By becoming a beggar, Lear is stripped down to his essential self, without the external markers that once defined him. This process of reconstruction is powerfully embodied in Lear’s moments of suffering. In the storm scene, as he faces the fury of nature, Lear’s vulnerability is laid bare. His physical exposure to the elements reflects his newfound state of being—unprotected, exposed, and in anguish. Yet, it is in this suffering that Lear begins to confront deeper truths about himself and the world. He gains insight into the universality of human pain, recognizing that all people, regardless of status, are subject to the whims of fate and nature. His line, “I am a man more sinned against than sinning,” reflects an emerging understanding of the human condition. Lear no longer identifies solely with the lofty ideals of kingship but begins to acknowledge the frailty and impermanence that bind all human beings together.

The transformation is also marked by his increasing connection with others, particularly with the Fool and later with Cordelia. As a king, Lear was isolated in his authority, demanding love and loyalty while unable to genuinely connect with those around him. As a beggar, however, he learns humility and self-awareness. His suffering strips him of his pride and opens him to genuine empathy. This shift is evident when he recognizes the loyalty and love of his daughter Cordelia, whose forgiveness and care allow him to

reconstruct his identity, not as a king, but as a father who understands the value of love, humility, and human connection. Ultimately, Lear’s identity reconstruction is incomplete and tragic, as his death follows closely after his moment of reconciliation with Cordelia. However, in his final moments, Lear’s awareness of his humanity and the complexity of love signifies the completion of his transformation. The beggar, as he is seen in the end, is no longer a powerless, broken man but one who has transcended the narrow confines of kingship to embrace a deeper understanding of his own vulnerability, suffering, and capacity for love. Through his transformation from king to beggar, Lear exemplifies the play’s exploration of the fragility of identity and the profound ways in which suffering can lead to self-awareness and spiritual redemption, even in the face of death.

V. THE RETURN TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE: REDEMPTION AND DEATH

In the final moments of King Lear, the protagonist undergoes a moment of profound self-realization and redemption, albeit too late to prevent his tragic death. After a harrowing journey through madness, suffering, and the loss of his kingdom, Lear experiences a return to self-knowledge that is both redemptive and deeply tragic. His identity, once defined by authority, power, and familial expectations, is now shaped by a new understanding of humility, love, and the fragility of the human condition. However, this self-knowledge arrives only in the face of imminent death, highlighting the play’s poignant meditation on the limits of personal transformation and the inevitability of mortality. Lear’s return to self-knowledge begins in the final acts of the play, as his suffering and the consequences of his earlier decisions push him toward a moment of clarity. After the devastating losses he has endured—being cast off by his daughters, abandoned by allies, and witnessing the brutal consequences of his actions—Lear finally comes to a deeper understanding of both himself and the world around him. In Act 4, Scene 7, after being reconciled with Cordelia, Lear speaks the lines, “I am a very foolish fond old man, / Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less,” acknowledging his age, foolishness, and the mistakes he has made. This recognition of his own fallibility marks a critical shift in his identity. Whereas earlier in the play, Lear’s sense of self was defined by pride and the illusions of control, now he humbly accepts his vulnerabilities and imperfections.

The reconciliation with Cordelia also plays a crucial role in this return to self-knowledge. In his earlier life, Lear was blind to the true nature of love, valuing flattery over sincerity, and treating Cordelia with harshness. However, in

his final moments, he comes to realize the depth of her love for him, an understanding that opens his heart to the unconditional love that transcends power and status. This moment of recognition represents the culmination of Lear's emotional and psychological journey. His transformation from an arrogant monarch to a humbled, self-aware man is marked by his acknowledgment of the love he had previously rejected, signifying the redemptive power of self-awareness and emotional reconciliation. Yet, Lear's redemption is tragically short-lived. The restoration of his self-awareness and emotional clarity is overshadowed by the inevitability of his death. Lear's recognition of the love between himself and Cordelia is overshadowed by the tragic events that follow, including the death of his daughter. Lear's death, following Cordelia's, becomes a final expression of the fleeting nature of self-knowledge and redemption. While Lear's journey toward self-realization allows him to die with a greater understanding of the world and his place in it, this moment of insight does not spare him from the consequences of his earlier actions. The profound loss of Cordelia in the final act of the play underscores the inevitability of suffering and death, even for those who experience moments of clarity and redemption.

In death, Lear's return to self-knowledge becomes both redemptive and futile. His recognition of the deeper truths of love, humility, and vulnerability comes too late to prevent the tragedy of his life's arc. Nevertheless, Lear's final moments suggest that redemption, while incomplete, is not without significance. His death, though tragic, marks a kind of spiritual resolution. He dies with an understanding of his humanity—no longer as a king, but as a father who has come to terms with the nature of love and his own limitations. This return to self-knowledge, in the context of his death, emphasizes the transient and often elusive nature of identity and redemption in the face of life's inexorable challenges. Thus, Lear's death marks the conclusion of his tragic transformation, a return to self-knowledge that highlights the fragility of human existence. Through his final moments, Shakespeare poignantly explores the complexities of identity, redemption, and mortality, suggesting that the journey toward self-awareness, though painful and fleeting, remains an essential part of the human experience.

VI. THE PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LEAR'S TRANSFORMATION

Lear's transformation in *King Lear* extends beyond the personal and psychological, carrying profound philosophical implications regarding the nature of identity, power, and human existence. His journey from a powerful monarch to a humble beggar reflects the fragility of human

selfhood and the existential crises that arise when external markers of identity, such as power and status, are stripped away. Through Lear's descent into madness and suffering, Shakespeare explores the tension between appearance and reality, questioning the true essence of identity. One of the central philosophical themes in Lear's transformation is the impermanence of worldly power and authority. Lear's initial sense of self is rooted in his kingship, yet the play reveals that such external markers of identity are illusory. His fall from power suggests that identity, when defined by status or material wealth, is precarious and ultimately hollow. This raises questions about the nature of personal worth and the illusion of control, positioning Lear's plight within a broader philosophical reflection on the futility of human striving against the forces of fate and nature.

Additionally, Lear's suffering and madness lead him to a deeper existential understanding of human vulnerability. Stripped of his illusions, he confronts the rawness of his own mortality and the inherent suffering of the human condition. Lear's newfound self-awareness suggests that true knowledge of the self comes not through the maintenance of power, but through the acceptance of vulnerability, loss, and mortality. His transformation thus echoes existential and humanist themes, emphasizing the significance of self-knowledge, humility, and the recognition of shared human frailty in the face of an indifferent universe. In this light, Lear's tragic journey speaks to the philosophical paradox that self-knowledge and redemption often emerge from suffering, underscoring the complexities of human identity and the existential search for meaning.

VII. CONCLUSION

Shakespeare's *King Lear* offers a profound exploration of identity and transformation, with the titular character's journey from king to beggar serving as a powerful commentary on the fragility of selfhood. Lear's initial sense of identity is deeply intertwined with his royal power and status, but his downfall reveals the illusory nature of such external markers. His transformation, marked by suffering and madness, forces him to confront the deeper truths of human vulnerability and the impermanence of authority. In losing everything, Lear ultimately gains self-knowledge, though this realization comes too late to prevent the tragedy that unfolds. Lear's descent into madness and his eventual return to a humble understanding of himself highlight the philosophical implications of the play. The collapse of his royal identity prompts a reflection on the futility of power and the importance of recognizing the shared human condition of suffering and mortality. His suffering becomes a catalyst for an existential awakening, as he learns to see

beyond pride, self-deception, and illusions of control, embracing a more profound, though painful, understanding of love, loss, and humanity.

Lear's tragic transformation underscores the complexities of identity and the delicate interplay between external circumstances and internal self-awareness. His journey reveals that identity is not static but constantly evolving, shaped by the forces of fate, suffering, and personal growth. While Lear's redemption is incomplete and his death inevitable, his transformation remains a poignant reflection on the nature of selfhood, the impermanence of worldly power, and the enduring search for meaning in the face of human frailty.

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Unlocking Opportunities: The Socioeconomic Impact of Quality Education

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Abstract— Education highly enables the individual to get better job opportunities, which leads to personal development, social development, and economic stability (UNESCO, 2021). Education equips the individual with skills to sustain their career, business, and financial life. Higher educational attainment often tends to be associated with higher wages in the workforce (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020). In addition, education improves quality of life, social empowerment, and economic stability at the national level (World Bank, 2018). Individuals with a good educational background are more likely to make better decisions in planning for their families, managing finances, and achieving economic independence (OECD, 2019). Education is not just about income; it also develops personal growth, financial security, and social development (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). It is a trigger for skill building, social status, and quality of life. Poverty, inequality, injustice, unemployment, child marriage, and discrimination can be discouraged through education (UNDP, 2019).



Keywords— Education, personal development, economic stability, social empowerment, skill building.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a cornerstone of socio-economic development, influencing various aspects of individual and collective progress. It plays a transformative role in shaping economic opportunities, social mobility, and overall well-being. Understanding the dynamics of how education impacts socio-economic development involves examining its effects on economic growth, poverty reduction, inequality, and social cohesion. (Spiel, Schwartzman, Busemeyer, & Schweisfurth, 2018). Of course, Education is involved in the process of not only teaching and learning but it expanding cultural awareness, maintaining social equilibrium, savor of traditional ethos and pathos. Indeed education supports to the development of the human, thought state, behavior, attitude, aptitude other psychological attributes. It is quite apparent that it is through humans gain knowledge, health awareness, sophisticated living conditions, augmented social communication, and economic productivity. It elevates or plays a key role in social progress and economics. (Nweke, 2023). Education pertinently

contributes to fostering social progress through different purposes and enhances individuals and humanity's living circumstances; and through nurturing social fairness and impartiality.

Education and Economic Growth:

Education directly comprehensively endorses economic growth by enhancing the skills and productivity of the workforce. Nevertheless, higher levels of education, which have skills-oriented targets always are associated with increased labor market efficiency, innovative tasks and development, and higher income levels. (Schultheiss, Pfister, Gnehm, & Backes-Gellner, 2023). Indeed, educated individuals are more likely to engage in skilled occupations and can contribute to technological advancements so there is always a simulative entrepreneurial expectation and higher required market demand. (NITI Aayog, 2019) Consequently, nations that have high income or awesome per capita income of its individual always will have with higher educational attainment often experience faster economic development and improved standards of living.

Educational and economic factors affecting development are:

- Natural Properties
- Capital development
- Technological advancement
- Free enterprise
- Human resource development
- Population growth and social overheads

Poverty Reduction and Social Mobility:

It has been long since our Indian Education witnessed big developmental innovations. What we have right now is absolutely old practices and approaches. Now is the time when it requires bunches of developmental and fantastic strategies in the field of pedagogical transactions. In the field of education now we have a kind of advancement that amplifies a random thought provocative. What we have right now is outstanding let it keep going and what we never have as a kind of imitative task should be acknowledged in our teaching practices. So far it seems that the quite awesome attributes that are associated with educational development should also be more often updated with new trending and world-level accredited innovative ideas. Education is of course a key factor in reducing poverty and promoting social mobility. Keeping the learner's access to quality education will always equip them with the skills needed for better employment opportunities and higher earning potential. It also plays a role in betrayal of poverty by empowering future groups to accomplish higher educational and economic outcomes. Educational initiatives targeting marginalized communities can help address socioeconomic disparities and foster more inclusive development. Poverty Alleviation Programs in India (Drishti IAS)

- Program of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):
- Jawahar Rozgar Yojana/Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana
- Rural Housing – Indira Awaas Yojana
- Food for Work Programme
- National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)
- Annapurna Scheme
- Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY):
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005.
- National Rural Livelihood Mission: Aajeevika (2011)
- National Urban Livelihood Mission:

Addressing Inequality:

Indeed education has the potential to mitigate social and economic inequalities by providing equal opportunities for

all individuals. When we say equal, it should mean the development of all regardless of their socio-economic background. However, disparities in educational access and quality can exacerbate existing inequalities. Ensuring equitable access to education, including for women, minorities, and disadvantaged groups, is essential for promoting fairness and reducing socio-economic gaps. Quality education and individual freedom to have them and equally to entree are initial morals that we draw upon when envisaging a healthier society. The code of identical opportunity for individuals is a social epitome that syndicates apprehension with autonomy and equality, and this social superlative delivers a vision of how we should to alive together.

Social Cohesion and Individual Advancement:

Beyond economic impacts, education fosters social cohesion and public assignation. A sophisticated public is more likely to contribute in self-governing procedures, engross in community events, and contribute to social stability. Education promotes critical thinking, tolerance, and understanding, which are crucial for building cohesive and resilient societies. Nevertheless, in the realm of societal progress and individual advancement, education stands as a cornerstone. It wields an outstanding stimulus and positive on both social kinesis and economic affluence and vice versa. It indeed keeps a role of endowing individuals to break free from the shackles of paucity to foster innovation and drive economic growth, the impact of education resonates across all levels of society. In this way, we delve into the elaborate interplay between education, social flexibility, and economic prosperity. It influences investments and savings in any form of education and can pave the way for a brighter and more equitable future.

II. CHALLENGES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Despite its benefits, the relationship between education and socio-economic development faces several challenges. Issues such as inadequate funding, unequal access, and disparities in educational quality can hinder development outcomes. Effective policies must address these challenges by investing in education infrastructure, promoting inclusive and equitable educational practices, and ensuring that educational reforms align with broader development goals.

Education is the foundation of development, and it unlocks doors for individual transformation and societal change. Here's how quality education drives socio-economic development:

Economic Empowerment	A good education equips a qualified workforce that makes people employable and promotes economic development. Better jobs translate into higher incomes and improved standards of living for the individual and family.
Reduction in Inequality	Quality education serves to narrow social inequalities. It eliminates gaps based on gender, region, or socioeconomic status in order to create social mobility and equality.
Health and Well-being	Better public health results and less expenditure on healthcare form an outcome of the informed health choices educated individuals make. Knowledge is a tool for prevention from disease and an agent for well-being.
Civic Participation	Education shapes active and informed citizens. It strengthens democracies by fostering critical thinking and encouraging participation in civic duties, creating socially responsible communities.
Intergenerational Impact	Education's ripple effects span generations. Educated parents value and invest in their children's learning, breaking the cycle of poverty and creating a sustainable path to success.
Global Relevance	Countries with good education systems take the lead in innovation, technology, and science. They maintain competitiveness in the global scenario, which ensures sustainable development and progress.

Investing in education is not a policy; it is a promise for a brighter and more equitable future for all.

The Role of Technology and Innovation:

It is typically believed and studied that technological advancements have the potential to transform education and enhance its impact on the socio-economic expansion of a nation. E-learning platforms, digital resources, and educational technologies can expand access to quality education, particularly in isolated or underserved zones.

Embracing technology in education can bridge gaps and create new opportunities for learning and development.

Nevertheless, to achieve this ambitious goal of inclusive and democratic education, it ought to encourage national and international governments to safeguard satisfactory judicial agendas in the sense that there ought to be awesome constitutional provisions for guaranteeing nondiscriminatory platforms for education either at primary or secondary or higher education. There are in dwelling to preserve the right to education and match all procedures of discernment. Nations should also recognize who is accepted and why and there should be legal terms and conditions for everything. In this technique, we can shape education systems that understand variety as strength and where every student matters likewise.

UNESCO and other international agencies are persuaded that comprehensive education systems are the most operative means of contending prejudiced insolences and gender-based acumen. Nonetheless, to generate openhearted communities, figure comprehensive societies, and accomplish education for all, what mandatory is society-acknowledged curriculum and entrepreneur-valued content? This practice of inclusive attainment purposes to appraise thinking and rehearsal globally. It provides an overview of the progress and challenges, as well as supervision and recommendations to help countries diminish obstacles to education and guarantee the genuine enclosure of all learners. Technology enhances students to have

- ✓ To learn in a tranquil environment without bullying and harassing each other
- ✓ It accepts the training of a classroom involvement and environment without interposing the recognized degree of communication.
- ✓ It simplifies students' thoughts based on strong point and flaws.
- ✓ It assistances the teacher to assess skills reliably and impartially.

III. CONCLUSION

Education is a cornerstone of socio-economic development, profoundly influencing both individual opportunities and societal progress. By addressing inequalities, fostering economic growth, and promoting social cohesion, education serves as a catalyst for sustainable development. To fully realize its potential, we must address existing challenges and leverage technological advancements. Continuous investment in education and strategic policy interventions are essential for harnessing its transformative power and achieving comprehensive socio-economic

development. Moreover, quality education extends its impact across generations, breaking cycles of poverty and empowering communities to thrive. Besides equipping people with knowledge and skills, it gives them the critical thinking ability, innovation, and resilience in the face of modernity's complexities (World Bank, 2018). With education as a priority, we lay the foundation for a more equitable, inclusive, and prosperous society (UNESCO, 2021).

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Binayak Bandyopadhyay's Sambhabami (A Collection of Bengali Poems): A Postmodern Appraisal

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Abstract— Postmodern literature is considered as a special approach of literature keeping in mind its ideological and stylistic features. As a genre of literature it is not confined within any boundary. Rather it is suggestive of “Zero-boundary”. ‘Postmodern’ is not a time zone or it does signify any particular time. But the postmodern school appeared before us with the intensity of discussion in the decade of 80s of Twentieth Century considering a radical change in sociological perspective. After Second world War the term ‘postmodern’ was applied on several subjects such as literature, art, architect, sociology, philosophy, film, communication and so on. Though it is said that postmodern is not sequel of modern, yet we cannot ignore the concepts of modern while discussing postmodern. In literature the features regarded as postmodern often were applied and are being still applied in poetry. Bengali poetry does not strictly follow the features of European postmodern aspects. It contains its own stylistics devices in reflecting postmodern swing. Binayak Bandyapadhyay, a poet of the “Shunya Dashak” of Bengali poetry is very much experimental in his creative output. His anthology namely “Sambhabami”, published from Signet Press is genuinely regarded as a postmodern discourse of the “Srimad Bhagvad Gita”. In this article I intend to mark the postmodern ethos found in the said anthology of Binayak Bandyapadhyay.



Keywords— Postmodern, stylistic, poetry, Bengali poetry, postmodernism.

In the decade of Eighties of the Twentieth Century two social historians namely Danial Bell and Alain Tauraine pointed out a radical change in social perspective and they called it postmodern effects. According to them this postmodern society depends on two primary concepts – information and knowledge. Some social historians use the term ‘postmodern’ in the aspect of consumerism related to commodity and its excellence in market index. But the term ‘postmodern’ with its concept is not new in literary aspects. Pabitra Sarkar, an eminent educationist and essayist of Bengal in an essay clearly says that as a term ‘postmodern’ is almost one hundred and thirty years old. But the application the term was different then from today’s usage. If we consider that ‘postmodern’ is a sequel term of ‘modern’ then it would be a wrong interpretation. After the end of Second World War the terms ‘postmodern’ and ‘postmodernism’ came into the scenario not only in literature but also in variety of disciplines like

art, architect, sociology, philosophy, communication, film etc. The term ‘postmodernism’ was employed in the Latin-American literary criticism and in the Anglo-American literary debates in the 1930s and 1940s, the main analysis of postmodernism got force in the 1970s.¹ The term postmodern is being applied with different connotations in different decades. Sometimes it refers the desire of unconditional freedom of human beings, sometimes from the perspective of industrial revolution, sometimes as the battle-cry of technology or sometimes as the motif of self-consciousness. We are sure of that it is never understood as a particular movement in literature and postmodern again is not a philosophy. It can again be recognized as hollow or unsubstantial but it is impossible to ignore it

¹ Preda, A. “Postmodernism in Sociology, International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences”. USA: Elsevier Science Ltd., 2001.

very casually. We can feel the essence of it but we can't be sure of our understanding. When at the end of 19th century Friedrich Nietzsche made a shocking declaration 'God is dead'², the general belief of man got destabilized. Following this the scholars came with many more shocking declarations as death of the author or death of the subject respectively by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. These radical approaches are regarded as the shaping influences of postmodern concept.

Postmodernism does never follow any consistent argument and it does even support any limitation in its application. It includes different thinking, different perspectives and considers novelty in every sphere. Postmodernism again does not believe in the segregation of the units of time and it does not even beyond time. The concept of postmodernism believes in application and in the varieties of application. It would really be unjustified if we want to confine postmodern within a single definition. If we come to the genre of poetry in considering the aspects of postmodern, certain ethos can be regarded as follows. Postmodern poetry does not depend on a single subject and it truly ambiguous in nature. But decentralization of subject is its primary focus as we can say 'things fall apart/centre cannot hold'.³ Postmodern poetry is not argumentative in nature and if there is any argument, it should not have any pattern. It is always open-ended both in style and theme. Critics refer it as multi-layered, multi-facet and multi-dimensional. It is with sundry openings to hint out several interpretations. Postmodern poetry does follow any predetermined equation. Rather it is observant of the life and as life proceeds, it tries to understand the proceedings. That is why it is not possible to bracket it within the limitation of any literary movement. We can say that it is a tempo or current of time to follow only. Finally we would really be better to confirm that it is not even idealist in nature and application as if it is not the way that takes us to our home; it is the way that can lead us to any unknown. Modern poetry sometimes emphasizes individualism but in postmodern literature there is no trace of individualism. A postmodern poet is as free as a bird to fly through any track and anything can be the subject of postmodern poetry.

There is a common belief that a postmodern poet feels a sense of detachment with everything. He is conscious of nothing but out of that nothing the poet signifies something. Postmodern poets do not create any vertically opposite angle in their creation rather establish a relation with meaningful void. In their creation void does not

signifies emptiness rather fulfilled with multiple understanding with indomitable or incalculable aura even in painful existence. But we need to clear here one thing first that postmodern concept of Bengali literature is not very same with the practice of postmodernism in Europe. European postmodern trend in poetry confirmed its absolute detachment from tradition. But in Bengal the poets who experimented and still in the midst of experiment following the courtesies of postmodernism, do not segregate them from the tradition and traditional approach completely. Undoubtedly Bengali literature is greatly influenced by trends and techniques of European literature. So it would not be an exaggeration if we confirm European influences of postmodernism in Bengali literature. But at the same time we need also to confirm that postmodern trends in Bengali literature are really with newness and specialty which do not follow Europe.

In the decades of 20s and 30s of Twentieth Century a new bend was seen in Bengali poetry. But the epithet "modern" or "adhunik" was not then consciously used to signify a literary style with radical difference from traditional style. In Bengali literature decade of 30s is identified as "Kollol Yug" and in the period of "Kollol", "Kalikolom" and "Pragati" the term "adhunik" came to the general preview of literature. Kollol's prime patron was Buddhadev Basu and under his leadership "Kollol" became greatly adventurous to create a new perspective of Bengali literature beyond Rabindra Nath Thakur. This new discourse of Bengali literature is recognized as modern. Buddhadev Basu published an anthology namely "Adhunik Bangla Kobita" but he didn't confirm the definition of "Adhunik". In the very argument regarding adhunik kobita, poet Basu says that adhunik kobita or modern poetry is not a solid material which can be recognized with strict perception. It may be regarded as the voice of revolution, protest, doubt, boredom, adventure and so on. But in it one can find out wonder of truth, ecstasy of life and absolute confidence on the spiritual order of the universe. Actually the words modern or postmodern do not signify any constant meaning. They are relative in nature as well as in meaning. Though "Kollol Group" being a movement in Bengali literature wanted to establish a novel poetic identity by discarding the style and diction of Rabindra Nath Thakur, yet in some poems of Rabindra Nath we can mark the identities of so call modern perspective what is genuinely reflected in Twentieth Century European literature. In the poem of T. S. Eliot namely "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" we can see the delineation of sordid metropolis⁴. Almost same picture of urbanization is depicted in the poem "Banshi"

² Nietzsche, F. Trans. Walter Kaufman. "The Gay Science". New York: Vintage, 1974.

³ Yeats, W. B. Ed. A Norman Jeffares. "Selected Poems". Calcutta: Radha Publishing House, 1998. P. – 99.

⁴ Jain, Manju. "A Critical Reading of the Selected Poems of T.S.Eliot". New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001. P. – 45-46

by Rabindra Nath Thakur⁵. So from decades of 30s a drastic change was seen in poetic diction and poetic style of Bengali poets and it was started with Jatindra Nath Sengupta, Mohitlal Majumdar, Jibananda Dash, Amiyo Chakraborty, Bishnu Dey, Dinesh Dash, Subhas Mukhopadhyay, Sukanta Bhattacharyay, Ajit Dutta and many more. They all contributed uniqueness in Bengali poetry and matured it. Beside this Bengali poetry in its journey to be modern and postmodern has gone through different social, political and economical swings like independence, partition, refugee problem, Bangladesh War of 71s, Naxalite Movement etc. These are working sometimes as background or sometimes as foreground of Bengali poetry after independence. In the period of post 71s poets like Ranajit Das, Tushar Chowdhury, Prasun Bandyopadhyay, Mridul Dasgupta, Bishwanath Garai, Kalikrishna Guha, Shyamal Kanti Das, Shankar Chakraborty, Krishna Basu, Joy Goswami, Subodh Sarkar, Bibhas Roy Chowdhury, Nilotpol Gupta have taken the responsibility of Bengali poetry and are still sound and solid in their creative journey. After that we stepped in the period of 90s and “Shunyo Dashak” of Bengali poetry. Binayak Bandyopadhyay as a poet belongs to this very period and still his pen is very much active with vigour, spirit and innovation in creative output.

Bengali poetry of 90s carries the marks of a new social perspective. This is the age of the new statement of globalization and the poets of this era were well aware of the radical changes life due to the effects of globalization. Their poems are marked with these social changes. Soft cadence of poetry was heard no more. The poets did not try to write good poetry rather they tried to write sensible or cerebral poetry. They thought that the cry of writing good poetry made poetic journey stagnant. No revelation is seen rather repetition is visible only. And even the poetry was then charged with unnecessary complicity and suffering from non-attention from the readers. The poets of that period accepted those hindrances with patience and started to build a new journey of poetic dictions of their own and in this making they didn't ask for easy popularity. Rather they waited for sensible readers and got success to build up the group of genuine readers of poetry. Binayak Bandyopadhyay was born in Kolkata in 1976. His father Late Paresh Nath Bandyopadhyay was a renowned Sanskrit pundit and their family came from the then East Bengal as refugee during partition. But his mother Gouri Bandyopadhyay came of the famous royal family of Muluti, a temple-township in the border of West Bengal and Jharkhand. Binayak's journey as a poet started when he was still in school. His literary drive is multi-facet

(Poetry, Novel, Short Stories, Essays) and he is a regular contributor in the leading magazines, news-papers and journals of West Bengal. His collections of poetry include “Cherechi Sob Osombhober Ashsa”, “Daracchi Dorjar Baire”, “Jototuku Mene Nite Paro”, “Rickshaw Noyto Rupkotha”, “Haoya Jake Koreche Ferar”, “Joler Bhiton Aguner Moto”, “Sambhabami”, “Premer Kobita” etc. A study of his poetry reveals a gradual evolution of his art and genius. A number of major themes run through his poetry gaining in depth and intensity with successive volume that have been published. Binayak being a poet is highly metaphysical and always there is a urge to transcend, to rise, and to travel beyond simply physical. But at the same time he is a devoted lover and to him mere physical love is sinful. That is why his poetry enjoys the passion beyond sex. Sometimes it is significant to note that nowhere is there any indication of poet's fall a prey to putrid love. On the contrary, he is trying invariably to feel the nature of real love.

Binayak Bandyopadhyay as a poet is truly metaphysical. In his poems he deals with spiritual aspect of human life. But the greatness of Binayak as a poet lies in the fact that in his poetry he is constantly bringing together opposite concept and trying to reunite and synchronize them. The actual spring of artistic tension in his poetry is between his invasive philosophic obsession and a persistent awareness of the ties stemming from the immediate locale. Postmodern poetry deems in new interpretation age-old impressions and it craves to throw new light even religious and spiritual perception. Postmodern texts trusts in deconstruction of dictionary meaning of myths and legend and desires to apply that with innovative contexts and settings. Binayak Bandyopadhyay is an excellent artist in doing so. The two polarities in his poetry, therefore, are life as pilgrimage, an endeavor-concerning a movement missing from home – and life in the concrete milieu of reality which he is associated by knots of the society. The collection of poems namely “Sambhabami” our present concern is absolutely postmodern from this angle. The first edition of “Sambhabami” was published by Signet Press in 2021 and got the attention of the readers immediately. The second edition of it is now in the market and still relishing the enthusiasm of the readers. The title of the anthology is taken from the part known as ‘Renunciation of Action in Knowledge’ (4.7-8) of the “Srimad Bhagavad Gita”:

*Whenever, O descendant of
Bharata, there is decline of
Dharma, and rise of Adharma, then
I embody myself.*

*For the protection of the
good, for the destruction of the*

⁵ Ayab, Abu Saiyad. “Adhunikata o Rabindranath”. Kolkata: Deys Publishing, 1968.

*wicked, and for the establishment of
dharma, I come into being in every
age.*⁶

The word 'Sambhabami' means 'presence' and in the said shloka of the "Bhagavad Gita", Lord Krishna assures Arjuna, the descendant of Bharata that whenever there will be trouble and the rise of the wicked, he would come surely to protect the good. So this is not only a simple word but also the confidence of entire Bharat believes in the presence of almighty. By believing this we feel the assurance of life. Binayak as a poet very sensibly exercises the word as title of the said anthology which actually delineates the topsy-turvy as well as chaotic situation of modern life. So the word is applied here with a sense of deconstruction. Following the trend of postmodern poetry Binayak Bandyopadhyay in "Sambhabami" strives to place the essence and discourse of the "Srimad Bhagavad Gita" on the very practice contemporary man and society. From this aspect we can say that it is a retold of the "Srimad Bhagavad Gita".

Before going to the discussion, one thing we need to clear that it is not written from atheist view point. Rather the poet holds a firm confidence on the sayings of that great text. Amidst the chaos he intends to rise on the cosmos in keeping absolute confidence on the "Srimad Bhagavad Gita". Already we have mentioned postmodern poetry intends to signify a hidden philosophic quest and in this way "Sambhabami" is genuinely postmodern. Binayak Bandyopadhyay took almost seven years to compose eighteen poems contained in this collection. After the publication readers were overwhelmed considering the synthesis of the "Gita" with our day to day life and the readers' enthusiasm regarding the collection remains same. The poet crafts a synthesis of the "Yoga" of the "Gita" with his observation of modern life. The "Gita" is not only religious text but also it is taken as the ultimate education of life given to Third Pandava, Arjuna by Lord Krishna before the starting of the Battle Kurukhestra. In postmodern poetry the poet does not believe in any limitation of thought and he even does not want to establish any particular idealism. Rather he intends for directionless journey in which readers may signify their directions. Following that the poet of "Sambhabami" effortlessly fuses the image of "Krishnarjuna" with the hunger, Chameleon the famous Chinath with god. Here we can see depiction of personal cry tinged with universal agony. Binayak comes out with novel tone and tune in this anthology leaving his safe zone as the poet. Postmodernism cries for limitless self-deconstruction and

⁶ Swarupananda, Swami. Trans. "Srimad Bhagavad Gita". Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 1909. P. – 90-91.

in the very texture of "Sambhabami" very often we, as the readers encounter that notion. The first poem of the collection titled as "Bishad" embodies sundry startling images such as:

How French-fries mixes with bread

Hay into idol

Body at copulation

Why not me, my lord,

(জেভাবে আলুভাজা মেশে রুটিতে

খড় মেশে প্রতিমায়

শরির মেশে সঙ্গমে

আমি কেন মিশতে পারছি না প্রভু⁷)

The reader gets surprise to witness the smartness of comparison which conveys something beyond the dictionary meaning of the words. Binayak being a postmodern poet builds his own poetic dictions which look fresh and fit enough to complement the sponge in this world. Even the great characters of age-old epic are delineated in such ways that astonish us. They almost seem to us as common men with simple attitudes. But the expression is again stroked with a sense of crisis and depression:

**Direct me the place, where the soil would
not ask for blood**

**Direct me the bed, lying on which
Chitrangada would ask for performance**

Direct me the seat,

**Where Duryodhana would
pass a cigar to me?**

(কোথায় গিয়ে দাঁড়ালে মাটি রক্ত চাইবে না,

কোথায় শুলে, চিত্রাঙ্গদা পারফরমেন্স চাইবে
না,

কোথায় বসলে,

দুর্যোধনও একটা সিগারেট এগিয়ে দিতে
পারবে?)⁸)

In another poem namely "Sangkhya" the poet consigns one of the great philosophies of the "Gita" with very casual run of life and this really amazes us:

**It is not that I have never existed,
nor thou nor these kings. Nor is it**

⁷ Bandyopadhyay, Binayak. "Sambhabami". Kolkata: Signet Press, 2021. P. – 10.

⁸ Bandyopadhyay, Binayak. "Sambhabami". Kolkata: Signet Press, 2021. P. – 11.

that we shall cease to exist in the future.⁹

Whether you played kabadi in the last birth

Whether you will cricket in the next birth

Regarding that

Why do you think amidst this football match?

(তুমি আগের জন্মে কবাদি খেলছিলে

কি পরের জন্মে ক্রিকেট খেলবে

তাই নিয়ে

এই ফুটবল ম্যাচের মধ্যে ভাবছ কেন?)¹⁰

This striking analogy between the philosophy of the “Gita” and common aspect of life is highly confusing in nature. Actually postmodern literature desire to do so and even does not want to allow reader to draw to a final conclusion. The perception is open-ended here. Another example from the poem “Dashachakra” in “Sambhabami” will fix it. ‘Dashachakra’ is referred as the multiple images of god. Here in referring the features of “Aditya”, the poet again comes with striking metaphors:

Of twelve Adityas I am the lost noble

Of publishers I am Battala

Of fourty-nine Winds I am the current of Election,

Of stars I am the star of Bollywood,

(দ্বাদশ আদিত্যের মধ্যে আমি চুরি যাওয়া নোবেল

প্রকাশকগণের মধ্যে আমি বট তলা

উনপঞ্চাশ বায়ুর মধ্যে ভোটের হাওয়া,

নক্ষত্রগণের মধ্যে বলিউডের তারকা,)¹¹

Society and its present milieu are the central metaphors in Binayak’s poetry. Binayak Bandyopadhyay is a poet who lives in this country and is committed to the environment of this country. There is always an encounter with myth, legend and spirituality in Binayak’s poetry. He is a poet

who hopes for a sensible and sound future and according to him this could only be attended being very honest and sincere to our grand past. The poet’s personal and familial conflicts and frustrations are constantly related to the Indian intellectual and social environment. Following this the individual and particular is generalized and universalized in his poems. “Sambhabami” is not an exception to it. The concreteness and precision are two important characteristics of postmodern poetry. Binayak Bandyopadhyay in “Sambhabami” achieves these by the use of telling vivid and visual imagery. In his poems image is not the spring-board behind the composition, but working as the driving force to transcend these as universal. When in the poem the poet says:

I am the fire spreading in the intestine

Being physic diluted in the tantra

(আমিই তো আগুন হয়ে ছড়িয়ে আছি অন্ত্রে

শরীর হয়ে মিশে আছি তন্ত্রে)¹²

We become spellbound being realized the essence of spirituality as well as practicality reflected in these lines. Following the trend of postmodern practices the poet strives to go ahead of the common connotation of words and phrases and composes his journey significant for all types of readers and for ages to come. Again the poet ultimately surrenders to love because the love can only be the panacea amidst the crisis and disorientation:

From Kurukhhestra to Kolkata

The enmity between men ends with death

Why not the love?

(কুরুক্ষেত্র থেকে কলকাতা

মানুষের সঙ্গে মানুষের শত্রুতা মৃত্যুতেই ফুরিয়ে যায়;

ভালোবাসা ফুরোয় না কেন?)¹³

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Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Female Image Construction in *China Daily*: A Case Study of Reports on Female Astronaut Wang Yaping

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Abstract— *The image of Chinese women in official media is a crucial component of China's national image. The story of Wang Yaping, an outstanding female astronaut, is widely promoted worldwide, influencing foreign perceptions of the country. Using Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model as a guiding framework, this study analyzes how China Daily constructs Wang's image. The study yields three major findings: (1) China Daily depict Wang as a space hero to China, a female role model and a knowledge disseminator, linking her personal achievements to national development and emphasizing her qualities such as persistence and approachability; (2) the newspaper balances the authenticity and vividness, provides properly detailed and concise reports and demonstrates objective and immersive narrative of Wang's story; (3) Wang's image combines the people's aspirations and social mainstream values, encourages women to pursue higher achievements and creates a positive international image for China. This study may investigate a new perspective to the field of female image research in China.*

Keywords— *Critical Discourse Analysis, news discourse, female image construction, astronaut, corpus.*



I. INTRODUCTION

Telling the stories of Chinese women effectively contributes to telling the China's story well. Over the past decades, Chinese women have experienced profound social changes, excelling in diverse fields and fulfilling their aspirations. Their stories not only reflect individual empowerment but also enhances the national image. Scholars worldwide have shown considerable interest in studying the portrayal of Chinese women in media discourse (Wallis, 2006; Feng, 1992; Li & Zhang, 2015). However, few studies focus on the construction of Chinese women's image from the perspective of prominent figures in specific fields. Given the public's interest in these

remarkable women, their representation holds significant role in shaping the image of Chinese women as a whole. Therefore, it is essential to examine how media constructs female images in China by focusing on influential individuals.

Wang Yaping, a distinguished female astronaut who completed two manned flights in 2013 and 2021, set inspiring examples for women to bravely pursue personal achievements. As the first Chinese woman obtaining this achievement, her name has been a prominent symbol across the world and frequently mentioned on the reports in *China Daily*, both a window for international exchanges and a voice for the government. Her image in such an official

platform would impact foreigner's perceptions of both Chinese women and China.

Employing Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CACDA) as a theoretical lens, this study combines qualitative analysis with corpus analysis to offer a thorough and comprehensive examination of female image in China's media discourse. Drawing on a self-build corpus of 67 articles from *China Daily*, the study analyzes the discursive construction of Wang Yaping's image in terms of high-frequency words, collocates, intertextuality and socio-cultural factors to answer three questions: (1) What images does the newspaper construct about Wang Yaping? (2) How are these female images constructed discursively in the news reports? (3) What are some of the major factors influencing the construction of the female image in the news reports?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of female image has been a prominent topic in China, particularly in literature and art with extensive analysis of both domestic and foreign works from ancient to modern times. Important accomplishments include Dai (1994) on marginalized women in Chinese films, Wang B. (2006) on female roles in revolutionary operas, and Li L. (2021) on feminist awakening in traditional operas. In literature, Wang J. et al. (2006) explore women's struggles in Su Tong's work, and Zhao D. (2014) examines female image in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Compared to them, the study of women's media image is not so massive in number but also productive from 1990s (Feng, 1992; Li Q., 2007; Liu M. & Liao, 2007; Xu M. & Qian, 2002). The 2008 Beijing Olympics further inspired studies, such as Yu's (2009) diachronic analysis of female athletes' media representations and Hong and Song's (2014) study on tennis player Li Na. However, these works primarily adopt communication perspectives rather than linguistic ones. More recently, some linguists investigate Chinese women's image in domestic newspaper (Li N., 2017), Western media (Li N. & Zhang, 2015; Li Lixin, 2019) and literature work (Qiu & Zhao X., 2017; Yang, 2019; Li J. & Hu S., 2022) with the preference of Critical Discourse Analysis.

For scholars worldwide, female image study is always

a key focus across various sociocultural and media contexts. In advertising, Konstantinovskaia (2020) explores Japanese television commercials, revealing a blend of kawaii culture, traditional gender roles and postfeminist values. Besides, McCann (2021) analyzes British magazines, observing how romantic and sexual narratives promote an updated hegemonic femininity. In political discourse, Felicia (2021) examined Nigerian political cartoons, highlighting semiotic strategies that both reinforce and challenge gender inequality. Hu and Kearney (2021) focus on Twitter where women's discourse reflects traditional gender patterns. Studies on body image include Bouvier and Chen (2021) who reveal gendered representations in health packaging, and Tranchese and Sugiura (2021) who find shared misogynistic discourse in pornography and digital communities.

In summary, both Chinese and foreign scholar pay attention to various expressions of female image. However, to my knowledge, few studies analyze Chinese women's representation through the lens of a prominent figure with a CACDA approach. Therefore, this study may investigate a new perspective to the field of female image research in China.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research adopts CACDA as an analytical framework to examine discursive construction of female image from the perspective of Three-dimensional Model proposed by Fairclough.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) seeks to contribute to social change by analyzing simple linguistic forms, exposing the ideologies implicit in texts and explaining the sociocultural conditions of their existence, production and role in power struggles. This approach is a detailed analysis of a limited number of discourse samples (Fairclough, 1992), which pose challenges to balance depth and breadth (Hardt-Mautner, 1995). However, computer-assisted corpus tools provide quantitative indicators that offer analysts possible starting points of qualitative analysis (Hardt-Mautner, 1995). This integration allows CACDA to combine the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research. Therefore, it has gained significant traction among

scholars worldwide (Flowerdew, 1997; Baker and McEnery, 2005; Baker et al., 2013; Tang & Ma, 2013; Hu K. & Tian, 2018) with its application continuously expanding (Xu Z., 2024; Yan & Hu K., 2024).

Adopting a socio-cultural approach, Fairclough's three-dimensional model is an influential and practical entry point for discourse analysis. The theory holds that "each discursive event can have three dimensions of facets: it is a spoken or written language text, it is an instance of discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of text, and it is a piece of social practice" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 94). From this viewpoint, Fairclough introduces a three-stage model for discourse analysis, as illustrated in the following figure:

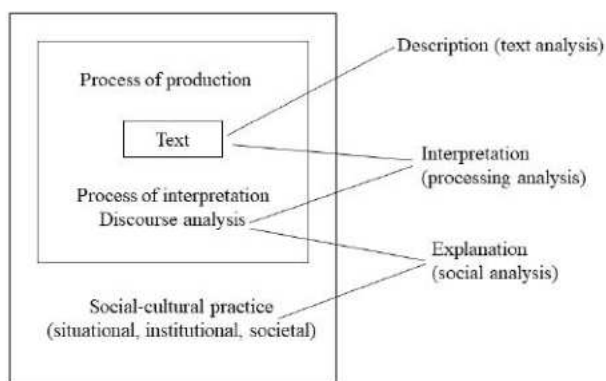


Fig.1. Dimensions of Discourse (Fairclough, 1995, p. 98)

Description involves the systematic examination of linguistic features within a text. Fairclough (1989) describes this stage as "concerned with the formal properties of text" (p. 26). This process entails analyzing specific linguistic aspects, including vocabulary, grammar, and textual sections. It guides the present study to explore the construction of Wang Yaping's images behind high-frequency words and collocates.

Interpretation is the examination of discourse practices involving the production, distribution, and consumption of texts. Fairclough (1992) notes that text productivity is often expressed through intertextuality, which refers to the insertion of fragments of existing texts into new texts in an explicit or implicit way with the aim of achieving some communicative goals. It inspires the present study to adopt news sources and reporting modes, two indicators of

intertextuality, to examine discursive techniques used in image representation.

Explanation is the process of social-cultural practice analysis. This stage emphasizes the "relationship between interaction and social context" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 26). It means that the historical, social and cultural factors must be taken into consideration, highlighting the indispensability of external macro factors and media image shaping.

This theoretical framework guides the present study to transition from surface-level lexical choices in corpus to deeper socio-cultural contexts, enabling a comprehensive examination of constructed images and the social background underpinning their construction.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study examines *China Daily*'s reports on Wang Yaping in terms of description, interpretation, and explanation. The descriptive analysis addresses research question (1) by exploring multiple images represented by textual and lexical choices. The author generates wordlists of self-built corpus through AntConc4.1.2, selects distinct words as analysis target and investigates their connotations and functions in contexts. The interpretative analysis is related to question (2), focusing on the intertextual technologies used to achieve specific goals in image representation. This stage involves analyzing news sources and reporting modes in the corpus. Explanatory analysis concerns question (3), identifying socio-cultural factors influencing image construction. Given *China Daily*'s role as official media, this stage connects state values with portrayed images of Wang.

The details of corpus building are as follows. The news containing "Wang Yaping" from March 1, 2012, to January 1, 2024, was searched on the *China Daily* website. After imputing the link of research results in data-collection software Octopus, 75 pieces of news were downloaded automatically. Through the similarity detection in Wcopyfind 4.1.5 and automatic coding in Tree Tagger 3, 8 articles were deleted because of repeatability and 67 articles were reserved to establish the corpus, which consists of 67 articles, 27720 tokens and 3644 types. Out of 67 articles, only ten focus on Wang herself. Among these, only six

contain cited information, and thus they were selected as objects of analysis in the interpretation stage.

V. THREE-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTS

5.1. Descriptive Analysis: Multiple Images Behind Textual and Lexical Choices

Table 1 High-frequency Nouns in the Corpus

No.	Word	Freq.	%	No.	Word	Freq.	%
1	space	589	0.985	11	students	83	0.441
2	china	328	0.912	12	crew	81	0.529
3	astronauts	228	0.868	13	module	77	0.500
4	wang	213	0.912	14	zhang	75	0.426
5	mission	207	0.750	15	nie	72	0.515
6	shenzhou	169	0.500	16	country	68	0.515
7	spacecraft	139	0.603	17	launch	65	0.382
8	station	136	0.529	18	orbit	64	0.471
9	astronaut	125	0.662	19	program	61	0.471
10	yaping	98	0.897	20	people	50	0.412

Following a preliminary filtering of the data in Table 1, it was found that the high-frequency nouns could be divided into three types. The first type consists of China Aerospace-related words, such as “space” “astronaut(s)” “beijing” and “shenzhou”. The second type are personal names, including “yapping” “zhang” and “nie”. The third type comprises “space lecture-related nouns”. During the mission, Wang Yaping conducted three space lectures, leading to the frequent appearance of related terms in the news like “students” “schools” and “lecture”. These three kinds of words and their contexts underline different aspects of Wang’s representation in *China Daily*.

5.1.1 A Space Hero to China

- (1) It is planned that the **country** will launch a **space** lab after three **spacecraft** have completed docking experiments with **Tiangong 1**, which was launched in 2011. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.12)
- (2) **Astronauts** Zhang Xiaoguang, Nie Haisheng and Wang Yaping wave to the welcoming crowd after they go out of **Shenzhou X spacecraft’s** return capsule on

This part deals with description stage with high-frequency nouns and collocates analyzed, in order to summarize the images constructed behind them. After importing the self-built corpus into AntConc 4.2.4, the author generated the high-frequency nouns and collocates of “Wang Yaping”.

Wednesday morning. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.26)

It is obvious that China Aerospace-related nouns constitute the largest proportion and appear more frequently than other words. Sentence (1) illustrates the typical context of China Aerospace-related nouns, where descriptions of the launch mission highlight China’s technological achievements, thereby constructing an image of China as a “major aerospace power”. In most articles, Wang is mentioned only as an astronaut carrying out the mission. Thus, among all her representations, the most prominent and significant is her role as part of China’s manned space program as shown in example (2); she is an extension of the image of a “major aerospace power”. This emphasizes her collectivist side rather than her individuality. From another perspective, these China aerospace-related terms create a discourse atmosphere that conveys the message of significant achievements in Chinese aerospace technology, reaching a world-leading level. As the first Chinese female astronaut to enter space, Wang is not only a witness and participant in this historic event but also one of its contributors. Her frequent mentions closely associate her

personal accomplishments with the macro achievements of the nation, thereby shaping her image as a “space hero”. This connection elevates the stature of her image, reinforcing her significance in the narrative of China’s advancements in space exploration.

The repeated appearance of other names among high-frequency nouns further supports these points. Given that these articles were retrieved using “Wang Yaping” as the keyword, their frequency is notably high, reinforcing the notion that Wang is not the focus of the reports. The names of other are often seen in phrases like, “*Astronauts Zhang Xiaoguang, Nie Haisheng, and Wang Yaping (from left to right) greet the welcoming crowd*”. When announcing selected pilots, introducing mission arrangements, reporting flight achievements, and celebrating aerospace accomplishments, the three astronauts, including Wang, are often mentioned together. This consistent association firmly binds them together, forming a collective identity as “space hero”.

5.1.2 A Female Role Model

Table 2 Collocates of “Yaping”

No.	Word	Freq. L&R
1	female	22
2	astronaut	20
3	zhigang	18
4	haisheng	17
5	xiaoguang	17
6	guangfu	15

In contrast to her male colleagues, the name of Wang is consistently accompanied by the gender marker “female”. This term appears 22 times in proximity to her name (as shown in Table 2), as in the phrase, “*commander Nie Haisheng, astronaut Zhang Xiaoguang, and female astronaut Wang Yaping*”. Besides “female”, the term “woman” is also used to emphasize her gender, as illustrated in “*The three astronauts — Nie Haisheng, Zhang Xiaoguang, and Wang Yaping, a woman*”. Given traditional societal norms which often default to male dominance and participation in various fields, it is necessary to explicitly denote female member’s gender in order to highlight their contribution. This practice reflects one of the strategies

employed in China to promote and embody gender equality. As the first Chinese woman to accomplish extravehicular activities, Wang has once again shattered the male-dominated narrative in this domain, emerging as a role model for women. Her courage serves as an inspiration, encouraging more Chinese girls to pursue careers in high-end industries, thus carrying symbolic value.

(3) She said the first jump was done among excitement and curiosity, but fears preoccupied her when she started the second jump.

“We girls all cried while singing an inspiring song ‘A Hero Never Dies’ on our way back after the training,” she said. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.10)

The news coverage of Wang is relatively limited; however, it also enhances her image as a female role model through relevant stories. In example (3), Wang described the scene during her first parachute jump alongside other female pilots. Faced with this daunting challenge, she expressed excitement and curiosity, reflecting the courage of women in confronting extreme situations and their enterprising spirit in exploring and transcending the unknown. While the term “cried” may carry connotations of fragility, in this context, it more accurately reflects their resilience against challenges. The song “A Hero Never Dies” honors the spirit of courage and mutual support in difficult times, illustrating the pilots’ unwavering commitment to their ideals after overcoming obstacles and warm friendship in their career. These are vivid and deep embodiment of “female role model”.

5.1.3 A knowledge disseminator

(4) Zhang ... to camera and record a **lecture**, which will be given by his teammate Wang to middle and elementary **school students** in China. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.10)

(5) She is preparing for the **lecture** and expressed full confidence about the upcoming lesson. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.10)

(6) “I like all these demonstrations, the gyro and water ball ones particularly. They are all impossible on Earth. How wonderful,” said Qian Jianghao. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.20)

The space lecture-related words play un

indispensable role in the construction of the image of Wang. Most contexts of these words are similar to examples (4) and (5), which provide a literal narration of staff arrangements, lecture preparations, and procedures. Example (4) indicates Wang's role as a lecturer and emphasizes her direct engagement with students, showcasing her as a bridge between space and education. Example (5) highlights her confidence and full preparation, further enhancing her image as a knowledgeable and approachable teacher. Besides, several reports cited reactions of students to reinforces such impressions. Example (6) shows that the lecture opened a new world to Qian whose scientific thinking was stimulated, verifying the value of space class and Wang Yaping. Therefore, the frequent occurrence of words such as "lecture" "school" and "students" reveals her enthusiasm to education and her active role in inspiring the next generation. These elements collectively contribute to Wang's portrayal as a

pioneering female astronaut who not only excels in her professional field but also passionately engages with youth, embodying the ideals of empowerment and knowledge sharing.

5.2. Interpretative Analysis: Discursive Techniques in Image Representation

The interpretative analysis deals with the discursive tools employed by *China Daily* in the representation. Actually, it takes full advantages of intertextuality to achieve objectivity while implying their attitudes and stances through others' voices. News sources, which refer to the originator of the words quoted by the reporter, are normally divided into three types: specified sources, semi-specified sources, and unspecified sources (Xin, 2005). Reporting modes involve direct speech and indirect speech. Their distributions in selected articles are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3 Distributions of News Sources and Reporting Modes

	News Sources			Reporting Modes	
	Specified	Semi-specified	Unspecified	Direct	Indirect
Number	35	1	0	33	7
Percentage	97.22%	2.78%	0	81.5%	17.5%

Obviously, reporters in *China Daily* prefer specified news sources and direct reporting modes, avoiding the use of unspecified sources. This choice guarantees its objectivity and authority as an official newspaper. In addition, this arrangement also influences the vividness of language, reliability of information and richness of description, thus contributing to the image construction. Further study begins with news sources analysis.

The originators mentioned in the corpus are "Wang Yaping" "Morgan" "Qian Jianghao" "Nie Haisheng" and others. The wordings of Wang Yaping, which account for 61.11% in total quotations, are distributed across five news reports. Morgan, the first the first teacher to travel into space, and Qian, the student watching space lecture, appear in reports about Wang's class. Nie Haisheng as well as Wang's other colleagues usually occurs when it comes to the appraisal of her.

(7) "They take care of me as their own younger sister in

life, but I wish to be their comrade-in-arms," said Wang. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.10)

(8) "All over the world, we are really very excited," Morgan wrote. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.17)

(9) "Sometimes we 'd like to give her a helping hand, but she just would not take a hand in help," said Nie Haisheng, commander astronaut in the mission. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.10)

It can be seen from above examples that *China Daily*'s constructs the image of Wang in two major ways. First of all, the stance, views and attitude of the two people are reflected through the quotation of their utterances, so as to imply the character's personalities, such as optimism and persistence. For example, in (7), the interdependent mind of Wang is underlined. Secondly, journalists will cite other people's words to supplement the image of the figure, or acknowledge her achievements. These people often have a direct connection to Wang, and their identities are clear enough to

increase credibility. Example (8) is excerpted from a letter that Morgan wrote to Wang after she completed her space lecture. “All over the world” and “excited” show the importance of this teaching with Morgan’s position making this judgment more convincing. This portrayal is a kind of implicit appraisal, where there are no notable judgements but imply the recognition of Wang. Instead, example (9) is an explicit one. This quotation illustrates Wang’s self-reliance and determination, qualities that align with her resilience in overcoming challenges without relying on others’ assistance. In fact, the reporters achieve the integration of direct and indirect characterization through the alternation of news sources, enhancing the validity and comprehensiveness of her image.

In the distributions of reporting modes, although direct speech is the dominant approach, the proportion of indirect speech is notably higher compared to semi-specified news sources. It appears that, on the premise of authenticity and credibility, journalists could employ various forms of quotations to enhance character portrayal.

(10) “I’d like to demonstrate that my generation is willing to embrace challenges.” (*China Daily*, 2013.6.10)

(11) She said the first jump was done among excitement and curiosity, but fears preoccupied her when she started the second jump. (*China Daily*, 2013.6.10)

(12) Wang was “talented in sports and seemed untiring”, said her teacher, Wang Zhixing. (*China Daily*, 2012.6.13)

(13) Wang said she would like to demonstrate that their generation was willing to embrace the challenges.

In direct speech, reporters do not alter the speaker’s words, allowing their emotions to be clearly conveyed. However, the processed indirect speech fails to do that. For example, the indirect forms of (10) can be demonstrated like (14). In indirect speech, “I” is replaced with “she” and “my” with “their”. The original use of “I” more effectively captures the speaker’s strong will, specifically Wang’s determination to overcome difficulties independently. Additionally, “my generation” links her with peers, showcasing not only her pioneering spirit but also serving as a persuasive appeal to tempering ourselves in hardships. Only first-person pronouns can directly convey her initiative. In contrast, third-person pronouns like “she” and “their”

introduce a sense of detachment, distancing readers from her inner emotions and limiting their ability to fully engage with Wang’s persistence.

Indirect speech can also simplify the lengthy discourses, increasing information intensity. Wang’s original description of her first and second parachute jumping is more concrete than example (11), such as the details of flight environment, but the reporter captures her emotional transition through “excitement” “curiosity” and “fears”. Therefore, the concise lexis helps readers to grasp her complex emotions quickly and turn into following content. In the corpus, some indirect speeches are mixed with direct speeches, as shown in example (12). Instead of citing Zhiqing’s whole comments on Wang Yaping, the reporter extracts the most representative one to emphasize her quality as “talented” and “untiring”. This selective citation highlights Wang’s notable characteristics through the words of a respected acquaintance who could add credibility.

5.3. Explanatory Analysis: State-Guided Values in Image Construction

While the first two stages analyze what kinds of and how images of Wang are constructed in *China Daily*, this section solves the last question: what are the major factors that influence the construction of the female image in the news reports?

In China, political responsibility is a primary characteristic of mainstream media (Liu S. et al., 2020). Under the slogan “Connecting China, Connecting the World” *China Daily* also undertakes the mission of promoting China’s voice, theories, and ideas and presenting a true, multi-dimensional and comprehensive view of China to the world. Therefore, *China Daily*’s reporting of Wang Yaping inevitably carries political intentions, both explicit and implicit, by emphasizing qualities that align with core government values in order to reinforce these ideals within its audience.

China Daily presents Wang Yaping in a positive perspective, showcasing her journey from rural origins to outer space. The reports narrate how she pursued higher education through perseverance and effort, became an outstanding pilot and embarked on space missions. Her story is epitome of an ordinary person achieving their dreams

through hard work, corresponding to values that many Chinese people cherish—diligence, kindness, and the pursuit of progress—while also resonating with the government’s initiative to promote a social atmosphere of equality and justice. Her image resonates with both societal aspirations for personal success and state-guided values of dedication.

Wang’s representation as a woman extends and reflects the national image, symbolizing China’s evolving stance on gender equality. Since the founding of New China, the Party and the government have actively promoted gender equality, with unprecedented slogans such as “women hold up half the sky” appearing during this period. This slogan liberated women from domestic roles and integrated them into social production, catering to both gender equality and the country’s developmental strategies (Wallis, 2006). Wang’s breakthrough against gender bias enhances the female participation in traditionally male-dominated fields and contributes social progress and national development. Her story inspires more women to surpass internal and external limitations and achieve personal success while also implies government’s commitment to supporting women’s development. This reflects China’s achievements in promoting gender equality. As a window for international exchange, *China Daily* utilizes this nuance to shape China’s global image as a country pursuing freedom, equality and justice.

From another perspective, *China Daily*’s coverage of Wang lacks personalized expression. The reports mainly highlight her positive minds in overcoming gender bias and emphasize her achievements, but seldom depict the discrimination and setbacks she may have faced. In other words, the journalists describe her story in a positive light, but offer little discussion of her stance on “opposing gender discrimination”, which might challenge traditional views more directly. This portrayal of her character is selective. On the negative side, this approach simplifies the real challenges women face, potentially obscuring the public’s understanding of gender issues. On the positive side, such an approach avoids directly bringing sharp gender conflicts to the forefront, helping to maintain social harmony and stability. Furthermore, as an international platform, *China Daily*’s positive reporting can prevent certain foreign media

with ulterior motives from exaggerating gender issues and smearing China through it.

VI. DISCUSSION

From above analysis, the study reveals three major findings. First of all, *China Daily* depicts Wang Yaping as a space hero to China, a female role model and a knowledge disseminator. These positive images emphasize her personality traits and connect her personal progress to national development, highlighting the collective perspective in her identity. Secondly, *China Daily* makes an appropriate arrangement of different news sources and reporting modes, providing properly detailed and concise reports and balancing the authenticity and vividness. Through this arrangement, the news reports combine direct and indirect characterization to shape her image, enhance the appeal of her portrayal and improve the readability of the reports. Lastly, the image construction of Wang is influenced by the country’s will. It combines the people’s aspirations and social mainstream values, contributing to social harmony and also creates a positive international image for the country.

VII. CONCLUSION

Findings of this study could offer certain suggestions for *China Daily* in its coverage of female figures, particularly special individuals like Wang Yaping. Official media hold unique advantages in accessing information on such figures. Therefore, within acceptable extent, it could further explore and present her personality and viewpoints to meet foreign readers’ expectations to a more personalized individual. In the meanwhile, upon reflection of the entire study, several limitations could be identified, such as the lack of a comparative perspective between Chinese and Western media. Analyzing differences between them may further identify the strengths and weaknesses of *China Daily*, improving its cross-cultural communication capability.

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The Struggle to Stay Alive: A Comparative Study of the Survival Strategies in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven*

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Abstract— *Survival is a prominent theme in the genre of post-apocalyptic literature. Such narrative unravels in the aftermath of a catastrophic event, where civilization has crumbled, leaving behind a desolate world. Its central theme revolves around survival - the instinctual drive of characters to stay alive amidst chaos, scarcity, and danger. These narratives explore the resilience of humanity, the loss of societal norms, and the pursuit of hope in dire circumstances. The strategy of survival is different for each survivor of every story - ranging from combating the outbreak of a deadly virus to coping with a world ending natural disaster. The novels of Cormac McCarthy, a prominent figure in modern American Fiction, tell the tale of a struggle for human survival. The novels of Emily St John Mandel also depict realistic scenarios where survival of humans is threatened. This paper intends to analyse the various survival strategies adopted by the characters of the selected post-apocalyptic fiction by the above mentioned authors in order to tackle the life threatening circumstances they are presented with.*



Keywords— *Post-apocalypse, survival strategies, survival.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Sometimes, even to live is an act of courage - Seneca

The literal meaning of the word “apocalypse” is “an event resulting in great destruction and violent change” (“Apocalypse”, def. 1). The genre of post-apocalyptic literature, as its name suggests, is set in a world that has been obliterated by a large-scale disaster or an ‘apocalypse’. Its beginnings may be traced back to the nineteenth century with the publication of *The Last Man* (1826) by Mary Shelley but its popularity has gained momentum in the past few decades. This rise in popularity was seen after the various wars of the twentieth century, the two World Wars in particular. The other events that might have triggered the post-apocalyptic imagination are nuclear proliferation, outbreak of various pandemics, and hostility among various nations. In the introduction of her

book *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract: We'll Not Go Home Again* (2010), Curtis agrees with the fact that the post-apocalyptic fiction is becoming more popular in contemporary times and gives the examples of the famous TV show *Jericho* (2006-2008), which was revived due to strong fan support. According to her, the “survivalist” fiction genre is becoming more renowned in contemporary times (Curtis 5). In addition to the soaring popularity of the genre of post-apocalyptic fiction, its study is also extremely relevant. According to Sam J Fires, the relevance of this genre sprouts from its ability to offer insight into human behaviour during stressful, even life threatening situations (Fires).

Out of the many themes that are explored in the genre of post-apocalyptic literature, the theme of survival stands out the most. The word ‘survival’ is derived from

the Latin word 'supervivere', which means to outlive. Merriam-Webster defines survival as "the continuation of life or existence" ("survival," N. def. 1.b) and this 'continuation' may also be understood as the saga of the evolution of various species. The aforementioned 'continuation' requires extreme effort from all living creatures including human beings and these efforts to survive increase manifold for an individual dwelling in the post-apocalyptic setting. This story of survival has been explained meticulously by Charles Darwin in his *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, where he states that organisms that cannot adapt to the changing environment remain unsuccessful in transmitting their genes and perish as casualties in the war of nature. Thus the instinct of survival is deeply ingrained in the human mind. This deep rooted instinct of survival is explored in a post-apocalyptic story (Darwin 253-320). This paper aims to study and highlight the discernible strategies of survival in the narratives of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) and Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014). In both of these works, the authors vividly present the post-apocalyptic worlds and place their characters in these worlds in such a manner that their story of survival becomes unforgettable.

The Road (2006) by Cormac McCarthy describes the arduous journey of a father and his son to the southern coast after the world has been hit by some unexplained disaster, the aftermath of which has resulted into a dark, ashen and cold surrounding. This disaster has managed to wipe out most of the life on earth, leaving the survivors no other option than to scavenge for food from their surroundings. The father and the son move with their shopping cart laden with essentials such as food, clothing etc. on the road. Their encounters with other people are mostly negative, because the scarcity of resources has made everyone desperate for food and supplies. They finally reach the southern coast battling the challenging environment, cannibal-infested roads and other desperate survivors. The father succumbs to his illness which he has had since a long time but the novel ends on a positive note with another surviving family taking the boy in their refuge.

Station Eleven (2014) by Emily St. John Mandel presents a world where the outbreak of a fast spreading virus named Georgia Flu has wiped out most of the human population. The events that unfold non-chronologically in the novel tell the story of a few survivors who witness this apocalyptic event first hand. These characters seem to have followed different methods of survival which range from living in a close knit community, as is done by Kirsten Raymonde, the protagonist of the novel by joining the Travelling Symphony to isolating oneself during the

peak of the flu as is done by Jeevan Chaudhary, another major character of the novel.

Both of these narratives tell a detailed story of survival and their authors have shed light on survival tactics employed by the characters in different scenarios.

Literary Background

The post-apocalyptic accounts tell the saga of survival in a world which fits the description of a wasteland. These end of the world narratives depict a world where the instinct of self-preservation drives the actions of the characters. The importance of survival in humans and animals is highlighted in the paper titled *The Ecology of Human Fear: Survival Optimization and The Nervous System*, according to which, the relentless pressure to outwit predators while balancing homeostatic threats, such as resource depletion, has produced a nervous system that optimises survival actions (Mobbs D et al. 1). The instinct of survival among the living beings explains the constant modification required for adaptation in the changing environment that has helped in the sustenance of life on earth.

The theme of survival is pretty evident in the post-apocalyptic works such as *Parable of the Sower* (1983) by Octavia E. Butler, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968) by Philip K. Dick and *The Bear* (2020) by Andrew Krivak. An elaborate analysis of the theme of survival and its presentation in literature illuminates the ways in which this instinct influences the psychology and actions of people. *The Contemporary Post-Apocalyptic Novel* (2019) by D. Cristofaro is a seminal work in this regard. It is a conceptual framework that highlights the contemporary obsession with 'the end' by stressing on the importance of time in the 21st-century post-apocalyptic narratives.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present study takes the context of the genre of post-apocalyptic literature and focuses on how survival instinct becomes the driving force for shaping the plot of the novel. The data is collected by a thorough and repeated reading of the selected texts and it deals with narrative textual analysis. The textual evidence is collected from the events that display the actions, thoughts, dialogues of various characters.

Literary Analysis of the Selected Texts: Survival Strategies in Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

The instinct for survival can be defined as the inherent capability to act in a manner that ensures one's survival. This instinct fosters adaptation among the living organisms so that the continuation of existence can be

ensured. The survival instincts have a great say on how we act and they also affect our psychology. Since survival is a primal instinct of humans, and it acts as a driving force for the actions of the post-apocalyptic characters, thus shaping the plot of post-apocalyptic fiction. This study attempts to explore various strategies of survival that are adopted by the characters of this genre of literature through the analysis of the selected texts.

Saving one's life in the most difficult times is plainly understood as survival. However surviving in a post-apocalyptic world is not limited to the physical well being of an individual, it extends to the optimum functioning of mental and psychological aspects of one's mind. As the survival instinct is an innate ability, it is just human nature to go to any lengths to ensure their continued sustenance. In order to achieve the required longevity during such times, the characters of post-apocalyptic texts, namely *The Road* and *Station Eleven*, employ a number of survival strategies. These strategies have been discussed below.

Overcoming the Mental Fatigue:

The theme of mental fatigue has been usually portrayed in literature. According to a study titled *Understanding Mental Fatigue and its Detection: A Comparative Analysis of Assessments and Tools*, mental fatigue is the root cause of reduced productivity and overall cognitive prowess (Kunasegaran et al.). In order to ensure one's survival, it is imperative that their brain functions optimally. Since mental fatigue directly affects brain function, it may also adversely affect survival in tough times. If one looks at the early English literature, the works such as *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, and *The Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd display the mental distress and fatigue experienced by their protagonists. In recent literature, *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, and *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf are good examples of the portrayal of mental fatigue experienced by people through literature. The characters of a post-apocalyptic novel have to undergo countless physical as well as mental struggles to merely survive the harsh surroundings. In *The Road*, both the protagonist and his son undergo such experiences that take a toll on their mental well being. In order to keep themselves sane, the man and the boy engage in various activities that provide them an escape from the grim reality and also aid in preserving their sense of identity. One way in which they managed to escape reality is through play. On his excursions to find food and other necessities, the man tried to find toys for his son. On one such excursion, he found a toy truck which the boy loved to play with, he made roads over the ashes with a stick on which "the truck tooted along slowly. He made truck noises"

(McCarthy 62). His play also distracts the man from reality. Similarly, the survivors in *Station Eleven* try to withdraw from the harsh reality by engaging in activities such as "meeting at the bonfire every night" (Mandel 250-51). Characters from both the novels indulge themselves in leisurely activities despite the grim circumstances, implying the necessity of mental rejuvenation in order to keep their spirit alive. Ultimately, it is a characteristic quality of humans that they would only want to continue with their lives if they can actually live it to the fullest.

Community Building:

Building a community refers to the act of bringing people together to work towards a common goal cooperatively. Building a community becomes even more important during tough times as it improves the chances of survival of the community members by resource sharing and better protection against external threats. Talking about the strategy of community building adopted by post-apocalyptic characters in order to survive, Curtis Claire in her work *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract* says, "they establish a community with an organised system and gradually discover other small, similar communities to connect with, allowing humanity to rebuild" (Curtis 8). In *Station Eleven*, the spirit for community formation is displayed by the survivors dwelling in the Severn City Airport as well as the members of Travelling Symphony. Initially the passengers do not know each other at all when they land at the Severn City Airport and they are very hesitant to socialise and interact with each other. Soon, however, they realise that they have a significant chance of surviving only if they work together as a community. After the restaurants at the airport run out of food, the individuals skilled in hunting skills, one named Tyrone and a woman decide to hunt and bring food for the entire community. "Tyrone set off into the trees with a woman who'd formerly been a park ranger and two TSA-issue handguns, and they returned some time later with a deer" (Mandel 244-245). The sharing of food and other precious resources among the members of a community shows the human tendency of preferring to live in a community in order to increase their chances of survival.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy, the depiction of scenario is very hostile and at one glance, it seems that living in a community cannot be feasible in such an environment where the resources are so scarce. However, as the journey of the father son duo proceeds, it becomes clear that the survivors have a better chance of living when they live together as a community. It is known that humans are social animals and this inherent ability of humans to want social contact is highlighted when the father and son

come across a community of people living in tall buildings. The son is thrilled to see a small child in the street there and later exclaims "I want to see him Papa" (McCarthy 89). The wish of the son to meet that young boy again indicates a yearning for social contact. The significance of living in a community is indicated through various cannibalistic communities in the novel. The father and son come across many such groups, but one stands out to them as it appears very organised. This group of cannibals hunted humans and even dressed the same colour. They appeared, "...all wearing red scarves at their necks. Red or orange, as close to red as they could find" (McCarthy 96), indicating the strong sense of belonging to the particular community, which overall helps to secure better survival, in the hostile environment.

Scavenging:

In a post-apocalyptic world, there is a rampant scarcity of resources. With the collapse of large scale agriculture, and destruction of other means of production, the survivors have little to no supply of the things essential to their survival. During such times, an important strategy of survival employed by the inhabitants of the post-apocalyptic world is scavenging. In *The Road*, McCarthy shows the survivors visiting the ruins of grocery stores, houses, farmhouses, gas stations and other similar buildings in search of essential items such as clothes, blankets, canned foods, tarps etc. On one such scavenging hunt, the father and son find "some utensils and a few pieces of clothing. A sweatshirt. Some plastic they could use for a tarp" (McCarthy 87). They store whatever they find in their cart to ensure their sustenance. In a post apocalyptic society, after the collapse of all the social and economic arrangements, it is impossible to find appropriate and required sources to fulfil human needs for survival, humans are forced to live on the leftovers of the preceding era. According to Jeremy Grossman, "Characters in post-apocalyptic narrative quite often are forced to interact with remains for survival" (Grossman 6). Not only do these remains act as the reminders of the pre-apocalyptic life, they are also the storehouses of the important resources for the survivors.

The characters of *Station Eleven* resort to scavenging for their survival. The members of the Travelling Symphony are especially seen revelling in expeditionary scavenging to collect items of use. In one instance, Kirsten and August, the actors of Travelling Symphony come across a house that hadn't been raided before and they leave with "towels and clothing and a stack of magazines that Kirsten wanted to go through later, an unopened box of salt from the kitchen and various other items that they thought they might use" (Mandel 151). The

people of the Severn City Airport also realise the need for resources in order to sustain themselves and they take to scavenging in order to ensure their survival. They form a scouting party to search the surrounding area for people, communities and resources. This scouting party returns "with three steel carts from an industrial kitchen, piled high with supplies" (Mandel 255), which they find in a nearby abandoned restaurant. The collapse of the entire system of producing capital goods, assets and other resources in a post-apocalyptic world makes scavenging an indispensable survival strategy. The characters of *Station Eleven* and *The Road* understand the value of items in the broken world such as warm clothing and canned food, therefore they do not hesitate to collect them while scavenging the ruins.

Fire and its Importance in Survival

It is a known fact that fire is very important for the survival of humans. It serves many significant purposes for humans- from making the food digestible, providing warmth in cold temperatures, to keeping away the predators. According to J.A. J Gowlett, since humans learnt to control the fire, it has had a major impact in the journey of their evolution (Gowlett 1).

The importance of fire for human existence is highlighted in *The Road*, where the surroundings are dark and cold. The inhabitants rely on fire for providing them warmth, being a source of light during the blinding nights and making food safe to consume. The phrase "no smoke, no movement of life" (McCarthy 82) stands true as the presence of fire is the proof of somebody's existence in the context of the post-apocalyptic world presented in the novel. Fire also holds a symbolic importance in the novel. It is used as a symbol for hope, endurance and adhering to morality in challenging times. The man is seen repeatedly telling his son that they are "carrying the fire" to encourage him to go on during the challenging times. When the boy witnesses his father killing the cannibal with his gun, he is traumatised. To console him, his father tells him, "nothing bad is going to happen to us", "because we're carrying the fire" this seems to console the boy and he repeats "Yes. Because we're carrying the fire." (McCarthy 87). The incident intensifies the value of fire in the mind of the young boy, adding to the significance of fire in the existence and evolution of mankind.

Similarly in *Station Eleven*, fire plays an important role to aid the existence of the people. After the collapse of the modern civilization due to the massive outbreak of Georgia flu, the survivors have to resort to the primitive methods of hunting prey, and gathering edible items both from the wild and from the abandoned houses. Fire, like previously mentioned, helps them to cook the

food and protect them from the cold. One such instance occurs when Kirsten and August get separated from the caravan of the Travelling Symphony and have to arrange food for themselves. They “gather wood for fire” after catching some fish. Even though the “fire smoked badly”, “the smoke replaced the stench of fish from their clothes” (Mandel 143). Fire also serves as a means to promote the sense of belonging and affinity among the residents of the airport. In *Station Eleven* it is seen that “the citizens of the airport had taken to meeting at the bonfire every night” (Mandel 251-252) and this social gathering helps inculcate a sense of togetherness among them. Fire, thus plays diverse roles in the novels selected for study. Apart from ensuring the physical safety of the survivors by enabling them to stay warm, cook their food and be used as a source of light, fire also serves as a symbol of hope and regeneration in both the narratives.

Weapons

Mastering the art of weaponry has helped humans tremendously in the course of evolution. According to Miki Ben-Dor and Ran Barkai, the ability to make precise weapons needed better cognitive abilities, which, in turn, facilitated the development of the human brain. (Ben-Dor and Barkai 1). Weapons played a huge role in the evolution of humans and excelling in the art of using weapons improves the chances of one's survival in the post-apocalyptic world as well. In *The Road* and *Station Eleven*, having a lethal weapon like a gun, ensures that a person has a better chance at defending oneself from others. Beholding a weapon also gives a sense of power over others, as it may easily be used to rob essential supplies like food, clothing etc from them.

In *Station Eleven*, the characters use weapons for a lot of things, especially acquiring food, defending themselves and gaining control over the resources. In the initial days after collapse, people hunt with the help of their guns. The people at the Severn City Airport hunt their first animal with the help of “TSA-issue Handguns” (Mandel 245). Kirsten, the protagonist of the novel, uses the “three knives in her belt” (Mandel 35) for hunting and fighting off attackers. Apparently, the Prophet and his followers also used weapons to get people to submit to them. When they initially came to St. Deborah by the water, “no one had quite realised how much weaponry they had” and “within a week it became obvious that the town was his” (Mandel 126).

In *The Road*, weapons not only serve the purpose of enabling a person to defend themselves, but also of taking their own life to escape a cruel death at the hands of cannibals. The father is seen contemplating taking the life of his son and himself a number of times. At one instance,

he thinks to himself, “I should have done it a long time ago. When there were three bullets in the gun instead of two” (McCarthy 57).

III. CONCLUSION

The study of post-apocalyptic fiction offers a deep insight into human resilience and endurance. It also imparts a deeper understanding of ethics and morality. By placing the characters in a lawless society, they explore the ethical dilemmas faced by the people in the face of adversity. In *The Road*, the dialogues between the man and the boy provide a good understanding of how the subject of morality affects human thinking when their survival is at stake. The study of both of these texts highlights the necessity of practical skills that one needs to have in order to survive. In this manner, the post apocalyptic texts encourage the readers to gain a better understanding of the real-world survival techniques and their importance during the tough times. A variegated study of post-apocalyptic literature is also important in the present times as it deals with relevant themes such as survival, human nature, collapse, and reinvention. Focusing on these themes help the readers gain a finer understanding of human nature and also compels them to imagine a future where even surviving is no less than fighting a battle. In a nutshell, the study of survival techniques of the post-apocalyptic characters beautifully showcases the human experiences in unimaginable circumstances and records their invincible spirit of survival.

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A Socio-Economic Study of Hansawas Khurd Village of Charkhi Dadri District

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Abstract— *Despite notable improvements in the social conditions of villages across Haryana, significant challenges remain for a large segment of the population, particularly in accessing higher education and essential services. While the government has made considerable efforts to provide basic facilities in rural areas, many residents continue to struggle with inadequate healthcare, education, and sanitation. To gain deeper insights into these persistent issues, a detailed case study was conducted in Hansawas Khurd village, situated in the Charkhi Dadri District. The study focused on evaluating various indicators of education and socio-economic status among rural households. Key aspects analyzed included household facilities, levels of educational achievement, employment patterns, and income distribution. The research utilized primary data collected from 60 households, covering a total of 150 respondents. By examining this data, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the community's access to essential resources and the impact of infrastructure development on their daily lives.*



Keywords— *Rural Household, Livelihood, Infrastructural Improvements.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Rural livelihoods, which support millions of households through diverse agricultural and non-agricultural pursuits, serve as the cornerstone of economies worldwide. Gaining a deeper understanding of the complexities faced by communities reliant on farming, non-farm industries, and traditional crafts is crucial for grasping the essence of rural livelihoods. Through a case study, this exploration delves into the intricate dynamics of rural living, shedding light on the interconnected socio-economic, environmental, and cultural factors that influence and define these communities (J.V. Meenakshi & Ranjan Ray, 2002).

A vital part of global socioeconomic systems, rural livelihoods are distinguished by their diversity, flexibility, and particular difficulties. Developing successful policies and programs targeted at eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable development, and advancing fair progress requires an understanding of the intricacies of rural livelihoods. In this regard, case studies are a crucial instrument for exploring the complexities of rural

livelihoods and providing information that may guide theoretical frameworks, policy, and practice. (Sitakanta Panda, 2015).

According to the Education Commission (1964–1966), "in a world based on science and technology, education determines the level of prosperity, welfare, and security of the people." In India, a region's top educational system is the best indicator of its socioeconomic position. There are significant regional disparities in India's economic growth and human development indexes, which is quite concerning. The gap between the rural and urban sectors is evident even within states. Economic progress in each location depends on its capacity to comprehend many socioeconomic factors (K. M. Singh, 2014). Outlining the socioeconomic characteristics of the research region and household livelihoods is the main objective of this paper.

Significance of the Study: -

Like many Indian rural neighborhoods, Hansawas Khurd Village is a microcosm of larger socioeconomic issues and trends. Over the last few decades, Haryana, a state renowned for its agricultural output, has seen

substantial upheaval. These include changes in farming methods, migration from rural to urban areas, and changing socioeconomic conditions. Examining a particular town in this light offers important insights into how these more general tendencies appear locally.

This study is important because it can help scholars, development professionals, and policymakers understand the unique opportunities and requirements in Hansawas Khurd. Stakeholders may more effectively plan and carry out interventions that address the particular difficulties encountered by rural communities in Haryana and comparable areas by having a deeper awareness of the socioeconomic environment of the village.

Study Area: -

Hansawas Khurd village, located in Charkhi Dadri district of Haryana, India, is an excellent example of rural life. Khurd is a prime example of rural life with its rich agricultural heritage, diverse socio-economic structure, and vibrant culture.

Hansawas Khurd Village is situated geographically in the western part of the Charkhi Dadri District and occupies an area of around 571 hectares ([District at a Glance | District Charkhi Dadri | India](#)). This village has an excellent agro-climatic environment that is ideal for developing a range of crops, including wheat, mustard, millet, and cotton. It is surrounded by beautiful fields and fertile farmland. Homesteads and farmlands are scattered throughout the countryside, accompanied by public areas like marketplaces, schools, and temples that operate as hubs for trade and social interaction.

Hansawas Khurd Village's population is heterogeneous, representing a range of caste, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The research area included 337 households in total. 1814 people are living in Hansawas Khurd village overall, 982 of them are men and 832 of whom are women. The number of total literates in the village is 1176, of which 725 are males and 451 are females (Census of India, 2011). Families involved in agriculture make up the majority of the population, and traditional farming methods are passed down through the years. The local economy is also significantly bolstered by many skilled laborers, craftsmen, and small-scale business owners. The village demonstrates a strong sense of Households, with familial and social ties significantly influencing its social dynamics.

Table No. 1: - Study Area

State	District	Tahsil	Village (Study Area)
Haryana	Charkhi Dadri	Badhra	Hansawas Khurd

Source: Census of India, 2011

Objectives: -

- i. To examine the level of literacy among the surveyed households in the study area.
- ii. To analyze the socioeconomic conditions of the study area.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data for the study was gathered through a comprehensive door-to-door survey conducted in the study area. Microsoft Excel was used to construct a variety of pie diagrams and bar graphs, and ArcGIS software was used for all geographic information system (GIS) tasks. Following data analysis, a rational assessment of the socioeconomic circumstances in the study region was made. A total of 60 respondents, representing 150 families, were chosen from the Hansawas Khurd village for the study's primary survey.

Analytical Framework

Determining the socioeconomic status of a home is a difficult undertaking, yet it is nevertheless required for a comprehensive analysis. Asset indices are often used as proxies by scholars, even if direct access to such data may not always be feasible. These indices take into account a number of factors to establish socioeconomic class, such as educational attainment, employment, income level, and home comforts. Indicators that fall under the category of domestic amenities include possession of televisions, refrigerators, cars, bikes and tractors, as well as access to sanitary facilities and gas connections.

Information about each member of the home is gathered, such as the total number of family members, gender, age, marital status, relationship to the household, degree of education, and highest degree earned. The specific indicators that were employed are listed below:

- Occupational levels
- Types of Vehicles
- Home Appliances used
- Income-Levels
- Education-Level attained
- Household Amenities

Results and Discussions: -

Analyzing and interpretation of data is a crucial step in the research process. In order to extract valuable information from survey data, this critical step involves a process called analysis. However, interpretation and analysis are inherently interdependent, creating a symbiotic relationship in which neither can progress without the other.

The first stage is analysis when closely examining raw data shows trends, patterns, and correlations.

Nevertheless, this analytical process is left incomplete without interpretation, without the underlying information necessary to reach significant findings.

Table No. 2: - Respondents using Home Appliances

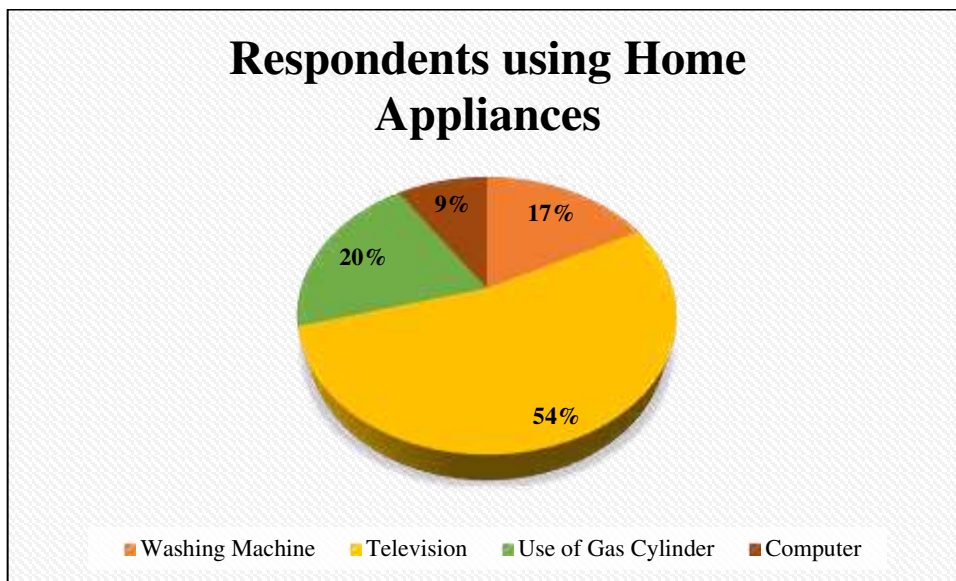
Sr. No.	Home Appliances	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Washing Machine	26	17.3
2.	Television	80	53.3
3.	Use of Gas Cylinder	30	20
4.	Computer	14	9.3
	Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey

Table no. 2 presents data on the usage of various home appliances among respondents, highlighting the number and percentage of individuals using each. The

highest percentage of respondents, 53.3%, reported owning or using a television, with 80 individuals indicating its widespread adoption as a common household appliance. The use of gas cylinders for cooking or other purposes comes next, with 30 respondents accounting for 20% of the total, reflecting its significant but more specialized role in daily life. Washing machines are utilized by 26 respondents, making up 17.3% of the sample, which suggests that while it is a popular appliance for convenience, its adoption may be influenced by factors such as affordability, need, or space availability. Computers, with 14 respondents representing 9.3%, show relatively lower adoption, potentially pointing to disparities in access to technology, differing household priorities, or the presence of alternative digital devices like smartphones or tablets that meet similar needs. Overall, the data underscores the varied distribution of household appliance use, with televisions leading as an essential entertainment and information device, followed by appliances that support cooking, cleaning, and digital connectivity, reflecting differing levels of necessity, affordability, and accessibility among users.

Fig. No. 1



Source: Table No. 2

Table No. 3: Vehicles Used by Respondents

Sr. No.	Types of Vehicles	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Motor Car	13	8.66
2.	Tractor and Trolley	63	42
3.	Bike	55	36.6
4.	Bi-Cycle	18	12

5.	No Vehicle	1	0.66
	Total	150	100

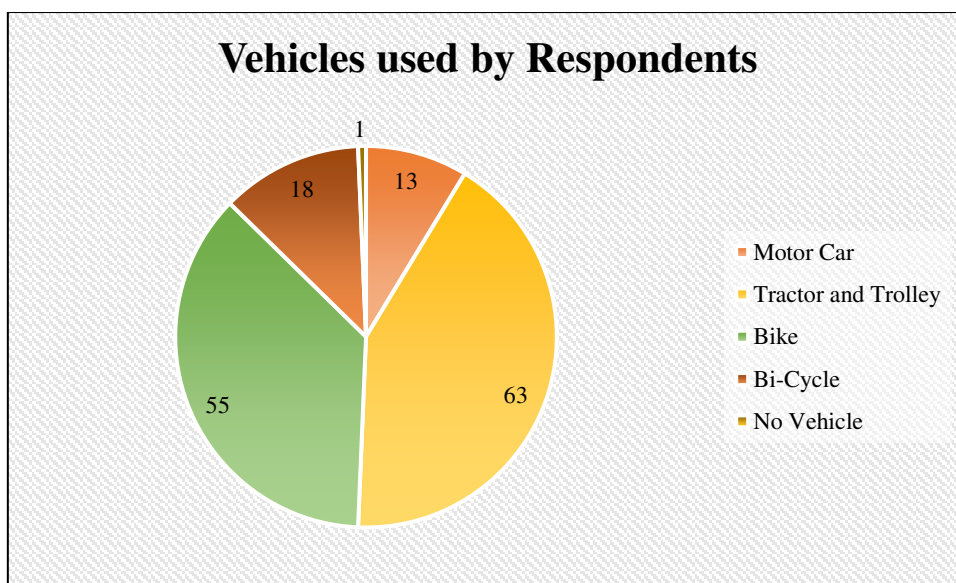
Source: Field Survey

Table no. 3 The table illustrates the distribution of different types of vehicles owned or used by respondents, providing insights into transportation preferences and accessibility within the surveyed population. The most commonly used vehicle is the tractor and trolley, with 63 respondents accounting for 42% of the total, suggesting its

significant role, possibly in rural or agricultural areas, where such vehicles are essential for farming and transportation of goods. Following closely, bikes are owned by 55 respondents, comprising 36.6%, indicating their popularity as an affordable, convenient, and versatile means of personal transportation, suitable for both urban and rural settings. Bicycles, with 18 respondents (12%), reflect a modest preference, which might be attributed to economic considerations, environmental awareness, or the lack of need for motorized vehicles in certain lifestyles or regions. Motor cars, owned by only 13 respondents (8.66%),

represent a relatively small proportion, likely reflecting the higher costs associated with car ownership and maintenance, as well as the availability of alternatives like bikes and public transportation. Interestingly, just one respondent (0.66%) reported not having any vehicle, highlighting the near-universal access to some form of transportation within the surveyed group. This table paints a comprehensive picture of transportation dynamics, emphasizing how utility, affordability, and purpose influence vehicle ownership patterns.

Fig. No. 2



Source: Table No. 3

While motorized vehicles like tractors and bikes dominate due to their practicality in various terrains and socioeconomic contexts, the presence of bicycles underscores their enduring relevance as a cost-effective and environmentally friendly option. Meanwhile, the lower prevalence of cars might point to economic constraints or the sufficiency of other transportation modes in fulfilling respondents' mobility needs. Overall, the data reveals a transportation landscape shaped by a blend of practical, economic, and cultural factors, with most individuals relying on vehicles tailored to their specific needs and circumstances, ensuring mobility and convenience while reflecting broader societal trends in vehicle ownership and usage.

Table No. 4: Educational Level of Respondents

Sr. No.	Educational Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	50	33.33
2.	10 th	47	31.33

3.	12 th	17	11.33
4.	B.A.	15	10
5.	M.A.	9	6
6.	Any Other/Diploma	12	8
	Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey

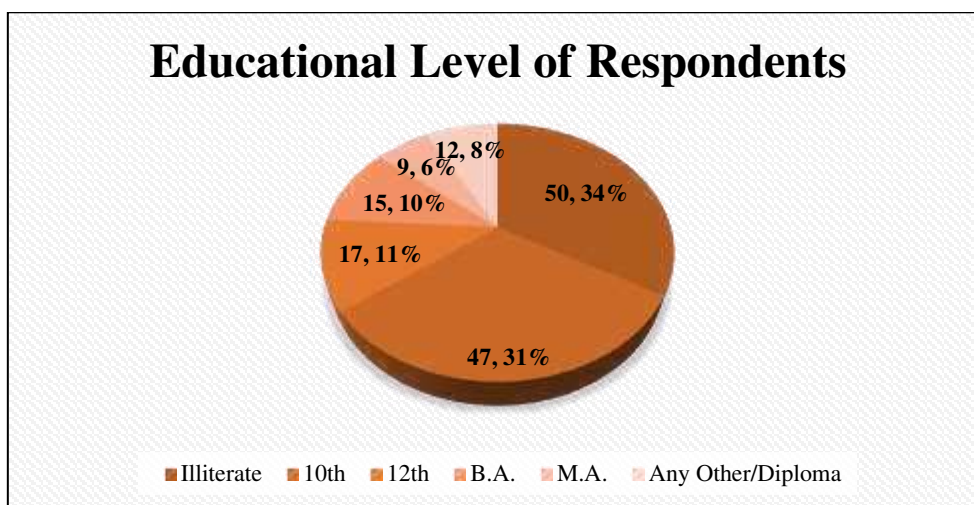
The above table provides a detailed overview of the educational levels among the surveyed respondents, highlighting the distribution and relative prevalence of different levels of education within the group. The largest segment of respondents, 33.33%, representing 50 individuals, is classified as illiterate, indicating that a significant portion of the population lacks basic reading and writing skills. This underscores challenges such as limited access to educational resources, socioeconomic barriers, or historical factors contributing to illiteracy. Close to this

figure, 31.33% of respondents, or 47 individuals, have completed up to the 10th grade, showcasing a substantial proportion of the population that has attained foundational education but may not have pursued higher studies, possibly due to financial constraints, early entry into the workforce, or limited access to secondary education facilities.

Moving further, 11.33%, or 17 respondents, have achieved education up to the 12th grade, indicating a smaller, but notable, group progressing to higher levels of schooling. This suggests either increased access to resources or greater awareness about the benefits of education at this stage. Graduates with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree constitute 10% of the respondents, or 15

individuals, reflecting a modest level of participation in higher education, likely influenced by factors such as aspirations for professional advancement or the availability of tertiary institutions. A smaller segment, 6% (9 respondents), has pursued postgraduate studies, attaining a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree, which reflects the aspirations and opportunities for a select group aiming for advanced knowledge and specialization in their fields. Finally, 8% of the respondents, or 12 individuals, fall under "Any Other/Diploma," highlighting a group pursuing alternative or vocational education, such as technical diplomas, skill-based certifications, or niche courses tailored to specific career paths.

Fig. No. 3



Source: Table No. 4

This distribution underscores a multifaceted educational landscape influenced by socioeconomic, cultural, and infrastructural factors, where basic and intermediate education levels dominate, while higher education and specialized qualifications remain less prevalent. The data emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to enhance access to education, reduce illiteracy, and support higher educational aspirations, fostering a more equitable and skilled society.

Table No. 5: Availability of Sanitation Amenities

Sr. No.	Sanitation Facility	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Toilets Available	103	68.66
2.	Toilets under construction	42	28

3.	Not Constructed/Available	5	3.33
Total		150	100

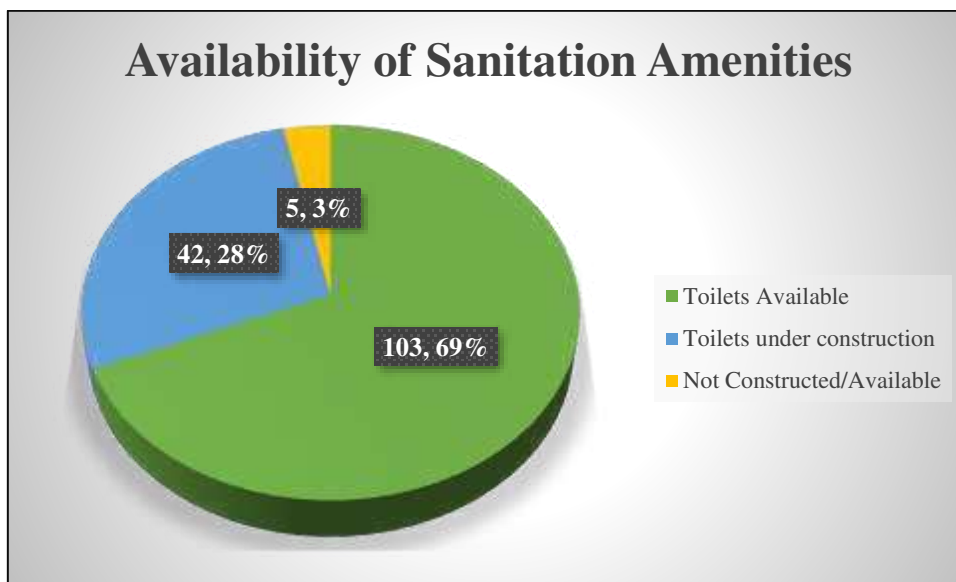
Source: Primary Survey

Table no. 5 provides a comprehensive view of the status of sanitation facilities among respondents, shedding light on the availability and development of toilets within the surveyed population. A significant majority, 68.66%, comprising 103 respondents, reported having access to fully constructed and functional toilets. This figure indicates progress in sanitation infrastructure, potentially driven by initiatives promoting hygiene, health, and dignity in households and communities. It highlights the successful implementation of programs aimed at addressing basic sanitation needs, reflecting both awareness and accessibility of resources to achieve this goal. However, 28% of respondents, totaling 42 individuals, reported that toilets in

their households were still under construction. This transitional figure suggests ongoing efforts to improve sanitation infrastructure, but also indicates challenges such as resource constraints, delays in construction, or lack of

immediate access to funds and materials. This group represents a critical phase where targeted support can ensure the timely completion of facilities, thereby improving sanitation access.

Fig. No. 4



Source: Table No. 5

On the other hand, 5 respondents, accounting for 3.33%, stated that toilets were neither constructed nor available in their households. This small but significant percentage points to gaps in the coverage of sanitation programs, reflecting persistent barriers such as extreme poverty, geographic isolation, or lack of awareness about the importance of toilets for health and hygiene. The presence of these households without access to basic sanitation underscores the need for continued efforts to achieve universal coverage, ensuring that even marginalized groups are included in developmental programs. Overall, the data paints a nuanced picture of sanitation development, where a majority has achieved access, some are in transition, and a minority still lags behind. This underscores the importance of sustained policies, financial support, and educational campaigns to bridge the gaps, accelerate progress, and promote equitable sanitation access for all, ultimately contributing to improved public health and quality of life.

3.	Agriculture Worker	70	46.66
4.	Industrial Worker	12	8
5.	Labor	16	10.66
6.	No Profession	02	1.33
	Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey

Table No. 6: Different Occupations of Respondents

Sr. No.	Different Occupations	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Govt. Job	28	18.66
2.	Private Job	32	21.33

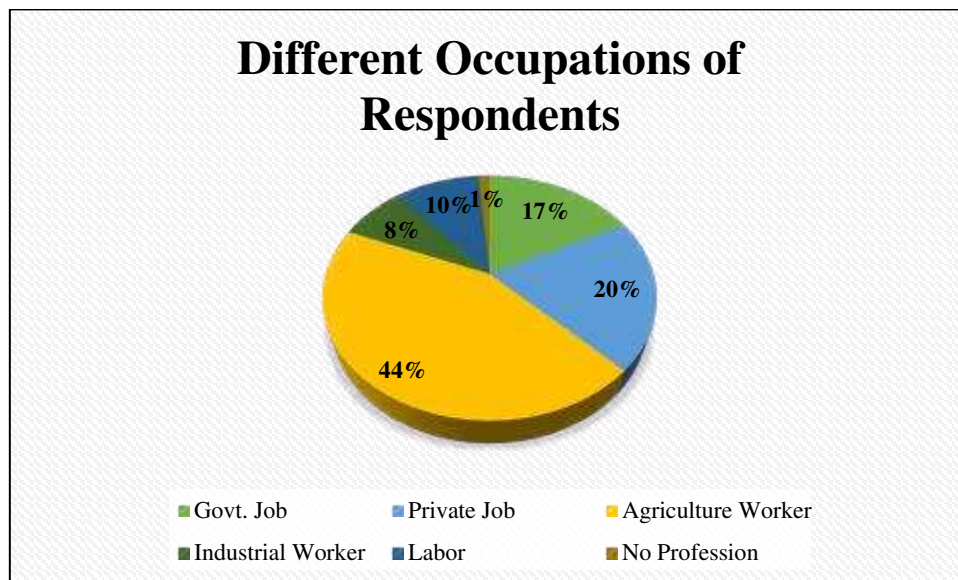
Table No. 6 provides a detailed breakdown of the occupational distribution among respondents, offering insights into the prevalence and diversity of employment sectors within the surveyed population. The largest group, comprising 46.66% or 70 respondents, is engaged in agricultural work, underscoring the central role of agriculture as a livelihood, especially in rural or semi-rural settings. This highlights the sector's importance in sustaining households and contributing to local economies, while also pointing to a potential reliance on traditional occupations that may be shaped by geographic and socio-economic contexts. The second-largest category, private jobs, accounts for 21.33% or 32 respondents, reflecting a growing shift toward private-sector employment, possibly in areas such as retail, services, or small enterprises. This trend indicates diversification in the job market, driven by

urbanization, education, and the expansion of industries outside agriculture. Government jobs, with 28 respondents making up 18.66%, signify a significant source of stable and secure employment for a portion of the population. These roles are often associated with social prestige, economic security, and access to benefits, indicating their enduring appeal in both urban and rural contexts.

Labor roles, reported by 16 respondents or 10.66%, showcase the reliance on unskilled or semi-skilled work in sectors such as construction, transport, or manual services, reflecting the demands of infrastructure development and economic activities that require flexible labor. Meanwhile, industrial workers, forming 8% of the respondents or 12 individuals, highlight participation in manufacturing or factory-based employment, typically concentrated in areas with established industrial hubs. This segment points to the development of industries and the

integration of respondents into structured labor environments, albeit on a smaller scale compared to agriculture or private jobs. Notably, 2 respondents, accounting for 1.33%, reported having no profession, which may include students, homemakers, or those temporarily unemployed, reflecting a minimal but significant portion of the population not engaged in formal employment. Collectively, the data reveals a dynamic occupational landscape shaped by traditional reliance on agriculture, a shift toward private and industrial employment, and ongoing participation in government and labor sectors. This distribution underscores the multifaceted nature of economic engagement, driven by geographic, educational, and infrastructural factors, while also pointing to opportunities for further diversification and upskilling to enhance income stability and economic resilience across different occupational categories.

Fig. No. 5



Source: Table No. 6

Table No. 7: Income Level of Different Respondents

Sr. No.	Income Groups	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 5000	16	10.66
2.	5001-10000	55	36.66
3.	10001-20000	44	29.33
4.	20001-30000	20	13.33
5.	Above 30000	15	10
	Total	150	100

Source: Primary Survey

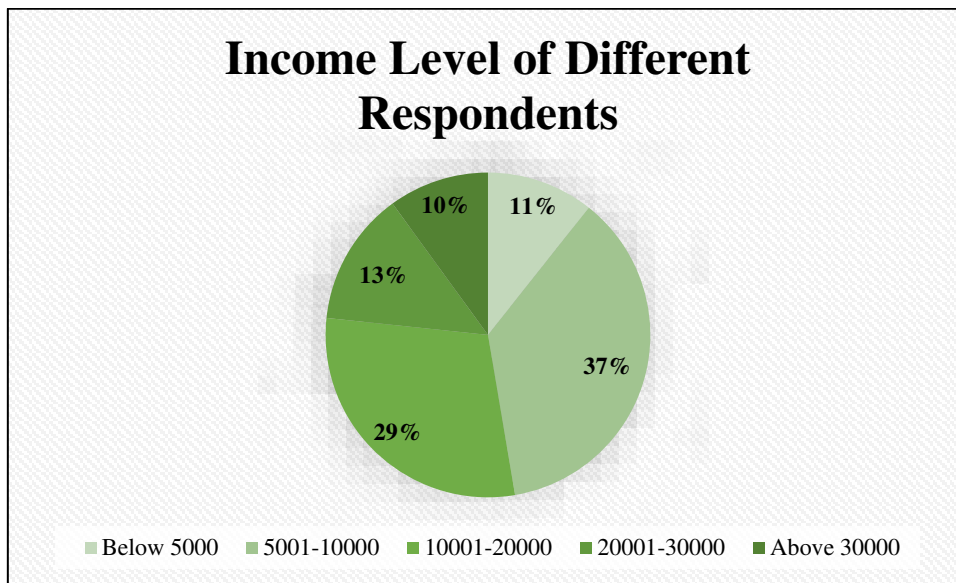
The table provides a detailed analysis of the income distribution among respondents, illustrating the economic diversity and disparities within the surveyed population. The largest income group, encompassing 36.66% or 55 respondents, earns between ₹5001 and ₹10,000 per month, indicating that a significant portion of the population belongs to the lower-middle-income category. This suggests that while they may have sufficient resources to meet basic needs, their financial flexibility might be limited, reflecting potential challenges in savings or discretionary spending. The second-largest group, representing 29.33% or 44 respondents, earns between ₹10,001 and ₹20,000 per month, showcasing a transition toward a middle-income range where individuals likely

enjoy relatively greater economic stability and purchasing power, enabling them to invest in better living standards, education, or health services.

A smaller segment, comprising 13.33% or 20 respondents, falls in the ₹20,001 to ₹30,000 income bracket, indicating an emerging upper-middle-income group that could be associated with stable employment, higher educational attainment, or specialized skills leading to better-paying jobs. Those earning above ₹30,000 per month account for 10% of respondents, or 15 individuals, representing the higher-income group within the sample.

This category reflects individuals with significant financial security, possibly holding senior positions in private or government sectors or operating successful businesses, contributing to economic leadership within their communities. At the other end of the spectrum, 10.66% of respondents, or 16 individuals, earn less than ₹5000 per month, placing them in the lowest-income category. This group likely faces significant financial hardships, with income levels barely sufficient to cover essential needs, underscoring issues such as poverty, limited access to employment opportunities, or reliance on low-paying jobs.

Fig. No. 6



Source: Table No. 7

The income distribution in the table highlights a diverse economic profile, ranging from those struggling with subsistence to those experiencing financial comfort and stability. This distribution underscores the varying socioeconomic realities within the population and points to the importance of targeted policies and interventions to uplift the lower-income groups while supporting upward mobility through education, skill development, and equitable economic opportunities. It also reflects broader economic trends, such as the dominance of lower-middle-income earners and the gradual emergence of higher-income segments, offering a glimpse into the evolving financial dynamics of the community.

III. CONCLUSION

The data provided across various tables offers a comprehensive insight into the socioeconomic status, lifestyle choices, and infrastructure development within the surveyed population. The findings highlight a mixed landscape of progress and challenges, revealing both

strengths and gaps in key areas such as home appliance usage, transportation, education, sanitation, occupation, and income distribution. A significant portion of respondents uses basic household appliances such as televisions and gas cylinders, indicating widespread access to essential utilities, though the lower adoption of computers signals a digital divide that limits opportunities for engagement with modern technology. Vehicle ownership reveals a heavy reliance on practical modes of transportation, with tractors, bikes, and bicycles being predominant, underscoring the influence of economic factors and geographic context on transportation choices. While motor cars are less common, their lower prevalence may be attributed to the higher costs associated with ownership and maintenance. In education, the survey paints a concerning picture of widespread illiteracy, with over a third of respondents unable to read or write, pointing to deep-rooted barriers to basic education, including poverty and limited access to educational resources. Though many respondents have completed their 10th grade, a sharp decline in educational attainment is observed as the

levels rise, reflecting financial constraints, limited access to secondary and tertiary education, and cultural factors that deter further academic pursuit. In terms of sanitation, a majority of respondents report having access to functioning toilets, signaling progress in improving public health and hygiene infrastructure, though gaps remain, with some households still in transition or lacking sanitation facilities altogether. The occupational data underscores the central role of agriculture as the primary livelihood, with nearly half of the respondents engaged in farming-related activities, followed by a growing number in private-sector jobs. This trend highlights a shift towards diversification in the workforce, though low-income, unskilled jobs like labor and industrial work remain prevalent, pointing to economic vulnerabilities and a need for upskilling and job security. The income distribution reveals a large portion of respondents in the lower-middle-income bracket, with limited financial flexibility, while higher-income groups are smaller but more economically secure. This income disparity reflects broader socio-economic inequalities and the challenges faced by lower-income individuals in accessing opportunities for upward mobility. The findings suggest that while there has been progress in some areas, such as sanitation and employment diversification, significant efforts are still needed to address the gaps in education, digital access, and income inequality. Targeted interventions are essential to improve literacy rates, ensure universal access to sanitation, promote skill development, and foster inclusive economic growth. By addressing these disparities, policies can contribute to the creation of a more equitable society, where all individuals have the opportunity to improve their quality of life and contribute to the nation's development. Ultimately, the data emphasizes the need for comprehensive, multi-faceted strategies that focus on education, infrastructure, economic opportunity, and social welfare to ensure sustainable, inclusive growth for all segments of the population.

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Students' Attitudes toward Learning English among Senior High School Stem Students in Siocon District, Division of Zamboanga Del Norte: Basis for Proposed Intervention Program

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Abstract— This study aimed to assess the level attitude towards learning English of the Senior High School STEM students in Siocon District, Division of Zamboanga del Norte during the school year 2022-2023. Frequency count and percent, weighted mean, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis H Test were the statistical tools used in the study. There were two hundred forty (240) respondents involved in the survey. The study revealed that most of the respondents were females, 18 years and above, most of them were grade 12 and majority of them were Bisaya/Cebuano. The study revealed that behavioral attitudes level toward learning English was high, cognitive attitudes level toward learning English was high, and affective attitudes level toward learning English was high. There was no significant difference in the perceived of level students' attitudes toward learning English in terms of sex, age, grade level and ethnic group. Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers should elevate the students' attitudes, and their interest in English should increase because of the teachers' provision of worthwhile activities, such as but not limited to remedial instruction, extracurricular English activities, and language-related programs.



Keywords— Attitude Towards Learning English, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

English is taken as the common language in all parts of the world. English is spoken everywhere, but most Asian countries observe it as a foreign language, and it is considered a second language in some places, like the Philippines. As a result, English is taught as a course from elementary school to college in the Philippines and as the language of instruction (Ong, 2020). On the other hand, teachers' poor English language proficiency, lack of subject knowledge, lack of resources and qualified teachers, lack of teacher training, and low expenditure on education make their students lack interest in learning English and lead to

poor students' academic performance (Kirkpatrick, 2016). DepEd students in Senior High School Sto. Tomas National High School have positive attitude towards speaking in English and that speaking in English is important to them in general. Interestingly, however, these students admitted that they do not speak English well, are worried about making mistakes when they speak English and are afraid of being laughed at when they make mistakes in speaking. The students also believe that they need to learn in speaking English because they might need it in their future job and that practicing it will make them better speakers of English (Canceran & Malenab-Temporal, 2018).

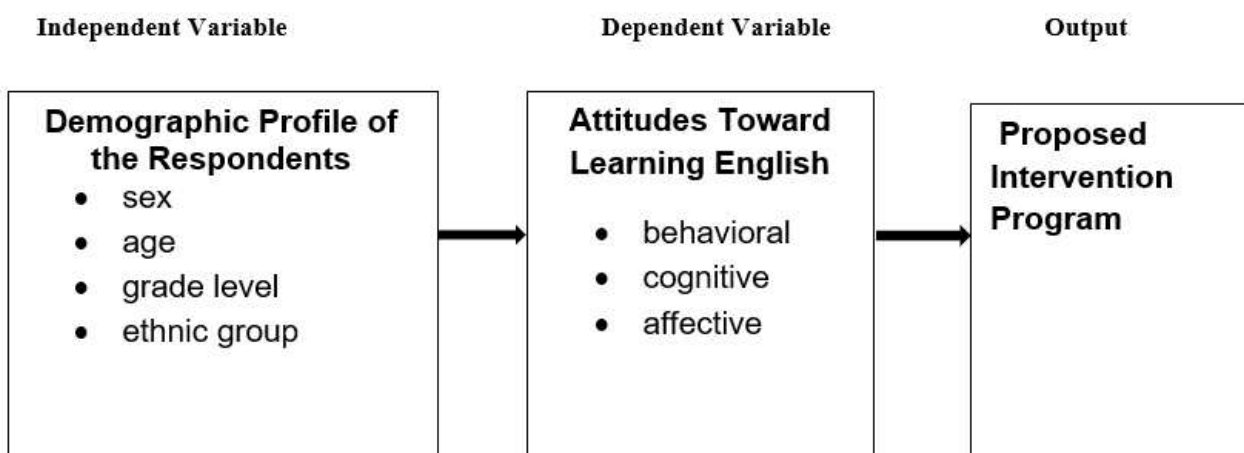
The significance of attitude and cognition as constructs influencing English language use, acceptance, and support has become the rationale for contextualized studies. Several studies have investigated the importance of attitudes toward learning English (Somblingo & Alieto, 2019). In addition, Khastgir and Neogi (2017) pointed out that the importance of being educated in English cannot be denied. This is true especially in the Philippines where English is used as a means of communication in the schools and in the workplace. Moreover, Alam (2017) stated that to be successful in language learning and teaching, it is important to understand the learners' attitudes toward learning the English language. Thus, English is used as a second language in the country, attitudes of learners toward learning English play an important role in the success of learning the language (Tanni, 2015). Arda and Doylan (2017) stated that the learners' attitudes influence their academic performance since "attitudes affect how much they become interested in learning the English language.

This study explored the different factors that might influence the attitudes toward learning English and students' academic performance. Ahmeed (2015) discovered that attitude toward learning English positively influence academic performance in the English course. In addition, Mamun et al. (2012) stated that the learners have positive

attitudes toward learning the English language, and their motivational orientation was instrumental. Moreover, Eshghinejad (2016) stated that there is a significant relationship between attitude and students' academic achievement. However, Colaste (2018) stated that there is no significant relationship between attitude level on academic performance. It implies that whether the attitude level is high or low, the academic performance of the learners is not affected.

Many studies have been conducted on attitudes toward English and academic performance (Colaste, 2018; Ong, 2020; Somblingo & Alieto, 2019). They explored the different factors that affect the learners' attitudes toward learning English, such as sex, age, and type of school in Junior High School and Senior High School in STEM. The current study is intended to assess the level of attitude towards learning English in Siocon District, Division of Zamboanga del Norte.

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 3. First, the profile of the respondents is categorized into sex, age, grade level, and ethnic group. Second, the independent variables which is attitudes toward learning English is categorized into behavioral, cognitive, and affective. Lastly, the output of the study is the proposed intervention program.



II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This presents the research design, research environment, respondents of the study, data gathering procedure, research instrument, ethical consideration, and statistical treatment of the data in this study.

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive method of research in determining the assess the level of attitude towards learning English of the Senior High School STEM students in terms of behavioral, cognitive and affective as well as the significant difference in the extent of their

attitude towards learning English when data are analyzed according to their profile.

Population

The respondents are a complete numeration of the two hundred forty (240) grade 11 and 12 STEM students in Julian Soriano Memorial Comprehensive High School and Siocon National Science High School in Siocon District, Division of Zamboanga del Norte during the school year 2022-2023. Table 1 below shows the distribution of respondents by grade level.

Data Gathering Procedure

A letter of request, signed by the adviser, was sent to the Dean's office, College of Arts and Sciences, Andres Bonifacio College, Inc., Dipolog City, requesting approval to field the study's instrument outside the vicinity of the campus. Next, the researchers' letter, along with the Dean's endorsement letter, were forwarded to the Research and Ethics Committee of the said institution and thereafter, approved the study's instrument to be field out.

Statistical Treatment of the Data

Attitudes Towards Learning English

Scale	Range Value	Description	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61-3.40	Somewhat Agree	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Standard Deviation. This is used to determine the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the respondents scores where $SD \leq 3$ is homogenous and $SD > 3$ is heterogeneous (Aiken & Susane, 2001; Refugio, Galleto, & Torres, 2019).

Mann-Whitney U Test. This is used to test the difference in attitudes towards learning English when respondents are grouped in terms of age, sex and grade level.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test. This is used to test the difference in attitudes towards learning English when respondents were analyzed as to ethnic group.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the data that were gathered through research questionnaires. The presentation of data follows the statement of the problem of the study.

Table 1: Profile of the respondents in terms of sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	103	42.9
Female	137	57.1
Total	240	100.0

Table 1 shows the sex profile of the Senior High School STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) students in Zamboanga del Norte's Siocon District. The table demonstrates that more female students (57.1%) participated in the poll. It is evident that more Senior High School female students than male students took part in the survey. It follows that Siocon District in

Presented are the statistical tools utilized in the treatment and analysis of the data gathered:

Frequency Counting and Percent. They are used to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, and grade level and ethnic group.

Weighted Mean. This is used to quantify the respondents' ratings on the attitudes towards learning English. Presented below is the scoring guide in giving qualitative descriptions and interpretation of the responses of the items in attitudes towards learning English.

Zamboanga del Norte Division appears to be dominated by female students.

However, Bacaling, Macaoay, Taypin, Obedencio, and Rosales (2020), who claimed that there was no proportionate representation of participants by sex because senior high school students were overwhelmingly male, are contradicted by the current finding.

Similarly, the current finding also differs from Absari, Jalon, Samla, Abujen, Jagolino, Rivera, and Molina (2021), who found more male senior high school students than females.

Table 2: Profile of the respondents in terms of age

	Frequency	Percent
17 years old & below	89	37.1
18 years old & above	151	62.9
Total	240	100.0

Table 2 distributes the age of students in Siocon District in Zamboanga del Norte Senior High School STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). According to the table, almost 63% of respondents were at least 18 years old, and just over 37% were no less than 17 years old. It shows that more survey respondents are on the verge of leaving the teenage category. That may indicate that these students are adequately confident in their worth and academic output.

The current finding complements Bacaling, Macaoay, Taypin, Obedencio, and Rosales's (2020) study, which found that roughly 60% of the respondents were at least 18 years old. However, the present result refutes Boateng, Baah, Boakye-Ansah, and Aboagye (2022), who found that the majority of the students in their study were within the age range of 16 to 18 years old (75.65%).

Table 3: Profile of the respondents in terms of grade level

	Frequency	Percent
Grade 11	111	46.3
Grade 12	129	53.8
Total	240	100.0

Table 3 displays the distribution of grade levels among STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) students at the Siocon District Senior High School in Zamboanga del Norte. The data indicates that roughly 54% of respondents were in Grade 12. This number surpasses an 8% differential in favor of Grade 12 students. It demonstrates that more Grade 12 than Grade 11 students participated in the survey. It might suggest that more students are enrolling in Grade 12 than in Grade 11.

The results of the current study add to those of Bacaling, Macaoay, Taypin, Obedencio, and Rosales's (2020) investigation, which showed that 66% of Grade 12 students participated in that survey. Similar to the present finding, Absari, Jalon, Samla, Abujen, Jagolino, Rivera, and Molina

(2021) included 64% of the Grade 12 students as responders in their study.

Table 4: Profile of the respondents in terms of ethnic group

Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percent
Subanon/Subanen	15	6.3
Bisaya/Cebuano	152	63.3
Muslim	73	30.5
Total	240	100.0

Table 4 lists the racial backgrounds of the senior high school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) students. The findings show that the respondents were of various ethnic backgrounds, with a substantial portion [63.3%] being Bisaya/Cebuano. Further, it demonstrates that the Subanon/Subanen, Muslim, had a considerable presence in the Siocon District. It just goes to show how many distinct ethnic groups live in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, with the majority being Bisaya/Cebuano. The current outcome confirms Cataliotti and Muscato's (2022) assertion that the people of the Philippines have a wide range of cultural and linguistic diversity due to the archipelago's many islands. As a result, many different ethnic groups make up Filipinos, or the people who dwell in the Philippines. As a result, several other ethnic groups live in Siocon and even the entire province of Zamboanga del Norte.

Table 5: Students' behavioral attitudes level toward learning English

Descriptors	AWV	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Speaking in English anywhere makes me feel happy.	3.46	0.802	Agree	High
2. Studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends.	3.55	0.876	Agree	High
3. When I hear a student in my class speaking in English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her.	4.03	0.914	Agree	High
4. Studying English helps me improve my personality.	4.04	0.881	Agree	High
5. I put off my English homework as much as possible.	3.18	0.852	Somewhat Agree	Moderate
6. I am relaxed whenever I have to speak in my English class.	3.01	0.826	Somewhat Agree	Moderate
7. I don't feel embarrassed to speak in English in front of other students.	3.02	0.981	Somewhat Agree	Moderate
8. I like to practice English the way native speakers do.	4.20	0.888	Agree	High
9. When I miss the class, I ask my friends or teachers for the homework on what has been taught.	4.23	0.910	Strongly Agree	Very High

10. I do not feel enthusiastic to come to class when English is being taught.	2.63	1.120	Somewhat Agree	Moderate
Mean & SD	3.53	0.450	Agree	High

AWV-Average Weighted Value, SD-Standard Deviation

Table 5 shows the behavioral attitudes level toward learning English among seniors at Siocon District high schools in Zamboanga del Norte division. The table shows that students' behavioral attitudes were high for some items and moderate for others. However, overall results showed that students had high levels of behavioral attitudes. It implies that particular acts directly influenced how students' perspectives were formed. It suggests that the

respondents' behavioral views about English were favorable. As a result, theoretically, students' linguistic attitudes ought to affect how they act. Furthermore, students who behave well in class immerse themselves in the material and make an effort to learn more. Ong's study in 2021, which found that respondents had favorable behavioral attitudes toward English, is supported by the current data.

Table 6: Students' cognitive attitudes level toward learning English

Descriptors	AWV	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Being good at English will help me study other subjects well.	4.28	0.820	Strongly Agree	Very High
2. I have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English.	3.80	0.859	Agree	High
3. Frankly, I study English just to pass the exams.	3.00	1.159	Somewhat Agree	Moderate
4. In my opinion, people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable.	4.06	0.990	Agree	High
5. Studying English helps me communicate in English effectively.	4.33	0.790	Strongly Agree	Very High
6. I can apply the knowledge from English subjects in my real life.	4.18	0.884	Agree	High
7. Studying English makes me able to create new thoughts	4.17	0.783	Agree	High
8. I am satisfied with my performance in the English subject.	3.42	0.869	Agree	High
9. In my opinion, English language is not difficult and not complicated to learn.	3.59	0.896	Agree	High
10. English subject has content that covers many fields of knowledge.	4.08	0.892	Agree	High
Mean & SD	3.89	0.484	Agree	High

AWV-Average Weighted Value, SD-Standard Deviation

Table 6 displays the cognitive attitudes level about learning English among seniors at high schools in the Siocon District in the Zamboanga del Norte division. The table demonstrates that students' cognitive attitudes were moderate for one item and very high and high for others. However, overall findings revealed that students' cognitive attitudes were at a high level. It indicates that Siocon senior high students can relate new information to their prior knowledge. It could imply that individuals have the

cognitive skills to generate, verify, and apply new knowledge in various contexts. The current finding concurs with Ong's study in 2021, which found that respondents had favorable cognitive attitudes regarding English. According to the study, attitudes formed from the cognitive component may obstruct or hamper the current learning process. Therefore, having an excellent cognitive attitude may affect how well children learn.

Table 7: Students' affective attitudes level toward learning English

Descriptors	AWV	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. I prefer studying in my mother tongue (e.g. Tagalog) rather than any other language.	2.93	1.133	Somewhat Agree	Moderate
2. To be honest, I really have an interest in my English class.	4.01	0.880	Agree	High
3. Studying English is enjoyable.	4.15	0.792	Agree	High
4. I feel proud when I can express myself in writing and speaking in English.	4.31	0.791	Strongly Agree	Very High
5. Studying English subject makes me feel more confident.	4.08	0.827	Agree	High
6. Ask questions to my teacher for further clarification.	3.92	0.904	Agree	High
7. Studying English is important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a job.	4.68	0.661	Strongly Agree	Very High
8. I look forward to the time I spend in English class.	3.85	0.789	Agree	High
9. Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).	3.87	0.877	Agree	High
Mean & SD	3.98	0.492	Agree	High

AWV-Average Weighted Value, SD-Standard Deviation

Table 7 shows the affective attitudes toward learning English among Senior High School in the Siocon District of the Zamboanga del Norte division. The table shows that while students' affective attitudes were high and extremely high for some items, they were moderate for one thing. However, the results as a whole showed that students' affective attitudes were high. It can mean that the students expressed their sentiments and feelings in English. It might imply that students were learning English in a way that included feeling good (like joyful, thrilled, comfortable, and proud), being confident, and having fun. Additionally, the students' awareness of the value of English in the future

may be the cause of their favorable affective attitudes about the subject.

The latest result supports Ong's study dated 2021, which found that respondents had a high level of positive affective attitudes. Thus, the findings of the present study and that of Ong (2021) concurred that learners' affective attitudes support their perspectives on the target language. Furthermore, the two studies recognized that the affective aspect of attitude is crucial since it links learners' present behavior to their future behavior. As a result, having an excellent affective attitude encourages students to do well on their coursework.

Table 8: Summary of students' attitude level towards learning English

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
Behavioral Attitude	3.53	0.450	Agree	High
Cognitive Attitude	3.89	0.484	Agree	High
Affective Attitude	3.98	0.492	Agree	High
Mean & SD	3.80	0.401	Agree	High

SD-Standard Deviation

Table 8 shows the summary of attitudes about learning English among senior high school students in the Siocon District of the Zamboanga del Norte division. The affective dimension got the highest mean score out of the three dimensions, followed by the cognitive and behavioral

aspects. Although the three categories' mean scores varied, the students' views about studying English were high overall. Despite the fact that students gave high ratings in all aspects of attitude, none of the aspects received

exceptionally high ratings. It means that there is still space for improvement in all aspects of attitude.

The high degree of views toward studying English among senior high school students in the Siocon District of Zamboanga del Norte division proves that these students held learning English in high regard. The students may also think that speaking English is something they should become proficient in because it may be necessary for their future employment. To spark their interest in the language and motivate them to learn more, the students may also believe that learning English is crucial.

Table 9: Test of Difference in the Students' Attitudes Level toward Learning English in terms of sex

Variables	Sex			
		U-Value	p-value @ 0.05	Interpretation
Behavioral Attitude		6972.00	0.875	Not Significant
Cognitive Attitude		6885.00	0.748	Not Significant
Affective Attitude		6815.00	0.651	Not Significant
Overall Attitude		6782.50	0.608	Not Significant

Table 9 displays the test for sex-based variations in the intensity of attitudes among senior high school students in the Siocon District of the Zamboanga del Norte division. In terms of behavioral, cognitive, affective, and overall attitudes, there was no discernible difference between the sexes of students, according to the data in the table. Additionally, it shows that students of any sex are capable of having high levels of attitude.

Table 10: Test of Difference in the Students' Attitudes Level toward Learning English in terms of age

Variables	Age			
		U-Value	p-value @ 0.05	Interpretation
Behavioral Attitude		6119.50	0.247	Not Significant
Cognitive Attitude		5926.50	0.126	Not Significant
Affective Attitude		5720.50	0.054	Not Significant
Overall Attitude		5853.00	0.095	Not Significant

Table 10 shows the test for age-based differences in the strength of attitudes among senior high school students in the Siocon District of the Zamboanga del Norte division. According to the data in the table, when respondents were divided into groups according to student age ranges, there was no noticeable difference in behavioral, cognitive, affective, and overall attitudes. Additionally, it demonstrates that students of any age can have excellent

The result of this study corroborates Ong's research in 2021, which revealed that senior high school students had a high or favorable attitude in each component of attitudes (behavioral, cognitive, and affective) towards English. In a similar vein, the present outcome supports Canceran and Malenab-Temporal's (2018) study findings, which indicated that both HumSS and ABM strand students had high/positive attitudes toward speaking in English and that speaking in English is essential to them in general.

Difference in the Students' Attitude Level towards Learning English

The current outcome is consistent with the study result of Ong (2021), which showed no statistically significant difference in each attitude dimension when categorized according to sex. The results of the current study also corroborate Canceran and Malenab-Temporal's (2018) study, which indicated no appreciable differences in the students' attitudes toward speaking English when they were divided into sex groups.

attitudes. The current finding confirms Orfan's (2020) study, which found no statistically significant age-related differences in students' opinions on their attitudes. In another study, Akay and Toraman (2015) divided the participants into three age groups: 17–19, 20–22, and 23+. The results demonstrated that opinions among various age groups on their attitudes did not differ significantly.

Table 11 Test of Difference in the Students' Attitudes Level toward Learning English in terms of grade level

Variables	Grade Level			
		U-Value	p-value @ 0.05	Interpretation
Behavioral Attitude		6574.00	0.274	Not Significant
Cognitive Attitude		6119.50	0.052	Not Significant
Affective Attitude		6248.50	0.088	Not Significant
Overall Attitude		6256.50	0.092	Not Significant

Table 11 shows the grade levels of senior high school students in the Siocon District of the Zamboanga del Norte division were tested for variances in the strength of their attitudes. The statistics in the table show no appreciable differences in behavioral, cognitive, affective, and overall attitudes when respondents were separated into groups based on student grade levels. It demonstrates that students can have positive attitudes at any grade level. The

new research adds to that of Sicam and Lucas (2016), who discovered that the general attitudes of English language learners had not altered over time. However, Coşkun and Taşgin (2018) found that first-year university students scored better on attitudes toward English than students in higher year levels, which is the opposite of the current study's findings.

Table 12: Test of Difference in the Students' Attitudes Level toward Learning English in terms of ethnic group

Variables	Ethnic Group			
		H-Value	p-value @ 0.05	Interpretation
Behavioral Attitude		1.656	0.799	Not Significant
Cognitive Attitude		11.953	0.118	Not Significant
Affective Attitude		6.341	0.175	Not Significant
Overall Attitude		7.765	0.101	Not Significant

Table 12 presents the outcomes of Senior high school students in the Siocon District of the Zamboanga del Norte division were assessed for differences in the tenacity of their attitudes according to ethnic groupings. The figures in the table indicate that when respondents were divided into groups based on student ethnic affiliations, there were no discernible variations in behavioral, cognitive, affective, or overall attitudes. It means students' attitudes about learning English does not significantly differ based on ethnicity. It proves that students can be optimistic about their attitude level no matter to which ethnic group they belong. In support, there are many reasons why it is crucial to learn English. One, and possibly the most important, is that it is the primary language used in school to teach other topics. As a result, poor language acquisition would result in academic failure for students. Thus, English learning is crucial for all students, independent of ethnic grouping, as they strive to pass and even thrive academically. The present study finding supports Parangan and Buslon (2020) when they revealed no attitude difference toward English

Language (LP) learning among secondary school students based on ethnicity grouping.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study's findings, Senior High School students in the Siocon District of Zamboanga del Norte division have positive behavioral, cognitive, affective, and overall attitudes regarding studying English, proving they value it highly. The students can also believe learning English is essential because it might be required for their future employment. The students may also think learning English is necessary to pique their interest in the language and inspire them to learn more. Although all facets of attitude obtained high evaluations from students, none of the aspects received exceptionally high ratings. It can be concluded that there is clear room for development in all attitude elements. Moreover, it is deduced that students can be optimistic about their attitude level regardless of their sex, age, grade level, or ethnicity.

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Revealing Depth: The Significance of the Holocaust Genre in Understanding Conceptual Metaphor through The Tattooist of Auschwitz and The Librarian of Auschwitz

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Abstract— Since the Holocaust genre held its significance in terms of literature and cultural memory, it served as a medium for preserving historical truth, which can also foster empathy and develop critical thinking skills among individuals. This study explores the significance of using the Holocaust genre to understand the conceptual metaphor through two notable works: *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris and *The Librarian of Auschwitz* by Antonio Iturbe. Indeed, the use of these two novels could bridge the gap between historical events and the readers using Lakoff's *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor*, offering new insight into the roles of metaphor in representing Holocaust survivors' experience during wartime, which underlines the concept related to survival, identity, moral ambiguity, atrocity, etc.



Keywords—The Holocaust genre, conceptual metaphor, Holocaust literature, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, *The Librarian of Auschwitz*

I. INTRODUCTION

Referring to the Holocaust, it was a tragic event related to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (the Nazis) during World War II, affecting the European Jews as the main target of the genocide. Those who survived often struggle with emotional trauma, causing unspeakable silence. Their stories were usually told in literature, which can portray their experience and trauma during wartime after they were unable to speak about it. In this case, the Holocaust genre as literature often contained a subject of historical truth and ethical representation, in which they were mostly highlighting the survivors in the Auschwitz concentration camp.

To bridge the gap between this unspeakable trauma and event, the concept and the role of metaphor served this purpose, particularly the conceptual metaphor proposed by Lakoff (1993) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980). This is because metaphor can unveil the inner thoughts and ideology of the speakers through metaphorical expression in the form of everyday language

use and enable an understanding of human beliefs, values, and culture (Lakoff, 1993). According to Kövecses (2017), Lakoff (1993), and Semino (2008), the concept of conceptual metaphor can be elucidated as the two domains in which one concept conveying an abstract idea in terms of another refers to the pattern of TARGET-DOMAIN IS SOURCE-DOMAIN or TARGET-DOMAIN AS SOURCE-DOMAIN. As a result, metaphor can serve as a tool to provide additional expressions and new vocabulary to fill the gap of the inability of ordinary language use to describe and represent the Holocaust event and survivors' trauma.

Correspondingly, the significance of the Holocaust genre in literature contributed to a deep understanding of conceptual metaphor will be explored by utilizing the two fictional works: *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris and *The Librarian of Auschwitz* by Antonio Iturbe. These contemporary novels are used due to the smaller number of recent Holocaust fiction used as part of conceptual metaphor analysis. Indeed, it aims to

understand how conceptual metaphor can represent the portrayal of the Holocaust and the survivors' traumatized experience and how it can be further applied in real-life situations. Accordingly, this literature will be followed by the subjects of the Holocaust genre, conceptual metaphor theory, the implementation between the Holocaust literature and conceptual metaphor with some examples of the analysis, and the role of conceptual metaphor in Holocaust texts.

II. THE HOLOCAUST GENRE: THEME AND NARRATIVE

Since the Holocaust was often related to the genocidal event during World War II, shedding light on Jewish people, the Holocaust survivors are likely to testify in the form of literature to portray their life in the concentration camp and traumatized events during wartime. Particularly at Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was the center of extermination for the Final Solution, it becomes the primary setting in most Holocaust literature to demonstrate unspeakable truth in the themes of life, death, suffering, trauma, survival, etc. (Hunter, 2005). In the Holocaust genre in literature discourse, according to Aarons (2014), Czaplinski (2013), and Hunter (2005), the Holocaust has appeared as a subject of ethical and historical representation that can be in the form of documentary, testimony, novel, film, etc. . One of the characteristics of the Holocaust genre, proposed by Aarons (2014), Hunter (2005), Levin (1982), and Young (2004), is that it contains a mixture of different literary genres, namely "the blurring of the traditional genre," which differentiates other genres of literature. . Accordingly, these can be defined as considering these differences as (a) a failure of form and structure and (b) a failure to utilize ordinary language to represent the adequate Holocaust event and its historical complexity (Aarons, 2014). . As a result, Levin (1982) argued that the Holocaust genre can hardly be classified as a specific type of genre regardless of the consideration of its authentic and aesthetic work.

Consequently, it resulted in a problematic issue since there was a tension between the ethics and aesthetics of the reproduction and generalization of the Holocaust context in terms of arts and literature (Aarons, 2014; Hunter, 2005; Young, 2004). This concern is quite a significant issue because some critics argued that the Holocaust aesthetic works fail to encapsulate the depiction of the reality of life and actual events, resulting in a mixed and ambiguous collection of historical facts (Hunter, 2005; Young, 2004). Accordingly, this problematic concern raises questions regarding the authenticity and accuracy of Holocaust literature.

2.1 Examples of Holocaust genre in literature: *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* and *The Librarian of Auschwitz*

In contemporary Holocaust literature, many authors would claim the literary works are based on the true story of a Holocaust survivor who had experienced Auschwitz concentration camp (Iturbe, 2019; Morris, 2018). However, the authentic issue mentioned previously remained a significant concern because it appeared to blur the distinction between fiction and fact (Aarons, 1981; Foley, 1982; Scheiber, 2009). Especially *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, this novel has a prominent problem as it is reported to be inauthentic in terms of portraying prisoners' life experiences in the concentration camp (Witek-Malicka, 2018). As the novel is about the romantic story of the survivor named Lale, who is a tattooist working in Auschwitz, the novel fairly represents its reality while distorting historical facts, such as tattooing procedures and numbers, the camp atmosphere, and the sexual relationship amidst the atrocity (Witek-Malicka, 2018). Indeed, Morris argued that this work is not a historical documentary that would only rely on the facts rather than a piece of fiction, and she also included her imagination to enrich the narrative (Flood, 2018; Groot, 2010; Young, 2011). Similarly, in *The Librarian of Auschwitz*, the story of Dita, who is the librarian assistant living in the family camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau, also lacks some historical evidence of certain events to ensure its accuracy, leading to ambiguity in terms of camp representation (Quealy-Gainer, 2017).

III. CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY

Lakoff's (1993) Complementary Theory of Metaphor was further complemented by the contribution of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) *Metaphor We Live By*. Due to this framework, the conceptual metaphor relies on the cross-domain of ordinary everyday language and human experience. (Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This mechanism of generating conceptual metaphor was often operated at the unconscious level, resulting in the automatic use without users' explicit awareness (Gibbs, 1992; Kövecses, 2010, 2017; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Semino, 2008). Besides, to comprehend conceptual metaphors, the users also require an understanding of the cultural variation because different cultures may employ different conceptual meanings, leading to a variety of interpretations when interpreting the same metaphorical expression (Boroditsky, 2018; Buakhao, 2016). For instance, Western culture comprehends time in terms of moving entities from left to right. However, some cultures would rather conceptualize

time as a movement from front to back (Boroditsky, 2018; Buakhao, 2016).

Additionally, the conceptual metaphor can be formulated as the pattern of the relationship between the “target” and “source” domains in which one domain corresponds to another domain, as TARGET-DOMAIN IS SOURCE-DOMAIN or TARGET-DOMAIN AS SOURCE-DOMAIN (Kövecses, 2010, 2017; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Semino, 2008). In simpler terms, the concept of the target domain represents the abstract idea, while the source domain conveys a more concrete concept, which the target will align with the source domain, constituting a schematical reflection (Kövecses, 2004, 2010; Lakoff, 1993; Semino, 2008).

The example can be illustrated through LOVE IS A JOURNEY where LOVE represents the target domain, and JOURNEY represents the source domain. To comprehend and identify this correspondence, involved systematic mapping between the source and target domain, referred to the following sentence: “*We are not going anywhere*” (Kövecses, 2010, 2017; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Semino, 2008). In this case, the subject “we” signifies two people, while “not going anywhere” indicates the obstacle to reaching the destination of the journey, exemplifying the uncertain relationship or inability of two individuals to progress together (Kövecses, 2010).

IV. HOLOCAUST GENRE AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

Since conceptual metaphors can reflect the reality of society and human life, this key concept is prevalent and utilized in various types of Holocaust genres in literature. Oster (2014) mentioned that the conceptual metaphor can capture the embodiment of the core of atrocity, especially the material substance and everyday presence of death-in-life, which facilitate the understanding of Holocaust survivors’ experience. Also, the conceptual metaphor can convey the pervasive sense of suffering and anti-Semitism endured by the Jewish people (Kahaky, 2015). Similar to Steinitz’s (2015) perspective, the conceptual metaphor can also serve to represent the unspeakable emotion or expression that the ordinary language is unable to convey the explanation for survivors’ trauma. In other words, this metaphor would serve as a tool for developing a new language for the survivors, as it can enable them to navigate life in the camp after the Nazis had alienated and stolen them from the normal world (Steinitz, 2015). Thus, with this ability of conceptual metaphor to depict the harsh and unbearable reality of the Holocaust, it potentially allowed the authors to universalize this experience to the readers as aiming to encourage them to relate their own

life with it and understand more of the Holocaust survivors (Kahaky, 2015; Oster, 2014; Steinitz, 2015).

V. EXAMPLE OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR IN HOLOCAUST LITERATURE

By adopting the CMT framework, the following examples are the conceptual metaphors found in *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* and *The Librarian of Auschwitz*. Taking the excerpt from Morris’s novel, the context is demonstrated as follows:

The next morning the two kind prisoners help Lale from the block and stand with him to await rollcall. How long has it been since I've stood like this? Numbers, numbers. Survival is always about your number. Being ticked off your kapo's list tells you that you are still alive. Lale's number is last on the list since he is the newest occupant of Block 31. He doesn't respond the first time it is called, has to be nudged. After a cup of old, weak coffee and a thin slice of stale bread, they are marched off toward their labor.

In this context, the conceptual metaphor is referred to as IDENTITY IS A NUMBER AND ENUMERATION. In this context and actual event, prisoners will receive the tattooed number when first registered in the camp. These numbers will be used to represent the prisoners' names in every activity. Since they represented the name and individual's identity, it would imply the dehumanizing process of reducing individuals to mere numerical representations, meaning to strip them of their identities and treat them as units within a system.

Moreover, the death can be indicated through the conceptual metaphor, DEATH IS A BURDEN, as referred to the following context:

Lale rests the legs he's been carrying on the ground and looks for the first time at the dead man's face. His compassion returns and he bows his head at this tragic end to yet another life. He gives an apologetic glance to the other man carrying the body and hurries to follow the guard. The other inmates of Block 31 all stare after him.

In this context, death is depicted from the act of “carrying” legs and looking at the dead man, which corresponds to the concept of shared burden. In this case, the burden is referred to as “returned compassion” and “the bowing head,” signifying that it is an emotional and psychological weight or gravity associated with death. Similar to the metaphorical meaning of carry in this context, it reflects the prisoners' daily activities they must do without rejecting because there will be dead prisoners every day. This experience could add more weight to those

who are alive since they are aware of the never-ending number of deaths. Also, the apologetic glance is considered a shared burden of death among prisoners.

On the other hand, the conceptual metaphor found in *The Librarian of Auschwitz* can be illustrated based on the context as follows:

Dita looks up, and her face, hands, and dress are spotted with tiny gray flakes that disintegrate between her fingers. The inhabitants of Block 31 come outside to see what's going on.

In this context, the conceptual metaphor is DEATH IS A POLLUTANT. The tiny gray flake is depicted as the ash, which simultaneously symbolizes the death domain. In terms of ash, it is an invasive, clinging substance that contaminates Dita's body. Also, ash disintegrates means clinging to surfaces and then dissolving, as well as the connotation of decay and destruction. In other words, this context reflects that seeing the ash indicates an awareness of the death of their friends, as it can refer to the underlined texts, "Come outside to see what's going on."

Another conceptual metaphor representing the character's life is SILENCE IS A SURVIVAL, based on the context:

Nobody sleeps in the family camp. Nobody speaks; nobody moves. In Dita's hut, when someone anxiously asks, "What's happening? What will happen to them?" in a loud voice, the other women, irritated, quickly tell her to be quiet and demand total silence. They have to keep listening, so they know exactly what's happening, or maybe they want complete silence so the SS officers won't hear them, won't notice them, and will let them stay alive on the filthy bunks – at least for a little longer.

In this context, the underlined texts signify silence, which corresponds to the active strategy for self-preservation. This is also the essential key strategy to survive and stay alive in the camp by avoiding catching the attention of the SS officers. It is because the prisoners are likely to encounter life-threatening torture if the Nazi officers pay attention to them. Indeed, the officers usually torture them without reason and do so for the sake of their pleasure.

VI. THE COMPARISON OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR BETWEEN TWO NOVELS

On the one hand, both novels shared similar themes of conceptual metaphors. The themes could be demonstrated directly through the protagonists of these novels, which portrayed life experiences and horrible events inside Auschwitz. For instance, both novels reveal the themes involving the prisoners' lives and identities, the survival strategy, the death, the suffering and torment, the

Nazis' authority, the camp environment, and the relationship between partner and mother-daughter. In the broader perspective, although both novels depicted the atrocity and hazards in Auschwitz, both protagonists retain their hope to survive. These reflections from both novels can indirectly foster empathy among readers in a way that they would likely feel for those victims and respect them as human beings.

On the other hand, these novels were likely to have their unique specificity. In *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, the conceptual metaphors mainly portray romantic relationships and the tattooist's duty, while *The Librarian of Auschwitz* would rather emphasize the role of the librarian assistant, the books, lives in the family camp, and school operation. Due to the different main themes of the novels, the same conceptual metaphors could be interpreted in different interpretations since the contexts are completely different.

VII. THE ROLE OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR IN HOLOCAUST TEXTS

According to Webber (2011), conceptual metaphor has the power to point out the truth. Exploring the roles of conceptual metaphor in Holocaust texts can provide the approaches that are significant for understanding the thought, language, and worldview, especially the facts of atrocity that can likely relate to their experience (Boroditsky, 2018; Buakhao & Deocampo, 2017; Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Webber, 2011). Also, comprehending the atrocity and trauma through real historical events can be essentially a tool to cultivate students' empathy, critical thinking, and a nuanced appreciation towards life through the way metaphor can shape their understanding of the past and hope for the future.

Although some critics would mention that empathy is difficult to teach and be taught, there would probably be an approach that can fill this gap, as Webber (2011, p. 23) argued that conceptual metaphor has the potential for "empathy as a crucial condition for ethical behavior." Due to this significant role, empathy skills can be examined through the dehumanizing conceptual metaphor used by the Nazis and Holocaust survivors so that students can develop their profound and psychological understanding of the concept of "stepping into other shoes" of the victims, underlying the genocide, atrocity, and human rights. In this essence, conceptual metaphor can help readers recognize the power of language as a weapon to marginalize and oppress, leading to physical violence (Musolff, 2007). Therefore, the themes in the Holocaust genre are the key to developing a deeper

empathetic understanding and inspiring greater compassion and a commitment to protecting human rights.

Regarding the role of enriching critical thinking skills, the Holocaust genre employed survivors' resistance, resilience, and moral triumph, reasserting the dignity, strength, and humanity of the victims along with the opponent's language (Musolff, 2007). For example, the analysis of the conceptual metaphor from the previous example, SILENCE IS SURVIVAL, can denote how the Holocaust survivors maintain their lives to survive. This concept demonstrated the survival strategy amidst the horror and hazardous situations, which simultaneously and indirectly indicated the candle flame of hope to be alive. Within the analysis of conceptual metaphor, readers can also develop the systematic function of the language and its potential to be used in certain circumstances in society for shared appreciation of human dignity. Additionally, it can encourage them to investigate and assume worth learning the language use and power dynamics of the way they shape individuals' understanding, thoughts, history, and vision of the future (Kansteiner, 2004).

VIII. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

8.1 Theoretical implication

The significance of theoretical implications would underscore the literary studies, cognitive science, and historical studies; however, this article will mainly emphasize the literature and cognitive linguistics. For the literary study, the study of conceptual metaphor using Holocaust genre literature can demonstrate how the Holocaust narratives shape the learners' understanding of the themes of dehumanization, human rights, dignity, and resilience. The learners could also learn the systematic cross-domain mapping of conceptual metaphor representations as they conveyed historical facts and unspeakable truths.

Within the cognitive linguistics aspect, the use of conceptual metaphors can illustrate how survivors' trauma developed the metaphorical formation. Due to the difference in reality in the camp itself and the outside world, this can also refer to the context of the survivors who developed and formed the language and metaphor used in the camp to represent their emotions. As for the roles of conceptual metaphor in Holocaust texts, it could illustrate how the survivors' unspeakable and collective memory operated through conceptual metaphor and its structure as well as demonstrate how their experience can be comprehended in the abstract in terms of the concrete concepts.

8.1 Practical implication

According to the educational context, the instructors can teach the historical context and event by choosing the Holocaust literature through the collection of conceptual metaphors and its metaphorical framework, involving cross-domain mapping and interpretation. This can lead to the development of emotional intelligence through metaphor analysis while it can build the critical thinking skills of the learners. Correspondingly, it then led to the implication of contemporary relevance that the instructors can use the current events of the Holocaust to be the setting for the learner. In 2024, the events that are relevant to the Holocaust can be demonstrated through the wars involving the genocide between different countries, such as Israel and Palestine or Russia and Ukraine. Using a conceptual metaphor framework, the learners could understand the pattern of dehumanization and Holocaust metaphors within this current discourse while they can cultivate empathy towards people and society.

IX. CONCLUSION

With the Holocaust context to understand the conceptual metaphor, this genre was capable of illuminating the function of conceptual metaphor while simultaneously demonstrating insight into the interpretation of unspeakable historical facts about the events. However, it is essential to consider that Holocaust literature can only capture some fragments of reality. With this limitation, it can lead to challenges for interpretation in which the readers were recommended to have historical background about such events. Additionally, this study's implication can also contribute to the understanding of current situations and traumatic experiences in other cases, not only the Holocaust, reminding us how conceptual metaphors can shape individuals' understanding and vision of the world. Also, the significant role of this would be beneficial since it can develop empathetic engagement and critical thinking skills. As for further research, a variety of Holocaust literature in this genre and other historical works can be utilized and examined using the conceptual metaphor framework to encapsulate the portrayal of historical events and understanding survivors' traumatized experiences.

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From Mimicry to Mockery: A Reading of Upamanyu Chatterjee's IAS Novels

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Abstract— *The day-to day micro-governance of the world's largest democracy is performed through the multi-tiered machinery of the Indian Administrative Service which was established by the East India Company as the Indian Civil Service in the late eighteenth century. Ontologically perceived, it is an immensely complex system, devised by the administrators of a colonial government to rule a group of 'natives' with whom they had hardly anything in common. The inevitable heavy influx of Indians into the service post-Independence has only accentuated its hybrid nature. This article seeks to understand the hybrid nature of this system and its representatives through the fictional representation by Upamanyu Chatterjee of the "steel frame" of the welfare state. In Upamanyu Chatterjee's novels, *English, August* (1988) and its sequel *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000), the protagonist, Agastya Sen, an IAS officer, is a classic representation of the hybridity of the system that he serves. Burdened with the name of a mythical Indian Saint, Agastya, the son of a Hindu Bengali father and a Goanese Christian mother, epitomizes the in-betweenness of the postcolonial subject. His missionary education and Anglicized upbringing have conferred upon him several nicknames like August and English. His existential crisis comes to a head when he finds himself taxed with the task of understanding the system of governance in the far-off district of Madna as a trainee officer. This article seeks to understand Agastya's plight as symptomatic of the problems inherent within the structure of the Indian Administrative Service and the state of India itself. Using the theoretical framework developed by Homi K Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*, I would like to understand Agastya as a postcolonial 'mimic' subject and the system he represents as a 'hybrid' and 'ambivalent' one.*



Keywords— *Mimicry, hybridity, postcolonial identity, the Indian Administrative Service*

The postcolonial subject and the postcolonial welfare nation-state are two complex phenomena that cannot be understood as singular, monolithic identities. This article seeks to understand Upamanyu Chatterjee's representation of both through the lens of "hybridity" and "mimicry" as formulated by Homi K. Bhabha. It provides a reading of Chatterjee's—who himself was an IAS officer—novels *English, August* (1988) and its sequel, *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000) as texts that foreground this mimicry and the complexity of identity in the postcolonial context. Towards the end of the second novel, Chatterjee moves away from mimicry to sheer mockery of the Indian Administrative Services using his confused, unmotivated postcolonial protagonist. The novels thus become a trenchant critique of the welfare state

machinery and also raises questions about the ontological status of the postcolonial subject.

In his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi K Bhabha characterizes hybridity as —" A difference "within", a subject that inhabits the rim of an "in-between" reality."(13) We will see how in these two novels the "in-betweenness" of the protagonist as well as that of the system he serves has been deftly portrayed.

One sultry afternoon, on his very first day as a trainee officer in the Collectorate of a fictitious Indian town, Agastya Sen, the protagonist of Upamanyu Chatterjee's novel *English, August*, witnesses a shame-faced Supply Officer being shouted at by the District Collector. An unconnected phrase—"lambent dullness" -- floats into his

mind, and he muses over the scene in the following words—“The Supply Officer wiped his forehead with a many-coloured handkerchief. Yes, lambent dullness, definitely. That he could relate a phrase from an eighteenth-century English poet to this, a sweating Supply Officer in a Collector's office, in Madna, made him smile.” (16)

That the twenty-four-year-old Indian Administrative Service officer could relate a phrase from John Dryden's mock-heroic satire *MacFlecknoe* to a situation he encounters in a non-descript Indian town should not come as a surprise. The historical impetus which gave birth to the Service which Agastya joins in the late twentieth century, had begun in earnest in eighteenth century England. When Dryden was depicting his “empire of dullness”, presided over by his rival poet Thomas Shadwell; a far more efficient system of empire was gradually taking shape in another part of the globe. Both the setting in which Agastya remembers the phrase—a District Collector's Office—and the very act of remembering these particular lines from an English poem (he has read the poem as part of his college curriculum), are legacies of the British Raj to India.

The Honourable Company's Civil Service was regularized as “the covenanted civil service of India” by the Charter Act of 1793. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a further distinction was made between the “covenanted” and the “uncovenanted” civil servants, whereby the former were appointed by the Court of Directors of the East India Company and were exclusively British, and the latter were recruited from among both British and “native” candidates. The system of nominating candidates for the ICS by the Court of Directors of the East India Company was replaced by a system of recruitment through competitive examination in 1854. There had been sporadic attempts earlier, at least in theory, to make the “covenanted service” open to Indians as exemplified by the Despatch of 1834 by the Court of Directors which proclaimed that “distinction of race or religion” shall be no bar to for the eligible candidate. But as Deepak Gupta in his study titled *The Steel Frame: A History of the IAS* (2019) succinctly notes “Actually, this clause only pledged that there would be no discriminations on ground of birth, but other tests of qualification provided the barriers to entry of Indians” (20). Even the major impetus behind the more substantial reforms of 1854 came from the needs of the employable educated in Britain, and not the requirements of the colony and the colonial subjects they were to govern. The two fundamental reasons behind the reforms, as outlined by C. J Dewey were--

In 1854 the ancient universities had just entered a period of crisis and reform. One minor aspect of the crisis was the problem of graduate

unemployment...But of far greater moment to academic politicians was the ancient universities' general crisis of identity.... It became necessary, through reform, to satisfy the strong feeling that the universities founded for the whole nation had been diverted to sectional ends. (264)

It was only in 1864 that Satyendranath Tagore, the elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore, became the first Indian ever to successfully compete in the open examination for recruitment into Civil Service. But what clearly emerges from this extremely brief outline of the establishment and the development of the ICS, is that the Indian bureaucracy, from its very inception, has been conceived of as a “ruling caste”, (the term used by Dewey in the title of his essay). To date, the competitive examination held by the Union Public Service Commission is perceived to be the most difficult examination in the country.

After Independence, in 1949 the Indian Civil Service was rechristened as the Indian Administrative Service. The administrative mechanism which was installed by the British primarily to regulate and systematize the collection of revenue from the country, and only secondarily to administer law and justice, was gradually turned into the “Steel Frame” which runs the governmental juggernaut of the world's largest democracy.

Chatterjee's novels *English, August: An Indian Story* and its sequel, *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* revolve around the experiences of Agastya Sen, a young trainee IAS officer. The two novels are as much about Agastya as about the giant administrative structure, the “steel frame” that he is a rather insignificant part of.

The Indian novel in English has been an identifiable phenomenon at least since the 1930s. In its almost century-long existence it has dealt with a wide variety of subjects and has emerged as a globally recognized genre in the 1980s. But one issue that seems to have problematized these novels is the issue of “Indianness”.

As Meenakshi Mukherjee puts it—

But when it comes to English fiction originating in our country, not only does the issue of Indianness becomes a favourite essentialising obsession in academic writings and the book review circuit, the writers themselves do not seem unaffected by it, the complicating factor being that English is not just any language—it was the language of our colonial rulers and continues even now to be the language of power and privilege. (2607)

The question of Indianness--and “authenticity of experience”, when we take into account the writing of the Indian diaspora--is a vexed one. But at the heart of the problem lies an implied value-judgement that privileges

certain types of experiences and writings as “more authentic” or more “quintessentially Indian” than others. In this article, I am going to argue that, Upamanyu Chatterjee treats this issue in his two novels by subverting the idea of a unique/unified/essentially Indian selfhood of which, among other pointers, language is a significant part. In the very first page of *English, August*, the “mongrelness” of the Indian English language is remarked upon

In his seminal essay “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse”, Homi Bhabha characterizes “colonial mimicry” as –

[T]he desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. (86)

If the civilizing mission or the “white man’s burden” are presented as the high-sounding ideals behind the banal and brutal appropriation of power and resources by the colonizer, “mimicry” affects a “comic turn” from these ideals and “emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (85).

Chatterjee’s protagonist emerges as a “mimic man” and the structure he reluctantly serves is “mimicry” of a colonial institution. Chatterjee does explore a wide array of problems including, but not limited to, the existential angst of an educated upper-middle class urban youth; the corruption that pervades the Indian administrative and political system; the politics of class and caste; and the problems particular to a developing economy; but instead of dealing with these issues in the manner of a “social realist” novel, he employs narrative and structural strategies that turn the novels into a brilliantly mocking satires on the state of the welfare state.

The title of Chatterjee’s first novel, contrary to expectations, is not a semantic parallel to a phrase like the “Indian Summer”. “English” and “August” are both names given to Agastya by his schoolmates as a reminder of his Anglicized upbringing and supposedly repressed Anglophilia. In a school essay when Agastya claims that his real ambition in life is to become a “domesticated male stray dog”, his friends object to his assertions by claiming that what he really wants to be is an “Anglo-Indian”. Becoming an Anglo-Indian, is of course, biologically impossible for Agastya, but it is interesting to note that his identity is already fractured along ethnic and religious, if not racial lines. The son of a Bengali-Hindu father and a Goanese-Catholic mother, Agastya creates for himself multiple identities with intrepidity. He lies about his age, his educational background, and even his marital status,

alternatively claiming he is married to an English woman or has a Norwegian Muslim wife. He creates several Agastyas for himself and for those around him, inscribing himself within a series of fictions, and getting inscribed in others’ fictions in the process. His father and paternal uncle, representatives of an older generation of the Bengali *bhadrolok* (genteel) class, and more conscious of their cultural roots, resent the implied cultural hybridity that Agastya’s self-projection implies. His uncle scolds him and his friend by pointing out “The greatest praise you mimics long for is to be called European junkies. And who is August? In my presence, call him Ogu” (30). Both the father and the uncle insist on calling him “Ogu”, a more typically Bengali sounding name than either August or English. Agastya’s identity is that a “reformed, recognizable other”, and in the production of this identity there are slippages, excesses and differences.

Name, accent, and appearance --often perceived as some of the most important markers as well as tethers of one’s identity-- ironically becomes the sources of a persistent identity related anxiety for Agastya in Madna. The most frequent question he answers in his early days in the district is about the meaning of his name. This recurrent question is generally followed by the observation that he does not ‘look like’ an IAS, that he does not fit in with his surroundings. Agastya carries this sense of dislocation with him throughout the novel. The structure of the novel is shaped by his disorientation, his existential crisis and his inertia. Bede Scott comments on the “entropic quality” of the novel which is the result of the entropic quality at the heart of the Indian bureaucratic system itself. The procedural delays, the interminable waiting, and the proverbial red-tapism that the system is mired in breeds a kind of boredom that is reflected in both the form and the structure of the novel. Scott points out – “... Agastya is bored, terribly bored, and this affective quality comes to have a profound influence over the narrative he occupies, draining it, too, of its meaning, its energy, and its desire” (497). In another of his fraught exchanges with his uncle, Agastya had been reprimanded for referring to a prolonged period of waiting as waiting for Godot. As with his objection to the Anglicized version of his name, Agastya’s uncle again retorts “... the *first* thing you are reminded of by something that happens around you, is something obscure and foreign, totally unrelated to the life and language around you” (31). For Agastya, a reference to Godot or Dryden is no longer foreign and obscure, it is a part of his identity, an identity which is shaped by his missionary-school education and his degree in English literature, a subject that he is ashamed of having studied in college. This cohabitation of different cultures is one of the sources of his anxiety, but between listening to Keith Jarrett

and Tagore's songs, between reading Marcus Aurelius and the Bhagvad Gita, Agastya testifies to the fact-- and again we go back to Bhabha's comment on Bipin Chandra Pal—that he is a product of “a flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English.” (87).

Unlike Agastya, his immediate boss R. Srivastav, the Collector of Madna, has found a way of resolving this conflict within himself and pronounces with confidence “...You are what you are, just as English here too is what it is, an unavoidable leftover. We can't be ashamed of our past, no, because that is to be ashamed of our present. People curse our history because it is much easier to do that than to work” (61). This comparatively easy resolution eludes Agastya's grasp as he has no inherent faith in the “work” of the welfare state that his superior puts so much faith upon. For him, the entire machinery of the administrative system appears as absurd, and the life he leads in Madna seems irrational. What saves him from becoming complacent and corrupt on the one hand, or misanthropic and corrupt on the other, is this very sense of absurdity. In order to live through a reality that seems impossibly remote, he concocts different versions of himself; is irreverent to the most solemn practices and norms of his service and gives his imagination a free reign. The reference to lambent dullness seems a particularly apt one in this context as in the original context this dullness is the result of an opium-induced stupor. Marijuana and masturbation, intense workout, and the creation of multiple identities—all become the survival strategies in Agastya's arsenal for the twelve months he spends in Madna.

The Mammaries of the Welfare State, published twelve years after its prequel, is more diffused in structure. The single-minded focus on Agastya's existential crisis that had given *English, August* its compactness, is absent from this novel. The setting has changed from Madna to New Delhi, the capital of the Welfare State and the readers are confronted with bigger players in the corridors of power, vis-a vis whom Agastya becomes a lesser actor. This shift in setting and focus is not accidental, and like the previous novel there is a remarkable congruity in theme, structure and characterization. To put the matter simply, if *English, August* was an exploration of ‘mimic man’ trying to find his place within the structure of a postcolonial state, *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*, is an exploration of a ‘mimic’ system, a system which not only registers the difference between mimesis and mimicry, but goes a step ahead into the zone of mockery in the course of this exploration.

As early as 1852, that is even before the ICS was officially open to recruitment through a competitive

examination supplanting the system of patronage and nomination—George Campbell had noted—

It is, indeed, the great principle of all grades of the Indian administration that each official grade is always kept constantly cognizant of all that is done by that below, by means of an infinite variety of statements submitted periodically, showing in every possible form every kind of business and devised to include everything in every shape (254)

The bulwark of the steel frame, from its inception, remains almost the same to date. In what Chatterjee describes as “a Punjabi manner of pronouncing English words”, “memories” becomes “mammaries” (285). The “mammaries” of the modern welfare state of India, thus, contain within itself the indelible “memories” of its colonial past. The structural diffuseness of this novel comes from the fact that it seeks to reproduce the mode of official correspondence within and between the different departments of the government and the functioning of the bureaucratic system itself. The insistence on record-keeping, note-sharing, and filing everything is so ingrained in the system that two officers who share the same desk communicate with each other in the form of official dispatches and memos. With characteristic exaggeration, the omniscient narrator suggests, periodical combustions are arranged in the various governmental departments so that the older and useless files and reports can be destroyed unobtrusively.

Thinly veiled political personages and historical occurrences are woven into the texture of the narrative, a trait that was largely missing in its prequel. However, unlike Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* (1981) or Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), Chatterjee does not narrate the nation through a mythopoeic framework. His concern is with the here and the now, but the here and now he presents is hyperbolic, irreverent, and almost always exaggerated, but never distorted beyond recognition. Agastya's feeling of unreality and absurdity in Madna was due to the lack of congruence between his lived experiences in the megalopolises of Delhi and Kolkata, and the vast unknown that Madna represents for him. The absurdity in this novel is of a different kind altogether. It is the absurdity of the manufactured reality of the bureaucracy, of the excesses of documentation that drown the facts and produce different versions of truth. Agastya here becomes less of a character and more of a narrative device to hold the disparate parts of the novel together. The focus has shifted from the man to the machine.

One of the first major occurrences of the novel is an outbreak of plague in Madna. When the news reaches the capital of the Welfare State, memos, dispatches, time, and

money are invested not to redress the situation, but to ascertain whether there really is an epidemic in the district. True to the circuitous and tortuous route always adopted by the bureaucratic system, officials from the capital are finally sent to the district almost eleven months after the actual outbreak. Interestingly enough, in the narrative universe of the novel, the actual happenings of national importance, like an epidemic, a political assassination or attempted mob-lynching literally take a backseat in comparison to the centenary celebration of an important politician or the meeting between the Prime Minister's sister-in-law with a political leader in disgrace.

The irreverence that we had noted in the case of *English, August* is magnified to a massive scale in this novel. In its constant references to eating, defecating and having or thinking about sex, it reaches a quasi-Rabelaisian dimension. There is also a marked proclivity for creating ludicrous acronyms, so that a welfare programme is called BOOBZ i.e., Budget Organization on Base Zero; the Ministry for Heritage, Upbringing and Resource Investment becomes HUBRIS. The concluding section of the novel, titled "Wake Up Call", takes the mockery to an unprecedented level. Agastya, along with his friend Dhruvo, a fellow IAS officer, draw up a proposal for a programme titled "Operation Bestial", which is an acronym for "Better Sex for Turning Into Life" (417). Operation Bestial is a proposed scheme for the Welfare State to invest in making pornographic movies "as part of a larger education policy". Like Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal", the narrative here reaches the state of total irony. In all non-seriousness, the proposal states that the programme, if implemented, will not only solve major public health issues but also generate a massive profit for the welfare state, as the Ministry of Culture may sell tickets for the movies in open as well as in the black market.

The mimicry in this narrative is multi-layered, and the epithet, at this stage, can no longer be restricted to Bhabha's explanation of the term. Not only is the present system of administrative governance in India a mimic and hybrid one; the narrative parodies the *modus operandi* of the Indian bureaucracy through its very form and adds a further level of mimicry. Thus, the novel becomes a mimicry of a mimicry, keeping the readers always alive to the inherent absurdity and the insidious ways of the system. The real moments of high seriousness come sporadically in the novel, in a blink-and-you-miss manner, but those are moments worth paying special attention to. One such moment is when Agastya is sent for a training programme in Paris, understands the problems of communication from a global perspective and its direct connection with the history of imperialism—

Agastya had sensed, or recognized anew, the obvious fact of the variety of our planet, of the millions on it from whom English was as remote as Spanish, French, and Portuguese were from him. They embarrassed and saddened him – his narrow Anglocentricity and the insidiousness of all colonialism, by which succeeding generations of the once-colonized too were obliged to think and to communicate in perpetually- alien tongues. (404)

These moments of self and systemic realization are all the more valuable as they are hedged around with the characteristic comic verve that the narrator employs.

Unlike his more public-minded father who had also been an IAS Officer and ended his career as the Governor of Bengal, Agastya Sen is a reluctant administrator, a postcolonial subject who is always confused about his selfhood and identity and ends up manufacturing various identities. He looks at the system he serves with detachment and sees through the skeleton of the steel frame. The final offer that he makes to the welfare state in the proposal for Project Bestial is to let him and his friend "further probe [the] links between power, documentation and desire" (423)—three qualities that marked the entire project of imperialism and unfortunately, still marks the political and administrative system of the neocolonial state.

Thus, the two novels by Upamanyu Chatterjee with Agastya Sen as their protagonist foreground the colonial mimicry and hybridity of existence that is the destiny of the postcolonial subject, but which is also a source of angst related to that very identity. It also offers an incisive critique of the welfare state with comic verve and irreverence.

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“Unseeing Truths: Gandhari’s Blindness as Narrative Prosthesis in The Curse of Gandhari” by Aditi Banerjee

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Abstract— In Aditi Banerjee’s The Curse of Gandhari, Gandhari’s self-imposed blindness operates as a central narrative prosthesis, deeply influencing the development of her character and the thematic direction of the novel. Narrative prosthesis refers to the use of disability to advance the plot, reveal deeper meanings, or shape the trajectory of character development. Gandhari’s voluntary blindness serves multiple purposes— it reflects her internal conflict, symbolizes her moral dilemmas, and becomes a powerful metaphor for the blindness of power, fate, and maternal helplessness. This article examines how Gandhari’s blindness not only reflects her psychological state but also drives the narrative forward, making it an indispensable tool in the novel’s exploration of patriarchal restrictions, moral blindness, and the tragic weight of maternal responsibility.



Keywords— Gandhari- blindness- narrative prosthesis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Aditi Banerjee’s *The Curse of Gandhari* is a rich reimagining of one of the most enigmatic characters from the Mahabharata. Gandhari, the queen of Hastinapur, is best known for her self-imposed blindness, a decision she makes to share in her husband Dhritrashtra’s disability. However, Banerjee’s novel gives Gandhari a new depth, framing her blindness as a symbolic and narrative device that influences not only her personal journey but the overarching themes of the novel.

Narrative prosthesis, a concept developed by David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, refers to the use of disability as a narrative device that shapes character and plot development. In *The Curse of Gandhari*, Gandhari’s blindness is more than a physical disability—it becomes a metaphor for the emotional, moral, and social struggles she faces. This article explores how Gandhari’s blindness functions as a narrative prosthesis, driving the novel’s key themes of moral conflict, maternal grief, and resistance against patriarchal structures.

Gandhari’s Blindness: A Dual Symbol of Agency and Surrender

In *The Curse of Gandhari*, Gandhari’s decision to blindfold herself at the time of her marriage can be interpreted as both an act of agency and surrender. On the surface, it is a display of loyalty and devotion to her husband, but it also signifies a deeper psychological tension between her autonomy and the limitations imposed on her by her role as a wife and queen in a patriarchal society.

As a narrative prosthesis, Gandhari’s blindness reflects her personal sacrifice, but it also becomes a tool through which the novel explores her internalization of patriarchal values. By choosing to share Dhritrashtra’s blindness, Gandhari symbolically accepts her subordinate role in the royal household, even though she harbours a keen awareness of the moral and political corruption surrounding her. This act of blindness represents both a moral stance—loyalty to her husband—and a form of suppression, as Gandhari consciously shuts herself off from the painful truths of her life.

This blindness is crucial to the narrative, as it creates a constant tension between Gandhari’s internal knowledge and her external inaction. Psychoanalytically, this can be seen as a form of repression, where Gandhari’s physical

blindness mirrors her psychological attempt to distance herself from the difficult realities of her family's destructive actions.

II. BLINDNESS AS RESISTANCE TO PATRIARCHAL CONSTRAINTS

While Gandhari's blindness can be interpreted as a form of repression, it also serves as a subtle form of resistance. In a patriarchal society that imposes strict roles on women, Gandhari's decision to blindfold herself can be seen as a way of reclaiming agency. By voluntarily disabling herself, Gandhari exercises control over her own body and rejects the passive role expected of her as a queen. This act of self-imposed blindness is not merely an acceptance of her husband's condition, but a defiant rejection of the expectation that she must always "see" and conform to the moral and social codes of her society. By blindfolding herself, Gandhari creates a space of resistance—she refuses to witness the injustices around her, and in doing so, asserts her autonomy in a limited and symbolic way.

In the novel, her blindness functions as a narrative prosthesis that challenges the traditional roles of women in the epic. It allows the reader to view Gandhari not just as a passive victim of fate, but as a complex character who resists patriarchal norms, even as she is constrained by them. This tension between her resistance and her powerlessness is central to the novel's exploration of gender and power.

III. BLINDNESS AS PSYCHOLOGICAL REPRESSION

From a psychoanalytic perspective, Gandhari's blindness can also be understood as a form of repression. Freud's theory of repression suggests that individuals often push disturbing thoughts or desires into the unconscious to protect themselves from psychological pain. Gandhari's decision to blindfold herself can be seen as an unconscious effort to shield herself from the overwhelming emotions associated with her role as a wife, mother, and queen.

As a mother, Gandhari is acutely aware of the consequences of Duryodhana's actions, yet her blindness allows her to avoid confronting the full reality of his destructive path. By blinding herself, she represses her maternal guilt and her responsibility for the actions of her sons. Her disability becomes a defense mechanism, a way of coping with the unbearable burden of watching her family disintegrate while being unable to stop it.

This repression is critical to understanding Gandhari's character in the novel. While she is portrayed as wise and perceptive, her blindness—both literal and figurative—prevents her from taking decisive action. Her disability is thus a narrative prosthesis that enables the exploration of repression, guilt, and emotional detachment. The novel uses her blindness to show how her refusal to see the truth ultimately contributes to the tragic outcome of the war, positioning her as a passive observer of her own family's destruction.

IV. BLINDNESS AS MORAL BLINDNESS

A central theme in *The Curse of Gandhari* is the moral blindness that plagues the Kuru dynasty. Gandhari's physical blindness becomes a narrative tool to explore the larger theme of ethical and moral failure. By choosing to blindfold herself, Gandhari also blinds herself to the flaws in her sons, particularly Duryodhana. Throughout the novel, she remains torn between her maternal love for him and the knowledge that his actions will lead to the downfall of their family.

Gandhari's blindness thus becomes a metaphor for her inability to intervene in the moral decay that surrounds her. She is physically blind to her sons' faults, but her moral blindness is more significant—her inability to confront the unethical choices made by her family, particularly Duryodhana, who leads the Kauravas into the catastrophic war. This use of blindness as a narrative prosthesis is crucial, as it highlights Gandhari's tragic position: she is aware of the impending disaster but feels powerless to change it.

The novel uses her blindness to underscore the broader theme of moral compromise. Gandhari, despite her wisdom and intuition, is rendered passive in the face of her son's ambition. Her blindness serves to magnify her inner turmoil, as she grapples with the guilt of being unable to "see" and correct the moral failings that lead to the war. In this sense, her disability is not just a reflection of her personal struggle but a narrative device that embodies the moral blindness of those in power.

V. BLINDNESS AND THE TRAGEDY OF MATERNAL GRIEF

The culmination of Gandhari's blindness as narrative prosthesis is most evident in her profound grief after the war, when she loses all of her sons. Her blindness, which has shielded her from fully confronting their moral failings, now becomes a symbol of her deep emotional pain. As a mother, she is left to mourn the loss of her children, and her blindness amplifies the intensity of her suffering.

In her final act of cursing Krishna, Gandhari's blindness takes on a new role—it becomes a form of rage and despair. She holds Krishna responsible for the destruction of her family, and her curse is a powerful moment in the narrative where her blindness is no longer a passive disability, but an active force of judgment and condemnation. Her blindness, which had previously symbolized her inability to intervene, now becomes a vehicle for her grief and her desire for retribution.

The novel uses Gandhari's blindness to explore the theme of maternal grief, showing how her disability becomes both a shield and a weapon. Her curse on Krishna is an emotional outburst born from the pain of her loss, and her blindness intensifies the impact of this moment, making it a defining point in the novel's tragic arc.

VI. CONCLUSION

In *The Curse of Gandhari*, Gandhari's blindness functions as a powerful narrative prosthesis that shapes the novel's exploration of moral conflict, repression, and maternal grief. Her blindness is not merely a physical condition but a complex symbol that drives the plot and deepens the thematic concerns of the novel. Through Gandhari's disability, the novel examines the tension between agency and helplessness, resistance and surrender, and the tragic consequences of moral and emotional blindness.

Aditi Banerjee's portrayal of Gandhari reclaims her as a nuanced and tragic figure, whose blindness becomes the lens through which the novel's central themes of power, fate, and maternal responsibility are explored. Gandhari's blindness, both literal and metaphorical, is an indispensable narrative tool that underscores her internal struggles and the broader tragedy of the Mahabharata's catastrophic war.

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As a narrative prosthesis, Gandhari’s blindness reflects her personal sacrifice, but it also becomes a tool through which the novel explores her internalization of patriarchal values. By choosing to share Dhritarashtra’s blindness, Gandhari symbolically accepts her subordinate role in the royal household, even though she harbours a keen awareness of the moral and political corruption surrounding her. This act of blindness represents both a moral stance—loyalty to her husband—and a form of suppression, as Gandhari consciously shuts herself off from the painful truths of her life.

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V. BLINDNESS AND THE TRAGEDY OF MATERNAL GRIEF

The culmination of Gandhari's blindness as narrative prosthesis is most evident in her profound grief after the war, when she loses all of her sons. Her blindness, which has shielded her from fully confronting their moral failings, now becomes a symbol of her deep emotional pain. As a mother, she is left to mourn the loss of her children, and her blindness amplifies the intensity of her suffering.

In her final act of cursing Krishna, Gandhari's blindness takes on a new role—it becomes a form of rage and despair. She holds Krishna responsible for the destruction of her family, and her curse is a powerful moment in the narrative where her blindness is no longer a passive disability, but an active force of judgment and condemnation. Her blindness, which had previously symbolized her inability to intervene, now becomes a vehicle for her grief and her desire for retribution.

The novel uses Gandhari's blindness to explore the theme of maternal grief, showing how her disability becomes both a shield and a weapon. Her curse on Krishna is an emotional outburst born from the pain of her loss, and her blindness intensifies the impact of this moment, making it a defining point in the novel's tragic arc.

VI. CONCLUSION

In *The Curse of Gandhari*, Gandhari's blindness functions as a powerful narrative prosthesis that shapes the novel's exploration of moral conflict, repression, and maternal grief. Her blindness is not merely a physical condition but a complex symbol that drives the plot and deepens the thematic concerns of the novel. Through Gandhari's disability, the novel examines the tension between agency and helplessness, resistance and surrender, and the tragic consequences of moral and emotional blindness.

Aditi Banerjee's portrayal of Gandhari reclaims her as a nuanced and tragic figure, whose blindness becomes the lens through which the novel's central themes of power, fate, and maternal responsibility are explored. Gandhari's blindness, both literal and metaphorical, is an indispensable narrative tool that underscores her internal struggles and the broader tragedy of the Mahabharata's catastrophic war.

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A Spectacle of Suffering: Disability, Euthanasia and Posthumanism in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Guzaarish*

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Abstract— This paper undertakes a critical analysis of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Guzaarish* (2010) via the interdisciplinary framework of Disability Studies, emphasising the intricate relationship between representation, agency, and socio-cultural ideology. The film focusses on Ethan Mascarenhas, a quadriplegic ex-magician, whose request for euthanasia generates conflicting narratives on autonomy, masculinity, and the commodification of suffering. This study employs the critical insights of academics such as Margrit Shildrick, David T. Mitchell, and Sharon L. Snyder to examine the interconnections of disability, vulnerability, and posthuman embodiment within cinematic discourse. The paper analyses how *Guzaarish* (2010) both romanticises and problematises disability, presenting it within an aestheticised tragedy while addressing Ethan's charismatic agency. This paper examines how the film's portrayal of Ethan's dependency redefines conventional masculinity and contests dominant notions of bodily perfection through posthumanist lens. This paper characterises *Guzaarish* (2010) as a contradictory work that alternates between reinforcing disability stereotypes as a manifestation of loss and offering instances of subversion that suggest the recovery of agency and dignity within the limitations of cinematic conventions. This paper elucidates the conflicts within Bollywood's engagement with disability as both a narrative and visual construct, providing new insights into its capacity for critique and complicity in sustaining ableist ideologies.



Keywords— Disability, Posthumanism, Masculinity, Bollywood, Euthanasia

I. INTRODUCTION

Cinematic representations of disability frequently fluctuate between two extremes: the portrayal of disabled individuals as tragic embodiments of suffering or as inspirational figures. *Guzaarish* (2010), directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, is praised for its emotive profundity and artistic quality. However, it exemplifies these polarities by interweaving themes of ableism, masculinity, autonomy, and suffering. The film's ethical debates regarding euthanasia and the socio-cultural construction of disability are navigated through the narrative of Ethan Mascarenhas, the quadriplegic protagonist. This paper examines *Guzaarish* (2010) within the interdisciplinary framework of Disability Studies, supplemented by posthumanist perspective. The study explores the intersection of corporeal

vulnerability, masculinity, posthuman condition and autonomy in cinematic representation by incorporating insights from Margrit Shildrick, David T. Mitchell, and Sharon L. Snyder, Hayles, Haraway and Braidotti etc. It critically evaluates the manner in which *Guzaarish* (2010) reinforces hegemonic able-bodied norms while concurrently providing opportunities for resistance and reclamation.

II. FRAGILE MASCULINITIES: THE CRISIS OF DEPENDENCY

Ethan's physical dependence is symbolically associated with a perceived loss of masculinity in *Guzaarish* (2010). His alleged failure as a man is exemplified by his inability to protect Sofia from her abusive ex-husband, which

reinforces hegemonic ideals of masculinity that emphasize physical strength and independence. This portrayal not only perpetuates the association between bodily autonomy and self-worth but also stigmatizes disability.

This cultural aversion to vulnerability is evidenced by the prioritization of control over one's body, which results in anxiety and stigmatization when one deviates from the idealized, self-contained subject. In *Guzaarish* (2010), this cultural bias is evident in the portrayal of Ethan Mascarenhas, who is depicted as experiencing a crisis of autonomy that threatens his masculine identity and subjectivity due to his disability. The film's exploration of masculinity, which is constructed by able-bodied standards, is inextricably linked to Ethan's disability. His present-day reliance on his nurse, Sofia (played by Aishwarya Rai), is starkly contrasted with his flashbacks, which portray him as a virile, successful magician adored by female admirers. This juxtaposition underscores the collapse of hegemonic masculinity, as Ethan bemoans his inability to safeguard Sofia from her abusive ex-husband—a failing that serves as a metaphor for his perceived loss of manhood.

Staples' (2011) critique of corporeal ability as central to male self-esteem and Connell's "hegemonic masculinity" (2005) can be used to analyse the intersection of disability and masculinity in *Guzaarish* (2010). Ethan's yearning for his past serves to reinforce societal norms that associate masculinity with independence and physical dominance. Simultaneously, the romantic interludes of the film challenge the stereotype of the disabled man as asexual, portraying Ethan as a subject worthy of admiration despite his physical limitations. Nevertheless, this dichotomy fails to challenge ableist narratives, as Ethan's sexual agency is ultimately eclipsed by his acceptance of a 'heroic' death.

III. THE 'HERO' AS A POSTHUMAN SUBJECT

Historical human subjectivity has been defined by the anthropocentric, Cartesian ideals of rationality, autonomy, and bounded individuality, which are challenged by posthumanism. This theoretical framework destabilizes binary oppositions, including human/non-human, mind/body, and self/other, underscoring the human's interconnection with technology, materiality, and the broader ecological world. Posthumanism challenges the normative constructions of embodiment in the context of disability, providing an alternative to ableist ideals of productivity and autonomy.

Ethan Mascarenhas, a quadriplegic ex-magician, is a posthuman figure whose existence is dependent upon a combination of human and non-human elements. His decentered subjectivity, which disrupts the fiction of the autonomous, self-contained individual, is reflected in his

ventilator, specialized wheelchair, and the tactile interventions of his attendant, Sofia. Nevertheless, the film's portrayal of Ethan fluctuates between acknowledging this interdependence as a legitimate mode of existence and portraying it as a source of existential despair. Ethan's dependence on technology and care networks could be interpreted as a representation of the hybrid nature of all human existence from a posthuman perspective. Human embodiment has consistently been mediated by tools, technologies, and environments, as Hayles (1999) contends, thereby challenging the primacy of the "natural" body. Ethan's radio broadcasts in *Guzaarish* (2010)—facilitated by adaptive technology—evidence that his embodied difference does not preclude creativity or agency. However, the narrative ultimately portrays these interdependencies as lamentable constraints, thereby reinforcing ableist hierarchies that prioritize unassisted corporeal autonomy over technologically mediated existence.

A central tension in *Guzaarish* (2010) stems from Ethan's appeal for euthanasia, which is presented as a reclaiming of dignity and agency. This narrative is further complicated by posthuman theory, which challenges the notion that vulnerability and dependence diminish personhood. Posthumanism, as Braidotti (2013) observes, redefines vulnerability as a shared and inherent condition, thereby denying the ideal of invulnerable individuality. McRuer (2006) critiques "compulsory able-bodiedness," a cultural logic that equates a fulfilling life with the absence of dependency or impairment. The film's portrayal of Ethan's euthanasia request is consistent with this perspective. The portrayal of Ethan's desire for death as a rational response to his physical limitations fails to acknowledge the influence of societal ableism on his despair. The posthuman approach emphasises the cultural devaluation of interdependence that Ethan's situation reveals, portraying his technologically and socially mediated existence as 'less than' entirely human.

In his seminal work, Wolfe (2010) contends that posthumanism forces us to reevaluate the concept of "the human" as a category that is defined by its opposition to the technological, the nonhuman, and the disabled. Wolfe (2010) criticises the "normative concept of the human" for its role in perpetuating systemic exclusions, particularly in the context of disability. The humanist ideal of an autonomous, self-sufficient subject is challenged by Ethan's existence, which is marked by both his intellectual vibrancy and physical limitations. According to Wolfe (2010) the philosophical frameworks used by humanism...reproduce the very kind of normative subjectivity that grounds discrimination. Ethan's condition challenges the binary distinctions between the able-bodied and the disabled, and it prompts enquiries regarding the limits of autonomy and

personhood. The posthumanist concept that human existence is inherently mediated by nonhuman entities is emphasised by his reliance on technology for mobility and communication. Ethan's existence exemplifies Wolfe's assertion that to be posthuman means to rethink, ever anew and vigorously, the concepts of 'consciousness,' 'autonomy,' and 'agency' (2010) in this sense.

Wolfe (2010) expands the discourse to encompass the interrelations between systems and their environments, underscoring the manner in which systems self-organise and adapt, drawing from Luhmann's Systems Theory. In *Guzaarish* (2010), Ethan's existence is sustained by a complex system that includes his carers, medical devices, and legal advocates. His residence, a literal and metaphorical space of containment, functions as a microcosm of Luhmann's concept of autopoiesis—a self-sustaining system that is reliant on its internal coherence and external interactions (Wolfe 2010).

The dynamic feedback cycles in systems theory are mirrored in the interaction between Ethan, his advocate Devyani Dutta (Shernaz Patel), and his nurse Sofia D'Souza (Aishwarya Rai). Sofia's unwavering concern is not merely an act of altruism; it is a recognition of their interconnected existences, which is consistent with Wolfe's assertion that "systems are always entangled with their environments" (Wolfe 2010). Humanist individualism is destabilised by this relational ontology, which posits that human individuality is derived from connections and dependencies.

IV. THE ETHICS OF EUTHANASIA AND DISABILITY AS A SPECTACLE

The romanticization of suffering and the problematic framing of euthanasia as the ultimate resolution for disability constitute some of the central themes of *Guzaarish* (2010). Ethan is praised for his wit and charm, which are consistent with the "supercrip" trope. However, his narrative trajectory concludes with his appeal for euthanasia, a decision that is framed as valiant but is profoundly entrenched in ableist assumptions about the "unlivability" of disabled lives. Shildrick (2002) remarks, "where physical and mental autonomy, the ability to think rationally and impartially, and interpersonal separation and distinction are the valued attributes of western subjectivity, then any compromise of control over one's own body, any indication of interdependency and connectivity, or of corporeal instability, are the occasion – for the normative majority – of a deep-seated anxiety that devalues difference."

Ethan's quadriplegia, which is the consequence of a traumatic accident, is portrayed as a loss of control over his

body and, consequently, his life. His disability positions him as a dependent on others, notably Sofia, his caretaker, because of his inability to perform everyday tasks or exert physical agency. Shildrick's (2002) observation resonates with Ethan's portrayal as his dependency manifests not as a relational dynamic but as a source of personal emasculation and defeat.

For instance, the film's incapacity to reconcile interdependence with a fulfilling existence is emphasized by Ethan's plea for euthanasia. The narrative that equates dependence with diminished humanity is problematic, as it frames his desire to end his life as a rational, heroic act of reclaiming autonomy. This formulation reinforces the notion that autonomy is the sole means of achieving dignity, thereby perpetuating the cultural devaluation of interdependence.

Shildrick's (2002) critique also illuminates the manner in which Ethan's relationships are indicative of societal apprehension regarding interdependence. His internalized sense of inadequacy is further exacerbated by his dependence on Sofia which is both necessary and burdensome. The film simultaneously portrays Ethan's dependence as a lamentable condition that must be resolved, while also valorising Sofia's self-sacrifice. This dynamic demonstrates the cultural concern with corporeal instability and interdependence as identified by Shildrick (2002), which challenges the ideal of the autonomous subject.

One of the most contentious ethical dilemmas in the film is highlighted by Ethan's appeal for euthanasia. Wolfe (2010) argues that posthumanism challenges the anthropocentric privileging of human agency by emphasising distributed modes of decision-making. Ethan's aspiration for ending his life is not exclusively determined by his internal will; it is also influenced by his embodied experience, societal perceptions of disability, and the reactions of those in his vicinity. Wolfe critiques conventional humanist ethics for its dependence on autonomous subjectivity, contending that it frequently excludes individuals who do not conform to normative paradigms of agency. The limitations of humanist frameworks in confronting complex bioethical issues are emphasised by Ethan's petition, which was met with both support and resistance. Wolfe posits that posthuman ethics necessitates a transition from 'abstract principles' to an acknowledgement of the interconnected, embodied realities of life (Wolfe, 2010). Ethan's narrative encourages viewers to reevaluate autonomy as a relational, context-dependent phenomenon, rather than an isolated trait.

Ethan's petition for euthanasia is also interconnected with more general biopolitical enquiries regarding the societal treatment of disabled bodies and the valuation of life. The concept of biopower, as defined by Foucault (1978), is

particularly pertinent in this context, as it investigates the manner in which societal institutions regulate and control existence. Ethan's struggle is not merely a personal conflict; it is a confrontation with the biopolitical structures that aspire to establish the parameters of a 'life worth living.'

Butler (2004) elaborates on these ideas by examining the manner in which specific lives are rendered more distressing than others. Ethan's existence is ambiguously positioned within this framework, as it is characterised by physical dependency and societal perceptions of suffering. While his intellectual contributions and charismatic personality are lauded, his physical condition is implicitly devalued by a culture that places a high value on able-bodiedness. This tension emphasises the normative concept of the human that Wolfe (2010) critiques, in which disability is frequently depicted as a deficit rather than a legitimate mode of existence. Ethan's advocacy for euthanasia can be interpreted as a form of resistance against these biopolitical norms from a posthumanist perspective. Ethan challenges the societal structures that attempt to impose a singular definition of the good life by asserting his right to choose the terms of his mortality. Concurrently, the concept of autonomy as an individualistic act is complicated by his relational entanglements, particularly his reliance on Sofia and the legal system, which mediate his decision.

In posthumanist ethics, euthanasia poses significant concerns regarding the boundaries of life and the individuals' rights to transcend them. The ethical implications of redefining existence in terms that transcend conventional humanist categories have been the subject of investigation by scholars such as Haraway and Agamben. The concept of "bare life" as articulated by Agamben (1995) is particularly instructive. He elaborates on the exclusion of specific individuals from political recognition and their reduction to their biological existence. In certain respects, Ethan's quadriplegia and the resulting dependence render him a barren existence, devoid of the autonomy that is typically associated with political agency.

In contrast, Haraway (1991) provides an alternative viewpoint, honouring the intermingling of human and nonhuman components. This cybernetic existence is exemplified by Ethan's life, which is mediated by technology and caregiving systems. His request for euthanasia is not only a repudiation of his biological condition, but also a reassertion of his cyborgian agency. Ethan's resistance to the limitations imposed by his embodied condition is consistent with Haraway's concept of the cyborg as a figure that subverts the boundaries between human, animal, and machine (1991).

The film's posthumanist critique of humanism is influenced by its aesthetic strategies. Bhansali's visual approach, which

is characterised by evocative close-ups, chiaroscuro lighting, and opulent interiors, simultaneously emphasises Ethan's corporeality and transcends it. Wolfe's assertion that posthumanism queries normal human experience through specific artistic modes is consistent with this dual focus (2010). Ethan's voice, which is amplified by a microphone and transmitted via radio, serves as a metaphor for technological mediation. He embodies the posthumanist idea of hybrid subjectivity, in which human and nonhuman elements converge, as he offers life advice on his radio program, despite his suffering. Wolfe's (2010) observation that the boundaries of the body are not where we typically think they are is illustrated by the blurring of boundaries between Ethan's physical limitations and his expansive intellectual presence.

V. CONCLUSION

Through the intersection of posthumanism, disability studies, and agency, this paper has endeavoured to decode the ethical and philosophical intricacies of euthanasia and disability in *Guzaarish* (2010). The film's narrative, which is centred on Ethan Mascarenhas's plea to terminate his life, transcends the boundaries of individual agency and autonomy, thereby encouraging a critical engagement with the relational and systemic contexts that characterise human existence. Ethan's narrative is consistent with posthumanist frameworks that underscore the contingent and distributed nature of agency by undermining humanist concepts of sovereignty and self-determination. The biopolitical forces that regulate disabled bodies are underscored by the ethical dilemmas surrounding euthanasia, as articulated in the film, which challenge traditional conceptions of life's value. This paper has emphasised the complexity of disability in the context of simplistic binary oppositions such as able-bodied versus disabled, life versus death, and agency versus dependency, as influenced by Foucault's concept of biopower and Butler's critique of normative frameworks. Ethan's decision to pursue euthanasia is not merely a denial of life; it is a radical assertion of his right to establish its boundaries, which challenges societal norms that prioritise autonomy for the able-bodied.

This discourse is further enriched by posthumanism, which reframes agency as relational and mediated by assemblages of human and nonhuman actors. The porous boundaries between human and machine, life and technology, autonomy and dependence are illuminated by Ethan's existence as a cyborgian figure, which is reliant on technology, caregiving networks, and legal systems. Sofia's role as a caregiver exemplifies the relational ethics that are fundamental to posthumanism, highlighting the mutual

entanglement of lives and complicating traditional caregiver-recipient dynamics.

Guzaarish (2010) is a poignant critique of humanist paradigms and a call to embrace more inclusive and compassionate frameworks for understanding disability, agency, and the ethics of care, as a result of the theoretical insights of Wolfe, Braidotti, and Haraway. Ethan's narrative not only emphasises the lived experiences of disability but also encourages to reconsider the preconceived notions of what constitutes a life that is worth living. In doing so, the film encourages one to imagine an ethical horizon in which human existence is viewed as fundamentally interconnected, influenced by systems, relationships, and technologies that both enable and constrain agency.

This paper concludes that *Guzaarish* (2010) provides a posthumanist reimagining of euthanasia that transcends the moral binaries that currently dominate public discourse. The critical engagement of the film and the decentering of the autonomous subject forces one to confront the ethical implications of our entanglements and responsibilities by situating life and death within a web of relationality. In an era that is becoming increasingly characterised by biopolitical governance and technological mediation, *Guzaarish* (2010) is a crucial reminder of the necessity of reevaluating the frameworks that undergird our comprehension of the human condition, life, and mortality.

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The Politics of Decolonization: Addressing Eurocentrism in Politics and Policy

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Abstract— This paper examines the Eurocentric bias that plagues the discipline of political science and explores ways to evaluate geography. Historically, political science has been dominated by Western theories and methods, leaving non-Western political theories lacking. This Eurocentrism not only ignores the diversity of international politics, but also leads to international conflict. This paper argues for a more unified and representative approach to politics by examining the political realm, the laws that currently govern, and the integration of Global South theory into international relations theory. This paper also explores the need to address research using alternative methods that reflect the complexity of non-Western political systems. Finally, decolonizing political science requires not only a broadening of inquiry but also a rethinking of the discipline's fundamental assumptions in order to create a more equitable and universal understanding of politics.



Keywords— *Indigenous governance, Global south, International relations, Postcolonial theory, Cultural Theory, Western theory, Decolonization Studies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Political science, like many other sciences, has a history of deriving from European ideas and theories, most of that have dominated the North America. This Eurocentrism often ignores the political and ideological differences of other regions of the world, thereby diminishing their involvement in the region. As the world becomes more interconnected, and formerly colonial countries gain greater political influence, calls for political decision-making are increasing. This means recognizing and addressing Eurocentric biases in political theory, research, and teaching methods is an imperative. Decolonizing political science is not about adding new voices; it is about rethinking the principles that have enabled the country to form a unified and representative discipline. By engaging with indigenous political institutions, postcolonial theory, and Global South perspectives, we can build a more equitable and rational understanding of global politics.

II. EUROCENTRISM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The dominance of science began during the European Enlightenment, when thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau laid the intellectual foundations of Western thought. Their ideas were often flexible, with implications for international politics, such as the social contract, individual rights, and national sovereignty. But these ideas emerged from a specific history and culture (17th- and 18th-century Europe) and were not applied to the rest of the world in the middle. As European powers expanded their control over large parts of the world, they developed their own policies and ideas on colonial societies, often viewing local political institutions as primitive or backward. This legacy continues today; political science systems in many countries still incorporate Western texts and methods. As a result, political organizations and ideas in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are often seen as marginal or “exceptional” rather than central to the mainstream world of political analysis.

Realism and Marxism have shaped how world politics is taught and understood. But these methods often fail to account for the political realities of non-Western peoples. For example, basic liberties such as individual rights and democratic governance may not adequately explain the public and administrative structures in many African societies. Similarly, realism, which views international relations as a struggle between states' powers, has difficulty explaining the region and the collaborations that have led to the various policies of Asia and Africa. For example, the political ideas of thinkers such as Confucius, Mahatma Gandhi, or Ibn Khaldun have received little attention in political science, despite their profound influence on control and thought in their respective fields. By focusing solely on Western perspectives, political science ignores the richness and diversity of cultures and ideas that exist in the West.

Integrating Indigenous and Non-Western Political Systems

A significant part of the decolonization process is the recognition of the value of Indigenous and non-Western political systems. These organizations are often based on social and cultural values and provide a model of governance that challenges Western ideals of freedom, justice, and liberty. For example, the Panchayati judiciary in India uses a system of local self-government by the local community, representing a form of participatory democracy distinct from Western liberal democracy. Similarly, African presidential rule and consensus-building policies regarding public decision-making and conflict resolution are incompatible with the human rights that underpin Western thinking. Non-Western political systems should not be viewed as anomalies or exceptions, but should be examined on their own terms as alternatives to Western models. This should not only broaden political studies, but also create new theoretical frameworks that can ground the diversity of international politics. Even after independence, many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America retained political institutions abandoned by European powers. This legacy has had a profound impact on the governance of postcolonial states, shaping everything from legal systems to bureaucratic structures.

Similarly, most African countries retain laws based on European models, but these are often associated with local standards of justice and governance. In some cases, these foreign political systems have proven hostile to local realities, leading to governance problems such as corruption, conflict, and weak states.

Decolonial political science must not only acknowledge these old policies, but also explore how postcolonial states reclaim their own political institutions and structures. This may involve integrating indigenous governance into

modern state structures or creating new political structures that transcend colonial systems. Like political science as a whole, it has traditionally been driven by Western thought. Ideas such as realism and liberalism were created in the context of European and North American politics and often reflect the interests and concerns of Western countries. This made sense in a political world where the Global South was often seen as a peripheral actor, looking to the power of the North in business. Regional organizations such as ASEAN, BRICS, and the African Union are challenging the energy-use model of global governance and politics. These organizations emphasize regional cooperation, negotiation, and other development methods, in contrast to the competitive, state-centric social theory of the Western world. For example, the Non-Aligned Movement, founded during the Cold War, rejected the binary logic of Western international relations theory and advocated a three-way approach that was critical to democratic governance and the independence of newly independent states. Today, countries in the Global South continue to struggle against Western control of organizations such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, advocating reforms that affect the supply pressures of developing countries. A comprehensive and inclusive approach that transcends the narrow confines of Western thought.

Traditional research methods used in political science, such as quantitative analysis, case studies, and comparative politics, are often based on Western epistemology and refer to objectivity, rationality, and empiricism. While these methods provide good insights, they may not be suitable for examining non-Western policies, which tend to be more complex and context-dependent. Decisions may not fit well within the rigid framework of Western politics. Similarly, participatory research that involves working closely with communities to create knowledge can provide a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to political education. These lessons are more important than local knowledge and experience, and are difficult to generalize from traditional, top-down research.

III. CONCLUSION

Decolonizing political science means embracing this alternative research methodology to help scholars construct more nuanced and contextualized analyses. This could include using ethnographic methods to examine politics within its cultural context, using narratives to understand the political significance of oral history, or conducting research on the importance of the needs and voices of marginalized communities. Through the study of politics, scholars can develop a unified and representative approach to political science that is not in line with Western

knowledge. If the discipline is to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world, the dominance of Eurocentric theories, frameworks, and methods limits the scope of political research, marginalizes non-Western perspectives, and reinforces the world's hierarchies of power. By examining these biases and integrating studies of regional politics, the Global South, and other issues, scholars can create a unified and representative picture of politics. It is about bringing new voices to politics. It is about rethinking what we have learned and understood about politics. Political science can transcend the narrowness of Eurocentrism and become an international discipline that can solve the political problems of the 21st century. The future of political science lies in its ability to embrace diversity of ideas, methods, and perspectives.

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A Study on the English Translation of Names of Cultural Relics: A Case Study of Cultural Relics Excavated from the Liangzhu Site

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Abstract— *Cultural relics contain rich historical and cultural information, and their English translation is an important part of cross-cultural communication. There are numerous cultural relics in the Liangzhu site, which represent the late Neolithic culture. This article analyzes the translation methods based on the requirements of translation of the cultural relics. The author intends to adopt the literal translation, annotations, and free translations. Through translation the author hope that the target readers can better understand the Liangzhu cultural relics and promote the dissemination of Chinese culture and Liangzhu culture.*



Keywords— *Culture going global, English translation of the names of cultural relics, Liangzhu site, Translation methods*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the strategic context of the “Chinese Culture Going Global”, cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries are becoming increasingly frequent, and Chinese culture is also receiving more and more attention from people around the world. Cultural relics carry ancient civilization and are witnesses of historical culture. Therefore, cultural relics’ translation is of great significance in spreading and inheriting Chinese culture and should receive sufficient attention.

The Liangzhu culture is an culture of the late Neolithic period in China, dating back 5300-4300 years, named after its origin in Liangzhu, Hangzhou. On July 6, 2019, the “Liangzhu Ancient City Site” was successfully listed in UNESCO World Heritage Site at the 43rd session. Therefore, the translation of cultural relics unearthed from Liangzhu has great research value.

The translation of cultural relics is not only the conversion between two languages, but also carries the mission of conveying culture. Therefore, in terms of translation

methods, traditional methods may not be suitable. This article will explore methods applicable to the translation of names of cultural relics to fully utilize their cultural dissemination function.

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL RELIC NAMES

At present, there is no unified regulation on the translation methods of cultural relics in China. Such complex and arduous translation tasks mainly rely on translators to complete. The specific translation methods or techniques used also need to be analyzed by translators based on different situations. Based on previous research of other scholars, the author believes that the translation of cultural relic names should meet the following three requirements:

2.1 Informative and Culture-related

Cultural relics are concentrated reflection of a country's material and spiritual culture, for this reason, when translating the names of cultural relics, translators should fully understand the background culture of the relics and

master certain basic knowledge^[4]. For example, the “陶鬶” unearthed in Liangzhu site is even unfamiliar to Chinese people. Translator should search background information to know it's function, shape, material and so on.

2.2 Smooth and Concise

The length and complexity of cultural relic names vary greatly depending on their production process and the amount of known information. The more known information and the more complex production process, the more complex the name of cultural relics will be^[2]. Therefore, special attention should be paid to word selection when translating.

The translator should reasonably filter and arrange information while ensuring the translation is smooth and easy to understand. In summary, it is important to preserve the Chinese meaning as much as possible, in line with the reading habits and thinking patterns of foreign readers. For example, in Chinese, “壶” is generally translated as "jar", but the English word “jar” does not necessarily refer to the historical and cultural utensil “壶” in China. Therefore, Chinese scholars uniformly translate it as "Hu jar".

2.3 Standard Terminology

When translating cultural relics, the translator must use standardized vocabulary. For vocabulary with corresponding categories in foreign languages, priority should be given to using these vocabulary. For those without corresponding items, certain criteria should be established for standardization. For the same type of object, ensure consistency before and after. For example, when translating “玉琮”, one of the most important jade objects that appears frequently, the translator should ensure the consistency when translating relevant text.

III. TRANSLATION METHODS

3.1 Literal Translation

On the basis of maintaining the cultural information inherent in the cultural relics themselves, if English can find expressions that correspond in both form and connotation, with directly corresponding or similar conceptual images, and the target language readers can obtain the same or similar understanding and feelings as the source language readers, literal translation can be used. For example:

玉纺轮 jade spinning wheel

玉三叉形器 jade trident-shaped vessel

玉锥形器 jade conical vessel

玉柱形器 jade column-shaped vessel

玉半圆形器 jade semicircular vessel

石刀 stone knife

In these examples, as these terms suggest, targets can imagine that “玉纺轮” is a kind of spinning wheel made up from jade, and “玉半圆形器” is a kind of jade ware in semicircular shape. Therefore, though the translation of these ancient vessels is still recognized as belonging to the cultural system of the source text, readers can understand them.

3.2 Add Annotation

Due to significant historical and cultural differences between English and Chinese, some cultural relic names are unique to China, which makes it difficult to accurately translate them into English. Annotation is an effective method to compensate for the cultural default, which enables the readers to enjoy the cultural exploration while comprehending the translation version^[3]. Annotation is always combined with transliteration^[1].

For example, “玉琮” is translated into Jade Cong (a long hollow piece of jade with rectangular side). If you transliterate “玉琮” directly into "Jade Cong", readers will find it difficult to read, so it is necessary to explain their historical background and provide relevant information to help readers better understand it.

3.3 Free Translation

When choose this translation method, it means translator deleting any foreign connotations and choosing neutral reference. In other words, it discards the specific image in the source text and directly reveal the meaning of the source text.

For example, “四系罐” is translated into “pottery container with four handles on the shoulder”. The translator did not translate literally, but used flexible translation methods to convey the deep information.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the actual translation process, translation methods such as literal translation, annotation, and free translation are relative, not absolute. In addition to the translation methods mentioned in the article, there are many different translation methods available for translators to choose from. How to choose translation methods depends on many factors. But the requirements for translation are similar and the author will improve translation skills to achieve these requirements.

There are a wide variety of cultural relics unearthed in the Liangzhu site, and the author alone cannot analyze the translation of all the relics, but the important thing is promoting Chinese culture to go global through translation of cultural relics.

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Multimedia-Based Instructional Materials and Students' Learning Achievement in Literature

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Abstract— *Multimedia-based Instructional Material nowadays become teachers' ultimate equipment to stimulate learner's interest. This descriptive-correlational study investigates the impact of Multimedia-Based instructional materials on students' learning achievement in Literature. The evaluation encompasses experts' assessments of Podcast Instructional Material, PowerPoint Video Material, and Digital Modular Material, focusing on content, relevance, visual appeal, and instructional quality. Additionally, it examines learning achievement in Literature of the Grade 9 students of Telafas National High School, their pre-test and post-test results among control and experimental groups using various multimedia approaches, including Podcast Instructional Material, PowerPoint, and Video Presentation were tested. Findings reveal high-quality Multimedia-Based Instructional Materials, with the Podcast Instructional Material, PowerPoint Video Material, and Video Presentation receiving commendable ratings across evaluated dimensions. Pre-test results indicate students' literary achievements below expectations, with post-test outcomes varying across experimental groups, ranging from fairly satisfactory to very satisfactory. Moreover, significant disparities exist between pre-test and post-test results among control and experimental groups, underscoring the efficacy of multimedia-based approaches. The study concludes that Multimedia-Based Instruction Materials, including Podcast, PowerPoint, and Video Presentation, significantly enhance students' literature achievement. Overall, this research highlights the effectiveness of integrating multimedia resources such as Podcasts, PowerPoint, and Video Presentations in literature education. The findings underscore the potential of multimedia-based approaches to elevate learning outcomes and improve students' engagement and understanding in Literature instruction. Consequently, educators and curriculum developers are encouraged to consider multimedia resources as valuable tools for enhancing learning experiences and promoting academic success in literary studies.*



Keywords— *Multimedia instructional materials, podcast, powerpoint and video presentations, learning achievement, literature class*

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning in recent times has become more complicated. If we try to look back decades ago, learners greatly differ. Before, Students had a longer attention span to listen to teachers' delivery, while the present learners were frequently distracted. In the invasion of the technological world, educators were having difficulty competing against gadgets for their focus. As a part of the

educational arena, the researcher has observed that nowadays, learners are hooked more on their visual skills.

Educational technologists nowadays commonly discuss how multimedia works (Hilal et al., 2015). The impact of education and classroom activities are reinforced and enhanced by it. New information resources like podcasts, blogs, and streaming video and audio are employed to effectively illustrate concepts to our students and reinforce media literacy skills. It was anticipated that

the new technology would shift the focus of learning and teaching from being heavily teacher-dominated to student-centered, allowing students to improve their higher-order thinking talents, such as problem-solving, communication, creativity, and information processing. However, there is little empirical evidence to back up these assertions (Guri-Rosenblit, 2009). Education is coping with a new phenomenon that does not yet have recognized bounds. A variety of terms used to describe the nature of new technologies in learning environments, some research findings that are frequently incongruent, and a lack of consolidation of the numerous findings into a coherent conceptual, theoretical framework are all indications of the multi-based learning field's immaturity.

Moreover, 90% of students worldwide have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, making it one of the largest educational interruptions in history (UNESCO, 2020). Many nations have resorted to online distance learning to guarantee that learning never ends. Learning achievement also significantly influences one's achievement in school. The DepEd bid it as one of the bases for skills an individual can acquire in the educational process wherein a learner must master. Student accomplishments are a doorway for all learners to access other learning areas since a learner who struggles with reading may struggle with other subjects. Studies have indicated numerous explanations for the variations in learners' success levels. According to Luz (2007), many Filipino students lack the reading habits necessary for learning.

Learning achievement among learners in the present was deteriorating since they were more disturbed, and teachers of Telafas National High School utilized some learning aids to catch their attention and to strengthen their understanding of the topic, which can enhance their academic achievements (Tomas et al., 2021). The different research dealing with learning achievement, achievement, and development forms vary across rural and urban schools (Johnson et al., 2021), and absenteeism (Santibanez et al., 2021) generally affects student results. It is made worse by the country's paradoxical, high-cost yet sluggish speed internet connectivity, as well as the transition to distant education modalities over self-learning modules and classrooms conducted online. Though many researchers attempt to explore the factors that intervene in learning achievement, very few, if none, can focus on the utilization of multimedia in intensifying the students' learning achievements. Looking at the scenario mentioned above, the researcher as a language educator was also disturbed, for almost all of them carry out challenges on the field. Many had tried to respond to the DepEd's challenge to elevate academic achievements among learners, and Grade 9 students of Telafas National High School were included.

The researchers, on the other hand, came up with instructional strategies that aid them in this venture, and this was through the use of multimedia instructions, which was tested in this study and its impact on student's learning achievements.

Statement of the Problem

The study identified the effect of employing Multimedia-Based Instructional Materials (MBIMs) and Students' Learning Achievement in Literature. It answered the following questions:

1. What is the level of content experts' evaluation of MBIMs, specifically, Podcast IMs, PowerPoint IMs, and Video Presentation IMs in terms of:
 - 1.1. content;
 - 1.2. relevance;
 - 1.3. visual appeal; and
 - 1.4. instructional quality?
2. What is the level of students' learning achievement in the pretest and posttest results among the control and experimental groups using :
 - 2.1. Conventional Teaching for the Control Group;
 - 2.2. Podcast IMs for Experimental Group 1;
 - 2.3. Powerpoint IMs for Experimental Group 2; and
 - 2.4. Video presentation IMs for Experimental Group 3?
3. What are the mean gain scores of the control and experimental groups in their pretest and posttest?
4. Is there a significant difference in the pretest and posttest results on students' learning achievement of the control group and experimental groups using MBIMs, particularly Podcast Instructional Material, PowerPoint, and Video Instructional Material?

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, the experimental research design was adopted. It evaluated how multimedia-based training affected the student's academic performance. Blakstad (2008) defines the experimental method as a systematic, scientific approach to research in which the investigator modifies one or more variables while monitoring and measuring any changes in the other variables. Using podcasts, PowerPoint presentations, and video

presentations, the experimental group received instruction differently.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at Telafas National High School, Barangay Telafas, Columbio, Sultan Kudarat. Telafas National High School is established on January 01, 2002 is a public high school located in Columbio, Province of Sultan Kudarat, Region XII-SOCCSKSARGEN.

Participants of the Study

The researchers utilized the four sections of Grade 9 students of Telafas National High School as respondents of this study. It included 40 Xenon students, 37 Argon students, 37 Neon students and 38 Krypton students, a total of 152 Grade 9 students, who were enrolled during the school year 2023-2024. The student-participants were homogeneously selected with common attributes. Primarily, all participants were Grade 9 students simultaneously and were enrolled in Telafas National High School for the school year 2023-2024. Their age ranged from fifteen to seventeen years old. Student's average in all sections was evenly distributed to each section, and each group was composed of students with low, average, and high-performing students. This study also involved three (3) language experts, such as a Master Teacher in English and an English teacher with a Master of Arts in Teaching major in English, to validate the contents of the MBIMs used in the study. In addition, two (2) experts in Information Technology, such as a teacher with NC 2 certification in Computer Application and a School Information Technology Coordinator, validated the MBIMs to be used in the study.

Sampling Technique

Total enumeration was utilized in this study, wherein the researcher used all 152 Grade 9 students of Telafas National High School. Since the Grade 9 students of the participating school have four sections, namely Xenon, Krypton, Argon, and Neon, and were being sectioned heterogeneously, the researcher utilized them all for this best suit the whole duration of the conduct of the experimental study without disturbing their other classes.

Research Instrument

The researcher used the information from the teachers' learning guides and learner's material for English grade 9 lessons from the material issued by Almonte et al. (2014) of the DepEd Central Office. First Edition, A Journey Through Anglo-American Literature, English Learner's Material, thoroughly chosen and modified. Primarily, the researcher compiled 5 lessons from the Grade 9 learning materials and made a 10-item test that served as the pretest and posttest materials. Results represented the

learning achievement in literature. Specifically, a total of 50-item tests composed of different test types (please refer to Appendix G for test items), which was used in the pretest and posttest that measured the student's achievement in Anglo-American Literature in all experimental groups and was interpreted using the data below based on DepEd Order No. 8 s. 2015.

Grading Scale	Description
90 – 100	Outstanding (O)
85 – 89	Very Satisfactory (VS)
80 – 84	Satisfactory (S)
75 – 79	Fairly Satisfactory (FS)
Below 75	Did Not Meet Expectations (DNME)

The researchers presented the lessons using MBIM tools such as Podcast, MS PowerPoint and Video Presentations, and Digital Modular containing similar contents to the lesson. A panel of experts validated All MBIMs regarding relevance, visual appeal, and interest-proving features using a 5 5-point Likert scale. It was rated using the given scale below.

Scale	Description
5	Excellent Quality
4	High Quality
3	Moderate Quality
2	Less Quality
1	Least Quality

Statistical Treatment

The information gathered by the researcher was analyzed using frequency count, mean, t-test, and f-test. Frequency count and mean describe the pretest and posttest results among three experimental groups from Grade 9 classes (Xenon, Krypton, Argon, and Neon). F-test (ANOVA) was used to determine the significant difference among the MBIMs, specifically the Podcast, PowerPoint and Video Presentation, and Digital Modular instructional materials, test results among the Grade 9 students of Telafas National High School. Lastly, a t-test was used to test the significant relationship between content experts' evaluations and the student's learning achievement in the experimental group at a 0.05 significance level.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Evaluation of the Instructional Materials

The instructional quality, content, acceptability, and relevance of the learning module were validated by the experts and were determined and interpreted.

Table 1. Summary of the Grand Mean Ratings of Podcast Instructional Material

No	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	Content	4.06	0.44	High Quality
2	Relevance	4.06	0.40	High Quality
3	Visual Appeal	4.10	0.27	High Quality
4	Instructional Quality	4.08	0.48	High Quality
Overall Mean		4.08	0.40	High Quality

Table 1 demonstrates the level of evaluation of the podcast instructional material across various indicators, including content, relevance, visual appeal, and instructional quality. The mean score for content evaluation is 4.06, with a standard deviation of 0.44, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the content provided in the podcast instructional material. It suggests that respondents find the content comprehensive, informative, and relevant to their needs.

Similarly, the mean score for relevance evaluation is 4.06, with a slightly lower standard deviation of 0.40, indicating that validators perceived the material to be highly relevant to the learning objectives. It implies that the content aligns well with the respondents and addresses pertinent topics. Moreover, the mean score for visual appeal is slightly higher at 4.10, with a lower standard deviation of 0.27, indicating that validators find the visual aspects of the instructional material appealing and engaging. The design, layout, and multimedia elements contribute to the user experience.

Lastly, the mean score for instructional quality is consistent with the overall mean at 4.08, with a standard deviation of 0.48, indicating a very high level of satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction provided in the podcast material. It encompasses various aspects such as clarity, organization, interactivity, and effectiveness of instructional methods.

The evaluation results suggest that the podcast instructional material delivers relevant, visually appealing content and highly instructional quality. These findings validate the effectiveness of using podcasts as an instructional tool in the context of this study.

It supports the claim of Ng'ambi and Lombe (2012) that the use of podcasts in the classroom complements a Constructivist approach, which holds its roots in the theories of eminent scholars such as Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky, offering different views on the essence of incorporating active, social and creative aspects of learning.

Table 2. Summary of the Grand Mean Rating of PowerPoint Instructional Material

No	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	Content	4.18	0.30	High Quality
2	Relevance	4.28	0.35	Excellent Quality
3	Visual Appeal	4.24	0.34	Excellent Quality
4	Instructional Quality	4.28	0.35	Excellent Quality
Overall Mean		4.25	0.34	Excellent Quality

Table 2 presents the results of the evaluation of the PowerPoint instructional material. The validators' excellent insight into the material is indicated by the high mean scores obtained for variables, including relevance (4.28), Instructional Quality (4.28), and Visual Appeal (4.24). The 4.25 overall mean score is additional evidence of the excellent quality of the overall PowerPoint material. On the other hand, the lowest mean is obtained by its Content

(4.18) imploring that the content of the PowerPoint instructional material is of high quality.

These results imply that the content should be presented to meet the audience's requirements and expectations by effectively communicating essential in a visually appealing and instructionally effective way. The excellent results show that the material successfully engages students and is in good alignment with the learning objectives.

The findings of Parang et al. (2019) confirm that using PowerPoint has improved motivation and that technology integration and e-learning are now typical in K–12 education. Even Ibrahim (2018) concluded that PowerPoint presentations are a very effective way to raise

academic achievement in social studies and national studies among students at risk of learning disabilities. As such, they should be included in teacher education programs to help prepare future educators who might work with students who perform poorly academically.

Table 3. Summary of the Grand Mean Rating of Video Presentation Instructional Material

No	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1	Content	4.44	0.45	Excellent quality
2	Relevance	4.56	0.40	Excellent quality
3	Visual Appeal	4.50	0.53	Excellent quality
4	Instructional Quality	4.58	0.46	Excellent quality
Overall Mean		4.52	0.46	Excellent quality

Table 3 presents the evaluation results of video presentation instructional material across four key indicators: Content, Relevance, Visual Appeal, and Instructional Quality. Primarily, the content obtained a mean score of 4.44, indicating that respondents generally rated the content of the instructional material as excellent. The material likely covers relevant topics comprehensively and effectively, providing learners with valuable information and insights. The second indicator, relevance, has a slightly higher mean score of 4.56, indicating that respondents perceived the material to be highly relevant to student's needs and learning objectives and that the instructional material aligns well with the context and goals of the learners, making it more engaging and applicable to their learning experiences.

Moreover, the visual appeal has a mean score of 4.50, indicating that validators found the instructional material's visual elements appealing and engaging. Lastly, instructional quality obtains the highest mean score of 4.58 among the indicators. It suggests that validators find the

overall quality of instruction provided by the material to be excellent and encompasses various aspects such as clarity, effectiveness, and engagement of instructional methods employed in the material.

Further, the overall mean score for all indicators is 4.52, indicating that the video presentation has an excellent quality and perceived effectiveness with the overall instructional material. These findings validate the instructional material's effectiveness in meeting learners' needs and expectations, potentially leading to increased content engagement, comprehension, and retention. The instructional material is a valuable resource for teaching and learning literature, offering a positive and enriching learning experience for students and can improve their achievement.

The claim of Jacobs (2012) supports video use results in student participation in the classroom. Furthermore, studies showed that instructional videos are one effective strategy for enhancing student participation in the school.

Table 4. Level of Students' Learning Achievement in the Pretest among the Control and Experimental Groups

No	Groups	Mean Rating	SD	Verbal Description
1	Control Group	66.97	2.02	Did Not Meet Expectations
2	PowerPoint	66.41	2.13	Did Not Meet Expectations
3	Podcast	66.75	2.21	Did Not Meet Expectations
4	Video Presentation	67.39	1.78	Did Not Meet Expectations

Table 4 presents the results of students' learning achievement in the pretest among different groups: Control Group, PowerPoint, Podcast, and Video Presentation. The results show that all groups scored below expectations, with mean ratings of 66.97, 66.41, 66.75, and 67.39,

respectively. Despite slight mean-score variations, all groups fell under the Did Not Meet Expectations category. It suggests that students' learning achievement in the pretest in all groups is comparable. While the differences in mean scores among the groups are minimal, they indicate that no

particular group stood out significantly better during the pretest.

Results are the manifestation of the stand of Tomas et al. (2021) that learning achievement among

learners in the present is deteriorating since they are more disturbed, and teachers should look and utilize some learning aids to catch their attention and strengthen their understanding of the topic which can improve their achievements academically.

Table 5. Level of Students' Learning Achievement in the Posttest among the Control and Experimental Groups

No	Groups	Mean Rating	SD	Verbal Description
1	Control Group	70.59	4.66	Did Not Meet Expectations
2	PowerPoint	80.76	4.51	Satisfactory
3	Podcast	78.58	5.46	Fairly Satisfactory
4	Video Presentation	85.42	4.44	Very Satisfactory

Table 5 presents the results of students' learning achievement in the posttest in this portion among different groups: Control Group, PowerPoint, Podcast, and Video Presentation. The posttest results reveal notable differences in the mean ratings among the groups, indicating varying levels of learning achievement.

The Control Group, despite showing improvement from the pretest, still fell short of meeting expectations, with a mean rating of 70.59. However, the experimental groups, including PowerPoint (80.76), Podcast (78.58), and Video Presentation (85.42), demonstrated significantly higher mean ratings.

Among these, the Video Presentation group achieved the highest mean rating of 85.42, indicating satisfactory learning achievement in literature. The group also has a denser result being shown by the group's lowest standard deviation of 4.44 compared to the other groups. These results highlight the potential effectiveness of Video Presentation as an instructional method in promoting higher levels of learning achievement among students in literature.

Multimedia learning theory can be used to guide and improve these learning environments through effective instructional message design is visible Mayer, (2019).

Table 6. Results of t-test Analysis between the Pretest and Posttest Scores of all Groups

Groups	Pretest	Posttest	Df	t-stat	p-value
Control Group	66.97	70.59	38	4.52	0.0001
PowerPoint	66.41	80.76	36	17.47	0.0000
Podcast	66.75	78.58	35	10.84	0.0000
Video Presentation	67.39	85.42	35	22.99	0.0000

The results in Table 6 showcase the outcomes of the t-test analysis conducted between all groups' pretest and posttest scores. Results show that all experimental groups, including the PowerPoint, Podcast, and Video Presentation groups' significant improvements in posttest scores are evident. Notably, the Control Group exhibited a moderate increase from a mean pretest score of 66.97 to 70.59 in the posttest, with a t-statistic of 4.52 and a p-value of 0.0001, indicating slight statistical significance.

However, the most evident improvements are observed in the experimental groups utilizing MBIMs. The Podcast group demonstrated significant progress, with posttest mean scores of 78.58 with 0.0000 p-values showing the efficacy of MBIMs in enhancing students' scores. Similarly, the PowerPoint group displayed a substantial

increase from 66.41 in the pretest to 80.76 in the posttest, with a remarkable t-statistic of 17.47 and a p-value of 0.0000, signifying highly significant improvement. Moreover, the Video Presentation group yielded the most substantial improvement in posttest scores, with a mean increase of 18.03 points from the pretest, supported by a notable t-statistic of 22.99 and a p-value of 0.0000. It suggests that video presentations as a pedagogical tool profoundly impact students' literary achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected since there is a significant difference in the pretest and posttest results on students' learning achievement of the control group and experimental groups using MBIMs, particularly Podcast, PowerPoint, and Video Instructional Material.

Meanwhile, the findings underscore the importance of employing diverse instructional strategies tailored to different learning styles and preferences, emphasizing the effectiveness of MBIMs in educational settings. It is true in the claim of Kay (2012) that utilizing

supplemental material such as videos increases student engagement. Developing a technique like integrating video clips into MBIM materials promotes effective learning in the learning process.

Table 7. Results of the one-way Analysis of Variance in the Mean Gain Scores of the 4 Groups

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F crit
Between Groups	4249.68	3	1416.56	49.49	0.00	2.67
Within Groups	4121.64	144	28.62			
Total	8371.32	147				

Table 7 presents the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) outcomes to analyze the mean gain scores among the four groups. The results indicate a significant difference in mean gain scores between the groups, as evidenced by a higher F-value of 49.49 and a corresponding p-value of 0.00, which is relatively lower than the set 0.05 statistical significance level.

The between-groups variance (SS = 4249.68) significantly outweighs the within-groups variance (SS = 4121.64), emphasizing the substantial impact of the MBIMs on the participants' learning outcomes. With a critical F-value of 2.67, the calculated F-value surpasses this

threshold by a significant margin, further supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, results reveal a significant difference in the pretest and posttest results on students' learning achievement of the control group and experimental groups using MBIMs, particularly Podcast, PowerPoint, and Videos.

Further, the difference between the sample means of the groups is big enough to be statistically significant. Thus, there is a need for a post hoc analysis. The Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) is applied in this case. From the multiple comparisons of means, the table below was derived.

Table 8. Results of Post-Hoc Analysis in the Mean Gain Scores of the 4 Groups

Groups	Mean Gains	F	p-value
Control Group	3.62a	49.49	0.00
PowerPoint	11.83b		
Podcast	14.35b		
Video Presentation	18.03c		

Notes: Means of the same subscript are comparable

Table 8 displays the result of the post-hoc analysis conducted to compare the mean gain scores among the four groups: Control Group, PowerPoint, Podcast, and Video Presentation. The results reveal substantial variations in mean gains across the groups, with statistically significant differences in the F-values and corresponding p-values. Notably, the Control Group exhibits the lowest mean gain score of 3.62, while the PowerPoint, Podcast, and Video Presentation groups show considerably higher mean gains of 11.83, 14.35, and 18.03, respectively.

Furthermore, the post-hoc analysis allows for meaningful comparisons between the groups, revealing notable differences in mean gains that align with the nature of the MBIMs employed. The results emphasize the

effectiveness of MBIMs, particularly video presentations, in fostering deeper understanding and retention of educational content. The increases in mean gain scores from PowerPoint to Podcast to Video Presentation groups highlight the benefits of utilizing MBIMs to engage learners and effectively improve the achievement of students in literature.

The ascending order of mean gains suggests a clear trend wherein MBIMs yield progressively higher improvements in literary achievement compared to conventional instruction in the control group. This is indicative of the statement of Greenberg et al. (2012) that video-based tools enhance students' creativity and teamwork. Access to videos can inspire learners and give

their education a unique setting. Using MBIMs in the classroom has allowed students and teachers to improve self-directed learning. Overall, the results highlight the potential of MBIMs in enhancing learning outcomes and call for further exploration and integration of innovative technologies in educational practices.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the study's findings, the researcher concluded that Multimedia-Based instructional materials, namely podcasts, PowerPoints, and video presentations used in this study, are of excellent quality in their content, relevance, visual appeal, and instructional quality. The student's achievement in literature during the pretest Did Not Meet Expectations. However, it ends fairly satisfactory and very satisfactory in Podcast, PowerPoint, and Video Presentation respectively. Additionally, the mean gain score of the three experimental groups, showed that the video presentation had a relatively higher gain than Podcast and Powerpoint.

Hence, this study concluded that integrating Multimedia-Based Instruction Materials such as podcasts, PowerPoints, and Video Presentations significantly improved the students' achievement in literature, creating a more welcoming and productive learning environment.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are considered:

1. The content of the Podcast instructional material needs to be further improved by incorporating additional activities or exercises in evaluating the students' learning performance. It provides opportunities for reflective engagement and a more diverse range of exercises for practice sessions, fostering deeper comprehension and active learning.
2. Language teachers may consider utilizing Multimedia-based instructional materials like podcasts, PowerPoints, and Video presentations to improve achievement in literature among students.
3. The school administrators and the DepEd stakeholders may consider means to provide more multimedia materials to language teachers that could be used in learning opportunities.
4. For further study employing Multimedia-based instructional materials, future researchers may correlate it in other learning areas to elicit its impact and be used by teachers of different subjects.

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CNN and BBC Shaping the Opinions in Different Countries: A multi-dimensional descriptive commentary related to security, military and diplomacy

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Abstract— *The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN) are pivotal actors in the global media ecosystem, wielding significant influence on public opinion, political discourse, and international diplomacy. This essay explores their roles as agents of soft power, examining how their coverage shapes global perceptions and aligns with the foreign policy objectives of their home nations. Through case studies such as the Arab Spring, the Hong Kong protests, and the Syrian Civil War, the analysis highlights their capacity to amplify democratic ideals and humanitarian narratives. However, it also critiques their tendency to oversimplify complex geopolitical realities, framing events through dichotomous lenses like democracy versus authoritarianism. Both networks serve as instruments of public diplomacy, projecting cultural and political values to global audiences. The BBC, as a publicly funded entity, reinforces British ideals of fairness and free speech, while CNN, despite its private ownership, often mirrors American democratic values. Their contributions to agenda-setting and narrative framing underscore their dual roles as informers and influencers. However, challenges such as perceived bias and editorial slant raise critical ethical questions. By dissecting their historical and contemporary impact, this discussion elucidates the intricate interplay between media, power, and international relations, emphasizing the need for balanced and nuanced reporting.*



Keywords— *Public Diplomacy, Human Development, News Agency, Public Opinion*

I. INTRODUCTION

The global media landscape is dominated by a handful of influential networks, among which the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN) stand as pivotal players. With their extensive reach and robust reputation, these media giants serve as conduits for shaping ideas, influencing political movements, and molding public opinion (Napoli, 1997). The impact of their coverage extends beyond mere reporting; it shapes perceptions, informs international policies, and catalyzes diplomatic actions. This essay delves into the historical significance of

BBC and CNN as agents of influence in major global events, highlighting their roles in framing narratives and projecting soft power.

Throughout history, BBC and CNN have demonstrated their ability to sway international opinion, often through their portrayals of political and social upheavals (Ganzert & Flournoy, 1992). Events such as the Arab Spring, the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests, and the Syrian Civil War exemplify their power to amplify voices, legitimize movements, and galvanize international responses. However, their framing of events, often through

dichotomous narratives of democracy versus authoritarianism, raises critical questions about the simplification of complex geopolitical realities. By examining these examples, this essay seeks to uncover the dual-edged nature of their influence: their capacity to inspire action and their propensity to overlook nuanced local contexts.

Furthermore, the essay explores how these networks function as instruments of public diplomacy for their home countries. The BBC, as a publicly funded entity, aligns with British foreign policy objectives, while CNN, a privately owned corporation, inadvertently mirrors American values and geopolitical interests (Powers & Samuel-Azran, 2015). Their roles as purveyors of soft power—a concept introduced by Joseph Nye—underscore their importance in projecting national values, shaping global perceptions, and fostering cultural diplomacy (Nye, 2008). However, their influence is not without challenges, as perceptions of bias and editorial slant have occasionally undermined their credibility.

By dissecting the historical and contemporary roles of BBC and CNN, this essay aims to provide a nuanced understanding of their influence on global discourse. It will assess their contributions to agenda-setting, the promotion of national values, and their alignment with foreign policy objectives, while critically examining the ethical implications of their editorial choices. In doing so, this discussion seeks to illuminate the intricate interplay between media, power, and international relations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted in this field, and in this section, some of the most important ones are introduced, reviewed, and analyzed.

The study examines the causes of the decline of American hegemony and its impact on China's regional policies in the Middle East and the role of the media in this area. This issue is of particular importance due to its wide-ranging effects on international policymaking. Given that the issue of the decline of American hegemony has led to different opinions, this research seeks to answer the key question of what factors have caused the decline of US hegemony and how this has affected China's policies in the Middle East. The results of this study, which was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method and library resources, show

that the decline of American hegemony has been shaped by reasons including the need for multilateralism, the country's financial crisis, and the emergence of new powers such as China. In particular, the decline of American influence has created an opportunity for China to participate more actively in trade and energy in the Middle East than before, concluding numerous oil contracts with important countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. This clearly demonstrates the wider influences that can shape the opinions and perceptions of different nations, including those in the Middle East, regarding global news and developments, and points to the role of media outlets such as CNN and BBC in shaping these opinions in different countries¹.

This study examines the relations between Iran and the United States over the past four decades. In this regard, the role of the media in shaping the opinions of their nations has also been examined. The relationship between the two countries has been important for various reasons, including numerous domestic and regional crises. The foreign relations between Iran and the United States after the Islamic Revolution have been a complex and very turbulent issue. This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the relations between the two countries to provide a clear view of the starting points of all the commotion and tensions between the two countries. In this regard, it has been shown that media such as CNN and BBC have also played an effective role in shaping people's opinions, especially regarding the relations between the two countries². Also, in another study, an analytical study of Iran-US relations after the Islamic Revolution of Iran has been conducted, emphasizing the strongholds and deep faith of the Iranian people. In this regard, the role of the media in the formation of these beliefs and deep faith has been examined. In addition, the historical, ideological and geopolitical characteristics of Iran-US relations over the past few decades have been examined. This study has been carried out with the help of an analysis of the chaotic situation of international and domestic politics. It has been shown that the orientation of media such as CNN has been significant in the public's belief in the need to reduce diplomatic and bilateral relations between the two countries³.

The redefinition of US foreign policy through immigration, security and diplomacy has been examined as the Trump doctrine. This study is based on the analysis of the book *Awakening from the American Dream*. This book examines

¹ Dehnavi, E. A. (2020). The reasons for the decline of American hegemony and its impact on China's regional policies in the Middle East. *Revista San Gregorio*, (37).

² Dehnavi, E. A. (2020). *Sorry, how can I get to Washington?*. tredition.

³ Dehnavi, E. A. (2024). An Analytical Examination of Iran-USA Relations Post-Islamic Revolution: Extended Scientific Review. *International Journal of Humanities and Education Development (IJHED)*, 6(5), 23-25.

US foreign relations during the Trump presidency, emphasizing the specific pillars of terrorism, immigration and international relations in relation to hostile countries. The role of the media in the formation of US foreign relations has been considered. In this regard, it has been shown that the activities of media such as CNN and BBC, especially after the events of September 11, have been effective in the formation of these relations¹.

The changes and indicators of Trump's new immigration policy program and the role of the media in the formation of these policies have been examined. In this regard, a descriptive-analytical study has been conducted. The results have shown that Trump's immigration policies were adopted very hastily and with regard to the effects of the US electoral environment and the media environment prevailing in this country. The result of this inspiration from the media environment was that the plan faced domestic and international reactions, including legal challenges, because it was contrary to the approvals of Congress. This indicates the significant power of the electoral environment and the media environment, which can easily affect the formation and adoption of major decisions in transitional politics².

Various media, whether news media or literary media, can act like a think tank and play a role in shaping international relations. For example, the impact of *The Captain's Tale* trilogy as a literary work on US foreign policy has been examined and it has been shown that this modern literary work can shape our understanding of global politics. It can also increase awareness, thinking, and a sense of empathy in society. Therefore, it can be said that it can act like components of a global think tank with a dynamic policy-making mechanism on a regular basis. This indicates the significant power of various media in shaping the thoughts of a society³.

The national security strategies adopted by different governments in the United States have been examined in the form of a descriptive-analytical study. In this study, interview-based methods and library sources were used to collect data. The results indicate that each of the American presidents had a national strategy in the aftermath of World War II, and in the post-World War II period, the US National Security Strategy has always had a global approach. One of the important tools for implementing these various

strategies has been the media, including CNN and BBC, which have always aligned themselves with these policies and have worked towards their realization. The efforts of the aforementioned media have made it easier to influence public beliefs in line with the national interests of the United States⁴.

A study examines the domestic economic strategies of the United States and the role of think tanks and the media in shaping these strategies. The US federal government, as the main institution managing various systems, plays an important role in economic policymaking. However, this process is strongly influenced by various political ideologies that affect the way economic issues, including inequality and the effects of technological change, are addressed. Meanwhile, major media outlets such as CNN and the BBC also play a significant role as key tools in shaping public opinion and interpreting events. These media outlets, by covering news and analyzing various economic policies, help to convey ideological ideas and influence public views. For example, in times of economic crisis, the way these media report can affect how people react to federal policies and strategies proposed by think tanks. Hence, a deep understanding of the role of the media in expressing and promoting various political ideas helps us better understand how these influences affect domestic economic policies in the United States as well as the international relations of countries⁵.

As influential institutions in analyzing and reporting on the Middle East, media outlets such as the BBC play a vital role in shaping public and international understanding of the factors behind the rise of authoritarianism and the challenges to democracy in the region. By covering news and analysis of social, political and economic unrest, these outlets can shed light on key factors such as weak civil society, underdevelopment and undemocratic systems, thereby drawing global attention to fundamental challenges such as corruption, unemployment and inequality. Analysis provided by the BBC and others can also shed light on the relationship between religion and democracy and the role of authoritarian regimes in undermining democratic efforts in these countries. In this way, the media can act as a bridge between local realities and global audiences, and provide

¹ Dehnavi, E. A. (2024). The Trump Doctrine: Redefining US Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 26-28.

² Dehnavi, E. A., & Daheshiar, H. (2020b). Changes and indicators of trump's new immigration policy plan. ResearchGate.

³ Dehnavi, E. A., & Fiedler, R. (2024b). Adventures of Two Captains' Trilogy and U.S Exceptionalism in their Foreign Policy:

Manifestation of Think Tanks in a literary work. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 9(3), 277-281

⁴ Dehnavi, E. A., & Jamal, M. A. (2020a). From containment to Americanism. ResearchGate.

⁵ Dehnavi, E. A., Niafar, M. M., & Ahmadzade, K. (2024a). An Overview Regarding the U.S domestic Economic Strategies: Role of Think Tanks. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 82-92.

the necessary awareness for international support for democratic processes in the Middle East¹.

A study has been conducted on the analysis and examination of the issue of Iran's proxy strategy in the Middle East and the role of the media in this area. Media such as the BBC play a key role in analyzing and explaining Iran's proxy strategy in the Middle East and act as reliable sources for providing in-depth information and analysis in this field. By comprehensively covering the activities of proxy forces, exerting Iranian influence in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, and examining the complex dimensions of these developments, the BBC can help viewers and readers to better understand the power dynamics in the region and the challenges of deterrence and instability. Also, by providing historical and comparative analysis, this media explains the cultural and political contexts that have led to the formation of these strategies, and can play a vital role in stimulating international dialogues and a global understanding of the effects of this strategy on regional security and international relations. In this way, media outlets like the BBC not only convey information but also contribute to a deeper understanding of complex issues in the Middle East and shape public thinking².

A study was conducted to examine the principles and positions of US foreign policy against terrorism. The role of the media in advancing these positions was also examined. The research method is descriptive-analytical. The method of collecting information is library. The data collection tool is note-taking. The data analysis method is also qualitative. The results have shown that terrorism has always been used as a tool to advance US foreign policy. US foreign policy has been able to fill the foreign policy vacuum that was created with the end of the Cold War by fighting terrorism. This does not mean that terrorism and terrorist groups are not against the interests of the United States. However, this country at least uses the concept of terrorism to label its opponents and in fact supports terrorist groups to advance its interests. The issue of banning the entry of nationals of some countries under the pretext of ensuring the security of the American people, who, ironically, are against US foreign policy, shows that Trump's immigration policies are purely political and aimed at exerting pressure on these countries. Meanwhile, media outlets such as CNN and BBC

have also been very effective in advancing these positions and providing reasons to justify the correctness of these policies³.

A study has been conducted to identify the factors affecting the migration of Iranian elites and the role of the media in this regard. The results have shown that political, economic, social factors, globalization of work, organizational and administrative factors, lack of respect and dignity of elites, lack of hierarchy and elitism are the most important factors in the migration of these people. One of the most important weaknesses of the policy in Iran for the departure of elites is the limited financial support, which is not enough to encourage elites to stay in the country. The lack of meritocracy, official invitations and the failure to attract elites to universities are other weaknesses of the existing policies. On the other hand, media such as the BBC actively encourage Iranian elites to migrate and create the perception that there is a better space for growth and prosperity outside the borders. By reporting positive news about the lives and achievements of Iranian elites in other countries and analyzing the benefits of immigration and the globalization of work, these media outlets are fueling the belief that the current conditions in Iran not only prevent the elites from succeeding, but also push them to leave the country. Overall, this combination of domestic policy weaknesses and effective media propaganda is exacerbating the elite exodus crisis⁴.

A study has been conducted to examine the complexities of the US approach to Iran and to address the numerous challenges of its policies in confronting the Islamic Republic. In this regard, international media outlets such as CNN and BBC play an important role in shaping public perception and international policies. With their detailed coverage of Iran-related news and political analysis, these media outlets not only reflect existing claims and challenges, but also try to portray the effects of US decision-making on Iran and the Middle East through current events. In addition, these media outlets can help create public awareness and support for US government policies towards Iran or, conversely, create pressure for policy change by criticizing official approaches. Therefore, the interaction between the media and US policies facilitates the ability to

¹ Dehnavi, E. A., & Nourmohammadi, M. (2023). Factors of the prevalence of authoritarianism and the push on democratization in the Middle East. ResearchGate.

² Dehnavi, E. A., & Safavipour, A. (2024a). Decoding Iran's proxy strategy: deterrent or destabilization? A review and scientific commentary. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 01–06.

³ Dehnavi, E. A., & Tabatabaei, S. M. (2021). Principles and positions of US foreign policy against terrorism. *EFFLATOUNIA-Multidisciplinary Journal*, 5(2).

⁴ Fiedler, R. A., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024c). Weaknesses of policy making in Iran to reduce the rate of departure of elites from the country. ResearchGate.

respond to the challenges raised and influences the way international relations are managed¹.

Another study examines the complexity and historical diversity of the Middle East. Studies show that the roots of conflicts and tensions in this region can be traced back to diverse cultural and religious factors. In this context, the media play a key role in shaping and perpetuating the current situation in the Middle East. Through their news coverage and analysis, the media not only present narratives of the region's diverse history and cultures, but can also contribute to creating or reducing tensions. For example, biased or distorted coverage of conflicts can lead to an escalation of conflicts, while committed media can help promote dialogue and mutual understanding between different groups. Therefore, understanding the relationship between the media and the complex history of the Middle East is of particular importance, especially when the goal is to find sustainable ways to create peace and security in this region².

Another study examined the challenges Mexican immigrants face in their quest for American identity and identified the factors that influence it. The results showed that this is influenced by multiple factors and that media outlets such as CNN play a significant role in shaping this issue. By presenting the realities of immigrants' daily lives, CNN provides more space for cultural and social acceptance and engages in conversations about American identity and immigrants' place within it³.

III. A BRIEF HISTORICAL DISCUSSION

Both BBC and CNN are influential global media organizations with extensive reach. They play significant roles in shaping ideas, political movements, and public opinion in the countries where their broadcasts are consumed (Kennedy & Prat, 2018). Though these networks are independent and generally maintain editorial freedom, their influence on public diplomacy stems from how they represent and communicate their home countries' values, policies, and narratives to global audiences.

BBC and CNN played a pivotal role in the international coverage of the Arab Spring, helping to amplify the voices of protesters across the Middle East (Gillespie et al., 2015). Their live reporting showcased the grassroots nature of the uprisings, framing them as democratic movements against

authoritarian regimes. This coverage was vital in increasing global awareness and providing legitimacy to the protesters, which in turn influenced international public opinion and diplomatic responses, especially in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. For example, the protests in Libya gained significant international attention, leading to NATO's intervention against Gaddafi's regime (Harlow & Brown, 2021). However, by consistently framing the movements as purely democratic revolutions, both networks arguably simplified the complex local political landscapes, overlooking the deep-rooted social, economic, and tribal tensions in these countries. This resulted in global support that sometimes underestimated the long-term consequences of toppling established regimes without fully considering the potential for instability.

During Hong Kong pro-democracy protests, BBC and CNN extensively covered the events, particularly highlighting police brutality and the protesters' demands for autonomy from mainland China (Cao, 2021). Their coverage emphasized the struggle for freedom, portraying the protests as a battle between democratic ideals and authoritarian oppression. This framing resonated particularly with Western audiences, leading to increased diplomatic tensions between China and the West. Governments in countries like the United States and the UK imposed sanctions on Chinese officials and expressed public support for the protesters (Tang, 2022). However, China criticized both networks for biased reporting, accusing them of inciting unrest and misrepresenting the situation (Zhang & Shaw, 2020). The networks' focus on democratic values helped frame the protests in a way that aligned with Western foreign policy goals, but it also heightened geopolitical tensions, making a peaceful resolution more difficult.

In the lead-up to the Iraq War, CNN and BBC played critical roles in shaping public opinion as well, particularly in the United States and the UK (Mhamdi, 2017). CNN, in particular, adopted a more pro-government stance, echoing the US government's justification for the war, including the false claims of weapons of mass destruction (WDMs) (Mhamdi, 2017). The networks' coverage, especially early on, helped build public support for the invasion by framing it as a necessary intervention to protect global security. This coverage heavily influenced public opinion, especially in the U.S. and UK, where citizens largely supported the war

¹ Fiedler, R., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024a). Navigating Engagement with Iran: Exploring US Strategies and Options: A Futuristic Scenario and Review. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 9(2), 109–113.

² Fiedler, R., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024b). Unraveling the Enigmas: Deciphering the Causes of Discord in the Middle East: A review. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(1), 51–56.

³ Dehnavi, E. A., & Mobin, K. (2020). Mexican immigrants challenges for American Identity. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(6), 945-950.

initially (Dutta et al., 2012). However, both networks were later criticized for not sufficiently questioning government motives or critically analyzing the available intelligence, contributing to widespread misinformation. The failure to challenge the narrative of WMDs had long-term consequences, including disillusionment with media credibility once it became clear that the war was based on faulty intelligence.

Another example would be the Ukrainian revolution in 2013-2014. During the revolution, BBC and CNN framed the ousting of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich as a battle between pro-European democratic aspirations and Russian-backed authoritarianism (Kamyanskyi, 2021). This framing helped shape the international response, particularly in the West, where governments and institutions were quick to impose sanctions on Russia following its annexation of Crimea. The networks' focus on the democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian protesters aligned with broader Western foreign policy interests in limiting Russian influence in Eastern Europe (Wilderom, 2020). However, by framing the situation as a clear dichotomy between democracy and authoritarianism, the networks sometimes overlooked the internal divisions within Ukraine, particularly the ethnic and political complexities that contributed to the country's instability.

Also, the coverage of the Syrian Civil War by both BBC and CNN heavily focused on the humanitarian disaster and the brutal tactics used by the Assad regime, including the use of chemical weapons and other human rights abuses (Zhang & Luther, 2019). This coverage helped garner international support for interventions, as Western audiences were moved by the images of suffering civilians and the widespread destruction. The networks also frequently highlighted Western-backed rebel groups, framing them as the legitimate opposition to Assad's authoritarian rule (Baden & Stalpuskaya, 2020). However, this approach tended to downplay the involvement of extremist factions like ISIS, which complicated the conflict and the international community's response. By focusing on the humanitarian aspect and portraying Assad as the primary antagonist, the networks sometimes oversimplified the conflict, making it harder for viewers to grasp the full scope of the war, including the roles of foreign powers and the fractured opposition forces.

In addition, CNN's reporting on Venezuela's political and economic crisis under Nicolás Maduro heavily influenced global perceptions of the country's descent into authoritarianism and economic collapse (Fredricks & Phillips, 2021). CNN focused on the suffering of Venezuelan citizens, particularly the mass migration crisis and the shortage of basic goods (Charner, 2023). This

coverage helped shape international views, contributing to the widespread perception of Venezuela as a failed state. By highlighting the humanitarian crisis, CNN helped bolster international diplomatic pressure and sanctions against Maduro's regime, aligning with the stance of Western governments that supported opposition leader Juan Guaidó (Pozzebón & Hu, 2021). The network's emphasis on Venezuela's plight also fueled political movements within Latin America and beyond, pushing for democratic reforms and international intervention.

BBC coverage of the Cyprus dispute often geopolitical interests of the UK, especially concerning its military bases on the island. While the UK government has historically supported the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, it also maintains strategic interests in the British Sovereign Base Areas (Hadjigeorgiou & Skoutaris, 2019). For instance, during discussions about military interventions or regional security matters, such as airstrikes against ISIS, Cyprus has shown alignment with UK policies, underscoring the strategic partnership between the two nations. The UK government has consistently maintained a policy of non-recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as an independent state, which has contributed to the ongoing international isolation of the TRNC (Safa, 2024).

BBC and CNN have considerable influence in shaping political movements and ideas through their global reach and extensive coverage. Their reporting on major global events such as the Arab Spring, Hong Kong protests, Iraq War, and the Syrian Civil War demonstrates their power in shaping public opinion, influencing international policies, and legitimizing protest movements. However, their framing of events, especially the tendency to simplify complex situations into narratives of democracy versus authoritarianism, often influences public perceptions in ways that can have far-reaching consequences. While BBC is known for its more neutral and balanced reporting, it is not immune to criticism, especially on issues related to nationalism and sovereignty. CNN, with its more immediate and often polarized approach, also plays a key role in influencing global discourse, especially on international conflicts and civil rights issues. They are crucial in shaping contemporary global politics, but their influence must be understood within the context of the narratives they promote and the international interests they serve.

IV. AS A PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOL

BBC and CNN play significant roles in public diplomacy and serve as tools for their respective governments to exert international influence while also shaping ideologies within their own countries as well. During the Cold War, the BBC

World Service was utilized as a counterweight to Soviet propaganda, broadcasting unbiased news to Eastern Europe (Johnston & Robertson, 2019). In the contemporary landscape, the BBC continues to broadcast in multiple languages, acting as a source of independent news in regions where media freedom is restricted. This effort promotes the UK's reputation as a defender of free speech and human rights.

Also, as a UK-based broadcaster, the BBC provided extensive coverage of Brexit, often emphasizing the economic and political risks while striving for neutrality (Greenslade, 2019). Its thorough analysis of Brexit's consequences significantly shaped public discourse. However, critics argue that in its pursuit of impartiality, the BBC may have given undue weight to fringe arguments or unsubstantiated claims from the Leave campaign, which contributed to the polarization of public opinion. While the BBC aimed for neutrality, its coverage was sometimes accused of fostering a "false balance," treating both sides of the debate equally, even when one was less substantiated (Randy & Witarti, 2021). This approach may have led to public confusion regarding the actual economic impacts of Brexit. The British government acknowledges the BBC World Service's role in public diplomacy by providing funding (Gov.UK, 2023). The World Service has been expanded or maintained in strategic regions where the UK seeks to exert influence, such as Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. In these areas, the BBC is often perceived as a reliable source of information, potentially countering authoritarian narratives. For instance, in regions like Iran and Afghanistan, where local media may be controlled or heavily censored, the BBC broadcasts in local languages, offering audiences an alternative to state-run propaganda and aligning with UK goals of supporting democratic movements and human rights (Sharma & Naresh, 2022).

The BBC also plays a vital role in shaping international perceptions of the UK's response to global crises, ranging from humanitarian aid to military interventions. Its portrayal of the UK's involvement in international aid during crises, such as famine or natural disasters, can reflect positively on the British government. For example, during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the BBC's coverage of the UK's aid efforts helped project an image of the UK as a compassionate global leader, aligning with the British government's foreign policy objectives of enhancing influence through humanitarian assistance (Duru, 2020).

CNN also plays a pivotal role in U.S. public diplomacy, leveraging its global reach to promote American cultural values and soft power, despite being a privately funded entity. CNN International broadcasts to millions worldwide, effectively representing ideals such as democracy, freedom

of the press, and individual rights (Robertson, 2012). Its coverage of U.S. policies and social movements serves as a form of cultural diplomacy that showcases the vibrancy and openness of American society. For instance, CNN's reporting on significant events like movements, particularly the Black Lives Matter protests, emphasizes democratic processes and public discourse (Henn & Posegga, 2023). This transparency, even when critical of U.S. policies, reinforces global perceptions of America as a nation that values free speech and political engagement. CNN and other media outlets extensively covered the Black Lives Matter protests following the death of George Floyd. The framing of these protests highlighted systemic racism and police brutality, which helped elevate the movement to international prominence and inspired discussions about racial justice globally.

While CNN operates independently, its coverage often aligns with U.S. foreign policy interests, particularly during conflicts. During the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iraq War in 2003, CNN's comprehensive reporting, including live broadcasts from Baghdad, shaped global opinion regarding U.S. military actions (Mhamdi, 2017). The network's portrayal of U.S. objectives, such as promoting democracy or removing dictators, resonated with government narratives during those periods (Dutta et al., 2012). CNN's coverage of international crises highlights U.S. humanitarian efforts, portraying the country as a global leader. For example, its extensive reporting on the U.S. response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake showcased military and civilian aid efforts, contributing to a favorable view of American engagement in international affairs (Walk et al., 2012). In the U.S., CNN has been increasingly viewed as aligned with specific ideological perspectives, particularly during the Trump administration, where it was often critical of the president (Lazer et al., 2017). This perception has led to accusations that CNN acts as a counterpoint to conservative media, rather than a neutral diplomatic tool. Nonetheless, during times of bipartisan consensus, such as anti-terrorism efforts, CNN can still function as a promoter of U.S. values abroad.

V. SOFT POWER AS A TOOL

Soft power, a concept introduced by Joseph Nye, refers to a nation's capacity to influence others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion (Nye, 2008). Media outlets like the BBC and CNN serve as critical tools for projecting soft power on a global scale (Joseph, 2014). By disseminating information, shaping narratives, and reflecting the values of their respective countries, these networks exert significant influence over international audiences. Their function transcends mere news reporting;

they act as cultural ambassadors, shaping global perceptions of the UK and the US (Loomis, 2009). This analysis examines how the BBC and CNN contribute to soft power through agenda-setting, promoting national values, and aligning with foreign policy objectives.

One of the most potent tools of media is its ability to set agendas and control global narratives, significantly impacting international perceptions (Wright et al., 2020). Both the BBC and CNN, as global broadcasters with extensive reach, shape how international events are understood. By setting the agenda, these networks influence what international audiences focus on and how they interpret global events, amplifying stories related to political movements, social justice, and human rights. Promoting national values is a key component of soft power, making a country more appealing on the world stage. Both the BBC and CNN, whether intentionally or not, function as cultural ambassadors for their home nations. As the UK's public broadcaster, the BBC embodies British values of democracy, fairness, and free speech (Seaton, 2020). Through its World Service, funded by the UK government, the BBC acts as a conduit for British soft power by providing news to audiences in regions where media freedom may be restricted. Although both networks maintain editorial independence, their global reach often aligns with their governments' foreign policy objectives, especially during conflicts (Wright et al., 2020). The BBC also supports UK foreign policy through its World Service, which has historically provided accurate information in regions with state-controlled media. These media outlets serve as indirect diplomatic tools, helping their governments project narratives that resonate with geopolitical interests without engaging in overt propaganda.

However, both networks face challenges related to perceptions of bias and editorial independence. Critics argue that CNN's coverage of US politics was polarized, potentially diminishing its credibility among international viewers (Gilboa, 2005). Similarly, the BBC has faced accusations of favoring governmental perspectives during events like the Falklands War or the Brexit debate, leading to concerns about bias. Such perceptions can undermine the effectiveness of media as a tool for soft power by eroding trust in its objectivity.

In conclusion, the BBC and CNN, as global media giants, are potent instruments of soft power for the UK and the US,

respectively. Through agenda-setting, they shape global narratives that align with democratic values and foreign policy objectives. Their extensive reach and reputation as credible news sources enable them to project national values and influence international perceptions, making them vital players in the soft power strategies of their home countries. While challenges related to bias exist, their overall contribution to shaping public diplomacy and international discourse remains substantial.

VI. MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC OPINION ACROSS CULTURES

Language, cultural differences, and regional reporting play key roles in shaping public perceptions of events. Language not only conveys the content of information, but also instills specific mindsets and emotions in audiences. Cultural differences can influence how audiences perceive news, as each culture may view events from different perspectives¹. Regional reporting can also tailor information to local priorities and concerns, which can lead people to respond differently to global issues.

CNN and BBC often report on world events with different frames, influenced by their political leanings and cultural perspectives. For example, in covering topics such as international crises or wars, the BBC may focus more on the human and social dimensions of the issues, while CNN may pay more attention to the political and security aspects. This difference in framing can lead to different public perceptions among the two media audiences, influencing their opinions about a particular event².

Studying specific cases such as the coverage of the Iraq War, the 9/11 attacks, Brexit, or the Syrian refugee crisis clearly shows how different framings can influence public opinion in different countries. For example, media coverage of the 9/11 attacks in the United States had a greater emphasis on national security and subsequent military action, while other countries may have focused more on the humanitarian impact and global consequences. These types of different approaches can influence public views and local policies³.

The global credibility of CNN and the BBC is strongly influenced by public beliefs and trust in government institutions and the media in different countries⁴. In some countries, such as the United States, CNN may be seen as a reliable news source, while in others, especially in regions

¹ Maddux, W. W., & Yuki, M. (2006). The "ripple effect": Cultural differences in perceptions of the consequences of events. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 32(5), 669-683.

² Banerjee, M. (2001). Comparative analysis of Asian News on BBC and CNN. *Media Asia*, 28(1), 37-53.

³ Karaman, Y., Akdeniz, F., Savaş, B. K., & Becerikli, Y. (2022, October). A comparative analysis of svm, lstm and cnn-rnn models for the bbc news classification. In *The Proceedings of the International Conference on Smart City Applications* (pp. 473-483). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

⁴ Mao, X. (2003). BBC and CNN Television News: Their credibility among viewers in Malta. *Unpublished Master's Thesis*.

with authoritarian governments, it may be subject to criticism and distrust. On the other hand, the BBC is generally seen as an independent and reliable media outlet globally, although this credibility may also decline in certain countries due to political and social developments. Therefore, understanding these regional changes helps to better understand the impact of the media on public opinion.

VII. CONCLUSION

BBC and CNN are far more than news organizations; they are powerful agents of influence in global politics, diplomacy, and public opinion. This essay has highlighted how their extensive reach and credibility enable them to frame narratives that resonate with international audiences and align, intentionally or not, with the foreign policy objectives of their home countries. From the Arab Spring to the Syrian Civil War, from Brexit to the Black Lives Matter movement, their coverage has shaped public discourse, legitimized movements, and informed global diplomatic responses.

However, their influence is a double-edged sword. While their reporting often amplifies democratic ideals and humanitarian values, the simplification of complex geopolitical realities into dichotomous narratives of democracy versus authoritarianism can distort public understanding and escalate tensions. The ethical implications of such framing call for a deeper examination of their editorial choices and the potential biases that arise from their roles as instruments of soft power. Both networks exemplify the concept of media as tools of public diplomacy, projecting the cultural and political values of their respective nations while fostering global perceptions of their credibility. Yet, challenges to their neutrality and accusations of bias underscore the need for balanced reporting that respects the intricacies of global events.

In conclusion, the BBC and CNN wield immense influence in the global media landscape. Their ability to shape agendas and frame narratives makes them indispensable players in the interplay between media, power, and international relations. Understanding their dual role as both informers and influencers is crucial for critically engaging with the content they produce and the broader impact they have on shaping global discourse.

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Vulnerable or/ and resistant: Transgender Worlds and Constructions of Identity

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Abstract— *The paper examines the vicissitudes of identity vis-à-vis vulnerability of Rosie, a transgender person in Geetanjali Shree's, Tomb of Sand (a Hindi-language fiction translated into English by an American translator, Daisy Rockwell) that won the International Booker Prize in 2022 from a queer theory and transgender theory framework. As the author situates Rosie in 'vulnerability' of varied sorts – gender, class and so on, the paper explores how Geetanjali Shree opens up analysis and debate of issues such as invisibility, transphobia, intersectionality of identities, 'central self', the 'double bind' of gender representation and sexed body, gender fluidity and personal empowerment in context of transgenderism. Further, the paper aims to gain an insight into the manner in which the author weaves her way through the issues related to transgenderism to not just enter into the historically contested, complex and dynamic understanding of gender and sexuality but to also present her own articulations on the questions related to the epistemology of the two.*



Keywords— *Gender, Identity, Queer, Sex, Transgender Studies, vulnerability*

Cambridge dictionary defines 'vulnerability' as 'the quality of being vulnerable (= able to be easily hurt, influenced, or attacked), or something that is vulnerable'.ⁱ Theorists with a 'universal' approach consider vulnerability 'a fundamental feature of the human condition, biologically imperative and permanent...(and) connected to the personal, economic, social and cultural circumstances within which individuals find themselves at different points in their lives'.ⁱⁱ My present research has its genesis in and builds upon the contention that people can respond to vulnerability in different ways – some may recognize it and engage with it while others may ignore or deny it.ⁱⁱⁱ

The present paper studies the text entitled, *Tomb of Sand* by Geetanjali Shree which is a 2018 Hindi-language fiction titled, *Ret Samadhi* translated into English by U.S. translator, Daisy Rockwell that won the International Booker Prize in 2022. Belonging to the genre of the so-called Partition novel, *Tomb of Sand* is primarily the story of an octogenarian lady known as 'Ma' and her life before and after the partition of India. However, the author seamlessly and dexterously weaves into the tapestry of the

novel the story of a transgender person namely, Rosie. Rosie as a small child escapes the terror of partition with the help of Ma, loses contact with her for some time and then re-unites with her post partition. It is during the course of Rosie's frequent visits first to the house of Bade, Ma's son where Ma lives and then to that of Beti, Ma's daughter where Ma shifts to that the author skillfully inserts and maps the personality and all that happens with her as a 'transgender' person.

The paper examines the vicissitudes of identity vis-à-vis vulnerability of Rosie from a queer and transgender theory framework. As the author situates Rosie in 'vulnerability' of varied sorts – gender, class and so on, the paper explores how Geetanjali Shree opens up analysis and debate of issues such as invisibility, transphobia, intersectionality of identities, 'central self', the 'double bind' of gender representation and sexed body, gender fluidity and personal empowerment in context of transgenderism. Further, the paper aims to gain an insight into the manner in which the author weaves her way through the issues related to transgenderism to enter into the historically contested,

complex and dynamic understanding of gender and sex as well as to present her own articulations on the questions related to the epistemology of the two.

Rosie presents a stereotypical case of a transgender person at least as concerns the initial years of her life. As is commonly seen, Rosie on being discovered a transgender baby, in all probability was rejected and thrown away by her family that landed her into an orphanage. The author mentions about Rosie's difficult beginnings of life how she runs from the orphanage to a Gurudwara and then finds shelter in the home of a Christian missionary where she receives some education. An insensitive and cruel family and society impose upon Rosie vulnerability of varied sorts and push her into a situation that is no less than a humanitarian emergency where she has to strive to fulfill the basic needs of her life and protect her rights all by herself.

Rosie spells out the 'invisibility' of transgender people like her that is imposed upon them by the society: "We aren't counted among the Muslims and Christians nor the Jews Parsis Hindus nor the men and the women, they won't take our name, won't recognize us."^{iv} "...we are impurity."^v "We are the grotesque... We've always been missing, we're forever missing..." "Who bothers about the nobodies in society?... There are no films, no literature, no art, no clothing.... Toss me away in the lake..., and no one will notice there's one less.... We don't even exist..."^{vi}

Rosie as a transgender person shuns 'invisibility' and confronts the biased definitions and barriers of socially constructed gender and sexual identity. Be it at Ma's house, market, hospital, she makes her presence feel everywhere - for instance, at the hospital wherein Ma is admitted for surgery, Rosie executes the oft-called masculine roles of managing affairs in public sphere such as a hospital with confidence and aplomb. She gets all the paperwork done at the hospital sending off Ma with Beti to home. In dismissing Ma's request to wait for her son, Bade before they leave for home from the hospital, Rosie actually disregards and shatters the male-ego and 'son-ego' of Bade by quipping, "...What kind of Bade, dahi Bade?"^{vii} But then, on the other hand, Rosie, displays her femininity in varied ways viz. always wearing an embroidered colourful sari or shalwar-kurta or a sharara outfit; her hair coiled into a bun, her sandals, her handbag, her bangles; helping Ma buy lightweight sandals from the market, getting an abaya stitched for Ma, doing Ma's hair and providing Ma with remedies for her moles - all physical manifestations of her femininity. The author's observation about Rosie: '... a body engaged in challenging all stereotypes and definitions. A body unrecognising of the legitimacy of any borders. Flowing this way and that.'^{viii} is a powerful marker of Rosie's fluidity of gender - her sexual identity as a female

is 'written on the body' clearly and visibly in the form of feminine attires and accessories allowing her sexual and social identity to be determined and defined by physical forces particularly social ones.^{ix}

Though Rosie epitomizes gender fluidity but despite all her efforts, she is unable to escape the cruel clutches of intersectionality of identities and its detrimental consequences. Though it is generally believed that transgender people face two intersectional identities namely, sex and gender but such a contention overlooks yet another intersectional identity associated with transgender community which is of class. Shields's remark about intersectional identities is worth quoting here: "...one's identity is not just about his or her own self-identification but is also about the intersecting larger social structures and the power differentials associated with belonging to a certain group or groups".^x These intersections may be a source of oppression and/or opportunity for an individual. One such instance of oppression accruing from intersectional identities of Rosie is provided by Beti when, without any apparent or logical reason she blames Rosie for Ma's tripping over. The indictments that Beti frame in her mind for Rosie holding her responsible for Ma's fall are so far from any rationale that it is evident that Beti was waiting for some opportune moment to chide and degrade Rosie and express her long-harboured dislike for Rosie's very frequent visits to her home to be with Ma. Beti's biased attitude towards Rosie is reflected in the absurd connection that she forges between Ma's fall and Ma's and Rosie's whistling together 'with increasing frequency and tunefulness'.^{xi} No matter how modern or a woman with a broad outlook Beti projects herself to be, one cannot certainly overlook the deeper recesses of her mind and heart wherein lurks extreme disgust and detestation for Rosie not just on account of her transgenderism (she finds it difficult to decide her sex and gender - "*he-no, she-no, he-no, she-no*"^{xii}) but also owing to Rosie's poor financial status. Beti's ruminations about Rosie as she blames her for Ma's topple bear undertones of classism as well. There's a sly pun on the word 'fall' as used by Rosie carrying implications of one stooping down from one's high rank or status. This connotation becomes clear from the manner in which Beti brings into focus during the course of her soliloquy Rosie's low class and impoverished status. Beti makes repeated references to Rosie's attempts to cheat them and take advantage of their good economic bearings - how Rosie gulps down voraciously large amounts of their food in exchange for a mere sprig of mint that she gets for them, or how she misuses Ma's simplicity and generosity by bringing to her the waste material, using all of Ma's ideas and efforts in designing the articles from the 'rubbish' and selling the finished goods for huge profits that she keeps all to herself.

Rosie, as a 'queer' is 'at odds with the heteronormative, dominant schema and thus rebels against, or "queers," these kinds of essentialist views by proposing that gender roles, gender identity, and sexual orientations are social constructs and therefore, open to questioning, subversion, and self-construction'.^{xiii} Rosie, indeed, questions, subverts, and self-constructs. She brushes aside the age-old assumptions and conventions associated with transgender community and aims to define the 'central self' on and by her own. She dabbles in various occupations like sewing, embroidery, making all sorts of handicrafts, preparing jam jelly chutney, and sending tiffins for workers. To augment her income, she buys a flat near the lake and rents it out. Rosie creates a charity organization for the welfare of trans people like her. She neither begs nor agrees to reduce herself to a prostitute. Instead, she opts to work hard and earn her livelihood in the most decent way possible. In doing so, she exudes immense creativity and enterprise and most importantly, self-confidence, dignity and again, 'visibility'.

Further, never does Rosie betray any sign of hesitancy or embarrassment in facing the world that are conventionally the characteristics of transgender people. Nothing seems to crush her high spirits and she makes sure that she infuses that same energy in the low and depressed Ma. Rosie vigorously attempts to revive life into Ma after her husband's demise by infusing the same kind of unconventionality in her – she gets the abaya stitched for Ma, takes Ma to Saturday market to buy lightweight sandals and so on. If she overthrows stereotypical behavior associated with transgender people then she encourages Ma too to write off the age-old societal ways of thinking and living of the ageing.

A cisgender person like Beti, Ma's daughter who is otherwise an outgoing and rebellious woman feels diffident and overshadowed by the overpowering personality of a transgender person like Rosie. Beti watches Ma being driven by Rosie to the market and wearing new types of clothes and applying mehndi in hair and garlic to her moles – all of Rosie's ideas, she can do nothing but gasp at the fact that "D(d)aily (there is) a new beginning"^{xiv} and wonder helplessly "...will anything be in my control anymore."^{xv}

Rosie's towering persona over Beti or Bade representatives of societal hegemony and heteronormativity is a reflection of Hird's contestation: "Queer theory presumes that transgressing boundaries will subvert, and eventually dismantle, hierarchies based on sex and gender. But subversion can lead to unanticipated outcomes that may not be transgressive at all."^{xvi} Rosie, in all actuality is in the process of self-construction resisting the illusion of a self that has its origin in the social norms and conventions and societal acceptance. In place of letting her 'central self' being mapped onto her by external factors as societal rules

and societal acceptance, she questions her own personal identity – a position that can lead one to either self-empowerment or self-confinement.^{xvii}

Rosie makes a case of *transphobia*, a phenomenon associated closely with every trans person. Transphobia is not merely the fear of trans people but it also includes 'any negative attitudes (hatred, loathing, rage, or moral indignation) towards trans people on the basis of our enactments of gender'.^{xviii} Geetanjali Shree, the author brings in a very important facet closely associated with transgender people and with *transphobia* viz. deceit and sham by introducing in the story Raza tailor who frequents Beti's home and is a continual source of confusion for Beti who is unable to make out if Rosie and Raza are one person or different. Beti continuously suspects Rosie's gender identity and at times, heaves upon her the blame of deception. In the essay, *Evil Deceivers and make-believers*, Talia Mae Bettcher has delved deep into the rhetoric of deception that contributes greatly to transphobic hostility and to either justify or excuse violence against trans people: '...the deceiver representation (with its related identity enforcement) in and of itself constitutes considerable emotional violence against transpeople through its impeachment of moral integrity and denials of authenticity'.^{xix} Trans people have very often been victimized as deceivers or pretenders whether on the basis of their genitalia or appearance or behavior. Talia also gives the concept of a 'double bind' which results from the contrast between gender presentation and sexed body^{xx}. According to Talia, the two sides of the 'double bind' are one, visibility or disclosure which represents trans person as pretentious or playing dress up and two, invisibility wherein trans person exposes one's actual self. Rosie too is caught up in this trap when she is labeled as an imposter for making her appearance first as a woman and then as a man: "faker (who) had no proper papers (of the rented flat)..., (who) cheated (them)"^{xxi} are the remarks of the tenants of Rosie who mercilessly castigate Rosie as a criminal who was least worthy of trust or respect in society. Rosie's attempts to earn a living buying and renting out a flat which actually speaks of her urge and efforts towards earning a respectable livelihood are not only brushed aside but also turned and twisted to victimize her. Rosie is accused of renting out a flat which has ceiling that was leaking and walls around that were so low in height that guaranteed no privacy to the tenants. The charges levelled by tenants against Rosie were pretexts when, in actuality, tenants wanted to force her to sign the legal documents by which Rosie, upon her death is succeeded by them as the owner of the house. Rosie, who had no mind to give up on her property was killed brutally by the tenants and her corpse was found '(i)n a box. In the iron mortar in the kitchen they found a pestle covered with

the same blood that splattered the wall like paan spit. Stuffed in with some shards of shattered rotting skull'.^{xxii}

With the confusion surrounding the identity of Raza tailor in the story, Geetanjali Shree enters into this historically contested, complex and dynamic understanding of gender and sex. In the article, *Patterned Fluidities*, Richardson traces the historical development of the epistemology of sex and gender since the late 19th century and concludes that the link between the two has reached to the point where it is 'not determinate or unidirectional, but complex, dynamic, contingent, fluid, and unstable'.^{xxiii} Geetanjali Shree, through the characters of Beti, the inspector and the tenants of Rosie who continuously suspect and feel confused about the identity of Rosie and Raza presents her own ideology about the long-standing issue of sex and gender. Beti observes that when she hears voices and thinks it to be Rosie's, she finds Raza and then when she is sure that is Raza's, it turns out to be Rosie's. The author keeps the question regarding Rosie and Raza being one person or not quite unclear thereby reinforcing Richardson's comparison between sex and gender to a shoreline. The identities of Rosie and Raza seem to be as blurry as sex and gender the interconnections between which are a 'a moving multilayered process with shifting interfaces that often 'mess up' established levels of social analysis'.^{xxiv}

However, the author extends the understanding of epistemology of sex and gender and positions it within the widespread social phenomena. As Beti ruminates over the dichotomy of Rosie's identity, she likens it to a river that flows in both the directions. But she finds a similar unpredictability in the personality of her lover too. KK, she finds, is seen sometimes sitting with Rosie and Ma and at other times, with Raza and Ma. Irony and unexpectedness pervade Raza's actions also who is fond of booze and is able to procure it even on dry days. Furthermore, Ma eludes coherence and intelligibility as she, who is averse to lemon honey brandy partakes of booze in the company of KK and Raza. The author thus seems to imply that it is not merely the understandings of sex and gender that are open to questioning and that are subject to change and reconstruction. Such processes of blurring of boundaries, deconstruction and exploration are all-pervasive and are an inextricable part of the warp and woof of various aspects of the society.

The author recognizing the denial of fixity, stability and determinacy of almost every facet of life from sex and gender to relationships to one's preferences to selfhood stresses upon in a rhetorical manner the oneness, the universality and the transcending of opposites and diversities - "Is there one voice? Or do we all have one voice, which comes out feminine for a feminine body and masculine for a masculine body? Some femininity, some masculinity."^{xxv}

The author accepts the overlapping nature and mysteriousness of each of the afore-mentioned phenomena and finds their understanding to be delimited by varied factors. The manifestations of these phenomena may vary but their basic origin is the same. This transcendence as well as inconsequentiality of the aspects of sex, class, religion and so on and their roots remaining one - humanity - is reinforced by the author in the way Rosie's life is concluded in the novel - 'Rosie bequeathed her deceased body to the hospital for medical research... and it was no less than a legal bequest...This was Rosie's last rite. Religious rites were thus absent.'^{xxvi} By such a humanitarian act, Rosie sets herself free from the classifications of cisgender and transgender person/community. Ironically, the body that is the source of condemnation, confusion and contestation throughout Rosie's life and the body that is treated with utter disrespect bearing a toe tag with corpse number on it (called as 'a price tag...cheap'^{xxvii} by the author) and as nothing less than filth by the hospital after Rosie's death becomes the very epitome of service, of humanity and of dilution of differences of sex, gender, class or religion emphasizing not the physical but the essence. Rosie's act of bequeathing her dead remains for the larger good of society changes the equation from that of cisgender people vs transgender people to human beings vs human beings that echoes the words of Bornstein, an American non-binary transactivist and author: "...you still think gender is the issue! Gender is not the issue. Gender is the battlefield. Or the playground. The issue is us versus them. Any us versus any them..."^{xxviii}

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School Heads' Leadership Skills and Teachers' Work Engagement in the Department of Education: Evidence from Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte

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Abstract— This study aimed to determine the school heads' leadership skills and their relationship to work engagement among the teachers of Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte during the school year 2023-2024. The study employed a descriptive correlational research method. Frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, Kruskal-Wallis H Test, and Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient (Spearman rho) were the statistical tools used with Jamovi as statistical software. There were ninety (90) teacher-respondents involved. The study revealed that the level of school heads' leadership skills was very high and the teachers were very highly engaged in their respective work assignments. There was no significant difference in the level of school heads' leadership skills and the perceived level of work engagement. There was a significant medium/moderate positive correlation between the levels of school heads' leadership skills and work engagement. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the author recommends that Top DepEd Officials, through the Schools Governance and Operations Division (SGOD) would use the findings of this study to validate the School - Based Management (SBM) practices of the school heads in the district. The teachers would also use the findings of the study as the basis for reflection on the importance of school heads' leadership skills and work engagement towards attaining a high level of SBM practice.



Keywords— leadership skills, school heads, work engagement, teachers, Piñan District, Division of Zamboanga del Norte, Department of Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Leaders are made, not born (Farlow, 2019). Everyone who aims to be a leader has to work to develop skills, use his/her strengths, mitigate one's weaknesses and most importantly learn from one's failures.

Section 6.1 Rule VI of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9155 otherwise known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 states that there shall be a school head for each public and secondary school or cluster thereof who is responsible of the administrative and instructional oversight of a school or group of schools. In addition, school heads are responsible

for defining the school's vision, introducing innovation to teachers' teaching methods, supporting staff performance, coordinating instructional activities and fostering a positive school climate (Ikediugwu & Agu, 2022).

Leadership skills are distinctive abilities that define a leader's capacity to guide and direct members of the organization in the direction of the organization's objectives. (Abun, et al., 2017) regarded leadership skills as instruments that the leaders employ to carry out their obligations and duties in order to guide their members.

Kapur (2020) believed that leadership skills encompass the instruments, conduct and capacities that

leaders ought to possess in order to improve the organizations they serve and the welfare of their employees. They are responsible for the direction and motivation of these employees in the performance of their job responsibilities and the attainment of the organization's goals and objectives.

Abun, et al., (2017) postulated that it is essential that a leader has a comprehensive understanding of leadership and management in order to influence work engagement.

Work engagement denotes engaging organizational members in their work roles which entails utilizing and expressing their physical, cognitive and emotional selves during the role performances. It is the amount of time spent contemplating one's role at work (Abun, et al., 2020).

Leadership research shows that certain leadership behaviors have a clear association with engagement, trust in the leader, support from the leader and creating a blame-free environment which are considered to be the components of

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE



psychological safety, a condition proposed by Kahn (1990) which leads to employee/teacher engagement (Zahed - Babelan, 2019) as cited by Magboo, et al., (2023). However, few studies have attempted to provide evidence of association between leadership and employees'/ teachers' work engagement. Hence, this research is being conducted on the school heads' leadership skills and teachers' work engagement in the Department of Education, Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte to fill the research gap.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework is presented in figure 1. First, the independent variable which is the leadership skills categorized into strategic planning skills; developing people skills; communication skills; motivating people skills and team building skills, next, the dependent variable which is the work engagement.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

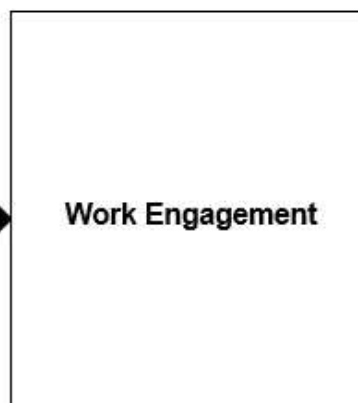


Fig.1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the school heads' leadership skills and their relationship to work engagement among the teachers in Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte during the school year 2023-2024.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' perceived level of school heads' leadership skills in terms of:

- 2.1 strategic planning skills;
- 2.2 developing people skills;
- 2.3 communication skills;
- 2.4 motivating people skills; and
- 2.5 team building skills?

2. What is the respondents' perceived level of work engagement?

3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' perceived level of school heads' leadership skills and work engagement?

III. LITERATURE

Strategic Planning Skills

Abun et al. (2017) defined strategic planning skills as the ability of administrators to formulate strategic direction of their schools in terms of vision, mission, objectives, key result areas, performance indicators and action plan or strategies.

Developing People Skills

In 2017, Abun et al. clarified that the capacity of administrators to assess the issue of subpar performance and identify the requirements for enhancing employees' job-related competencies is one of his/her roles. It is important to note that mere employment does not guarantee that an individual possesses all the requisite skills and knowledge to perform the job. However, it is possible that this perspective on hiring may serve as a starting point (McNamara, 2017). People's development is not limited to knowledge and skills only. It also includes developing employees to be leaders (Abun et al., 2020).

Communication skills

Magboo et al. (2023) found out that the leadership behavior of their school heads which obtained the highest mean of 3.70 indicated that when school leaders communicate school academic goals to people at school leaders meet their people and discuss matters to them to keep them aware and participate in communicating the school goals. Ruano et al. (2021) believed that one of the best aspects of instructional leadership behavior of school heads is that they can positively influence teachers' collaboration thus, positive communication with teachers brings better views on the school goals done on a table meeting. Communication skills refer to the capacity of administrators to effectively convey information regarding organizational or school matters to employees/teachers, so that they are informed and motivated to contribute to the school's growth (Abun et al., 2017).

Motivating Skills

Motivation skills are actions or strategies that induce an individual to perform the desired action or provide the desired response. These strategies and actions differ according to three primary determinants: the style of the motivator, the target audience, and the personality of the individual the motivator aims to sway (Doyle, 2022). Employees/Teachers are encouraged to increase their productivity and attain success through the use of motivational skills.

Team Building Skills

Abun et al., (2017) pointed out that team building skills pertain to the capacity of administrators to assemble and oversee a team, wherein team members utilize their respective expertise to accomplish the objectives of the organization. The realization of organizational objectives is contingent upon the concerted efforts of all work forces towards the shared goals. Collaborative working relationships are fostered among individual members of a department or interdepartmental group through this process. (Doyle, 2022)

Work Engagement

Work engagement denotes the integration of individuals into their work, wherein the personal selves and the work are inseparable. It is a two-dimensional construct that encompasses absorption which pertains to the intensity of one's focus on a specific role at work, and attention. It is defined by the three qualities: vigor, commitment and absorption. Vigor is distinguished by a strong commitment to one's tasks and mental fortitude during work, It is the disposition to exert effort in one's endeavors (Baes, et al., (2023). Commitment is the quality of being dedicated to one's work while absorption is defined as fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work causing time to fly by Baes & Naparota, (2023).

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used the descriptive-correlational research design with a survey questionnaire as a means of gathering data for both the leadership skills of school heads as perceived by the respondents and work engagement.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in the three national high schools in Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte namely: Piñan National High School, Dilawa National High School and Teresita Integrated School.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the ninety (90) teachers in the three (3) national high schools of Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte during the school year 2023-2024. Among the eighty (80) teachers in Piñan National High School only sixty-seven (67) were chosen as respondents computed through Raosoft Calculator Software while nineteen (19) or one hundred percent (100%) of the teachers were from Dilawa National High School and four (4) or one hundred percent (100%) were from Teresita Integrated School respectively.

Statistical Treatment of the Data

Presented are the statistical tools utilized in the treatment and analysis of the data gathered.

Weighted Mean. This is used to quantify the respondents' ratings on the leadership skills and work engagement. Presented below is the scoring guide in giving qualitative descriptions and interpretation of the responses of the items in leadership skills and work engagement.

Scoring Guide

Leadership skills

Scale	Range of Values	Description	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Strongly agree	Very high
4	3.41-4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61-3.40	Somewhat Agree	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very low

Work Engagement

Scale	Range of Values	Description	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Strongly agree	Very highly Engaged
4	3.41-4.20	Agree	Highly Engaged
3	2.61-3.40	Somewhat Agree	Engaged
2	1.81-2.60	Disagree	Lowly Engaged
1	1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Lowly Engaged

Standard Deviation. This is used to determine the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the respondents' scores where $SD \leq 3$ is homogenous and $SD > 3$ is heterogeneous (Aiken & Susane, 2001; Refugio, et. al., 2019).

Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient (Spearman rho). This is used to determine the correlation between leadership skills and work engagement. The following guide in interpreting the correlation value suggested by Cohen, et al., (2014) was utilized in this study:

Value	Size	Interpretation
± 0.50 to ± 1.00	Large	High positive/negative correlation
± 0.30 to ± 0.49	Medium	Moderate positive/negative correlation
± 0.10 to ± 0.29	Small	Low positive/negative correlation
± 0.01 to ± 0.09	Negligible	Slight positive/negative correlation
0.00	No correlation	

The data gathered in this study were tallied, treated, and analyzed using Microsoft Excel Data Analysis ToolPak and Jamovi Software Version 14. Thus, displaying of the statistical formulas is not necessary. All statistical tests were performed at 0.05 level of significance.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceived Level of School Heads' Leadership Skills

Table 1 Perceived Level of School Heads' Leadership Skills in Terms of Strategic Planning Skills

A. Strategic Planning Skills	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Has a clear overall vision or concept of his/her school's purpose, function and responsibility	4.61	0.49	Very Good	Very High
2. Keeps abreast of new ideas, trends, challenges or events that may affect his school.	4.56	0.56	Very Good	Very High

3. Sets clear objectives and strategies for his/her school effectively.	4.61	0.53	Very Good	Very High
4. Articulates a clear and compelling sense of the school's vision and objectives.	4.62	0.53	Very Good	Very High
5. Develops performance indicators to measure the school's success.	4.53	0.60	Very Good	Very High
6. Has the ability to adapt and change the focus of the school's work.	4.60	0.60	Very Good	Very High
7. Makes sure that all the school's goals are compatible/align with the overall institution's goals.	4.53	0.60	Very Good	Very High
Overall	4.57	0.49	Very Good	Very High

Table 1 reflects the perceived level of school heads' leadership skills in terms of strategic planning. The data affirms that the respondents described their school heads as very good in overall vision or concept of the school's purpose, keeping abreast of new ideas, trends, challenges or events that may affect the school, setting clear objectives and strategies for the school effectively, articulate a clear and compelling sense of the school's vision and objectives, develop performance indicators to measure the school's success, can adapt and change the focus of the school's work, and make sure that all the school's goals are

compatible/align with the overall institution's goals. Overall, the respondents described their school heads as very good in terms of strategic planning skills. This finding entails that the level of strategic planning skills of the school heads in Piñan District, Division of Zamboanga del Norte is very high. Aquino et al., (2021) supported this finding who stated that the level of school heads' leadership practices in terms of planning, and other practices like organizing, controlling, commanding and coordinating in the Schools Division of Nueva Viscaya is very high.

Table 2 Perceived Level of School Heads' Leadership Skills in Terms of Developing People Skills

B. Developing People Skills	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Provides an accurate and thorough performance appraisal for the teachers for developmental purposes.	4.47	0.60	Very Good	Very High
2. Uses a performance appraisal to identify strength and weakness of teachers for further training	4.48	0.64	Very Good	Very High
3. Teaches and coaches teachers skillfully to help them carry out their duties and responsibilities	4.46	0.66	Very Good	Very High
4. Gives constructive feedback effectively (regularly, firmly, humanely).	4.51	0.60	Very Good	Very High
5. Deals with performance problems In a timely manner and help employees understand their specific performance problems	4.38	0.63	Very Good	Very High
6. Identifies the needs of the school and teachers' deficiencies in carrying out duties and responsibilities and sends them for further training and development	4.38	0.68	Very Good	Very High
7. Identifies potential teachers for positions and prepares them before they assume their positions	4.37	0.73	Very Good	Very High
Overall	4.42	0.58	Very Good	Very High

Table 2 discloses the perceived level of school heads' leadership skills in terms of developing people. As disclosed in the table, the respondents described their school heads' as very good in terms of developing people. The school heads are very good at providing an accurate and thorough performance appraisal for the teachers for developmental purposes, using a performance appraisal to identify strengths and weaknesses of teachers for further training purposes, coaching teachers skillfully to help them carry out their duties and responsibilities, give constructive feedback effectively (regularly, firmly, humanely), deal with performance problems promptly and help employees understand their specific performance problems, identify the needs of the school and teachers' deficiencies in carrying out duties and responsibilities and sends them for

further training and development, and identify potential teachers for positions and prepares them before they assume their positions. Altogether, the school heads are very good at developing people. This finding indicates that the level of leadership skills in schools in terms of developing people is very high. Bass (1985) as cited by Abun et al. (2020) contended that the success of a leader is not measured by the profit and advancement of an organization but how many people or employees he/she has developed to be leaders like them. Maxwell (1995) also cited by Abun et al., (2020) made it clear that the job of a leader is to develop leaders around leaders. He pointed out that the challenge of a leader is to raise potential leaders, nursing them, equipping them, developing them forming a dream team of leaders and producing a generation of leaders.

Table 3 Perceived Level of School Heads' Leadership Skills in Terms of Communication Skills

C. Communication Skills	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Communicates well on a one-to-one basis (clearly, positively, humanely and with respect).	4.48	0.67	Very Good	Very High
2. Keeps up-to-date on what is going on with the school and disseminate to the teachers.	4.50	0.62	Very Good	Very High
3. Keeps his/her teachers well informed on news that affect them and their jobs.	4.46	0.64	Very Good	Very High
4. Has the ability to communicate with people in a professional manner when under stress.	4.48	0.62	Very Good	Very High
5. Communicates information in a timely manner.	4.47	0.64	Very Good	Very High
6. Takes the time to explain their decisions, opinions and recommendations.	4.46	0.60	Very Good	Very High
7. Communicates to groups in an articulate, concise, and clear manner.	4.39	0.65	Very Good	Very High
8. Confidently states his opinion when there is a conflict or concern.	4.40	0.67	Very Good	Very High
9. Takes time to listen to teachers' problems.	4.41	0.67	Very Good	Very High
10. Actively seeks teachers' opinions regarding work affecting their area of responsibility	4.42	0.67	Very Good	Very High
11. Keeps an open mind when hearing teachers' opinions or ideas.	4.49	0.67	Very Good	Very High
Overall	4.45	0.46	Very Good	Very High

Table 3 exhibits the perceived level of school heads' leadership skills in terms of communication skills. The respondents declare that their school heads are very good in terms of communication. The school heads communicate well on a one-to-one basis (clearly, positively, humanely, and with respect), keep up-to-date on what is going on with the school and disseminate to the teachers, keep their teachers well informed on news that affects them and their

jobs, can communicate with people professionally when under stress, communicate information on time, take the time to explain their decisions, opinions and recommendations, communicate to groups in an articulate, concise, and clear manner, confidently states opinion when there is a conflict or concern, take time to listen to teachers' problems, actively seek teachers' opinions regarding work affecting their area of responsibility, and keep an open mind

when hearing teachers' opinions or ideas. In general, the level of leadership skills of school heads in terms of communication is very high. This finding is supported by Ruano et al., (2021) who asserted that one of the best aspects of instructional leadership behavior of school heads is that they can positively influence teachers' collaboration thus, positive communication with teachers bring better views on the school goals done on a table meeting. Luthra and Dahiya (2015) cited by Abun et al, (2020) argued that an effective leader is all about communicating effectively and even considered to be imperative skills to have. Bass

(1990) as cited by Ginnett et al., (1999) and Abun et al., (2020) pointed out that effective communication is determined by the degree to which the message is understood by the listener and the receiver which is not only verbal but also non-verbal, therefore a good leader must be able to communicate his feelings and ideas effectively and be able to articulate arguments, advocates positions to persuade others. According to Khimoski and Hayness (1980) likewise cited by Abun et al., (2020), communication correlates with job satisfaction, productivity and quality of work outputs.

Table 4 Perceived Level of School Heads' Leadership Skills in Terms of Motivating People Skills

D. Motivating People Skills	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Shows genuine concern for teachers as unique individuals.	4.53	0.64	Very Good	Very High
2. Gives credit and recognition to teachers when they do a good job.	4.53	0.64	Very Good	Very High
3. Generates enthusiasm among teachers by providing the necessary support.	4.51	0.62	Very Good	Very High
4. Understands what motivates teachers to work hard and provides the needed assistance to fulfill those needs.	4.50	0.62	Very Good	Very High
5. Appropriately rewards the highest achievers for their contributions.	4.53	0.64	Very Good	Very High
6. Recognizes or appreciates the positive aspects of the teachers, not the negative ones.	4.56	0.58	Very Good	Very High
7. Encourages a positive outlook with teachers when there are problems, instead of the negative outlook.	4.58	0.56	Very Good	Very High
Overall	4.54	0.54	Very Good	Very High

Table 4 conveys the perceived level of school heads' leadership skills in terms of motivating people. The result maintains that the school heads are very good at motivating people. They show genuine concern for teachers as unique individuals, give credit and recognition to teachers when they do a good job, generate enthusiasm among teachers by providing the necessary support, understand what motivates teachers to work hard and provide the needed assistance to fulfill those needs, appropriately reward the highest achievers for their contributions, recognize or appreciate the positive aspects of the teachers, not the negative ones, and encourage a

positive outlook with teachers when there are problems, instead of the negative outlook. In general, the level of school heads' leadership skills in terms of motivating people is very high. Abun (2018) contended that a leader must learn how to motivate his/her employees since they have different needs and aspirations to be fulfilled. It is the job of a leader to identify the different needs that motivate employees to work. Thus, Ginnett et al., (1999) cited by Abun et al., (2020) argued that motivation cannot be generalized because all people/employees do not have the same needs.

Table 5 Perceived Level of School Heads' Leadership Skills in Terms of Team Building Skills

E. Team Building Skills	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Rewards collaborative -oriented behavior.	4.43	0.60	Very Good	Very High
2. Encourages cooperation and collaborations between teachers and department heads.	4.51	0.57	Very Good	Very High
3. Fosters a sense of teamwork and builds enthusiasm for group projects and assignments.	4.50	0.62	Very Good	Very High

4. Develop good working relationship with or among teachers.	4.54	0.54	Very Good	Very High
5. Anticipates teachers' needs, seek ways to help them, willingly assists them when needed.	4.50	0.59	Very Good	Very High
6. Respects the contributions of teachers, supports and interacts well with them.	4.54	0.54	Very Good	Very High
7. Focuses on goals and activities that support the larger organizational goals rather than trivial ones.	4.52	0.58	Very Good	Very High
Overall	4.51	0.42	Very Good	Very High

Table 5 manifests the perceived level of school heads' leadership skills in terms of team building. The outcome signifies that the school heads are very good at team building. They reward collaborative-oriented behavior, encourage cooperation and collaboration between teachers and department heads, foster a sense of teamwork and build enthusiasm for group projects and assignments, develop good working relationships with or among teachers, anticipate teachers' needs, seek ways to help them, willingly

assists them when needed, respect the contributions of teachers, supports and interacts well with them, and focus on goals and activities that support the larger organizational goals rather than trivial ones. This finding implies that the leadership skills of school heads in terms of team building is very high. This finding is corroborated by the study of Jimenez (2023) which indicated that the respondents of her study see the fact that their school heads promote teamwork for better teaching.

Table 6 Summary of the Perceived Level of School Heads' Leadership Skills

Leadership Skills	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
A. Strategic Planning Skills	4.57	0.49	Very Good	Very High
B. Developing People Skills	4.42	0.58	Very Good	Very High
C. Communication Skills	4.45	0.46	Very Good	Very High
D. Motivating People Skills	4.54	0.54	Very Good	Very High
E. Team Building Skills	4.51	0.42	Very Good	Very High
Overall	5.50	0.46	Very Good	Very High

Table 6 illustrates the summary of the perceived level of school heads' leadership skills. The result shows that the school heads are very good in all indicators of leadership skills. The finding suggests that the level of leadership skills of the school heads is very high. This finding is supported by Jimenez (2023) who found out that the school heads' leadership skills is very high as shown by the overall

weighted mean of 3.61. This shows that the school heads in the City Schools Division of Biñan City possess the required instructional leadership qualities required for a school leader.

Perceived Level of Work Engagement

Table 7 Perceived Level of Work Engagement

Work Engagement	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. I am willingly accepting change.	4.77	0.45	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
2. I am willing to take on new task as needed.	4.71	0.48	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
3. I take the initiative to help other teachers when the need arises.	4.71	0.50	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
4. I keep going even when things get tough.	4.69	0.53	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
5. I adapt quickly to difficult situations.	4.61	0.51	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
6. When at work, I am completely focused on my job/duties.	4.63	0.57	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged

7. I am determined to give my best effort at work each day.	4.71	0.55	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
8. I am often so involved in my work that the day goes by very quickly.	4.67	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
9. I get excited about going to work.	4.58	0.60	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
10. I feel completely involved in my work.	4.73	0.56	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
11. I am inspired to meet my goals at work.	4.77	0.50	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engage
12. I understand the strategic goals of my school.	4.68	0.54	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engage
13. I see to it that I work to the best I can to meet the objective of my school.	4.74	0.51	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engage
14. I see to it that what I do is in line with the school's objectives.	4.74	0.51	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engage
Overall	4.70	0.40	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engage

Table 7 shows the perceived level of work engagement. The outcome asserts that the respondents strongly agree that they are willing to accept change, take on new tasks as needed, take the initiative to help other teachers when the need arises, keep going even when things get tough, adapt quickly to difficult situations, completely focused on their job/duties, determined to give their best effort at work each day, often so involved in their work that the day goes by very quickly, get excited about going to work, feel completely involved in their work, inspired to meet their goals at work, I understand the strategic goals of my school, see to it that they work to the best they can to meet the objective of my school, I see to it that what I do is

in line with the school's objectives. Overall, the data on work engagement is very high. Baes (2023) supported this finding who found out that the respondents in his study were highly engaged in terms of cognitive and emotional work engagements. However, this finding is refuted by Aquino et al., 2021 who concluded that the very productive performance of teachers stays the same regardless of whether the school heads exhibit a very high degree of authentic leadership.

Test of Relationship between the Levels of School Heads' Leadership Skills and Work Engagement

Table 8 Test of Relationship between the Levels of School Heads' Leadership Skills and Work Engagement

Variables	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
School Heads' Leadership Skills and Work Engagement	0.409	< 0.01	Medium/Moderate Positive Significant

Table 8 displays the test of the relationship between the levels of school heads' leadership skills and work engagement. Employing the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient (Spearman rho), the outcome declares that there exists a significant medium/moderate positive correlation between the school heads' leadership skills and work engagement. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding denotes that as the level of school heads' leadership skills increases, the level of work engagement also increases. This finding further denotes that work engagement is significantly affected by leadership skills. This finding furthermore denotes that work engagement is dependent on leadership skills. Brolund (2016) as cited by Magboo et al supports this finding. They stated that the goal of instructional leadership is for the school heads to work closely with teachers in order to

increase student achievement as well as the performance of the teachers as part of work engagement. Villanueva (2021) emphasized that the school's success or failure is determined by the quality of the school head. In like manner, Abun et al. (2020) stressed that administrators' leadership skills impact employees' work engagement. Ferinia et al. (2016) asserted that employee engagement has a deep connection to the organization and a love for one's job.

Basañes & Dagol (2021) warranted that when the employees are satisfied, they tend to feel happy with their families and friends. For great employees, they work hard because they felt that working is just fun. Babelan et al. (2019) concluded that instructional leadership had a positive association with work engagement.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that school heads' leadership skills as perceived by the respondents were at a very high level. The respondents who were the teachers were very highly engaged in their respective work assignments. There was a significant medium/moderate positive correlation between the levels of school heads' leadership skills and work engagement. This finding denotes that work engagement is dependent on the school heads' leadership skills which means that if school heads' leadership skills are good, teachers would be motivated to work and therefore they would be productive.

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The Impact of Online Harassment on Women's Societal Development

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Abstract—A significant barrier to women's progression in society is online harassment, which has an impact on their social engagement, profession development, and personal welfare. Serious psychological effects including anxiety, despair, and emotional agony can arise from this type of abuse, which includes hate speech, and gender-based discrimination. In the workplace, women encounter obstacles to advancement, decreased public participation, especially in fields where males dominate. In addition to limiting commercial options and discouraging civic engagement, online abuse also strengthens gender inequity. Women may stop participating in freelance labor or internet business endeavors, which has a significant economic impact as well. The issue is further made worse by the absence of strong legal protections, which exposes women to further danger. Women's physical security, home life, and academic endeavors are all impacted by cyberbullying. A multidimensional strategy is needed to solve these issues, one that includes improved legal safeguards, heightened public awareness, and supportive systems that allow women to fully engage in all facets of social development.



Keywords— Digital abuse, gender inequality, psychological effects, mental health, social change, education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The research paper studies key aspects of the diverse and far-reaching impacts of online harassment on women's societal development, highlighting the psychological, social, professional, and economic consequences of digital abuse. Women's mental health, academic achievement, and civic engagement are all impaired by online harassment, which seriously impedes the advancement of society. Women may experience panic, hopelessness, and self-censorship as a result, which limits their ability to participate fully in social and professional settings. By promoting unfavorable preconceptions and deterring women from obtaining leadership positions or starting their own businesses, this harassment sustains gender inequity. likewise, it reduces women's contributions to society advancement by erecting obstacles to civic engagement and education. In order to encourage women to engage equally in all facets of society, it is imperative that

online harassment be addressed with greater legal safeguards and supportive structures.

HARASSMENT AND ABUSE OF WOMEN ONLINE

To learn more about the ways and locations of online harassment,

1.1. Abuse was made possible by technology

Technology has made it possible for abusers to target victims with little accountability since it provides anonymity, broad access, and immediate contact. Online gaming, social networking, and digital settings have all turned into havens for stalking, misogyny, and cyberbullying. The continuation of this abuse is made possible by inadequate regulation and support networks, which have a detrimental impact on women's security, well-being, and social participation.

1.2. Abuse in online dating

When people use digital platforms to control, manipulate, or hurt others—often by lying, harassing, or

taking advantage of their emotions—this is known as online dating abuse. Coercive tactics, uninvited explicit texts, and catfishing are examples of this. In the absence of appropriate protections, victims are susceptible to both physical and psychological harm from online predators.

1.3. Image-based sexual abuse

When intimate photos or films are shared, distributed, or threatened without consent in order to control, humiliate, or hurt the victim, this is known as image-based sexual abuse. Frequently without the victim's knowledge or agreement, this might happen via websites, messaging applications, or social media. It can have long-term psychological ramifications, create serious emotional suffering, and harm one's reputation.

1.3 Violations of privacy

When private data, information, or actions are accessed, shared, or used without permission, it is considered a privacy violation. Examples of this include hacking, illegal spying, and the unlawful use of personal information. Such breaches may result in identity theft, emotional distress, and a loss of personal control.

The setting of ongoing intimate partner violence, particularly violence that occurs after a separation, is frequently where online abuse and harassment take place. Online abuse and harassment are frequently directed at women who have a public profile or who come to the notice of the public (such as journalists, activists, or leaders). Women who advocate for gender equality at work or in their society may also come under attack.

1.4 Women's Development

"Women's Development" refers to the process of improving women's status, opportunities, and overall well-being in economic, social, cultural, and political spheres. Its main goal is to create a fair society where women and men have equal access to resources, opportunities, and rights.

II. IMPACT OF ONLINE HARASSMENT

2.1. Psychological and Emotional impact: Abuse over the internet can have serious psychological repercussions, such as anxiety, despair. Constant terror, emotionlessness, and a sense of powerlessness can affect victims' everyday lives and mental health in general. Women are frequently the focus of derogatory remarks, threats, and humiliation in online abuse. Increased stress, anxiety, and sadness may result from this. Women's mental health and sense of safety online may be impacted by their dream of becoming victims again.

2.2. Freedom of Expression: Women are frequently the focus of derogatory remarks, threats, and humiliation in

online abuse. Increased stress, anxiety, and sadness may result from this. Women's mental health and sense of safety online may be impacted by their dream of becoming victims again.

2.3. Impact on Professional Identity: Online abuse frequently targets women in public-facing professions like journalism, activism, or politics, weakening their authority and expertise. This may harm their reputations and impede their ability to advance in their careers.

2.4. Digital Gender Divide: Women may be deterred from utilizing social media and technology to the fullest extent if they experience harassment online. By preventing them from accessing online education, economic possibilities, and political discourse—all of which are essential for empowerment in the modern world—this might worsen the digital gender barrier.

2.5. Effects on Political and Social Action: Women, especially those engaged in activism or women's rights advocacy, frequently experience extreme online abuse when they attempt to question social norms or bring attention to important concerns. Their activity may be the direct target of this harassment, which would undermine their work and deter others from joining the cause.

2.6. Obstacles to Digital Access and Literacy: Women's access to technology and the internet may already be restricted, particularly for those living in underprivileged groups. They may become even less inclined to use digital tools for social interaction, employment, and education as a result of online harassment, which limits their capacity to gain from digital empowerment. Improving women's digital literacy may be hampered by the possibility of online harassment since they may be hesitant to learn about technology or social media sites out of concern about harassment. This perpetuates the unequal access to digital resources for men and women.

2.7. Social Isolation and Alienation: Women who are the targets of online harassment may experience social isolation as a result of their online environments become hostile or poisonous. A sense of belonging is essential for personal empowerment, and thus alienation may hinder it. Social networks and interpersonal connections can be harmed by online harassment that carries over into in-person interactions. Women may be less able to communicate their experiences, obtain support, and develop collective power as a result of this isolation.

III. CONCLUSION

A major obstacle to women's empowerment is online harassment, which restricts their capacity to participate fully in the social, political, economic, and

digital domains. Beyond the immediate emotional and psychological effects, online harassment has structural repercussions, including the silencing of women in crucial domains including political participation, professional advancement, and advocacy. In order to combat online harassment, societal changes that promote more equality and respect for women in both online and offline contexts are just as important as improved legal safeguards and enforcement.

Digital literacy initiatives, safer online platforms, improved law enforcement training, and the creation of encouraging online communities are some ways to fight online harassment. Society cannot achieve full gender equality and guarantee that women are treated fairly until these issues are addressed.

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The Constitution of Nepal 2015 and the Capacity of Government to Governance in Local Governments

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Abstract— This paper explores Nepal's local governance after the endorsement of the Constitution in 2015. The Constitution identifies the local government (LG) as the lowest unit of government with no constitutional provision for the opposition group. The paper analyzes it from the perspective of government to governance using primary and secondary data. LG is the closest form of government envisioned by the Constitution. LGs in Nepal have played a crucial role in institutionalizing local governance, promoting democratic values, and accelerating social and economic development. However, these objectives are partly accomplished, despite constitutional provisions. There is still much work to complete at the local level to develop the necessary capability for promoting and distributing services and infrastructure. Though it concludes with recommendations for improving local governance, citizen dissatisfaction and political and bureaucratic dishonesty pose risks to their capacity development. It aims to address the extent to which local governments can implement constitutional rights to transform communities, revealing that more capacity is needed for restructuring, citizen engagement, partnerships, technical, administrative, and fiscal capacity, and law formulation. Major arguments remain unanswered.



Keywords— administration, capacity, democracy, government, governance, participation, people.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nepal's ancient political system was based on geographic norms, and cultural traditions. Religion was the influencing factor for legitimatizing function of government at that time. Regmi (2020) claims that during the Lichhavi period, the local *Panchayat* had the power of justice. Jayasthiti Malla's Human Jurisprudence of 1380 AD was related to the political system. The first Civil Code of Jang Bahadur Rana implemented in 1854 was the first authentic law of Nepal. Regmi (2002) points out that the prime objective of civil code was to ensure about uniformity in punishment. However, with the change of time, the perception of government, especially local government (LG) is different. It refers to the closest units of government located on the doorstep of people. Pradhan (2019) accepts, "Local governments are the foundations of democratic governance. They are, in real sense, the governments of the citizens" (109). LGs in developing

countries like Nepal deliver services, foster public trust, and involve people in democratic practice, to regulate civic necessities, and uphold responsibility and liability. Shah and Shah (2006) indicate that LGs governments are community-level public entities practiced globally through numerous lawful tools, including national legal documents (Denmark, India, Japan, and Sweden), and statutes state/provincial governments (Australia, Canada, and the United States), and exclusive guidelines as in China.

In Nepal, LG was created under the recently adopted Constitution (2015), which grants them powers with autonomy within their jurisdictions. The preamble of the Constitution incorporates the goal of eradicating discrimination and oppression rooted in feudalistic governance, encouraging societal and cultural cohesion, and building an egalitarian society based on proportional inclusive principles, ensuring economic equality and social justice. Article 51 (b) 4 indicates, "to guarantee good

governance by ensuring the equal and easy access of the people to the services and facilities delivered by the State while making public administration fair, competent, impartial, transparent, free from corruption, accountable and participatory.” It endorses three tiers of government and offers rights to local levels, “The Federation, State and Local levels shall exercise the power of State of Nepal pursuant to this Constitution and law” (Article 56, 2) which is mentioned in Schedule -8. Schedule -8 has a connection with clause (4) of Article 57, clause (2) of Article 214, clause (2) of Article 221 and clause (1) of Article 226).

There are currently 753 local governments, all committed to democratic governance, efficient public service delivery, and promoting communal and economic expansion to raise local existing canons. Democracy and LG are integral concepts. Suhrke (2014) states that some countries adopt a federal form of governance and others implement unitary systems. LG, the bottom level of government within a government, is the administration of a county, with elected representatives. For this, Basu (2019) states that public administration encompasses various decrees and roles performed by municipal administrators and structures in authority. It includes rules, instructions, and managerial performances expressed by governments to offer municipal goods and services. Public bureaucrats at all levels exercise daily work processes, routine behaviors, and discretionary decisions in areas like planning, budgeting, law enforcement, and social services. Both concepts aim to deliver democracy to the doorsteps of communities (UK Government, 2016). LGs in Nepal face challenges such as dishonesty, negligence, maladministration, and absence of civic responsibility.

The government to governance refers to a state's capacity to function effectively and protect citizens' rights. It is for delivering desired social and economic outcomes to address the objectives of the Constitution of Nepal. For this, LGs manage governance processes, focusing on socio-economic development through ownership, provision, regulation, and support. Shah and Shah (2006), Ardanaz, Leiras, and Tommasi (2014), and Pandeya (2015) observe that LGs manage governance processes, focusing on socio-economic development. After 2017, in response to the Local Government Operational Act (2017) the system of government and governance incorporated the policy to strengthen the management LGs. Civil society entities in the case of Nepal, led to debates about their capacity to simplify financial and societal development. Over three decades, it has enforced central governments and global aid agencies to regulate their roles and collaborative approaches in progressing states, presenting new challenges in authority sources, serving purposes, and

constituting government procedures. LGs need to develop substantial sovereign authority to achieve sustainable economic growth and social outcomes. It requires a shift of rule to societies, allowing them to rule government for municipal goals and benefits. The problems faced by LGs in developing countries are mismanagement of municipal resources and decreased service delivery effectiveness, power sharing between central government and local actors for required decision-making. A desirable tactic at the local administration where different actors like representatives of local government, and community groups sit together to reach consensus-based decisions.

The approach to effective local governance relies on the capacity of all involved to inaugurate and perform within the structure for tactical, factual policy outline, measure, and assessment. Capacity-building, retention, and application require multi-dimensional knowledge, abilities, skills, and behavior. Podgórska-Rykała (2024) outlines that the LG offers opportunities for participatory perspectives of people at the local level, and serves as a framework for the development. Factors influencing local governments' capacity incorporate required resources, social system, collaboration, and political legal action. The required cooperative action is crucial to appraise local development with the assumption of higher levels of government. Political legitimacy is crucial for community engagement and responsible service delivery.

This article discusses the challenges faced by local governments and their responses to citizen expectations. It explores the nature of these expectations, their sources, and whether they are based on individual needs or collective interests. The panel also examines the characteristics of the demanding citizen, such as age, gender, education, and political persuasion. It also explores how local authorities are seeking to satisfy these expectations, whether innovative or traditional responses are successful, and whether innovations, such as direct democracy, can help or reinforce an inflation of expectations. Both empirical and theoretical papers are welcome. Political party leaders at local levels have been criticized for their slow work and lack of progress in local units. After assuming office a year ago, elected representatives of Tokha Municipality, Kathmandu have not made significant progress, leading to disappointment among locals. Some believe that the representatives are struggling to understand their roles and responsibilities, and the excitement and hope that the people had a year ago have evaporated. The locals have expressed disappointment that the representatives have not been able to bring change and development to their villages and that they are still in the learning phase. The first time working under a federal setup, representatives are still confused

over rules and policies. Despite this, locals remain hopeful that the situation will change within the next few years. The local elections were held after a long time in 2017. Common people had a huge expectation from the local election of 2022 for transformation and development. The Central Government introduced the Local Government Operation Act (LGOA) 2017 to strengthen its management and operational capacity. However, challenges still exist, including questionable political and administrative commitment. Research conducted in two local governments in seven provinces reveals these challenges. Interviews with mayors, deputy mayors, chief administrative officers, and community members, as well as national officials, highlight the need for a more vibrant form of local governance. The paper reviews the literature on local democracy in federal contexts and presents findings with a case of Nepal's local democracy, development, government, and governance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Government of Nepal Act was enacted in 1948 to address Nepal's traditional monarchy. Nepal's Shah Dynasty had exercised limited power, and became unsuccessful due to the Rana's control of executive power. The Interim Government of Nepal Act 1951 strengthened the king's authority and introduced reforms like the Supreme Court and fundamental rights. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1959 was short-lived and replaced by 1962, a new constitution of the *Panchayat* system, which had eliminated political parties and allowed the king to modify the constitution in case of emergency. The 1991 Constitution established multi-party democracy back to Nepal. However, critics argued that it failed to adequately represent growing desires of Nepali society, despite Nepal's diverse social groups. The 2007 Interim Constitution expanded the democratic characters and included provisions on citizenship, people's basic rights, state's accountability, and the judiciary. Local governance, defined by international scholars and authorities, is self-governing administration of public affairs by local community representatives, subject to central government. Podgórska-Rykała (2024) observes that traditional government violate local self-government principles and specific rules. It becomes difficult to resolve issues in a daily manner. Byrne (1981) views LGs possesses significant responsibility and discretionary power, despite being subject to various practices. Thapa (1998, p. 2) opines, "Broadly speaking, the term local self-government is connected with mainly two aspects – governance and development." The concept of LG is closely linked to governance and focuses on power and authority within local institutions to protect and promote the interests of

local community.

The history of Nepal's government system was traditionally centralized. Since long the King in Nepal was the head of state and government head. A council facilitated local governance, giving some autonomy for development. However, some areas were ignored, leading to reliance on neighboring India for basic services. This structure consists of three tiers of Government: zonal, district, and lower units of Government (Village *Panchyat* and Municipal *Panchyat*). National Legislation was introduced to define roles, powers, and organizational structures, aiming to strengthen the *Panchyat* system which could not develop local leadership, and involve local people in decision-making. Acharya (2018) views that Nepal's past centralized local governance was hindered by weak institutional structures and decision-making processes which led to ineffective implementation of decentralization policies and programs. The goal was to strengthen the political system and involve local people in decision-making.

The Constitution of 1991 introduced legislation and expanded local governments' powers and responsibilities. The Village *Panchyat* and Municipal *Panchyat* were converted to Village Development Committees and Municipalities. The Local Self-Governance Act (1999) was enacted to improve local planning and development, promoting accountability, transparency, and citizen participation in decision-making. Rijal (2013) writes that the LG is a sub-national level of government with jurisdiction over limited state functions within a geographical area. It is often portrayed as the maximum form of decentralization and delegates the power. It involves collective action at the local level, and involves citizens in decision-making and development of local levels. It values inclusion, tolerance, and openness. It accepts different ideas and interests, and promotes peaceful conflict resolution. LGs are responsive to their electorate and negotiate with competing choices to seek compromise. They also mediate disputes and offer processes to resolve interpersonal differences.

In 2002, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) prevented local government elections, resulting in central government employees taking over. In 2006, a peace accord was signed between the government and the rebel force, laying the groundwork for extensive state transformation and subsequent constitution. The new Constitution (2015) established 753 new local governments, with each LG having elected ward committees based on population size. These ward committees are also known as sub-municipal entities. Local governments are divided into Rural Municipalities (460) and Municipalities (293), with 77 district

coordination committees. They have exclusive and shared powers in the planning and implementation of economic, social, environmental, and community infrastructure. Wards in local governments ensure citizens have easy access to basic services and can participate in service design. Nepal's local governments are divided into urban and rural municipalities following the 2015 federal Constitution. Dahal (2024) opines that LGs, at the lowest level of a country's government, address issues directly affecting local people. They are increasingly taking on more responsibilities, improving local quality of life. Central government representatives cannot reach all outlying areas, necessitating local leaders. Decentralization/devolution improves access to services by LGs that understand their needs and utilize local knowledge and resources. Matsui (2005) and Hope (2014) state that LGs are crucial in transitioning to renewable energy systems and leading decentralization for regional economic development.

The LGOA (2017) empowers municipalities to establish political and administrative structures, procedures, performance standards, and community interaction methods, with mayors and chairpersons serving as leaders. Bhusal and Acharya (2024) state that Nepal's Constitution establishes local councils to frame local legislation. These councils, led by the Mayor, and Rural President have five years of tenure, and it has increased the representation of women, Dalit, indigenous group, and Madhesi. However, there are concerns about the impact of elected politicians on local councils. Reforms in local levels in planning, budgetary process and administration for inclusive strong local democracy in Nepal after the implementation of the new Constitution is necessary. Ordinary citizens were need to be given adequate opportunities to participate in policymaking and budget allocations system.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part explains the research design, study population, sample size, data sources, reliability, validity, and data processing, and cleaning. LG refers to the management of local affairs by locally elected representatives, addressing local problems and needs better than central or state governments. LGs provide political and administrative control over services.

This study uses mixed methods and descriptive logic. Collecting data at local levels, face-to-face interviews, and telephonic conversations has enriched the research paper. 15 respondents including Mayor and Deputy Mayor, elected representatives from Tokha Municipality, Kathmandu were chosen for authenticity and validity. 55

common people from different Ward Numbers e.g. 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 were selected to get responses from local people. Similarly, 7 bureaucratic staff from the Municipal Office, and Wards Offices including 3, 6, and 9 were collected to understand the policies ratified by the LG. Primary data were collected in 2022 AD and compared with some secondary sources published in different journals. The study covers the elected local government's tenure from 2017 to 2022. The research collected secondary data from different papers published in journals, books, and Municipal rules.

IV. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The twelve-point agreement (Sharma 2006) opened the door to launch a peaceful people's movement for the seven-political-party and rebel force (Maoist) which opened the way for signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006. The Constitution (2015) grants local governments autonomy, but institutional arrangements for service delivery at local levels. 2017 local governments held elections, allowing public questioning and control. With 14,054,482 votes, 36,639 representatives were elected, ending a two-decade political vacuum led by the federal government in LGs. There are gaps in power structures and delivery performances between the federal and staff of LGs. Local staff view themselves as they are supporters of federal officials and are inclined to nepotism and favoritism. To strengthen LGs' technical and administrative capacity and skills, the federal government instituted the Employees Adjustment Act (2017) and reorganized the civil service structure. With 37,257 positions approved, local entities still have over 15,000 staff. The central government had formed a study committee to scrutinize and recommend organizational structures and employee numbers at the local level. Around 75 percent of the 86,529 civil servants are anticipated to be employed to provincial and local levels. Temporary arrangements have increased local administration capacity, but long-term initiatives are needed to sustain capacity. Staff numbers, employment terms, recruitment, retention, and training will be adjusted to improve local services and infrastructure.

The Constitution establishes fiscal federalism, focusing on economic development, income distribution, and fiscal transfers. The government is committed to addressing these issues through the Inter-Governmental Fiscal Transfer Act (2017). It outlines power sharing and revenue generation through self-financing, co-financing, property and sales taxes, inter-governmental transfers, and local borrowing. LGs collect only one-third of their financial resources through taxation and fees, with fiscal

transfers accounting for almost two-thirds of their total income. Article 56 (4) of the Constitution of Nepal incorporates, “There shall be Village Institutions, Municipalities and District Assemblies under the Local level. The number of Wards in a Village Institution and Municipality shall be as provided for in the Federal law”. The Constitution and LGOA (2017) allow local governments to create regulations and guidelines for local affairs like tax collection, social security distribution, development planning, and council administration. These laws must be passed within 15 days and produced in the government gazette. However, local governments often lack the necessary knowledge and capacity to effectively make laws, requiring central government involvement. Article 59 (1) includes, “The Federation, State and Local level shall make laws, make annual budget, decisions, formulate and implement policies and plans on any matters related to financial powers within their respective jurisdictions”.

V. PEOPLE’S CONCERNS TOWARDS GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNANCE

Local autonomy allows LGs to extend their full perspective as approachable and accountable public structures. The Constitution of 2015 establishes a semi-autonomous system with significant powers for service delivery and community infrastructure provision. Local governments' closeness to communities authorizes them to be acquainted with community requirements and fosters active people’s participation in decision-making. The electoral arrangements are presidential, with council mayors and chairs elected by the people for five-year terms. This stability helps local councils develop strong relationships with their communities. The inclusive policy at the local level and self-governing pluralism, including quotas for women and marginalized groups, can increase local decision-making and action. However, challenges remain, such as inadequate capacity of political representatives and council staff, lack of technical and administrative knowledge, poor staff compliance, inadequate attention to budgetary demands, and slow implementation of programs. Additionally, alterations in understanding between elected representatives and central and LGs' responsibilities limit the inherent power for local governments to become legitimate centers of governance.

One of the respondents from Ward No. 9 of Tokha Municipality expressed:

Public administration at the local level evolves due to factors like information and communication. Here is less influence of globalization, democratization, and knowledge

for driving the local units. The New Public Management, the integration of the private sector and civil society in policy-making, and increased ethical and accountability concerns are ignored.

The respondent asserted that the LG is not sincere about public concern. For this accountable public administration is the key factor for government to governance. The prime factor of the Constitution (2015) is to implement constitutional provisions to ensure the rights of people and deliver services to the people. It is a main challenge at the local level to increase the capacity of the LG to strengthen the local institutions. About 71 percent of common people responded that the LG is only committed to addressing the issues of political parties, but not addressing the common concerns of common people.

VI. LOCAL ADMINISTRATION FOR GOVERNANCE

The federal government has partnered with development partners to establish local governance and cooperative federalism. These partners provide an economic foundation for service and infrastructure projects to support projects to increase technical capacity training, income generation, infrastructure development, and accountability. This funding demonstrates the government's dependency on external support and commitment to reducing corruption and instability. The country's local administration apparatus is modernizing to boost socio-economic development. The central bureaucracy system is increasing power and control over resources impacts socio-economic progress and local governance. Staff in the central bureaucracy play a major role in policy-making, and the provincial and local governments focus on implementation. However, remoteness, career opportunities, administrative structures, and lack of office space hinder staff's transition to local governments. Addressing this reluctance could limit the potential for progressive staff contributions and dynamic local governance.

One staff from Tokha Municipality expressed the ideas as:

The sharing of power and authority among elected representatives and agencies is complex. The authority divided between higher and lower ranks has some ego problems at the local level. In the past, the centralized system had different practices. With the endorsement of the new Constitution, delegates function to sub-national units, covering education, transport, housing, health, etc. It has been a problem to track the representatives to follow the guidelines of LGOA

(2017). There are some policy gaps between federal and local policy for governance system.

The practice of LG is for local development which is interconnected with public policy and administration to enhance economic, social, and environmental conditions in local areas. Public policy at the local level provides a framework for administration and local development. They are the parts of government and governance at local units of Nepal. It fosters economic growth and improves the quality of life. However, in Nepal, LGs struggle to define priorities that hinder sustainable development. Nepal should focus on sustainable development for a self-reliant economy only. Article 229 (2) of the Constitution (2015) accepts, "Matters relating to expenditures from the Local Consolidated Fund under clause (1) shall be as provided for in the Local law."

VII. PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

Participation strategies focus on community or social aspects, often in civil society or government initiatives. Political participation involves the activities of LG for voting and lobbying the local policies. It has been more associated with democratic decentralization. People are happy with their active participation in LG. The governance networks poses a significant challenge for academics and practitioners in network governance and public administration for performance and effectiveness. Public participation is a set of principles and actions to address societal issues, promote welfare, and achieve specific objectives. It encompasses decisions in various sectors like economics, social services, education, healthcare, infrastructure, and environment.

The goal is to enhance safety, reduce poverty, improve health, foster economic growth, and safeguard individual rights. Bongiwe, (2022) claims that local people's knowledge, ideas, and experiences are crucial for development practice, particularly in identifying and prioritizing needy programs, enabling beneficiaries to effectively assess requirements and formulate annual plans and policy instruments. Hogstrom, Brokking, Balfors, and Hammer (2021) state that the development and planning sector faces ongoing debates about implementing participatory approaches. To effectively address development challenges, local actors must define their needs and establish conditions for effective planning. Wangchuk and Turner (2019) ensure about the bottom-up development efforts, where local people actively engage in planning, are an alternative approach to address these issues. One young respondent from Ward No. 9 asserted as:

Elected representatives at the local level did not

try to understand the norms of the Constitution. The only main concern was earning money, renting out government property, or making money under any pretext. At the local level, the local government is seen to be weak for governance as it does not seem to pay much attention to increase the income of the municipality. The priority is not given for improving quality education, health, employment, and increase production at local level. They are the backbone of the LG. Common people become happy if they feel good governance, responsive administration, and social security. The educated young people and taxpayers at local levels are demanding rights, entitlements, and services from the local government. They demand accountability for products and services. Nepal, with the 25-45 age group, has an informed citizenry with skill sets ready for jobs in both the private and public sectors.

Local governance is a crucial system where citizens come together to discuss issues, elect representatives, and make decisions. Vibrant local governments ensure access to services and create a conducive environment for conflict resolution. Despite opposition from some political parties, the government completed the phase-wise local election. The government has enriched local government units with legal instruments, improving capacity, teamwork, job satisfaction, and decision-making. They have also focused on capacity development, employee adjustment, and infrastructure development. Erdoğan and Paabort (2024) mention that the policy should not neglect the multidimensional social problems faced by vulnerable young people. To improve policy-making, reinforced governance should address the multidimensionality of social problems and promote a design-based policy development mindset, creating new avenues for support and services.

The LG policy and administration should explore community-based projects to address challenges faced by young people to promote their quality of life and social inclusion. The municipal representatives express that they have increased the capacity of local government in the case of governance which has strengthened its management and operational capacity to carry out the developmental works at the local level.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This paper aimed to explore and analyzed government to governance in Tokha Municipality,

Kathmandu to identify the achievements of LG and people's views towards the LG. Though, the municipal government and administration has taken several initiatives, the capacity of government is not increased to strengthen the governance at the local level. The lack of policy, and management of local resources to address the problems of local people needs to be reviewed soon. However, there are some policy gaps analysis between the federal and local policy for development of local levels. Nepal, a federal republic with the practice of new Constitution in 2015 which acknowledges three tiers of governments to settle the political conflict, faces challenges in empowering local levels due to resource scarcity. The resource distribution, and reluctance to decentralize power are some invisible challenges. Despite elections of LGs and LGOA (2017), these barriers persist in local levels. Democracy must empower local bodies to achieve Constitutional goals. Although local governments have been elected and started working on law making, service delivery, and development, they face challenges in capacity, knowledge, and resource planning. Local governments are crucial for a well-governed public sector and society. They involve electing representatives, and people's participation in different ways for making decisions. They facilitate citizens' access to services and encourage citizens' involvement in public affairs. Effective local governance requires commitment and action at all levels, and the experience of Nepal demonstrates the importance of establishing appropriate structures and processes to meet community needs.

In the local election of 2017, women, backward group, Madhesi, indigenous community, Dalit occupied most positions in LGs. The LGOA assigns significant responsibilities to elected institutions to coordinate the judicial committee, monitor planning and implementation of public policy for the development of local levels. Even with the promulgation of new Constitutions local units face challenges in asserting their rights due to cultural dominance. LGs in Nepal should be responsible for institutionalizing local governance, promoting democratic values, and accelerating social and economic development. However, these goals are only partially achieved, despite institutional arrangements. Now, it is a time to ensure local governments have the necessary capacity to design and deliver services and infrastructure.

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Ideologies of a Chauvinist: A Study on the Personal vs Social Dichotomy in *When I Hit You, Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*

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Abstract— *This study attempts to read the context that male chauvinist oppression is not only held in the former ages but also exists in contemporary society. When I Hit You: Or, The Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife (2017) is a meditation on love, marriage, violence and how someone who is a feminist gets trapped in an abusive marriage. This book takes the readers through structures of toxic masculinity and patriarchy which allow violence to be perpetuated. The novel portrays the torture inflicted by an ideologically conflicted revolutionary husband to his wife. He is not manifesting the ideology he is boasting off. Ideologies have an explanatory function: they provide explanations for the facts and problems of social life, enabling individuals and groups to orientate themselves in society, but the man in the novel is building traumas in his wife's life.*



Keywords— *Chauvinism, Dichotomy, Women's Literature, Feminist Literature, Ideology, Trauma, Domestic Violence.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Ideology is a set of beliefs or philosophies attributed to a person or group of persons, especially as held for reasons that are not purely epistemic, in which “practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones.” The term ideology originates from French ‘ideologie’, itself deriving from combining Greek: idea (‘notion, pattern’; close to the Lockean sense of idea) and -logia. The term ideology, and the system of ideas associated with it, was coined in 1796 by Antoine Destutt de Tracy while in prison pending trial during the Reign of Terror, where he read the works of Locke and Condillac. Hoping to form a secure foundation for the moral and political sciences, Tracy devised the term for a “science of ideas”, basing such upon two things:

1. The sensations that people experience as they interact with the material world; and
2. The ideas that form in their minds due to those sensations.

Patriarchy is a social structure and legitimating ideology in

which men have more power and privilege than women; according to feminist ideology, patriarchy is the main source of violence such as rape, battering, and murder against women in contemporary society. Patriarchy is associated with a set of ideas, a patriarchal ideology that acts to explain and justify this dominance and attributes it to inherent natural differences between men and women. Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, religious, and economic organization of a range of different cultures. Most contemporary societies are, in practice, patriarchal. The term patriarchy has been used to refer to autocratic rule by the male head of a family; however, since the late 20th century it has also been used to refer to social systems in which power is primarily headed by adult men. Chauvinists are the persons who are seen as strong and virtuous, while others are considered weak, unworthy, or inferior. Dichotomy is a form of logical division consisting of the separation of a class into two subclasses, one of which has and the other has not a certain quality or attribute. The term dichotomy is

from the Greek language, “dividing in two” from “in two, asunder” and “a cutting, incision”.

Ideological conflict is a clash or disagreement of opposing ideas, ideologies, or concepts. Ideology is important to conflict. Shared beliefs create a sense of group identity, specify targets of hostility and enable coordinated action. Understanding ideology is key to effective conflict resolution and management. It is presumed to be something abstract or irrational, therefore best disregarded in the search for concrete explanations and solutions. Those who do pay attention to ideology tend to offer simple explanations for its role, often due to incorrect assumptions about the relationship between ideas and material objects, between mind and body and between individuals and the groups to which they belong.

When I Hit You: Or, a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife gives us “a woman at whom society cannot spit or throw stones, because this me is a she who is made up only of words on a page, and the lines she speaks are those that everyone hears in their own voice”. The book seems like advice to the future selves that they are on their own. It is a warning; that it is easy for a once upon a time feminist to get trapped in an abusive marriage. This is a piece of work which illustrates how gender oppressive ideology and behaviour can be perpetuated, irrespective of people’s education, class, political leanings. It warns people how a seemingly “successful” marriage could be violent, oppressive and abusive without any one around being aware of its brutality. The book demonstrates the systematic patriarchy that exists no matter where people are in his brutal honesty and very real depiction of an abusive marriage. The increasing prominence of the feminist voice around the world today is shown through the book.

The journey towards that assertion is a tough one. It begins with a stripping of the narrator’s autonomy after her marriage to a university lecturer, Marxist and one-time revolutionary in south India who uses communist ideas “as a cover for his own sadism”. When she moves with him to an unfamiliar city, an assault on her tongue, mind and body begins.

II. IDEOLOGIES OF A CHAUVINIST

Shortly after the novel begins, the social and personal dichotomy of the narrator’s husband unveils, “I want the world to know that we are a couple. I want to accept us as a unit” (56)

The story leads us through an emotional journey, from a confident college student to a published writer, “a woman whom no one wants to look at or, more accurately, whom

no one ever sees”. The journey towards the assertion is a tough one which begins with a stripping of the narrator’s autonomy after her marriage to a university lecturer, Marxist and one-time revolutionary in South India, an educated cultured brute who uses his doctrines “as a cover for his own sadism” (80). The ‘dichotomy’ termed in the title “Ideologies of a Chauvinist: A Study on the Personal vs Social Dichotomy” portrays that the writer’s husband as a man with dual nature. The writer says, “he might be a strong, invincible man to the world outside, but to me, he is someone in need of tenderness”(114). The writer’s abusive husband approves of dowdiness. He wants her to be plain without being attractive, nothing eye-catching. This is the plainness that makes him pleased. In his personal life he is a psychopath injecting his ideology to his wife and creating havoc by reacting violently and beating her severely but to the outside world he appears as a happily married college lecturer who is loved by everyone, his students, the writer’s parents and his friends. The ideology he professes is not revealed in his nature which is inclined towards violence and brutality in the household.

The writer’s husband tries to inflict his ideologies through a set of blackmails. His aim is to make her suffer for his pain. The matchstick pyrotechnical performance prompted her to delete her Facebook account, her lifeline to the world outside. In her helpless situation, he wants her to cut herself off from Facebook, it’s an act of career suicide. He wants her email passwords and he opens her inbox and replies to the emails by signing both their names at the end of every message. He finds that her name has been co-signed in letters to students, in emails to his activist friends, in making recommendations to his colleagues, in querying for a postcolonial studies research conference. She feels nauseous, feels robbed of her identity.

The writer’s husband rails at her, slaps her, throws her laptop across the small kitchen, forces her to delete a manuscript, a non-fiction-book-in-progress, because somewhere in its pages there is a mention of the word lover. He accuses her of carrying her past into their present, and this treason is evidence enough that there is no hope or space for the future to flourish. He always corners her. If she stands up to him, if she shouts back at him, he calls her mad. ‘Depression’ is the label that he applies to her state of mind, her sense of life. Sometimes, he does not theorize at all, does not diagnose her anger and develops his conjectures. When it is not depression, when it is not this restless insect flying around in her brain and eating away all the softer parts that programme her to be an obedient wife, he blames it on the demons that have possessed her.

She never understood rape until it happened to her, it was a concept – of savagery, of violence, of disrespect. The man who rapes her is not a stranger who runs away, not the silhouette in the carpark, not the masked assaulter, he is not the acquaintance who has spiked her drinks, he is someone who wakes up next to her, he is the husband who can shrug it away and tell her to stop imagining things, he is the husband who can blame his actions on unbridled passion the next day, while she hobbles from room to room.

“The shame of rape is the shame of unspeakable. Women have found it easier to jump into fire, consume poison, blow themselves up as suicide bombers, than tell another soul about what happened. A rape is a fight you did not win. You could not win” (169).

III. SOCIAL VS PERSONAL DICHOTOMY

In the writer’s husband’s rule book- sown by patriarchy, watered by feudalism, manured by a selective interpretation of Communism – a woman should not moan. The man who appeared to carry two inbuilt safeguards: unlike the politician, as a college lecturer, he was perfect husband-material in the eyes of her parents. Unlike the politician, in his secret life as a guerilla, he believed in a revolutionary overthrow of the Indian state, boycotted democratic structures. The man is a courteous person in the society, but actually he happens to be a monster in his home, he doesn’t allow his wife to activate her FB account; he says that it’s a waste of time, it’s narcissism and exhibitionism. He has the defiant eyes of a man who is in no mood to give up by feudalism, manured by a selective interpretation of communism- a woman should not moan. The fear that he seeks to instill in her is never the actual act itself, but the fear of where the act can lead to. He is the drama queen who plays all the roles. The doting husband in the presence of his colleagues acts as the harassed victim of a suspicious wife, the unjustly emasculated man to her female friends, the pleading-son-in-law to her parents. (149-155 & 185)

The writer’s husband narrated and boasted about his guerrilla days, as once he ran a typing institute in the south, at the time he had a decoy operation and he had to provide cover for a senior leader who was undergoing treatment. He says he had to kill a soldier once and raped her against her will and had tortured her little sister who he snatched from the road to school. He disembowelled him.

Not one man in his platoon would have the guts to be inappropriate to women after they saw his corpse. Even the party was angry that he went beyond his brief. The isolation of their marriage feeds his words, he speaks of his exploits unceasingly and in the most graphic language

possible. She cannot rule out if all this is an experiment to control her, having got used to the nightly bedroom violence, she has become less afraid, and so the more menacing his story telling grows and no longer sift fact from fiction. She considers going to the police, but when she contemplates it in the solitude of lonely afternoons, she understands that it is impossible and if he caught scent of her plans, she knows how he would react. For the sake of self-preservation, she knows that the police route – the first port of call for any abused woman – is closed to her.

The only option to her are family and friends but he plays the role of dutiful son-in-law to her parents and weeps over the phone to her father and begs her mother to tell her to be more obedient and he tells his relatives that she do not feed him properly and hints to the only neighbours around that she is anti- social, that she is one of the intellectual types who prefers her own company. The bigger the circle of spectators, the more nuanced his portrait of her becomes and the less inclined people are to believe that there is no substance to his lies. To women, he evokes sympathy by saying that she constantly compares him to other men and to men, he peddles the story that she is jealous, that she does not tolerate his female students. He tries to portray that the writer is the battered woman and he is the one who is playing the role of the victim. Her escape cannot come through these people and he is too effective at giving his version of events; too quick to ask grovelingly for their advice; too good at flattering them with his attention. He pushes her friends and family into the territory of the neutral; he asks them to play fair. No one wants to give a guilty verdict to the man who is prepared to elevate them to the role of judge and jury.

“I will skin your scalp. It will be slow, but I will do a very thorough job of it.” (184).

She searches his eyes for just a glimpse that he recognizes how absurd he sounds, how inhuman he has himself become, but the hollow look he returns is of something that has become extinct.

Finally, she contacted her parents to prepare the way and get the courage to share the shame of how she has been treated, what it means to live in the fear of being killed. She repeats her husband’s threat to scalp her word for word, talk of her death, cradle the menacing words like a militant’s hand grenade and pull the pin. Her mother implores if again he talks of murder, come home, and her father orders if he does it again, run for her life without even turning to look back. ‘We are here’, they say, finally, far too late, but in unison.

For two and a half years, her case at the Metropolitan Magistrate Court fails to be called and runs from pillar to post. She wants him to come to India and face charges – if

he takes citizenship elsewhere, then she can hardly run to Interpol. Then there is the divorce petition, sent by his lawyers, which talks about her ultra-feminism, which blames her parents for her modern upbringing.

The very title of the novel *When I Hit You or, a Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* subtly alludes the patriarchal convention that a woman who is a writer was abused by her monstrous husband. Although the writer succeeds in breaking her abusive marriage – made boundaries, there are certain priorities so deeply embedded within her that she struggles to shake through the shackles. In the course of the novel, she grows to remain silent in order to be a good housewife as told by her parents, and the husband grows more of a male chauvinist day by day as opposed to his social behaviour.

IV. CONCLUSION

When I Hit You Or A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife is a powerful story of ‘modern’ marriage through the art of fiction. It brings out the way violence perpetuates in a seemingly “modern” love marriage and takes us through the structure of toxic masculinity and patriarchy which allows violence to be perpetuated. Kandasamy describes her own experiences as an abused and dehumanised wife in south India and her struggle to both retain and also create her identity. A crucial aspect this book brings out is the way violence perpetuates in a seemingly “modern” love marriage. People are always told when they question the patriarchy of traditional marriages that “modern” marriages are not like that, “love marriages are not like that”, but Kandasamy breaks this myth. The newly-wed narrator experiences extreme violence at her husband’s and finds herself socially isolated. Intellectual and physical cruelty is explored. Yet hope keeps her alive. Writing becomes her salvation, a supreme act of defiance and as the subtitle suggests, the novel is also about the act of writing itself and the way that fiction and stories can help people escape.

An unnamed narrator takes us into her world of a chauvinist husband, a father embarrassed by the shame that a possible divorce would bring, and a mother who tells her this is how things are, to be silent and to accept the situation because the first year of marriage is always hard, a mother who makes a “spectacle” of the narrator’s embarrassment and advises her that time will pass and all her troubles will be forgotten. Her parents’ attitude demonstrates wider society’s systematic support and justification of abuse and reveals the changes that need to happen regardless of location or culture. When the narrator recounts her conversations with her parents, it is nothing new to people as they have heard this time and again.

“Avoid confrontation,” her father tells her while her mother tells her that “Marriage is a give and take “. These token bits of wisdom are nothing new to anyone who has contested marriage and its patriarchal ways of subordinating women. One of the most revealing aspects of the book is Kandasamy’s discussion of the caste system and the excuses that her parents make for her husband’s behaviour.

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Fragmented Lives: Analyzing Genocidal Trauma and the Plight of Abducted Women during the Partition in Select Indian and Pakistani Short Fiction

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Abstract— At the threshold of commemorating seventy-seven years of Indian independence, the shadows of cataclysmic incident of Partition and its aftermath cannot be obliterated. The political upheaval at the midnight is historicized with demographics analysing the root cause of the division and creation of two states and accounts glorifying the independence movement catering to the purpose of nationalistic fervour but the heart wrenching accounts of human suffering recorded in literary works by the writers writing from the opposite sides of the great divide narrate the unsayable experiences of the millions of people who were once living in a harmonious ambience in the undivided India. The holocaust of partition portrayed more sensitively in the literary works coming from the affected nations leaves an impact on the people. Annals of history are stained with the ghastly violence, rape, abduction and genocide arising from the split of Indian subcontinent. This man-made calamity disproportionately affected women. They were kidnapped, sexually assaulted, humiliated in public, and had their genitalia cut off. In addition, their families murdered them in the sake of honour, and many of them were compelled to kill themselves to preserve their honour. The bleak memories associated with partition reflected in diverse narratives demonstrate the horrible reality. This paper aims to investigate the catastrophic effect of partition on women through the thematic analysis of the short stories written by Indian authors Rajinder Singh Bedi and Krishna Chander and Pakistani authors Saadat Hasan Manto and Jameela Hashmi



Keywords— Abduction, Genocide, Partition, Trauma, Violence

INTRODUCTION

The tragedies of partition would not have been complete had they not been accompanied, as every conflict since the dawn of history, by an outpouring of sexual savagery. Nearly all of the atrocities cursing the unhappy province were embellished by their orgy of rape. Tens of thousands of girls and women were seized from refugee columns, from crowded trains, from isolated villages, in the most widescale kidnapping of modern times. (Lapierre and Collins, 392))

The crucial incident of partition of Indian subcontinent still reverberates in the consciousness of its survivors. It was a political step taken by the British government

before handing over autonomy on our nation. Eminent modern poet WH Auden in his poem "Partition" criticizes this act as an unjust as the person sent by the British Government was Cyril Radcliff who was alien to Indian subcontinent and secondly the cartography that he had to deal with was also inaccurate. A barrister by Profession Radcliff was assigned to split the nation or fate of millions on the basis of cultural differences within seven days and thus division of India further led to communal riots, massacres, loot and a major exodus of the century. As Urvashi Butalia mentions, "Unable to follow the natural divisions, Radcliff was forced to draw what are called

‘complex boundaries’ which ran through villages, deserts, shrines—and people’s lives” (Butalia,1998, 85)

Yasmin Khan in her book *The Great Partition (2017)* recounts the early disturbances that went unnoticed by the common natives who were largely landless peasants or crops sharers till finally Cyril Radcliff was summoned to partition the country and after two hundred years of imperialism, British left India but before that they divided it into two nations. Before anyone could decipher where he has to go or decode anything, unimaginable violence escalated and ended into ethnic cleansing. Eminent writer Ismat Chughtai sums up :

It wasn’t only that the country was split into two—bodies and minds were also divided. Moral beliefs were tossed aside and humanity was in shreds. Government officers and clerks with their chairs, pens and inkpots, were distributed like the spoils of war.... Those whose bodies were whole had hearts that were splintered. Families were torn apart. One brother was allotted to Hindustan, the other to Pakistan; the mother was in Hindustan, her offspring were in Pakistan; the husband was in Hindustan, his wife was in Pakistan. The bonds of relationship were in tatters, and in the end many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off for Pakistan.(Qtd in Hasan,25)

Urvashi Butalia ponders over the survival of those who were uprooted and dislocated due to this political decision. That was not merely a line drawn on map of India, but also a terrible decision that was to affect the fate of millions.

These aspects of Partition –how families were divided, how friendships endured across borders , how people coped up with trauma how they rebuilt their lives, what resources both physical and mental they drew upon how their experience of dislocation and trauma shaped their lives and indeed the cities and towns and villages they settled in ---find little reflection in written history.(Butalia,9)

Urvashi Butalia reflects on the human perspectives that remained far from the recorded history. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin(1998) in *Borders and Boundaries* observe the shattering memories of people. Partition as a political history is handed over from one generation to another but its social, psychological ramifications are never enquired. The political history has eclipsed the social history as Menon and Bhasin states:

The futility and tragedy of demarcating boundaries, and the impossibility of dividing homes and hearts are the theme of story after

story, as is the terrible violence that accompanied forced migration.(Menon & Bhasin,1998)

Partition Literature beyond statistical records imbibes the unrecorded pain of this disintegrated nation. Sukrita Paul Kumar rightly observes that the subject of the demand for Partition has been studied in great detail by historians. the causes of Partition and the individuals in charge for it, the circumstances surrounding it, the British viewpoint, etc. However, the imaginative writer has been reenacting violence related to the Partition on a regular basis, which has been experienced by people of different ages. distinct classes. disparities between the sexes and races, in terms of both their physical and psychological makeup. (Kumar,xi). Apart from the political historiography, it highlights the nuances of human suffering as far as victimization of women is concerned Arunima Dey rightly observes that women are presumed as the outsiders of public and politics, consequently they are excluded from the history because history is the manifestation of politics (Dey 106)

One of the main themes of the early historical accounts of Partition was the compulsive quest to find its origins. Partition was described in these histories as purely political, and for the nationalists who had dreamt about the freedom it was “the unfortunate outcome of sectarian and separatist politics,” and “a tragic accompaniment to the exhilaration and promise of a freedom fought for with courage and valour” (Menon and Bhasin 1998, 3)It was construed in light of its constitutional context, intergovernmental negotiations, or conversations among the political elite. As a result, the experiences of regular people on both sides of the recently drawn borders were ignored. As a result, a significant shift was undertaken in an effort to recover the perspective of the subaltern, with a focus on reclaiming the lived experiences through oral history interviews. Partition affected millions of people, and it instantly turned them all into refugees. However, Udit Sen(2018) adamantly contends that even the histories of ordinary people eventually give rise to socioeconomic and political histories of ordinary people, where millions of people encountered and lived through the Partition, becoming refugees overnight.

Women were the worst victims of this carnage. They were physically mentally and emotionally exploited. Their bodies were mutilated. Women’s bodies were abducted, stripped naked, raped, mutilated (their breasts cut off), carved with religious symbols and murdered to be sent in train wagons to the “other” side of the border. Millions of women were abducted and forced into marriages. During partition approximately seventy five thousand women were abducted and violated by the rival groups Miranda Alison(2007) aptly analyses the sexual violence against women during conflict as she states:

During times of conflict multiple binary constructions are formed; not only in 'masculine' contrasted with 'feminine' within a group and 'us' contrasted to them between groups .but 'our women' are contrasted to 'their women' and our men to 'their men'. 'Our women' are chaste , honourable and to be protected by 'our men,' their women' are unchaste and depraved.(Alison,2007, 77)

Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have worked extensively on women victims of partition as historical records fail to provide the true picture of the violence inflicted upon the women as they note :

We began to discern some specific features of "communal" crimes against women...stripping; parading naked; mutilating and disfiguring; tattooing or branding the breasts and genitalia with triumphal slogans; amputating breasts; knifing open the womb; raping, of course; killing foetuses- is shocking not only for its savagery, but for what it tells us about women as objects in male constructions of their own honour. (Menon &Bhasin,1998,43)

Partition has left a scar on the consciousness of the victims. It is a trauma that haunts the survivors Trauma as *Oxford Dictionary* defines it is a disordered psychic or behavioural state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury. The father of psychology, Sigmund Freud along with Dr Bruner(1895) analysed the behaviour of women suffering from hysteria in *Studies on Hysteria* states that trauma is not the wound of the body that could be healed sooner or later but it is an event...not locatable in simple, violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in a way that its very unassimilated nature-the way it was precisely not known in the first instance-returns to haunt the survivor later on.(Freud.4). He said that that any overpowering event unacceptable to consciousness temporarily forgotten but keeps on returning in the form of repetitive behaviour of the patient. Cathy Caruth in her Trauma theory mentions: Trauma keeps on haunting the survivor and later she espouses Freud that only through literature such terrible experiences can be narrated.

As far as partition literature is concerned, apart from novels, short stories revolving around the ghastly incident of partition move the soul depicting the experiences of people from either side. Communal violence eradicated human values. It drew a line not only on map but also on the hearts of people who once had cordial relationship. As Sudha Tiwari argues:

a body of literature was thus born that gave voice to the traumatic realities of partition, the disillusionment and the psychological trauma. These writers not only reject religion as the cause of the separation; they also highlight the composite culture of united India and invoke the symbols of unity and humanism observed by the masses even during times of such horrific violence.(Tiwari 2013)

Writers from both the countries have projected the macabre reality in their short stories.They addressed the plight of women and expressed worries for their dislocation, healing, and rehabilitation, citing both personal and governmental accountability in guaranteeing their safety and welfare.

Rajinder Singh Bedi is considered one of the major writers of Progressive Writers Movement. He is known for his disturbing tales of partition. He was also a recipient of Sahitya Akademi award for his novel *Ek Chadar Maili si*. Like many contemporary authors of his time writing in Indian languages and in English, Bedi was influenced by the Progressive Writers' Movement, its social realism, anti-imperialist stance and its criticism of religious, political and social life in India. Rajinder Singh Bedi's short story 'Lajwanti' was written in Urdu in 1951 around the recovery and rehabilitation of abducted women. Lajwanti a docile wife of social activist Sundar Lal is abducted during the communal riots. Sundar Lal devastated with loss dedicates himself to the rehabilitation programme to recover the women. Sundar Lal's repentance after missing of his wife makes him accept the fact and propels him to stand for the cause of rehabilitation. Rajinder Singh Bedi blends facts with fiction with the govt endeavour for the recovery of women. The inclusion of Malika Sarabhai's attempt to recover the women refers to the government's action for the recovery of abducted or missing women. It was Mridula Sarabhai who had campaigned for this recovery operation. She had prepared a fourteen page note to Nehru outlining the necessity of recovering abducted women (Butalia,,1998, 143)

Taking the women of another community and establishing one community's identity over the other was referred to as "abduction." It was believed that forced marriage and conversion was a response to abduction and a response against family honour, religion, and community honour. Abduction as a gendered violence weaves manifold implications where women are ethicized, raced and then relegated to the status of an object of desire and subject for a psychoanalysis. (Abbas,9182) Though humanitarian and philanthropic in intent, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin contend that the government of India's recovery operation

was specifically carried out in India to help it come to terms with its own disintegration and to perform its obligation to its people as Malika Sarabhai asserted that recovery was “an effort to remove from the lives of thousands of innocent women the misery that is their lot today, and to restore them to their legitimate environment where they can spend the rest of their lives with izzat” (honour). (quoted in Menon and Bhasin ,pp91) The willingness to welcome the kidnapped women emerged as a further issue with the recovery programme.

Sunder Lal the secretary of the “Rehabilitation of Hearts Committee” initiated by the inhabitants of the locality Mulla Shakoor, to ensure the dignity of women abducted during the partition . Sunder Lal’s dedication is also due to his personal loss as his wife Lajwanti is also abducted during the communal riots. The people singing the song mention Lajwanti that literally means a plant touch me not but Sunder Lal is swayed in dejection recalling his wife . Lajwanti as he recalls was fragile as Touch me not plant and he like other dominating husbands would ill- treat her. She would tolerate everything He got irritated with everything she did and thrashed her at every pretext he could find. But she took everything in her stride, enduring the beatings since “all men beat their wives” (Bedi 69). But he made up his mind that if he ever got another chance, he would rehabilitate her in his heart and set an example to the people of Mulla Shakoor.

Rajinder Singh Bedi has projected the strong hold of patriarchy that as bell hooks refers is a disease affecting both the sexes. Sunder Lal opposes the Narain Bawa’s justification quoting Ramayana as according to him Rama’s abandonment of Sita was an episode of injustice as Sita was chaste . It was Ravana who had kidnapped Sita so why should Sita be abandoned ?

Lajwanti witnesses the extreme objectification of women during the process of exchange at Wagah Border.

A large crowd gathered, and heated words were exchanged. Then one of their volunteers pointed at Lajo Bhabhi and said, ‘Is this one old? Look at her... Look... Have you returned any woman who is as beautiful as she is?’ Lajo Bhabhi stood there trying to hide her tattoo marks from the curious gaze of people. The argument got more heated. Both sides threatened to take back their ‘goods.’

The word goods itself indicates the commodification of women. People reduced women to the commodity to be exchanged and exhibited as the man who removed the dupatta of Lajo presented her to others. As Bhasin mentions that large numbers of women were forced into death to avoid sexual violence against them, to preserve

chastity and protect individual, family and community “honour”. The means used to accomplish this end varied; when women themselves took their lives, they would either jump into the nearest well or set themselves ablaze, singly, or in groups that could be made up either of all the women in the family; the younger women ; or women and children. Bedi in his short story Lajwanti realistically painted the patriarchal attitude of the society that denied any independent identity to women as :

There were some amongst these abducted women whose husbands, parents, brothers, and sisters refused to recognize them. “Why didn’t they die? Why didn’t they take poison to preserve their virtue and honour? Why didn’t they jump into a well? Cowards, clinging to life! Thousands of women in the past killed themselves to save their chastity!...” Little did these people understand the courage of the women, the awesome strength with which they had faced death and chosen to go on living in such a world—a world in which even their husbands refused to acknowledge them. (Lajwanti)

Sunder Lal’s acceptance of Lajwanti sets an example for others but as far as Lajo is concerned, she finds it difficult to retrieve her old self. She wants to tell everything she has gone through during her abduction to Sunder Lal but Sunder Lal doesn’t wish to listen to her. After rehabilitation Lajo fails to return to her old self. It seems a disconnected life . Sunder Lal’s reception of Lajwanti as goddess fills her with affection but she is silenced. Lajo couldn’t be the Lajo whom Sunder Lal would often tease and beat her. Lajwanti is rehabilitated but not accepted as Lajo but rather venerated as Devi. This deification of Lajwanti stresses to start a life afresh and not to look back. As Mukerjea observes:

His acceptance of her is also tempered with irony because Lajwanti's brief absence has altered the dynamics of their marriage, a fact condensed in the switch from his former intimate mode of address 'Lajo' to the courteously distant 'devi' (goddess). This recasting of her desecrated body into the sacred, inviolable body of a goddess, pushes her beyond human contact, and constitutes a denial of her embodiedness. It amounts ultimately to a rejection of her sexuality. (Lal, Malashri and Sukrita P. Kumar ,5)

Here in Lajwanti both husband and wife face the trauma. Sunder Lal experiences a cultural trauma. There is an ambiguity in his character. Sunder Lal who supported the recovery of the abducted women was himself reluctant to accept the reality as R. K Kaul observes:

"Lajwanti" stands out as a revelation of the treachery in the heart of man. Its protagonist campaigns for the rehabilitation of abducted women but when confronted with his own wife he is embarrassed rather than relieved by her return. (Hashmi et al 306)

Sundar Lal's reluctance to listen to the painful account of Lajwanti is a defence mechanism to survive but as far as Lajwanti is concerned, her inability is to reconcile with her old self. Another aspect of the story is the silence. A silence is sought as a solution but it is strangulating silence on the part of Lajwanti. Freud in collaboration with Joseph Breuer found that hysteria was the result of psychological trauma and this and many other inquiries similar to it led Freud to what he called Psychoanalysis. They understood that it was necessary to talk to the subjects and make a simulation of the trauma that a subject had undergone to heal her and when Lajwanti was to speak and unburden herself, she was obstructed by Sunderlal. Counselling could have eased the pain and would have helped the victims to lead a normal life

Whereas Rajinder Singh Bedi's Lajwanti raises a question of women's belongingness Krishna Chander a progressive writer who is accredited to have written twenty novels and short stories. Krishna Chander's oeuvres known depicting his social realism and romance. Like Manto he too was criticized He in his short story "Tawaif ka Khat" (letter from a Prostitute) has depicted the dislocation of female children who were separated from their family and were forced to prostitution.

Written in an epistolary style, the letter is addressed to Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the prime minister of Independent India and Mohd Ali Jinnah the founder of Pakistan. Since both of them are esteemed political personalities, they can never expect the letter from a prostitute who is marginalized in society. Throughout the letter these two political leaders are addressed as respectable and compassionate. An ordinary rank prostitute clarifies her intention of writing this open letter to make these leaders acquaint with the deteriorating predicament of the country. She does not wish to win their attention for her upliftment as she has accepted her fate but ironically, she wishes to draw their attention to the two youngsters Bela and Batool who have been the victim of communal violence. Bela has been transacted by a Muslim procurer while Batool by a Jat procurer. The prostitute's letter unleashes the hideous reality of partition and its aftermath. It was a blot on humanity. The barbarism had no space in these religions then why such brutality was executed. According to the prostitute, Bela who lived in Rawalpindi had witnessed the arson, bloodshed and massacre in front of her innocent eyes. Her father was murdered. Her mother's breasts were

cut off by the Muslims chanting 'Allah ho Akbar' while Batool who lived in Jalandhar had seen the Jat's cruelty. They killed her father and gauged out his eyes. Not only this they molested her sisters. She also points out the incident of fornication. She emphasises the fact that both religions never supported such brutality. Innocence was always worshipped but such ghastly incidents have left these girls in utter trauma. As V. K Menon writes 'The uprooted millions were in a terrible mental state. . . . Not many had the time to plan their evacuation. . . . They had been subjected to terrible indignities. They had witnessed their near and dear ones hacked to pieces before their eyes and their houses ransacked, looted and set on fire by their own neighbours' (qtd. in Mukhopadhyay 19). The prostitute buys them and offers them shelter but she doesn't want these girls to become prostitute like her

Bela and Batool are two girls, two communities, two cultures, two cultures, two mosques and temples. These days, Bela and Batool live with a prostitute, who runs her business in a shop close the Chinese barber's on Farris Road. Bela and Batool do not like this trade. I have purchased these two girls; if I want, I could get the work done by them too. But I think that I will not do that which Rawalpindi and Jalandhar have done to them. So far, I have been able to keep them away from the world of Farris Road. Even then, when my customers go to the back room to wash their hands and faces, Bela and Batool's gaze begin to speak to me. I cannot bring to you the heat of their gaze. I cannot also adequately convey their message to you. Why don't you read the ciphers in their gaze yourselves?(Chander, Para 28)

Krishna Chander's story unravels the gender violence and sexual abuse a trauma inflicted on the female children who had seen their family being slaughtered in front of their innocent eyes. These girls Bela and Batool unaware of the changing socio-political divide were targeted for revenge. Whom could they have harmed? Those were buds as the prostitute mentions who had seen autumn before blooming. Prostitute's letter also critiques the decision of this great divide on the basis of religion. She finally pleads these leaders to adopt these girls:

Panditji, what I want is that you make Batool your daughter. Jinnah Sahib, I wish for you to consider Bela your 'daughter of the auspicious stars'. Just for once, extricate them from the clutches of Farris Road, keep them in your homes. Pay heed to the laments of the lakhs of souls, that dirge that resounds all the way from Noakhali to Rawalpindi, from Bharatpur to

Bombay. Is it only in the Government House that it cannot be heard? Will you attend to this voice?(Chander,para 29)

If Indian authors could hold the tattered cloak of secularism through their moving tales the other side of the border too had witnessed the tragedy and its devastating impact on human lives. The history in its multiplicity has been recorded in the works of Pakistani writers as well. Saadat Hasan Manto was a vociferous writer who has captured the apocalyptic incident of Partition in his short stories. Saadat Hasan Manto was distressingly a prophetic writer who captured the senseless and brutal tragedy of Partition in his works. Manto wrote one novel *Black Margin*, five anthologies of radio dramas, twenty collections of short stories, three collections of essays, two collections of sketches, and a number of screenplays for films. He was accused of obscenity six times, and his writings included themes of sex and desire, drunks and prostitutes. He foresaw the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan in his journalism. However, he is most renowned for his stories about the partition. He dipped his pen in the pain of the people who suffered the onslaught of the Partition and wrote about the naked reality they underwent. His short stories speak of the blistering abrasions that the time engraved on the heart and mind of the people. Losing life and property was the common fate of the general masses who were entrapped in the political imbroglio of intermigration (Ghosh,93).

His short story 'Khol Do' unleashes the horrors of this rupture. The genocidal divide has left indelible scars on the psyche of the people. Freud defines Trauma can have the long-lasting impact on the psyche of the victim While Cathy Caruth in her Unclaimed experiences states that traumatic experiences are beyond linguistic expression

Saadat Hasan Manto's "Khol do(Open it)" set in the aftermath of this sectarian divide unravels the complexities of human lives affected by this incident. As it was the large exodus. People were uprooted and dislocated in chaos. The story begins with an elderly man Sirajuddin who after regaining his consciousness finds himself in the refugee camp:

His gaze was fixed on the gloomy sky when his eyes happened to stumble upon the sun. The intense sunlight penetrated every sinew of his being, and he regained his senses. Several images ran through his mind. Looting...Fire...Helter-Skelter...The station...Bullets...Night and Sakina.(Fair,2022)

While looking for her he recalls that how he got only her dupatta as she was dragged from the train. When he fails to locate his daughter, he takes the assistance of a group of

young volunteers who assure him that they would locate her. They find Sakina on the highway. They extend their support to her and then they raped her. One day Sirajuddin comes across a corpse in the hospital. Sirajuddin screams to see his daughter back. The doctor orders the windows to be opened. The word open triggers the girl lying on the stretcher and she unties her salwar and lowers it. As Caruth in her theory postulates that Trauma is unclaimed experiences. According to Erikson "...trauma involves a continual reliving of some wounding experience in daydreams and nightmares, flashbacks and hallucinations, and in a compulsive seeking out of similar circumstances". (qtd in Caruth's Unclaimed Experiences) Alok Bhalla notes that Manto's stories are fragmentary records of terror and cries of pain, violation and pleas of mercy, vile sexuality and cynical laughter (26-59). He wrote almost obsessively about the events that led to the division of the sub-continent and the terrible suffering it inflicted on innocent people

Jameela Hashmi, a prolific Urdu writer from Pakistan is accredited to have written many short stories and novels as *Aatish e Ruffia* and *Talash e Baharan*. Jameela Hashmi's story extends the Sita trope as used in Lajwanti. Whereas Sundar Lal in Lajwanti questions about Ramrajya and banishment of Sita, here in this short story exile, Jameela Hashmi juxtaposes the prevalent myth by introducing a protagonist who is abducted by Ravana is not rescued. There is a confinement which she finally accepts:

Exile is such a hard thing. But nothing is in anyone's power. Who accepts suffering by choice?(Hashmi, 105-106)

'Exile' by Jameela Hashmi is a story about an abducted woman who after many years finds it difficult to erase the memories from her sub consciousness. There is always a hope to return that is accentuated with the policy of government to return the women back to their native family but her brother whom she had relied upon doesn't set out to look for his sister. When she is located and is asked to return, she hides herself as how would she face her family and another reason was her children. How would she leave her children here in Sangrao. She for all these years couldn't forgive Gурpal who in the frenzy had not only dragged her but also killed her father and mutilated her mother.

The unnamed protagonist is an abducted woman who keeps on revisiting her happy past before the gruesome episode of partition. She finds unable to relate herself to the new family. Jameela Hashmi weaves her story on the myth of Sita who was abducted by Ravana but eventually Rama came and rescued Sita but here Sita that means that unnamed protagonist is forced to live with her abductor

Gurpal. She infuses the social narrative with personal narrative of the abducted protagonist. The protagonist who is now received warmly by Bari maa and is other of three children still keeps on losing herself in her past. It becomes a rescue for her since she is unable to erase the dark memories from her mind. Gurpal now changed asks her if she could forget that incident

‘Will you ever be able to forget that incident? Those times were different. It’s changed now’ Gurpal says softly:

How can I convince Gurpal that time is never different and people are condemned to suffer because they can’t forget? In my memory that scene is alive -fire on all sides, country had become independent, it had been divided.’

The protagonist keeps on oscillating between her childhood that assured her love and security and present where she is forced to adapt to the new socio-cultural environment. Delving deep into the past has become her temporary escape from the present where she finds herself still alienated. She ponders on her fate where she had become the unwed bahu of Gurpal, the mother of three children and a domestic servant to be beaten and cursed. Her bari maa who receives her as a domestic servant later on accepts her as Bahu and hails her as goddess Lakshmi was not only like disrobing the narrator from her religious and cultural roots but also denying her any hope and self-identity.

Abducted women suffered from double dislocation, sexual savagery, brutality and slavery. Rajinder Singh Bedi’s Lajwanti stands as an example of women who though recovered but still unable to restart their lives. She can’t retrieve her old self while the lives of the two young girls who were dislocated and sold are unable to forget the trauma as depicted in Krishna Chander’s Prostitute’s letter raise an issue of child sexual abuse during the chaos of communal riots. Those two girls had seen their family members butchered in front of their own eyes. The letter addressed to two leaders of independent nations by none other than a prostitute unravels the human misery at its peak. The innocent girls were pushed into the prostitution in the wake of decolonization and at that time it is the prostitute herself who writes this open letter to the stakeholders to adopt these orphan girls so that they might not see further horrors of the society.

Pakistan was a new nation. People supporting the divide had their own expectations. It was not only the dream of eminent poet and educationist Allama Iqbal but it was the dream of generations of people who wished for a separate Islamic state. As Batool would cheer the formation of a new state (“Prostitute’s letter”), it was conceptualized as

Islamic utopia but the creation of Pakistan resulted in a tragedy at the very onset. As Faiz Ahmad Faiz laments that it was not the dawn that we had waited for (Faiz, “Subh E Azadi”). The chaos of its division affected people from both sides notwithstanding with creed, class, caste, gender, nationality Pakistani writers have penned this catastrophe in their writings. Saadat Hasan Manto through his candid stories has explored the human psyche disturbed by the violence and trauma. The sudden dislocation of people had left them bewildered. They in order to save their lives left their place in chaos. Sirajuddin portrayed by Manto was a baffled father looking madly for his daughter Sakina trusts volunteers and then those so-called saviours of Sakina gang rape her. Sirajuddin screams that finally he found his daughter but the daughter had become a wounded soul. The short story as Manto doesn’t stretch it unnecessarily leaves not only the doctor in cold sweat but also the readers in a state of utter shock.

Jameela Hashmi through her short story narrates the experience of a woman who is unable to reconcile with her present and finds an escape in her past as abduction followed by forced marriage has shattered her completely. She was a Muslim woman living with her family her parents and siblings. Her whole life changed all of a sudden when Gurpal attacks her family, he kills her parents and drags her and then brings her to Sangrao as an unwed bride. Though years pass but she is unable to forget anything. The story also brings out the truth of Recovery mission as many of the kidnapped women didn’t return as they had become mothers and separation from their children was not acceptable to them as the protagonist in Exile hides herself.

CONCLUSION

The narratives presented illuminate the severe impact of Partition and subsequent chaos on women, highlighting themes of dislocation, sexual violence, and enduring trauma. Through the works of Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishna Chander, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Jameela Hashmi, we witness the multifaceted suffering and resilience of women who bore the brunt of this historic upheaval. These stories do more than recount the past; they challenge us to confront the ongoing consequences of violence and displacement, urging a collective reflection on the human cost of conflict. The profound emotional and psychological scars left on these women serve as poignant reminders of the urgent need for empathy, justice, and sustained efforts towards healing and reconciliation.

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Do Bodies Without Organs Feel Shame? An Affective Approach of Identity Crisis in Gene Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese*

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Abstract— Since the beginning of Chinese American literature in the United States, the identity issue of the Chinese American community has received much attention from Chinese American writers. Gene Luen Yang's graphic novel *American Born Chinese* tells the story of the protagonist Jin Wang who experiences his identity crisis due to the ethnicity as a Chinese American. Following the protagonist's frustrating attempt of getting accepted into the white American society, constructing an affective model of shame, and through the philosophical perspective of "body without organs" of Deleuze and Guattari, it is to be argued that the genesis and resolution of Jin's identity crisis is actually, as the intensity of affect changes, a process of de-territorialization and entering the state of "body without organs", which also depicts the authentic living conditions of people of color who are kept dissociated and marginalized from the white American society.

Keywords— Asian American, Body without Organs, shame, identity, affect theory



I. INTRODUCTION

The success of graphic novel *American Born Chinese* catapulted Gene Luen Yang to fame and appreciation across the world. The novel revolves around the stories of three characters, the Monkey King, Jin Wang and Danny, and weaves their storylines together at the end by unveiling to the audience that Wei-Chen is the son of the Monkey King, whilst Danny is the white-male image Jin makes for himself to transform into. Through intertwining the three stories, Yang discusses themes like Asian stereotypes, the emasculation of Asian male, racism, cultural and racial identity, etc. The way how Yang contends with the twist of the ending is one of magical realism, as Jin Wang splits

himself into two extreme images, Danny and Chin-Kee, which lends itself easily to an Deleuzo-Guattarian study of the emergence and resolution of the identity crisis of Chinese American illustrated in the book.

The Occluded Flow and Identity Crisis

The Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy defines all things and beings as flows, which means that all "desire to flow unconstrained" within the limit of body without organs (BwO) (Ibrahim, 2015, p.13). However, because his flow is already occluded, Jin Wang can't flow freely until he resolves his identity crisis at the end of the novel. When Jin's storyline starts, the faces of his parents are always half-covered by text bubbles, unseeable from readers' angle, or

half cut out by the frames, which stays so till Jin transforms into Danny. As the audience's attention follows Jin's narrative of the story of his parents, it becomes evident that the neglect of the visage of Jin's parents indicates the internalization of "cultural loss that are ungrivable" shows itself from the beginning of the storyline (Sarigianides, 2017, p.43). Put in another word, from the start of Jin's part, he either willingly or reluctantly identifies with the racial affronts he experiences and internalizes the pattern of racist thinking.



Fig. 1 Jin's parents' visages are half covered by text-bubbles. (Yang, 2006, p.25)

The internalization is, in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, a result of stratification, which withers the affective power of the body, and turns it into an organism. The body, as mentioned, desires to move freely within the BwO, or in other words, on the plane of consistency, which, according to Deleuze and Guattari (D&G), is the "unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.43). However, the body is always in a process of sedimentation. "We are continually stratified", in which case the BwO will make complaints such as "They've made me an organism! They've wrongfully folded me! They've stolen my body!" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.159). It can also be explained why, for instance, when Wei-Chen approaches Jin, trying to greet him in Chinese, the language they share along with their ethnicity, whilst Jin, who is eating a

sandwich rather than dumplings which he used to eat, coldly rejects Wei-Chen's friendliness in English.



Fig. 2 Jin rejects Wei-Chen's friendliness in English (Yang, 2006, p.37)

For Deleuze and Guattari, God is a lobster, or something alike that has a pair of pincers, by which they mean that "[n]ot only do strata come at least in pairs, but in a different way each stratum is double" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.40). When the organism seeps into the body and starts to work on the flow, it selects and stratifies, in a double-articulated manner of form and content. It needs to be stressed that the term BwO is a kind of a "misnomer", which can be called more accurately a "non-organismic body" (Somers-Hall, 2018, p.99). The mission of the BwO, therefore, is to oppose the stratified organization of organs, or put in another word, to interrupt the organismic pattern of the organism. Within the context of *A Thousand Plateaus (ATP)*, in fact, the question is never how to build one's BwO, but "how to dismantle the full, organized body and impede its consolidation and the expansion of its authority to its parts" (Kolyri, 2020, p.489). The BwO is a repertoire of a body's full potentiality. However, Jin has lost his access to his potentiality due to his inability to break the shackles of his organism, which is to some extent reasonable because "as soon as we come into existence, through very complicated mechanisms including language, desire, belonging and love, we absorb the values of society and in turn obey them as we are expected to" (Ibrahim, 2015, p.16).

Trans-Fo-Ma Kills the Flow

Given the premise that Jin's flow is occluded at the beginning of his story, he completely kills it when he realizes his dream of being a transformer.



Fig. 3 Jin tells the herbalist's wife he wants to be a transformer (Yang, 2006, p.27)

The existence of a being is to be examined affectively. In other words, “human beings are beings of the affect, which is in constant metamorphosis” (Wang, 2017, p.116). However, Jin’s transformation into Danny turns out to be the decease of his flow. Under the constant barrage of racism from his surroundings, Jin grows up as a boy who, not only endures, but internalizes the organismic pattern of racial discrimination. Though Danny is introduced in the novel as an independent character at first, it doesn’t take long for readers to find out that Danny is Jin.

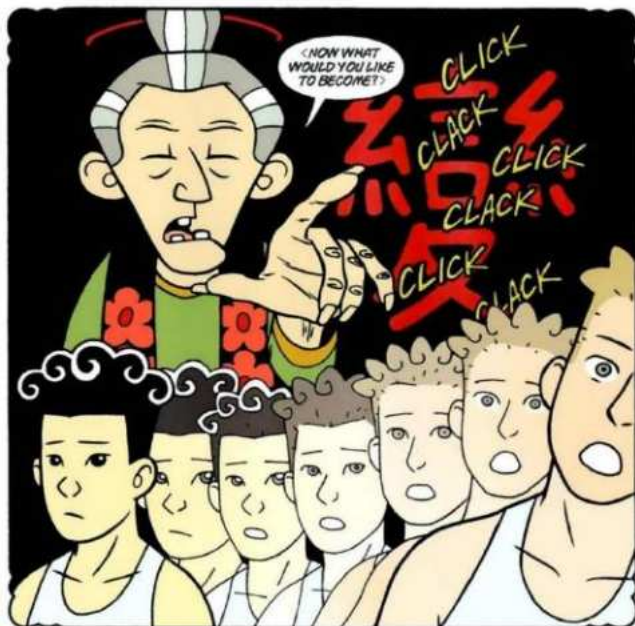


Fig. 4 Jin transforms into Danny (Yang, 2006, p.194)

After Jin’s failure of courting Amelia, the white girl in his class, he loses self-control and kisses Suzy Nakamura, the girlfriend of Wei-Chen. However, Jin refuses to give any explanation of the kiss, nor is he willing to accept the fact that Wei-Chen and he are brothers and “blood”. And it is this night that Jin becomes Danny and leaves everything

that is Chinese of him behind to become another character, Chin-Kee.



Fig. 5 Jin refutes Wei-Chen's reminder of them being brothers and blood (Yang, 2006, p.190)

Taking *ATP* as instance, Deleuze and Guattari clarified: “we will never ask what a book means, as signifier and signified; we will not look for anything to understand in it; but we will ask what it function with...” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.4). Instead of what desire is, the question that should matter is how desire gets actualized, which constitutes desiring-machines. Mentioned also as assemblages, since they are assembled desire, desiring-machines are “existing forms of desire” (Jordan, 1995, p.126). The Deleuzo-Guattarian desire is not Oedipally repressed, but rather is autonomously assembled. “There are”, Deleuze and Guattari reaffirmed, “no internal drives in desire, only assemblages” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.229). Unprocessed in its existence, desire is the raw material for desiring-machines. Schizophrenia, therefore, was distinguished by Deleuze and Guattari as a process rather than an illness. The matrix of the unconscious is open to the mapping of Schizophrenia’s overwhelming experience, whereby “tremendous flights of imagination”, or, to put it in another way, desire, is allowed to flow freely to induce an increase of a body’s capacity (Buchanan, 2008, p.40). In schizoanalysis, a desiring-machine is a reality that desire achieves, hence the corollary that a book, a body, everything in the world is a desiring-machine/assemblage. Once desire realizes itself as a desiring-machine, “desiring-production is transformed from a general principle into a particular desiring-machine” (Jordan, 1995, p.127). The production of desire, or desiring-production, Deleuze and Guattari pointed out:

...is immediately consumption and a recording process (enregistrement), without any sort of mediation, and the recording process and consumption directly determine production, though they do so within the production process itself. Hence everything is production...since the recording processes are immediately consumed, immediately consummated, and these consumptions directly reproduced. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p.4)

Therefore, desiring-production is a mere order or principle of desire, which does not exist, and neither does desire. Desire does not exist except in a desiring-machine/assemblage, whilst an assemblage defines desiring-production in its essence. To make it clear, the relationship between desire and desiring-machines, along with organism and the BwO, is suggestive of quantum physics, where "reality itself, the density of matter, is reduced to the collapse of the virtuality of wave oscillations" (Žižek, 2012, p.22). Ironically, though in Jin's dream, the herbalist's wife tells Jin that he can become anything he wants as long as he's ready to forfeit your soul, it turns out that by becoming what he wants to become, Jin, the transfo-ma, kills his flow by surrendering totally to the organism, and fully loses his access to the repertoire of the BwO. At this point, Jin reaches the summite of his identity crisis.

Shame as an Event

The scene where Wei-Chen confronts Jin about his kissing Suzy is pivotal for understanding Jin's identity crisis as an event of shame. Affect, Massumi asserts, is transindividual rather than individual, as "it is ontogenetically prior to the distinction between the individual understood as separate unit and the collective understood as a molar aggregate of separate units" (Massumi, 2021, p.XLIII). This argument leads to one of the outstanding features of Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy, de-substantialization, which means "in a work of art, an affect (boredom, for instance) is no longer attributable to actual persons but becomes a free-floating event" (Žižek, 2012, p.22). Shame, in the affect theory, is taken as "one of the nine affects he conceives of as the starting kit of subsequently emergent emotional life" by Silvan S. Tomkins (Timár, 2019, p.200). By starting kit,

what Tomkins meant is that shame occurs in a very early stage of human development. One of the premises for shame to be detected is that the age of the subject can't be younger than three to seven months old, because the subject won't be able to identify the face of its care-taker. Once the subject passes that age, shame occurs. The interaction between an infant and its care-taker is considered to be mutual communication, rather than the misconception that the child is a mere recipient of the care-taker's signals. When the child cries, it is signaling its distress to activate its care-taker's anxiety. Meanwhile, it smiles to inform its care-taker that its needs are currently satisfied. However, if the signal of smile is not responded by the recipient, a reaction will be taken by the child as response of "loss of feedback from others, indicating social isolation and signaling the need for relief from that condition", usually shown as the infant "hanging the head and averting the eyes" (Basch, 1976, p.765; Sedgwick, 2003, p.37).

To take it a step further, in addition to the more "primordial" shame just sketched, Sedgwick introduced a double-movement of shame, with an example that she used in her lectures:

Lecturing on shame, I used to ask listeners to join in a thought experiment, visualizing an unwashed, half-insane man who would wander into the lecture hall mumbling loudly, his speech increasingly accusatory and disjointed, and publicly urinate in the front of the room, then wander out again. I pictured the excruciation of everyone else in the room: each looking down, wishing to be anywhere else yet conscious of the inexorable fate of being exactly there, inside the individual skin of which each was burningly aware; at the same time, though, unable to stanch the hemorrhage of painful identification with the misbehaving man. That's the double movement shame makes: toward painful individuation, toward uncontrollable relationality. (Sedgwick, 2003, p.37)

The reaction of "everyone else in the room: each looking down, wishing to be anywhere else" is suggestive of its "primordial" form, which is the infant hanging its head and

botches the real, because it botches the BwO” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.151). Similar to what psychoanalysis do, the cancerous BwO resides on strata, proliferates after selecting homogenized contents from the flow. In the context that BwO is somewhat the infinite repertoire of the body, the cancerous BwO plays only one song from it and plays it forever. It is a “cancer of the stratum” (Somers-Hall, 2018, p.109). Jin fails to de-stratify/de-territorialize against the organism because he botches and makes himself a cancer of capture points of racism.

The promise that he can become anything he wants easily, which the herbalist wife tells Jin, turns out to only consolidate the stratum of Jin. By splitting himself into two entities, Jin in fact commits that he cannot become anything but the ideal image of a white male to get accepted into the white American society.

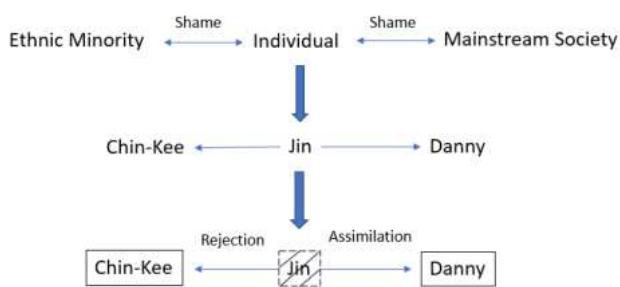


Fig. 7 Jin Fails the Flight

The resolution of Jin’s identity crisis is still in de-territorialization because the cancerous BwO Jin makes is “too much sedimentation...too much content or coding and territorializing” (Somers-Hall, 2018, p.109). With that being clear, Jin needs to become productive, or put in another way, to produce difference. From the beginning of the novel, Jin’s reaction against the racism he experiences is just giving up his ethnicity piece by piece, for instance, rejecting Wei-Chen’s greeting in Chinese, stopping eating Chinese food after being mocked, etc.



Fig. 8 Jin gets harassed for eating Chinese food (Yang, 2006 p.32)

It is appropriate to say that Jin is behaving differently. However, it is more accurate to say, in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, that Jin is not producing any difference. What Jin tries to do to get accepted into the white American society is just conformity of the social values of racist. He is doing nothing more than reifying the Chinese stereotype that lives in the mind of those classmates that harasses him, which confirms the biased idea that Chinese students are strange and awkward. After Jin’s transformation into Danny, Chin-Kee, the Chinese part of his subconscious, only reaffirms and reminds readers of that idea since the Chinese image becomes even more cringe.



Fig. 9 Jin starts to eat sandwiches instead of Chinese food (Yang, 2006, p.34)

Danny is incessantly haunted by Chin-Kee and is always trying to eschew from this embarrassing cousin of his. However, failure to achieve that goal is definite, since the very process of trying to remove Chin-Kee’s experience is, as illustrated before, the mechanism of the cancerous BwO

that Jin makes his body into. The failure of Jin's flight from his fantasized life as Danny resembles the psychoanalytic desire, which Deleuze and Guattari revolted against with their schizoanalysis, renovating the idea of the unconscious, which, according to Sigmund Freud, lends itself to be considered as "a rowdy guest one has ejected...who continues to hammer on the door...causing such a ruckus that one is compelled to post a guard", making it possible that the unconscious can "produce desire in harmony together" with the Ego and the Id (Buchanan, 2008, p.28; Kolyri, 2020, p.483). With that being said, Jin's problem is to make Chin-Kee, the rowdy guest, live in harmony within the body. The BwO "is not at all the opposite of the organs", D&G asserts, but "that organization of the organs called organism" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.158). The disruption of the sedimented organization appears at the point where Chin-Kee gets dragged away by Danny when Chin-Kee is singing *She Bangs* by Rick Martin in the library. After they go out, Danny and Chin-Kee, the two organs stratified by Jin's fantasized transformation, begins to interact again, although in a form of violence. To make the affect to start flowing through the novel passages between organs, such ferocity is acceptable/essential in allowing Jin to become productive because the prioritized question of schizoanalysis is, taking *ATP* as an instance, not "what a book means, as signifier and signified; we will not look for anything to understand in it; but we will ask what it function with..." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.4). To construct the BwO is to draw the line of flight, to overcome the stratification organism imposes upon the body, during the process of which the BwO disconnects from the signifying order. In his monograph *Parables for the Virtual*, Brian Massumi mentioned a psychological study conducted by a group of researchers headed by Hertha Sturm. The study was inspired by a broadcast accident that happened in Germany, which is caused by a short fill-in film between programs. The film goes like this: "A man builds a snowman on his roof garden. It starts to melt in the afternoon sun. He watches. After a time, he takes the snowman to the cool of the mountains, where it stops melting. He bids it good-bye, and leaves" (Massumi, 2021, p.25). Complaints were made by parents about their

children feeling frightened of the film. Hertha Sturm and her team used three different versions of the film to scrutinize the differences of influence these films impose upon the audience. These researchers asked different groups of nine-year-olds to rate the films, among which one is the original wordless one, one with factual voice-over and the other with emotional voice-over, on two scales of happy-sad and pleasant-unpleasant. The result turned out that the subjects of the study rated the sad scenes the most pleasant. As a matter of fact, "the sadder the better" is what researchers learnt from the outputs, demarcating a "gap between content and effect" of affects (Massumi, 2021, p.26). The gap is described by Massumi in the title of the first chapter of his book as the autonomy of affect, which is exactly the disconnection from signifying order just sketched. However, disconnection does not mean that there is no connection at all. The connection here, according to Massumi, is not a conventional indexing of the image received by the subject is all. The autonomy of affect demonstrates its sequencing of meanings on, if not multiple, a parallel level of intensity where sadness is registered as pleasantness. It may be noted that by intensity, Massumi means "the strength or duration of the image's effect" (Massumi, 2021, p.26). During the fight, Chin-Kee's head falls to the ground and it turns out to be a mask, used by the Monkey King as his disguise, which serves as the twist of all three storylines.



Fig. 10 Chin-Kee's head falls to the ground, turning out to be a mask of the Monkey King (Yang, 2006, p. 212)

In their conversation, the Monkey King tells Jin that what he should do is to realize how good it is to be himself. Moreover, Jin's parents no longer have their visages covered or neglected from the readers' point of view, making it easy for the audience to tell what ethnicity they are of.



Fig. 11 The visages of Jin's parents are finally uncovered after Jin's de-territorialization (Yang, 2006, p. 225)

The schizoid Jin transforms into is cured, therefore, through the de-territorializing schizoanalysis. As a Chinese American, Jin cannot be straightforwardly Chinese nor American. He needs to let the two co-exist in harmony, with flows traveling between them, with the intensity of the two identities interacting within dynamic balance. In other words, Jin needs to build his own BwO to access "a state of metamorphosis", allowing the self to be "open to all its potentialities" (Kolyri, 2020, p.489). With the revealing of Chin-kee's real identity, Jin returns to his true self as well. By far, it is fair to say that Chin-kee and Danny have merged together by physical connection, literally the punch Danny does on Chin-kee, allowing Jin to transform, in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, from organismic state to "non-organismic" state, or put in another way, the state of the BwO. In other words, Jin finally gains "the courage to face the bewildering space of liminality and to do the work of constructing a hybrid identity without relying upon the false

security of an essentialized finite principle" (Pinti, 2016, p.244).



Fig. 12 Danny transforms back to Jin (Yang, 2006, p. 214)

The Magical Realism of the Twist

If the transformation of Jin into Danny may be considered as schizophrenia, which is still possible to explain from a perspective of reality, the final twist of the story that converges the three storylines is pure magical (realism). It is, to some extent, imaginable for the audience that Gene Luen Yang makes the resolution of Jin's identity crisis a magical realist one, considering that the Monkey King is introduced at the very beginning of the novel as a main character. However, when it comes to the pivotal question the author is discussing, namely the Chinese American identity, the author's magical touch of the story leaves potential danger for Jin, a remnant of his identity crisis, which is to be argued. Deleuze and Guattari claims that "[a] plateau is a piece of immanence. Every BwO is made up of plateaus. Every BwO is itself a plateau in communication with other plateaus on the plane of consistency. The BwO is a component of passages" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.158). In the final pages of the novel, where Jin reconciles with his Chinese self-identity as well as Wei-Chen, there are only three characters involved. With the Monkey King being a magical character, Wei-Chen being the humanoid incarnation of the Monkey King's son, there is only Jin who is a human being that exists in the real world, which, to take a step further, indirectly confirms that fact that this resolution of identity crisis merely happens in Jin's mind, or phantasy world. The trans-individuality of affect makes it impossible for a BwO to exist on its own. Therefore, as a BwO, Jin is open to his full potentiality, but he is also assumed to continue to experience racism, since the environment has not changed, neither do his classmates. Not only affect is both trans-individual and social, making

it impossible for a BwO to exist on its own, but also the BwO is, as mentioned above, in constant metamorphosis, which means sedimentation is incessantly happening at the same time. In the domain of schizoanalysis, affect is incessantly stratified by an abstract machine, which is, described by Deleuze and Guattari as the organism, “a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labor...imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences”, which “reduces complexity in producing a body composed of homogeneous layers” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.159). Jin may fail to communicate with other bodies on another plateau, meanwhile, he may also botch again once another organism is formed. After all, “becoming BwO as anti-racism line of flight is a dynamic, ongoing process; one is always and forever in search for it, it can never be attained once and for all” (Ibrahim, 2015, p.24). The process of approaching the BwO is meant to be a peregrination. It is “beyond the organism and at the limits of the lived body” (Whitlock, 2020, p.510). One may be hindered, take wrong turns at crossroads, or if given enough luck, succeed, but one can never reach it. “You never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit”, contends D&G (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.150). In a word, Jin still faces threats of future problems that may come from both other bodies and the body of his own.

CONCLUSION

As a graphic novel, with its unique form of expression that combines both visual and literal languages, *American Born Chinese* tells its audience, with abundant details and rigorous interweaving of the storylines, a story of adolescent development in which Jin Wang, the main character, is repeatedly subjected to racial discrimination in his pursuing of getting accepted into the white society. In his first attempt of drawing the lines of flight against racism, he botches in building his own BwO by wrongfully giving up his Chinese identity, splitting his character into two. Meanwhile, the affect of shame flows throughout the story. Its intensity fluctuates, indicating the various degrees of the

stratification of Jin at different points of the book. The double-movement of shame, aroused by the racial discrimination he experiences, along with the fact that not only Jin is objected by Greg during his courting Amelia, but realizes that the relationality between him and his ethnicity is impossible to cut, makes Jin's identity crisis gradually evolves to its worst. Consequently, Jin becomes a victim of the cancerous BwO he makes himself into, in response to the shame from both the mainstream society and his Chinese ethnicity. Jin's transforming into Danny and eschewing from Chin-Kee is argued to be a conformity to the racist ideology, which serves as an evidence of Jin's affective flow being impeded by the organismic patterns of the organism. Therefore, for Jin “to disintegrate an organism”, what he needs to do is not to delete the very existence of himself, but “to open the body to all kinds of connections” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.160). At the end of the novel, Danny confronts Chin-Kee in a fight, during which Chin-Kee reveals his identity as the Monkey King after his mask falls to the ground. Such event of ferocity is, in the sense of schizoanalysis, acceptable because for a desiring-machine, D&G care exhaustively about how it works, rather than what it means. In other words, there is a political indifference of difference in schizoanalysis, which prioritizes the production of difference above all. At this point, Jin reconciles with his Chinese American identity and later with Wei-Chen, who turns out to be the son of the Monkey King. By building his own BwO, Jin finally overcomes the identity crisis caused by racism and the shame that follows, establishing a hybrid identity in which his Chinese ethnicity and American identity can live in harmony.

However, there is still potential threat, because of the magical realism the author employs at the end of the book. Ss the BwO is sketched by Deleuze and Guattari as a plane of consistency that is always in a state of metamorphosis, non-organismic state is not meant to be a finite solution, but a limit which Jin is always attaining but never attains. Everything in the world desires to flow unconstrained, however, everything is, on the other hand, in constant stratification/sedimentation, which means that the formation of another organism is assumed to happen sooner

or later. By that time, Jin may overcome the organismic patterns again, but risk is to be expected during the peregrination. On top of that, after reconciling with his Chinese identity, it is still possible for Jin to encounter racism when he is communicating with other bodies on another plateau. Given that there is only one human character in real-life sense involved in Jin's resolution of his identity crisis, with the Monkey King being a magical character, Wei-Chen being the humanoid incarnation of the Monkey King's son, it lends itself easily to the putative conclusion that although Wang Jin has reconciled with his Chinese identity and resolved an identity crisis in his mind, in real life he will continue to face internal and external distress during his endeavor of getting accepted into the mainstream society of the United States as a Chinese American. To put it in another way, Jin, as well as many other people of color living in the United States, is expected to continue to remain dissociated and marginalized from the white American society.

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Beyond the Elite Gaze: A Comparative Study to Unveil the Subaltern Voices Through Gurdial Singh's *The Last Flicker* and Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*

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Abstract— *In every society, there are some segments of people who are wealthy and have supreme authority over the means of production. They tend to exploit those with limited or no access to socio-economic opportunities. In postcolonial terms, these people are referred to as subalterns who are systematically excluded from a society's established structures. It also speaks about those people who are discriminated against based on race, gender, caste, status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religious affiliations. Literature plays a pivotal role in subaltern lives by providing them assistance through which they can express themselves freely. The present study tries to explore the voices of subaltern subjects by bringing on surface the oppression, violence, and suppression through Gurdial Singh's *The Last Flicker* (1964) and Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (1995). Though these writers come from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities, their works depict the mutual concept of the inhuman treatment of the subaltern subjects. Their protagonists are unconventional and rebellious. They make their own identity even though consistently suppressed by dominant ideologies. The author's concern for the downtrodden and subaltern characters is visible through their writings. Both authors explore themes of marginalization, socio-political issues, and the impact of power structures on subaltern groups.*



Keywords— *subalternity, Subaltern Studies Group, postcolonial, discrimination, oppression, hegemony.*

Postcolonial theory examines the power and ongoing authority of Western modes of intellectual inquiry and knowledge production. It aims to empower the colonized and those who have experienced social, racial, and ethnic discrimination. The subaltern study is one of the subdivisions of postcolonial literature which talks about the colonial inhabitants who are socially, politically, and geographically debarred from the pyramid of power by imperial authorities. Edward Said in his *Orientalism* (1978) speculatively negotiates how the oppressed subaltern natives are victimized by colonialism. Said explains how the Eurocentric viewpoint of Orientalism created the

ideological underpinnings and rationales for the colonial control of the Other. Before their valid expedition to The Orient, Europeans had concocted fictitious details about the geography of the Orient, even preconceived that the people of that particular region were uncivilized and toxic. "Orientalism is a way of seeing that imagines, emphasizes, exaggerates and distorts differences of Arab people and cultures as compared to that of Europe and the US. It often involves seeing Arab culture as exotic, backward, uncivilized and at times dangerous. The West construed the East as extremely different and inferior and therefore in need of Western intervention and rescue" (Said 12). This

binary relation of Us and Them prompted Europeans to take expeditions to Orient lands to make them civilized in Western ways because Europeans saw them as backwards, hence the Eurocentric perspective of Orientalism silenced the voices of subaltern natives.

Through the lens of Postcolonial theory, the term subaltern refers to those social groups who are pushed to the periphery of a society, in colonial dominion, it refers to a subaltern native without human agency. However, feminist researcher Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak advised against using the term "subaltern" too broadly because, "subaltern is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for [the] Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie In post-colonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern—a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern" (Ariel 29). Spivak was also with the view that the subalterns cannot speak because if they can speak, they are not subalterns at all.

The concept of subaltern study substantially deals with the emancipation of the oppressed and subjugated strata of society. The word "subaltern" was handed-down by Antonio Gramsci to refer to the cultural hegemony that drives out particular individuals and social groups from society's socioeconomic institutions to deny them agency and a voice in colonial politics. It gained prominence with the emergence of the Subaltern Studies Group or Subaltern Studies Collective which was an attempt to give voice to the marginalized and allow them to be heard inside the pages of elite historiography. It was a collective effort of eminent Indian scholars which came into existence in the 1980s. The Subaltern Studies Group shed light on many controversial issues, including the problematic representation of subaltern subjects in Indian historiography. They put massive efforts into re-examining Indian history from the below by keeping in mind the perspective of subaltern subjects whose voices and contributions were neglected by elite groups. Guha asserts that the notion of the subaltern is an endeavour to investigate, "the history, the politics, the economics and sociology of Subalternity" (Guha 39).

The historical development of the concept of the subaltern seems unsteady and hard to define which stems from the deceit of critics and authors whose, "unscrupulous, instrumental, or merely selective readings of Gramsci have been animated by the impulse to make him appear relevant to the present time, particularly when he has been used to lend authority to or legitimize a specific political stance, ideological tendency, or theoretical position" (Francese, 2009). The notion of the subaltern was first mentioned by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, in his piece *Notes on*

Italian History, which was published in his cornerstone work *Prison Notebooks*, written between 1929 and 1935. According to Gramsci, the word subaltern indicates a "low-rank" person or group of people in a particular society who are suffering under the hegemonic thumb of a ruling elite class that deprives them of fundamental rights. These "low-rank" people have no active participation in the construction of the local history or culture of the same nation due to hegemonic domination. The only folks Gramsci had in his head when he first used the word subaltern were the peasants and workers who were battling with the atrocities and discrimination at the hands of the leader of the National Fascist Party, Benito Mussolini and his envoys. Rather than depending solely on the state's historical narrative, which ultimately tells the story of the ruling and dominant classes, Gramsci developed an interest in the study of the subaltern classes of consciousness and culture as a potential means of having their voice heard. Gramsci plans to investigate the verified fact as follows in this study: "The subaltern classes by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a "State": their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society, and thereby with the history of States and groups of States" (Gramsci 52).

Incongruously, Gramsci even stated that the subaltern classes and the hegemonic classes have been sharing somewhat the same and complex historical roots but surprisingly, the latter is more officially esteemed and accepted. The reason as Gramsci asserts that because the history of subaltern classes lacks unity. They easily succumb to ruling authority due to their irregular totality. This eventually leads to the absence of subaltern classes on social and cultural grounds where the lack of representation results in the non-accessibility of the means of their state. The only possible way to decimate the master/slave pattern in Gramsci's perspective was to get freedom through permanent victory.

To gain this decimation, non-elite groups have to realise their subordinated consciousness, which is being exercised by the cultural hegemony of the ruling class. His inclusion of the role of peasants as a distinct group within the subaltern division set Gramsci apart from the previous founders of Marxism. His carefully considered theories regarding the peasant classes as a social, cultural, and political force conscious of its unique consciousness of subalternity, especially those penned during his incarnation, prompted other 20th-century scholars to address the subject of Indian peasantry historiography to pick up where he left off. The group of academics known as the Subaltern Studies Group was founded and is chaired by Ranajit Guha. With its emergence in the early 1980s, the subalternity as a concept gained worldwide acknowledgement. Ranajit Guha established the group which consists of various social critics

and scholars. The group took inspiration from Gramsci's view. It was further expanded by Ranajit Guha, first in his 'manifesto' in *Subaltern Studies I* and later on in his renowned work titled *The Elementary Aspects of Peasants Insurgency in Colonial India*. In the aforementioned book, Guha attempted to showcase the impact of the Indian peasant's uprising on colonial authorities. By analysing the interactions between relations of dominance and subordination in the Indian context from 1783 to 1900, Guha aims to fairly represent the Indian peasantry.

Subaltern Studies were defined by Ranajit Guha as "a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way" (Guha 35). For him, that distinctly distinct entity (subalterns), consists of "the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the 'elite' (Guha, 1982)". The group also assumed that the Indian national history is dominated by colonial elitism as well as nationalist bourgeois elitism. Not only that, Guha also asserted that this type of historiography is unable to convey, evaluate or recognize the contribution of these common people. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was also part of that literary circle but she had issues because the group ignored the contribution of women. The subaltern as a female can hardly be heard as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* points out: "Sexual difference is doubly affected, if in the context of colonial production, subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in the shadow" (Spivak 287).

Many Indian writers made the world aware of the hardships of the underclass under the rule of the governing elite class through their literary works like Mulk Raj Anand, Gurdial Singh, Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Prem Chand, Mahasweta Devi, Anna Bhau Sathe, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Omprakash Valmiki, Aravind Adiga, Baburao Bagul, Bama, Baby Kamble and many more. The present research paper is a comparative study of subaltern narratives in the fiction of Gurdial Singh and Rohinton Mistry which reveals power dynamics and marginalized voices. Singh's work likely delves into the history of silenced and neglected masses, reflecting socio-cultural development and globalisation. On the other hand, Mistry's novels focus on the problematic representation of Parsis in the political realm, highlighting the struggles of common people amidst political power plays. Both authors explore themes of marginalization, socio-political issues, and the impact of power structures on subaltern groups. By analysing their works, one can uncover how these authors portray the complexities of power dynamics and the challenges faced by marginalized communities in their respective narratives.

Gurdial Singh is a notable writer of Punjabi Literature who is known for writing on the oppressed sections of society. His works are deeply concerned and celebrate the issues of the subalterns on a large scale. His fictional world spins around the stories of Dalits, poor peasants, the downtrodden, and various subalterns. His selfless devotion to Punjabi Literature has bagged him various awards like Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975, the Padam Shri in 1998, and the Jnanpith Award in 1999. Gurdial Singh's literary career spans from his debut novel *Marhi Da Deeva* (The Last Flicker), including other major novels like *Unhoye* (The Survivors), *Adh Chanani Raat* (Night of the Half Moon), *Anhe Ghode da Daan* (Alms in the Name of a Blind Horse), and *Parsa*. In the words of Rana Nayar, who has translated the majority of his works into English language, Gurdial Singh was the "messiah of the marginalised" (Nayar 25). In the preface to *Re-Readings of Gurdial Singh's Fiction*, Amar Tarsem and Kumar Sushil remark, "He is a novelist of the subaltern and downtrodden and captures the inner strife and struggles faced by the peasants and workers during the fall of the feudal era which in turn tries to generate social consciousness in low-class people" (Tarsem and Sushil 7).

Gurdial Singh's debut novel *Marhi Da Deeva* (The Last Flicker) focuses on the plight of downtrodden people who are being marginalized in a Punjabi rural society. They are systematically ostracized and discriminated based on their caste, class, status, gender, etc. Published in 1964, it presents the story of Jagseer Singh, a Dalit, who is compelled to face discrimination due to his low caste and poverty. This was an influential work in the fictitious Punjabi world because it was uncanny to have a Dalit in the pivotal role, as the Punjabi literary scene was controlled by elite-class writers who never considered portraying low-caste figures as protagonists. The character of Jagseer represents those subaltern people who have no say in the means of production. These people are treated as outcasts or untouchables. In the novel after the death of his father, Jagseer is kicked out of a piece of land by Bhanta, son of Dharam Singh, which Jagseer's family was rearing for ages. Jagseer's father Thola was very dear to Dharam Singh because due to the hard work of Thola, Dharam Singh was able to get so much profit from his land. But his son Bhanta does not consider the lifelong loyalty of Jagseer's family and discards him of that piece of land. Nandi's lamentation over the death of her husband Thola sheds light on the condition of untouchables in rural society, "Look Dharam Singh, my son, my two generations served your family. My old man died walking on snakes in your fields. Now my son works for you like a dark bullock. I have wiped your floors, cleaned out much all my life...and you! Curse on you! Is this how you pay us back? Is this...? You..." (Singh 79).

The novel also depicts the horrific image of the agrarian economy where only a handful of people have their authority on the means of production. These people are at the top of the hierarchy system and exploit their subordinates. The novel showcases how the Jat community in rural Punjab controls all the means of production. Due to that, Dalits like Jagseer are compelled to do bone-breaking jobs on petty financial assistance in their fields. In the novel, Jagseer's mother Nandi spits the fact about atrocities that these folks have to undergo at the hands of rich Jats by saying, "I knew these evil-ones would one day treat us like this for all the labour we did for them. What good can you expect from these Jat-boors who keep us at a distance and throw us a morsel whenever they please as if we were dogs" (Singh 95).

The novel also depicts the unrequited love of Jagseer with the wife of his friend Nikka. Hard to bear the pangs of one-sided love and the discrimination due to his low caste, drags him into the well of opium addiction. Opium seems to be the only narcotic providing some relief to his pain which is inflicted upon him as a member of an outcast community. The novel also highlights the lot of women characters who are double marginalized due to their gender and low caste status.

Rohinton Mistry is an Indian-born Canadian writer of Parsi descent. Mistry is a prolific writer who is known for his collection of short stories, *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987), three novels, *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995), *Family Matters* (2002), and the latest one *The Screem* (2006). He has been the recipient of many awards including the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 2012. Although he left his homeland and migrated to Canada quite early in his age but his works represent the true picture and culture of India. He showcases the burning issues of the social, cultural, and political life of India through his works. His concern for the preservation of the Parsi community, which is a marginalized section of society, is quite evident in his works. His works focus on the day-to-day struggles of the Indian Parsi community in Bombay (at present Mumbai). They showcase the reality of the Parsi community which is treated as a 'subaltern' against the mainstream majority of Hindu culture. Mistry's fiction deals with the inequalities that are prevalent in the world between classes, genders, castes, and official hierarchies. His fictional works predominantly deal with the Parsi protagonist who is in a state of constant fight with himself and against his surroundings due to fears, anxieties, sense of insecurity, and helplessness because of political uncertainties. His works also shed light on the struggles of other minority groups like Muslims, Christians, women, Dalits, and elder people who are being marginalized in a caste-ridden society.

Khushwant Singh expressed his views regarding the demographic picture of Parsi in India, "It is a dying community; the rate of death is higher than the rate of birth. They admit no converts nor recognise the offspring of non-Parsi fathers as Parsi. An increasing number of girls now marry outside community" (Singh 87). Regardless of facing the fear of demographic extinction, the Parsis are still struggling not to suffer the loss of their identity and social purity.

A Fine Balance (1995) was set during the period of Emergency which was declared by the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi in 1975. The novel shows the reality of India in the wake of political corruption, tyranny, exploitation, violence, and bloodshed. It also sheds light on the aspects of rural India which was struggling with injustice, cruelty, trauma, caste discrimination, and communal and religious disharmony. The story of the novel revolves around the collective and individual experiences of four characters who come from different backgrounds. The novel brings forth the difficulties of marginalized communities and their ill-treatment.

Dina Dalal, a Parsi by religion, Ishvar, Omprakash, and Maneck share a family bond in the novel but their lives are completely disrupted during the period of emergency when they bid adieu to each other due to some personal reasons. By the end of the novel, Dina Dalal has lost her freedom to her brother—Ishvar and Omprakash turn baggers after being crippled and castrated respectively. Maneck commits suicide by throwing himself in front of the train.

The novel also presents the wretched condition of low-caste people through the character of Ishvar and Omprakash, who belongs to the chammaar caste of tanners and leatherworkers. Mistry shows the tyranny of upper caste people through the character of Thakur Dharamsi who murdered the family of Ishvar because they raised their voice for their rights. Later on in the novel, Thakur uses his authority and operates Ishvar and Omprakash under a family planning scheme just to take revenge. As a result, Omprakash is castrated and Ishvar gets crippled. In one of the chapters, Narayan and Ishvar get punished by the school teacher for touching the instruments of learning. Pandit Lalluram justifies the horrendous act of beating to Dukhi by saying, "Your children entered the classroom. They polluted the place. They touched instruments of learning. They defiled slates and chalks, which upper-caste children would touch. You are lucky there wasn't a holy book like the Bhagavad Gita in that cupboard; no scared texts. Or the punishment would have been more final" (Mistry 113-114).

The condition of women characters is even worse in a patriarchal society. Dina is being tortured by her brother, Nusswan, after the death of her husband Rustom. She tries

to escape this torture by taking the profession of seamstress, which succeeds but for a short period of time. Another character, Roopa, wife of Omprakash's grandfather Dukhi, is sexually harassed at the hands of an upper-class Zamindar. A watchman even rapes her but she is quite helpless to tell anyone: "In the morning Roopa behaved as if nothing had occurred. So Dukhi said nothing, and they ate the oranges" (Mistry 99).

CONCLUSION

The concept of subaltern has always been a pivotal part of world literature, specifically in the writings of postcolonial writers. They become the torch-bearers for the neglected sections of society by raising their voices against injustice, oppression, violence, exploitation, and social discrimination. Gurdial Singh and Rohinton Mistry are among those writers whose works echo the struggle of subaltern subjects as they are toiling hard to sail through the intricacies of life. Though their works concentrate on those characters who belong to different sections of marginalized society i.e., Dalits, women, and subjugated minorities, somehow collectively echo the condition of all those who are forced to live on the fringes of society. They try to delve deep into the psyche of different characters in different situations and with that show deep concern for the suffering humanity. Through the characterization of Jagseer Singh in *The Last Flicker* and Ishvar and Omprakash in *A Fine Balance*, the authors show the tyranny of upper-class people towards the Dalit community. In the face of such atrocities, they are still battling against the dominant ideologies for their economic upliftment.

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Memory as Counter Narrative: A Subaltern *Ramayana*

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Abstract— In Manini.J.Anandani's *Mandodari, Queen of Lanka* the author employs memory as a tool for the narrative of the persona as well as an era. The narrative is in the form of recollections by Mandodari, who is extolled as the pious and virtuous queen of the mighty king of Lanka in the epic tale. In this process of recreation, the hidden aspects of his personality and character came to the fore. As her memory took the form of a narrative, it is revealed how he shouldered the responsibility of the emancipation and the upliftment of his race from a very early age onwards, how he along with his siblings were treated as half-castes, how the knowledge of Vedas was denied to him and so on. Mandodari's recollections never attempt to obliterate the dark corners of Dashaanan's character. Her narrative provides an alternate representation of the cliched narration of the epics, thus creating a counter narrative of the familiar tales of *Ramayana*. As Mandodari walks down the memory lane, the entire discourse of *Ramayana* necessitated a reconstitution as Ravana is viewed through the eyes of a person who knows him from within. Her memory recreates Ravana as Dashaanan, remoulded him to an individual who is not familiar to the readers of mythology.



Keywords— Memory, retelling, narrative, counter-narrative

The Hindu mythological epic *Ramayana* has innumerable versions and Manini.J.Anandani's debut work of fiction *Mandodari, Queen of Lanka* is a retelling based on the Jaina version. In Indian Writing in English retellings of mythology are either from a subaltern or from a feminine perspective. In *Mandodari, Queen of Lanka*, though the narrator is a gendered subaltern, the retelling neither focused on the marginalization nor on the gender oppression in the mythological tale though these themes remain as a subtext. The narrative is in the form of recollections by Mandodari, who is extolled as the pious and virtuous queen of the mighty king of Lanka in the epic tale. In almost all the versions of the epic she is portrayed as a woman who had tolerated the debauchery of a cruel, despotic, immoral and lecherous man and had loved him in spite of all his faults. Mythology portrays Ravana as the archetype of evil and injustice; as a foil to Rama- to accentuate his nobility, justice and righteousness. Through the ages Rama and Ravana became stereotypical binaries.

Sidonie Smith opines "Memory is ultimately a story about, and thus a discourse on, original experience,"

something that actually occurred in the past. The past can never be "articulated outside the structures of language and storytelling" (*A Poetics of Women's Autobiography*45). As Mandodari walks down the memory lane, the entire discourse of *Ramayana* necessitated a reconstitution as Ravana is viewed through the eyes of a person who knows him from within. She is one who knows all his follies, foibles and weaknesses. Her memory recreates Ravana as Dashaanan, remoulded him to an individual who is not familiar to the readers of mythology. In this process of recreation, the hidden aspects of his personality and character came to the fore; he emerged as a new individual in flesh and blood, much more adorable and honourable than the recognized heroes of mythology. As her memory took the form of a narrative, he is not the demonized Rakshasa in the epic, not even by his race. James Olney's concepts about memory is relevant in the context. He says: "Memory enables and vitalizes narrative; in return, narrative provides form for memory, supplements it, and sometimes displaces it" (*Memory and Narrative*417)

Mandodari's recollections never attempt to obliterate the dark corners of Dashaanan's character. Rather, she always exposes it, fights against it and expresses her reproach and revulsion to his practices. All the aspects of his personality -his uncontrollable anger, insatiable lust for power, indomitable ambition, egoistic arrogant nature etc. are brought to the forefront in her recollections. But she can't resist loving him due to his admirable qualities which outweighs all these negative shadings. All the major incidents of the epic tale are discussed by Mandodari through her reminiscences, and it provides an alternate representation of the cliched narration of the epics, thus creating a counter narrative of the familiar tales of Ramayana. They reveal a post truth experience to the events which are internalized in the collective individual psyche.

Her memory of Dashaanan begins with his arrival at her father's court at Mayarashtra as a distinguished guest. He is hailed as a Brahmin boy who is a scholar and also a Shiva *bhakta*. He wished to get some architectural advice from her father, the great architect, king Maya on building temples in his kingdom. He was playing *Veena* when she first met him in the court. She, the extremely beautiful princess of Mayarashtra was captivated by the young ruler of Lanka. Later, when she reached Lanka as his wife, she realized that what she heard about the prosperity of 'golden' Lanka and the popularity of Lankesh, was not an exaggeration.

Dashaanan was very fond of advanced technology. He had constructed six operational airports in Lanka.... The airports were equipped with navigational expertise as well as hangars for his flying *vimanas*. His empire spread over various lands.... (*Mandodari Queen of Lanka* 17)

He loved his people very much and they loved him in return abundantly.

People in Lanka rejoiced and I could see how much Dashaanan meant to them. They loved him, blessed him and prayed to him like he was their god. Lanka was a flourishing kingdom. There was plenty of food, gold, skilled artists, promising technology, soldiers and the city was well-planned. (19)

Mandodari reminisced how the very first time when they were together after the marriage, he confessed her about his failings as an individual. "I made more foes than friends; I made more errors than success. And yet, I believe you will accept me the way I am".(22) Born as the

eldest son of the great Rishi Vishravas and his second wife, the Asura princess Kaikasi, he and his younger siblings were always treated as half castes. She realized that her husband had trodden hard and rough paths to become the king of Lanka and it was those miseries and hardships which he experienced that moulded his character.

Mandodari, this journey of our life might not be easy for you. You were a princess, not a stranded offspring who was always given half-caste treatment. You may find it difficult to understand me at times but you have to trust my goals (22)

He had shouldered the responsibility of the emancipation and the upliftment of his race from a very early age onwards and the sacrifices made by his mother for the sake of it were there in his memory also. He could never get over his childhood memories which were rather unpleasant. The Brahmin sages and Rishis, prohibited them to learn Vedas and Upanishads though their father is a Brahmin. But it was only because of the intervention of their father, they were finally able to learn it. Ravan mastered all the branches of knowledge with a vengeance and he became an acclaimed scholar.

Dashaanan and his siblings were taught mainly by their father. Education and knowledge empowered them. They learned advanced skills that even the most learned sages fail to master. And then Dashaanan began to eradicate most of the sages to prove his valour. Rumours went around that he would store the blood of the sages he killed in a large pot. (79)

His insatiable hunger for knowledge even later in life may be attributed to his childhood experiences. As memory theorist and psychologist Dan McAdams observes,

Certain events from our past take on extraordinary meaning over time as their significance in the overall story of our lives and times come to be known. In a sense, then our current situation in life and our anticipation of what the future will bring partly determine what we remember and how we remember it(*The Stories We Live By*295)

This concept is exemplified through the biographical sketch of the powerful anti-hero of the celebrated epic. Dashaanan's hunger for power and the resultant expansion of his territory brought him new allies.

It also resulted in his new marriages for political advancements. Though it hurts Mandodari very much, she accepted it as the queen of Lanka and as the first wife of Lankeshwar. "I was a dejected wife, who had to unwillingly share her husband with other women; a struggling queen, who failed to match the king's ambitions" (*Mandodari Queen of Lanka* 97). It was customary for a queen to accept the new wives of the king as it is for the wellbeing of their country. Though she reluctantly admitted his new wives she could not excuse him for his innumerable women in the *antapura*, his concubines, his women of pleasure. Dashaanan confided to her "- but I feel like conquering more than ever before-even if it is beauty in the form of a woman". (52)

As a self-made man he was very proud of his capabilities and also very egoistic and arrogant. The unfortunate incident with Vedavati is not the act of a lecherous boud, but the spontaneous reaction of an egoistic arrogant man who could not tolerate a beautiful woman preferring Lord Vishnu over him. But he was fiercely protective of his family and his people, blindly believed in the loyalty of his blood and was ready to risk anything to safeguard the honour of his family which ended up in his doom. His pride in his family and his immediate relatives was unquestionable.

Mandodari justifies his murder of his sister's husband as inevitable to safeguard the security of their country. Though Ravana killed him in self-defence it was an incident for which he regretted throughout his life. Memory of that ill-fated event and her husband's face after that incident is fresh in the mind of Mandodari. "I saw regret in my husband's eyes.... I have never seen him so repentant at anybody's death after any battle." (160)

Her recollections reveal Dashaanan as a man completely broken down by the betrayal of his younger brother. He wanted his brother to reconsider his decision to leave Lanka. As an affectionate brother he nobly assured his sister-in-law that her husband's decision will not in any way affect her position in his kingdom. Finally, when his sister for whose sake the catastrophic chain of events had started, revealed her true intentions Dashaanan with stoic resignation accepts her confession. His honour and his dedication is evident in his reply to her.

The only regret I have, dear sister, is that although we fought for your honour, you considered me your adversary. While we were fighting the war for you and also for my people, I had my own brother Vibhishana and you wanting to see me fail. Now you can leave, at ease after your confession, yet I have to fight this

war today for my people and my kingdom. (249)

It was the treachery and accusations of his own siblings, his own blood, that devastated Dashaanan. For indeed, as memory theorist John A. Robinson observes, "The meaning of any experience can change over time. New information or an altered perspective can prompt us to reinterpret specific experiences or entire segments of our personal history" (*Remembering Our Past*202).

Dashaanan was a fiercely protective father who wants to avoid the hardships of his childhood to his offspring.

I am planning the birth of my son and I want the planetary positions to be perfect. I don't want my son to struggle like I did. My childhood and youth were ravaged by a constant struggle to uplift my people. I fought for my rights, my education, my caste, my clan and my family. Hence, I want my son to have all advantages. (*Mandodari Queen of Lanka* 127)

His affectionate longing for a daughter, which she recollects, reveals the tenderness in him

I want a daughter with you, Mandodari. I am known to be a rakshasa who didn't hesitate for a minute before killing the Brahmins. I am known to be egoistic, selfish and proud. I am known as a womanizer, full of lust and greed. But my daughter, she will be my pride. I will win the world for her. I will fulfill all her dreams. I will care for her, protect her from every evil. (88)

He was so misjudged by the people who could not understand his personality, as evident from the words of Mai at Mandodari's repentance at the loss of her daughter "He has touched several women with his lustful hands and so he wasn't fortunate enough to hold his own daughter with those hands!" (119).

Finally, when he came to know that the ominous woman in his life, whom he held as a hostage to avenge the humiliation of his sister, is their own daughter, he has reached on a verge from where he could not turn away. He could not forgive Mandodari for hiding the truth from him for so long.

This is unforgivable...Look at what we have lost. I have a daughter that I so longed for, whom I have held hostage. My own daughter curses me every day.

It is her husband I am to fight..... My daughter is a prisoner in her own home. Like a nomad she wandered with her husband at his service. Is this her destiny? Was she born to suffer? (238)

He looked longingly at Sita, when he left for his final war, with the affection of a father whom she never recognized. He did not want her to realise him as her father as it will make her repentant later. He wants her to hate him as it is better for her life.

But his pride and honour did not permit him from turning away or withdrawing himself from what he had initiated. The words of his son Meghnad echoed his thoughts. "This war is not about Sita anymore. It is about all we have lost. They started this war with a purpose-to defeat the reign of rakshasas." (243). Dashaanan is a man who is guided by noble motives, but traversed through shoddy paths to achieve those motives which paved the way for his destruction.

He was ready to accept the superior strength of Vali and his friendship when Vali defeated him. His warm reception of Angad as he realized that the young Vanara is his friend's son and his honorable reply to Rama's message to return Sita are all instances to provide his perspective towards relationship and honour which made him an adorable person.

In the final war also, justice and righteousness displayed by him is admirable when he is certain about his defeat and imminent death. Mandodari remembers his words "They are right outside the gates of my city. I am bound by the laws of war or else I would have finished them off before they could have landed" (229). But the morality and the righteousness of the victors were suspicious and questionable.

Some nights, monkeys would loot our temples and granaries. Their supposed morality had been reduced to farce. They assaulted our women, beating them, tearing their clothes, sometimes even dragging them out of their chambers. (245)

Treachery and deception were employed by them to win the war. As Malyavan has rightly pointed out, they were on a mission to destroy the reign of the rakshasa domain and it was Dashaanan's attempt to revenge for the sake of his sister that made Lanka a target to them. His words to Meenakshi emphasized the actual intention of the war.

Your desire for revenge provoked your brother to abduct Sita, and Rama's mission got a new dimension wherein he

had reason to attack one of the greatest rakshasa kingdoms. It was for you that Dashaanan took Sita captive and lured her husband out to war, thereby marking Lanka as a possible target. (249)

Malyavan rightly judged Vibhishana's betrayal also. "He has been sulking for ages. His incompetence made him insecure. Going against his brother's commands was a petty ploy to prove he could be a better king" (214) "A brother who wants to finish another brother for his throne...how else would you justify his decision to join Rama?" (218). Ravan's prophetic statement on war became true when Vibhishana, the one who betrayed his loyalty became the king after the war. Mandodari recollects his words, "A war costs lives; it claims the throne, causes destruction and leaves a kingdom deprived of food, wealth and sometimes even the right ruler" (248,249).

As an individual, Dashaanan was completely aware of the drawbacks of his character or his failings, as he considers it. He is ready to admit it especially during the intimate moments with his wife whom he trusted more than himself. He confessed to Mandodari,

I do not wish to go into any battle or war. I have ruled this kingdom for decades; nobody has ever challenged me on my land before. The revenge I seek is not worth a battle so massive. I have lost my son, my people, but I am far too gone to turn back now. My pride will not let me, my arrogance.... You had once told me that my arrogance made me who I was and I'd much rather sustain it than give it up now (228,229)

As Mandodari has observed about him "Arrogance is now one of your characteristics, Lankeshwar, and it makes you who you are." (153)

He was a scholar, a man of great learning, who was at a loss when he puts his knowledge into practice. As a man who has great knowledge in astrology and different branches of science, he developed these branches of knowledge in his kingdom so that their physicians can even identify the gender of a child when it is in its mother's womb.

As a man who has carved his destiny for himself and achieved name and fame at a very early age along with the absence of proper guidance and advice regarding matters of ethics and morality affects his personality. Dashaanan fails to recognize the thin borderline between ambition and over ambition, righteousness and unrighteousness, ethical and unethical. He fails to understand where to stop. His

imprisonment of the Navagraha gurus and making them to obey his orders in matters regarding the destiny of individuals and his chemical experiments that resulted in producing the heavenly elixir *Amruth* which he placed below his navel by conducting a surgery were the result of this lack of guidance.

In her retelling the author employs memory as a tool for the narrative of the persona as well as an era. The advanced technologies, branches of knowledge, architecture and the prosperity of a pre-historic nation is unravelled. This retelling can also be viewed as a counter narrative, a *Ravanayana*, replacing the mythological narratives which have acquired an archetypal stature. As Mandodari's memories are shaped into a narrative, Dashaanan has transformed to the stature of a Greek epic hero whose fatal tragic flaw resulted in the inevitable tragedy.

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Tracing the voices of Resistance: Representation of tormented Girlhood in select Novels of Dickens

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Abstract— Charles Dickens is famous for his depiction of stereotypical female characters like Dora, Emily, Agnes, Amy, Florence, Nancy, Esther, Estella, Biddy etc. Interestingly, there are a number of girls in a few novels of Dickens who can however not be reduced into any of the above stereotypes as they do not conform to the standards of the Victorian society with ease. They are represented as characters voicing out their repressed state of existence from which they strongly desire to escape. Although these characters are generally seen as minor characters, they are shown to be much in tune with the voices of dissent raised against the patriarchal role of the Victorian society in terms of the restrictions that it imposes on girls from their childhood. This study will try to talk about the oppressed and traumatic childhood of a select set of Dickensian novels. It will focus upon the characters like Caddy Jellyby from *Bleak House*, Kate Nickleby from *Nicholas Nickleby*, Tattycoram from *Little Dorrit* and trace these early voices of resistance raised against their tormented girlhood as depicted in the novels. This study will also deal with the various dimensions of the nineteenth century Victorian idea of the girl child and the discourses associated with the sex and gender issues of the age while trying to locate the position of Dickens in his manner of representation of the above mentioned characters in the relevant novels.



Keywords— deprivation, distress, feminine ideal, patriarchal role, sex and gender.

I. INTRODUCTION

While writing about the concept of the Victorian women in her book *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, Deborah Gorham talks about the cult of domesticity which insisted in the concept of ‘a separate sphere’ for women with a ‘distinct set of roles’ (p. 4) in the Victorian age. According to her, between the public and the private, it was “the private sphere of love, the emotions and domesticity was defined as the sphere of the women” (Gorham, 2012, p. 4). The general idea behind the Victorian idealisation of womanhood would actually begin to find its initial reflection in the domestic space of the Victorian family which particularly echoed in the roles of parenting and upbringing of the girl child in it. Gorham elaborates on how it was essential for the women of the Victorian age to remain within the domestic sphere like the family to perform her duties through which the social

status of the patriarchal male would be reflected in a Victorian English society (p. 6-8). She writes

Through the creation of an appropriate domestic environment, and through the management of social life, women at all levels of the middle class were responsible for assuring that the private sphere acted as an effective indicator of status in the public sphere. Through the family, then, middle- class females played a central role in determining the social status of the males with whom they were connected, just as they played a central role in functioning of the cult of domesticity. (Gorham, 2012, p. 8)

Gorham brings in the concept of the prescribed roles for the Victorian daughters as holding the key to their future and she also mentions that the prescribed feminine ideal for the Victorian middle-class daughter of the house was to fit into the conventions of being “the sheltered flower, a creature whose role in the home was to adorn it and assist in its maintenance” as it was never expected of her to participate in the public sphere for she was supposed to remain within the confines of domesticity throughout her life (p. 11). As Gorham puts it, “the cult of domesticity depended not only on an image of the ideal wife, but also on an image of the ideal daughter” and the family, although ideally considered to be a matter of the private sphere, could not however be completely separated from the impact of the public sphere as the economical and political developments would have their own influence on it. Thus being part of the domestic sphere it was not only the wives but also the daughters who would be influenced by the public within the private sphere of the family space.

Novels written and published during the reign of Queen Victoria in England are characteristically known for their depiction of the Victorian society in its various shades. Charles Dickens, being considered to be one of the master novelists of the Victorian age is also famous for portraying a significant number of female characters in his novels. As Robin Gilmour remarks, the female stereotypes of the Victorian age included the categories of ‘the Angel in the House’, ‘the Fallen Woman’, ‘the Madwoman’, ‘the Siren’ and ‘the Criminal’ into which women of the period were classified (p. 189). A majority of the female characters in the novels of Dickens in spite of displaying some amount of diversity too can be categorically read as individuals either conforming to the prevailing stereotypes of the Victorian age or in pursuit of achieving those stereotypical roles in their lives. Catherine Waters in her essay ‘Gender, family, and domestic ideology’ writes

Dickens’s fictional representations of the family have traditionally been examined as an index to social realities . . . his novels can be assigned a more active role in the discursive construction of the family and of gendered identity . . . and rather than assessing the faithfulness of their correspondence to reality, his novels must be understood in more dynamic terms. (p.122)

The domestic world in Dickensian novels are indeed shown to have been dominated by the role of the home-making woman embodied in female characters like Little Nell, Agnes Wickfield, Esther Summerson, Little Dorrit,

Florence Dombey and a few other characters who can actually help in the establishment and maintenance of the patriarchal stereotype of the ‘Angel in the house’. Interestingly, these few female characters along with many more are initially represented as good daughters of the family to which they belong. As Catherine Waters opines in ‘Gender, family, and domestic ideology’ “The representation of these domestic angels helps to define the middle-class ideal of the family in opposition to the values and practices held to characterize social groups” (p. 123). Although deprived of the desired amount of love and affection from their family particularly from their parental figures, the above mentioned female characters are represented as submissive daughters of the middle class families of the Victorian age. Little Nell from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Agnes from *David Copperfield*, Dorrit from *Little Dorrit*, Florence from *Dombey and Son* and Louisa from *Hard Times* can be seen as the epitome of domestic virtue with what Catherine Waters calls as the “everpresence of the Good Angel, the constancy of the ‘same sweet girl’ in her ministry of domestic devotion . . .” (p. 126). Besides these domestic angels, Dickens had also depicted daughters like Estella (*Great Expectations*) and Emily (*David Copperfield*) who cannot be categorized into the stereotypical image of the ‘Angel in the house’ owing to the complicated life that they are made to lead. Although victims to the evils of the Victorian society, failing to realize about its impact in the beginning these girls suffer a tragic fate in the due course of the novel. Emily and Rosa stereotypically represent the ‘Fallen Women’ in *David Copperfield*. Nancy and Rose Maylie are representations of the criminal women in *Oliver Twist* by Dickens. Apart from the brief list of characters already referred here, there also remain a number of extraordinary female characters in few of the novels written by Dickens who can however not be categorized into any of the stereotypes as neither do they completely conform to the established standards nor are they able to totally escape from those stereotypical conventions in their life. They chose to raise their voices against the distress of their tormenting girlhood. This paper is going to be a reading of three such female characters from a select group of novels of Dickens whose voices of resistance are not much in tune with the contemporary ideology of domesticity as they seem to resist their status of being oppressed at certain decisive moments in their lives.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE

This paper is going to trace three different voices of resistance from three different novels written at several time periods in the life of Dickens. It will explore three

daughter figures from these three novels. Kate Nickleby from *Nicholas Nickleby*, Caddy Jellyby from *Bleak House* and Tattycoram from *Little Dorrit* and their experiences as represented in the novels will become the matter of discussion in this paper. Although none of them are the principal characters, these girls are significant in terms of the position that they occupy in the novels owing to the voices of resistance that they are made to display during the most vulnerable moments of their life. Interestingly these three novels can be used to explore three different kinds of portrayals of the figure of the Victorian daughter in three different ways. Kate Nickleby is a fatherless daughter in the novel with a helpless mother and an adult but inexperienced elder brother in the novel; Caddy Jellyby in *Bleak House* is the eldest daughter of the Jellyby family and Tattycoram is the adopted foundling companion to the daughter of the Meagles family in *Little Dorrit*. In spite of being characters from three different novels, these three girls have similarity in their experiences of being tormented by circumstances in their girlhood. None of these three girls can be reduced to any single stereotypes used for the classification of women in the Victorian age as they can actually raise their voice to speak about the kind of discomfort that they feel while staying within a particular kind of domestic space. Although Kate, Caddy and Tattycoram have three different life stories to tell, a story of deprivation runs through their narrative which unites them in one single pattern. Kate Nickleby is a victim of her Uncle Ralph Nickleby's plan which does not go unanswered by Kate who despite being a feeble and unprotected child is able to strike the conscience of his uncle through her pleas. Caddy Jellyby is a victim of her mother's eccentric manner of considering her philanthropic concerns for Africa to be more important than the duties and responsibilities of being a homemaker. Tattycoram's story in *Little Dorrit* is a bit different one as Tatty being an adopted child in the Meagles family appears to be vocal about what she considers to be of an inferior position in comparison to their daughter's in the family. Tattycoram appears to have been struggling with her unhappiness in the Meagles family and she eventually starts to live with Miss Wade but is shown to reconcile with the Meagles before the ending of the novel.

III. THE NOVELS: DISCUSSION

To begin with the novels, in Chapter 19 of *Nicholas Nickleby*, Nicholas's sister Kate is shown to modestly protest about her displeasure on being unwillingly exposed to Sir Mulberry's harassing advances when left in her Uncle Ralph Nickleby's dinner party on the circumstance.

"What is this?" said Ralph.

'It is this, sir,' replied Kate, violently agitated: 'that beneath the roof where I, a helpless girl, your dead brother's child, should most have found protection, I have been exposed to insult which should make you shrink to look upon me. Let me pass you.'

Ralph did shrink, as the indignant girl fixed her kindling eye upon him

(Dickens, p.236)

A victim of abuse and harassment within her own uncle's house Kate's narrative perhaps provides the readers with one of the most vulnerable issues among all of the Dickensian novels. A precursor to Agnes Wickfield's narrative of being Wickham's victim in *David Copperfield*, Kate has no David to save her from the distress but she herself alone who can meekly protest about her helplessness to her uncle after bearing the torment of being treated as a 'matter of business' by him at the dinner party. Chapter 19 of *Nicholas Nickleby* indeed has one of the most remarkable of all the other chapters in the novel as it makes the adolescent and vulnerable fatherless girl discover her own voice of resistance against the humiliations faced by her from Sir Mulberry and others at the dinner party. Michael Slater in his *Dickens and Women* classifies Kate Nickleby with three other Dickensian female characters that represent the image of Mary Hogarth through their "beautiful, sympathetic, devoted, self-sacrificing" nature. Slater writes

The 'Marys' – Rose Maylie, Kate Nickleby, Madeline Bray, Mary Graham – are beautiful, sympathetic, devoted, self-sacrificing seventeen-year-olds, a succession of stained-glass memorials to Mary Hogarth as she had become angelically transformed in Dickens's mind. . . Kate, Madeline and Mary Graham all have to endure the hot breath, and hot hands, of evil men. . .(p.234)

Slater also mentions that characters like Kate receive moral approval from the writer as they are represented as strong and resolute in love for their male relations (234). Kate is indeed a timid adolescent girl of fourteen years or so when her father dies leaving her under the supposed care of an unemployed nineteen year old elder brother Nicholas and their widowed mother, the family begins to look up to Ralph Nickleby in times of need. Nicholas eventually is employed as a teacher in the Dotheboys Hall and Kate, although still a child is trained by Miss Knag

and other previously employed girls of Miss Mantalini to become a milliner as this was one of the few available jobs for penniless young women of the time. Since the death of her father in the novel, Kate had already been going through a lot of distress and her new employment adds to another set of humiliations and bitterness in her life. Burdened under the necessity of getting employed, Kate is unable to refuse her laborious apprenticeship at Miss Mantalini's at the tender age of fourteen and thus is forced to participate in the public sphere like most other unfortunate girls of her time.

Dickens also brings the distress associated with 'women workers in the clothing industry' in which they were exploited into accepting extremely poor conditions with little time to rest or attend their own needs in proper time. Preoccupied with the hardships of her engagement, Kate has to disguise her real feelings in front of her mother. Her distress as shown in the novel with her new occupation does not end when she is invited to be present in a dinner party at her Uncle Ralph's place 'to keep house for him' (Dickens, 225) during a gentlemen's party. Although Kate is reluctant to go with Ralph, her mother's insistence convinces her to act according to Ralph's wish. Kate is expected by her mother and Uncle to abide by the patriarchal role assigned to daughters in the Victorian era. Most importantly, Mrs. Nickleby hopes that her daughter might get the opportunity of winning some good fortune due to her good impression with Ralph. Kate is made to dress up well for the occasion and is indeed taken aback by the fact that there are no ladies except she herself.

'Pray, uncle,' said Kate, a little flurried, as people much more conversant with society often are, when they are about to enter a room full of strangers, and have had time to think of it previously, 'are there any ladies here?'

'No,' said Ralph, shortly, 'I don't know any.' (Dickens, 2011, p.228)

Indeed there were no other female figures in Ralph's house on that day in which Kate was exposed to a bunch of abusive men at her uncle's house. Kate is subjected to repeated insults as she is considered to be someone with whom liberty can be taken owing to the fact that she appears to have no one to protect her while participating in the public sphere. Although being next in relation of a guardian to Kate after her deceased father, Ralph Nickleby himself chooses to transgress the role of a parent over here. Kate is initially reluctant to show her displeasure out of the role that patriarchy imposes upon all women accepting the male dominance in their lives. Kate too is unable to speak up in the beginning out of her gratitude

towards her Uncle without realizing that her torment was actually planned by Ralph himself. Kate, although meek and gentle is however successful in raising the conscience of her uncle regarding his duty and he is reminded of his brother's face on seeing Kate's helpless condition. Kate Nickleby may be a vulnerable victim of patriarchy but her resistive nature culminates in her ability to raise question about the conduct of her uncle under whose protection she should have felt comfortable. The complicated structure of human relationship can become an area of further reading through its presentation in this part of the novel.

Caddy Jellyby from *Bleak House* is another example of the girl child expressing dissatisfaction on her own situation in her own family due to her mother Mrs. Jellyby's strange nature of nurturing philanthropic interests in the social and economic development of Africa is shown to hamper her domestic peace. The author calls it Mrs. Jellyby's 'telescopic philanthropy' as the Jellyby family is introduced in the chapter by the same name. The Jellyby household is all in complete disarray when Esther arrives there for the first time and Caddy Jellyby being the eldest daughter of the house seems to have been mostly affected by her mother's negligence as she detests the general condition of the house. All the children in the Jellyby family are neglected as none of their parents seem to be having much interest in the affairs of the family and all of them seem to be on their own. Amidst the disorganised structure of the Jellyby house, Esther was drawn by Caddy's appearance from the very beginning of the novel. She says

But what principally struck us was a jaded and unhealthy-looking, though by no means plain girl, at the writing-table, who sat biting the feather of her pen, and staring at us, I suppose nobody ever was in such a state of ink. And, from her tumbled hair to her pretty feet, which were disfigured with frayed and broken satin slippers trodden down at heel, she really seemed to have no article of dress upon her. . . (p. 38)

Caddy's despair arises chiefly out of the fact that she is unable to enrich herself on account of being preoccupied with her mother's enormous amount of paper work which she has to look after so that her mother's 'African Project' can keep functioning. On the night in which Esther and Ada come to stay at the Jellyby's, Caddy finds a moment to express her despair at the kind of life she has to follow in the Jellyby household. Caddy's loneliness becomes the reason of her friendship with Esther and Ada. On getting a

chance to express her disgust with her present situation, she explains

“I wish Africa was dead!” she said, on a sudden.

I was going to remonstrate.

“ I do!” she said. Don’t talk to me, Miss Summerson. I hate it and detest it. It’s a beast!” . . .

But knows a quantity, I suppose? Can dance, and play music and sing? She can talk

French, I suppose, and do geography, and globes, and needlework, and

everything?” . . .

“I can’t,” she returned. “I can’t do anything hardly, except write. I’m always writing

for Ma. (Dickens, 44)

Caddy Jellyby is almost on the verge of crying after this episode. Her deep anguish on realizing that Ada, despite being an orphan is so much more accomplished than she is generates her anguish for her present condition. At this juncture, she exclaims that “The whole house is disgraceful” and her next exclamation “I wish I was dead!” she broke out. “I wish we were all dead. It would be a great deal better for us” (p.44). Caddy breaks in tears in front of Esther after these words.

Caddy’s tormented girlhood in her family is due to an improper upbringing that all the Jellyby children go through. Mrs. Jellyby’s utilizes Caddy’s skill for her African project by keeping her entire family deprived of the immediate needs that they require from her as a mother and mistress of the family. Caddy is thus a victim of her family’s negligence and opens up about it to Esther. Caddy even goes as far as complaining about the inappropriate role of her mother to Esther by breaking the stereotypical concept of a docile and timid daughter of the house. Although she is unable to protest about it in front of her parents, she confides on Esther regarding the inappropriate role of the parental figures in her life. Once again Dickens gives a very brief instance of an exceptional scene in which the daughter of the house becomes the voice of resistance against the parental authority within the house. It will be apparent from the following conversation

“O! Don’t talk of duty as a child, Miss Summerson; where’s Ma’s duty as a parent?”

All made over to the public and Africa, I suppose! Then let the public and Africa

show duty as a child; it’s much more their affair than mine. You are shocked, I

dare say!(Dickens, 1977, p. 47)

Much in tune with that of Jane Eyre, Caddy has that air of intelligence in her which can question the mechanisms of the world. She is called as the ‘angriest daughter’ by Hillary Schor in her book *Dickens and the Daughter of the House* (p.109). Caddy enjoys some kind of empowerment for being granted a protesting voice against the eccentric ways of her family. Caddy even thinks of getting married to Mr. Turveydrop in order to escape from her mother’s African project for she remarks “It won’t much agitate Ma; I am only pen and ink to her. One great comfort is,” said Caddy, with a sob, “that I shall never hear of Africa after I am married” (Bleak House, 1977, p.169).

The next and perhaps the most intriguing character for this study would be Tattycoram from *Little Dorrit*. Tattycoram is an adopted child in the Meagles family. Regarding her inclusion into the Meagles family it comes to be known that Tattycoram was a foundling adopted from the Foundling Hospital to become a companion of their daughter Pet Meagles. Tatty’s narrative highlights the philanthropic nature of Victorian families who would find comfort in the adoption of orphans, if not to let them acquire the position of their son or daughters but become members of the family in some way. The irony in Tattycoram’s case lies in the fact that in spite of Mr Meagles being self satisfied for saving Tattycoram from the Foundling Hospital she feels deprived of the equal amount of care as she can find being showered on Pet Meagles, the daughter of the Meagles family. Clennam notices the bitterness in Tatty’s eyes on several occasions of his visit to the Meagles family. Tatty chooses to express her resentment on witnessing the indulgent nature of the Meagles parents for their daughter Pet as Clennam notices the anguish on Tatty’s face when she witnesses the Meagles family picture with Pet on it. The narrator in Chapter 16 of *Little Dorrit* mentions about Arthur Clennam witnessing Caddy’s distress

The picture happened to be near a looking-glass. As Arthur looked at it again, he saw,

by the reflection of the mirror, Tattycoram stop in passing outside the door, listen to

what was going on, and pass away with an angry and contemptuous frown upon her

face that changed its beauty into ugliness. (p. 186)

Although instances from the novel do not show the Meagles family being rude to Tattycoram under any circumstances, it is her own displeasure of being a foundling growing up in an adopted family always demanding some kind of allegiance from her every time by

reminding about her reality. Tatty is deprived of a true family and her torment arises from the fact that she is not treated on equal terms with Pet Meagles. For Jenny Bourne Taylor, “hovering on the margins on the narrative, the alternately rebellious and self-abnegating Tattycoram disturbingly embodies the contradictory dynamics of passion and repression” (p. 209). Tattycoram desires to leave the house of the Meagles particularly after meeting with Miss Wade. Her character becomes an allusion to Caddy Jellyby’s outburst to Esther on getting relieved after leaving the Jellyby household, and in her “obsessive pattern of self assertion” to speak against her supposed confinement she resembles Jane Eyre to some extent (Taylor, 2001, p. 209). Since *Little Dorrit* is about the lives of people with the prison, the theme of ‘inner confinement’ runs through Tatty’s sense of being imprisoned among the Meagles. As Jenny Bourne Taylor notes “Tattycoram . . . brings together and extends the novel’s concerns with social and psychic confinement. . . (p. 210)”. Tatty is unable to bear the burdens of goodness that the Meagles have exercised upon her and is aware of her appendages to them. Tatty’s identity goes through a process of omission and reclamation as she is renamed by the Meagles from Harriet Beadle to Hatty and finally to Tattycoram to become the maid and companion to Pet Meagles. The practice of changing names has been associated with a repression of identities also and Tattycoram finds her identity always being overshadowed by the presence of Pet Meagles. In the strange practice of counting five and twenty which Mr Meagles keeps on insisting whenever Tatty is on the verge of voicing her resistive nature, it can be observed that Tatty being a foundling is always expected to have the most submissive form of temperament towards her relation with the Meagles family. Her stature is diminished to that of a ‘passionate girl’ owing to her excited nature. Tatty’s upbringing although much better in comparison to what the conventional Victorian daughters like Florence Dombey or Louisa Bouverby faced, Dickens perhaps desired to show an extraordinary literary instance of a foundling girl child who eventually is taken by the dominating companionship of Miss Wade but retreats to the domestic space of the family by the end of the novel.

The fact that Miss Wade is known to Tattycoram is in itself a matter of great concern for the Meagles. Tatty reveals how Miss Wade has tried to befriend her by writing to her first. It is at this moment that Tatty’s touch gets reproached by Pet and this establishes her reluctance at not being able to consider Tatty an equal within the family. Tatty is taken in by Miss Wade’s manner of offering support during emotional turmoils. Tattycoram says “So she wrote to me to say that if I ever felt myself

hurt,” . . . or found myself worried . . . I might go to her, and be considerably treated” (Dickens, p. 188). Tatty is asked to count five and twenty by Mr Meagles to calm her down. The next reference to Tatty appears in Chapter 27 of the novel when it comes to be known that Tatty has left the Meagles home after a heated argument expressing her dissatisfaction with the Meagles. Mr. Meagles describes the incident to Clennam in *Little Dorrit*

We presently heard this unfortunate Tattycoram loud and angry, and before we could

ask what was the matter, Pet came back in a tremble, saying she was frightened of

her. Close after her came Tattycoram in a flaming rage. “I hate you all three,” says

she, stamping her foot at us. “I am bursting with hate of the whole house”. (Dickens,

1996, p.305)

Mr Meagles is sympathetic of Tattycoram’s deprivation as while explaining her condition to Clennam he refers to Tatty’s tormented past in which she never had the chances of being “caressed and cared for in her childhood like her young mistress” (305). Mr. Meagles also realizes that when everybody in the house would have talked about their parents, it must have been equally tormenting for Tatty whose sense of deprivation and inability to find recognition among the Meagles makes her desperate to seek refuge in Miss Wade’s companionship. Quite interestingly Dickens has used the plot of the foundling’s being separated and reunited in other novels like *David Copperfield* in which Emily, like Tatty, taken in by the imaginary promises of Steerforth lands into great trouble. In case of *Little Dorrit*, Tatty is also misguided by Miss Wade’s promises of companionship and leaves the Meagles family. Peter Preston in his introduction to the text claims that in spite of granting Tattycoram the essential “intelligence to perceive and eventually articulate her position” she is not offered the means of escape as Miss Wade is represented in a ‘negative light’ whose ‘motives of liberating Tattycoram are highly dubious’ (Dickens, 1996, xix). The kind of relationship that is developed between Tatty and Wade is also an allusion to the kind of power that Miss Havisham had exercised over Estella in *Great Expectations*. Tatty serves a binary to Amy Dorrit who is the stereotypical representation of a Victorian daughter never being resistive to her fate of being confined in the prison since her childhood. Tatty is a brief marginalized representation of what Amy could have been but Dickens does not allow Amy to lose her innate innocence despite all hardships. Tattycoram even raises her voice against Miss Wade when she realizes that Wade

has made Tatty her dependent and all she wants is to have Tatty in her control. Miss Wade considers her own position superior to that of Tatty for she says

Is that your fidelity to me? Is that the common cause I make with you? You are

not worth the confidence I have placed in you. You are not worth the favour I

have shown you. You are no higher than a spaniel and had better go back

to the people who did worse than whip you. . .

‘Go back to them,’ Miss Wade retorted. ‘Go back to them.’ (Dickens, 1996, p-626)

Tatty’s voice against Miss Wade’s desire to manipulate her is openly resisted in this section of the novel when Tatty expresses her tormenting experience with Miss Wade

You are reproaching me, undemanded with having nobody but you to look to.

And because I have nobody but you to look to, you think you are to make me do, or

not do, everything you please, and are to put any affront upon me. You are as bad as

they were, every bit. But I will not be quite tamed and made submissive. (Dickens,

1996,p- 626)

Tatty refuses to be taken in by Miss Wade’s false friendship and is finally reunited with the Meagles as according to Peter Preston she seems to be ready to “accept her dependence on the patronising but benevolent Meagles than submit to the bullying demands of the faintly depraved Miss Wade” (Little Dorrit xx). Tatty has to accept the rule of five and twenty as she has no other option left other than that.

IV. CONCLUSION

It can however be seen that even when the three characters in this study are allowed some kind of autonomy to speak about their condition, they are not granted any permanent change in the position that they hold in the society. Kate Nickleby has her brother Nicholas to take revenge from Mulberry for her humiliation but there is no change in the gendered notion of the public and private sphere and Kate’s position in it. Caddy chooses to marry her choice but goes through a phase of poverty and hardship after that even when she chooses not to return to her mother. Tatty has to return to the Meagles after discovering Miss Wade’s true nature. Above all even when a voice of resistance is granted to the characters, the writer is unable to resolve the issue

completely owing to the discomfort that lies with the problem in the Victorian age which could probably not allow a complete liberation for its women.

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Gandhian Thought in Rajarao's Kanthapura

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Abstract—Rajarao was one of the most significant Indian novelists in English during the middle decades of the 20th century. His novel 'Kanthapura' explores the facts of the freedom struggle in India. The novel basically deals with how Gandhi's thought influenced the minds of the Indians. This article also explores how the people of Kanthapura were influenced by Gandhi's thought.

Keywords—Kanthapura, Gandhi, Truth, Untouchables, Moorthy.



I. INTRODUCTION

The novel Kanthapura, written in 1938 by Rajarao, shows the influence of Gandhian ideals on the Indian freedom struggle. It is the story of a small village in South India in which the people struggle against the British government. The novel opens with the narrator Achakka's lengthy sentence, "Our village—I don't think you have ever heard of it—Kanthapura is its name, and it is in the province of Kara." The novelist Rajarao gives a vivid and beautiful picture of rural India. By setting the story in a village, Kanthapura, Rajarao shows that the Indian freedom movement spread to the villages, and the people of rural India have rigorously participated in the fight against the British. Generally, history records the significant people from cities who are well-educated and highly learned and who participate in the struggles. By taking a village as the backdrop of his novel, Rajarao emphasises the invaluable contribution of the unsung heroes during the freedom struggle.

II. MOORTHY AS A CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE NOVEL

Though the novel contains many characters, I would like to focus on the central figure of the novel, Moorthy. Moorthy is a young man, a university graduate. He comes from a Brahmin family. He lost his father and mother when he was still young. His two sisters are married and have gone to their in-laws houses. Having been left alone in the village, he used to say that he would go to the city to

study at the university. Though he doesn't get through even intermediate, he learns all city manners, changes his lifestyle, reads city books, and even calls himself a Gandhian man. He preaches the Gandhian philosophy of truth, non-violence, and equality among various castes and communities. He transforms the simple, innocent, and illiterate villagers. Moorthy formed the local congress committee and inspired the women of the village to support the freedom movement. They supported Moorthy by forming the Sevika Sangh.

"Of course, he never got through inter even- but he had city ways, read city books, and even called himself a Gandhi man. Some two years ago, he had come back from Poona, he has given up his boots and hat and suit and had taken to dhoti and Khadi. And it was said that he had even Given up his city habit of smoking."
(K 13)¹

He has always been a braggart. The people of Kanthapura never liked him. He is not like Corner Moorthy, as people call him, who has gone through life like a noble cow, quiet, generous, and serene. He is completely changed under the influence of Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement, which was an expression of deep anguish and resentment. It had the backing and support of the leaders of the Indian National Congress and the country. Kanthapura covers the history of the whole decade of the

1920s and ends with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. Though the novel ends without completing the history of the freedom struggle, it shows the change of mood that the country has experienced.

Gandhi realized that unity among the Indians was the only weapon he could use to fight against the social evils in Indian society, like the purdah system. He believed that unity among the Hindus and Muslims was essential if they wanted to fight against the British rulers. Mahatma Gandhi stressed the boycott of foreign goods.

Moorthy, having been influenced by Gandhian ideology, comes to Kanthapura to unify all the communities in the village of Kanthapura. It has been the tradition of Indian culture to have Burrakathas and Harikathas during festivals in villages. People from all communities gather in one place, usually at temple corners, to listen to the Kathas. The general subjects of these kathas are from the Mahabharata, Ramayana, or Puranas. The character called Sastry in Kanthapura is well known as Harikatha Man. He received rewards and awards, even from the Maharaja of Mysore.

Moorthy, when he comes back to Kanthapura from Poona, utilizes the opportunity of the celebration of festivals in the village to unite the people. In fact, religion is one of the forcing factors that acts as an impetus to unite the people of the country. He proposes to celebrate the Rama festival, the Krishna festival, and the Ganesh festival every month in the village. For that, he chooses to collect money from all sections of the people in their village. Collecting money from all quarters of the village, even the Sudhras and Pariahs, to meet the expenses of the festivals is a strategy for Moorthy to bring a sense of unity to the public.

“So Moorthy goes from house to house and from younger brother to elder brother, and from elder brother to grandfather himself – and what do you think, he even goes to Potters’ quarter, Weavers’ quarter and Sudhra quarter ... Pariah quarter.” (K 20)²

When the people of Kanthapura looked at Moorthy going to all quarters and gathering money in an ascetic bowl, they thought that he was one of the Gandhi-men “who say there is neither caste, nor clan, nor family, and yet they pray like us and they live like us.” Gandhi initiated widow marriages and inert caste marriages. So, Moorthy and other followers of Gandhi say that a Pariah can marry a Brahmin, and a Brahmin can marry a Pariah.

“And what a grand festival we had the following Ganesh- jayanthi. There were reading parties, and camphor ceremonies every evening, and our

young men even performed a drum and sitar bhajan”. (K-21)³

In one of his speeches at the reception at Mayavaram on May 1, 1915, Gandhi was received by the untouchables. He said in the address gathering that “it was quite by accident that I had the great pleasure of receiving an address from my brethren, and there they said that they were without convenience for drinking water, they were without convenience for living supplies, and they could not hold or buy land. He asks the congregation:

“Do we propose to perpetuate this state of things ? Is it part of Hinduism? In so far as I have learned ...it is no part of real Hinduism to have in its hold a mass of people whom I would call “untouchables”... but who is responsible for this class of untouchables? I have been told that where ever there are Brahmins , it is they who are enjoying supremacy as a matter of right , but today are they enjoying the supremacy? If they are , then the sin will fall upon their shoulders... the true Brahmin is he who is equi-minded towards a pundit and a paraiah”.(69-70)⁴

On one of the evenings, they invited Jayaramachar, the famous Harikatha man. It is believed that he did harikatha before Mahatma Gandhi. Jayaramachar, while telling the story of Parvathi and Siva, draws an analogy between Shiva and the struggle for freedom. As Siva has three eyes, Swaraj has three eyes. Self-purification, Hindu-Muslim unity, and Khaddar—he talks of Damayanthi, Sakuntala, and Yasodha—and everywhere there is something about our country and something about Swaraj.

People were astonished to listen to the narration of Jayaramachar. “He can keep us rapt in tears for four hours together.” He spoke of Gandhiji. People will never forget the story. “It is neither about Rama nor about Krishna, but a Mahatma, a saint, a holy man.”

In the harikatha done by Jaryaramachar, he says Siva himself incarnated as Mohandas in Gujarat to free his people from darkness and slavery. Gandhi is compared to Krishna in his wisdom. He goes to every village and starts saying, “Fight, but harm no soul. Love all—Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, or Pariah—for all are equal before God. Don’t be attached to riches, for riches create passions, and passions create attachments, and attachment

hides the face of truth. Truth must you tell, he says, for truth is God.” (K-22)⁵

Gandhi's idea of Swadeshi goods encouraged the people of India. He said to spin and weave every day, for our mothers are tattered weeds, and a poor mother needs clothes to cover her sores. If you spin the money that goes into the red man's hands, it will stay within the country, and the mother can feed the foodless, the milkless, and the clothless. (K-23)⁶

Under Gandhi's charismatic leadership, people felt so inspired that they were ready to make any sacrifice to break the chains of slavery. The police kicked thousands of them; they were wounded, and many of them were killed in the police firing. It was inspiration from Gandhi that kept them fired with patriotism. The villagers were forced to flee the village. They burned their houses and crops before leaving the village. The great Mahatma himself never appears on the scene. But the fire of patriotism ignited by him in the hearts of the Indians across villages and cities keeps blazing till India achieves freedom. Ultimately, the British rulers had to quit India in 1947.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Raja Rao's 'Kanthapura' stands as an exceptional portrayal of India's freedom struggle and the pervasive impact of Gandhian philosophy beyond urban intellectuals to the very heart of rural India. The novel deeply entrenches itself in the theme of grassroots revolution, where ordinary villagers embrace resistance against colonial power, highlighting the widespread influence Gandhi had across all strata of Indian society. Through vivid narratives and a distinctly rural setting, Rao immortalizes the oft-overlooked contributions of village dwellers to India's path to independence. 'Kanthapura' is thus a tribute not just to a pivotal era in Indian history but also a celebration of its unsung heroes who rallied behind Gandhi's vision for a liberated nation.

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Reflection of Ecocriticism in Indian Poetry

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Abstract— *Literature has long expressed concern about ecology and the harm that ongoing environmental misuse poses. Even when addressing the beauty and majesty of nature, literature has always depicted the awareness of the writers about the threat that ongoing environmental abuse poses to humanity and the issue of ecology. This concern and how it is reflected in literature are what have given rise to Ecocriticism, a new subfield of literary study. Nature has been the focus of many artistic mediums and has been treated in poetry in particular. Indian poets who have celebrated diversity include Toru Dutt, Keki N. Daruwalla, Sarojini Naidu, A.K. Ramanujan, Dip Chitre, and many others. On the one hand, it assumes the form of a strength that serves as a mother goddess, a godly spirit, or a friend of humanity. Nature is a major component of both thematic and creative components in poetic expressions, regardless of the form it takes. Many natural elements, including skies, lakes, rivers, valleys, plants, animals, and creatures, frequently take on metaphorical meaning that gives poetry works depth and richness. Modern Indian English poetry is characterized by an eco-conscious outlook and mindset that speaks to our globalized society and even forewarns us of impending disasters brought on by environmental degradation. The purpose of the study is to examine a few Indian English poets who began to focus on an ecocritical perspective on humankind.*



Keywords— *Ecocriticism, civilization, revolution, romantic, nature, imagery.*

INTRODUCTION

Literature has served as a powerful medium for exploring the intricate relationship between humanity and the natural world. While poets have often been captivated by nature's beauty and grandeur, their works also reveal a growing awareness of the environmental threats posed by human activity. This confluence of appreciation, concern and anxiety related to its environment degradation has resulted in the development of Ecocriticism, a branch of literary study that examines how literature portrays the environment and our interaction with it (Glotfelty, 1996). As per M. H. Abraham, "Ecocriticism' (or by alternative names, environmental criticism and green studies) designates the critical writings which explore the relations between the literature and biological and physical environment, conducted with an acute awareness of the devastation being wrought on that environment by human activities."

Literature, especially poetry has been the main artistic medium through which nature has been depicted very in significant ways. Many poets, including S.T

Coleridge, William Wordsworth, P.B. Shelley, John Keats, Alfred Lord Tennyson Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and many more as great poets of nature and romanticism, have shown interest and honoured various facets and aspects of nature for various reasons and from various perspectives. Their portrayal of nature highlights the ways in which it takes on various meanings and interpretations and they also borrowed a lot of symbols and imagery from the natural world.

It can take on the forms of a violent force that operates as a supernatural agency to coerce or punish people for their violation of natural aspects and justice and other malpractice or wrongdoings. It can also seem as a divine spirit helpful for stress and chaos of hectic life, a holy mother to care and nourish with all its resources, and a friend of humanity in saving lives. Nature, in all its phenomena or manifestations, is a major component of both thematic and artistic components in poetry. Nature is ubiquitous; it has its own beauty and grandeur and uniqueness. Various natural elements, including rivers,

skies, meadows, trees, plants, animals, and creatures, frequently take on metaphorical meaning that lends poetry works complexity and richness. Indian English poetry is characterized by an environmentally sensitive outlook and mindset that speaks to our globalized society and even forewarns us of impending disasters brought on by environmental degradation so humanity's relationship with the natural world has long been a central theme in literature. While poets have celebrated nature's beauty and power, they have also expressed concern for its preservation. This fusion of appreciation and anxiety forms the basis of Ecocriticism, a critical lens that examines literature's engagement with environmental issues.

Ecocriticism in Indian Literature: Various aspects

India possesses a rich literary heritage, and poetry plays a particularly significant role in it. Even though a large number of Indian English writers have composed poems that deal with nature, some have shown creative acumen for preserving nature. In literature it has been in tradition that we find two ways to view nature: philosophically and mystically, or with an aesthetic appreciation.

The ecocritical themes that are reflected in Indian poetry, focusing on works written in English by prominent poets like Toru Dutt, Keki N. Daruwalla, Sarojini Naidu, A.K. Ramanujan, and Dip Chitre present their diverse perspectives. In those works we witness a spectrum of representations of nature – as a nurturing force, a sacred entity, or a companion to human existence. Regardless of the form it takes, nature remains a central component in their work, often imbued with metaphorical weight. Moreover, contemporary Indian English poetry demonstrates a growing eco-consciousness, critiquing human actions that disrupt ecological balance and advocating for sustainable practices. By analyzing these trends, we gain a deeper understanding of how Indian poets grapple with environmental issues and the evolving relationship between humankind and nature.

Nature as Nurturer and Sacred Entity

Early Indian poetry in English, exemplified by the works of Toru Dutt, often depicts nature as a nurturing and benevolent force. In "Our Casuarina Tree," Dutt evokes a sense of maternal comfort and security associated with the titular tree, describing its shade as "a verdant roof" that shields her from the harsh sun (Dutt, 1882). In this poem, Toru Dutt honors the grandeur of the casuarina tree that she used to look from her window, recalls her blissful days spent playing under it when she was a child, and recalls up memories of her missed and beloved siblings. Thus this portrayal reflects a deep-rooted cultural reverence for nature, particularly in India, where the Earth itself is often

personified as a divine mother figure, "Bhumi Devi" (Ghosh, 2000).

Similarly, Sarojini Naidu, another prominent poet of the early 20th century, celebrates nature's beauty and its power to evoke spiritual connection. In "The Gift of the Sea," she describes the vastness of the ocean as a "holy thing" and portrays waves as "priests" chanting hymns of praise (Naidu, 1910). These descriptions imbue nature with a sense of sacredness, highlighting its ability to inspire awe and spiritual contemplation.

Nature as Companion and Witness

Beyond its nurturing and sacred dimensions, nature is also portrayed as a companion and witness to human experience in Indian poetry. A.K. Ramanujan, in his poem "Lectures on Experience," explores the concept of "nature" itself, questioning its separateness from human experience. He suggests that nature is not merely an external force but rather an integral part of human existence, intertwined with our emotions and memories (Ramanujan, 1989). This perspective challenges the traditional human-nature dichotomy and emphasizes a more interconnected relationship.

Likewise, Dip Chitre, in "Looking at the Sea," creates a sense of intimacy with the ocean. He describes the waves as "friends" and the sea itself as a "mirror" reflecting the complexities of human emotions (Chitre, 1973). This portrayal suggests a sense of shared experience and vulnerability between humanity and the natural world. While humans observe and are affected by nature, they also leave their imprint on it, creating a dynamic and interwoven relationship.

Metaphors of Nature

A lot of Indian poets including Nissim Ezekiel, A.K. Ramanujan, Arun Kolatkar, and Daruwalla, have borrowed imagery and metaphors from the aspects of nature.

So the use of powerful metaphors emphasizes the significance of nature in Indian poetry. In "A Poem for A.K.," Ramanujan employs the image of a monsoon to symbolize renewal and the cyclical nature of life (Ramanujan, 1989). The monsoon, with its cleansing rains transformation and rebirth capacity, and subsequent growth, on the earth represents the natural world's resilience and the potential for human transformation.

Keki N. Daruwalla, a leading voice in contemporary ecocritical Indian poetry, utilizes metaphors to highlight the consequences of environmental degradation. In "The Desolation of Drought," he compares a parched landscape to a "corpse," drawing a stark analogy between the death of a living entity and the devastation caused by drought (Daruwalla, 1984). This image serves as

a powerful critique of human actions that disrupt ecological balance and lead to environmental destruction.

The Rise of Eco-Consciousness

Modern Indian English poetry reflects a growing eco-consciousness, with poets actively critiquing human actions that endanger the environment. Daruwalla, in "The Public Park," laments the loss of green spaces due to urbanization, depicting the park as a "concrete cage" that suffocates nature (Daruwalla, 1984). This poem serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of unchecked development and the need to prioritize the preservation of natural spaces.

Dip Chitre, in "Elegy for the Rhino," mourns the extinction of the rhinoceros due to poaching, highlighting the fragility of ecosystems and the interconnectedness of species (Chitre, 1973). This poem is a poignant call to action, urging readers to recognize the impact of human necessities and greed on the natural world and advocate for sustainable practices.

Some Prominent Poets with Ecocritical Lens

Nissim Ezekiel: Implications of Ecology

Nissim Ezekiel's poems have dealt with a wide variety of themes such as love, isolation, human foibles or flaws, superstitions and imperfections but at the same time he seems to have eco-critical and biocentric approach in some of his poems such as "Squirrel", "Sparrows", "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher".

The image of superstition in the poem 'Night of the Scorpion' in these lines is very vivid, apt, and accurate. He describes the actions of the neighbours and peasants coming to visit and as they are big in numbers as being like swarms of flies, and they "buzzed" God's name to save the life of the poet's mother and in a hope to paralyze or remove the effect of the "Evil One."

The peasants came like swarms of flies
 And buzzed the Name of God a hundred
 Time to paralyse the Evil one.
 With candles and with lanterns
 Throwing giant scorpion shadows
 On the mud-baked walls
 They searched for him; he was not found
 They clicked their tongues.

The poem "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" is included in the volume *The Exact Name* (1965). This aesthetic and appealing poem carries beauty but abrupt expression and analysis of human behaviour towards nature. Her language is lucid and critical of and sense within it but at the same

time it is blunt enough to criticize human behavior towards nature. The language is lucid enough and directly deals with the subject matter as a statement without any deception. "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" brings within its purview nature as well as human and non-human entities. The poet affirms that birds and women represent nature so it is impossible to identify and value them promptly and they cannot be comprehended in compulsion or hastily.

Ecocriticism in Toru Dutt's poems : A poetic Narrative against Modern Trend

People appreciate the relevance of nature for all living beings and develop a more wide and biocentric view of the natural world. Indian English poetry shows the relationship between nature and humans and illustrates the connection and even interaction. Toru Dutt as poet of the era of pre-independence has reflected her awareness and sensibility through numerous poems. The Lotus, Sita, and Baumaree are examples of her outstanding creations that represent her love for nature. Sentimental expression in the poem "Our Casuarina Tree" by Toru Dutt is her love for the childhood memories that the tree makes her recollected.

Like a huge Python, winding round and round
 The rugged trunk, intended deep scars,
 Up to its very summit near the stars,
 A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound
 No other tree could live

— (Our Casuarina Tree by Toru Dutt — Poem Hunter).

Indian history and culture is represented with the help of the tree by Toru Dutt. Using natural resources for growth and development of society to great extent for personal gain leads people to suffer in a very pathetic way. As a result of violation of laws, Nature, like the Casuarina Tree seems to lament:

What is that dirge-like murmur that I hear
 Like the sea breaking on a shingle-beach?
 It is the tree's lament, an eerie speech

— (Our Casuarina Tree by Toru Dutt — Poem Hunter).

It is obvious that trees are very crucial for the existence of humans. Trees like Peepal and Neem are revered and worshiped, as emotions are associated with them. Toru Dutt had an intense affinity with nature from her childhood days. When she was living in the rural house at Baumaree and Rambagan in Calcutta her innate love of nature became more ardent. Her imagination got stimulated by Rambagan's beautiful surroundings that sparked her perception and lyrical tendencies. Her poems having descriptions of trees, gardens, rivers, brooks, hills, forests etc are very spontaneous. Like her 'Ballads' is full of nature

descriptions; 'Savitri' describes two forest scenes; Sindhu describes the scene of sunset; Trees Flowers in 'Buttoo' and hermitage scene in 'Sita' and others are 'The Lotus', 'Baumaree' and 'Casuarina Tree' with remarkable descriptions with poetic sensibility presenting astute observation of nature

Nature in Keki N. Daruwalla's Poetry: Emotional and Intellectual Representation

Daruwalla's poetry features a significant amount of nature and landscapes as subjects. One remarkable aspect of his poetry is the way in which nature and human passion are united. Keki N. Daruwalla is a prolific poet who focuses on powerful locations with striking imagery. He is referred to as a landscape poet. In addition to showcasing the locations' natural beauty, Daruwalla's sense of landscape also highlights the harsh reality of the surroundings. Metaphors that the poet uses relate to nature, human corporeal and animals and fantasy. He gives his readers an emotional, intellectual, and moral translation of the sceneries in words. He asserts his obsession with landscapes by quoting the poet. "My poems are rooted in landscape, which anchors the poem. The landscape is not merely there set to the senses but to lead to an illumination, it should be the eye of the spiral, I try that poetry relates to the landscape, both on physical, and on the plane of the spirit" (Two Decades of Indian Poetry 21). "Mandwa" is a superb poem about the water and the environment. He depicts nature using a variety of pictures and symbols. The time of year in the seaside region was summertime, the heat was intense, and the scene looked like "an egg-yolk frying in the sky." Additionally, the shoreline was covered in fish scales, creating "The beach white with fish-scales." All of these elements are masterfully expressed by Daruwalla in his poem.

Mostly when I arrive at places it is winter. Here it isn't.

The sea pants, the islands smoulder,

The sun is an egg-yolk frying in the sky.

And so to this anointed strip o the beach white with fish-scales,

girdled by islands that seem to float like pieces of a broken carafe. (191)

The poem "Boat-Ride along the Ganga" explores the Ganges river's alternate existence. Ganga is a mother, a goddess, a source of life, and a river that leads to salvation for Hindus. Daruwalla, a Zoroastrian poet, has a different perspective and expresses the river's depressing reality. He discovers staleness, sickness, and death beside the riverbanks. He expresses his shame at seeing things in the river and its banks through the poem's lines as he rides a motorboat upstream with a boat rider at nightfall.

Slowly the ghat-amphitheatre unfolds

Like a diseased nocturnal flower in a dream That opens its petals only at dusk.

Palm-leaf parasols sprouting like freak-mushrooms Brood over platforms that are empty. (97)

In the line, "I listen avidly to his legend-talk/ striving to forget what I changed to see: / the sewer-mouth trained like a cannon / on the river's flank" (97). He conveys his disinterest in what he sees while rowing. His unease and disillusionment are evident in these sentences. It can be because of his ignorance, his religious upbringing, or his misinterpretation of Hindu rites and beliefs. According to Bruce King, he rarely seems at peace with Hindu culture's traditions, apathy, and fatalism (as quoted in R.A. Singh 82).

Sarojini Naidu: Innate Fervor in her Poems

Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India having a keen sense of Nature's innate aestheticism inculcated a natural inclination toward romanticism and paradigm of the Renaissance in her conception of nature. Her best nature description is found in 'The sons of Springtime Spring is full of warmth of love, and is succulent, savory and enticing. She gets fascinated towards the majesty of trees, flowers and the whole vibrant Indian scenery....., which includes "crimson gulmohars," "champa boughs," "lotus buds," "cassia woods, and "boughs of tamarind." It also features natural forests, a variety of animals and birds, "water-lily pools," rivers, and hills. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" in her words. She enjoys nature and appears to be inspired by the sights and sounds of the lovely settings around her, just like Wordsworth did. She expresses all of this fully in her writings. She not only depicts but also recreates in her writings beautifully the characteristics of love in these natural settings, the beauty of life and environment, and the wonderful rhythm of movement and music of the natural world. The sights, sounds, colors, and smells of the magnificent and vibrant Nature captivate her. "She has a keen sense of observation and her fine sensibility responds more emotionally than intellectually to the sense impressions from nature" (Nair 99). "Village Song" is an escape from the stereotyped realities of life. She can sort of escape from the everyday grind of life by going outside. Her poetry on nature are romantic elaborations on a variety of natural themes. One such poetry is "Village Song," which offers a romanticized view of a life filled with serene surroundings and sensual displays of the magnificent natural world. In the poem, the young girl "finds peace and joys in the sanctuary of Nature" after becoming "disgusted by the false shows and boastful claims, the fever and fret of life" (Kumar 96). She tells her mother, seemingly enthralled with the magical realm of fairies and nature:

O mother mine! to the wild forest I am
going Whereupon the champa boughs, the
champa buds are blowing

To the koel-hunted river – isles where lotus lilies glisten
The voices of the fairy folk are calling me, O listen!
(Singh 49)

The allure of the woodland call outweighs all the dazzling extras of a materialistic existence for a girl youngster. Even more delightful than the real world are the realms of fairies in the forest and nature. She finds that the sounds of the natural world, specifically "the forest notes where forest streams are falling," are more delightful than cradle melodies. This poem makes us think of the escapism-focused poet W. B. Yeats and his poem "The Stolen Child," which envisions a realm where fairies are beckoning a human infant away. When she informs her mother:

"The Woods in Summer" another poem by Sarojini Naidu likewise has an escape theme. The character in the poem is not only "sick of strife and song and festivals and fame" and "tired of painted roofs and soft and silken floors," but she also yearns "to fly where cassia-woods are breaking into flame" and "for wind-blown canopies of crimson gulmohars." She expresses a strong wish to be rescued from her pain and from the "toil and weariness, the praise and prayers of men."

O let us fling all care away and
lie alone and dream 'Neath
tangled boughs of tamarind and
molsari and neem

And bind our brows with jasmine sprays to play on carren
flutes

To wake the slumbering serpent-kings among the banyan
roots. (Singh 53)

Over the entire poem, a variety of ecological characteristics of nature are vividly depicted, including trees (like cassia-woods, tamarind, molsari, neem, and banyan), flowers (like water lilies, jasmine, and scarlet gulmohars), animals (like golden panthers and serpent-kings), and birds (like koels) and of rivers and pools, like in the words that read, "And bathe in water-lily pools where golden panthers drink, and roam at fall of eventide along the river's brink" (53). The picturesque natural splendor of the twilight is captured in these sentences. This poem highlights the romantic and mystical sensations that the beauty of nature evokes in our souls. Although Naidu is not a nature mystic like Wordsworth, she did see nature as a haven from the worries of human life. Thus, in a way, Sarojini Naidu's poems honor Mother Earth by instilling in us a profound respect for India's ecological treasures. Her nature poetry evokes the moods of Keats, Wordsworth, W.B. Yeats, and

the Pre-Raphaelites with its patchwork of melodic sounds, vivid colors, and natural scents, or "vernal breezes." Her nature poems, like "The Village Song," "Summer Woods," "The Quest," and others, are characterized by two main ideas: one is her sensual admiration of the luxurious beauty of nature, and the other is her undeniable ability to portray various aspects of nature in an incredibly picturesque way by utilizing metaphors, similes, and symbols Her poems are braided with a silken fabric of sensual nature-images, and because of the exquisite way in which she has woven different natural components together, "a network of exotic combinations of two or more sense impressions" (Nair 100) seem to materialize before our very eyes.

A.K.Ramanujan: His Empathy for Nature

A.K. Ramanujan's poems are profoundly influenced by this Indianness. His poetry reacts to nature's nuanced details. There is so much ecological insight in his poems. Ramanujan's Poems challenge the anthropocentric culture of the West since they are firmly anchored in Indian culture and tradition.

They recognize the impressions and impacts of nature and react to them delicately or subtly. The ecological sense found in Ramanujan's poems defies categorization. It displays a range of reactions to nature. The essence of his poems is nature. He understands the enigmatic relationship between the environment and humans. In poetry such as Ecology, we discover affinity with the realms of animals, plants, and minerals in things like a game of chess, a little sacrifice, snakes, scorpions, and the black hen, among others. Numerous poems of A.K. Ramanujan convey the idea of the unity of all creation. Indian mythology and folktales are the source of his metaphors. Hinduism views the world holistically. The sacred, humans, animals, plants, and germs are all positioned in connection to one another in Ramanujan's poetry. Poetry by Ramanujan uses a symbolic language that is full of imagery such as trees, mountains, birds, animals, and water. Ramanujan is also troubled by the destruction of the environment and animal abuse. He begs us to save the environment. He has empathy with the natural world.

Dilip Chitre: Ecological Essence in the poems

His poem "The Felling of the Banyan Tree" demonstrates his intense love of the natural world and his irrational fascination with ecology. In essence, Dilip Chitre is a creation of the modern era. He has seen environmental degradation, technical development, urbanization, scientific advancements, and their implications on humankind and the natural world.

The home of the narrator in "The felling of the Banyan Tree" is perched on a hill. His dad gives his tenants the order to leave their homes. They are all around the

narrator's home. One by one, the abandoned homes were demolished, leaving just the narrator's house and a large number of trees. There was a massive 200-year-old banyan tree that had a lengthy history connected to the house. However, the father chose to clear every tree. Interestingly, the process of destruction occurs right in the heart of natural phenomena. Second, Dilip Chitre used the word "house" rather than "home," which has a well-known meaning. Thirdly, the grandmother's statement demonstrates the extraordinary attitude of the "Old" generation. The Love of Nature has always been evoked by the grandmother. She used to remark that cutting down a tree is the worst crime since they are sacred. However, the father of the narrator has slaughtered them all. Every kind of tree, including neem, oudumber, and sheoga, was felled. However, the enormous banyan tree loomed like a problem, its roots deeper than his father's love for the property. At last, his father gave the order to cut down or remove the tree.

However, the poet's profound concern for nature is hidden under the theme's seeming simplicity. Not only were the tenants' homes demolished, but every tree that surrounded the poet's residences was chopped down one by one. The grandmother of the poet objected to this tree-cutting:

Trees are sacred my grandmother used to say

Felling them is a crime but he massacred them all (05-06)

A reading of the poet's poetry also provides insight into his religious worldview on his culture, environment, and ecology, since the poet's writing is fundamentally infused with his culture. Understanding the grandmother's cultural and religious background—that is, the Hindu concept of "sacred"—that is, sacred species, sacred grooves, and sacred landscapes—is necessary to comprehend her distaste for the felling of trees. These customs from religion and culture bind man to nature.

Nature is more powerful than humans as it has frequently demonstrated its power by using natural disasters like famine, drought, floods, earthquakes, etc. to control human resources. Human existence depends on nature and so life is inextricably linked to it, making it impossible for humans to escape its effect. Nature suffers irreversible harm or even irreparable as a result of our careless behavior. This is the way the ecosystem's chain of relationships functions, where everything is interconnected and consequently influences everything else. Therefore, the care for the environment and ecology that these poems express not only reflects our own cultural and personal attitudes toward the environment, but it also sends a message to the general public about the need of preserving the environment, ecology, and natural world.

CONCLUSION

Indian poetry offers a rich tapestry of perspectives on the relationship between humanity and nature. Early poets like Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu celebrate nature's nurturing and sacred aspects. A.K. Ramanujan and Dip Chitre portray nature as a companion and witness, fostering a sense of interconnectedness. The use of metaphors further amplifies the significance of nature, highlighting its cyclical nature and vulnerability. Notably, contemporary Indian English poetry exhibits a growing eco-consciousness, with Keki N. Daruwalla and Dip Chitre critiquing environmental degradation and advocating for sustainable practices. By examining these diverse perspectives, we gain a deeper understanding of the evolving relationship between humankind and the natural world in Indian poetry, and the potential of literature to inspire environmental awareness and action.

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The Changing Dynamics of Indian Education for Holistic and Multidisciplinary Development: A Literary Review of NEP 2020

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Abstract— This research paper examines the transformative impact of India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) on holistic and multidisciplinary education. Released in July 2020, NEP replaces the 1986 framework to address evolving educational requirements through comprehensive reforms from primary to higher education levels. The policy emphasizes technology integration, research promotion, and infrastructure enhancement while preserving indigenous knowledge systems. A key focus is modernizing libraries through digital resources, including e-books and e-journals, to facilitate research and improve accessibility. The policy recognizes libraries as crucial centers for learning and cultural preservation, particularly in promoting local and indigenous knowledge from the primary education level. By mandating infrastructure strengthening at both school and higher education levels, NEP 2020 ensures institutions receive adequate resources for implementation. The policy's vision extends beyond traditional academic frameworks to foster holistic student development through enhanced learning resources and community library engagement. This research analyzes how these multifaceted approaches contribute to creating a more flexible, effective, and culturally responsive education system in India. Thus, NEP 2020 envisions enhancing holistic and multidisciplinary development in students by boosting their learning and by inculcating their habits of reading through community libraries.



Keywords— National Educational Policy, Holistic, Indian languages, Multidisciplinary, Library, vernacular languages, technology.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim and objectives of this paper are to study the NEP 2020 its impact, prospect, consequences and challenges in the Indian education system.

1. Develop holistic and multidisciplinary learning
2. Enhance critical thinking and research capabilities
3. Prepare students for emerging global workforce
4. Reduce educational disparities
5. Prioritize the vernacular languages

INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a landmark transformation in India's educational landscape, marking the first comprehensive policy revision since 1986. Initiated under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020, the policy addresses critical gaps in the existing educational framework and aspires to align India's education system with 21st-century global challenges. Its main concern were previous policy was 34 years old so it aims to address systemic challenges in Indian education system, the Government of India (GOI) understood the need of an hour and drafted after extensive consultations with stakeholders they proposed finally in July 2020, NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 is not merely a policy document but a transformative roadmap designed to revolutionize India's educational ecosystem. It seeks to shift from a traditional, exam-centric approach to a more flexible, learner-centric model that emphasizes cognitive development, critical reasoning, and skill acquisition.

The Fundamental Objectives of this policy are:

1. Promote inclusive and equitable quality education

This policy aims to reform the educational system in India at all levels, from primary to higher education, and to make it more holistic, multidisciplinary, flexible and qualitative. (Kalyani, 2020). It also suggests increasing the state share on education from 3% to 6%. The key highlights of the NEP 2020 include: Replacing the existing 10+2 structure of school education with a new 5+3+3+4 structure, which includes three years of pre-primary education. Introducing a new curricular and pedagogical framework for school

education, which focus on the development of core capacities such as cognitive, social, emotional, and ethical by promoting multilingualism and the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction up-to at least 5th class. (Soni, web) Moreover, this policy helps the students to comprehend the quality of education by reducing the pressure of learning language. Most of the children were overloaded with mechanical writing work for the sake of preparation for grade first. According to research, 85% of children's brain develops by the age of 6 years. Therefore, it is important to give proper stimulation for the development of child's brain at early stages. In addition, the children who come from diverse background (based on caste and religion) are not getting quality education at early stages. Therefore, the policy talks about the universalization of education at every level per child for the sake of acquiring logical thinking, problem solving attitude, observational skills, fluency in communication and smart behavior etc. (Sharma, web)

The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education consist of Foundational Stage (Grades 1-2), preparatory stage (Grades 3-5), middle stage (Grades 6-8), secondary stage (Grades 9-12). The curricula will aim for holistic development of learners by equipping them with the key 21st century skills, reduction in curricular content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking and greater focus on experiential learning. Students will have to increase flexibility and choice of subjects so that they choose their own paths according to their talents and interests. In other words, this taboo of our society will be replaced by this policy because parents will not be able to force their students to opt any particular field. This societal pressure will be minimized and hopefully these academics suicidal attempt will be vanished from our society. This policy also gives emphasis on the summative to formative assessments which focus on the competency basis evaluations. The goal of this is to reduce the rote learning and hard evaluation of examinations in order to encourage continuous and progressive learning process.

Languages

In contemporary time, communication plays a significant role in one's daily life. Meanwhile, current education policies which are responsible to rote learning, students find it difficult to acquire and understand some other language proficiently. Communication is the best medium to showcase ones inner potential and talent. Therefore, the National Education Policy 2020 aims to keeps the mother tongue as the medium of instruction till Grade 5 while suggesting its continuance till Grade 8 and beyond. This policy also focuses that students will have to learn minimum 3 languages at their school years under the 'formula' of which at least two should be native language of India. It also suggested that no language will be imposed on the students because children understand more if the concept is comprehended in their language as they can relate to the word quickly. (NEP, Web) Thus, NEP encourages the use of bilingual teaching learning approaches, especially for those students whose home language is different from the medium of instruction.

To felicitate this, these bilingual textbooks will be made available to express the concept in their language. They emphasize that up to grade 2, the student will learn reading and writing in their own mother tongue. Further our classical languages like Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Odia, Pali etc. will also be made available in schools as options for students in grades 6-12 and simultaneously foreign languages like English, Korean, Thai, French, Japanese and German will also be offered at the secondary level. Indian sign language will be standardized or given importance. (Sharma, Web) NEP 2020 The policy lays emphasis on promoting multilingualism so that children can know and learn about the rich and vast array of languages of their country. So, every student in the country will be able to participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative. (NEP Web) This proficiency in language will enable the students to represent their country at global level. There will be no inferiority in the eyes of an Indian which has inserted by the colonizer in our psyche. The NEP 2020 also gives special attention to the teacher recruitment process and their career path. Teacher will be recruited through robust and transparent method. Promotion will be merit based and there will be a lot of skilled and competent training programme which enhance the effective learning teaching outcome. This will enhance the quality of teaching and education in the long run.

Higher Education

NEP 2020 proposes a 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's degree in an undergraduate program with multiple exit options, ranging from a certificate after completing a year in a discipline or field, to a Bachelor's degree 'with research' if the student completes a four-year degree program which includes a 'rigorous' research project in a chosen major area of study. Likewise, the master's program is intended to be flexible in its duration, depending on the prior experience of the student. A Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) has a minimum requirement of a Master's degree or a 4-year Bachelor's degree with Research experience. (NEP, 2020) As Sharma, further stated that there will be no rigid distinction between the different streams like Arts, science, music, craft, yoga etc. students can opt any subject combination as they like. The subject which is considered as extra-curricular activities earlier will be taught as curricular subjects. So that learners can choose their subjects according to their talent and interest and can prepare themselves to vocational as well as academic subjects without any peer and parental pressure.

To increase (Gross Enrolment Ratio) GER in higher education to reach at least up to 50% by 2035. The aim will not only be to increase the GER in higher education rather including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. A holistic and multidisciplinary education will help to develop well-rounded individuals who possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication,

discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. (NEP, Web)

Holistic Multidisciplinary Education

In present world, technologies and advancement is inseparable part of our society simultaneously, our education is confronted with different challenges. We need students, who are quick learner, critical thinker and effective communicator to analyze any kind of situation. But, our present classroom teaching encourage to rote learning. To remedies this, the policy envisages a broad-based multi-disciplinary holistic education at the undergraduate level for integrated, exposure to science, arts, humanities, mathematics and imaginative and creative combination of study along with multiple entry/exit points. (Sharma, Web)

Earlier, only literature was seen as a medium to enhance the student's analytical and critical thinking. High Order Thinking skills questions were designed to enhance the student's critical, analytical and descriptive skills. But, now NEP 2020 took a revolutionary step towards individual's all round development in this direction. It will promote the integration of libraries into curriculum that means libraries should be considered as the integral components of teaching learning process rather just a place to enhance their skills. Thus, Libraries are seen as critical tools in achieving this goal, as they provide a central location for students to access and use these resources. It will enhance student's wide range of learning. NEP 2020 has understood the importance of reading and critical thinking so they want to promote this reading culture among the students through libraries (Soni, Web). Therefore, NEP will strengthen the public libraries and provide accessibility to those who cannot grasp such opportunity and it ensures equal access to quality education for all the students. NEP 2020 aims to integrate vocational education into the mainstream education since at school level from Grade 6 onwards in order to achieve skilled workforce. As per Kaushik (2014), in modern India there are 90% of jobs opportunities are skill based; entailing the requirement of vocational training on the contrary only 5% of the youth in India are vocationally trained. Though, there is a huge disparity in demand and supply. NEP 2020 aimed to give exposure to vocational education at least to 50% of learner by 2025. (Nandini, Web) Therefore, students will learn practical knowledge about their surroundings during this period.

Challenges

The National Education Policy 2020 emerges as a bold reimagining of India's educational framework, challenging traditional approaches and signaling a radical shift in how learning is conceptualized and delivered. This isn't merely a policy update—it's a strategic intervention designed to bridge the gaps between education, innovation, and real-world needs. While the policy appears picture-perfect on paper, its true test lies in navigating the complex terrain of practical execution over the next two decades.

The successful implementation of NEP 2020 faces five critical obstacles:

1. **Teacher Training Complexity:** Establishing high-quality foundational education requires more than volunteer efforts. It demands a systematic, professional approach to teacher training, necessitating substantial time and resources to develop skilled educators capable of delivering comprehensive early childhood education.
2. **Multilingual Content Development Challenge:** India's linguistic diversity presents a significant barrier to creating standardized, mother-tongue-based educational content. The country's vast array of languages makes it extremely difficult to develop comprehensive, inclusive educational materials that can effectively address linguistic variations.
3. **Infrastructure Limitations:** Many educational institutions lack the necessary infrastructure to support innovative learning spaces. Schools and colleges frequently struggle with inadequate library facilities, insufficient storage spaces, and technological deficiencies, which impede the policy's vision of creating vibrant, interactive learning environments.
4. **Funding Uncertainty:** The NEP 2020 lacks clear mechanisms for generating the substantial financial resources required for its comprehensive implementation. Without a well-defined funding strategy, the policy's ambitious goals may remain theoretical rather than practical.

These challenges collectively underscore the complex landscape of educational reform in India, highlighting the need for a strategic, well-resourced approach to policy implementation.

5. **Library up gradation:** Libraries are envisioned as dynamic, interactive hubs that spark creativity and innovation. However, in many Indian educational institutions, this potential remains unrealized due to significant infrastructural challenges, including limited physical spaces, inadequate storage facilities, and technological deficiencies. These constraints prevent libraries from becoming the transformative learning environments they are meant to be, hindering students' access to knowledge and collaborative opportunities.

The gap between the ideal library as a vibrant intellectual center and the current reality in numerous schools and colleges underscores the urgent need for comprehensive infrastructure development and technological up gradation in India's educational ecosystem. (Soni, Web) The policy's potential is immense, but so are the challenges. Its true measure will not be in its eloquent design, but in how effectively it can be translated into meaningful educational experiences that empower India's youth to become innovative, adaptable, and globally competitive professionals.

Similarly, there is not proper guideline regarding what kind of job opportunity students will get who will have learned multidisciplinary subjects. It would not be easy to create

such jobs opportunities which have such subject combination future availability, for example, a student with physics and music as a subject combination will have what kind of job opportunity because Indian market has narrow scopes for it. Ultimately, the students will definitely be getting confused while selecting such subject combinations. (Sharma, Web) However, before implementing this policy these few question should be answered by the GOI and some ground work as a preparation should be done for the same. So, such kind of confusion should have no place before implementation.

CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 marks a strategic departure from traditional rote learning, prioritizing children's holistic development. The policy represents a transformative government outlook that emphasizes: Learner-Centric Approach, shifting from memorization to comprehension, encouraging critical thinking, promoting individualized learning. This is one of the boldest step has been taken by the GOI, where world is setting a new goal at global platform in such scenario to promote one's own classical language and willing to set new goal is appreciating. The National Education Policy 2020 represents a groundbreaking initiative by the Indian government, positioning itself as a transformative approach to education that addresses multiple dimensions of learning and development. By embracing a holistic and forward-thinking framework, the policy seeks to revolutionize India's educational landscape. At its core, the NEP 2020 is a comprehensive blueprint that goes beyond traditional educational paradigms. It champions a multidisciplinary approach that breaks down rigid academic boundaries, encouraging students to explore diverse fields of knowledge. The policy recognizes that modern education must be adaptive, integrating digital technologies, multilingual learning, and skill-based training to prepare students for a rapidly changing global environment. The National Education Policy 2020 stands at a critical crossroads of aspiration and implementation, presenting a visionary blueprint that simultaneously inspires and challenges the existing educational ecosystem. While the policy appears picture-perfect on paper, its true test lies in navigating the complex terrain of practical execution over the next two decades.

Positioned to be operationally active until 2030-40, the NEP 2020 represents more than a mere policy document—it's a strategic roadmap designed to reimaging India's educational landscape. Its ambition is profound: to transform a traditional, often rigid educational system into a dynamic, adaptive learning environment that can nurture future-ready talent. The policy's strength lies in its holistic vision, which goes beyond conventional academic frameworks. It doesn't just propose changes; it envisions a fundamental reconstruction of how learning is perceived, delivered, and experienced. By emphasizing multidisciplinary approaches, technological integration, and skill-based learning, the NEP 2020 acknowledges that education must evolve to meet the unpredictable demands of a rapidly changing global ecosystem. However, the journey from policy to practice is

rarely straightforward. The gaps between theoretical brilliance and ground-level implementation remain a critical consideration. Success will depend on multiple factors: institutional readiness, teacher training, infrastructure development, and a cultural shift in educational mindsets. The policy's potential is immense, but so are the challenges. Its true measure will not be in its eloquent design, but in how effectively it can be translated into meaningful educational experiences that empower India's youth to become innovative, adaptable, and globally competitive professionals.

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Adaptation of Management Students' Interpersonal Communication in the Learning Process during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract— *This research was used to find out how the process of adapting management students' interpersonal communication in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. As social creatures, humans are required to always interact with other humans, especially in the process of interaction and communication in the learning process. The learning process is an obligation carried out by every student during their education. The theory used in this research is communication adaptation theory using research methods, data collection techniques through interviews, observation and documentation using a qualitative research method approach. Based on data collected by researchers obtained from interviews with informants and observations in the field, it was found that there was an adaptation of management students' interpersonal communication in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the communication adaptation process, there are five communication adaptation strategies, namely student openness, student empathy, support between students, positive student feelings and student equality in the online learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. Where the results of this research are changes in communication interactions which led to student adaptation, which was initially face-to-face and then changed to online learning. Adaptation of communication involving management students. Adaptation can be seen in communication between students and lecturers, which does not go well, which results in students being passive and indifferent. Assignments given in groups aim to explore communication between friends, but are not carried out very effectively between students due to mismatches in the time of each member, and students still feel reluctant about the lecturer, so they communicate with the lecturer through class representatives.*



Keywords— *Communication Adaptation, Interpersonal Communication, student, online learning, Covid-19 Pandemic*

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. Students who were previously accustomed to face-to-face learning on campus now have to switch to online learning. These changes not only change teaching and learning methods, but also influence the way students communicate and interact with each other, especially in the context of interpersonal communication. Communication adaptations also occur in activities carried out at home

(Work from Home), especially in learning process activities carried out at home which become routine. This activity uses and utilizes communication technology so that students are able to adapt in interacting with fellow students and lecturers in learning activities.

The existence of interaction and communication built on the above phenomena requires an interpersonal communication process. The communication process requires special efforts from each role to gain mutual understanding. In this case, these efforts can take the form

of a process of adaptation, accommodation and openness (mindfulness) which is aimed at minimizing communication failures and creating effective communication. Effective communication means that the communicator and the communicant both have the same understanding of a message. In foreign languages, people call it "the communication is in tune", that is, both parties communicating understand what the message is conveying (Mulyana, 2008). From the communication process within humans, there are definitely emotions that are carried out. That is why in every communication there must be communication emotions as a display of the emotional expression of each communicator (Pandjaitan H. Rosmawaty, n.d.). This is very visible from the emotions expressed by students in implementing online learning.

Interpersonal communication involves direct interactions between individuals, such as teachers and students, which impact classroom climate, trust, and the effectiveness of the learning process (Miller, 2002). Effective interpersonal communication between teachers and students is very important in creating a classroom climate that is conducive to learning. Teachers who have good interpersonal communication skills are able to build positive relationships with students, gain a better understanding of individual learning needs, and facilitate effective learning. As stated by Miller (Miller, 2002), "Effective interpersonal communication between teachers

and students is key in creating a classroom climate conducive to learning"(Yeni & Susanti, n.d.).

Communication adaptations also need to be carried out by lecturers as teachers. In the learning process, it is necessary to develop communication skills for all parties involved. In addition, you also need to be trained in effective interpersonal communication skills, including active listening, providing constructive feedback, and managing conflict. Meanwhile, students also need to be given opportunities to participate in group activities that promote effective communication and cooperation. In order to achieve optimal educational goals, it is important for educational institutions to pay serious attention to the development of interpersonal communication in the online learning process of Mercu Buana University Management Students.

Mercu Buana University took action to respond by creating a temporary online lecture system or what is usually called a POST system for all courses by creating personal online learning media. Mercu Buana University diversifies learning through e-learning, with the ability to convert learning materials into various media formats. This way you can maximize the delivery of the material because it only needs to be adjusted to suit your needs. This is used so that students do not get bored and can study the material while having wider internet access. The system used is as shown in the image below:



Fig.1 Mercu Buana University POST System

Source: <https://umb-post.mercubuana.ac.id>

There is a POST system as an online learning media designed by Mercu Buana University as a substitute for face-to-face learning methods. The POST media system was introduced as a teaching and learning process media that utilizes the internet and digital media to deliver learning materials and online learning spaces carried out by lecturers to students. The POST system also acts as a learning intermediary, such as providing materials,

downloading materials, and collecting assignments. Media POST is carried out by all Mercu Buana University students. For management students, who often need good communication skills to work in teams, make presentations, and collaborate on projects, the transition to online learning brings its own challenges. Communication that previously could be done in person now has to be transferred via digital platforms such as Zoom, Google

Meet, or instant messaging applications. Learning changes are also carried out online, using the learning media and communication channels that have been provided. In its implementation, students also often carry out learning activities and group assignments in the hope that students can interact with each other. Online learning is considered a flexible learning mode that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. However, obstacles that often occur are time mismatches, disorganization of assignments and other activities, and online learning presents new challenges for students such as limited access to technology, loss of face-to-face interaction, increased personal responsibility and so on. Lecturers can see and understand students' changes in overcoming these challenges, which can help them understand their ability to adapt in the face of change.

This requires them to develop new skills in communicating effectively in digital environments. However, this transition does not always go smoothly. Many students face difficulties in adapting to new technology, limited internet access, and a sense of isolation due to a lack of direct social interaction. Interpersonal communication, which was previously one of the main foundations of the teaching and learning process, has now become more complex and sometimes less effective due to the limitations of digital media. On the other hand, this change also opens up opportunities for students to hone digital communication skills which are increasingly relevant in the era of globalization and digitalization. Skills such as writing formal emails, communicating via video conference, and working in virtual teams are becoming increasingly important. Therefore, students' ability to adapt to these changes will greatly influence their academic success and their readiness to face an increasingly digital world of work. The author also sees that the pandemic has forced all interactions that previously occurred in person to shift to online platforms. Management students, who are often involved in group discussions, presentations, and project collaboration, are experiencing significant changes in the way they communicate. This research is important for understanding how students adapt to these changes and how these changes affect their communication effectiveness.

In line with the results of the research presented by Pratiwi entitled *Interpersonal Communication between Students and Lecturers (Review of Communication Apprehension among University Students in Jakarta)*, the same main concept, namely interpersonal communication, is discussed with the aim of understanding the differences in communication relationships that exist between students and lecturers in the form of communication. interpersonal. The findings here also reveal that there are certain fears or obstacles in relating or communicating with lecturers.

Interpersonal communication plays a very important role in motivating students to be able to collaborate in studies and assignments given by their lecturers (PRATIWI, 2018).

From the explanation above, the focus of this research discusses the adaptation of management students' interpersonal communication in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research can enrich academic understanding of how management students adapt to drastic changes in online learning and communication methods.

Trenhol and Jensen also provide a definition of "Interpersonal communication as communication between two people that takes place face to face (Trenholm, 1996)." Then according to Littlejohn said that: "Interpersonal communication is communication between individuals (S. W. & K. A. F. Littlejohn, 2009)." Deddy Mulyana also said that "Interpersonal communication or interpersonal communication is communication between people face to face, which allows each participant to capture other people's reactions directly, both verbally and nonverbally (Mulyana, 2008b)." Interpersonal communication or interpersonal communication is interaction from someone to another person face to face. From this communication, humans can form relationships with other people, because this communication is the most effective communication because they can observe other people's reactions directly so that they can change a person's attitudes, opinions or behavior. Interpersonal communication can also be done through media, as one of the advances achieved in new communication technology. So that conveying information or interacting with others can still take place.

It can be concluded that interpersonal communication is the process of conveying information in the form of messages, thoughts or ideas between two people who have a clear relationship with each other, taking place face to face or through the media so that they react to each other with the aim of achieving mutual attention, understanding and understanding the problem. which will be discussed until someone's opinion or behavior changes.

Differential Adaptation Theory

Differential adaptation theory also distinguishes between adaptation and assimilation as it relates to agency. De La Garza and Ono explain that adaptation is something that an individual, or several individuals, can choose to do. In this research, differential adaptation was carried out by students, namely students regarding their participation in the 2024 general elections.

The first dialectic is universal versus specific

De La Garza and Ono explain that the integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation assumes a universal perspective in which all immigrants adapt in the same way. There may be some individual differences, but overall these experiences have similarities that can be explained by a single model. Furthermore, this theory assumes that all people want (or at least should want) to adapt to their host culture. (S. Littlejohn & Foss, n.d.).

The second dialectic is individual versus society

De La Garza and Ono argue that the integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation assumes a one-way adaptation in which the society changes the individual. In contrast, they also note that individuals change society and/or resist efforts to change which in turn can force society to change (S. Littlejohn & Foss, n.d.). In this research, the differential adaptation theory is the implementation of students in conducting conversations through interpersonal communication in the learning process online management students class of 2020 at Mercu Buana University, Jakarta. This theory will look at how students adapt in the learning process of the online management students class of 2020 at Mercu Buana University, Jakarta. Including the motives, foundations, knowledge, curiosity of students in interacting and learning processes through the POST system

Dialogic Theory

Referring to Bakhtin's thinking, the concept of dialogue is an important element in the dialectical theory of relationships. In short, without dialogue, a relationship cannot exist. In addition, there are five important concepts regarding how dialogue becomes the main point in the communication process, namely.

- a. Dialogue as a constructive process (*dialogue as constitutive process*).

Communication creates a relationship and in practice as individuals change, their relationships also change. In this case dialogic considers that differences and similarities in people are equally important. Differences focus on what these differences mean to partners and how they act on these meanings. Meanwhile, similarities in attitudes, backgrounds and interests can unite people in a positive way.

- b. Dialogue as a dialectical flow (*dialogue as dialectical flux*).

All social life is the product of "a union dominated by contradiction and full of tension of two warring desires." This makes it clear that various forms of contradiction are increasingly recognized as existing. This means that the process of developing

and maintaining relationships becomes unpredictable, unresolvable and uncertain.

- c. Dialogue as an aesthetic moment (*dialogue as an aesthetic moment*)

Baxter describes this reciprocal sensation of refinement, accoutrement or wholeness amidst such fragmented experiences as not lasting. However, memories of good times can support couples through the turbulence that occurs in close relationships.

- d. Dialogue as an expression (*dialog as utterance*)

Phrases are described as expressive links that form a dialogue chain. Therefore, the expressions that are approved are influenced by the words that came before and the words that will be used. Baxter (2004) emphasizes whether expressions give credence to the voices of both parties in a relationship or not (Baxter, 2004).

- e. Dialogue as critical sensibility (*dialogue as a critical sensibility*).

It is an obligation to criticize dominant voices, especially those who suppress opposing views (S. Littlejohn & Foss, n.d.). The implementation of conversations can be used to dissect students' knowledge regarding the learning process of the online management students class of 2020 at Mercu Buana University, Jakarta. Conversations held by fellow students will certainly give rise to enthusiasm and contribute to the learning process, both in the discussion process and in carrying out assignments given by the lecturer. The conversation is part of student adaptation and participation in the online learning process carried out by Mercu Buana University Management Students. So research on conversation is considered very important because of the impact it will have on public opinion among students.

II. METHODOLOGY

The paradigm used in this research is the constructivist paradigm. Neuman explains that: "The constructivist paradigm is an attempt to understand and explain meaningful social action" (Neuman, 2015). The method used in this research uses a qualitative method. This method is a method that explores and understands the meaning ascribed to social or humanitarian problems. This research process involves important efforts such as asking questions and procedures, collecting specific data from participants, analyzing data inductively starting from specific, general themes and interpreting the data. This

research uses a descriptive research type. This type of descriptive research aims to create systematic, factual and accurate information (descriptions) regarding the facts and characteristics of a particular population or area. Moleong stated: "Research subjects or informants are people who are able to provide information about the situation and conditions of the research background (Moleong, 2012). The subjects of this research consisted of new students from the 2020 Management Study Program at Mercu Buana University, Jakarta, at which time they were entering the start of the semester directly through online learning.

The key informants in this research are Lina Agustina (Nim: 43120010184), Salfa Nabila Catelia (Nim: 43120010185), Putri Adelia Wardani (Nim: 43120010179). In this research, new students from the class of 2020 communicated with lecturers in the teaching courses, where at that time the communication and learning process at the beginning of their semester was carried out via *online*. The data collection techniques used by the author are interviews, indirect observation and documentation. The analysis process for this research was carried out starting from reading, studying and reviewing the data using the analytical technique steps from Miles and Huberman, namely: Data collection, Data Reduction, Data Presentation and Conclusion Drawing. The technique for checking the validity of the data used in this research is the Triangulation technique. Triangulation is checking the validity of data that uses something other than words for the purposes of checking and comparing data. Using the triangulation technique with sources, the researcher compares the interview results obtained from each source or key informant and research informant as a comparison to check the veracity of the information obtained. Apart from that, the researcher also checked the degree of trustworthiness through the Triangulation technique with a method, namely, by checking the research results using different data collection techniques, namely interviews and observation so that the degree of trustworthiness of the data could be valid.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mercu Buana University Management Students' Interpersonal Communication in the Learning Process during the Covid 19 Pandemic

The discussion of the results of this research is based on Interpersonal Communication according to Joseph De Vito, there are 5 (five) positive attitudes that must be prepared in interpersonal communication, namely (A. Devito, 1898) :

1. Openness, where in this case an open attitude is required in interacting in the learning process and requires adaptation to be carried out by students in carrying out the learning process. This open attitude is a willingness to open up about common problems, so that other people are able to know our opinions, ideas or thoughts so that communication will be easy. Openness refers to our willingness to respond to other people honestly and frankly regarding everything they say. Openness or an open attitude is very influential in fostering effective interpersonal communication. Look at the 6 (six) Key Informants.

In this case there is openness in conducting learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Where lecturers interact and communicate and provide explanations when learning courses is very good even though it does require challenges for students to understand. Yes, there are several lecturers who give examples to us as students about learning in the classes of the subjects they teach. However, there are also lecturers who only provide rules for classes in their courses but they themselves do not apply these rules to themselves as an example. Not only that, the lecturer always directs you to adapt when class starts. From the introduction first, the directions or regulations that apply when the class starts are explained. Communication adaptations are also needed for students to adapt to communicate well with lecturers, so that in the Zoom class learning runs well and comfortably. Of course, this behavioral attitude applies to all subject classes. This form of interpersonal communication is carried out by having a WA group established between students and lecturers. Because of the gap, it makes students passively communicate with various obstacles that occur to students. The WAG group is a communication medium between students and lecturers.

2. Empathy (Empathy), in the context of empathy in interpersonal communication, requires a person's ability to feel as if they were someone else, to be able to understand something that another person is experiencing, to feel what another person is feeling, and to understand a problem from another person's point of view. Empathetic people are able to understand other people's motivations and experiences, their feelings and attitudes, and their hopes and desires for the future. The role of empathy is very important, but in this case it is found when there are feelings from other people towards other people. Empathy can be seen from understanding the opinions, attitudes and behavior of other people.

This can be seen from the existence of group activities or group communication. Due to the many challenges faced by students with changes in the learning process where students are required to be more active, more diligent, more agile in searching for information, it is necessary to have team work or group cooperation developed in the learning process.

With group assignments carried out in coordination using WhatsApp and Google Meet/Zoom, many students are lazy about communicating, doing assignments and feel reluctant to ask their friends and lecturers. So there is a need for a sense of empathy that must be established in building group communication. Students prefer the process of dividing group assignments because the division of group assignments can still be understood because they are completed in groups or together. This is different from individual assignments which have to be completed by myself while learning online, if I don't really understand it then I find it difficult. So that we understand the explanation and directions of the assignment given. The online learning process really determines the student's disciplinary attitude and level of diligence in carrying out assignments.

Students are required to be more diligent and more disciplined in online learning, this is because there are many assignments, both individual and group, that have the same deadline. Because of that, like it or not, I have to immediately do the task before another task comes. But students feel bored when doing assignments given the same deadline. Therefore, in my opinion, online learning really influences a student's discipline and diligence in carrying out assignments.

3. Support (Supportiveness), In this context, it is necessary to provide mutual support for the message conveyed. In interpersonal communication, an attitude of support from the communicator is needed so that the communicant wants to participate in the communication. In interpersonal communication, there needs to be a supportive or motivating atmosphere, especially for the communicator. From the communication process carried out, support can be obtained from other students or lecturers. The attitude of support here can be in the form of compatibility with other people to adapt to each other, provide good responses and be able to work together in online learning. Since she first entered college as a student, Putri has started learning online, in fact all her initial lecture activities were

also carried out online. Of course, this makes it very difficult for us to adapt and adapt to the learning and interactions that are carried out. I experience this difficulty because I am still not very fluent in using technology and in the end, I often miss out on important information about campus (Putri Adelia Wardani).

Judging from the context above, students need communication adaptations to solve difficulties in conducting online learning. Management students try to adapt and operate until they are able to adapt to other students and lecturers.

4. Positive feelings (Positiveness), a positive attitude here also influences the communication process as well as the learning process in the communication process carried out online. Seeing the COVID-19 pandemic situation. This online learning produces a feeling of curiosity about lectures conducted online. With the communication process carried out during learning during the pandemic, effective communication and learning can be seen directly in class when the lecturer explains directly. Online learning is easier because you can study anywhere, but what is difficult is if there is material that is not easy to understand, I cannot ask the lecturer directly. The communication or online learning process is felt to be easier because it is flexible considering the COVID-19 situation in order to avoid the spread, but the communication process experiences difficulties during this learning when one does not understand the material explained by the lecturer.
5. Equality (Equality). Equality can be seen from the approach taken between students and other students and lecturers. Seeing the situation in the communication process carried out online influences online learning. The existence of an approach that exists between lecturers and students during online learning is able to influence the student's discipline in learning. If students are close to a lecturer, students will be less likely to not attend that lecturer's class. In the learning process, an approach is needed with the lecturer to get to know the lecturer in charge of each course better. I don't know about how close the lecturer is, but there is a way to ask the lecturer when in the WA group or Google Meet. Students need to approach other students as well as lecturers. From this approach, we can get to know each other so that everything can be made easier, from material to grades. However, some students try to get close to the lecturer, some don't.

Mercu Buana University Management Students' Communication Adaptation in the Learning Process during the Covid 19 Pandemic

The conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic have caused changes in communication behavior carried out in the learning process in lectures. In 2019, there was a momentum for changes in learning from face-to-face learning to online learning. Communication is also in creating openness in the experiences of students who are now studying remotely, which applies during times of crisis where the pandemic is the main factor in the situation which then forces all students to be sent home. At first, students' expectations were built to carry out activities on campus, but the reality is that they can't even meet their friends. There is a very interesting communication adaptation when there are changes in behavior made by students and lecturers in carrying out learning. Humans are essentially always changing and adapting to what is happening around them. These changes result in communication adaptations carried out by the community, especially among higher education academics in carrying out the Tridharma of Research.

The adaptation process in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic requires students to build a sense of self-confidence and become a person attitudes and feelings that are confident in one's own abilities, this makes individuals not feel anxious when carrying out an action, can feel free to do things they like and are able to take responsibility for the actions they take, be polite and friendly when interacting with other people, respect and accept others, want to show their skills and be able to know their own strengths and weaknesses (Lauster, 2003). An individual's self-confidence is related to one of the phenomena of the formation of interpersonal communication patterns in the learning process. Self-confidence is a positive attitude that is present in an individual, namely feelings, behavior and a belief that he is better and believes in his abilities. (Nabilah & Jayanti, 2024).

IV. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the existence of interpersonal communication in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic has experienced changes and requires adaptation by all educational institutions, due to the existence of letter from the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education Policy During the Emergency Period of the Spread of CoronaVirus Disease (Covid-19), point 2 is the learning process at home. This was also carried out at Mercur Buana University, the author looked at the learning process activities during the

During the pandemic, even though there are restrictions on face-to-face interactions or meetings, it turns out that the need as humans to continue to exist and be recognized will still be needed by using digital technology and mass media. The pandemic has tended to flatten the graph. Life situations may shift to become endemic to Covid-19. Currently, there are changes in communication behavior related to technological adaptation. There is communication adaptation carried out by students in the learning process, where students are able to adapt themselves to other students and lecturers who teach each course at Mercur Buana University. However, there are still students who feel awkward because this learning is carried out online. The lecturers in charge of the Management Study Program at Mercur Buana University are very open to their students in delivering material and communicating regularly on the POST platform provided by the campus in carrying out the lecture process. Apart from that, the lecturers in charge also provide directions or regulations that must be followed when attending in class and outside of class.

Judging from this, we have to adapt to digital from conventional in the online learning process. Where Mercur Buana University has provided a platform, namely the POST system as an online learning system. The openness carried out by students and lecturers in the learning process means that communication adaptations are implemented as a strategy for the learning process on digital platforms. The pandemic conditions have forced students and all higher education academics to be able to use technology-based media which then opens up opportunities for all students to explore more deeply the material presented at each meeting using multiplatform. Changes in communication occur because humans need to adapt to situations related to information received online and indeed the ability to adapt to technology is not the same for everyone.

pandemic for students in the Management Study Program at Mercur Buana University. It can be seen from the activities carried out by students and lecturers in the learning process as usual, there are definitely new challenges and new adaptations that are being felt. Adaptations were made to create the same space and the same dialogue in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. Even if you use a changed method. The learning process during the Covid 19 Pandemic requires adaptation in building interpersonal communication, namely in 5 ways, namely First, Openness, Empathy, Support, Positive Feelings and Equality. Openness in conducting learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Where lecturers interact and communicate and

provide explanations when learning courses is very good even though it does require challenges for students to understand. Yes, there are several lecturers who give examples to us as students about learning in the classes of the subjects they teach.

Second, empathy is also felt in the learning process during the Covid 19 pandemic, especially as a lecturer who builds adaptations and strategic steps in the learning process. Lecturers give group assignments or group communication as a form of empathy given to students in the learning process, because with group assignments students are better able to build communication, discussion, dialogue with each other in solving problems based on the theories and concepts taught. There are many challenges faced by students with changes in the learning process. Where students are required to be more active, more diligent, more agile in searching for information, it is necessary to have team work or group cooperation developed in the learning process. Third, Support. This context requires mutual support between friends in the learning process. Not only that, lecturers also provide support and motivation to students to be more active, more diligent, more agile in seeking information and responsive in the learning process.

Fourth, Positive Feelings. Where students feel that online learning produces feelings of curiosity about the lectures conducted online. With the communication process carried out during learning during the pandemic, it resulted in adaptation in building communication in the learning process, the methods used changed according to the platform used in this learning process. Students and lecturers must have positive feelings, so that there is warm dialogue and discussion during lectures. Lina Agustina also explained that having positive feelings in learning also brings new color and enthusiasm to the learning process, so that there is no decline in the grades you get.

Fifth, equality can be seen from the approach taken between students and other students and teaching lecturers. Seeing the situation in the communication process carried out through *online* this affects online learning. *AThe approach that exists between lecturers and students during online learning is able to influence the student's discipline in learning. If students are close to a lecturer, students will be less likely to not attend that lecturer's class.*

Therefore, the changes in communication behavior carried out in the learning process are felt by all groups, especially students and lecturers in carrying out learning activities during the pandemic. The adaptation process in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic requires students to build a sense of self-confidence and become a person attitudes and feelings that are confident in one's own

abilities, this makes individuals not feel anxious when carrying out an action, can feel free to do things they like and are able to take responsibility for the actions they take, be polite and friendly when interacting with other people, respect and accept others, want to show their skills and be able to know their own strengths and weaknesses.

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Identity Politics and Dehumanisation in Manjula Padmanabhan's *Harvest* and Mahesh Dattani's *Dance Like a Man*

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Abstract— This paper explores the themes of identity politics and dehumanisation in Mahesh Dattani's *Dance Like a Man* (1989) and Manjula Padmanabhan's *Harvest* (1997). Both plays explore the sociocultural and political implications of identity while acknowledging the transformative effects of late capitalism on actual landscapes. The selected works examine the tension between personal desire, economic disparity, societal expectations, and commodification of human life. While Dattani critiques traditional gender norms, Padmanabhan addresses the intersections of global capitalism. This paper argues that both plays expose the ideology of prevailing capitalism, producing pre-constituted subjects in which one's role in society is predetermined. By examining the dynamic of social identity, the study locates analysis within the politics of space vis-à-vis power relations that reconstruct dominant hierarchal organisation and its implication to govern subordinates.



Keywords— Identity, Gender, Margin, Capitalism, Utilitarianism, Power

INTRODUCTION

Manjula Padmanabhan (1953–) and Mahesh Dattani (1958–) are contemporary Indian playwrights. They are known to readers through celebrated works such as *Light Out* (1984) and *Harvest* (1997; winner of the Onassis Prize; adapted into a film in 2001) by Padmanabhan and *Where There's a Will* (1988), *Dance Like a Man* (1989), *Bravely Fought the Queen* (1991), *Final Solutions* (1993) by Dattani. Dattani is the first playwright to win the Sahitya Academy Award. He talks about the issue of gender roles and identity in his plays. His play *Final Solutions* deals with a conflict between Muslims and Hindus. Padmanabhan's *Light Out* talks about sexual violence against women in India. Both Dattani and Padmanabhan challenge certain dominant aspects of society, such as patriarchy, feudalism, gender issues, and global capitalism. The social and political conditions of

India are addressed in their plays. There are various themes and subject matter seen in Dattani and Padmanabhan, but dehumanisation and identity politics are some of the dominant issues. This study investigates the spiritual and political realms depicted in their plays. Dattani and Padmanabhan reveal a variety of sketches from all walks of human. The main argument of this paper, in this case, is to study some of the key elements in *Dance Like a Man* and Padmanabhan and showcase the existing sociocultural and political landscapes which can influence one's identity. Padmanabhan's play *Harvest* is a science fiction set in 2010 Bombay; it imagines a world in which a U.S.-based transnational corporation called InterPlanta Services sells its wealthy, ageing, and sick clients not only organ transplants but also whole-body transplants. In this context, as we will analyse in detail in the next section, the discourse

of identity, whose politics shapes the more significant understanding of the power in which space operates, of which *Dance Like a Man* and *Harvest* presents nuanced examinations of social relations.

The Gender Role in *Dance Like a Man*

The play *Dance Like a Man* by Dattani revolves around the lives of Bharatanatyam dancers Jairaj Parekh and his wife Ratna, exploring their sacrifice, love, and passions. The play examines the conflicts arising from personal dreams clashing with societal norms, particularly the tensions surrounding gender roles in a patriarchal society. Jairaj and Ratna are passionate about Indian classical dance and wish to establish a dance academy. They showcase their passion for Bharatanatyam dance and family tensions when personal dreams conflict with societal norms and expectations. The play unfolds in a non-linear fashion, moving between the present and the past, where Jairaj's father, Amritlal, disapproves of his son's dance career, perceiving it as a feminine activity. Jairaj's father, Amritlal Pareesh, discourages Jairaj from taking his career as a dancer. Amritlal tries his best to stop Jairaj from becoming a dancer. Amritlal considers dance a feminine activity, stopping Jairaj from dancing. This act of discouragement reveals Amritlal's ingrained beliefs about masculinity and the gender roles that govern their world. His notion of gender roles is pseudoprogressive as he states, "A woman in man's world may be considered as being progressive. But a man in woman's world is pathetic" (52). This statement reflects that Amritlal is a very conservative man who believes that man's happiness lies always in being a man. He has his ideas and rules, reframing anyone in his family to do what they like.

This is a feudal world where the head of the family is a man. Amritlal represents this feudal world, which embraces the stereotypical gender roles — a single man, as the ultimate decision-maker, governs the family. According to Bryan S. Turner, patriarchy indicates "the power of men, a power which extends to the individual jurisdiction of men (or a man) over a family and its members, as well as the more general power of "the male" over the organisation of a social group or a society" (433). This quote highlights the rule of men, not just over women but also over the general structure of social relations. Amritlal belongs to a patriarchal system in which a man has the right to determine the fate of the entire family. In this sense, Amritlal does everything he can to prevent Jairaj from pursuing his career as a dancer, disregarding his son's only passion. The very idea of gender roles that he holds is contradictory to his liberal tag. He seeks Ratna's help to discourage his son from pursuing a career as a dancer; he states, "Help me and I'll never prevent you from dancing. I know it will take time but it must be done" (52). This statement underlines his

desperation and determination to align his son with traditional notions of masculinity, showcasing the tension between societal expectations and individual passion.

Nevertheless, Jairaj and Ratna are concerned about their daughter Lata, who must perform an upcoming dance recital that could establish her career as a professional Bharatanatyam dancer. They are also anxious about whether her future husband, Viswas, will support her pursuit of classical dance after marriage. Viswas assures their concerns when Jairaj questions him about Lata's career. He responds, "Look, I don't mean I object to her dancing. It is her passion and it wouldn't be fair for me to" (62). Unlike Amritlal, Viswas recognises and respects the significance of love and passion. These intergenerational shifts highlight the dynamics of power and control, underlining how dominant societal structures often regulate spatial practices and personal ambitions. Dattani suggests the complexity of self and identity. Throughout the play, Jairaj is told not to behave like a woman. Dattani questions this societal stereotype about gender roles. Through portraying Jairaj's career as a Bharatanatyam dancer, Dattani challenges the conventional expectations of men and women. Amritlal — as a hardcore supporter of hierarchical organisations — reinforces the notions of masculinity over femininity, telling his son to be a man. Amritlal hatches a plan with Ratna to destroy Jairaj's dance career. Ratna's collaboration with her father-in-law illustrates how identity is shaped not only by individual desires but also by external pressures. Jairaj knows from the beginning that he wants to be a dancer, but Ratna's harsh criticism ultimately disrupts his ambitions to become an acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer.

Globalisation, Ethics, and the Panopticon in *Harvest*

The play *Harvest* by Manjula Padmanabhan is a science fiction drama that deals with the issue of identity and organ trade in India. Set in a futuristic 2010 in Mumbai, the play depicts machines increasingly replacing human beings. As a genre, science fiction — or sci-fi — is a significant medium for exploring the potential consequences of present-day actions, projecting them into speculative futures that challenge our ethical and social frameworks. According to M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, science fiction is applied to those narratives in which "an explicit attempt is made to render plausible the fictional world by reference to known or imagined scientific principles, or to a projected advance in technology, or to a drastic change in the organisation of society" (355). The impact of science fiction is so much that it creates tremendous scientific possibilities, and some of them have come true. *Harvest* opens up with Om Prakash, a twenty-year-old man struggling to support his family. His mother, Ma, insists he finds work regardless of the consequences.

Om's wife, Jaya, endures an unstable relationship with him while secretly engaging in an affair with her brother-in-law, Jeetu.

Due to economic setbacks, Om decides to sell his organs to a U.S.-based transnational corporation named InterPlanta Services. It is a Western company whose wealthy clients seek to purchase everlasting life through multiple, successive whole-body transplants. The U.S.-based company targets economically disadvantaged nations, particularly in third-world countries, convincing them to sell body parts in return for money. This is reflected when Om tells her mother he got the job in a place "like a big machine. They had... like iron bars, snaking around and around. And everywhere there were guards" (10). This quote highlights foreign factory plants in a third-world country where earning money is much more complicated than selling organs. When his mother asks about the pay scale, Om claims, "We'll have more money than you and I have names for! Who'd believe there's so much money in the world?" (11). This statement highlights the condition of Om's family, which is quite money-centric as Om has chosen to sell organs. Ma is unaware of Om's present-day job, which involves selling organs to a U.S.-based company. As Jodi Kim argues in her 2014 essay, Ma's confusion is a stark reminder of "sedimented ways in which we have come to understand the relationship between labor and money, or more generally the creation of value" (219). The Marxian perspective that labour is the foundation of value creation — the labour theory of value — has become increasingly complicated due to modern developments. In his analysis of the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the rise of wage labour, Karl Marx (1818–1883) remarks, "[T]hese newly freed men became sellers of themselves only after they had been stripped of their own means of production and the security provided by the old feudal arrangements" (875). When Marx described these newly liberated individuals as sellers of themselves, he meant that they were selling their labour power. He could not have envisioned that advancements in the life sciences would one day allow individuals to sell their literal biological selves, including their body parts and organs (Kim 220).

Padmanabhan engages with two significant concepts, utilitarianism and the panopticon, intertwining them to explore the ethical and social implications of exploitation in a globalised world. Robert Audi defines utilitarianism as the "moral theory that an action is morally right if and only if it produces at least as much good (utility) for all people affected by the action as any alternative action the person could do instead" (942). This ethical framework prioritises the greatest good for the greatest number, emphasising collective happiness and moral action to

maximise societal benefit. The theory of utilitarianism promotes happiness and moral ethics that produce particular good or joy in society. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), a key proponent of utilitarianism, also conceptualised the panopticon — a model of surveillance that enforces power through the internalisation of observation. It is a prisoner concept where a guard is watching prisoners, but prisoners do not know whether someone is watching them. This system fosters behavioural modification rooted in the internalisation of surveillance. The panopticon extends beyond its initial design for prisons, as Miran Božović (1957–) argues:

[A] building could be constructed resembling the panopticon from the outside; occasional screams, not of prisoners, but of people hired specifically for that purpose, could be heard from within. While the others would think that the offenders were being punished for their deeds, in truth, nobody at all would really be suffering punishment. A 'good of the second order' could then be produced without requiring any 'evil of the first order'. (7)

This quote highlights the psychological dimension of the panopticon, where the perception of discipline and punishment is enough to maintain control, even in the absence of actual punishment. The phrase 'good of the second order' depicts the societal order achieved without direct harm, aligning with utilitarian principles of maximising the greatest good for the greatest number. In this way, the panopticon concept manifests in the Prakash family through technological surveillance and economic coercion, where the fear of consequences forces individuals to obey, even without immediate punishment. The panopticon serves as a metaphor for the dehumanising systems of power, highlighting the destruction of individual entities. This concept is evident in the relationship between the Prakash family and Ginni, the organ recipient. Ginni monitors Om and his family through a videophone, placing them under constant surveillance. This panoptic mechanism ensures that their behaviours align with the expectations set by U.S.-based InterPlanta Service. This surveillance results in a loss of their autonomy, and their actions are shaped by Ginni, emphasising the dehumanising effects of commodification. Therefore, the Prakash family lives under a strict disciplinary regime characterised by meticulous regulation of their bodies to ensure the harvesting of healthy organs. The Contact Module — a white, faceted globe suspended from the ceiling — is an electronic device that enables Om to communicate with Ginni.

Furthermore, the Contact Module operates as a pedagogical tool, enabling Ginni to instruct the family on the proper personal hygiene and self-care protocols, as she

desires to avoid receiving diseased or compromised organs. Ginni is a wealthy American — a young, beautiful white woman — whose health diseases remain undisclosed until the end of the play. Ginni epitomises the power imbalance between the West and the East. This imbalance is evident in the way Ginni dictates the Prakash family's behaviour, as shown in the following way:

The Most Important Thing is to keep [Om] smiling. Coz if [Om's] smiling, it means his body's smiling and if his body's smiling, it means his organs are smiling. And that's the kind of organs that'll survive a transplant best, smiling organs — I mean, God forbid that it should ever come to that, right? But after all, we can't let ourselves forget what this programme is about! I mean, if I'm going to need a transplant — then by God, let's make it the best damn transplant that we can manage! (41)

This quote underlines the exploitative nature of organ trade, where the marginalised are reduced to mere commodities to sustain the privileged elite. In this context, utilitarianism and panopticon converge in a way that critiques the sociocultural and moral landscapes. While utilitarianism promotes the welfare of the majority, it often marginalises minority groups, reducing them to lower-level positions within hierarchical organisations. The Prakash family strives for financial stability, ultimately compelling one member to sell their organs. Om lacks insight into the consequences of his actions, leading him to sell his organs. In doing so, his individuality is distorted as he sacrifices agency for the greater good of his family. This aligns with the utilitarianism principle of maximising the collective goods, but it also showcases the tendency to devalue the individual within a group.

Survival, Choice, and the Politics of Identity

The politics of identity is one of the key themes in *Harvest*, reflecting power, culture, and societal norms that shape one's sense of identity. It is a personal and sociocultural construct shaped by external forces that can diminish individual agency, often reducing people to mere commodities within a globalised, profit-driven system. David Matsumoto defines identity as “the way individuals understand themselves and are recognised by others” (244). This definition highlights the complex nature of identity and its encompassing personal, cultural, and relative dimensions. Moreover, identities are shown to be politically constructed by certain societal groups that wield power and establish norms. There are different kinds of identity: personal, cultural, and relative. These identities are somehow construed by politics, which influences our day-to-day life. In the case of Om, he perceives himself as a

commodity, readily marketable and devoid of agency regarding his actions. He remains indifferent to the implications of his choices and accepts a job from U.S.-based InterPlant Service without questioning the nature of the work. Upon returning home, he remarks:

Oh — there was some pamphlet they gave us to read, right in the beginning. Just to tell us to be relaxed and to do whatever we were told. In that it said that once we were selected, each man would get special instructions. That we would be monitored carefully. Not just us but our...lives. To remain employed, we have to keep ourselves exactly as they tell us. (13)

This quote highlights the dehumanising nature of employment, reducing Om to mere tools of utility. He is doing what he is told to rather than what he wishes to do. This blind adherence to materiality makes him more of a machine, not a human who can think and act on free will. Om remains a static character throughout the play, symbolising his lack of agency amidst the uncontrolled circumstances faced by his family. The only significant shift occurs when the guards arrive to take him away for the ‘harvest’ of his organs. Om captures the transformations within sociocultural and political landscapes, reflecting the dehumanising effects of global capitalism and technological domination. The resistance in the form of Om's hiding from guards is futile. It shows the helplessness of individuals against powerful institutions.

However, in the case of Ma, we witness a wilful submission to the modern technological world, where individuals are reduced to passive consumers within a capitalist system. Her unquestioning acceptance of Om's decision to sell his organs highlights her support for the commodification of human life. Ma's lack of resistance showcases a broader societal tendency to accept dominant economic and political systems. There is a clear-cut distinction between human and machine. Om's wife, Jaya, is aware of the dehumanising effects of modern technology and resists becoming part of the commodified world. Unlike other characters, Jaya is rebellious, questioning the dominant hierarchical organisations that treat subordinates as tools for economic gain. Her resistance to modern technology reflects autonomy in an increasingly commodified world. Jaya challenges the oppressive systems that govern her life, symbolising resistance against the dehumanising forces of capitalist commodification. When Virgil, an American man, asks her to get pregnant. Jaya says, “You've shown me that it's not really mine any more. It's yours. I'm not willing to caretake *my* body for *your* sake! The only thing I have left which is still mine is my death. My death and my pride” (101). This strong statement not only reflects her unwillingness to submit but

also signals her rejection of the objectification and commodification of her body. Jaya is seen as a tool to fulfil Virgil's personal desires by a U.S.-based corporation rather than as an individual with autonomy over her body. Om, Ma, and Jaya each represent different responses to modern-day technology and its impact on their lives. They are viewed as commodities by the West, and their identities are reduced to the value of their organs. This materialistic perspective dehumanises them, reducing their worth to economic utility. Through the Prakash family experiences, the play critiques the power imbalance that forces individuals to compromise their bodies for the greatest number.

CONCLUSION

By discussing *Dance Like a Man* and *Harvest*, this paper examines the dehumanising effects of societal expectations and capitalistic exploitation on both personal and collective identity. Dattani critiques the constricting gender roles within a patriarchal society, while Padmanabhan examines the commodification of human bodies within a global capitalist framework. Both plays challenge conventional norms surrounding gender, class, and power. Through their respective narrative structures, Dattani and Padmanabhan uncover the complexities of navigating selfhood in systems that prioritise exploitation, emphasising the fragmentation of the human psyche into separate and often conflicting parts that characterise the dehumanising condition. The tension between collective utility and individual agency emerges as a central theme in both plays, drawing attention to the ethical implications of prioritising the collective good over individual well-being, especially in exploitation and commodification. In this light, Om and Jairaj function as critiques of systems that suppress individuals of their autonomy. This exploration of identity destabilises the binary of centre/margin, offering a vision for a more democratic and inclusive future.

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An archetypal post modern lover as depicted in the poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

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Abstract— *The love song of Alfred j prufrock is a masterpiece of the modern times. With the overlapping of the post modern over the modern times this piece of poetry has opened the attributes of an archetypal lover of both the times to be similar and also different. Classifying the text of the poem with the text of a contemporary novel as having striking similarities and undoable differences this paper strives to glue the times together and assert the commonness in discourse of love.*

Keywords— *Modernism, postmodernism, archetypal lover, comparative analysis, and discourse of love.*



INTRODUCTION

Love is a universal emotion. However in reality it is severely complicated. Lovers share a very close bond, the second relation only to the first being between mother and child. Love and love affairs between man and woman is not something new Love has travelled the time machine and whether in the past or in coming future it has basic similarities as well as differences. Complexity of love especially the one in courtship, only in rarity do get solemnised into marriage. Rest ends up in a broken affair.

The love song of J. Alfred prufrock conveys similar feelings. The complexity is evident and the nature of love in the Modern and Post Modern times seem to overlap and also distinctively separate as is examined here under. The comparison is made with a recent novel by Kunal Bhardwaj *Love was Never mine*.

The epigraph

*S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma percioche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo*

Translation of the epigraph:

If I but thought that my response were made/
To the one perhaps returning to the world /
This tongue of flame will cease to flicker/
But since up from these depths no one has returned alive/
If what I hear is true /
I answer without being fear of ashamed.

Through the epigraph the poet wants to narrate his story to those who would metaphorically never recite it to the others. Thus we see that the poet of the love song of J. Alfred prufrock wishes to tell us about his condition after a blunt rejection from his lover. So the epigraph where shame and dejection are ornamentally projected; matches the theme of the poem. It is an example of a prototypical modern man and also an archetypal universal lover. The protagonist is heartbroken and is seen developing his thought from rejection to reconciliation. The Comparison with contemporary lovers and the ones in Eliot's times shows a sharp strike of commonality. In the recent book by Kunal Bhardwaj titled *love was never mine*. In this contemporary novel the post-modern lover archetype is depicted. He is under confident, Heart broken. Like the love song the novel has a similar narration. It is a pure tragic narration as at the end Rahul's car meets with an accident And he dies.

The poem love song begins by an address to the reader to slide along with him /accompany him as he is about to narrate a disheartening love story. At first he uses grotesque imagery to horrify the narrator and overwhelm him to ask the reason of his dejection from life.

Let us go then, you and I,

When the evening is spread out against the sky

He uses fragmentation and vague imagery like deserted streets, one night cheap hotels ,uncleaned inn , complex directions from street to street. When we readers are taken to a vexing state of mind; the poet tells us to wait and employing the art of fragmentation again describes how woman are talking about Michelangelo. This is perhaps because the poet wants to say a showy and uptown talk as it will appear later. Next continuing his grotesque imagery he uses a symbol of yellow fog to depict sickness. Yellow signifies sickness and disease. Through the symbol of fog the poet wants to depict his dismantled health and ill well being.

Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,

The muttering retreats

Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels

And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:

Streets that follow like a tedious argument

Of insidious intent.

The licking tongue signifies the absence of fog in the corners in the evening and continuing his narration he employs the metaphor of a cat that is jumping and leaping over terraces and finally cuddles to sleep. This is to compare routine affairs of humans an evening Walk and cozy winter sleep:

In the room the women come and go

Talking of Michelangelo.

These lines are repeated again and again in the poem as is similar with the novel.

In the novel the author writes:

If you want something whole heartedly , the whole universe conspires to get it for you.(pg 33 , 55)

Through these repetitions the author as well as the poet tries to bring us to a realistic as well as hypothetical situation. The poet subconsciously employs his monologue and time and again is snatched away to the talking of the woman. Similar to this the author of the novel in the

course of his life is time and again reminded of his motivating self . He is taken away by his thoughtful self into his own realm of existence.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,

The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,

Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,

Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,

Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,

Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,

And seeing that it was a soft October night,

Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

Similar to it the novel portrays a dejected lover working in the corporate sick due to the heart break.

Hello Rahul said after hari handed him the phone. He was still sobbing. (pg 57)

In the subsequent narration the poet further delays his intentions and employing the allusion "there is time" from the poem to his coy mistress by Andrew marvell ; like the poet hurries his lover for intimacy, the poet Eliot's so and not so urgency to describe his condition in love . In the next paragraph ; as a kind of validation to the delay he is making , he puts forth his inadequacies in terms of his looks and demeanour.

With a bald spot in the middle of my hair —

(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")

My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,

My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin —

(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")

A striking similarity can be seen in the novel's protagonist where he is confused shy and pre-occupied with himself. He is unsure about his looks.

No this looks a little girlish. I should wear something macho, more masculine . Girls love macho boys..(pg 16)

Again employing the similar allusion , he says that even in a minute there is time to reverse the indecisions but not the shame caused to him in love through rejection. Further quoting time again , he talks of the time spent with his lover ,and so much so that

he can compare all his life with number of coffee spoons used for coffee with the beloved:

Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.

So how should I presume?

This is similar to the text in the novel in which despite strong relationship of Shreya and Rahul Shreya does not accept him as her husband :

Rahul you are a very good person. You are one of my very good friends. But I can't love you. I can't ever love you. You are not the kind of person I am looking for to spend the rest of the life with. (pg 104)

Then the woman talking about Michelangelo is dying away from the perception of the narrator similar to the leaving of his lover. With this mention he asserts the placid nature of his love. Quoting woman again, he talks of their vanities and cruel and selfish mindedness by describing them as pinning the men as insects on the wall, keeping them in formulated solutions. With this he describes the indecency of woman he loved. Next as if lighting a cigarette and getting away with its butt ends he seems to not love her anymore:

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—

The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin

To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?

And how should I presume?

The novel also portrays a similar condition when the woman are uncertain about the man they would love:

But what? you need a good looking person who has loads of money; who is a status symbol for you while making your public appearances, even if he lusts after your physical beauty. (Pg 104)

Back in the poem, As a way to defend himself from the deceiving beauties of woman he says that he is sure not to digress from his honour and self-respect. Next describing the condition his lover left him he moans that he is equivalent to crabs and idle men glancing onto the streets. In a way of liking his situation and admitting it he wants to

be a person that malingers and also metaphorically a cat that is smothered to sleep.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!

Smoothed by long fingers,

Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers,

Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.

Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,

Eclipsing again on his emotions and like an ideal lover in his interior monologue reminisces on the days spent with her (ice cakes marmalade) and in a moment of free flow of thought he mentions his reason to his dejection and depressed state. "Brought the moment to crisis" he wanted to go ahead with his relationship and desire intimacy to which the woman had adjusted her pillow and say "this is not what I meant; Nothing at all". To this he was ashamed and saw his greatness flicker; similar to the flame in the epigraph of the poem. In the succeeding stanzas the narrator confirms that he is not Hamlet for he is procrastinating his whole affair, not being clear and getting swallowed by his own flaw or shame. However he is happy to be the other titular characters for in shame he wants seclusion:

Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?

But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald)
brought in upon a platter,

I am no prophet — and here's no great matter;

I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,

And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat,
and snicker,

And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,

After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,

Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,

Would it have been worth while,

To have bitten off the matter with a smile,

To have squeezed the universe into a ball

To roll it towards some overwhelming question,

To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,

Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—

If one, settling a pillow by her head

Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;

That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
 Would it have been worth while,
 After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled
 streets,
 After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts
 that trail along the floor—
 And this, and so much more?—
 It is impossible to say just what I mean!
 But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns
 on a screen:
 Would it have been worth while
 If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
 And turning toward the window, should say:
 "That is not it at all,
 That is not what I meant, at all."

As we topple over the ending of the poem. The narrator feels himself to be in water chambers and with the voices of humans they will drown. This is similar to the rooms where woman talked. His dreamy sustenance with his lover would end as those voices (talking of Michelangelo) would be seen as indecency at their part, gossiping about the lovers and thus the poet will no longer love and again metaphorically out of shame drown.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
 Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
 When the wind blows the water white and black.
 We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
 By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
 Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

A similar situation also ends in the novel where after rejection Rahul tragically dies .

The novel is exemplary of woman who are corrupt by heart and are unable to get love all their lives. The protagonist like prufrock himself falls in love with such woman and at the end tragically forgets about it.

CONCLUSION

Most commonly love becomes a touchstone of trust and half of human beings fail to look up to it

Infidelity, ignorance and a corrupt heart (like in case of Shreya) and case of the woman portrayed in love song by Alfred j prufrock, shows the universality of archetypal characters involved In a love affair. The only bridge where modern times can be linked to the past is by the rational understanding of love in both times. Surely so, this

similarity in the perceivable world will form a glue to coalesce the two times together .

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Sex of Things – An exploration of Bill Brown’s things through the lens of gender

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Abstract— Bill Brown’s ‘Thing Theory’ (2001) introduces the radical idea of the difference between ‘objects’ and ‘things’. For Brown an object is an entity which is functional and therefore obedient and docile drawing no significant attention from the user. A thing on the other hand is a recalcitrant object who has shed its utilitarian property and specifically by becoming non-functional makes its presence felt in the user’s /onlooker’s consciousness. This chapter uses Brown’s ‘Thing Theory’ (2001) as a tool to demonstrate that objects can be explored as both gendered and gender-ambivalent entities following their anthropomorphisation — a mass scale phenomenon Brown himself emphasises. This chapter argues that through the process of humanisation and subsequent internalisation objects can impact human perception of themselves in lasting and therefore powerful ways.



Keywords — anthropomorphisation, gender, objects, things, ‘Thing Theory’

I. INTRODUCTION

What decade of the century didn't have its own thing about things? (2015, 12)

We want things to come before ideas, before theory, before the word (2001, 16).

Bill Brown opens his seminal essay 'Thing Theory' in the special issue of Critical Inquiry (2001) with a quote of Michel Serres, 'Le sujet nait de l'objet' (1) and goes on to ask,

is there something perverse, if not archly insistent, about complicating things with theory? Do we really need anything like thing theory the way we need narrative theory or cultural theory, queer theory or discourse theory? Why not let things alone? Let them rest ... in the balmy elsewhere beyond theory. (1)

Brown's formulation of Thing Theory epitomises an ardent appeal to appraise things based on the merit of their apparent and tangible materiality. That is not to say, that in his appraisal of 'thingness', the things in the form of physical entities are divorced from human intentionality: 'objects are materialized by (ap)perceiving subject' (5), therefore, for

Brown, they are rather ineluctably linked with one another. The key premise and the promise of 'Thing Theory' are to bring things to the forefront of the contemporary discourses and register the simultaneous process where things play a crucial role in affecting human subjects whilst being continually appropriated and re-appropriated by them. The Thing Theory conceptualises 'things, the thing, and thingness' (12) as it also reveals the evolving nature of subject-object relation over few decades, spreading over the latter half of the twentieth century, till the very recent years of the twenty-first. It is a given, that in the present climate, the evolving dynamics between humans and objects are consistently and rather speedily gaining currency, and the plenitude of contemporary thinking in dealing with the complexities of human-object association reflects that momentum. Brown draws his stock of thoughts from a range of such thinking/disciplines both traditional and modern. The two key concerns of this chapter are, firstly, to analyse in-depth, Brown's objects, in their multiple dimensions through the understanding of his theorization of 'thingness'. While doing so and being true to the actual intent of the thesis, which is to explore objects in the light of their gender quotients, this section will, examine and

excavate gender overtones embedded within objects, the lack of gender within *his* inquest of objects, and also gender ambiguity in the objects using 'thingness' as the literary-theoretical pathway. Since, the whole array of Brown's objects are borrowed from diverse schools of thoughts, most notably visual art and literature, this study will reflect on Brown's renderings of those pieces, for example, his analyses of the museal objects, collectibles and objects in ruins. The latter half of the chapter will first present a detailed analysis of the Twin towers as 'lost objects' in the manner that Brown considers them, plus attempt to examine them as 'lost objects', but within the prism of gender.

Brown observes that whilst the literary world has been invested in recognising the pivotal role of the subjects in shaping up the social, cultural, and economic scene, the role of objects has been marginalised. He comments:

the criticism of the past decade has been profoundly successful in showing how literary texts exhibits multiple modes of fashioning the identity of subjects (national subjects, gendered subjects, hybrid subjects), but the identity of objects has hardly been voiced as a question ... we might say, as has Jean Baudrillard, that the object, because it is considered 'only the alienated, accursed part of the subject' has been rendered unintelligible, 'shamed, obscene, passive'. (2003, 17)

Through this argument, Brown asserts that the literature reveals how gendered identity is one of the many defining identities that a subject carries forth, and that, it is also elemental in shaping up of his/her personality. Similarly, it is also crucial to examine objects in the light of gender, especially because (as per Brown's consideration in literature and beyond) subjects live in and through their objects. In other words, objects reflect subjects.

1.1 Thing Theory - a brief overview

One of the fundamental premises of the Thing Theory draws heavily from Heideggerian axiom of the thingness of things, an idea that resists (as the previous section of this chapter analyses in great detail) the irreducibility of things to merely functional objects. Brown takes a cue from Heidegger's interrogation of the abstractness embedded within a thing, which can at best be 'glimpsed' (2001, 4) or sensed and never thoroughly grasped - an *essential* quality, which renders objects their 'thingness'. As Heidegger points out, 'the thingness of the thing remains concealed, forgotten. The nature of the thing never comes to light, that is, it never gets a hearing' (1971, 170). To which Brown echoes,

if Thing theory sounds like an oxymoron, then, it may not be because things reside in balmy elsewhere beyond theory but because they lie both at hand and somewhere outside the theoretical field, beyond a certain limit, as a recognizable yet illegible remainder'. (2004, 5)

Brown builds his theory arguing that there are two sides to any object. On one side there is the utilitarian value of an object, that is when the object fulfils its expected functional duty, such as the transparency of a windowpane offering a clear view of what is on the other side, a drilling machine being able to drill a hole in the wall, *etc.* Inversely, Brown depicts a scenario where the objects have stopped performing their estimated duties, that is when the windowpane has accumulated dirt on its surface limiting its efficacy as a facilitator of viewing activity, or a piece of malfunctioning equipment, eventually thwarting human subjects' flow of action. Interestingly, Brown concentrates more on the latter status of the object. Rather than resigning to the pragmatism that equipment is liable at times to malfunction and cause hindrances in our lives, he rationalises this particular caprice of tools as their ability to exert power over human subjects by being noticeable. Brown contends that unimpeded functioning of tools is consistently presupposed and entities such as them, command attention only by disrupting that continuum. To Brown, 'opacity' of an object, that is the prominence of its non-functional/broken form is far more suggestive of its abstractness (thingness, realness) as opposed to its 'transparency', which is their habitual disposition when they are performing as per expectation.

II. THE CORPOREALITY FACTOR

If the dominant criticism against Heidegger's idea of *Dasein* or 'being' is the lack of actual tangible body, Brown's ideation of objects does not at all at any point overlook corporeality. The key assumption of Thing Theory is to look more closely *at the bodies of objects* and not just through them. This, therefore, justifies the intuition that an unclean/opaque windowpane is much more in attendance to be physically touched and felt than its clean/transparent counterpart. Similarly, a piece of equipment is more enigmatic and phantasmal/alluring in its defunct state, and therefore more perceptually real - a characteristic, that makes them ideal entities to be regarded as gendered. It is also to be noted that Brown employs a ceaseless assortment of objects, in his multiple theses regarding objects, as opposed to Heidegger's singular jug. Interestingly, he also includes a massive inventory, an exhibition catalogue from *Voices* with which he closes his essay, 'Thing Theory'. His taxonomy ranges from quotidian sought-after objects to the undesirable for example, the detritus. Brown places emphasis on the altering power of detritus substances left behind after a life-changing transformation. In *Other Thing* (2015) he alludes to a character in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*- 'an unidentified consciousness' (2015, 17) metamorphosed from a regular human subject into walking but a palpable apparition, more appropriately, an apparition

of a man, or an abruptly altered body after having been engulfed by the powdered glass: debris from shattered buildings in the aftermath of the 9/11. His reflection on art objects ranges from the very ancient to the modern. The fact that he opens his book *Other Things* (2015) with an objective study on the mere materiality of the Shield of Achilles proves the point. In his on-going quest for thingness, he even integrates planet earth (highlighting its complete commodification by humans) into his long list of objects. All his objects or physically touchable entities have abilities to journey on unexpected trajectories and breach the code of normal conduct, because 'the experience of object agency can't be ascribed to any one disposition' (2015, 7). My exploration of the gendered identity in Brown's objects will be based on his conceptual assumption of their ability to *become* or self-reorder - a transformative event that helps them manifest their 'thinghood' over and against their, 'objecthood': that is to say from being functional to being dysfunctional - from being merely physiological to psychological, from being determinate to amorphous.

III. BECOMING OF OBJECTS THROUGH THE SOCIAL JOURNEY - CAN BROWN'S BROKEN/DEFUNCT OBJECTS BE REGARDED AS GENDERED

Brown argues that,

we begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested. (Brown, 2004, 4)

The key observation in the above excerpt is about accosting a sudden situation along the social journey of objects. The journey entails for the objects a fluidity of course or 'flow within the circuits' (2004, 4), through specific phases, that is when all the four phases - 'production and distribution' and 'consumption and exhibition' (4) that the objects must pass through are to be reflected upon. Each of these four junctures is a conduit that accounts for a transformation in the disposition of the objects, as each singular stage represents a departure of a particular kind. The objects get delivered from one conduit to the next, and their mobility ultimately concludes at 'exhibition'. Within a broader spectrum of the subject-object transaction, 'consumption' would logically be the terminal stop in the object journey, which represents the metamorphosis of an object into a commodity, and according to Brown's axiomatic position in 'Thing Theory', 'commodity' because of its use-value is bereft of 'thingness'. Furthermore, Brown's position on

object intelligence is fastened to Heidegger's analytic of the actual reality of objects, that does not undervalue the present-at-handness of objects, (defined as the objects as such, without their baggage of functional abilities - a quality central to the objects' transcendental potentiality), in preference to its ready-at-handness characterised by their potential to function. Therefore, for him, the journey of an object completes with its breaking down because that is when it draws the special spectatorship, because, in this final phase the object by breaching the promise of its operational efficacy gains a different allure - an opacity which invites curiosity. The object through its brokenness becomes an exhibit in the gaze of a beholder. Thus, the gaining of this opacity - the exhibitory quality becomes a potent reason as to why Brown must further the corridor of the object journey to 'exhibition'. For, at this stage, the object is not regarded just by its earlier credential of authenticity, but its immediately present, palpable, complex, and therefore hard to define vivacity on all its layers as a material being. In *Other things* (2015) he revisits his old outlook towards his object/thing duality and points out,

thingness is precipitated as a kind of misuse value. By *misuse value* I mean to name the aspects of an object - sensuous, aesthetic, semiotic — that become palpable, legible, audible when the object is experienced in whatever time it takes ... for an object to become another thing. (2015, 51)

For objects, entering the sequential journey through the social conveyor belt of production distribution, consumption and exhibition imply repetitive departures. By the same token, every departure through the various junctions of this chain of operation (production, distribution, consumption, and exhibition) also implies new emergences. In the current context, it is indicative of the arrival of an inscrutable newness in the corporeality of the same objects. Attaining this newness further ties in with the essential notions of 'becoming'. Therefore in plain terms, every departure generates a new beginning and thus a new becoming, and the idea of becoming irrevocably is entwined with the phenomenon of fluidity/mutability. Gender, at the height of its mutable form, is illustrative of this becoming potential.

Brown affirms that an 'object' whilst on its trajectory through the chain of operations to become a 'thing', that is, transmuting from being instrumental to ornamental, gains in the quality of 'misuse value'. 'Misuse value' is a specific juncture along the object trail. This is a state that can be reached or realized only when the 'sensuous, 'aesthetic' and 'semiotic' aspects of the objects so long obfuscated, come to the fore. Once they surface, their texture can be felt, making them 'palpable', their aesthetic (visual image) can be

comprehended, making them 'legible' and finally, their inner vibration can be sensed, making them 'audible'. In short, the entities from being sensible (transparent) become sensuous (opaque). Undoubtedly, as has been discussed earlier, Brown's imagining of 'thingness' is enthused by the sensuousness of the physicality of objects rather than the sensibilities of their use-value. But can sensuousness - a hugely subjective phenomenon be interpreted through gender? Or more pointedly, is 'sensuousness' a gendered experience?

Carolyn Korsmeyer regards sensuousness to be very much within the realm of the gender binary. She suggests that sensuousness, or the function of senses, in traditional philosophy, can be split between mind (intellect) and body (flesh). Her interrogation of this binary, or more appropriately the hierarchical arrangement of senses rests, therefore, on the understanding of the fundamental differences between the finer senses and the secondary senses. According to her, finer senses represent the visual and the auditory (matters of mind). Whereas the minor or the secondary senses, important though they are, denotes the bodily awareness of touch, smell, and taste (matters of flesh). In her own words, 'philosophy has traditionally privileged mind - abstract, nonphysical, intellectual - over the body - concrete, material and sensuous' (2004, 9). According to the 'ancient value culture' (9) matters of mind exemplifies masculine intellectual elitism, consigning the senses of flesh to the feminine domain. Nevertheless, can sensuousness widen its compass beyond the realms of art and philosophy? If so, can its rawness be one of the integral components of collective mourning following a loss of a massive scale? In such an event, what role would gender have to play?

Brown's analysis of the collective psychological turmoil that followed the collapse of the World Trade Centre in the year 2001 challenges and rearranges the meticulously fashioned theories concerning sensuousness established over centuries. The event embodies one of the most complex as well as an irreversible kind of transmuting or 'becoming' on multiple levels and therefore, is one of the most problematic incidents to comprehend. The life and the extraordinary demise of World Trade Centre is a textbook instance confirming Brown's charting of the course of an object through production, distribution, consumption, and exhibition and also this thesis' contention that objects within the folds of their 'opacity' of thingness, (the Twin Towers are considered as objects turned into things in this discussion), contain traces of gender. This section, however, retains the idea that their genderedness is sensitive, predisposed to be influenced and thus be altered, or even be nullified by altering situations.

IV. WHAT THE TWIN TOWERS STOOD FOR

Brown starts his analysis with a depiction of the twin towers, with a sense of incredulity, as to how the towers' absurdly monumental elevation, (therefore phallic), dwarfed the presence of the surrounding structures. Moreover, because of the advantage of heights, they served as two giant omniscient overseers monitoring the rhythm of trade in the world's centre of business. He juxtaposes the unmissable stability of their concrete presence against the virtual yet uninterrupted fluidity of the process of the trade itself.

the Towers literally and symbolically stood at the center around which other objects, literal and virtual, ceaselessly circulated. Their massive stability was the more important and impressive because they were emblems of the system of trade in which all things are fungible ... seem above all virtual with no solidity at all. (2015, 277)

It is not easy to single out just one definite attribute of the World Trade Centre that unifies the collective psyche of the New Yorkers, for the fact that the object relation (the relation between the New Yorkers and the towers) involved is extremely nuanced on many levels. However, the one unifying factor that constitutes the shared sentiment of the New Yorkers regarding the World Trade Centre, is the knowledge that they were markers like no other, and hence, attained an appendage status in the daily lives of the New Yorkers. In more elaborate terms, the intimacy resulting from the sense of identification between the Twin Towers and the New Yorkers were such that the mental images of them were carried along by the city dwellers in the mundaneness of their daily existence, as just another body part. From a psychological perspective, the boundary between the actual and the virtual was at best blurry. The intensity of this cathexis became even more telling after the towers' mutilation. Brown's analysis taps into that cathartic component of mass grief, which according to him (at least in the current context) is the 'misuse value' of the towers', which were once *useful objects* but following a life-changing event have turned to *things*. It is in the aftermath of their collapse, that is, in the vacuum of their physical absence the towers re-materialise, but into a phantasmal form - a feature necessary to be classified as 'real' and thus 'sensuous'. What emerges out of Brown's churning of the idea of the twin towers is a sense of hybridity as the fundamental identity of the towers following their annihilation. In the present context, hybridisation of the towers has taken place at the time of their transformation from being physical to transcendental and functional to ornamental. Deeper research of the afterlife of the towers will reveal whether or not the amalgam of these affects is resonant with gender.

Brown's enquiry into the mass mourning followed by the melancholy of the Americans post 9/11, is suggestive of the towers' totemic energy. To evaluate the towers' mystical power, it is necessary to examine their significance in two separate contexts. First, to study their significance before the attack took place and the weight of their absence after. Eric Darton, in his biography of the Twin Towers, observes very closely their trajectory moving further and further away from the 'earth's fecundity' (1999) charting a new vertical roadmap to commercial bounty, 'four million square feet of office space stacked a quarter mile into New York's skyline have been transformed into a thin gray ribbon of highway, stretching into space' (Darton, 1999). He identifies the priapic perspective as the essential thought behind the genesis of the Lower Manhattan skyline, the Twin Towers being the centrepiece of the entire spectacle. He further notes,

here wealth turned increasingly mobile and intangible as it wrested itself free from the earth bound limitation ... In Lower Manhattan's city of towers one gives no thought to the mythic emblems of the earth's limitless fecundity: cornucopia bursting with sheaves of grain, vegetables, and ripe, edible fruit. Instead we imagine bounties of debt, harvests of financial instruments ... our towers have transformed into urban silos, overflowing with disembodied commodities. (1999)

Most thinkers agree that the Twin Towers were the sum and substance embodying the tall orders of the ambitious American dream. The phallogocentric 'social imagination' (Darton, 1999) that permitted such a cityscape can seem facetious, but no less true. The American consciousness has wilfully traded off the sensuous appeals of mother earth's abundance with the sensibleness of economic gain. The attack on the Twin Towers can be read as the emasculation of America's potency. The mode of the attack can be understood as the physical violation of the most cherished structures, and the fire that followed the attack is virile in its destructive potential. The collapse of the towers from their vertiginous altitude to the level of 'Ground Zero' is a fall from grace which is compellingly gendered. Thus, so far, the gender resonances are easy to comprehend.

4.1. The Aftermath - what came out of the towers

However, the account gets complicated as the towers fall. Brown's observation illuminates what the towers reveal through their fall. Firstly, the towers leave behind a colossal amount of debris. But they are no ordinary debris as they are profoundly revelatory in terms of their contents. It is necessary to note that the contents, because of the loss of their utilitarian aspects are now objects turned into things. This event has succeeded in transforming their transparency or plainness of use-value into the opacity of misuse value.

Brown notes among countless other items the debris contained a huge heap of 'high-heeled shoes left lying on the streets, shed by women running for their lives' (2015, 278). This specific heap of shoes can be characterised as gendered commodities designed to cater to the female consumers in their previous lives. But what remains of their genderedness after they had been abandoned by their owners? The once useful accessories that used to contain and also enhance the beauty of female feet were turned into trash. This means, that at overwhelming moments such as this, the very useful accessories through which the subjects define their personalities, including the crucial gender expression is instinctively forgotten. In a figurative sense, these are the times, when the subjects are reborn by surviving disasters and so are their disowned belongings. Therefore, the shoes at this altered stage are still adequate to be assigned feminine adjectives, but purely by the dint of their anatomical realities. But whether they become less feminine or even gender indeterminate, without the bodily touch of women, is a complex position to commit to. The above argument allows the inference that those shoes have lost their identity as gendered objects along with their veracity of use-value ('gender' at least in this context *is* rooted in their functional value,) following the disaster. It will be interesting to note, however, if their subsequent continuation in the environment of wreckage following the disaster has further altered them on numerous other levels (like many other objects caught up in disasters), and whether it complicates even further their already problematic gender. Julian Stallabrass' meditation on the objects relegated to trash, illuminates a stage in the life of objects which is beyond the consideration of gender. His theory suggests items in debris come to possess the demeanour of children who are lost and strayed off the mainstream of life. He imagines that to be able to integrate with their fellow items in the dirt, their first job is to disintegrate. Whilst in the process of breaking down, for the very first time since their birth as commodities, they unlearn their use-value defined by their performativity, and with that, they also shed their gender. Finally, through casting off their social baggage they emerge as matter. In doing so, they are reborn or regain consciousness on an alien plane where they are too nascent and pure to be gendered. The rebirth of the shoes in the wreckage is a stark reminder of the man in DeLillo's *Falling Man* covered with glass, unrecognisable, waking up in a strange space, trying to make sense of his abruptly altered surroundings, *or* being born of the womb of the towers covered with its innards. This also implies a turn of an event can ascribe complex femininity to the towers. But the man and the shoes in their current form (the re-borns) attain an unsullied aura of innocence and honesty, tying in with Stallabrass' thinking: 'somehow, during this

process, their allure is not lost but loosed from exchange value, it takes on an apparently more genuine *aesthetic* air' (italics added) (Candlin and Guins, 2009, 408).

4.2. Objects over Subjects

Brown asserts that the mass mourning and the ensuing melancholia that followed the Twin Tower tragedy was more about the loss of the structures itself and all that was within those structures (the internal substructures and other objects) and much less about the loss of human lives:

I want to speculate that this august stability [the apparent physical stability of the towers] ... had a great deal to do with *why* the emotional response to the loss of the built space, a human artifact, almost instantly exceeded the response to the loss of human lives. In diluted Heideggerian terms, an ontic tragedy (that involved beings) soon became ontological (a tragedy about being). It was clear that America plunged into a state of mourning for the lost objects ... not really knowing what has been lost, the towers having become the emblems of something like the lost objects. (2015, 277)

Can lost objects be perceived as gendered? In that case, if the towers *are* the lost objects what is their gender position following their collapse? Freud's analytics have highly sexualised lost objects. His evaluation of the entire process of mourning and melancholia, a study dealing with object relations (1914-16) puts the fixation with cathected objects within the ambit of libidinal consciousness. Psychical identification with lost objects forms the centrality of his observation in his patients' dealing with the loss of 'loved object' (1914-16), which surmises that the 'lost object' can be regarded as gendered since gender plays a crucial role in shaping our identities. Similarly, for Lacan, as Stephen Frosh suggests, the 'lost object' is the mother's womb: 'the infant is born into an environment of loss, already cut off from something (the womb or the mother's immediate presence)' (2012, 178).

4.3. Re-materialization of the lost objects

Brown does not elaborate in detail on the gender perspective of the towers barring a few instances where he alludes to their apparent phallic architecture and at another time, on an oppositional note, he underlines the towers' intrinsic vulnerability resulting from their superlative visibility. His analysis largely focuses on their spectral presence as objects that have ceased to exist, and the efforts to resurrect them in the form of mass-produced 'high-end 9/11 collectibles' (2015, 274), which he calls '9/11 kitsch' (276). He recounts, they come in the form of, 'figurines, statues, pins, ornaments, and plates' all of which have Twin Towers enshrined on them, together with the statues of 'the fire fighters' and reproductions of 'the patriotic heart itself'

(Brown, 2015, 274). What is significant about these ornaments is that they represent the compulsive nature of the Americans' attachment to the towers which essentially authenticates the American 'self-determination' (2015, 276) embedded in consumerism. Secondly, they signify the ultimate exploit of consumerism - the commodification of grief. Through the manufactured surrogates, 'the towers became a Thing, a metaphysical presence more massive than they really ever were' (281). The importance of the little miniature collectibles is also because they uncover a disorderly spot in the consciousness of the mourners. The collectibles specially designed to replicate the towers (although in a radically dissimilar scale), help the memories of the towers to be corporealized into proper concrete physical matters even after they were gone. And because of the advantage of their handy dimensions, as opposed to the towers itself, the collectibles feel much tamer. The tameness along with the portability of the incarnates, offers the mourners a window of relief amidst the acute trauma of loss. Moreover, by acting as accessible proxies, they help create an imaginary sense of control over the objects that in truth are lost. And in so doing they endorse a false sense of denial in the minds of the mourners, thereby generating a feeling of triumph over the tragedy, however transitory.

Considering the above nostalgia, the collectibles can account for palliative hence feminine affect. On the contrary, however, they are the reminders of American creed of materialism stimulated by the principles of trade - a traditionally masculinist construct. Yet, Brown's scrutiny of 'lost objects' puts them in a gender-neutral area. His evaluation of some of the 'surviving objects', which in their previous lives belonged to the towers, the actual 'lost objects', and hence a part of them, such as a squeegee, or a 'twenty-dollar pair of handcuffs' (Brown, 2015, 280) explains this ambivalence. According to Brown's details, these ordinary objects not just escaped the crash, but were also successfully put to task to rescue the trapped survivors in the damaged towers. Their attribute as saviours should be able to reverse their ordinariness and situate them within the gender spectrum as heroes, which was the case. But Brown's treatment was not to follow the popular sentiment and exalt them with heroism but to treat them with sympathy, at par with their fellow human survivors. He underlines their versatility, yet, his interrogation of them does not point to any conclusive gender identity. He appositely recognises the mourners' 'fascination' for and 'emotional investment' in all the objects associated with the Twin Towers tragedy but 'as a kind of nonerotic fetishism that ... both marks and disavows an unendurable absence' (2015, 280).

V. CONCLUSION

The central motif of Brown's narrative of Thing Theory is to look at objects for their appearance. Thing Theory suggests that the morphology or the surface reality does not conceal the story or the affects of the objects. For him the physical contours do the storytelling if indeed they have a story to tell, because the stories are inscribed on them, saving the pain of having to scratch the surface. For example, when he focuses on Claes Oldenburg's grotesque recreation of America's iconic food the hamburger, the model's monumental scale pitted against the rubbery limpness of its texture reveals its fatigue as an overworked fetishized symbol. Brown concedes, 'if these objects are tired, of our perpetual reconstitution of them as objects of our desire ... they are tired of our longing. They are tired of us' (2004,15). Brown accepts the tradition of humanisation of objects in art because they are part and projection of humanity. I have earlier argued that the first step to gender an object is to humanise or more appropriately anthropomorphise them. Brown quotes Donald Judd critiquing Oldenburg's objects calling them 'grossly anthropomorphised' (14). He then reaffirms, 'Indeed they are teasingly mammary, ocular, phallic, facial, vaginal, scrotal' (14). Here Brown's deduction is clinical. He reads the objects barely by their sexes, leaving hardly any room for the subtleties of gender. But earlier in the thesis I have argued that anthropomorphisation of objects cannot fully occur without the participation of gender. Gender somehow inhabits the ill-defined location between biology and society. Therefore, we will forever be intrigued by the gender fluidity of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*. Since, although we appreciate it is and will remain a 'male' object, will continue to perplex us with its explicit vaginal contour.

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Breaking the Silence: A Quest for Self in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror*

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Abstract— Shashi Deshpande, one of the prominent Indo-Anglian writers, captures tension, trauma, and turmoil of the post-colonial Indian women in her writings. Her novels, especially, deal with the struggles, and daily battles of the middle-class female characters whose stories remain neglected, unheard, and silent in the patriarchal society. Though Deshpande's female characters remain in confinement, subjugation, and silence in the male-controlled society, but they attempt to show resistance by confronting the difficulties, breaking silence, and learning to speak. Thus, they contest their subaltern conditions. Deshpande uses consciousness of the protagonists as the site to challenge the repressive forces that dominate, and control women in the Indian society. The rise of awareness and self-consciousness enable the protagonists to search for self-fulfillment, and self-identity. Thus, this paper aims to show the protagonist, Saru's pursuit to attain selfhood, and subjectivity against gender stereotyping in a male-dominated society in *The Dark Holds No Terror* through feminist, psychoanalytic, and post-colonial perspectives.



Keywords— middle-class women, silence, subjugation, consciousness, selfhood

I. INTRODUCTION

Writers consider writing as a medium of expressing unspeakable thoughts, and revealing inner conflicts and turmoil. For them, writing is like having a conversation with one's (an)other self. Notable Indo-Anglian writer and novelist Shashi Deshpande (2012) opines, "the novelist is impelled into writing by something deep within her, something she can't explain" (381). So, writing is "a kind of self-revelation" to her (Choudhury, 1995, 20). She further believes, "the writing self is another self" (2012, 381). Her writings, especially, novels, capture "the tensions and fears" of the inner psyche of the female protagonists which remain insignificant, neglected and unheard in the patriarchal society (Gopal, 2009, 151). Her stories deal with the middle-class female characters, their struggles, conflicts and problematic relationships— lack of communication, silences in marriage. However, Deshpande firmly believes

that, women's tales are not only about "victimization", rather they are also celebrations of liberation and "liberated woman" (Choudhury, 1995, 15). Though faced by many hardships in their lives, women in her novels show "resistance towards gender stereotyping" (Nair, 2010, 177). The novelist uses consciousness of the protagonists as the site to challenge the repressive forces that subjugate, and dominate women in the Indian conventional society. The objective of this paper is to portray the protagonist, Saru's confrontation with the obstacles in the course of her life as well the eventual realization of the new meaning of (her)self and subjectivity in a male-dominated society in *The Dark Holds No Terror* (henceforth, *The Dark*).

II. DISCUSSION

Deshpande is well known for her close understanding and keen observation of the middle-class female characters in

domestic sphere in post-independent India. Rosemary Marangoly George (1996) asserts that, in a new independent nation, women are able to lead luxurious life, but their individual stories and experiences lack “sense of fulfilment” (170). In her novels, Deshpande represents the emptiness that the middle-class women experience after marriage. Elizabeth Jackson (2010) opines, in India, the popular and cultural narratives, e.g., Bollywood films and songs, daily soaps, etc. uphold the structures of marriage. Similarly, Jasbir Jain points out “there are no role models available for managing life without a husband” (2003, 84). She further comments that “husband lessness, in any form, is perceived as personal failure to attract a husband [if a woman is single], or keep him [if separated], or failure to look after him [if widowed]” (84). The protagonists of Deshpande’s novels, normally married women, face personal crisis in their lives, which result their withdrawal from public and private responsibilities to reflect on their past and present lives, conditions and situations. In the process, they excavate painful past, reimagine their failed or dysfunctional relationship with a parent or spouse and seek to understand the meaning of self and relationship anew. Finally, the resolution generally happens with a new attitude towards the seemingly situation.

In her significant work, *The Dark*, Deshpande deals with the unacknowledged and often considered ridiculous subject matter in a stereotypical patriarchal society but a grim reality in Indian society: marital rape. The story revolves around an educated woman named Sarita or Saru, who is successful in her career as a doctor in the public sphere, but suffers from traumatic experiences in her personal sphere, everyday, at home. Her fickle conjugal life along with her bitter childhood experiences cause acute psychological trauma that later influence her, eventually, to self-query. Though at first, she runs away from her husband, her children, her past memories, but later her decision to encounter with these “darkness” of her life assert her quest for identity.

Though Saru is an educated woman, her gendered (constructed) identity leads to her psychological and physical repression in her married life. In fact, her relationship with her husband, Manohar or Manu, at some point turns into hellish experience for her that she escapes from it and comes to her parent’s house. The initial stage of Saru’s conjugal life is full of love and passion for each other. There existed a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere between the husband and the wife. Saru enjoyed the exhilaration of a blissful married life: “The initial stage of Saru’s conjugal life is full of love and passion for each other. There existed a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere between the husband and the wife. Saru enjoyed the exhilaration of a blissful married life, “I became in an

instant a physically aroused woman, with an infinite capacity for loving and giving, with a passionate desire to be absorbed by the man I loved” (40). Her unwanted and previously deprived self finds its solace in Manu. Physical intercourse became the 'triumphant assertion' of their love. Saru reminisces that Manu's love has made her feel “being wanted”, the feeling that she has craved for a long time (40). But soon, her world crumples down and she comes out from the 'illusion' of a beautiful dream. In a stereotypical Indian Hindu society, which runs on the terms and conditions of a man, a married woman is regarded as the socially, economically and religiously sanctioned property of her husband. Ancient Hindu religious books also decline women's rights in marriage. The Hindu lawmaker, Manu proclaims that:

No act is to be done according to her own will by a young girl, a young woman, though she is in her own house. In her childhood a girl should be under the will of her father, in her youth under that of her husband; her husband being dead, under the will of her sons. A woman should never enjoy her own will. Though of bad conduct or debauched, a husband must always be worshipped like a god by a good wife (Briffault, 1952, 345).

In this traditional society, woman is considered as the receiver and man as the provider/ bread earner which asserts man’s superiority and supremacy over the other sex. It is this idea of role-playing that signify his masculinity. In this stereotypical society, whenever, man fails to provide adequate financial support to his family, it is considered as a matter of ignominy and humiliation to his masculinity. This is what happened with Saru’s husband Manu. Saru’s rise in the professional life as a doctor casts a shadow in her personal life. The more Saru gets recognition, the more Manu thinks him inferior to her. Saru’s dignity and financial success hurts Manu’s male ego. In a traditional Indian society, it is expected that “A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband. If he's an MA, you should be a BA. If he's 5`4` tall, you shouldn't be more than 5` 3` tall. If he's earning five hundred rupees, you should never earn more than four and ninety-nine rupees” (*The Dark* 137). The smiles and greetings that Saru receives from other people make Manu jealous and almost invisible to other’s eyes. Saru’s growing self-esteem makes her “inches taller” and her husband “inches shorter” in Manu’s eyes (42). In a society dominated by males, the relationship between a husband-wife is always like the mathematical equation of ‘a+b’, where the husband stands for ‘a’ and wife for ‘b’. Though in mathematical term ‘a+b’ is equal to ‘b+a’, Saru considers that in their relationship ‘a+b’ is in no way equal

to 'b+a'. This equation is "a monstrously unbalanced equation, lopsided, unequal, and impossible" from Manu's perspective (42). His sense of (in)security disturbs the equilibrium of the family. The situation aggravates with the question of a journalist in an interview. The interviewer asked him about his feeling of his wife "earning not only the butter but most of the bread" (200). Though he acted cool before the interviewer and laughed it out, at night he vented his anger and frustration out on bed for the first time. He attacked her "like an animal" hurting her with "his hands, his teeth, his whole body" (201). Since then, it became a routine for him. The novel raises frustration against such social restriction theory which compelled a woman to stay, always, few steps behind her husband. The novelist foregrounds an environment of the psychological repression created through a male supremacist ideology where women's financial solvency does not provide or guarantee emancipation and freedom rather it destroys women's selfhood. In the novel, marital rape is represented as a form of violence, a tool of patriarchal violence. Ulaka Anjaria (2012) considers, in the novel, "marital rape is represented as a desire to express violence (toward Saru), rather than as motivated by sexual desire" (330). Her observation echoes Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's opinion: "rape as phenomenon in contemporary India is more properly understood as the expression of (male) violence — sanctioned by various models of social power— rather than of sexual desire" (1993, 78). In the novel, violence towards Saru emerges out of Manu's resentment at Saru's success as a doctor. Her success and prosperity hurt his male ego and its supremacy. Feeling inferior in public sphere, Manu, like Pappachi in *The God of Small Things*, asserts his supremacy as a husband/lord, in Saru's private sphere.

Saru's traumatic experience in her conjugal life leads her to silence. In *The Dark*, silence symbolizes the negation of the self and it casts a diabolical shadow on Saru's life. Her continuous hesitation in confronting Manu only increases her miseries. She fails to comprehend Manu's dual personality, his sadism and immediate forgetfulness of his deed. She also cannot put together "the fearful stranger of the night and the rather pathetic Manu of other times" (96). Her inability of understanding her husband leads her to maintain silence. To some extent, Manu, got encouragement from her silence to act violently against her day by day. She also fathoms the consequence of her dilemma:

I should have spoken about it the very first day. But I didn't. And each time it happens and I don't speak; I put another brick on the wall of silence between us. Maybe one day I will be walled alive within it and die a slow, painful death (96).

Saru tries to open up with professor Kulkarni about Manu's sadist behaviour, the fact that "he's a wreck, a ruin, a sadist" but holds herself (97). She also makes her mind to talk to her friend Nalu about her problems, but again gets struck by the thought that Nalu would take her problems as "part of women's problems" (121). And again, she maintains silence and let herself immerse in her own agony. Saru's distress leads her to decide to divorce Manu. But once again, her thinking of her children and the world leads to maintain further silence.

Silence works as a metaphor in Deshpande's work that carries significant meanings. The protagonist of Deshpande's another ground breaking novel *That Long Silence* (1989) also suffers from the excruciating pain of silence. Silence acts as suppressive tool against women. In the novel, Jaya negates herself and engages herself in the socially assigned roles of dutiful wife, mother, and partner. She remains silent in order to maintain a peaceful ambivalence in her domestic life. Jaya's husband Mohan takes her silence to be granted and transforms her into a mere puppet of his wishes. Silence never permits her to express her frustration and anger of her life. Anjaria (2012) considers Deshpande's female protagonists are compelled to silence by "both their husband, and their own sense of acceptability within society" (330). In *The Dark*, there also grows a "sense of acceptability" within her. Saru blames herself for her wretched relationship with her husband. Her self-loathing is reflected when she says, "My husband is a failure because I destroyed his manhood" (217). Guilt absorbs Saru's psyche. Her fear of losing in the oblivion, makes her a refugee who flees from one place to another. Saru's psychological dilemma can be connected to that of Doris Lessing's protagonist Susan Rawling in the short story titled "To Room Nineteen". Like Saru, Susan suffered from the psychological problem that stems from the expectations of the patriarchal society towards a woman. Susan, previously a successful woman, left her job for her husband Matthew and became engaged with domestic affairs sacrificing her personal aspirations. Burdened by her responsibility as a good housewife and good mother, Susan started to feel suffocated like a prisoner. An emotionally and psychologically exhausted Susan found her much needed space in the quiet atmosphere of Room Number 19 of Fred's hotel. This room or space symbolizes Susan's search for her inner self that is distinguished from the socially and culturally constructed self. Like Susan, Saru leaves her husband, children, and looks for a space so that she can have time to ponder over her conjugal life.

Leaving her husband and two children, Sarita retreats to her ancestral home for a quest of self-identity. Returning to her ancestral home gives her opportunity to interact with the past and regain integrity. Ancestral home and family

relationship always have importance in Indian subcontinent. The ancestral homes are considered as the places where family members reunite together either in joy, e.g. social and religious festivals, or in sufferings, e.g., death. In Deshpande's writings, home serves special purpose. Nair (2010) comments, "In the novels of Shashi Deshpande, the characters come to life when they are set against the background of these structures, which are places associated with nostalgic memories of sounds and smells" (175). In Deshpande's novels, material culture of home plays a significant role which evokes memory, nostalgia and a hope of re-living the past in the present. Saru thinks about her past memories, her bitter relationships with her mother and the death of her brother Druva. The terrible guilt of not being able to save her brother from drowning and ultimately losing him causes a permanent scar and guilt in Saru's consciousness. In her dream, she used to have nightmare in a form of dialogue of self-blaming between the conscious and the unconscious self:

You killed your brother.

I didn't. truly I didn't. It was an accident.

I loved him, my little brother. I tried to save him truly.

Truly I tried. But I couldn't. And I ran away. I admit that. But I didn't kill him. How do you know you didn't kill him? How do you know? (177)

She was always fearful of dark. Dhruva's face always comes to her dream in the dark. She observes, "When the light comes on, it goes away. When the dark comes, it returns" (205). So, darkness always means a space of fear and terror to her.

While re-living her childhood memories and experiences, Saru finds a reflection of Druva on Madhav, a student who lives with her father in their house, and through him she once again goes through her traumatic experience. Saru nurses Madhav in his high fever, recovers him from illness and death. This recreates to do the thing that was not possible for her to do for Druva. Thus, it releases her from guilt and self-blame. Moreover, returning to her childhood fantasy and later accepting that Dhruva is dead and she can "never bring him back" helps her to redeem from the guilt in the past (212). This assists in getting rid of the terrors of the darkness. Through her narrative technique Deshpande uses past as an important element in the present, utilizes memory as an integral component in analysing present circumstances and activities. In order to overcome her present turmoil and conflicts Saru needs to turn inward. In focusing inward, on her inner agony, pain and conflict, and revisiting her traumatic memory of the death of Druva contributes to the healing process. Her settlement and

confrontation with the guilt of the past prepares her to settle the present tension and turmoil.

Another chapter of Saru's distressing memory of the past is related to her mother which has a great impact on Saru and her negation of life in the present. From her childhood, Saru does not have a good relationship with her mother. There remains a gap between mother and daughter. Her mother internalized the patriarchal gender norms and considered expenditure in girls' education as an unnecessary thing. She believed that girls are destined to be married off to another family. So, spending money on women's education is waste of money and wealth. Therefore, she was against Saru's education in the medical college. Moreover, after, Dhruva's death, she held Saru responsible for the death of her son, "Why are you still alive when he is dead?" (77). Later, Saru's love affair and consequently her marriage to lower caste Manu was considered as an act of betrayal to her mother. Till her death, Saru's mother denied her as a daughter. "Silence had become a habit" in mother-daughter's relationship (199). It is only after the news of her mother's death that Saru can return to her ancestral home. She considers that her marital hardship results from her mother's curse. This continuous self-blaming causes her self-negation and self-renunciation. Deshpande, analyses Saru's return to her ancestral house, after her mother's death from Jungian interpretation and considers this returning, as "a dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious" symbolically (qtd in Nair, 178). Her healing process starts with sympathizing with her mother after death. After homecoming to her house, she wore her mother's dresses, dressed like her mother. Forgetting the bitter memories of their relationship, Saru identified with her mother and this caused to get rid of her guilt and psychological distress.

Saru's retreating to her ancestral home helps not only to release her haunting past memories but also helps to break the silences that she carries within her due to hardship in the conjugal life. Her guilt and traumatic memories in the childhood doubles with her marital hardship which together makes her troubled and silent person. She kept her marital difficulties within herself finding no possibility to share it with anyone else. This acts as a burden to her mind and consciousness. Bonnie Zare (2004) argues, "Deshpande's characters experience revelations via two modes: conversing with others or writing to an imaginary listener" (86). Her conversation with her father serves as a way of revealing her inner turmoil. Her father's curiosity to know "What's wrong? Is something wrong between you and your husband?" paves Saru's way of expressing her tensions and fear (198). Saru understands the accomplishment of her coming home lies in the act of speaking and telling her affliction to her father. This is for the first time she releases her pain and agony to someone. Her father's sympathetic

invitation, "What is it, Saru? Why don't you tell me what it is" gives her courage and offers an atmosphere of empathy and support to open her heart (198). Through using a medium of listener Deshpande allows her protagonist to speak. According to philosopher Kelly Oliver, for asserting subjectivity it is important to re-present one's reality. For this it is necessary to speak or write to an actual person or an imaginary listener. Oliver thinks, "Subjectivity is dependent on a sympathetic listener, an interlocutor" who begins the "internal dialogue that makes subjective experience possible" (1998, 176). In *The Dark*, Saru's father acts "a sympathetic listener". His willingness to know the problems as well as his interest to listen to her ordeals help to break her silence. She shares for the first time of her husband Manu's sadism, love for cruelty, to someone. The act of speaking gives Saru an opportunity to break stillness to the world and most importantly, to herself. Rajan opines, Deshpande's protagonists break silence "at one level through the act of writing itself, at another level through renegotiating interpersonal relations within the family" (1993, 87-88). She shares the traumatic experiences of Manu's cruelty with the only surviving member of her family, her father: "I was sleeping and I woke up and there was this...this man hurting me" (*The Dark*, 201). Through sharing with her father, Saru exerts out of her anger, frustration, pain and agony which helps her to reduce her torment, anguish and suffering. The way, Saru finds relief and shelter to her ancestral home, her father also acts, metaphorically, as a home, where she finds refuge and support.

Saru's father works as an instrument for attaining Saru's self-realization. It is her father who advises her to forget her traumatic past, to accept the reality of the death of her mother and brother and to live in the present. He said, "I told you ... they're dead. They can do nothing. Why do you torture yourself with other?" (217) He asked her to stop reproaching herself and stop thinking about the past. Moreover, after getting the news of Manu's visit to Saru's parental home to return her, Saru became perplexed and wanted to escape and withdraw from there. Here again her father suggests to confront the problem, rather than running away from it. Through her father's voice, probably we find an echo Deshpande's voice: "Don't go without meeting your husband. Talk to him. Tell him what's wrong" (217). He encourages her to break the silence and communicate. He asks for communication for resolution. Furthermore, he advised to think about her life, to give importance to her life: "Are you not sufficient for yourself? It's your life, isn't it?" (217). It is her father who first talks about that Saru should think about her life first, and later about other people. From her father's guidance, Saru learns to reflect on her selfhood. In her *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf

opines a personal room, a particular space is vital for a woman to reflect, rethink on her selfhood and identity construction. In Deshpande's novels, domestic space plays a very significant role for awakening her consciousness and sense of self. Deshpande affirms, "I think for women understanding her world begin with the domestic sphere" (24). It is with her family members in her ancestral house that Saru discovers her selfhood and re-evaluates her identity: "My life is my own" (220). Through her authorial point of view, Deshpande comments that, her parental home works as "the connecting link" where Saru "had found" the meaning of her life (220). She learns to recognize her shortcomings and emphasizes to take the responsibility for her life. She realizes it is she who is responsible for her suffering to some extent also; it is her thinking that make her to blame herself: "If I have been a puppet, it is because I made myself one" (220). When Deshpande was asked about "who stops Saru from speaking" the novelist answers, "One answer is Saru herself. She has learned to gag herself" (1995, 20) Her lack of courage has made her fearful: "I have been my own enemy" (*The Dark*, 221). Saru's discovery of her true self occurs in the domestic sphere and in connection with the family members.

At the end of the novel, we meet a new Saru, who recognizes the new meaning of her life. She finds that apart from her role as a woman, she is a human being. Apart from her familial role as a daughter, a sister, a wife and a mother, she realizes has a professional role as a doctor. Josna Rege (2003) comments, "Her social role as a doctor gives her ... the recognition that she has a public identity in addition to her private role of daughter, wife, and mother" (55). She embodies all of these familial roles but she has much more things to do. At the end, we see her visiting to a sick child as a doctor. She emphasizes her social role as doctor to serve the people, serve the community. The novel ends with Saru's positive thinking: "there were no thoughts in her, except those of the child she was going to help" (*The Dark*, 221). Moreover, she is willing to take the challenge to talk to Manu. She asks her father to tell Manu to wait for her return from attending a sick child. She is willing to confront to Manu, and is ready to talk to him. The novel ends with her courage to talk, rather than keeping silence. Deshpande enables her protagonist to speak. Hence, a subaltern can speak here. At the end, we find a picture of a courageous and liberated woman through Saru who does not have any terror for darkness, any kind of fear, rather "her mind ranged over all the possibilities" (222).

III. CONCLUSION

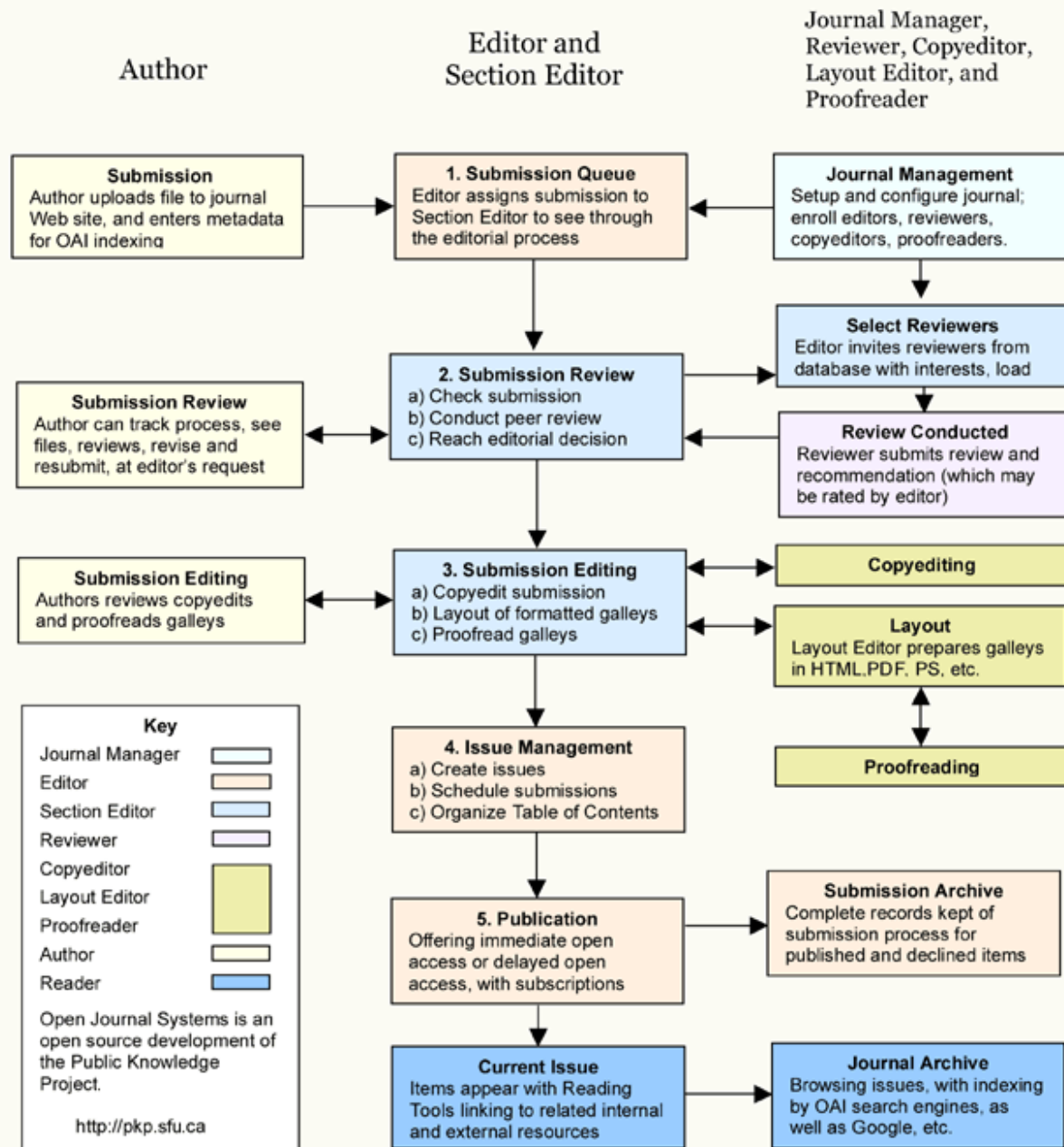
As a feminist writer, Shashi Deshpande delineates the multiple experiences of women, especially middle-class

women in her writings. Rooted in Indian tradition and culture, her novels capture the new complexities and challenges women face in their daily life in a post-colonial Indian society. Through her writings, on the one hand, Deshpande portrays the dilemmas, complexities and gender inequality of the stereotypical Indian society, on the other hand, she does not negate the significance of the values, customs of traditional Indian society. For seeking the solution of the problem, she takes shelter in age-old ancient ethos and ethics. While searching for subjectivity, agency and selfhood for women, Deshpande does not rely on Western feminism, rather she believes in Indian tradition institutions- family and family relationship, ancestral home, marriage etc. She does not believe that identity can be developed in isolation and alienation, rather identity can be constructed through communication. Like her other novels, the story of Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror* revolves around a middle-class woman who faces difficulties and emptiness in her married life, still she finds a way for resolution. Through her protagonist, Saru, Deshpande portrays a strong female character who learns to confront the difficulties and finds her way for liberation.

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