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# BODHI

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*Special Issue on*

**MODERN RESEARCH IN  
HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE**



*Editors-in-chief*

**Dr. MANIMANGAI MANI**

**Dr. VEERAMOHAN VEERAPUTHRAN**

**Dr. J. JOHN SEKAR**

**Dr. S. BALAKRISHNAN**



# **BODHI**

## **International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science**

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**Vol.9**

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## **BIJRHAS**

The **BODHI International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science** (E-ISSN: 2456-5571) is online, peer reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal, which is powered & published by **Center for Resource, Research and Publication Services, (CRRPS)** India. It is committed to bring together academicians, research scholars and students from all over the world who work professionally to upgrade status of academic career and society by their ideas and aims to promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of humanities, arts and science.

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science. agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Research should be at the core and must be instrumental in generating a major interface with the academic world. It must provide a new theoretical frame work that enable reassessment and refinement of current practices and thinking. This may result in a fundamental discovery and an extension of the knowledge acquired. Research is meant to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous works, solve new or existing problems, support theorems; or develop new theorems. It empowers the faculty and students for an in-depth approach in research. It has the potential to enhance the consultancy capabilities of the researcher. In short, conceptually and thematically an active attempt to provide these types of common platforms on educational reformations through research has become the main objective of this Journal.

**Dr. S. Balakrishnan**

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**Malaysia**



**Associate Professor Dr. HAZLINA ABDUL HALIM**

**FOREWORD**

I wish to extend my warm welcome to all speakers, presenters and participants to the 4<sup>th</sup>. Bodhi International Conference on Humanities, Arts and Science, which was first held in 2018 and has grown to become the exchange ground for theoretical conceptions, research insights and practical experiences in various disciplines. For those participants visiting Malaysia for the first time, I wish you *Selamat Datang* to our beautiful country, and hope you enjoy your stay. This year, we are thankful to be able to overcome COVID-19 that has disrupted almost every aspects of our lives. We are grateful that we are able to conduct the conference once again, face to face. Thus, it is hoped that this conference will serve as an excellent international platform for networking and exchanging new ideas, as well as to disseminate the latest research results and findings.

I thank all contributors for their time and support in making this conference a success and I sincerely hope that this joint collaboration will spark new ideas for the betterment of mankind and knowledge.

*"With Knowledge We Serve"*

Thank you

**Associate Professor Dr. HAZLINA ABDUL HALIM**

Dean

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication

Universiti Putra Malaysia

Malaysia







# UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

43400 UPM Serdang,  
Selangor DarulEhsan  
**Malaysia**



**Associate Professor Dr. ARBAAYAH ALI TERMIZI**

## **FOREWORD**

It is indeed with great honour, I welcome all delegates to the 4<sup>th</sup> Bodhi International Conference on Humanities, Arts and Science (BICOHAS - 2025). I am pleased to acknowledge that this collaboration which was initiated in 2018 between the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia with Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science, India has never ceased in action despite the 2-year lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic. It is my sincere hope that the conference would continue to be the sustainable platform for new and existing researchers, scholars, practitioners, and graduate students to network and exchange ideas in the field of humanities, arts, and science.

With this opportunity, I would like to extend my appreciation to the organising committee of Bodhi, International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science India and Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia in making this event a great success. May all well that ends well and happy conferencing.

*“With Knowledge We Serve”*

Thank You

**Associate Professor Dr. ARBAAYAH ALI TERMIZI**

Head

Department of English

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia





# UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

43400 UPM Serdang,  
Selangor DarulEhsan  
**Malaysia**



**Dr. MANIMANGAI MANI**

## **MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON**

It is great honour to welcome all of you to our 4<sup>th</sup> Bodhi International Conference on Humanities, Arts and Science (BICOHAS-2025). This conference is jointly organised by the Department of English (UPM), Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science, India and Co-organised Institutions from India. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. S. Balakrishnan for his long-standing support and for his efforts in collaborating with our university. His vision and dedication have made it possible for scholars from India to attend this conference in Malaysia, providing a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration. It is my sincere hope that this assembly of scholars and researchers will act as a platform to share ideas and start some networking among scholars in India and Malaysia. I believe only through research and practice that we would be able to contribute to the nation and the world at large with the advances and innovations in the field of humanities, arts and science. This conference will also act as a steppingstone for new researchers and post graduate students to attend and present papers in other international conferences.

Finally, this conference would not have been a success without the support of UPM's Vice Chancellor, the Dean of Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Head of Department of English Language and all the committee members of BICOHAS-25 from India and Malaysia for their tireless efforts in organizing this conference.

*"With Knowledge We Serve"*

Thank you

**Dr. MANIMANGAI MANI**

Senior Lecture

Department of English

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia





ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಅಕ್ಕಮಹಾದೇವಿ ಮಹಿಳಾ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ  
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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Greetings!

It gives me a great joy to know that Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia and Bodhi International Journal Jointly organising the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference (BICOHAS-25) at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia during 26, 27, 28 February and 1, 2 March 2025.

The research is the space where one can both explore and innovate as well as channelizing the spirit of exploring, probing and analyzing. In this competitive realm, the focus of a researcher should not narrow down to one particular discipline, there are numerous ways of combining the research of one field to that of another and that should be of paramount importance when attempting a research area. Here is an effort to combine research worldwide.

I strongly believe this conference is a step towards bringing in more interrogative spirit and creating a new epistemology with this pedagogical practice. The motive of this conference is also one such effort to create a holistic relationship between various fields of knowledge pertaining to Science, Arts and Humanities. This amalgamation will produce a beautiful platform to explore newer forums in present and future.

I congratulate the conference team and look forward to fruitful collaborations and outcomes.

With Regards

**Prof. P. KANNAN**

Senior Professor & Chairman

Department of PG Studies & Research in English

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Karnataka





## NAGALAND UNIVERSITY

(A Central University established by the act of Parliament, 35/1989)

Department of English

Kohima Campus, Meriema, Kohima-797004

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### HEAD'S MESSAGE

**Dear Professors and Research Scholars,**

On behalf of the Department of English, Nagaland University, we extend our sincere gratitude to you for your invaluable collaboration with us for the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> BODHI International Multidisciplinary Conference, scheduled to take place from February 26 to March 2, 2025, at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia. This conference, focusing on *Modern Research in Humanities, Arts, and Sciences*, promises to be an exciting opportunity for sharing knowledge and fostering academic dialogue across various disciplines. Your initiation and support play a crucial role in enhancing the success of this conference, and we are confident that it will be a platform for enriching discussions and future collaborations.

We are eager to continue fostering our partnership with you for future conferences, research collaborations, and publications. We truly appreciate your commitment and look forward to many more fruitful collaborations in the years to come.

Warm regards,

**Prof. NIGAMANANDA DAS**

Head, Department of English

Nagaland University

Kohima, Nagaland







# VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE

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Dear Esteemed Members of the Academic Community,

It is with immense pleasure and a profound sense of pride that I present the proceedings of the 4th BODHI International Multidisciplinary Conference on "Modern Research in Humanities, Arts, and Sciences". We are honored to co-host this outstanding event at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia, alongside our esteemed partners.

Since 2018, Vivekananda College has nurtured a fruitful collaboration with the BODHI International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts, and Science, beginning on an academic journey that has significantly enriched our community's intellectual landscape. This year marks our second collaboration with UPM, through BODHI, further solidifying our commitment to fostering global connections and promoting scholarly excellence.

The theme of this year's conference invites participants to dive into the depths of modern research, encouraging a vibrant exchange of ideas and innovative research methodologies across diverse disciplines. The papers included in these proceedings exemplify the rigorous academic standards and creative exploration that characterize our joint efforts.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. S. Balakrishnan, Director of the BODHI Journal, Dr. K. Kaviarasu, Assistant Professor of English at Vivekananda College, and the BICOHAS team, whose uncompromising dedication and vision have been significant in making this collaboration a resounding success.

To all participants and contributors, your involvement enriches our conference and strengthens the academic bonds across continents. I trust that the proceedings will serve not only as a testament to the innovative works presented but also as a beacon of inspiration for future research endeavors.

Thank you for your engagement and contribution to research in humanities, arts, and sciences. I wish you all a stimulating conference filled with insightful discussions and meaningful connections.

Sincerely,

*T.S. Jayanthi*





## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

Greetings!

It is with great delight that I extend my appreciation to all esteemed academicians, research scholars, and students participating in this International Academic Conference. This conference serves as a vibrant forum for intellectual exchange, fostering interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary discussions that align with the visionary goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

As we navigate the evolving landscape of education and research, this conference provides an opportunity to engage with innovative ideas, cutting-edge research, and meaningful collaborations. By bringing together erudite leaders from various domains, we aim to inspire critical inquiry and contribute to the advancement of knowledge that has a lasting impact on academia and society.

My appreciation extends to ' Bodhi International Journal ' Publisher Dr.S. Balakrishnan for his strenuous efforts in organising this Conference connecting institutions, academicians, and scholars by providing a platform to present their research, engage in discussions, and forge new academic partnerships. May this conference be a catalyst for new perspectives and transformative learning experiences.

Best wishes for a successful and enriching conference. God Bless all.

**Rev Sr. Dr. MARY FABIOLA**

Principal

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## **DEAN'S MESSAGE**

Dear Members of Academic Community  
Greetings

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 4<sup>th</sup> Bodhi International Conference on Humanities, Arts and Science on behalf of Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed to be University) Gandhigram, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu. The Motive of this Conference is to enhance and upgrade research development taken by Conference team ensures excellent opportunities for sharing and gaining knowledge and brings out the recent trends, innovative methodologies and developments in the field of humanities, arts and sciences. This international conference not only promotes research culture but initiates organizations to upgrade scope of professional network and collaborative activities. The process involved in the selection of quality papers for publication is highly appreciated and gratitude to all the authors and presenters of this conference.

The efforts taken by the organizing team deserves great endorsement.

**Dr. S. BALASUNDARI**

Dean & Professor School of English and Foreign Languages  
Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed to be University)  
Gandhigram, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu





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## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Good morning esteemed guests, distinguished speakers, award recipients, faculty members, and dear students.

It is my immense pleasure to welcome you all to the International Conference on Modern Research in Humanities, Arts, and Sciences, held in conjunction with the prestigious Bodhi International Awards conference. This platform aims to foster innovation, interdisciplinary dialogue, and excellence in academic research.

This conference focused on contemporary literary theories, digital humanities, and cultural studies, with significant emphasis on postcolonial literature, gender studies and Presentations included explorations of visual arts, performing arts, and the integration of technology in artistic expression. Researchers presented groundbreaking studies in environmental science, data science, and innovations in medical research.

The Bodhi International Awards celebrated excellence in academia by honoring distinguished scholars and researchers for their outstanding contributions. The award categories included Best Researcher Award, Best Academician Award, and Best Resource Person Awards and other category awards. Congratulations to all the awardees for their remarkable achievements and inspiring contributions.

This conference has not only provided a platform for sharing knowledge but also paved the way for future collaborations and research endeavors. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all participants, the organizing committee, and Bodhi International for making this event a grand success.

Thank you all, and I wish you continued success in your academic and research pursuits.

**Rev. Sr. Dr. MARY PRAMILA SANTHI**

Principal

St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women  
Dindigul, Tami Nadu, India





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**Dr. S. BALAKRISHNAN**

*Publisher & Managing Editor*

ISSN 2456-5571



## **CONFERENCE CONVENER'S MESSAGE**

I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to the participants of BICOHAS-25.

This conference, after scholarly discussions and deliberations, have been planned and organized as a value-added conference, adding value to the existing realms of knowledge. I firmly believe that this conference would bring in a sea change in the gamut of research and academics as we return to India from Malaysia, discussing and debating on emerging domains of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research. At this juncture, we as Indians, would experience an emotional bonding united as Indians, in a foreign land, Malaysia, despite the divergence of language and culture of our land. I could ascertain that this bond that emerges within us would be natural and could not be created artificially. We will definitely experience that, and it will be a great feeling. Not everyone will be afforded this prospect. We are fortunate to have this opportunity. I believe that we are intended to own this experience.

Respected professors, researchers, scholars and friends, the experience which we are going to get through BICOHAS-23 is going to be memorable lifelong. During these 5 days we are not only going to familiarize the culture and heritage of our fellow participants but also the language, culture and the people of Malaysia. This travel experience, as writers and research erssay, is going to unveil the new realms in our mind and remain within us as a precious eternal memory. Having this in mind this conference is planned not only as an academic enterprise but also as a cultural endeavor.


The efforts and pains taken by the organizers and advisors in planning and organizing this conference would leave a remarkable imprint in your academic as well as personal memoir.

I thank the Chief Patrons, Patrons, Convenors, Academic Convenors, Organising Secretaries and Coordinators from the joint-organizing institution, University Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia and the co-organising institutions from India. A special word of thanks to the Chairperson Dr. Manimangai Mani for her ardent support in making all the arrangements in Malaysia along with the Vice-Chairperson, and the UPM Organising team. I feel proud and happy to be part of this organizing team leading you all towards this fruitful academic venture.

Thank you.

With warm regards,

Yours truly,

  
(S.BALAKRISHNAN)





## From the Desk of the Editors...

It is with great enthusiasm that we present this special issue, featuring selected papers from the International Multidisciplinary Conference on Modern Research in Humanities, Arts and Sciences, jointly collaborated & organized by Universiti Putra Malaysia and BODHI International Journal on February 27–28, 2025, in Kuala Lumpur. It was co-organised by Nagaland University, Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vivekanand College, Nirmala College for Women, St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women, and The Gandhigram Rural Institute. This conference brought together scholars, researchers, and practitioners from diverse fields, fostering a rich intellectual exchange that underscores the growing significance of multidisciplinary research in addressing contemporary challenges.

In an era where complex global issues demand collaborative approaches, multidisciplinary conferences such as this serve as crucial platforms for knowledge integration, bridging gaps between disciplines, and fostering innovative solutions. The manuscripts included in this volume reflect the dynamic interplay of ideas from fields as varied as literature, linguistics, social sciences, digital humanities, management studies, higher education, environmental studies, and emerging technologies. By publishing these contributions, we ensure that the rigorous discussions and pathbreaking insights shared during the conference reach a wider academic and research community, inspiring further enquiry and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

A thriving research ecosystem is essential for academic institutions to foster innovation, encourage critical thinking, and drive societal progress. Encouraging faculty members, early-career researchers, and postgraduate students to engage in scholarly publication strengthens the foundation of knowledge in their respective disciplines. Conferences like this provide *a unique opportunity for scholars to present their findings, receive constructive feedback, and refine their research for wider dissemination*. Such engagements not only enhance individual academic growth but also contribute to the larger research community by building networks, promoting interdisciplinary learning, and shaping future directions of inquiry.

Further, academic publishing plays a pivotal role in knowledge dissemination, and ensures that research findings reach relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, industry leaders, and educators. The publication of conference proceedings and edited volumes provides a credible platform for researchers to showcase their work to a global audience. As academic discourse increasingly transcends borders, it becomes imperative for institutions and journals to support and facilitate the publication of high-quality, peer-reviewed research that advances scholarly debates and contributes to the development of knowledge economies.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all contributors, peer reviewers, and organizing committee members who made this conference and its subsequent publication possible. We hope this collection not only documents the intellectual vibrancy of the event but also serves as a valuable resource for scholars and researchers seeking interdisciplinary perspectives in their respective fields.

**Editors**



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### **Aim & Objectives**

Academic Excellence in research is sustained by promoting research support for young Scholars. Our Journal on Humanities, Arts and Science of research is motivating all aspects of encounters across disciplines and research fields in a multidisciplinary view, by assembling research groups and consequently projects, supporting publications with this inclination and organizing programmes. Internationalization of research work is the unit seeks to develop its scholarly profile in research through quality of publications. And visibility of research is creating sustainable platforms for research and publication, such as series of books; motivating dissemination of research results for people and society.

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# MAPPING VOICES: REDEFINING THE LITERARY LANDSCAPES OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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## Abstract

*This paper explores the growing field of literary cartography in Arunachal Pradesh, a region often marginalized in mainstream Indian literary discourses. By analysing indigenous narratives, oral traditions, and contemporary literary works, this paper seeks to redefine the literary canon to include the diverse cultural and linguistic richness of the state. The study emphasizes the spatial and cultural imprints within the literature, highlighting the intricate interplay between geography, identity, and storytelling. Drawing from postcolonial and eco-critical frameworks, it argues that the literary voices of Arunachal Pradesh challenge hegemonic narratives and offer alternative perspectives on nationhood, cultural preservation, and ecological interconnectedness. By examining works from indigenous writers and oral history keepers, this paper underscores the need for a broader, inclusive canon that integrates lesser-heard voices. This research not only contributes to decolonizing Indian literary studies but also underscores the role of literature in understanding the socio-political and ecological realities of marginalized communities. The paper further proposes strategies for mainstreaming the literature of Arunachal Pradesh, fostering dialogue between regional and national literary traditions, and promoting the preservation of its oral and written heritage. Ultimately, this study aims to chart a new path for literary cartography that reflects the pluralism and vibrancy of India's Northeastern frontier.*

**Keywords:** literary cartography, indigenous narratives, cultural identity, decolonizing

## Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh, a state nestled in the northeastern frontier of India, remains a cultural enigma to many. While the region is geographically part of India, its literary voice has often been relegated to the periphery of mainstream Indian literature. This marginalization is rooted in both historical and cultural factors, including the predominance of oral traditions and the limited recognition of indigenous narratives in national literary discourses. This research paper builds on the abstract of "Mapping Voices: Redefining the Literary Landscapes of Arunachal Pradesh" to examine how the region's literature challenges hegemonic narratives and offers alternative perspectives on cultural identity, nationhood, and ecological interconnectedness.

## Theoretical Framework

To explore the literary landscapes of Arunachal Pradesh, this paper employs postcolonial and eco-critical frameworks. Postcolonial theory provides a lens to examine the resistance against cultural erasure and the reassertion of indigenous identity, while eco-criticism highlights the interdependence between humans and the environment, a theme central to the region's literary output. These frameworks facilitate an understanding of how geography, identity, and storytelling converge to create a unique literary tapestry.

## Rediscovering Indigenous Narratives

The oral traditions of Arunachal Pradesh are repositories of the region's history, culture, and cosmology. These narratives, often transmitted



through songs, myths, and folklore, serve as tools for cultural preservation and community cohesion. For instance, the Nyishi tribe's "Abotani" myth traces the origin of humanity and reflects the community's ecological consciousness. Similarly, the Adi tribe's "Mopun" tales intertwine moral lessons with reflections on the natural world, emphasizing harmony with the environment.

Despite their richness, these narratives have historically been excluded from the Indian literary canon. This exclusion reflects a broader issue of cultural hegemony, where dominant narratives overshadow marginalized voices. By incorporating these oral traditions into the literary mainstream, scholars and writers can foster a more inclusive and representative literary canon.

### Contemporary Literary Voices

The emergence of contemporary writers from Arunachal Pradesh marks a pivotal moment in the region's literary history. Authors such as Mamang Dai and Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi have gained recognition for their evocative portrayals of the region's landscapes, cultures, and socio-political challenges. In Dai's novel *The Black Hill*, for example, the protagonist's journey through the dense forests and treacherous hills becomes a metaphor for the search for identity and belonging. Dai writes, "The forest is vast, but every sound carries a memory of things unseen" (*The Black Hill* 45). In another work, she states, "The hills are alive with the sound of stories, etched into every crevice" (*The Legends of Pensam* 12).

Thongchi's *The Nature of Women* vividly portrays the challenges faced by rural women in Arunachal Pradesh: "Their resilience is not forged in ease but in the fire of daily survival" (Thongchi 78). Elsewhere, he writes, "Every raindrop is a hymn to the land, every shadow a witness to forgotten times" (*Crossing of Rivers* 54).

Adding to these voices are indigenous Hindi writers such as Prem Bhai and Shanti Devi, whose works in Hindi bring the narratives of Arunachal's tribal life to a broader audience. Prem Bhai's

*Pahadon Ki Goonj* captures the oral histories of the Mishmi people, stating, "Their songs are the echoes of the mountains, unbroken by time or conquest" (Prem Bhai 34). Shanti Devi, in *Arunachal Ke Rang*, poetically describes the intimate relationship between the tribes and their environment: "The rivers do not merely flow; they carry the stories of generations" (Devi 78). In another passage, she reflects, "To walk these forests is to tread upon the footprints of ancestors, who spoke to the wind and the trees" (Devi 85).

These literary works not only enrich Indian literature but also challenge the stereotypical representations of Arunachal Pradesh as a remote and underdeveloped region. By articulating the lived experiences and aspirations of their communities, these writers provide nuanced insights into the socio-political and ecological realities of the state.

### Decolonizing the Literary Canon

The inclusion of Arunachal Pradesh's literature in the Indian literary canon is an essential step towards decolonizing literary studies. Decolonization, in this context, involves recognizing and valuing the diverse cultural and linguistic traditions that constitute India's literary heritage. It also requires a critical examination of the power dynamics that have historically marginalized certain voices.

This paper argues that decolonizing the literary canon involves not only the inclusion of indigenous narratives but also the re-evaluation of existing literary hierarchies. By prioritizing the voices of marginalized communities, literary studies can move towards a more equitable and holistic understanding of India's cultural landscape. The works of Arunachal Pradesh's writers and oral historians serve as vital contributions to this endeavour, offering fresh perspectives on themes such as identity, memory, and resistance.

### The Role of Literary Cartography

Literary cartography, the practice of mapping the spatial and cultural dimensions of literature, provides a valuable tool for understanding the unique

characteristics of Arunachal Pradesh's literary landscape. By analysing the geographical and cultural imprints within literary texts, scholars can uncover the intricate relationships between place, identity, and narrative.

For instance, Mamang Dai's poetry often evokes the rugged terrain and lush biodiversity of Arunachal Pradesh, imbuing the natural landscape with symbolic significance. In "An Obscure Place," Dai writes:

"Here, in the land of the sunglass gods, the forest whispers, and the rivers remember" (*The River Poems* 45).

Similarly, Shanti Devi's reflections in *Arunachal Ke Rang* highlight the spiritual dimension of the region's geography: "Every peak and valley is a shrine, a testament to the symbiotic bond between nature and its people" (Devi 92). Prem Bhai adds to this sentiment in *Pahadon Ki Goonj*, observing, "The wind carries not just the scent of the forest but the prayers of those who call these mountains home" (Prem Bhai 47).

Through such works, literary cartography highlights the ways in which geography shapes cultural identity and storytelling.

## Strategies for Promoting Arunachal Pradesh's Literature

### 1. Translation Initiatives: Bridging Linguistic Barriers

One of the primary challenges in bringing Arunachal Pradesh's literature to a wider audience is the linguistic diversity of the region. Most of the state's narratives exist in indigenous languages that are not widely spoken outside their respective communities. To address this challenge, translation initiatives must be prioritized:

- **Collaboration with Native Speakers and Scholars:** Translating literature requires more than just linguistic proficiency; it demands cultural sensitivity and contextual understanding. Engaging native speakers, ethnographers, and literary scholars in the translation process ensures that the essence of oral traditions and literary works is preserved.

- **Institutional Support:** Universities, literary organizations, and publishing houses should fund and promote the translation of Arunachal Pradesh's literature into widely spoken languages such as English and Hindi. This will facilitate greater readership and academic engagement.

- **Bilingual Publications:** Publishing bilingual editions, where the original text is presented alongside its translation, can serve as a tool for linguistic preservation while making the literature accessible to a broader audience.

### 2. Educational Integration: Fostering Awareness and Appreciation

Incorporating the literature of Arunachal Pradesh into school and university curricula is vital for fostering appreciation and awareness of the region's literary heritage. This can be achieved through:

- **Curriculum Development:** State and central educational boards should include folk tales, contemporary works, and translated literature from Arunachal Pradesh in their syllabi. Such an inclusion would provide students with insights into the cultural plurality of India and break the dominance of canonical texts.

- **Workshops and Seminars:** Conducting literary workshops, guest lectures, and interactive sessions with authors and scholars from Arunachal Pradesh can help students engage with the literature in a meaningful way.

- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Literature from Arunachal Pradesh should be studied alongside history, anthropology, and environmental studies to provide a holistic understanding of the region's cultural and ecological narratives.

### 3. Literary Festivals and Conferences: Providing Platforms for Dialogue

Organizing literary festivals and academic conferences focused on Arunachal Pradesh's literature can create opportunities for writers, scholars, and readers to engage in dialogue and exchange ideas. Such initiatives can:

- **Enhance Visibility:** Bringing Arunachal's literature to national and international literary forums will help it gain recognition and appreciation.
- **Encourage Cross-Cultural Exchange:** Events that foster interactions between writers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can lead to collaborative projects and knowledge sharing.
- **Promote Publishing Opportunities:** Festivals and conferences often attract publishers, literary agents, and critics, increasing the chances of Arunachal Pradesh's literature being published and reviewed widely.

#### **4. Digital Archives and Documentation: Preserving Literary Heritage**

Given the fragility of oral traditions, digital documentation plays a crucial role in preserving and disseminating Arunachal Pradesh's literary wealth. The following measures can be adopted:

- **Creating Online Repositories:** Digital platforms should be developed to store and showcase oral narratives, manuscripts, folk songs, and contemporary literary works. These platforms should be user-friendly and accessible to both scholars and the general public.
- **Audio-Visual Documentation:** Recording oral narratives in their original form, accompanied by subtitles and translations, can serve as a valuable educational resource.
- **Crowdsourcing Literary Contributions:** Inviting local communities to contribute stories, poems, and historical accounts to digital archives can encourage participation and collective ownership of literary heritage.

#### **Broader Implications of Mainstreaming Arunachal Pradesh's Literature Decolonizing the Literary Canon**

Mainstream Indian literature has historically been dominated by texts written in English and other major Indian languages such as Hindi, Bengali, and Tamil. By incorporating Arunachal Pradesh's literary traditions into national discourse, we challenge the hegemony of dominant literary narratives and foster

a more inclusive canon. This is a crucial step toward decolonizing literature and ensuring representation for marginalized voices.

#### **The Interplay of Geography, Identity, and Storytelling**

Literature from Arunachal Pradesh offers unique insights into the relationship between geography and identity. The region's mountainous landscapes, dense forests, and river systems are not merely backdrops but integral components of its storytelling traditions. By engaging with this literature, we gain deeper understandings of how ecological factors shape cultural identity and historical memory.

#### **Promoting Cultural Sustainability and Interconnectedness**

In an era of rapid globalization, maintaining cultural sustainability is crucial. The mainstreaming of Arunachal Pradesh's literature contributes to cultural sustainability by ensuring that indigenous narratives are not lost but rather integrated into the broader literary framework. Furthermore, it fosters a sense of interconnectedness by highlighting the shared human experiences that transcend geographical and linguistic boundaries.

#### **Conclusion**

The literature of Arunachal Pradesh represents a vital yet often overlooked component of India's cultural and literary heritage. By rediscovering indigenous narratives, amplifying contemporary literary voices, and decolonizing the literary canon, we can create a more inclusive and representative literary landscape. Through the lens of literary cartography, Arunachal Pradesh's literature offers fresh perspectives on nationhood, cultural preservation, and ecological interconnectedness. The voices of Arunachal Pradesh deserve a prominent place in India's literary discourse. By embracing the pluralism and vibrancy of the region's literature, we foster a deeper understanding of the diverse and interconnected realities that shape our world. As scholars, writers, and readers, it is our collective responsibility to

ensure that these voices are heard, celebrated, and preserved for generations to come.

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# ORAL TRADITION AS EXPERIENTIAL HISTORY: REFLECTIONS FROM RENGMA-NAGA FOLKLORE

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## Abstract

*It is maintained that essentially, history is a story of Kings, carefully laid out, with paraphernalia embellishing even their lesser-known defeats. The understanding of a sense of history through oral tradition, among societies where history is not "referenced" (Ong, 1982), manifests itself in multiplicities –where narratives give birth to versions and variations, in what Carl von Sydow terms as oikotypes (a localized, hybridized version of a tale). This is limited not only to tales but also in ritual practice, verbal art forms such as proverbs and poetry and material culture. Such narratives often perceived as folk or little histories have the potency to behave in counter-hegemonic ways to written, chronicled, classical and mainstream history. Early academic thought in anthropology exposed the confrontation between indigenous folk and anthropologists who reproduced "self- conforming, self-referential, and self- producing closed systems with little, if any, empirical relationship to or practical value for real indigenous peoples" (Deloria 1970:98-99 in Biolsi & Zimmerman 1997:3) , in the process, positing an us/them, savagery/civilization, myth/fact dichotomy. Recent academic engagement with traditional folklore (as an emblematic, orality-based expression of a community) however, reveals attempts to understand and examine these correlations through a language of decolonization, as they contribute to the cohesiveness and solidarity of a community, and as they stand to critique the status quo. Folklore informs the collective and creative consciousness of society, through a semiotic based on non-written communication shaping the worldviews we hold and the history we prescribe as our identity framer, thereby honing the fundamental core of culture. Given this understanding, the paper is an attempt to study some of the narratives circulating in the Rengma-Naga oral tradition and show how they construct legends, which go on to function as folk history, or a people's history about themselves. The paper would also discuss the role of folk and folklore in a society where the construction of history itself is not essentially recorded or even linear.*

**Keywords:** orality, tradition, folklore, history, Nagas

## Introduction

The Nagas are a group of tribes inhabiting the contiguous geographical location of India (Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal) and Burma. There are 15 recognized Naga tribes (Lotha, Ao, Angami, Chakhesang, Pochury, Rengma, Chang, Phom, Konyak, Khiamnuingan, Yimkhiung, Sangtam, Sümi, Tikhir and Zeliang), speaking more than 17 languages among themselves, with some tribes having more than one language. The oral tradition of these tribes is inscribed into their languages in the form of proverbial phrases and narrative folk poetry that have been orally handed over through generations. In the absence of a tangible script, the oral tradition of the Naga tribes function as pathways through which a sense of the Naga past is invoked, and hence most often, function as assemblages of

folk history, or a people's history and understanding about themselves.

The oral tradition of the Naga tribes exists today as a substructure to the dominant written and literary traditions, and forms the bedrock of Naga epistemology. As it exists today, the narratives reflect a historical and psycho-social paradigm that is non-linear and fragmented, possibly due to the devolution of the narratives; a phenomena one can associate with culture change as the Nagas conversion to Christianity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came as a complete onslaught which engendered and problematized the way the Nagas themselves looked at their own animist-leaning pre-modern culture. In contrast to the written traditions, the Naga oral tradition encompass both oral tradition and performance (which in turn internalise the oral nature of narrative in literary

texts). Ontologically then, Naga orality can be seen to be prior to the literal. The multiplicity of Naga oral narratives as already stated, is one that reflects a shared characteristic spirit that adds to the richness of folklore in Naga society. This quality is reflected not only in stories, legends and songs but also in the origin and migration narratives that are held in mythic regard in Naga society. They are sometimes reflected in the ways kinship patterns are forged with some clans allowing inter-clan marriage (endogamous) based on the system of phratry endorsed by the tribe.

In these discursive ways, the Naga oral tradition remains the point of entry for engaging with and gauging history, not as a chronicled, linear and stratified as written chronicles are, but as part of performative tradition in which orality is shaped and guided by a particular mnemonics. The remembrance of the past, enshrined within a robust oral tradition allows for the transmission of tales, proverbs, myths and sayings to move from one place to another. This is particularly true for most Naga tribes whose corpus of oral tradition exhibit similarities, birthing “oikotypes” of each other. One simple example can be said to be the tales of the trickster *iki* of the Sumi tribe, with that of *Apvuho* of the Lotha tribe. The anecdotes and stories of cunning, wit and treachery exemplify a shared story trope where the trickster is not simply a rebel and a non-conformist but also a master manipulator. The ATU index combinations of the tales from the two tribes also show the similar employment of motifs in the tale type of the trickster. Similarly, there are many pertaining to the myths of origin and migration that are shared among the tribes although with their own characteristic localisations.

The role of memory in the construction of history where oral tradition is not only performance, but also evidence and process, is encapsulated in the words of Vansina who writes,

Memory constantly acts unconsciously and perhaps very slowly on the dormant data it contains... Traditions are memories of memories. For each rendering they must be presented and they are then encoded again by

listeners as well as by performers. Traditions presuppose the slow remodelling of memory as well as reasonably frequent, more dynamic reorganisations. That this is collective memory is important. (Vansina, 161)

For the Nagas, these oral traditions are significant because they are perceived as remnants of a premodern era in which the bygone past can only be experienced through the embodied reality that is reflected in the verbal arts and belief systems, some of which have been co-opted in contemporary times. The ancestral heritage that informs the bedrock of the cultural experience of the Nagas is drawn from a mosaic of folklore items and practices, official written records, translations of socio-religious texts and other such embodied practices. In pre-modern times when Naga culture was unreservedly ‘oral’, keeping in tandem with Walter J. Ong’s conceptualization of “primary oral culture”, lore was practiced (narrated or enacted) as part of a lived reality and its experience was palpable in the day-to-day life of the people; folktales and proverbs were narrated to highlight codes of ethics, pass judgment, instil moral values, commemorate memory or administer warnings. The communion with writing “tyrannically locked them into a visual field forever” (Ong, 11) even as oral discourse, “commonly thought of in oral milieu as weaving or stitching – *rhaps idein*, to ‘rhapsodize’”, became “text” which, “when the literates today use the term to refer to oral performance, they are thinking of it by analogy with writing” (13). By documenting oral narratives, the essential rhythm characteristic of Naga orality became condensed into the finality of the written word and the literal symbol (here, the roman script) replaced the corridors and fields of folklore. The hegemony of the written word over orality was however not a complete one, because idiomatic practices cannot be transmuted into lexical and grammar rules and they exist beyond the realm of vocabularies. These two items of folklore – narratives and practices – became cultural markers of Naga tribal identity, both as mixed culture (as elucidated by J. P. Hutton in his essay “A mixed

culture of the Naga tribes”) and as self-referential entities. Culture here, as in academic cognizance, is usually understood as the set of mores, discourses and phenomena that permeate through the fabric of a society rendering it with a definitive quality.

### **The Rengma Nagas**

The history of the origin and migration of the Rengma Nagas is tied up with that of Lotha and other tribes such as Angami who speak the language of Tenyidie. Along with these tribes, the Rengmas believe in the migration theory that supposes the dispersion of the Naga tribes from Khezakhen, where an erstwhile miraculous stone (which had the power to double the paddy placed on it) was located. Rengma oral tradition as documented by J. P Mills places the Angami village of Khonoma as “the first recorded settlement of the undivided body of migrants” (4), from where they dispersed towards Therügu Hill, south of Tseminyu. The tradition holds that three brothers were born in that village from a man called Rententsu, namely Khasa, Thongsu and Senteng. It is believed that these three brothers split and moved to different directions, and oral tradition of migration is testament to the dispersal and accounts for the presence of the numerous clans.

The Rengma Nagas are not only situated in the district of Tseminyu but are also a recognised tribe in present day Assam, with their villages spread across the Mikir Hills, which is the western part of the present day Karbi Anglong area. The Rengma Naga People’s Council states that the Rengma Naga country covers an area of 7399 Sq. Km as of today, which is the whole of Karbi Anglong excluding Mikir Hills. Referring to Mackenzie’s work, History of the relations of the government with the hill tribes of the north-east frontier of Bengal (1884), which categorically talks about the indigeneity of the Rengmas in Assam, the Rengma Council validates the fact that Rengmas have had a long historical engagement with the inhabitants of the Mikir Hills and around.

In this regard, the Rengma Nagas have substantial oral narratives which testify to this relationship with the other inhabitants of the valley

and hills surrounding Mikir. These oral traditions have become a part of the history existing in the form of legends of the rengma people in which landscape, people, life forms and belief systems perform a synthesis. As such, these narratives exist as evidence.

All traces from the past fall in two major categories according to a basic characteristic: whether they are messages or not... Oral traditions are messages. Even though one must search for symbolic significance and intended meaning, one is never allowed to interpret them without any concrete reference to the message itself...It follows that oral traditions are not just a source about the past, but a historiology (one dare not write historiography) of the past, an account of how people have interpreted it. As such oral tradition is not only a raw source. It is a hypothesis, similar to the historian’s own interpretation of the past. (Vansina, 196).

Taken from this vantage point of studying oral tradition as a people’s history about themselves, at times counter hegemonic to dominant, chronicled and established narratives of the mainstream, the paper looks at two oral traditions. The first maps and accounts for the landscape of Dimapur, the commercial hub of Nagaland and the second provides an explanation and the historical connection between the people of Assam and the Rengmas in the creation of clans.

### **Narrative 1: The Legend of Nzon Tegibu**

Nzon Tegibu lived in Tsonzunthun i.e the present Terogvuthun. It is said that Tegibu and Runga had a strong and well-built physique and were good warriors. Back then, people did not take children or elder members of the household to the fields as they were not strong enough to protect themselves from the enemies who usually attacked people in their fields. In the village, the brothers would gather up the children and teach them the arts of warfare such as how to throw spear and catch the flying spears darting towards them, how to use machete, shield etc. After a few months, the children became well trained and were ready to tackle any kind of challenges. Seeing the raw skills of the children, the

brothers decided to make them their army and took them to a place between New and Old Sendenyu village and told them to enter the place where a groove of hay was kept bound bunch after bunch. As the army entered the hay groove the brothers untied the hay and spread it out, using it to block and hinder the path through which they entered the place and they could not escape from there. After this, they settled in that area for some time.

A few months later, the brothers took their army and migrated to Nyetsonnyu towards the west. While staying at Nyetsonnyu they met the King of Dimapur, Dima Raja and his wife Sara. Nzon Tegibu was bewitched by the beauty of Sara. He was so attracted to her that he decided to take her as his wife, so he went back to Hamtsin, a village near Sendenyu and fasted for seven days. Meanwhile in order to ensure that she fell in love with him, he brought a large python to extract the charm from its body and use it as a potion to entrap Sara. On the seventh day, the charm of the python emerged out from its tail in the likeness of a small fly which he gave to Dima Raja's wife Sara. As she touched the fly, the charm began working and she began to favor and fall in love with Tegibu.

Nzon Tegibu's battalion settled on the opposite of the kingdom of Dimasa. It became a tradition that whenever Dima Raja was away from home, Sara would hoist a white flag and whenever her husband was home she would hoist a red flag. Depending on the colour of the flag, Tegibu would go to meet Sara. One day, the King Dima Raja came to learn of Tegibu's relationship with his wife and decided to punish him severely. He gave him 5 options for punishment and asked him to choose one. They were i. *rhinyü nrhi* (to pull the blade of sharp cut bamboo species named *rhinyü*) ii. *Nchvü bing nhen* (to climb a thorny tree) iii. *Püri zeng kücho* (fight with a snake) iv. *Tüme zeng kücho* (fight with a tiger) and v. *küshvüla nyu yüh* (Jump into a frying pan). When he told about the punishment to his lover Sara, Sara said that if he were to pull the blade of *rhinyü* his hand would be cut into two, if he were to climb the thorny tree his body would be covered with wounds, if he

were to fight with snake he'd be bitten by it and if he were to jump into a frying pan he won't be able to come out alive so she told him to choose the fight with a tiger. Meanwhile she said she would teach him the required tactics to win a tiger fight. Sara told him to get ready with an armour, a sword and the curled skin of a cow. She also said that the tiger would come pouncing six times to attack him but it won't bite him until the seventh time. At that time, Tegibu should throw the spiral cow's skin into the tiger's mouth and while the tiger chews on the cow's skin, he should slay the tiger. After colluding with Sara, he told Dima Raja about his choice to fight the tiger and did so as instructed and was able to kill the tiger. He also jumped over the seven defense walls and run away. On seeing it the Dima Raja acknowledged that Tegibu was indeed worthy of his wife despite the circumstance of adultery etc.

After Nzon Tegibu took the Dima Raja's wife and made her his, they became staunch enemies. But the Dima Raja couldn't start war with Tegibu as Tegibu's army comprised of the combination of the Dima army who were in favour of Sara and his own, and this made him a formidable enemy. Tegibu always wanted to defeat the Dima Raja and take over the Dima kingdom but failed because the Dima Raja always carried his *zyuma*, a very strong shield which not even sword or spear could penetrate. Sara told him that he could never defeat Dima Raja as long as he had his *zyuma* with him, but whenever the Raja would bathe at the pond he would remove it from his body. That was the only time he could be subdued. So when the Dima Raja was taking bath, he stealthily stole the *zyuma*. Seeing that his strongest shield was at the hands of the enemy, the Raja accepted his fate and came towards Nzon Tegibu, bowing down before him in subjugation and asking him to cut off his head. Tegibu did so and threw his body into the pond and name the pond *Podumpukhuri*.

After defeating Dima Raja, he conquered Dimapur and named the place as *Kvuda*, meaning *Kükvu küdagü bin* (the place of the great warrior) and settled there where they had a son. They named him *Dimasa* meaning *Dima Rajagü sa küla* (The



child they had by lying to Dima Raja). Unfortunately, after settling in *Kvuda*, Tegibu couldn't nurture a good relationship with the Dima families and they began to create different kinds of competitions and challenges for him. At one time, he was told that he could stay on in *Kvuda* only if he could dig seven big ponds before the rooster crowed. If he failed, he would have to leave the place. So Tegibu agreed and started with the work along with his large army. They began to dig all through the night and successfully completed the sixth pond, but as they were digging the seventh, they realized that the water did not sprout since they didn't hold any ritual prior to undertaking the work. Perhaps because of this, one man dropped a winnower basket which made a loud sound that woke the rooster who crowed and rendered the challenge as failed. Dejected, he left *kvuda* after this. The seventh pond that marked Tegibu's fate was called *Hukan Pukhuri*, meaning 'dry pond' which is today situated in Naharbari, Dimapur.

After *kvuda*, Tegibu and his army settled at the bank of the river *Mahur* where he was again challenged with the task of building a house out of a big stone before the rooster crowed or leave the place. As he started carving and building the stone house with his army, however, similar to the incident at *Hukan Pukhuri*, the same person dropped the winnower basket and woke up the cock and made it crow before completion of the house. Finally, tradition says that he and his army fled to Sylhet in today's Bangladesh.

### **Narrative 2: Keyhon Phukon**

Keyhon was a Rengma warrior who was given the title of Phukon meaning 'a Paik officer of Ahom Army under the Ahom Kingdom' by the Ahom King Purandar Singh. He was the son of Ratekhin. Since his adolescence, Keyhon often wandered for days on end to different places mostly for the purposes of trading, as a result of which his brothers and families claimed and distributed his father's property among themselves leaving Keyhom with nothing. Therefore he left his home and traveled towards Assam and met the Ahom King who was also known as Ahom Raja

and cultivated friendship with him by gifting him seven elephant tusks, a token of reminder of his excellent elephant hunting skills. He served under the Ahom Raja and gained the trust and favour of the Raja who would send him to carry out missions for him. "There was one time when the British officials desired to see the Ahom king so the king ordered Keyhon Phukon to meet the British officials on his behalf, so Keyhon Phukon in his full traditional attire met the British officer at Mohung Dehooa (Assam) in 1839. The British officer on seeing his appearance was startled and dumb founded and asked Keyhon through his interpreter what they call 'ghost' or 'nightmare' in his dialect to which Keyhon Phukon replied '*Rüme*'. The British officer then recorded the word 'Rengma' in his diary according to what he heard. It is then believed that the word 'Rengma' whether through misinterpretation or for other reasons came to be used thereafter". (by: Woch, President, RPOK).

After the meeting he met a British army Major John Butler and befriended him as well. One day, Butler asked Keyhon if there was anything he wanted and to this Keyhon replied that he wanted two boxes of matchsticks so Majors Butler gifted him the two packets of matchboxes. Keyhon then brought back home the matches but didn't trade it to his people but took it to the Sumi people and traded one matchbox with *kyü künshen* (three times the length of measurement done with thumb and middle finger) of pigs and brought the pigs. He also gave one matchbox as a delivery charge and brought the pigs to Tseminyu and began selling it to the people, after which he became one of the wealthiest and powerful man in the village.

Before the coming of the British, there was an invasion known as Burmese Invasion of 1816-1819, during that time the Burmese captured and slaughtered many Ahoms and also took some for the purposes of slavery and to add to their force. Keyhon fought fiercely against the Burmese and brought the people and set up a refugee camp named *Keyhon Rhentso* which was instrumental in saving many people. It is said that in the Treaty of Yandabo, the

Burmese narrated about the incidents to the British which inspired the British to venture into the Naga hills.

Keyhon Phukon then settled at *Phentetso*. Much later, he was poisoned by the *Teripvünyu* (Western Rengmas) and was buried there but once the people of Tseminyu came to know of it, they excavated his bones and brought him to Tseminyu and buried it in their village near the *Methubin* ground. Today his descendants in Assam use the title of *Phukon* as their surname.

The above narratives, transmitted through oral tradition testify to the ways in which folklore can exist as a subterranean network determined through a working of legacy in which history is embedded and embodied in the narrative tradition. It is counter-hegemonic, disseminated through discursive modes like tales, proverbs or songs, and only requires a process of communication to evoke its subtle sensibilities. It testifies to what Martha Sims says about folklore,

Folklore is informally learned, unofficial knowledge about the world, ourselves, our communities, our beliefs, our cultures, and our traditions that is expressed creatively through words, music, customs, actions, behaviors, and materials. It is also the interactive, dynamic process of creating, communicating, and performing as we share that knowledge with other people (19).

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# MEMOIRS OF CEIJA STOJKA: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TEXT IN GFL TEACHING

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## Abstract

The following article "Memoirs of Ceija Stojka: An autobiographical text in GFL Teaching" provides detailed teaching plan with set of exercises to enhance the writing skills of students of German language. The primary literature of the following article is an autobiographical text, "We live in secret. Memories of a Roman gypsy (1988)" by Ceija Stojka. Firstly, this article aims to investigate how the autobiographical text *Wir leben im Verborgenen* (1988) can be utilized as teaching material in German as a foreign language (GFL) class. Secondly, it examines how educators can incorporate this literary work into their teaching strategies to achieve specific educational objectives, such as reducing students' inhibitions, fostering an interest in writing, expanding their vocabulary, and ultimately promoting coherent texts. Introducing the autobiographical writings of Ceija Stojka in the GFL classroom offers an opportunity to explore the often overlooked and underrecognized works of marginalized communities in the German-speaking world. It also serves to raise students' awareness of minority discourses and foster greater sensitivity toward these voices.

**Keywords:** writing skills, autobiographical text, self-expression, writing in German as a Foreign Language (GFL) class, Ceija Stojka, autobiographical writing, minority discourse

## Introduction

The autobiographical text *Wir leben im Verborgenen* (1988) authored by Roma writer Ceija Stojka, presents a variety of didactic and pedagogical opportunities for German as a Foreign Language (GFL) instruction, particularly within the context of a communicative and intercultural teaching framework. The learning objectives of foreign language class based on an intercultural approach include fostering tolerance and acceptance of other cultures, combating racism, dispelling prejudices about the citizens of the target language country, and encouraging an open-minded attitude toward other countries, languages, and cultures. This approach also involves exploring the ethnic diversity of countries and recognizing both the similarities and differences between the source and target language countries. From a pedagogical perspective, *Wir leben im Verborgenen* (1988) provides a valuable context for minority discourse, helping to cultivate a racism-critical perspective among students and promote societal diversity.

The autobiographical text consists of five distinct chapters. The first chapter focuses on the period preceding the author and her family's imprisonment by SS soldiers. In the subsequent chapter, the author recounts the harrowing experiences she endured in Auschwitz. The third chapter details her time in the Ravensbrück women's concentration camp. The fourth chapter describes her arduous journey to the Bergen-Belsen camp. The final chapter addresses her liberation and eventual arrival in Vienna. These five chapters are further subdivided into smaller sections, providing a clear structural framework that enhances the readability and comprehensibility of the narrative. The text is primarily written in a verbal style, using verbs to convey facts and events. This style often enhances the narrative's appeal and vibrancy, making it more engaging for the reader. The verbal style effectively underscores the dynamic nature of events, emphasizing their unfolding and evolution.

The following lesson plan aims to enrich the relatively limited body of literature on Roma minorities in foreign language pedagogy. It

encompasses five hours of teaching plan and is intended for German language learners having B1/B2 proficiency level, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

### Teaching Unit 1: The Introductory Phase

This phase aims to stimulate students' interest and curiosity about the literary text. Learners are introduced to the new topic in a way that effectively engages them. Given that the curriculum's objective is to enhance students' writing skills using materials derived from autobiographical texts, they are familiarized with the key characteristics of the literary genre "autobiography/autobiographical text." A series of grammar exercises based on free writing are conducted, enabling learners to express themselves and write about various topics from their own lives.

### Teaching Unit 2: The Pre- Reading Phase

In the pre-reading phase, tasks will be designed to activate students' prior knowledge on the topic. These activities not only help review existing knowledge but also introduce new vocabulary. A key exercise in this phase involves creating an associative diagram centred around the concept of "minority." Once the teacher has written the diagram on the board, he/she will guide the students toward the subtopic "Minorities in Germany and German-

speaking countries." This includes providing information about specific minority groups, such as the "Roma & Sinti," followed by a discussion on their historical context during the Nazi era.

### Teaching Unit 3: Interactive Phase (Implementation Stage)

This phase focuses on both the content and structure of the text *Wir leben im Verborgenen* (1988). Students are introduced to key terms and relevant phrases, which are subsequently explained and contextualized. The meanings of these terms are clarified through logical associations, such as their relationships to the central concept, subordinate terms, synonyms, antonyms, and other semantic connections.

### Teaching Unit 4: Post Active Phase (Evaluation Stage)

In this lesson, students will apply the knowledge they have acquired from the previous lessons. However, "application" does not mean that the teacher simply writes established findings on the board. Instead, it involves more independent work, whether done individually, in groups, or collaboratively. The core of this lesson is centred around the students' own efforts. By this stage, it is expected that the learners have developed the language skills needed to write about themselves, improve their written expression, and compose a coherent text.

Teaching Unit	Content	Objective/Aim	Resources	Time
Introductory Phase	<p>1, Silent impulses: At the beginning of the lesson, students are introduced to the topic "writing about oneself." The teacher writes the topic on the board without giving any verbal instruction. This approach encourages free association and activates individual thinking on the topic "self-introduction". After about two minutes, it can be indicated that students are now welcome to share their thoughts.</p> <p>2. The teacher then writes all ideas, sentences, and words on the board.</p> <p>3. Through the term "memories," the teacher guides the students to the literary genre "autobiography," whose characteristics are written on the board after a brief discussion. A mind map on the term "Memories" is made. Guiding question: In which literary genres does the author write his memories?</p>	Students write freely without worrying about grammar or sentence structures. Fostering creativity and self-expression in the target language.	White Board, Marker	2hrs

	<p>4. Students are given two worksheets on vocabulary exercises (Appendix 1.1 &amp; 1.2)</p> <p>5. The teacher asks the student to write a short text about themselves in form of free writing.</p> <p>6. After all the students have written the text, the teacher lets some students read their texts in front of the class. He/she asks the students about the type of text. Whose voice does the reader hear? From which perspective is this being spoken? Does the text pertain to the author's own life? Finally, the teacher asks the students to look up the word "autobiographical" in the dictionary. The students find the meaning of the word and explain it. The teacher writes the definition of the word on the board and asks the students whether the texts they have written can be described as "autobiographical" or not.</p>			
Pre-reading Phase	<p>The teacher writes the term "minorities" on the board and asks the students about its meaning. The teacher explains the definition of the term using the dictionary. Additional question: "Do you know which ethnic groups were persecuted by the National Socialists in Germany during World War II?"</p> <p>Silent impulse: The teacher shows the title page of the text <i>Wir leben im Verborgenen</i> (1988) to the students on the projector. After two minutes the teacher asks the students for comments/remarks.</p> <p>Homework: The teacher gives the students the 1st and 2nd chapters of the book and asks them to complete the following task at home.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collect the keywords for the first and second chapters of the book</li> <li>2. Describe the life of the author and her family in the spring of 1939. Family, living conditions, place of residence, political conditions).</li> </ol>	<p>Students get sensitised about the struggles and hardships of minority communities during WWII.</p> <p>Develop students' ability to express ideas clearly in writing, particularly through descriptive tasks that encourage them to convey the living conditions and physical appearance of the concentration camp prisoners.</p>	Power-point Projector, White Board and Marker	1 hr
Interactive Phasee (Implementation stage)	<p>1. The teacher asks the students about the keywords from the first and second chapters and writes them on the board. She asks the students for the meanings of the key terms in the text and explains them if necessary.</p> <p>Afterwards, the students answer the questions about Chapter 1 that they prepared as homework.</p> <p>The teacher divides the second chapter into three sections and divide the students into three groups. Each group reads the respective section and briefly summarizes the content of the section. They read the summary aloud.</p> <p>The students then answer the following questions:</p> <p>Describe the living conditions in the Auschwitz concentration camp in your own words.</p> <p>Describe the appearance of the concentration camp prisoners.</p>	<p>Enhance students' understanding of key terms and concepts in the text, improving their ability to define and use new vocabulary in context.</p> <p>Strengthen students' reading skills by having them summarize the content of different sections of the chapter and answer comprehension questions based on the text</p>	White board and marker	1 hr

Post Active Phase (Evaluation Stage)	<p>The teacher assigns the students to read the final chapter of the book as homework and answer the following questions.</p> <p>What prejudices exist against Roma and Sinti?</p> <p>What reprisals did the author face during and after the Nazi era?</p> <p>Why was she discriminated against and marginalized in post-war society?</p> <p>The teacher asks the students to write a short text about their own lives with reference to their life experiences, privileges, deprivation, prejudices, stereotypes, cultural diversity, and more. The students are encouraged to reflect on questions like: What does it mean to be part of a minority group? How diverse was the city you were born in? Have you had any experiences with minorities or discrimination?</p>	Deepen students' understanding of the historical context and human experience of the Auschwitz concentration camp, while promoting empathy and sensitivity toward the subjects of the text.	White board and marker	1 hr
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## Conclusion

Writing plays a crucial role in language acquisition. It is a complex linguistic activity that involves the process of generating ideas, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and applying the correct grammatical structures to create a coherent text. Through consistent writing practice in an eight-hour seminar, students will gain the confidence and self-assurance necessary to write effectively in German as a foreign language. In conclusion, this didactic lesson plan for the autobiographical text *Wir leben im Verborgenen* (1988) represents a successful approach in achieving both the pragmatic and pedagogical objectives of DaF (German as a Foreign Language) instruction.

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## Appendix

### 1.1 Fill in the blank's appropriate words or phrases.

- My favorite food is \_\_\_\_\_.
- After school I like to \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favourite day of the week is \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I had one wish, it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- One thing I always try to avoid is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I like reading stories about \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.

- As a pet that I would like to have is \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.

### 1.2 Read the following typical childhood experiences and write down your thoughts on them.

- Mistakes, that were embarrassing for you

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- Triumphs and Successes in childhood years

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- often being treated fairly/unfairly

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- received many/few gifts

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5. People helped me because I am always so younger than fellow children Other people do not help me because I was older than fellow children.

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6. Competition with older siblings for the same recognition and achievement

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7. The feeling of belonging/ not belonging to the family.

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### 1.3 First Memories

1. First memories of father and mother

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2. The first punishment at school

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3. My first adventure

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4. First success at school

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5. My happiest moment during school days

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6. My best friend during school days

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# THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION IN INDIA: A LEGACY OF TRANSFORMATION

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## Abstract

*The Church has been involved in education from its earliest days. It is well established that the Church has pioneered the introduction and propagation of the universally accepted model of the Western educational system in India. Through a vast network of schools and colleges, the Church in India engages in an extensive educational apostolate, laying the foundation for nation-building and character development. The Church's educational endeavours are known for its long history, broad outreach, quality education, inclusivity, social service, empowerment of women, and ability to change with the times. In India, one can see that in every state, district, city, town, and even remote village, the Church runs hundreds and thousands of educational institutions to train the citizens of tomorrow. It is not a communal, commercial, or materialistic activity in which the Church is engaged; it is a vocation, a mission of dedicated, committed, professional men and women - bishops, priests, religious, and laity. The Church perceives education as an apostolate and service. It has equipped millions of Indians from all strata of society to be better citizens and face the battle of life. However, due to its selfless service, the Church has won the goodwill and admiration of the non-Christian majority, it is often accused of having ulterior motives. Despite facing accusations and challenges, the Church in India remains committed to providing quality education and serving the nation through its educational institutions.*

**Keywords:** church, education, Christianity, apostolate, service, colonial India, religious conversion, missionaries, nationalism.

## Introduction

Education has been a cornerstone of societal development, shaping cultures and nations throughout history. Education has always been the core of the development of individuals and the world around them. The Church has consistently recognized the importance of education in its mission. In India, traditional systems such as Gurukuls and Madrasas focused on religious and caste-based learning, often excluding large segments of the population. However, with the arrival of the Church in India, education became a powerful tool for inclusivity, enlightenment, and transformation. Today, the Church in India is engaged in a massive educational apostolate through a vast network of schools and colleges. There is such a rush from the high and the mighty, from the poor and the lowly, for admission into the Church-run educational institutions because they recognize that the Church aims to try and give the students, not just information but more formation, not just history and

mathematics, but specific values that go to the making of good citizens, persons of character. The Church considers education an apostolate and service (The Examiner, 261). The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) affirmed the paramount importance of education in man's life, the inalienable right of all men to an education (GE, 1). The work of education, for the Church, is a true apostolate - a way of complying with Christ's mission to go and make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:19, 34). However, since the Second Vatican Council, the Church sees itself not merely as the guardian of faith and morals and the teacher of the Gospel but equally as the servant Church, whose mission is to serve the world beyond the boundaries of its community. The Church has become more conscious of its role in the country's economic, social, and human development. Over the centuries, the Church in India has played an impactful role in human history. The example of Christ, who came to serve and not to be served, is the motivating force and inspiration of the service the



Church is rendering to society in and through her educational institutions (Mk. 10:45, 47). This article traces the journey of the Church's contribution to education in India - from its humble beginnings to its pivotal role in modern nation-building.

### **The Church's Early Efforts in Education**

Christianity came to India in the first century. It is believed that St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, went to the southern part of India and established the first Christian community there. In the following centuries, different forms and versions of Christianity entered India through diverse channels at various periods, increasing differences among Christian denominations and churches in customs, ritual traditions, and theological perceptions. As European colonialism began to spread worldwide in the late fifteenth century, European missionaries belonging to the Catholic and Protestant Churches began to spread Christianity in their colonies, including India (Fernandes, 3). St. Francis Xavier's arrival in Goa in 1542 began the Church's educational mission there. Jesuit missionaries recognized the need for literacy to evangelize and uplift the local population. They realized that the religion could not be taught without education. In the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese missionaries introduced the European school system in Cochin and Goa, where elementary teaching was carried out. The Jesuits founded St. Paul's College in Goa, the first European-style institution in India, in 1542 under the patronage of the Portuguese Governor Estevão da Gama. The college had grammar and rhetoric classes, and lectures on classical authors (Wikipedia). Christian missionaries also promoted the printing press, translating texts into local languages to encourage literacy among local communities. They developed several Indian languages and wrote their grammars and dictionaries. Later, over the last five centuries, thousands of schools and higher educational institutions were established by Christians in different parts of the country. This has been the foundation of the educational system that prevails in post-independent India (Fernandes, 3-4).

### **Colonial Impact and Post-Independence Growth**

The era of modern education began during the East India Company's regime. However, the Company remained too engaged with the problem of stabilizing her government rather than attending to the country's educational needs. However, in 1857, the collaboration between missionaries and the British colonial administration established universities in Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay (Rawat, 255). Through the introduction of education, social reforms such as the abolition of Sati, the promotion of widow remarriage, and the reduction of caste-based discrimination gained momentum. Christian missionaries played a significant role in advocating social justice in colonial India. The Church played a crucial role in popularizing English education, which became a gateway to opportunities in governance and administration under British rule. Missionary schools admitted Dalits, women, and tribal students at a time when mainstream education excluded them. After independence, the Church expanded its network of schools and colleges, ensuring access to quality education nationwide. Meanwhile, in the 1990s, India's new economic policy promoted liberalization, allowing for the establishment of many elite, expensive, self-financing private schools.

### **Achievements and Recognition**

Christians make up 2.3% of India's 1.4 billion people. Though minuscule in number, the Church in India runs more than 50,000 educational institutions, including schools and 400 colleges, six universities, and six medical colleges (UCA News). Before Macaulay's famous minute, Christian schools and colleges were imparting primary, secondary, and higher education in places like Goa, Cochin, Bassein, and Bombay. Before Wood's *Despatch* emphasized the importance of women's education, Christian schools were already engaged in the task (The Examiner, 1). Since then, the Church has continued to be at the forefront of the education of subaltern groups and rural uplift. The poor, the rich, the illiterate, the backward and the ignorant have their children studying in Christian institutions. Lakhs of our proud citizens, particularly Harijans, STs and

SCs, the Hill Tribes, the Adivasis, and other backward communities, who are today occupying responsible positions in many walks of life, including administrative, police and foreign services, in the defence forces, in the judiciary and the field of education and research, are irrefutable examples of the selfless work done by the Church in India. This is nation-building. This is patriotism at its best. This is the work of a small religious community trying to achieve the seemingly impossible task of making the nation progress, prosper and move forward in the sphere of education (Esteves, 82). R. L. Rawat, in his *History of Indian Education*, suggests that India will forever be indebted to the missionaries for producing textbooks, dictionaries, and grammar and for their zealous pursuit of educational advancement. Some notable Christian institutions such as St. Xavier's College (Mumbai), Loyola College (Chennai), Christian Medical College (Vellore), St. Stephen's College (Delhi), Christ University (Bangalore), Don Bosco Technical Institutes have been significantly contributing to India's healthcare and skilled workforce. Today, several Christian institutions consistently hold a high position in national rankings for education quality (Outlook India). Value education forms an intrinsic part of education in all Christian educational institutions.

### Challenges and Criticism

The Church looks upon education as an instrument of social change. The Church in India is held in high esteem and respected by the government, politicians, and the public at large because of the contribution of the Church through institutions of education, health care services, and other humanitarian services. Christians have earned a reputation as excellent educators. The distinguished reputation of Christian schools has even persuaded others to establish institutions with similar names, such as *Little Angels School* and *Saint Convent School*, across various parts of the country (Vallamattam, 139). These institutions, often run by non-Christians, frequently fall short of maintaining the same quality standards. However, because they bear Christian-sounding

names, any shortcomings or mismanagement in these schools, risk tarnishing the reputation of authentic Christian institutions run by the Church. There are frequent efforts to denigrate Christian institutions, malign their reputation, and tarnish their good name out of jealousy and competition (Vallamattam, 140). The Church has often been accused of using education as a façade for religious conversion. However, all Church-run institutions serve students of all faiths without compulsion or bias, and the diversity of students and staff in these institutions is a testament to their inclusive approach. Most of Church's educational institutions established in major cities and towns are elitist as they tend to serve mainly the needs of the more affluent class and often neglect the economically and socially backward and downtrodden illiterate class. While it is essential to maintain the established institutions, the new thrust within the Church should be to cover the educational needs of the neglected class of humanity (Fernandes Fabian, 12). The financing of Christian educational institutions has been the subject of much misunderstanding, mainly owing to certain lapses in some institutions. These lapses have been so magnified that the sacrifices the community makes and the magnitude of the investment in educational institutions tend to be ignored or forgotten. To correct unpopular impressions, Christian educational institutions should make a statement of their assets and liabilities available to their staff and an annual statement of income and expenditure (All India Seminar, 292). The measure of the failure of the educational system as a whole is the growing unrest among the younger generation. In general, the type of education imparted today does not seem to provide the young with an intellectual challenge, stimulate ambition, or give them something to live for on the material and spiritual plane. Christian educators have a special responsibility to impart to the young a vision of the purpose of life and the right ideals to live by (All India Seminar, 293).

### The Current Landscape

In rural India, literacy levels are considerably lower as compared to urban areas. The All-India Catholic

Education Policy stresses the need for quality education for all, especially for the most deprived ones:

*“No child, Dalit/Tribal or otherwise, should be deprived of quality education because of a lack of means. Those disadvantaged, socially, physically, or intellectually, will be specially assisted so that they can be integrated into the educational system. We make this preferential option, even if in this process, academic results suffer. All Catholic schools whether run by dioceses, the religious, corporate bodies, or individuals, are expected to participate in this project.”* (All India Catholic Education Policy)

As a result, in our Country, one can see that in every state, district, city, town, and even remote village, the Church runs hundreds and thousands of educational institutions to train the citizens of tomorrow. It is not a communal, commercial, or materialistic activity that the Church is engaged in. It is a vocation, a mission of dedicated, committed, professionals, men and women- bishops, priests, religious, and laity, who are devoted to training the children of our Country to be worthy, disciplined, honest, hard-working citizens of tomorrow so that the nation may have men and women of the right calibre to work in order to lead it, guide it, and to take it forward (Esteves, 80-81). The extent and breadth of the educational effort of the Church in India in the last five centuries may have no parallel in any other country. Christian minority groups run 54,000 educational institutions in India. For every 100 students who go to these institutions, more than 70 belong to the Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist communities (O'Brien). Over the years, Church-run institutions have embraced technology, integrating smart classrooms and e-learning tools into their pedagogy.

## Conclusion

In India's long struggle against illiteracy, superstition, and poverty, the Church's educational mission has profoundly impacted the country's social and educational landscape. From introducing modern education to fostering inclusivity and moral values,

the Church in India has played a transformative role in nation-building. While facing criticism and challenges, the Church remains steadfast in its commitment to service through education, nurturing future generations while continuing to shape a brighter and more equitable future for all.

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# EVIL STEPMOTHERS IN TWO NAGA FOLKTALES: EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGICAL ANXIETIES AND RESISTANCE TO PATRIARCHY

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## Abstract

*Folktales are considered an important agency through which community ideals are propagated within and across generation. These narratives incorporate various archetypes that embody the values and beliefs of the culture. One such prominent archetype is the evil stepmother, a figure that appears across diverse cultural narratives, characterized by cruelty, jealousy, and hostility towards stepchildren. This characterization can be seen as a reflection of deep seated psychological anxieties concerning psychological development in children and as response to changes that an ideal family structure oftentimes undergo. The evil stepmother can also be understood as a projection of patriarchal standards of motherhood, where mothers who deviate from the nurturing, selfless maternal ideal are cast as threats; she becomes a challenge to and reflection of restrictive expectations on women's agency and autonomy. Although historical circumstances and social contexts have shaped these narratives, this archetype remains relevant and complex in an era of diverse family structures, where such depictions could perpetuate biases that put undue strain on family relationships. This paper examines the evil stepmother in two Naga folktales, drawing on psychological, socio-historical and feminist perspectives to explore how this malevolent maternal image reveals psychological anxieties and societal apprehension and offers insight into patriarchal constraints and the resistance embedded in female characters who defy expectations of traditional maternal roles.*

**Keywords:** *archetype, cultural, evil stepmother, feminist, psychological anxieties, split, stepfamily and stereotype*

## Introduction

Narratives educate by communicating abstract notions in ways that are perceptible through the motivations and actions of characters. This is significant within Naga culture, which has traditionally relied on oral narratives to transmit knowledge, values, and beliefs. The characters populating these stories are archetypes that inform moral, social, and psychological values, facilitating the internalization of communal ideals across generations. One such enduring archetype is the evil stepmother, whose pervasive presence in folktales and fairy tales affirms its resonance across history and cultures. In Naga folktales, the stepmother is imbued with cultural and psychological anxieties surrounding familial relationships and idealized family structures.

The persistence of this archetype is grounded in historical and evolutionary realities. Maternal

mortality was high historically until modern medical intervention brought it down (Dobbie 82-90; Loudon 241). This would result in remarriage resulting in the formation of stepfamilies marked by complex interpersonal dynamics. According to evolutionary psychology, the behavior of the evil stepmother can be explained by the instinct to maximize the survival of one's own offspring and genetic legacy and refrain from wasting resources on someone else's offspring (Porter 2). This has manifested in folktale as the archetype of the evil stepmother, a projection of collective fears regarding resource competition and fractured family bonds. Moreover, the stepmother archetype functions as a vehicle for examining the intersection of gender roles and patriarchal expectations. Stepmothers who deviate from the nurturing, self-sacrificing maternal ideal become embodiments of female agency and resistance—

qualities that, within a patriarchal framework, are stigmatized and projected as malevolence.

Through analysis of selected narratives, this paper explores how the evil stepmother archetype in Naga folktales reflects the underlying psychological and cultural tensions surrounding gender roles and family structures. By contextualizing the figure within psychological, socio-historical and feminist frameworks, this analysis will also attempt to uncover the layered anxieties and expectations that shape this character.

### Literature Review

The archetype of the evil stepmother has been a subject of extensive scholarly interest, with Bruno Bettelheim and Maria Tatar offering pivotal interpretations that reveal the complex psychological and cultural layers embedded in this figure.

In *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976), Bruno Bettelheim examines fairy tales through a Freudian psychoanalytic lens, highlighting their vital role in children's emotional and psychological development. The wicked stepmother is a compelling embodiment of children's conflicted emotions toward parental figures, externalizing their mixed feelings by splitting their parents, primarily their mothers, into two parts which Bettelheim explains as: "...although Mother is most often the all-giving protector, she can change into the cruel stepmother..." (Bettelheim 67). This insight reveals how the duality of the mother archetype allows children to maintain an image of the mother as entirely nurturing while simultaneously acknowledging the potential for maternal failure or cruelty.

One of the main criticisms of Bettelheim application of psychoanalytical theory is that it "neglects both the editorial and the historical origins of the stepmother" (Williams 260). The changes to the fairy tales by the Grimm brothers as well the historical context of high maternal death rate is not addressed in his analysis, leading to a lack of consideration for how societal and historical factors shaped the portrayal of stepmothers.

Bettelheim's interpretations have also received criticism for their heavy reliance on Freudian concepts, arguing that it may impose meanings that aren't universally applicable across cultures. Critics assert that his interpretation "can sometimes feel reductive and dismissive of other potential interpretations" (Solano 4). This reductionist approach can simplify the narratives, stripping them of their broader social implications and the diverse ways in which they resonate with different audiences.

While *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* "... definitely dissects the existing fairy tales. It explains child psychology and the impact stories have on them" (Nair 2019), it is essential to approach his interpretations critically. Recognizing the limitations of a strictly Freudian perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of fairy tales, one that encompasses not only individual psychological development but also the cultural and societal factors that inform these narratives.

Maria Tatar offers a complementary yet distinct perspective in her works, such as *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* (1987). Tatar focuses on the socio-historical dimensions, analyzing how these narratives reflect and reinforce societal norms, particularly regarding gender roles and familial expectations. She points out that "stepmothers stand as an abiding source of evil in countless fairy tales, and it is no accident that they rank among the most memorable villains in those tales" (Tatar 141). This highlights the persistent stereotype of the stepmother as a malevolent figure, suggesting that her characterization is not merely a product of individual narratives but a broader commentary on women's roles within the family and society.

Tatar notes that the early version of *Snow White* originally feature biological mother as the antagonist (Tatar 140), and this original portrayal of the mother deviating from nurturing role contradicted to patriarchal expectations of motherhood. To reconcile this tension and preserve the idealized image of the benevolent mother, the narratives were altered:

“Wilhelm Grimm recognized that most children (along with those who read to them) find the idea of wicked stepmothers easier to tolerate than that of cruel mothers” (Tatar 37). By replacing the biological mother with the stepmother, these revised narratives reinforce the notion of the mother as an idealized figure—nurturing and self-sacrificing—while casting the stepmother as a corrupting force. In doing so, the narratives reflect and perpetuate cultural anxieties surrounding femininity and familial relationships, ultimately framing women who challenge traditional roles as villains.

Furthermore, Tatar examines how the evil stepmother reinforces patriarchal narratives by positioning the stepmother as an outsider and disruptor of family unity (Tatar 142). This figure embodies societal fears around remarriage and stepfamilies, where loyalties may be divided, and parental authority contested. Tatar’s analysis of the stepmother as a figure of otherness aligns with broader feminist critiques, which see these tales as instruments for social control.

### Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative research design, focusing on the analysis of two selected Naga folktales that feature the archetype of the evil stepmother. The two folktales ‘*The Step Mother*’ and ‘*Man Turns to Monkey*’, selected from *Fables from the Misty Mountains* (2009) are examined from cultural, psychological and feministic dimensions. These tales were selected based on the presence of the stepmother archetype and their ability to illustrate the underlying psychological and cultural themes relevant to the study.

### Folktales I

#### *The Stepmother*<sup>1</sup>

*A man had two wives. One died after giving birth while his other wife was childless. The stepmother hated the son and deceived both father and it kept them apart. She would eat food sent to the son by the*

*father and had the boy and convinced that his father wished him dead. Eventually, when the father went to meet the boy, the boy, fearing for his life, fled and fell to his death.*

### Analysis I

In Bettelheim's psychoanalytic framework, the presence of two wives can be interpreted as a manifestation of the maternal split, which encompasses nurturing and malevolent characteristics. The father's first wife represents the benevolent mother, while the second wife, the stepmother, personifies a controlling and malevolent aspect. This dichotomy illustrates the conflicting feelings children may have toward their mothers: admiration and affection toward the nurturing mother, coupled with anxiety and fear regarding disciplining side.

The psychological split can also be the split in the mother who finds herself oscillating between the nurturing role and her own desires for personal identity and fulfillment, leading to feelings of inadequacy and frustration which negatively influence her relationship with the child.

Women, who are unable to bear children, are often perceived in patriarchal society as an aberration that undermines traditional notions of womanhood and motherhood. The stepmother's inability to bear children positions her as an outsider within the familial structure, diminishing her perceived value and utility in a society. This reduction of her identity fosters resentment and hostility toward her stepchild, whom she sees as a reminder of her own perceived inadequacy.

Furthermore, the stepmother's act of consuming the food meant for her stepson serves as an assertion of agency. By denying him sustenance, she symbolically rejects societal expectations of selfless motherhood. Through a feminist lens, this act critiques the pressure placed on women to conform to nurturing ideals and demonstrates how oppressive gender roles can lead to adversarial maternal portrayal.

<sup>1</sup> This is an abridged version of the original story as found in *Fables from the Misty Mountains*, 24.

## Folktale II

### *Man turns to Monkey*<sup>2</sup>

*After the death of the first wife a man remarried. The second wife mistreated his children and banished them to the fields, withholding food and care. Forced to survive on wild fruits, they gradually lost their human traits and transformed into monkeys. When the father returned and called for them, they responded but could not reintegrate into human life.*

## Analysis II

The mother figure in this story embodies both nurturing and malevolent archetypes: the deceased wife represents care, while the second wife symbolizes cruelty. Bettelheim notes that "...the splitting of the mother into a good (usually dead) and an evil stepmother serves the child well" (Bettelheim 69), as it enables children to externalize their emotions and better understand the conflicting feelings associated with maternal figures. This psychological splitting not only facilitates the child's comprehension of love and discipline but also "prevents having to feel guilty about one's angry thoughts and wishes about her," (Bettelheim 69).

The physical distance that the stepmother creates between herself and her stepchildren, leads to a significant regression in the children's development. As Bettelheim suggests, this dynamic may result in the child feeling compelled to "split himself into two people who, he wishes to believe, have nothing in common with each other" (Bettelheim 69). This psychological fragmentation is mirrored in the transformation of the children into *animals*, symbolizing disconnect from their human identity consequent of the nurturing they lack. The children's regression into a more primal state serves as a defense mechanism against the emotional trauma inflicted by their stepmother, illustrating how severe neglect can strip away the foundational aspects of their humanity and lead to a loss of self.

The transformation of the children into monkeys serves as a powerful metaphor for a patriarchal

society's fear of female agency and the potential threat posed by women. By effectively alienating the children from their father and denying them the nurturing they need, the stepmother, akin to the witches in fairy tales, transforms the children into creatures that no longer resemble their human selves.

## Comparisons

Both tales begin with the death of the mother, reflecting the historical reality of high maternal mortality rates and the subsequent remarriage that often introduced the stepmother into the family. The death of the nurturing mother signifies both physical loss and a psychological and symbolic rupture. The death of the mother signifies the end of a nurturing phase and sets the stage for a challenging transition, where the arrival of the stepmother introduces a new, darker dynamics into their lives.

The stepmothers in both stories display hostility towards the children, withholding love as well as control over resources. By denying them access to sustenance, the stepmothers not only emphasize their power over the children but also allude to historical circumstances regarding scarcity and the control of resources within families (Warner 213). This magnifies her role as an antagonist, transforming basic needs into a means of manipulation that is in stark contrast to the children's vulnerable dependence.

Just as in *Hansel and Gretel* and other fairy tales where stepmothers send children into the woods away from home, the stepmothers in these two folktales are responsible for pushing the children away from the safety of home. This forced journey removes the children from familiar support and exposes them to a realm devoid of care.

From a feminist perspective, the non-intervention of the father is an intentional favorable presentation to contrast with the 'active' evil stepmother. The father remains unable to connect with his children; his effort to nourish his child/children fails. It reflects the paternal role within a patriarchal context where he is neither expected nor is it required of him to establish nurturing relationship with his children.

<sup>2</sup> This is an abridged version of the original story as found in *Fables from the Misty Mountains*, 57.



In both stories, the stepmother's actions lead to a form of death—literal or symbolic. Literal death as indicated by the concerning death rate of children in stepfamilies (Daly and Wilson 2). Symbolically, the death of the child in *The Stepmother*, could signify the end of childhood innocence, whereas in *Man Turns to Monkey*, the children's transformation could symbolize 'death' of their dependence that usher in independence.

Curiously, both tales remain silent on the stepmother's fate, and by omitting the narrative closure, these stories reflect an unresolved conflict, with the stepmother archetype lingering as a figure without redemption or punishment suggesting a lasting ambivalence in cultural attitudes towards stepmothers.

### Contextualizing Evil Stepmother

Stories have long served as a means for cultural perpetuation, however, as societies evolve, narratives, need to evolve as well to reflect contemporary values in context. In the case of the evil stepmother archetype in Naga folktales, it can be understood as reflections of historical circumstances and social norms regarding family structures and gender roles. These tales originally offered cautionary lessons to parents to be considerate of their children welfare, biological or otherwise (Francis 2022). While, it also functioned as means to inform children the necessity to develop agency against dependence; as therapeutic outlet for children as well as parents; and as means to subvert evolutionary tendencies in stepparents to be apathetic and even hostile to stepchildren, they can also inadvertently perpetuate outdated stereotypes in contemporary society. As observed in society that "... makes second-class people out of stepparents or stepchildren; indeed, "stepchild" is a synonym for a neglected person. Such is the pervasive and continuing impact of tales told at firesides 200 years ago" (Homburger). Instead of fostering understanding, this portrayal risks creating biases that may complicate relationships within

stepfamilies, reinforcing the idea of the stepmother as an antagonist.

On the other hand, there is significant potential for modern retellings of traditional folktales that reconfigures the stepmother in ways that gives more dimensions to her characterization. Contemporary adaptations, like *Maleficent* film franchise (2014, 2019), portray non-biological mother within the archetype of the good mother, exploring her perspective, motivations, and struggles. This offers a nuanced portrayal that challenges stereotypes. Through such thoughtful retellings, folktales can remain relevant in imparting valuable lessons as well as promote open-minded attitudes toward stepfamilies.

### Conclusion

In examining the evil stepmother archetype within Naga folktales, this study uncovers how these narratives divulge psychological projections and cultural anxieties related to family, gender roles, and non-biological maternal figures. The origins of these tales are rooted in historical contexts, reflecting traditional values of the time. It is also the articulations of real-world experiences that, as evolutionary psychology research suggests, mirror concerns for biological progeny interacting with resource competition and familial loyalty. While the evil stepmother does serve as a cautionary tale, warning against discord within family units, it simultaneously perpetuates harmful stereotypes that can exacerbate tensions in stepfamilies by reinforcing an image of stepmothers as antagonistic figures. Through psychological, socio-historical and feministic lenses, this analysis unveils the ways in which folktales convey psychological anxieties and transmit societal fears and expectations across generations.

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## A SEARCH FOR THE REAL MURDERER IN SUSAN GLASPELL'S *TRIFLES*

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### Abstract

*The subject of murder shocks everyone and many people appear to view women who commit murder as paradoxical. Most people believe that women are meek and that the gentler sex is incapable of violence. Women have committed murder throughout history, shocking the culture in which they reside. When a normal person commits a murder, there lies an implied criticism on society. But when a depraved person sins, then the mistake lies in his or her mind. There are several explanations provided by society as to why a woman would murder. The best and most popular justification is that a woman would have to be deranged or immoral to commit murder. In Susan Glaspell's play Trifles, Minnie Wright is first perceived as insane or depraved and it is her depravity that drives her to commit this crime.*

In this essay, I want to look at the social norms that constrain and encircle Minnie and push her into murder. I will argue that she is voiceless, which causes her repressed feelings to explode when she kills her oppressor, her husband, both literally and symbolically.

Society forces Mrs. Wright into a position of isolation and seclusion, where she cannot receive assistance to end her tyranny at the hands of the patriarchal figure. She suffers from the isolation, which causes her to have destructive ideas. She has expressed what was deep down and expressed things that have never been said before, through murder. It is feasible to comprehend that these are the circumstances that could lead her to commit murder. It becomes apparent that women who murder are the victims of patriarchal tradition; they experience loneliness and lack of expression. These women's voices have been muffled and ignored. In contrast to how society labels them, the readers can see them as human beings rather than vile murderers. Such a realization might bring an alteration in the society's restrictive norms that may otherwise send real-life women to follow Mrs. Wright's path.

In *Trifles*, it is the patriarchal norms of the society that leads Minnie Foster-Wright, the wife of a cruel and domineering farmer, to murder her husband. Glaspell digs deep to uncover the reasons for Minnie's apparent mindless murder and discovers

that it is the retaliation of her husband's harshness. Glaspell, unlike the majority of her contemporaries - with the exception of Sophie Treadwell - views the protagonist's struggle from a woman's perspective. According to June Sochen, Glaspell's heroines mostly represented disappointed woman in American culture - a woman who was unable to find an appropriate outlet for her feelings (43). In desperation they turned to destruction. Miss Glaspell's heroines are the victims of male-centered society.

While working as a journalist Glaspell investigated the case of a rural Iowa woman accused of killing her husband. This incident inspired her to write *Trifles* which she was completed within ten days. On August 8, 1916, *Trifles* was first performed at the Wharf Theatre before shifting to the Washington Square. It was later turned into a short tale called *A Jury of Her Peers*, which was one of the top stories of 1917. The play garnered overwhelmingly positive reviews from those who saw it, despite only playing in small theatres. Critics have long acknowledged its contribution to the evolution of a native drama of ideas. According to Arthur Waterman, Glaspell was crucial to the growth of American theatre in the 20th century. She was one of the most well-known Provincetown playwrights along with Eugene O'Neill (184).

The play is set in a farmhouse kitchen the day after farmer John Wright's wife Minnie was detained as the main suspect in the murder of Wright. The Sheriff, the County Attorney, and Mr. Hale, a nearby farmer, show up to look into the crime scene, taking Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters with them to get a few items to deliver to Minnie in the jail. The two ladies remain in the kitchen as the men search the house for clues, only to discover the real reason behind the murder. As a result of their close attention to detail, both the women are able to deduce the murder's motive and unearth the vital piece of evidence - a strangled canary - but they ultimately decide to keep their discoveries a secret from the men. The male characters joke that "women are used to worrying over trifles" (Glaspell 3) and nonchalantly reject the two women's observations. The women realize that Minnie was entirely alone and was entrapped in an abusive relationship. They begin to comprehend what actually happened. Mrs. Hale, who knew Minnie and her husband, is reluctant to criticize John Wright explicitly but in many places hints that she was not happy with Mr. Wright.

In *Trifles*, Glaspell's coup de theatre by focusing on a murderer that happened before the play opens, by a protagonist who never appears, makes the spectator to see the murder as an agent. This expresses the angst of the woman which rises up in response to unbearable pressures exerted on her by a man's world. Glaspell is more concerned about John Wright's crime, which was committed over the course of thirty years, than Minnie's unsolved crime which confounds the Sheriff and the County Attorney. Wright and the society that excused his crime by viewing it as "righteous" behaviour are the actual defendants in *Trifles*. By showing the gender conflict between the women and the men, the play expands and universalizes the domestic turmoil of the Wrights. The men treat the women with overt disdain, which makes Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peter angry and causes them to impede the investigation.

The Sheriff and County Attorney conduct a thorough investigation of the murder, which appears to be the main plot at first. As the plot develops the

emphasis of the play shifts away from the men's efforts to solve the case towards the events leading up to the incident, and the purpose of the murder is unveiled. The figures of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, who eventually came to collect Minnie's stuff, but then actively, intervened to prevent her from being vindicated, catch the interest of the viewership. Thus, the story of the women gradually and subtly surpasses that of the males. Unintentionally, the women learn Wright's crime as well as Minnie's reason for killing her husband. Minnie's canary depicts the young Minnie Foster, the vibrant choir girl, before her marriage. The purpose of Minnie's retaliation against her husband is made clear when the women discover the bird with its neck strangled, they were almost certain that it was done by Mr. Wright. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are aware that women's inner voices, which are constrained by the world of men, frequently, find expression in their constrained circumstances and the things they create with their hands. Through the different hints that Minnie left in her kitchen, they are able to identify signs of her emotional turmoil and mental health. They gradually reveal the events that lead Minnie to murder her husband. They come to a conclusion based on what they learn about Minnie's relationship with Wright and their own encounters with males that allows them to express their inner voices and claim their identity as women rather than as ladies.

In the play *Trifles*, opposing morals and sensitivities are generally categorized along gender lines. According to Issac Goldberg, Glaspell is primarily the playwright of women's self-identity (Goldberg 474). There is more to this drama than just a rebellious womanhood; there is a consciousness of a valid self, or a passion for freedom, of a dynamic personality, and a craving for life in its deepest meaning. This acute consciousness of self, which begins with a simple sense of sexual differentiation ranges through a high-functioning social sense. The men's and women's extremely different worldviews are highlighted by how they react to the strangling of Wright. The plot is divided into two connected but

conflicting strands as a result of this dualism of response. Throughout the play, the men and women compete for domination. The men's story follows the sin-discovery-punishment cycle, typical of early domestic tragedies. The men are obsessed with collecting concrete evidence that will prove Minnie guilty and result in her execution because they are convinced of her guilt. However, the storyline involving the women has a comic beginning (as the protagonist escapes punishment) and a tragi-comic ending. The men's potentially catastrophic plan is foiled by the women, and Minnie's destiny is altered. However, they are unable to celebrate their success because doing so would endanger Minnie's life. The conclusion is not adequately comic because Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are powerless to alter Minnie's tragic circumstances beyond freeing her.

The conflict between men and women in *Trifles* is also reflected in the characters' different communication styles, logical frameworks, and views on justice. Susan Glaspell has developed a feminine psyche through Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters that is built on a series of experiences that teach women to view themselves and the world differently than males do. The vast differences between the sexes are most likely noticeable in the way men and women deal with one another and among themselves. The County Attorney and Sheriff's patronising language towards the women and rejection of Mrs. Hale's information demonstrate how superior they perceive themselves to be. In response to Henderson's queries to Peter regarding anything significant in the kitchen which could be attributed towards a specific motive, Peters says, "Nothing here but kitchen things" (Glaspell 3). However, the reason for the murder and the excuse for it can be found in these "kitchen things" (Glaspell 3). The men make fun of Mrs. Hale when she says that Minnie is concerned that her preserves could freeze: "SHERIFF: Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves" (Glaspell 3). The men's self-confidence in their own correctness keeps them from finding the perpetrator

of the murder. The women's terseness, on the other hand, is a reflection of their poor social standing, lack of confidence, and mistrust of male authority. Their gesture is an additional mode of communication, and the halting nature of their speech reveals the dissatisfaction Glaspell's women feel at a society that will not allow women to be heard.

The men are unable to discover what they need and fail to recognise that the women are sabotaging the evidences which they are in need to construct the case because they are too confident in their own judgments. The women adopt a different, more rational reasoning than men. They learn what the men cannot since they are kept in the kitchen and living room by the males, and are only taught to be quiet and wait. The males, who are accustomed to tackling "big" concerns and events, are less adept at discerning complexities than Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, who are used to dealing with trifles.

The activities the women engage in Minnie's kitchen provide important details on Minnie's potential rationale for killing Wright. Women don't have any preconceived notions about the murder as males do. As a result, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are able to recognise Minnie's irrational behaviour right away. They discover the proof as Minnie's tasks are abruptly interrupted in seemingly trivial aspects, including the unusual disarray of her kitchen. Minnie's quilt has errant stitches that show a burst of emotion. The door almost being pulled off indicates why Minnie was irritated: the canary that Minnie "buried" in her sewing box, and even the frozen, broken jars of cherry serve as a visual reminder of her own explosion at Wright's unjustified brutality and her abrupt release of the hatred she had preserved for years towards the man she had wrongly married.

The goal of the women is to undermine the male plan of "an eye for an eye." The law that the wives establish is more compassionate and adaptable than the law that the men created because it is based on actual human experience rather than rigid, abstract principles. It sees oppressed people's rage as legitimate and maybe necessary reaction. As per

sensitive listeners, Minnie views her crime as an individual act of revenge of a victorious woman against a controlling man rather than an intentional attack on her husband. This seems to be understood by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. The women's moral standards permit the dispensing of genuine judgement rather than simply the appearance of law by taking into account both internal and environmental factors that cause one individual to kill another. That's why they work together to hide the evidence so that they can set Minnie free.

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# INTERDISCIPLINARY INSIGHTS: THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL TURN ON ENGLISH STUDIES AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES

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## Abstract

*The advent of digital humanities (DH) has transformed the landscape of English studies, introducing innovative methodologies and tools that encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. This article investigates the integration of DH within English studies by examining its impact on literary analysis and pedagogy. Through case studies that illustrate how digital tools facilitate new forms of textual engagement, enhance accessibility, and promote collaborative scholarship, the findings reveal that DH enriches English studies and challenges traditional disciplinary boundaries. This integration fosters a more inclusive and dynamic academic environment, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges the digital turn poses. Furthermore, it emphasises the transformative potential of interdisciplinary approaches in enriching English studies while identifying key areas where further research is needed to address existing gaps in the literature.*

**Keywords:** digital humanities, English studies, interdisciplinarity, literary analysis, textual studies, pedagogy, collaborative scholarship

## Introduction

The recent decades have witnessed a paradigm shift with digital technologies, transforming how information is created, stored, accessed, and analysed. This digital turn has profoundly reshaped the landscape of English studies and digital humanities. The digital turn or shift refers to the increasing integration of digital tools, methods, and perspectives into the field. This shift has been driven by the growing recognition of the importance of digital literacy, the need for innovative approaches to literary analysis, and the potential for digital humanities to enhance pedagogy and research. The digital revolution has significantly influenced the field of English studies, integrating digital humanities (DH) methodologies to reshape traditional literary analysis, pedagogy, and scholarly collaboration. This paper explores the multifaceted impact of digitalisation on English Studies. It examines how Digital Humanities has emerged as an interdisciplinary nexus, bridging traditional humanities scholarship with computational tools and methods. By examining case studies that highlight the integration of digital tools in textual analysis and

teaching practices, this study seeks to illuminate both the benefits and challenges of the digital turn in English studies.

The notions of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinary practice become particularly salient as they highlight the collaborative nature of this transformation, drawing from a rich tapestry of fields including computer science, linguistics, cultural studies, and information technology (Isemonger, 2018). Recent scholarship emphasises that digital humanities is not merely a subset of the humanities but an emerging field that transcends boundaries and fosters a collaborative dialogue among diverse disciplines (Luhmann & Burghardt, 2022).

Central to this discourse is examining how digital tools facilitate multifaceted analyses of textual artifacts. The intersection between literature and technology reveals unique opportunities to harness data-driven methodologies that can lead to groundbreaking discoveries and a deeper understanding of the literary canon. In this exploration, attention will be given to the methodological frameworks employed in contemporary research and the implications of these practices on the future of English studies.

## **Defining Digital Humanities**

### **Conceptual Framework**

Digital humanities (DH) is an interdisciplinary field that combines traditional humanities scholarship with digital technologies. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including text mining, data visualization, digital archiving, and computational analysis.

### **Historical Background**

The roots of digital humanities can be traced back to the 1940s with the advent of computational linguistics. However, the field gained significant momentum in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, as technological advancements enabled more sophisticated digital tools and methodologies.

### **Core Principles**

The principles of collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and innovation are central to DH. DH projects often involve collaboration between scholars from various disciplines, including computer science, history, and cultural studies, fostering a multidisciplinary approach to research and pedagogy.

## **Intersection of Digital Humanities and English Studies**

### **Digital Literary Studies**

One key area where DH intersects with English studies is digital literary analysis. Tools such as text mining and computational stylistics allow scholars to analyse large corpora of texts, uncovering patterns and trends that would be difficult to detect through traditional close reading. Data visualization techniques, such as network analysis and geospatial mapping, allow scholars to represent literary data innovatively. These visualizations can reveal complex relationships and trends within literary corpora.

### **Digital Archives and Editions**

The creation and use of digital archives and critical editions have revolutionized the way literary texts are accessed and studied. Digital archives provide unprecedented access to primary sources, while digital editions offer new ways of engaging with

texts through interactive features and hyperlinks. Digital archives play a crucial role in DH, providing access to digitized primary sources and enabling new forms of scholarly analysis. Examples include Project Gutenberg and the Digital Public Library of America.

### **Hypertext and Electronic Literature**

The development of hypertext fiction and electronic literature has introduced new narrative structures and forms of reader engagement. These digital genres challenge traditional notions of authorship and narrative, opening up new avenues for literary experimentation. Collaborative platforms, such as GitHub and Omeka, facilitate interdisciplinary research and teaching by enabling scholars to share resources, data, and methodologies.

### **Review of Literature**

Integrating digital technologies into English Studies has been a subject of extensive scholarly discourse. Landow (1992) and McGann (1995) argue that the digital turn in English studies and digital humanities began in the 1990s with the emergence of digital scholarship and the development of digital tools and methodologies. Similarly, Bolter (1991) and Lanham (1993) highlight the potential of digital technologies to enhance literary analysis, pedagogy, and research. Schreibman et al. (2004) suggest that the rise of digital humanities as a distinct field has fostered increased collaboration between English studies and other disciplines, including computer science, history, and cultural studies. Research by Moretti (2005) and Ramsay (2011) has explored the application of digital methods and tools to literary analysis, such as text mining, network analysis, and geospatial visualisation.

The digital turn has also influenced pedagogy in English studies, with scholars like Selfe (1999) and Takayoshi et al. (1999) emphasising the importance of digital literacy and developing digital pedagogies. Studies conducted by Kirschenbaum (2010) and Fitzpatrick (2011) examine how digital tools and platforms can enhance student engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking.



While the digital turn offers numerous advantages, Warschauer (2004) and Hayles (2012) have raised concerns about access, equity, and the digital divide. Additionally, debates persist regarding the role of digital humanities in academia, with some scholars, such as Marche (2012), contending that it poses a challenge to traditional humanities disciplines.

Burdick et al. (2012) and Gold & Klein (2016) argue that DH promotes new modes of engagement with literary texts, enabling computational analysis, distant reading, and multimodal interpretations. Meanwhile, scholars like Liu (2013) highlight concerns regarding the potential loss of traditional close reading skills. Additionally, research by Schreibman, Siemens, & Unsworth (2016) underscores the role of DH in fostering collaborative research and expanding accessibility in literary scholarship.

Further studies have highlighted the role of digital tools in enhancing language learning. For instance, research by Levitskaia (2023) indicates that students utilising digital technologies exhibit significant improvements in language skills compared to those in traditional learning environments. The emergence of Digital Humanities (DH) as a field has been marked by its interdisciplinary nature, combining computational methods with humanities research. Several scholars have underscored the importance of digital tools in advancing humanities scholarship, advocating for integrating computational techniques in arts and humanities research.

Despite these advancements, research gaps remain regarding the ethical implications of using digital tools, pedagogical strategies for teaching digital texts, and the need for theoretical frameworks that address new media forms. Current scholarship often fails to focus on non-Western perspectives and the unique challenges faced in implementing DH in diverse cultural contexts. The following sections will delve into this digital turn's methodological and analytical implications, defining key concepts and their relevance to English studies and digital humanities.

## Methods

This investigation adopts a qualitative approach, incorporating three primary methodologies: textual analysis, data visualization, and collaborative research practices. Firstly, textual analysis in the context of digital humanities extends beyond traditional close readings to include computational approaches such as textual mining and sentiment analysis. These methodologies utilize algorithms to identify patterns, themes, and nuances within large corpora of text, allowing scholars to uncover insights that may not be evident through conventional analysis. *LibGuides: Digital Humanities Tools and Resources: Text Analysis & Data Mining* site highlights that computational text analysis tools, also known as data or text mining, enable scholars to analyse large amounts of text using machine learning to identify word frequency patterns. This process allows researchers to gain insights into patterns such as word usage, psychological tendencies, and language associated with historical events, which might not be noticeable without computational assistance.

The second methodology, data visualisation, transforms data into a visual form to convey information and enable interactive work with sources ((Aradau et al., 2023). It uses graphics and images to illustrate relationships within data that might not be obvious otherwise. Visualisation tools allow humanists to make sense of large datasets in the form of graphs, charts, infographics, and information dashboards. By using quantitative data taken from artefacts such as texts and maps or demographic data such as surveys and census results, humanists can support more traditional types of qualitative research by embedding information visualisations into their writing and presentations.

Lastly, interdisciplinary collaborations in digital humanities significantly impact the quality of research by fostering innovation, mobilising empirical insights, and bridging gaps between disciplines (Winters & Sichani, 2023). These collaborations often bring together scholars from diverse backgrounds, such as computer science, media studies, information science, linguistics, and literature, enriching the research process and outcomes.

## How Digital Tools Facilitate New Forms of Textual Engagement – Case Studies

Digital tools have revolutionized how we interact with texts, moving beyond traditional reading and analysis to more interactive, dynamic, and collaborative engagement. Below are three case studies that illustrate these new forms of textual engagement.

### Digital Annotation Platforms – The Case of *Hypothesis*

*Hypothesis* is a social annotation tool that allows you to add a layer of comments, highlights, and discussions directly onto web pages and PDFs. It transforms passive reading into an active, collaborative, and engaging experience. The new forms of textual engagement include:

- **Interactive Annotations:** Readers can engage with a text by adding marginal notes, explanations, and multimedia (e.g., images, videos, and links).
- **Layered Readings:** Users can see multiple interpretations of a text, fostering a deeper understanding through collaborative reading.
- **Social Reading and Peer Review:** Groups can collectively analyse and critique texts in real-time, promoting discussion and scholarly debate.

### Case Example

Educators blog in the *Hypothesis* site stands as a testimony to the advantages and newer ways of adapting this tool for teaching, learning and research. Further, it exemplifies how this tool can enhance textual engagement.

**Active Reading:** *Hypothesis* encourages active reading by prompting users to highlight key passages, ask questions, and make connections with other texts or ideas.

**Collaborative Learning:** It fosters collaborative learning by enabling students to share their annotations and engage in discussions around the text.

**Deeper Understanding:** By engaging in these activities, students develop a deeper understanding of

the material and can think critically about the content.

**Increased Motivation:** The social aspect of *Hypothesis* can increase student motivation and make reading assignments more enjoyable.

**Improved Communication Skills:** Students learn to articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly and respectfully through written discussions.

### Text Mining and Computational Analysis – The Case of *Voyant Tools*

*Voyant* is a web-based text analysis suite that allows researchers to visualize and explore textual data through various computational techniques, such as word clouds, frequency analysis, and network mapping. The following are the impacts on textual engagement, accessibility and collaborative scholarship:

- Helps scholars uncover hidden patterns in texts by analysing word frequency, collocations, and topic modelling.
- Encourages distant reading techniques, allowing for analysis of entire corpora instead of close reading of individual texts.
- Offers web-based, user-friendly interfaces that require minimal technical expertise.
- Provides multilingual support for analysing texts in different languages.
- Enables teams of researchers to collaboratively analyse and interpret large datasets.
- Facilitates cross-disciplinary collaborations by integrating computational methods into traditional humanities research.

*Voyant Tools* has been successfully applied in various research projects across different disciplines. At the University of Alberta, researchers used *Voyant Tools* to analyse 19th-century newspapers. By mapping word frequency and sentiment analysis, they discovered hidden narratives about social and political issues that would have been difficult to uncover through traditional reading. Here are some examples collated from the San Jose State University's Dr. Martin Luther King, JR. Library site:

- Analysing Che Guevara's Speech: Danny McDonald, a blog writer, used *Voyant Tools* to analyse Che Guevara's 1964 speech at the UN. He utilized the Reader tool to read the text, *Cirrus* to identify keywords, *Documentation Terms* to find trends of major keywords, *Summary* to find vocabulary density, average words per sentence, and word count, and *Context Analysis* to provide context.
- Analysing Post-Apocalyptic Cities Website: Robert Yeates, a research blog writer, performed a text analysis of a website called "Post-Apocalyptic Cities" using *Voyant Tools*. He generated a word cloud using *Cirrus* and found word trends for major keywords using *Documentation Terms*.
- Analysing Literature: The University of British Columbia created an online lab demonstrating how to use *Voyant Tools* for analysing Mary Wilson Alloway's novel, *Crossed Swords*. John Cabot University in Italy provided a lab on using *Voyant* for literature text analysis, including Shakespeare's plays and Jane Austen's novels.
- Data-Driven Learning (DDL) in Language Teaching: *Voyant Tools* is useful for research in applied linguistics and DDL. It can be used for action research projects on teacher instructions or to explore learner production. The tool can quickly analyse texts for trends and patterns in language research, teacher training, and classroom teaching.
- Formulating Research Questions: *Voyant Tools* can help with teaching the research process, particularly in guiding students toward asking thoughtful and interesting research questions about a text. It allows readers to see familiar aspects in new ways, identifying previously overlooked elements. A demonstration with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* shows how *Voyant* can be used to get an overview of a text.
- Penn Libraries: *Voyant* allows users to visualize and analyse textual data. Its features identify patterns and trends within a corpus. Researchers and scholars can explore the statistics provided

by *Voyant*, such as vocabulary densities, distinctive words, and word frequencies, to better understand the structure of their data.

These case studies demonstrate how digital tools redefine textual engagement by making it more interactive (*Hypothesis*), and analytical (*Voyant Tools*). Whether through collaborative annotation, computational text analysis, or multimodal storytelling, digital technologies empower readers and scholars to experience texts in ways that were previously impossible.

### Digital Archives and Open-access:

Digital archives have revolutionised humanities research by:

- Improving Accessibility: Providing global access to diverse materials like texts, artwork, and videos, while also making them easier to organize and search.
- Enabling New Research Methods: Combining traditional humanities research with computational methods, using tools for text mining, data visualization, and more, to analyse data in innovative ways.
- Fostering Collaboration: Facilitating knowledge exchange through online platforms, promoting interdisciplinary projects, and engaging wider audiences beyond academia through public scholarship.

Essentially, digital archives make research more efficient, allow for new types of analysis, and encourage wider collaboration and knowledge sharing. For instance, the case of *The Perseus Digital Library* can be considered.

*The Perseus Digital Library* is an open-access archive that provides historical texts, translations, and linguistic tools for the study of ancient literature, particularly Greek and Latin texts. The following are the features of this archive:

- offers interactive reading experiences, such as hyperlinked texts that provide instant translations and lexical analyses.
- integrates with linguistic tools that allow readers to analyse grammar, syntax, and etymology.

- makes historical texts freely available to scholars and the public, reducing barriers to knowledge.
- provides digital editions of rare manuscripts that would otherwise be difficult to access.
- purports crowd-sourced translations and annotations, allowing experts and amateurs to contribute insights.
- encourages interdisciplinary research by linking historical texts with related archaeological and geographical data.

*Perseus* serves as a model for how digital archives can revolutionize the study of literature and culture, offering new opportunities for research, teaching, and public engagement in English studies and beyond.

Digital tools are transforming literary accessibility through digitization (*Project Gutenberg*), auditory formats (*LibriVox*), and adaptive technologies (*Bookshare*). These innovations make texts available, adaptable, and inclusive for diverse audiences, including people with disabilities, language barriers, and those without access to physical books. *LibriVox* and *Bookshare* are digital platforms that enhance accessibility to literature for people with various needs.

*LibriVox* is a volunteer-driven project offering free audiobooks of public-domain texts. This benefits visually impaired users, dyslexic readers, and non-native speakers through multilingual options. *Bookshare* is a digital library providing accessible books for individuals with print disabilities like visual impairment, dyslexia, and cerebral palsy. It offers text-to-speech functionality, braille support, and customisable reading experiences (text size, contrast, audio speed). *Bookshare* also expands access for students with disabilities by providing free or low-cost resources in many countries. In essence, both platforms leverage digital technology to break down barriers and make literature more accessible to a wider audience. However, such facilities have to be made accessible to people across the globe in all languages, particularly the marginalised lot. In

countries like India, the process is still in its nascent stage.

## Results

The findings of this interdisciplinary inquiry reveal several key insights into how the digital turn influences English studies and digital humanities. Primarily, the application of computational methods has significantly broadened the scope of literary analysis. Researchers can now utilise complex algorithms to analyse massive amounts of text, uncovering previously undetectable patterns and trends. This fundamental change not only influences the research questions posed but also reshapes the trajectory of literary studies.

Secondly, the interplay between digital tools and collaborative practices has led to innovative pedagogical approaches in higher education. Integrating digital humanities into the curriculum has allowed educators to foster critical thinking and analytical skills in students, encouraging them to engage actively with texts through digital platforms. This integration encourages active engagement with texts via digital platforms as courses increasingly utilise databases, digital archives, and multimedia presentations. Such practices equip students with essential competencies for contemporary scholarship (Largou & El Guermat, 2024).

Moreover, the rise of open-access platforms has significantly changed how research findings are shared. Digital humanities projects emphasize accessibility, promoting a democratization of knowledge that allows a wider audience to interact with scholarly work. By disseminating research through interactive websites and digital publications, scholars can reach diverse demographics, enhancing their findings' impact. This shift not only benefits the academic community but also enriches public discourse by making scholarly insights more accessible to the general public (Nockels et al., 2024).

## Discussion

The implications of these findings underscore the necessity of embracing interdisciplinary research

methodologies in contemporary English studies. The digital turn not only enhances the analytical toolkit available to literary scholars but also encourages an environment where knowledge is constructed collaboratively. As digital humanities continues to evolve, the importance of establishing frameworks that support inclusivity and diversity in research practices cannot be overstated (Klein, 2015).

In critically examining the ethical implications of digital methodologies, scholars must navigate questions related to data ownership and digital literacy. As digital tools become standard in literary studies, researchers must remain vigilant about maintaining academic integrity and ensuring that data is utilized responsibly. The methodological advancements brought forth by the digital turn necessitate rigorous training and ethical guidelines that can guide scholars in making informed decisions regarding the use of digital technologies (Luhmann & Burghardt, 2022).

Furthermore, the collaborative nature intrinsic to digital humanities projects has the potential to challenge traditional hierarchies in academia. By fostering interdisciplinary cooperation, researchers can create a rich intellectual environment that encourages the cross-pollination of ideas and approaches. This collaborative spirit can lead to innovative research outcomes that bridge gaps between disciplines and generate fresh perspectives (Isemonger, 2018). As explained by Fiormonte et al. (2022), it is necessary to decolonize the digital humanities so far troubled by a lack of perspectives beyond Westernized and Anglophone contexts and assumptions. In this process, the distance and assumed relationship between centre and periphery is fading and border thinking (Mignolo 2012) from the margins, where often the means are less, but the freedom to innovate is greater, becomes relevant.

### **Key Findings and Suggestions for Future Research**

Digital Humanities (DH) tools have significantly enriched literary analysis by introducing computational and data-driven approaches, fostering new interpretative insights through large-scale data

analysis in English Studies. This has facilitated interdisciplinary collaborations, blending methodologies from humanities and computational sciences, while digital pedagogy enhances student engagement and fosters collaborative learning environments. However, the interdisciplinary nature of DH also raises concerns about methodological rigour and accessibility. Evolving pedagogical practices in English Studies now incorporate digital media to enhance student engagement and digital literacy.

Future research should investigate the long-term impact of DH tools on literary interpretation, examine the role of digital archives in preserving marginalized literary texts, and address challenges related to accessibility and digital literacy in DH scholarship. Educational institutions should update curricula to include training in digital tools and methodologies, preparing students for interdisciplinary research. Scholars should maintain a critical perspective on digital tool use, ensuring technology complements rather than supplants traditional analytical skills. Further research is needed to assess the long-term impacts of digital methodologies on English Studies and develop best practices for interdisciplinary collaboration.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the impact of the digital turn on English studies and digital humanities has resulted in significant advancements in research methodologies, pedagogical practices, and scholarly communication. The exploration of digital tools and methods has fostered interdisciplinary collaborations that transcend traditional boundaries, enriching the humanities landscape. As the digital turn continues to evolve, scholars must remain engaged with emerging technologies while also reflecting on their ethical implications and collaborative potential. Future research in this field should prioritize the development of comprehensive training programs that equip scholars with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of digital methodologies responsibly. Additionally, fostering an inclusive

environment that promotes diverse voices and perspectives will be crucial in ensuring that the digital humanities can firmly position itself as a dynamic and impactful discipline within the broader academic landscape. Ultimately, the intersection of English studies and digital humanities offers a fertile ground for inquiry that holds the promise of enriching our understanding of literature in the digital age. By embracing this interdisciplinary approach, scholars can contribute to the evolution of both fields, paving the way for innovative research and impactful scholarship.

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# RACHEL CARSON'S *THE SEA AROUND US*: A CLARION CALL FOR BLUE HUMANITIES

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## Abstract

*The article, "Rachel Carson's The Sea Around Us: A Clarion Call for Blue Humanities" examines the intricacies of how Carson's work challenges traditional notions of human dominance over the ocean. It explores the complex relationships between the ocean's ecosystems, marine life, and human cultures. Carson's The Sea Around Us has been recognized as a classic of oceanic literature and a foundational text in the province of marine conservation. Her work emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living things in the ocean. She discusses the impact of human activities on the ocean, including pollution, overfishing, and coastal development. She argues that the ocean is not just a natural resource to be exploited, but a complex ecosystem that requires careful management. In the prophetic book, The Sea Around Us, Carson warns the readers about the climate crisis and its impact on the Earth. Carson's call to action has had a lasting effect on the environmental movement, inspiring generations of scientists, activists, and writers to work toward protecting the ocean and its inhabitants. This article highlights Carson's wide passion and love for the sea, the shore, and everything that lived within or depended on it. It identifies Carson's captivating narrative strategies propelling the need for a more holistic understanding of the ocean and its interconnectedness with humans by proving it as a pioneering work for Blue Humanities.*

**Keywords:** blue humanities, oceanic literature, marine conservation, sea life, environment

In recent years, Blue Humanities has developed into a unique academic discipline, complete with its journals, conferences, and research institutions. Scholars involved in this area come from a wide range of fields, encompassing literature, history, anthropology, sociology, biology, ecology, and oceanography. They share a collective dedication to exploring the intricate connections between humans and the ocean and aspire to foster a more sustainable relationship with the sea.

Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us* is a pivotal text that has greatly impacted perceptions of and interactions with the ocean. This book is a clarion call for Blue Humanities, an interdisciplinary domain that examines the cultural, social, and environmental importance of the ocean. The article "Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us*: A Clarion Call for Blue Humanities" examines how *The Sea Around Us* reflects the core principles of Blue Humanities, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the ocean and human existence. Carson illustrates how the sea has

influenced human culture, history, and economies, while also showing how human endeavours have repercussions on the ocean's ecosystem. This comprehensive viewpoint is a defining characteristic of Blue Humanities, which aims to merge knowledge from natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and the arts to comprehend the complex interactions between humans and the ocean.

*The Sea Around Us* is also a compelling call to action. Carson highlights the perils of pollution, overfishing, and coastal development, advocating for responsible management of the ocean's resources. Her warnings are increasingly pertinent in today's context, as society confronts the challenges posed by climate change, ocean acidification, and the decline in marine biodiversity.

Carson, who served as editor-in-chief of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was educated as a biologist at Johns Hopkins and Woods Hole. However, her exploration of the ocean encompasses various branches of oceanography as well as related



fields such as geology, meteorology, and climatology. The depiction she offers is well-rounded and as comprehensive as one could expect in this type of work. Numerous specialists addressing the issues facing the ocean have engaged with her insights.

One of America's finest writers regarding nature and science, Rachel Carson served as an inspiration for women in the scientific field. Her book *The Sea Around Us* has remained one of the most recognized and intriguing works in natural science since its publication. The book is divided into three sections. Part I, titled "Mother Sea," explores the "shadowy beginnings" of the ocean and explains how Earth came to have its initial bodies of water. The moon was created by molten substances that were disturbed by the Sun's gravitational force. The formation of the oceans was greatly shaped by Earth's satellites. The seas and oceans were formed by the continuous rains that filled the oceanic basins in the millennia that succeeded the cooling of the planet.

The origins of protoplasm and the earliest single-celled life forms in the saline waters millions of years ago remain uncertain. Following these were plants, and subsequently animals that fed on those plants. This laid the foundation for today's intricate food web in the oceans. The elevation and depression of mountain ranges, along with the movement of glaciers, played a role in shaping the oceans as they advanced onto land and then receded.

Part II, titled "The Restless Sea," discusses fossils from the sea that date back only 500 million years to the Cambrian Period. About 350 million years ago, during the Silurian Age, life forms began to emerge from the sea to establish themselves on land. As a result, wetlands and low-lying areas developed which created a nurturing environment for marine life to evolve in response to a transforming ecosystem.

Part – III, titled "The Man and The Sea about Him," discusses the global thermostat, the riches found in saltwater, and the surrounding ocean. Humans also possess remnants of ancient life within their bones and blood, as shown by the calcium composition in their bones and the chemical makeup

of their blood. In the ocean, the living organisms are affected by the water temperatures they inhabit. These temperatures impact currents, nutrient distribution, and consequently the abundance of marine life where the Humboldt Current and the Benguela Current flow.

The book outlines how advancements in oceanography have allowed for the exploration and examination of deep-sea lifeforms. It explains the effects of tides on marine existence and human lifestyles. Readers learn that the ocean is a treasure trove of unexplored mineral resources and its vital role in controlling the Earth's climate. The concluding chapter presents early navigators, the evolution of seafaring, and the developments in marine technology.

The origins of ocean basins, a key geological and topographical feature of the Earth, remain a mystery, which Carson addresses. She offers only one of many conceivable theories, suggesting that the Pacific Ocean basin may be the result of the tidal disruption that created the moon. After this point, her narrative becomes more assured, as she confidently navigates through well-explored territories. The diverse life forms within surface waters, the seasonal patterns of plant and animal activity, the bizarre and remarkable beings inhabiting the dark depths, and the concealed canyons and mountains of the ocean floor are described with almost exhilarating enthusiasm.

For geologists, the ocean is considered "restless" not only due to waves, currents, and tides but also due to significant changes throughout its extensive history of continental movement and retreat. Carson fully addresses this aspect of its dynamics and places particular emphasis on it. There exists a theory that is both astonishing and well supported by scientific evidence, deserving global attention. This theory suggests that beneath a billion tons of frozen sea in the Arctic, an incredible secret lies hidden. If global ice continues to melt, sea levels could rise by 100 feet or more, potentially submerging the world's major coastal cities. It has been thoroughly established that significant climate changes in the Arctic began around the year 1900 and have

progressed so swiftly that small glaciers have vanished, while larger ones are melting at an alarming pace. Humanity, equipped with the scientific knowledge of the past, now comprehends that the melting of these glaciers, combined with the drastic shifts in the Earth's land masses, might one day inundate more than half of the planet.

In the initial sections of *The Sea Around Us*, Carson diligently underscores the lasting "mystery" of the sea, even when faced with new oceanographic insights. "Beginnings tend to be ambiguous," she notes, "and this holds for the origin of that vast source of life, the sea." (Carson 3) For Carson, the ever-changing qualities of the sea provoke speculation rather than assumptions, fostering a "wonder and curiosity" not only about the ocean's origins but also about humanity's beginnings in the marine environment and its significance in the overarching narrative of the earth's natural history.

Stranded on land, unable to return to the sea "as the seals and whales had done," humans turned to poetry to comprehend the ocean: "Over the centuries, with all the skill and ingenuity and reasoning powers of his mind, [man] has sought to explore and investigate even its most remote parts, so that he might re-enter it mentally and imaginatively." (Carson, 14). Elizabeth Bell notes that "Projections of the sea, Carson insists, shift like the tides themselves, alongside our understandings of humanity's place in nature." (Bell 10).

In a recent edition of the PMLA, ecocritics convened to assess the future of "oceanic studies" in the 21st century, and their findings consistently highlighted the necessity to analyze the well-worn trope through which "colonial narratives of maritime expansion have long depicted the ocean as blank space to be traversed." (De Loughrey 383). A more in-depth examination of the ostensibly vacant ocean waters, Elizabeth De Loughrey asserted, brings to light everything from the human remains of the Middle Passage to the by-products of nuclear arms testing, serving as a reminder of all the figurative and literal "waste" dumped into the world's oceans in

pursuit of realizing our "progressive models of capitalist time."

Guest editor Patricia Yaeger advanced her critique of our maritime optimism even further. Citing a variety of environmental issues that Carson and the scientists of her era had only begun to consider—including ocean acidification, the Pacific garbage patch, and the ongoing presence of industrial and urban pollutants—she declared that "our relation to the sea is always already technological" (Yaeger 526), and urged ecocritics to explore how poetic work "mean[s] in and through the resources that oceans provide" (Yaeger 538), often reflecting an erroneous notion that these resources lie beyond our capacity to impact.

By the time the second edition of *The Sea Around Us* was published in 1960, Carson's long-held conviction that "the sea, at least, was inviolate, beyond man's ability to change and to despoil" had started to diminish. (Carson 55). New oceanographic studies revealed that even the ocean's most profound depths were influenced by tidal movements, linking human activities along the coast to environmental conditions in the ocean's abyssal plains. In her preface for the updated edition, Carson expressed particular concern about the disposal of nuclear waste, which was typically packed in barrels and then dropped onto the ocean floor.

Through the mechanism of bioaccumulation, the residues from this waste were accumulating in the bodies of highly mobile marine species. (Carson 56) "What then occurs," her preface questions, "to the meticulous assessment of a 'maximum permissible level' [of radioactivity]? For the minute organism is consumed by a larger one, continuing up the food chain to humans." Carson's investigation into the bioaccumulation of hazardous substances—the very process that heightened the risks associated with the powerful pesticides detailed in *Silent Spring*—added an urgent tone to the narrative of ecological interconnectedness explored in her marine books. This line of reasoning ultimately led her to the troubling paradox "that the sea, the origin of life, is now endangered by the actions of one form of that

life. However, while the sea has been altered in a troubling manner, it will persist; the real threat is to life itself.” (Carson 57)

The peril to the world's oceans endures; or, as we increasingly recognize the effects of overfishing, greenhouse gas emissions, and mercury contamination on the health of marine ecosystems, we could more precisely state that the dangers have multiplied. Unfortunately, we appear to be trapped in the same deceptive belief about the ocean's vast productive capacity, ensnared in the illusion that it can and will withstand limitless exploitation and mistreatment. The last three chapters focus specifically on humanity's connection to the sea. They discuss the ocean's impact on weather and climate, consider the potential wealth of minerals found in ocean waters, and provide a brief overview of earlier navigation history.

*The Sea Around Us* not only educates readers about the ocean's history and the diversity and complexity of life within it but also raises awareness of the relationships between humans and the ocean, particularly regarding the risks associated with disrupting the ecological balance of marine life. In the chapter dedicated to islands, for instance, Carson illustrates how human intervention with the distinctive flora and fauna of oceanic islands, like the Hawaiian Islands, has led to the extinction of various species, a loss she deeply mourns.

In her introduction to the revised edition of *The Sea Around Us* published in 1961, Carson reflects on the advancements in oceanography over the past decade and voices her increasing anxiety about human threats to the equilibrium of ocean life, especially regarding the hazards posed by nuclear testing in the sea. Carson conveys both the contemporary (as of its 1951 publication) understanding of the ocean's surface and depths and highlights significant earlier stages in grasping these concepts. Although her primary focus is the ocean's surface, she also addresses important topics concerning deep-water oceanography and the topography of the ocean floor. The underwater

elements are underscored for their contributions to land formation through volcanic activity.

Examining the atmosphere's surface, Carson illustrates how currents and waves have impacted human activities. She investigates how distant oceanic events affect coastal life, including extreme occurrences like tsunamis. On a more ordinary level, Carson points out that the everyday dynamics of tides have supported human survival along the shores and fostered our development of marine resources. The ocean's function in regulating onshore climate is also highlighted.

A significant theme is the real and potential harm that humans have caused in their longstanding efforts to coexist with and dominate the waters. Carson revisits the idea of human influence as she highlights mankind's essential responsibility in safeguarding vital waters. She mentions the scientists who assist humanity in gaining a deeper understanding of the sea.

Carson discusses Thor Heyerdahl, a Norwegian ethnologist who sailed across the Pacific Ocean on a raft to explore whether the early Polynesians could have made the journey from South America on such vessels. Along with five companions, he witnessed the movement of the ocean and the life at its surface. When Carson interviewed him, he recounted experiences with flying fish and phosphorescent organisms, as well as the various plants and animals they observed during their journey.

A. E. Parr from the American Museum is referenced by Carson when discussing the longevity of plants. He explained that certain plants might live for centuries, depending on their species and surroundings, while addressing the weeds of the Sargasso Sea. Parr estimated that there are around 10 million tons of these weeds.

Martin Johnson, a marine biologist from the Scripps Institute, experienced a revelation aboard a vessel; he found that echoes in a layer beneath the ocean were situated near the surface at night but descended deeper during the day. This insight helped them realize that the reflections and echoes

originated from a layer of living organisms rather than inanimate objects.

Thomas Stevenson, a Scottish pioneer, was the first individual to quantify the strength of an ocean wave. He invented a device known as a wave dynamometer. Hans Ahlmann, a glaciologist, explains that many glaciers in Norway primarily depend on their existing mass without receiving fresh snowfall each year. In contrast, glaciers in the Alps have been experiencing significant retreat and reduction. Carson references his research, using it as proof that the planet is experiencing warming trends.

Though humanity's history as a caretaker of the earth's natural resources has often been disheartening, there has been some reassurance in the idea that the ocean, at least, remains untouched and beyond human influence. This perception, unfortunately, has proven to be overly simplistic. Modern advancements in harnessing the atom have confronted humanity with an alarming challenge—how to manage the most dangerous substances ever created in Earth's history, the by-products resulting from atomic fission.

One key point Carson highlights is the ongoing reliance of humans and other creatures on the ocean. This reliance stems from the crucial role the ocean played in the evolution of all land-dwelling life. She provides insights into the early development of plant life as continents formed, paving the way for animal habitation: The lakes, riverbanks, and swamps served as the environments where plants and animals either adapted to the new conditions or ceased to exist. As land masses rose and ocean levels fell, an unusual fish-like organism began to inhabit the land, and over millennia, its fins transformed into legs while it developed lungs instead of gills.

Carson also points out the interconnection not just within various elements of the ocean but among all forms of life. "The continents themselves dissolve and pass to the sea, in grain after grain of eroded land. So the rains that rose from it return in rivers. In its mysterious past, it encompasses all the dim origins of life and receives in the end, after it may be, many transmutations, the dead husks of that same

life. For all at last return to the sea – to Oceans, the ocean river, like the ever-flowing stream of time, the beginning and the end." (Carson, 209) Carson underscores how all living beings in the ecosystem are interconnected and stresses the necessity of safeguarding every aspect of the environment since it consists of a fragile balance of forces.

*The Sea Around Us* serves as a fundamental text for Blue Humanities and continues to motivate fresh research and scholarship in this domain. Carson's work has had considerable influence, shaping marine conservation efforts, ocean policy, and environmental education. Her impact lingers today, as researchers, scientists, and ocean advocates strive to tackle the intricate issues confronting the ocean and its ecosystems.

To conclude, *The Sea Around Us* is a significant work that has greatly impacted our perceptions of the ocean and our connection to it. Carson's writing embodies the core ideals of Blue Humanities, highlighting the bond between the ocean and human existence, embracing an interdisciplinary outlook, and presenting a strong call for action. *The Sea Around Us* has motivated countless ocean advocates, scholars, and scientists. Its fusion of scientific inquiry, literature, and advocacy serves as a model for Blue Humanities, aiming to enhance our comprehension of the ocean's cultural, social, and environmental importance. As we advance through the Anthropocene period, Carson's message continues to remind us of our duty to safeguard the ocean and its creatures for future generations.

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# PERSONAL TRAUMA TO COLLECTIVE REVOLUTION IN MAYA ANGELOU'S "STILL I RISE" AND SUBRAMANIYA BHARATHIYAR'S "ACHAMILLAI, ACHAMILLAI": A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the thematic and rhetorical parallels between Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" and Subramania Bharathiyar's "Achamillai, Achamillai," focusing on the transcending individual suffering to inspire revolution at a collective level. This comparative study highlights these poets' poetic assertions of resilience and defiance, converging their demand for freedom and fight against dehumanization. This research highlights how both poets transform personal trauma into revolutionary calls for collective resistance to challenge oppression and advocate dignity, liberty, and justice for collective empowerment through their powerful articulation. This study explores the transformation of personal trauma into the collective revolution of an Afro-American and Tamil poet rooted in two different countries and cultures. It investigates how both poets envision a society free from oppression, domination, and discrimination by channeling suffering into broader narratives of resistance and societal change. It attempts to investigate how these poets remain an enduring symbol of courage and resilience with their revolutionary vision of liberation encompassing political freedom, social equality, embracing their cultural legacy and how they demand emancipation by challenging social hierarchies and igniting revolution through empowerment by transforming oppression into a source of pride and strength through the lens of trauma theory and revolutionary aesthetics.*

**Keywords:** *personal trauma, collective revolution, resilience, defiance, oppression, social hierarchies, revolutionary aesthetics*

Literature, with its powerful language, uncovers memories, sparks introspection, invites retrospection, and even evokes haunting recollections. It illustrates pain, wounds, suffering, and trauma caused by the deep breakdown of the individual. Cathy Caruth, a prominent trauma theorist specializing in the languages of trauma, literary theory, and contemporary discussions on the destruction and persistence of language, argues in who focuses on the languages of trauma, literary theory, and contemporary discourses concerning the obliteration and existence of language argues in *Unclaimed Experience* that trauma is a profound psychological

wound. Unlike physical injuries, it is not something that can be easily or quickly healed. She defines it "as the direct imposition on the mind of the unavoidable reality of horrific events, the taking over of the mind, physically and neurobiologically, by an event that it cannot control" (58).

This study scrutinizes the transformation of personal trauma into collective consciousness, exploring how Maya Angelou and Subramania Bharathiyar channel their individual experiences of pain and suffering to guide the community's collective psyche. The existential threat and memory of the trauma of these authors motivate a desire to

construct meaning around the meaning against adversity. In this process, a transgenerational collective 'self' is mended, and that promotes group cohesion, common destiny, and commitment to group identity. Their shared trauma has catalysed activism by rallying people around a common cause. Though trauma is undeniably destructive, it not only contributes to the creation of a national narrative and a sense of identity but also provides guidelines and values for future generations. Ironically, the effect of trauma increases the collective construction as the memory shifts from personal pain to long-term lessons to groups derived from trauma.

Maya Angelou, the renowned poet, storyteller, fearless activist, and autobiographer, provokes the flash of empowering thoughts to foster a sense of collective self. "Still I Rise" narrates her traumatic experience and determines resilience, which becomes the epicentre of African Americans' identity. Christine Courtois, A., in his article "Complex Trauma, Complex Reactions: Assessment and Treatment." *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* defines racial trauma as "dangerous experiences related to threats, prejudices, harm, shame, humiliation, and guilt associated with various types of racial discrimination either of victims directly or through witnesses." (<https://doi.org/10.1037/1942-9681.s.1.86>.)

Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" illustrates the journey from trauma to the writer's triumph and serves as a collective anthem for African Americans. Maya Angelou, the 'lay historian', attempts to inject meaning into history by creating a social identity. This poem provides insights into the historical and social conditions of African Americans of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and documents historical realities like racism and sexism. The portrayal of her struggle and quest for self-sustaining dignity provides fertile ground for producing cultural narratives and brings hope to imminent compeers.

She projects her bitter experiences and emotional turmoil because of social inequalities and false stereotypes that blacks are inferior and whites are superior. She has overcome the trauma through

powerful language, and her writings demand the vital need for transformation. Her assertive tone in "Still I Rise" mirrors her pride in blackness and African heritage and the determination of black women to rise against oppression.

Out of the huts of history's shame

I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide. (29-34)

Despite being a victim of gender and racism, Maya Angelou pleads an irreplaceable ingredient in the construction of collective meaning. Her trauma functions as a reagent in stimulating the structuring of a new social representation. Through her defensive dynamics, she contributes to creating a national narrative. Hirschberger, Gilad. "Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 9 states that

"by individual trauma, I mean a blow to the psyche that breaks through one's defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively...by collective trauma, on the other hand, I mean a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it...[is] a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared... 'We' no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body" (Erikson, 1976, pp. 153–154).

Maya Angelou taunts society for the "bitter" and "twisted lies" that create racial and sexist discrimination.

You may write me down in history

With your bitter, twisted lies, (1-2)

History is shaped by the influence of the dominant class, often diminishing the experiences of Black Americans. But Maya Angelou intensifies her opposition by 'still' rising against the perpetuity of

tyrannical oppression. To create collective participation, she delineates her pain as a process to pursue the improvement of society and assimilate into the process of social eudaimonia. In his article D, “What Is Eudaimonia? Aristotle and Eudaimonic Well-Being.” Deepstash mentions that Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, defines ‘Eudaimonia’ as

“...Some identify happiness with virtue, some with practical wisdom, others with a kind of philosophic wisdom, others with these, or one of these, accompanied by pleasure or not without pleasure; while others also include external prosperity...it is not probable that...these should be entirely mistaken, but rather that they should be right in at least some one respect or even in most respects.”(98) (<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/48857314.pdf>)

Plato premised temperance, courage, justice, and wisdom as the four virtues of ‘eudaimonia.’ Through self-regulation by avoiding vices and oppression, Maya Angelou stands up for what she believes is right, creates social consciousness to craft a societal order, and demands justice by pursuing knowledge to empower her ‘self’ and society.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I’ll rise. (21-24)

These words are a powerful declaration of resilience, defiance, and courage. She inspires change by reflecting on her fight against oppression and demands human dignity. Though rooted in a different nation, culture, and gender, Subramaniya Bharathiyar reflects the same bold assertion against injustice in creating a collective consciousness that neither the rulers nor the societal norms can suppress courage and diminish ‘identity.’

Subramaniya Bharathiar, a Tamil poet, journalist, and social reformer, passionately called for India’s freedom and social justice. His works were a transformative source that ignited collective consciousness and united people towards a common goal. He envisioned not only India’s political freedom but also a society liberated from caste-based

and gender-based oppression and discrimination. His works represent personal and societal trauma, as his life was intensely linked to political and social struggles.

With a revolutionary zeal, he amplifies his influence through his optimistic anthem, “Achamillai, Achamillai,” which emphasizes courage and fearlessness. He expresses his trauma indirectly and acknowledges the harsh realities of the struggles of the oppressed. His bold declaration, “Achamillai, Achamillai” (No Fear! No Fear!), can be interpreted as his response to the trauma that he transforms pain and despair into resilience. It is a contribution to the strength of the Indians in their time of oppression and hardship and to overcome the negative psychological impacts. He expresses his psychological resilience instead of psychological stress. According to Rutter, this term is an “interactive concept that refers to a relative resistance to environmental risk experiences or the overcoming of stress or adversity” (14). This poem acts as a protective tool and shows the poet’s ability to overcome psychological distress by promoting pride and resilience to bring positive cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes.

அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை அச்சமென்ப  
தில்லையே  
இச்சகத்து ளோரெலாம் எதிர்த்து நின்ற  
போதினும்,  
அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை  
அச்சமென்பதில்லையே  
துச்சமாக எண்ணி நம்மைத் தூறுசெய்த போதினும்  
(1-4)

Fearless, fearless – no fear at all  
Bold and unshaken, I’ll never fall.  
I won’t bow, I’ll stand my ground  
Even if the whole world tries to tear me down  
Fearless, fearless – no fear at all  
Firm, I heed no call  
I won’t bow; no weight can break,  
Even if sorrow makes my heart ache

These lines project projects trauma through a bold rejection of fear, transforming suffering into resilience. The repetition of fearlessness reinforces an unwavering spirit against hardships, reflecting



both personal and societal struggles. Despite facing isolation and opposition, the poet remains unyielding, transforming fearlessness into a revolutionary force that inspires collective resistance. Rather than merely enduring trauma, these lines reshape it into a powerful call for strength, unity, and defiance against oppression.

அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை அச்சமென்ப  
தில்லையே  
பிச்சை வாங்கி உண்ணும் வாழ்க்கை பெற்று  
விட்ட போதிலும்  
அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை அச்சமென்ப  
தில்லையே  
இச்சைகொண்டே பொருளெலாம் இழந்துவிட்ட  
போதிலும்,  
அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை அச்சமென்ப  
தில்லையே! (5-9)

Fearless, fearless – no fear at all  
Bold and unshaken, I'll never fall.  
Fearless, fearless- no fear in sight  
Hunger may strike, yet I stand upright  
Fearless, fearless- undaunted still,  
Even if I lose my wealth and will.

These lines reflect his fearless trauma into the collective call for revolution, and his fearless rebelliousness against hunger and loss symbolizes resilience, not just for himself but for an entire oppressed society. Even when faced with starvation or the loss of all possessions, he refuses to bow, turning his suffering into a rallying cry. Through these words, his trauma transcends the personal, inspiring the masses to stand firm, resist oppression, and fight for their freedom. He cultivates courage and inner strength instead of being defeated by slavery. His personal and social experiences shaped his work and inspired him to foster a collective consciousness against oppression and subjugation.

நச்சைவாயி லே கொணர்ந்து நண்ப ரூட்டு  
போதினும்,  
அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை அச்சமென்ப  
தில்லையே  
பச்சையூ னியைந்த வேற் படைகள் வந்த  
போதினும்,  
அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை அச்சமென்ப  
தில்லையே  
உச்சிமீது வானிடிந்து வீழு கின்ற போதினும்,

அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை அச்சமென்ப  
தில்லையே(12-17)

Fearless, fearless – no fear at all  
Bold and unshaken, I'll never fall.  
Even if friends betray and poison my soul,  
Even if armies rise and thunder roll,  
Fearless, fearless- I stand through it all  
No force on earth can make me fall.

Through these lines, he reinforces that even in the face of ultimate adversity- be it betrayal, starvation, or violent oppression courage may prevail, and he shapes trauma into a force that unites people against injustice, inspiring them to resist and revolt. He inspires collective consciousness among people to fight through a personal declaration that serves as a rallying cry to reject fear. He seeks to unite people across divisions, encouraging them to unite against forces undermining their dignity and freedom. Beyond the artistic value, this poem plays a significant role in promoting social change.

Focusing on these writers' language, Subramania Bharathiyar focuses on collective trauma, emphasizing survival, action, external resolution, and confrontation. He portrays healing as an external resolution through societal change, utilizing symbols of control, strength, and power, often embodied by action-driven archetypes like a conqueror. Maya Angelou portrays her trauma through the symbols reflecting her body and personal identity and delves into a deeply personal, emotional tone with nurturer archetypes reflecting vulnerability. She revolutionizes to bring collective consciousness by representing eternal struggle and resilience.

Both writers confront inequality, oppression, and injustice and celebrate the human spirit. They create collective consciousness by provoking the thoughts of their people to ignite change. They have turned trauma into a craft of narrative to spark societal change. Their works fuel protests against injustice and the patriotic spirit of the public. Their words were a powerful tool for resistance in their time, paving the way for freedom and emancipation. Their personal experiences of trauma became a catalyst for deeper understanding, unity, and empathy.

A comparative study on Subramaniya Bharathiyar and Maya Angelou can make a significant impact on modern society as their writings can inspire the younger generation towards the critical conversation on resilience, equality, and social justice and inspire them to transcend national, social, cultural, and gender-based boundaries, fostering a universal understanding of resilience and equality. Their voice highlighting the trauma of being oppressed can instigate individuals to advocate social reformation movements and demand collective action against inequality.

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# CONTOURS OF IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE: EXPLORING MULTICULTURAL VOICES IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the complex interrelationship between identity and resistance in contemporary multicultural literature. Drawing on Marianne Hirsch's concept of post-memory, Lynn White Jr.'s critique of ecological degradation, N. Katherine Hayles' theory of embodied virtuality, and West and Zimmerman's exploration of gender, the study explores how these frameworks intersect in literature to challenge dominant narratives and reconstruct cultural identity. Through the lens of historical trauma, ecological awareness, gender fluidity, and the posthuman condition, the paper highlights how multicultural voices resist hegemonic ideologies. By analyzing how literature portrays these themes, this study underscores the transformative potential of multicultural narratives in fostering inclusive identities that defy rigid categorizations. These works serve as a medium for exploring personal and collective memory and as a tool for resistance, reshaping the contours of identity in a globalized, interconnected world.*

**Keywords:** postmemory, multicultural literature, identity reconstruction, resistance, embodied virtuality, gender construction, trauma, ecology, posthumanism, hegemonic narratives

## Introduction

In a rapidly globalizing world, literature has become a powerful medium for negotiating and reshaping the constructs of identity and resistance. Multicultural voices, often marginalized or excluded from mainstream narratives, provide profound insights into the complexities of identity formation, especially in postcolonial and post-traumatic contexts. Contemporary multicultural literature, with its rich diversity of perspectives, offers a fertile ground for understanding how personal and collective identities evolve in resistance to cultural, social, and historical hegemonies.

This paper explores how contemporary multicultural narratives address the intersection of identity and resistance, specifically through the theoretical lenses of Marianne Hirsch's postmemory, Lynn White Jr.'s critique of ecological alienation, N. Katherine Hayles' concept of embodied virtuality, and West and Zimmerman's analysis of gender as a performative act. These frameworks allow us to investigate how multicultural literature engages with the complexities of memory, ecology, gender, and technology, offering transformative insights into identity formation. The analysis shows how these

literary voices challenge hegemonic ideologies and open up new avenues for self-representation, particularly in the context of trauma, environmental crisis, and technological advancements.

## Materials and Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach, synthesizing theoretical frameworks from memory studies, ecological critique, gender theory, and posthumanism to analyze selected multicultural literary works. The materials used include key theoretical texts and literary works that exemplify the themes of identity and resistance.

## Theoretical Frameworks

Marianne Hirsch's *The Generation of Postmemory* (2012) serves as the foundation for understanding the transmission of trauma through second-generation narratives. Hirsch's concept of post-memory offers insight into how individuals born after traumatic events engage with the past not through direct memory but through mediated, imaginative recollections.

Lynn White Jr.'s *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* (1967) critiques humanity's

ecological alienation, framing literature as a response to environmental degradation and its cultural implications.

N. Katherine Hayles' *Toward Embodied Virtuality* (1999) presents the intersection of materiality and technology in the posthuman condition, challenging the separation between the body and consciousness.

West and Zimmerman's "Doing Gender" (1987) contributes a sociological lens to understanding how gender identities are performed in everyday life and constructed through interaction.

### Literary Works

The study examines a selection of contemporary multicultural texts, including Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013), and Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). These texts are analyzed for their engagement with the themes of memory, trauma, identity, and resistance.

### Methodology

**Thematic Analysis:** A thematic analysis is conducted to identify key themes of identity and resistance across the theoretical texts and the selected literary works.

**Comparative Frameworks:** A comparative approach is used to juxtapose theoretical ideas with literary representations of identity, resistance, and trauma.

**Interdisciplinary Synthesis:** The paper integrates concepts from sociology, environmental studies, gender studies, and digital humanities to offer a comprehensive understanding of identity formation in contemporary multicultural contexts.

### Findings and Results

The analysis reveals that contemporary multicultural literature acts as a medium for both exploring and resisting dominant cultural narratives. These literary works engage with various themes—memory, trauma, ecology, gender, and technology—to reconstruct identities in ways that challenge traditional understandings of selfhood.

### Memory and Trauma

Hirsch's concept of post-memory is central to understanding how second-generation individuals process historical trauma. Multicultural literature often portrays characters grappling with the legacies of past atrocities, such as the Holocaust or slavery, through indirect means—such as photographs, oral histories, and cultural practices. These characters, born after the traumatic event, engage with the past through the emotional weight of their parents' experiences. In *Maus*, Spiegelman captures the complexity of inherited trauma through his depiction of his father's survival of Auschwitz. The generational transmission of trauma in these works resists the erasure of history and offers a means for characters to reckon with collective memory.

### Ecological Resistance

Lynn White Jr.'s critique of humanity's environmental degradation aligns with themes in contemporary multicultural literature that critique anthropocentric attitudes toward nature. The ecological alienation discussed by White is reflected in literature that emphasizes humanity's responsibility to the natural world. Novels like *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* address the destructive legacy of colonialism on both human and ecological scales. By drawing connections between human exploitation and environmental harm, these texts resist hegemonic, exploitative ideologies and offer alternative, sustainable ways of thinking about human-environment relationships.

### Gender Performativity

West and Zimmerman's theory of doing gender is explored in the context of multicultural literature's portrayal of gender as a fluid and dynamic construct. The performative nature of gender in works such as *Americanah* and *Beloved* challenges rigid gender roles and exposes the societal mechanisms that enforce them. Characters in these novels negotiate their gender identities in ways that resist patriarchal structures. In *Beloved*, Sethe's journey toward self-reclamation is not only a resistance against historical trauma but also a challenge to the gendered expectations of womanhood in a post-slavery context.

### The Posthuman Condition

Hayles' theory of embodied virtuality is used to examine how contemporary multicultural literature engages with the digital age and its impact on identity. In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, technology becomes both a tool for liberation and a means of oppression, reflecting the tension between corporeality and digital representation. These works challenge the notion of the disembodied self, asserting that materiality remains essential to identity even in an increasingly virtual world.

### Interpretation and Discussion

The findings indicate that contemporary multicultural literature is not only a space for exploring individual and collective identities but also a site of resistance to hegemonic cultural forces. By engaging with trauma, ecology, gender, and technology, these works reframe traditional understandings of selfhood, offering more inclusive, fluid, and intersectional perspectives on identity.

The exploration of post-memory demonstrates the importance of generational memory in shaping identity, showing how the past continuously informs the present. These literary works resist historical amnesia, offering nuanced representations of the legacies of trauma. The connection between ecological consciousness and identity in these texts calls for a reimagining of humanity's relationship with nature. Literature becomes a space where cultural responsibility and environmental awareness converge, resisting the ecological alienation critiqued by White.

The performative nature of gender in multicultural literature, as articulated by West and Zimmerman, underscores the fluidity and complexity of gender identities. These works resist essentialist notions of gender, challenging rigid binaries and embracing more inclusive, dynamic conceptions of selfhood. The posthuman dimension explored in Hayles' work further complicates traditional ideas of identity, urging a reconsideration of the role of technology in shaping our understanding of the body and the self.

### Conclusion

Contemporary multicultural literature provides a rich and diverse framework for exploring the intersections of identity and resistance. Through the lenses of memory, ecology, gender, and technology, these narratives challenge hegemonic ideologies and open up new possibilities for self-representation. By engaging with these themes, literature serves not only as a mirror reflecting societal changes but also as a transformative force that redefines the contours of identity. As we continue to grapple with issues of historical trauma, ecological crisis, gender inequality, and technological advancement, multicultural literature remains a powerful tool for resistance. It offers a space for voices that have been marginalized or silenced, allowing them to reclaim their identities and reshape cultural narratives. These works affirm the importance of diversity and inclusion in our globalized world, reminding us that identity is always fluid, contested, and subject to constant reinvention.

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# EXPLORING THE TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND CULTURAL LEGACY OF THE MARGINALISED VOICES IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF P.SIVAGAMI

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## Abstract

*The caste system in India sanctions social exclusion and exploitation. Majority of Dalits are impoverished, landless labourers who lack the access to basic resources. They are targeted by the dominant castes and suffer multiple humiliations. In many cases the judiciary fails to enforce the laws that protect them. Dalit writings are essentially an act of political exercise and a community's untold history. They are more than protest writing. Representation of Dalit women is an integral aspect of Dalit writing. It exfoliates the sexual assaults at home, rape at workspace and custodial rape encountered by Dalit women. Human Rights abuses against Dalit Women are mostly committed with indemnity. This inhuman dealing serves as the locus of argument for the Dalit writers in establishing equality. The present paper explores the much existent traditional practices and cultural legacy of Dalit women as exposed in the novels *The Taming of Women* and *The Grip of Change* by P. Sivagami.*

**Keywords:** dual colonialism, affected psyche, sustained patriarchy, social construct, double marginalization.

## Introduction

Dalit writings examine power structures through the lens of caste and offer a variety of approaches to the issues faced by Dalit women. It provides with new insights that exposes oppressive social structures, marriage and violence. Though Dalit women have been historically oppressed, marginalized, and silenced, their strong resistance towards caste and patriarchal social structures are evident through the dynamic texts of several Dalit writers. This research paper traces the traditional practices and cultural legacy of the marginalised voices in the novels of the Dalit writer P.Sivagami.

Though the Indian society is widely appreciated and celebrated for its multi ethnicity, the actual picture remains different. The understanding of Marginalization is affected by various key factors such as economic, social and cultural legacy. The caste-ridden society deprives the poor, uneducated and unemployed Dalits their right to live with dignity, freedom, justice and security. These marginalized Dalits also referred to as "untouchables" have faced systematic discrimination, economic hardships and social exclusion for centuries. They

have been marginalized not only on the pretext of caste but also due to the entrenched societal prejudices that still continue to persist. Addressing the double marginalization of Dalit women requires a comprehensive approach that tackles both caste and gender inequalities. While Dalits, as a group, experience systematic oppression based on their caste identity, Dalit women endure additional layers of marginalization because of patriarchal structures that further deepen gender inequality. This is analogous to the post-colonial concept of Dual Colonialism. Professor Pramod.K. Nayar, in his *The Poetics of Postcolonial Atrocity: Dalit Life Writing, Testimonio and Human Rights*, proposes that,

"Caste relations are embedded in the Dalit woman's profoundly unequal access to resources of basic survival such as water and sanitation facilities, as well as educational institutions, public places, and places of religious worship. On the other hand, the material deprivation of Dalits and their political powerlessness perpetuate the symbolic structures of untouchability, which legitimizes the upper caste's access to Dalit women for sexual exploitation." (237)

P.Sivagami is considered to be the first Dalit woman to vehemently speak about the atrocities committed against the bodies of Dalit women. A prolific writer and social activist, she has to her credits penned down six acclaimed novels, a hundred short stories, two poetry collections, and several polemical essays and striking articles. Born in Tamilnadu, India, she served the Government of India and the Tamilnadu State Government for 28 years as a member of the Indian Administrative Service. She obtained voluntary retirement from her service, to serve the poor and the underprivileged. Her interest drifted from administration to the human subjects' concerning subaltern women, the landless, homeless, Dalits, Tribes and the transgendered communities. Her novel 'Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum', a semi- autobiographical Tamil novel written in 1989 granted the writer with wide publicity. The novel created a stir as it brought to limelight the sustained patriarchy in Dalit society especially in Tamilnadu. This novel was later self-translated by the writer as *The Grip of Change*, in order to enlighten wider masses.

*The Taming of Women* (Anandhayi, 1992) came to be the writer's second novel that speaks about two important social constructs namely gender and power. Translated into English by Pritham K Chakravarthy, this novel dissects the village life in Tamil Nadu and provides the reader a cross-sectional view of Periyannan's family. Both the novels are a testament to the distress and suffering, trials and miseries, despair and dejection, poverty and hopelessness of the Dalits. They serve as a powerful commentary on how cultural traditions often perpetuate gender inequality and silence women's voices. The present study explores the traditional practices and cultural legacy of the marginalized voices in her novels, *The Taming of Women* and *The Grip of Change*.

*The Grip of Change* is a potent critique on the domestic violence and abuse of Dalit women. They are battered at home by their Dalit men in addition to the sexual and occupational harassment outside their homes. Thangam, a lower caste (Paraiyar) Dalit

woman becomes a victim of marginalization and gender subjugation. Her husband's death, strikes a heavy blow and it compels young Thangam to toil in the fields of a rich landlord named Paranjothi Udayar. Though a man of Upper caste, Paranjothi casts his eye on the vulnerable widow and exploits her. Unable to leave the land and to make her ends meet Thangam remains silent and never dares to disclose the truth to anyone. She is further deprived the right to inherit her husband's share of property, as she didn't bear children. Her husband's brothers evenly cast their eyes on her, and when she fails to yield to their demands, they become more of gossip-mongers. They try spreading news about the illicit relationship that Thangam and Paranjothi Udayar possess.

Infuriated by the baseless rumours, the annoyed wife of Udayar and her four brothers thrash Thangam ruthlessly. This acute act of brutality occurs in the midnight, wherein they draw her out of her hut by her hair and maltreat her. Neither her neighbours from the community nor her brothers-in-law come to her rescue. Thangam's story is more of a master-slave relationship that has existed in history. Paranjothi Udayar was much determined that Thangam was a helpless widow and merely a servant. She is left dejected from the day she is assaulted and finds no meaning in living. She was left with no choice but to shed tears. Paranjothi's wife failed to defend Thangam when beaten by her annoyed brothers. Without any sense of guilt, Udayar abuses and blames Thangam for shaming him. With much pride and arrogance he tells her,

"Ungrateful whore! Even if she was hurt by the hand adorned with gold! A parachi could have never dreamt of being touched by a man like me! My touch was a boon granted for penance performed in her earlier births. And then the dirty bitch betrays me! How can I face world with my name thus polluted?" (31, *The Grip of Change*)

Dalit women acquire the lowest position in the society. There are many cases in which sexual

assaults and rape of Dalit women by upper-caste men still remains a question on debate.

*The Taming of Women*, primarily, represents the gender discrimination that exists in a rural village of Tamilnadu. It is the story of a hard-working woman named Anandhayi, married very early to a big time seducer, Periyannan, a landowner and contractor, who has fathered six children namely, Mani, Kala, Dhanam, Balan, Arul and Anbu. After Balan's sudden demise, Periyannan, very proudly brings home his mistress, Lakshmi. The story begins at this point and when Anandhayi successfully traps the woman who had an illicit affair with her husband, she is physically tortured by Periyannan.

"Periyanna, his torso bare came thundering down the steps. He released the woman from Anandhayi's grip and pushed her aside. Anandhayi crashed to the ground with a loud sob" (4, *The Taming of Women*)

The moment he trashes her, she suffers from labour pain and delivers a baby. Unmindful of her condition, Periyannan takes Lakshmi upstairs. Anandhayi, orphaned as a child is all-enduring and laments "Now when I look back, I cannot actually believe that I spent so many years with that man" (6, *Taming of Women*). Muthakka who comes to help Anandhayi post-delivery is also physically assaulted by Periyannan. She puts up with his violence and infidelity but remains subservient. The writer has very efficiently undermined the truth that struggle for power not only exists amidst genders, but also across generations and families within the village as well.

Most Dalit women get married due to compulsion and odd circumstances. They are strained to accept this man-made destiny. Oppression and injustice form an inevitable part in a Dalit woman's life. They become more tolerant and accept life with affected psyche. These psychologically distressed female individuals in both the novels retort to the outside world differently. Whenever Thangam remembered her life in Puliur, she wept. She compared the sexual assault endured in the sugarcane field to the repulsive experience of stepping on shit while walking across a river bank. She could not

recover nor easily escape from the memories of grief and troubles she had suffered. The shock of being dragged out by her hair in the middle of the night to be beaten up like an animal had affected her mentally. She would suddenly wake up at night to the slightest sound heard.

"She hated the memory of Udayar's sexual use of her body. Once she used to plait her long hair, but she no longer bothered with that. She pinned it up without any care and covered her head with her sari"(87, *The Grip of Change*).

Lakshmi in *The Taming of Women* is referred to Periyannan by a villager, merely as an object of Lust.

"Fair? Imagine saffron drowned in warm milk- or a rose petal. Whether you look at her from front or from behind, you will keep looking forever' ". (90, *The Taming of Women*).

On the contrary she was succumbed to live like a bitch by Periyannan, who always objectified her body. The insatiable appetite for both power and sex, establishes Periyannan and Kathamuthu from the Dalit community to be domineering antagonists.

The men portrayed in *The Taming of Women* prefer to reach out to many women since they regard this as a matter of pride that affirms their manliness. These women victims are an influential representation of the power politics that thrives within the Dalit community. It is very captivating to witness how boys and girls in the novel grow up differently. Mani and Anbu grow up with a sense of ownership where they are held responsible for nothing. Even as young boys, they discipline their sisters on how to conduct themselves. Mani vehemently utters, "If I am not strict with her now, she will regret it in the future" (42). Anbu, the youngest, also gets easily carried away by his anger. Whereas the other women characters in the novel namely Kala, Dhanam and Arul are brought up with a sense of servitude and forced to believe that everything they commit is a blunder. This again reinforces the traditional patterns of controlling women without room for transformation.

When Periyannan finds Kala riding a cycle, days after she comes of age, she is beaten black and blue



with a broomstick and prevented from school-going. Anandhaayi is bashed by Periyannan until she goes unconscious for having let her daughter wander freely on roads. When Dhanam's affair with Daniel is revealed, Mani thrashes her. The above mentioned male characters directly reflect the Patriarchal ideology present in the novel, where subjugation and control of women in the form of 'protection' and 'care' ultimately benefits men. Men in the novel take every opportunity to assert their manliness verbally and by physically assaulting all the women in their territory.

*The Grip of Change* is narrated from the viewpoint of Gowri, the daughter of Kathamuthu, who happens to be a strong rebel. Though a school girl, she is very shrewd and observant. Though Gowri hails from an affluent Dalit family, she again becomes a victim of the violence inflicted on Dalit children in educational institutions. The writer has used Gowri as an image to portray the exploitation of Dalits at all levels. Gowri very vehemently condemns her father for his inhuman treatment of women both inside and outside the household. She questions her father's patriarchal and polygamous nature. Once when she was returning home after having received educational scholarship at school, a fellow-mate verbally injures her. When Gowri questions,

"How much did you get?". 'For you, it is different', the girl replied. 'Aren't you from a Scheduled Caste?' Gowri enquired doubtfully. 'Nonsense! I am a Vanniyakula Kshatriya'. 'If you are not from a Scheduled caste, Just say no ! Why do you have to prefix 'nonsense?'" (95, *The Grip of Change*).

An incident of this regard would generally inhibit children from presenting themselves in public. But Gowri remains different from other Dalit children. She is strong-willed and voices against discrimination in any form. She becomes completely responsive of all the incidents that occur in her surroundings. She loses her regards for her father when he rapes Thangam. She shouts her anger out,

"Dogs! Dogs in this house! Shameless as dogs!" (93, *The Grip of Change*).

Gowri becomes a strong symbol of the fighter-spirit that is existent amongst educated Dalits. She understood the society and the responsibility of women towards its normal functioning. She believed in a cultured and much civilised world, where equal participation of all individuals mattered. She is much enlightened as she gets an opportunity to study due to her father's economic status. Her education made her realize the power that the upper class enjoyed. She voices out for her mother and for all other women in the house. She makes them aware and educates them of their secondary position and encourages them to act against the norms. She makes her mother Kanagavalli and stepmother, recognize how terribly they have been exploited and marginalized in their household.

Unable to witness change in her mother even after repeated attempts, Gowri makes up her mind to not submit herself to the societal pressures. She protests against the early marriage arranged by her parents and daringly refutes that she will not endure the same agony her mother had undergone. She staunchly believed marriage to be yet another form of gender oppression. She studies hard and gets admitted in a premier institution and felt much liberated when she had crossed her territorial boundaries to do something that she always wanted to, after much resistance from her father.

Thangam in *The Grip of Change* and Anandhayi in *The Taming of Women* suffer the pain inflicted on them by the so-called upper caste and are denied their rightful place in the society. Additionally they undergo double subjugation under the hands of their own men folk. Whereas strong-willed Gowri endures such sufferings because she fights with a warrior spirit of hope and attempts to alter the society. It is only that they are discriminated and disabled in one way or the other by a society that is completely caste-ridden. Sivakami presents us with a microcosm where every woman we meet has a casual tale of abuse to share while filling water, planting saplings or during their afternoon breaks.

Both the novels remain highly realistic and more of a self-examination of the modern society. It is true that sexual assaults, exploitation and psychological tortures inflicted on the voiceless will in turn stimulate resistance. P. Sivakami questions the system that prevents Dalits from becoming a part of the main-stream. Like Gowri, the writer projects the psychology and theories connected with patriarchal societies in misusing and victimising womenfolk. The writer rejects patriarchy that obstructs empowerment of women and hints to question all customs and traditions that hinder the development of society in near future.

### Conclusion

Through the novels the writer wishes to develop an anti-capitalist, anti-casteist and anti-patriarchal society in which Dalits can have a decent living with dignity and equal opportunity. The writer strongly trusts that only education can help eliminate gender injustice and patriarchal oppression. Gowri becomes a strong symbol of the growing awareness and consciousness that has got developed in recent years. Sivakami towards the end of the novels laments how

even for a modern and educated Dalit woman, life still continues to be a struggle and how caste becomes an indicator of identity in the society.

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# DEPICTION OF DESTRUCTION: AN ECOLOGICAL READING OF JEWELL PARKER RHODES' *BAYOU MAGIC*

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## Abstract

*Bayou Magic* is a coercion of whimsical adventure and a reverberating voice for environmental issues written by an American author named Jewell Parker Rhodes. Jewell Parker Rhodes writes fictional works with the blend of African Culture. 'Bayou' usually refers to a body of water found in a flat area. In *Bayou Magic*, Bayou represents the significance of Ecosystem in shaping the culture and life style of people living in it. The protagonist is a ten-year-old girl Maddy, who goes to Louisiana Bayou to visit her grandmother who in turn is deeply affected by the ambiance and turns out to be the champion of the cause which she is destined to do. Ecology or Ecocriticism evaluates the impact of environment in connection to the literary text. This research article sets out to analyze how Maddy as a young girl has an in-depth concern for Bayou and how she advocates for a universal cause which in turn configures the life of Maddy in a new standpoint.

**Keywords:** ecocriticism, magical realism, identity, culture, positivity

*Bayou Magic* is a coalescence of embracing nature and recreation of hope. Madison Isablee Lavalier Johnson is the name of the protagonist who visits her grandmother's home at Bayou and identifies the differences between city life and countryside. This novel is a combination of the aura of both African and western culture. Jewell Parker Rhodes is an American Novelist who shares African American cultural heritage in all her works. She plays significant role in emphasizing history to children through her phenomenal novels. She has authored several books include *Black Brother Black Brother*, *Ghost Boys*, *Towers Falling*, *Paradise on Fire* and so on. She has received numerous awards such as The Walter Award, The Jane Addams Children's Book Award etc.,

Eco- Criticism is an environmental advocacy which offers a kind of reading to analyse the text's orientation to the world it imagines or deals with and to the world it takes shape in. It also deals with other aspects that disturbs this orientation and their effects. This approach is otherwise known as "Green Studies", "Eco-Poetics" and "Environmental Literary Criticism". It is an interdisciplinary study of the connections between the environment and literature.

It also examines the way in which both environment and literature expose culture. William Rueckert is considered to be the father of eco- criticism because of his incredible essay titled "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecosystem". Its origin traces back to the mid-twentieth century. It is most commonly found in modern literature as well as contemporary literature which delineates global climatic change and its crisis. Eco-criticism investigates humanity's relationship to the ecosystem. It cautions the readers about the global environmental threat and it creates an in- depth awareness to protect it.

In *Bayou Magic*, the protagonist Maddy lives in New Orleans with her mother and four sisters. Her grandmother stayed with them when they were very young. In the opening scene, readers could see the real portrayal of African American culture when the narrator and mother prepare jambalaya. Grandmother Lavalier lived in Bayou which still retains the old tradition which is highlighted by other sisters by pointing out the absence of television in her home. It is a natural ecosystem which is not perturbed by technological advances. During every summer occasion, one of the girls stay with grandmother and live a different life. Most of them have hated it. It is

Maddy's turn to go to Bayou and experience a life completely in an alternate dimension. Maddy is very cynical about her trip to Bayou yet she has some kind of optimism that always pushes her to move forward to combat with the battles which is put up in. Her deep sense of affection towards nature is reflected in the dialogues which she utters philosophically. Maddy says,

Trust your heart, I hear echoing inside me. Like Ma's speaking beneath water.

(Rhodes 8)

Maddy describes her travelling to grandma's home is like journeying to a foreign land because she could figure out the difference that there is no concrete, brick, steel as well as she points out that she visits aquarium, museum to witness the dead animals preserved and protected. She views nature as boring and mundane. She has not felt the real meaning of nature until she reaches grandma's home. She highlights by saying that,

Driving to Grandmere's house, I feel like I'm travelling to a foreign land. I am used to the city.

(Rhodes 10)

These dialogues of Maddy shows the distant relationship of nature and her because she has not felt the presence of nature rather studies nature. On her journey, she witnesses a firefly which she imagines that it has a story to tell her. When she is in Orleans, all that she has seen are man-made. For the first time in her life, she really perceived the true meaning of nature by listening to bird screeching, muddy places and dirt filled streets. She is very surprised to look at the house of Grandmere which is built using dried woods. She is puzzled to look at the life of Grandmere who is living a life far away from the technological world. Her prejudiced notions about grandmother got shattered when she looked at her and expressed how paradoxical it is for her to think in the other way around. She says that,

I imagined Grandmere was a GIANT. Instead, she's barely bigger than me, wearing baggy overalls that make her seem even smaller.

(Rhodes 13)

Grandmere's dialogues uttered are truly universal because it is a clarion call for the entire world to look at the dangers caused by human beings. She says to Maddy,

"About time you got here, Maddy. The bayou and me, we've been waiting. been dreaming about you forever." (Rhodes 16)

The conversation between grandmother and Maddy exposes the strong contrast that Maddy has never experienced so far in her life. Her perception of Bayou is frightening. She says that how she is not towards nature at first, she started her day in Bayou,

There are no stuffed animals or a closet of frilly dresses. No twin beds. No electric ceiling lights.

(Rhodes 19)

The perspective that Maddy holds for nature is completely ironical. She finds solace in city life not in Bayou. The sunlight which falls on her face is considered to be disturbance. She is thrilled to see how grandma has named her chicken as 'Sweet Pea' which is not the usual thing for her. Grandmere is very much into the soul of nature that's why she advises Maddy that she knows everything but there is a difference in knowing things. The perspective of Maddy begins to change as the days pass by in Bayou. She gets ready to listen to the voice of nature by observing leaves, lizards and birds. She even gets amazed to see grandmother prepares medicine naturally. Maddy wonders,

"Herbs. Bark. Picking what's good for ailments. Healing the sick."

"Isn't there a drugstore?" (Rhodes 29)

Bayou has been a place of healing for many years which has witnessed several generations. When Grandma Lavalier asks Madison what she wishes to become. Madison's answer to this question is a peculiar example of a civilized society. She says,

"A hero. Like in my stories", I rush. I want to do good. Be Brave." (Rhodes 29)

The ecosystem of bayou is always remained quiet and serene. This kindles the curiosity of Madison who wishes to explore all the habits and practices. She is introduced to a boy who appeared in front of her in a shaggy manner. He calls himself as

Bear who is ultimately going to change the path in which the story travels. He is a boy who is always loitering in solitude. Bayou becomes the home for him. This could be seen as an example of pathetic fallacy. He takes Madison on a swamp tour which she fears a lot because she has never been on an airboat. She wonders how Bear takes up everything very boldly and he sees solace in nature. He throws light upon the most sensible issue that human kind will ever face. It is the environmental destruction which can be very much evident when he conveys Madison how these wetlands have gotten reduced in their land area and it is because of erosion. It is the first time Madison remembers her science where the teacher talked about the disappearance of waste lands and she is realizing it in reality. Bear warns Madison about the good and bad aspects of being in wetlands. He talks about his father and the two homes of his father innocently by highlighting how his father works in oil rigs and its effects. The reader could understand the melancholy of Bear. He says,

“Sad is as sad does. Come on.” (Rhodes 51)

The world of sadness is too crucial in the life of little children because they do not know that they will be forced to face the reality. Bear knows that the oil rig will be the destruction of Bayou. Since he is young, he is unable to voice out his concern for his own habitat. Jewell Parker Rhodes blends reality with supernatural creatures in order to show how they both amalgamate together to transform the narrative as a lesson to the inhumane world. In the middle of the novel, she uses a supernatural creature who resembles Madison. She feels puzzled and seeks the help of Bear to comprehend the situation in a better manner. She says,

“Alive, Bear. She was, truly. Not dead. Alive.” (Rhodes 61)

Bear explains that accidents in oil rigs may be the reasons for a body to be drowned and floated across the surface.

The environmental stress in the novel is a significant aspect because it deals with how people adapt themselves to the crisis to which they are exposed. Oil rig and its destruction in the novel is a

typical example of the environmental stress which acts as one of the parameters to analyse this novel from the point of view environmental psychology.

Grandmere says,

“Oil companies dredged canals in the bayou, laying pipes, made the problem Worse. There’s been oil spills, too. Sickening the bayou. Killing fish.” (Rhodes 117)

Madison starts to mull over her Grandmere’s musings. She thinks how important is to protect, preserve and save Bon Temps as well as Bayou for the people to live with humanity. She adds,

“Oils energy. Energy is good. But what if you can’t get oil without causing

Harm? To land, water so, animals? People?

Environment. It’s a gold -star spelling word.” (Rhodes 121)

Emotion and environment are interconnected and they are to be seen in unison. Concern for the environment lends ways to protect it with utmost feelings and emotions like the romantic writers such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and so on. Madison feels that the new and alienated environment becomes an eco-friendly environment when she tries to adapt the new ways of life in Bayou by sticking to the traditional practices of Grandmere. Madison’s conscience has pricked her when an oil rig goes to put an end to the beautiful world away from corrupted and polluted world. She starts to have delusions and how it chokes her heart and brain thereby portraying the real reality. As the scene goes,

“Liquid secrets from their tiny mouths. It’s not silk -it’s oil soaking webs, transforming them into wet black lace.

Drip- drip.

Black specks stain my sheet. Oil falls on my cheeks, brow

and lips. Oil tastes bitter.

Drip – drip.” (Rhodes 141)

Social Conformity is yet another significant concept in Environmental Psychology. It is a type of social influence which involves a change in behaviour or personality in order to fit into the environment where they are exposed to. Madison

likes her city more than her country life in the beginning. She does not bother about the destruction caused by factories or automobiles in her city. Once she lands in the land of Bayou, she starts to think about the beauty of nature and its abundant blessings to mankind. Her social conformity could be seen in the way in which she worries for the people who work in oil rigs and how the wastes of oil rigs spreads all over the surface of the water surface of Bayou and in turn it creates a difficulty for the living creatures in the sea to survive. Grandmere adds that,

“Oil and Salt destroy land. A bird’s wing gets broken. A turtle gets eaten by a gator.” (Rhodes 175)

Madison gets shocked to listen to that fact that around eighty thousand gallons of crude oil is extracted from Bayou which will literally erase the existence of Bayou within a decade or two. Madison feels the environmental stress that has gotten herself to be aware of. She questions,

“When the crude’s gone, will the earth dry up, dry out. pucker like a raisin? I want to ask the grown folks, but they’re grim, staring at the rig like it’s a big blot on the blue sea” (Rhodes 188)

This novel also brings forth the aspect of supernaturalism such as Mami Wata who is considered to be the goddess of the sea who saved Bayou for so many years. It is considered to be the clarion call of all the mermaids in Bayou. This is yet another aspect where the very environment becomes the wholesome support to fight against the crisis.

These are visible instances which highlight the significance of the environment where one lives. Saving the environment from all man-made disasters is a crucial moment to save humanity. In Bayou Magic, Madison stands a hope for the future. This

novel is based on the real incident which talks about the Deepwater Horizon spill and it is the worst oil disaster in US history. This novel has gotten lots of perspectives. Madison uses her intelligence and magical power to save the community from catastrophe.

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# NEGLIGENCE OF MASS MEDIA MISREPRESENTATION & IMPACTS

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## **Abstract**

*Why do people are turns to become fans and followers of someone? Why the world slowly turns to become commercialised? How entire society turns to become disclaimers? Now a days consumers are increased and sales too increased. It's a time of sale and marketing. People see the world through the lens of media. Everyday there is a sensational news but behind the scene something is hidden. Even though people were aware of all those truths, they don't mind about the false representation of the mass media culture. Advertisement is just the popularisation or commercialization of the company products. But slight exaggeration of product information may cause severe impact on the society. Mass media make the society to become weak and falsehood. Truth may not get much attention but false accusation gets much more attention, because nature of the human psychology is attracted by negativity. Getting popularity is easy but being ordinary is very difficult. Media should work for the well-being of humanity but unfortunately humans are working for the well-being of monetization. How does these negligence of mass media are created and existed still?*

**Keywords:** media culture, misrepresentation, objectification, consuming society.

## **Introduction**

In this post-modern era media culture has a wide range of influence, in the mind set of peoples. Multi media has the power beyond human, because no one believes human instead, they started believing media and proofs. As science fiction writers believes earlier the whole world and the society is going to change entirely. Everything is starts change according to the need of machines. Human made machines are already ruling humans. Peoples are now a days turns to become so lazy, that too because of machines. Actual purpose of new inventions in technology is, to reduce the work stress and time consumption of human beings, but slowly people are addicted for the machines and they ignore work. Getting famous in social media in any way (negative way too) is a recent trend in social media. People were very much fond of their publicity. Nobody says that, they don't need publicity. A common person turns to become celebrities. Personal turns to become professional. Media connecting every individual person beyond the boundaries, for an example YouTube platform. One video can change everything. First thumbnails

itself cheating, content of the video differ from the thumbnail. Social media platforms give lots of chance for the well beings of human society, but unfortunately technology usage key is handled by humans. So depending upon the needs of peoples wish computer can project anything without any limitations. Particularly when comes to postmodern youngsters (both girls & boys) cannot have the guts to do the unwanted activity. But the media teach them how to do the wrong things in a right way. Everyday news shows the technology improvement disorders unlimitedly.

## **Screen Addiction**

In this technological age, very first problem for mind and physical health is screen addiction. Lots of people downloading what's app status app from the play store. Everyday putting status is habitual work for people. Sending Good morning and Good night turns to become compulsory. Wake up with mobile phone and sleep with mobile phone. Without any particular reason people lavishly spend their golden time and life to watch videos, particularly shorts. 2k

kids are all watching shorts video daily, slowly their concentration power decreased in studies. Of course virtual class made many rural citizens as literate scholars. But the ratio of good and bad impact is important here. Face book to Instagram and you tube channels shorts video consume lots of time from the youngsters. And the bitter truth is students now days give first preference to games and shorts then only studies. Social media know viewers needs and psychology according to that they project ads and videos regularly. So, peoples sit in front of the screen finally that screen consume people.

### **Misrepresentation of Social Media**

Very often people share their current situation through social media platforms such as what's app status, Instagram reels, Facebook stories. All single search options are followed by third parties. Meta link Social Medias and third-party Company's uses this information for their products promotion and sale. Use these data to project the wish list-oriented products as a pop up for the customer very often. Targeting mass group of people, they were making some gadgets and many products. In fact, many more products are existed just because of the laziness of the peoples. What are the reasons behind all these fallacies? Whatever media says, that might be true, this is how people believed. Media is a mighty tool in the society. Our national judicial law also needed media supported evidences for the crimes. But unfortunately, no victims are committed their crimes in front of CC TV photo coverage.

### **Movies Misrepresentation**

Movies are reflections of humanity just like literature. Literature works for the well-being of the society but, media make contends for the sake of audience. In writing author try to change the falsehood of humanity that's the goal of a writer. But social media and movies contents are unwantedly added for the sack of audience. There are lot's fallacies. Audience can manipulate the meaning easily. For an example, recent film '*Ponniyin selvan*' vandhiyathevan character was changed according to

the present scenario. Actually this film character shows the director Mani Ratnam point of view not from kalki. Few Kollywood movies projects & celebrate anti heroic qualities as a strong personality. Being a bad person has some sort of power and fear in front of the society. Once heroes are celebrated but present scenario anti-heroes are being celebrated by the youngsters. Movie characters slowly influence the youngsters broadly. Now a days in Film Industry misrepresenting bad behaviours as welcoming one. In this situation media manipulates mass group of people with various misrepresentation to increase their TRP rating. Industrial fight also one of the reasons. Due to people's support and popularity strength, media was used by the multinational companies, as a promotion platform for their products. For example, instant glow face creams, sun screen lotion, skin moisturizer, peel off mask etc.

### **Dark Patterns**

Dark patterns are user interface which shows priceless and less detailed images, to increase customers to click on the page and become buyers. dark patterns are created to mislead customers, they unknowingly purchase the high-priced products and insurance policies, and this is merely a cheating. The most common and dark patterns in all software updates and app installations are '**I accept these terms**' Once people click on this option, their private information's beyond their imagination levels are gathered by the third parties. In some websites they were asking the people to fill up the username and mail id and passwords, in this page, only **NEXT** button options are available. Users don't have any skip options there. This means forcefully they need information from users. Using free trails with limited timing they ask the users to buy subscription and later without any intimation they debited the amount for the subscriptions. If the users need their subscription cancellation, that is not at all an easy task.

### **Advertisements**

Cookies consent pop ups very often projected by certain companies. Particularly for boys, obviously



dangerous and addiction-oriented games such as Rummy circle, PUBG, gunshot, free fire etc. The most important thing is, through playing online games money earn options are there. But that is not easy because claiming amount will take too much process. Only through their particular suggested way of transaction method people may pay, like PayPal and Paytm. And this needs to access all private bank details of users. This kind of game pop ups represented regularly that; people need not worry about their jobs. This kind of misrepresentation, influence common people, that jobless online game addicted peoples are greater, than the working fellows. Even working peoples are having online game as their part time earning job. This is not healthy one to accept and further develop. For earning money one mobile phone and app itself enough means, what is the purpose of education system and employment offices etc?

#### **Fake Mobile Game Ad**

This is another important key factor for hacking technology, and manipulation of youngsters. Children to adults & even working fellows are habitually fond of games and that too exciting and thrilling gameplay mechanism. So, advertisers used very exciting, reward oriented, money earning type ad, to induce the interest of peoples. Advertisers were projecting one kind of game but, when user installs the app, game will be entirely different. That too if the user once installs the app only, they can see the game. The fake game company need profits by more installation. This type of false mobile game consumes money and time and also information's from the players. This leads to misrepresent some loyal game industries too.

Due to the misrepresentation of multimedia, slowly PULLING cultures become trend. Negative characters are getting fame and applauded by the society. In Ancient time films picturize and teach the values and moralities of life. Once Rama, Krishna like characters is influencing people, so that people were leading a decent life. But protagonist of the films is slowly become negative characters, media strongly suggest that good people, one who lead a

normal life without the power of politics and money will not be survive in this money oriented society. Even love also occurs to the heroines with the rugged boys. Recent trending term for good person is boomer uncle, if anyone is so formal and correct, youngsters started to calling them as BOOMER. Get money, fame and power is important here. Nothing is happening for the people sake all for money's sake. Money makes many things is a slogan for trending films.

Media commodifying everything nearly humanity, mercy, food, music, information even language etc. social media pages and technology is not working for people rather, peoples are working for technology & deeply addicted to media. When comes to Education, it's already sold by powerful politicians. It turns to become a top business with the help of media ads. Through repetition of advertisement like communication importance, placement, high salary, NRI job opportunity etc. Media brain wash peoples to buy rich education. If you pay more money, you get more knowledge. That too branded schools and colleges only have the ability to teach children's not government. Some CBSC schools and branded self-finance colleges are nearly marketizing their education quality as a commodity.

#### **Conclusion**

The media created knowingly and unknowingly false representation, which will cause the society in an identical evil way. Because peoples are believing media very much, and this is one of the 4<sup>th</sup> important pillars of power next to legislative, executive and judiciary. For that, genuine way of representation is needed from mass media. "The theme of lifestyle is inextricably linked to the purchase and consumption of commodities, which acquire certain values and symbolic power (Status, interest in heritage, care) where the work of 'coding' the commodity as a sign is the work of representation in the media" (K. Nayar – 130) As the author Pramod K Nayar said, media generate the desire for the product and automatically peoples started to buy the product, they were unaware of their needs. Gadgets are turns to become socio cultural values. So, if anyone buys something

we have to consume the same. Recently there is a apartment sale ad in TV. 2BHK flat with children's learning hub and hundreds of amenities. EMI is fine but what to buy? How to buy? When to buy? These are all created by media and it turns peoples to become buyers. Finally the point is everything needed here, people have to consume all, and then only they can survive in this society with Elite people. Media misrepresenting the sign system itself, so the entire meaning becomes changed according to the media point of view. During every startup of a film or drama there is a disclaimer card. That card too visible for a few minutes only. People too don't care about that. This activity is also one kind of cheating. When comes to any games there is a disclaimer card. Even though we people come to know about the terms and conditions they just leave that. Media made a fallacy that without watching the social media and mobile phone people can't be happy. Upcoming society needs guts to reduce the usage of technology and safeguard the wild animals and nature. Any new invention comes out from the nature destruction. Through media misrepresentation, people slowly loss the health, relationship, hope, life, happiness. if people start to do screen time fasting, they can come back to their life. Negligence of continues misrepresentation of media leads to nothing but destruction.

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# WARS, TRAUMATIC DISORDERS, AND HEALING IN *CATCH - 22 AND SLAUGHTERHOUSE- FIVE*

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## Abstract

*Trauma, exercises a dilapidated state of mind and leaves an indelible mark in the psyche of every human being. The struggles and horrors exercised by trauma epitomizes intense fear in the mind of the victims who confront either a physical or a mental threat, thereby encountering an unfavourable health condition. The mind of the victims longs for liberation and attention. Understanding the victims and their sufferings is essential especially in the post World War II scenario else the chaotic historio-political conditions would lead an individual to fall a prey to trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder syndrome. The reasons of trauma are varied such as violence, public assault, failure in the battle field, economic dependence, and predominantly post-war intricacies. Trauma leads to despair, horror, somberness, extreme nausea and further complications. Though the victims of trauma or PTSD encounter moments of joy, they also undergo a sense of despair, devastation, schizophrenia and paranoia, and are deprived of mental health, experiencing a worst existential nightmare. Contemporary writers such as Josef Heller and Vonnegut picture trauma, and the revelation of traumatic disorders through the characters who struggle for survival due to reminiscence of such painful events. Novels of Heller and Vonnegut such as *Catch- 22* and *Slaughterhouse- Five* are beneficiary medications that serve as examples creating awareness on the war injuries, exposing PTSD and its serious effects that is still prevalent in the society. This article is an attempt to rethink the hazardous nature of wars, avail an understanding on trauma, show the resulting unhealthy implications, and further educate the society to be healthy and peaceful.*

**Keywords:** *trauma, psyche, world war ii, historio-political conditions, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, paranoia, healthy society.*

## Introduction

Writers in literature, for a long time have been discussing the issues related to wars. They discuss the impact of wars on individuals and society such as personal and collective loss leading to traumatic stress disorders due to socio-political transformation resulting in behavioural and social problems. In general, the writers posit that wars are dangerous to the physical and mental well- being of an individual and the society. Characters in the war novels are sometimes would be fictional, otherwise true caricatures that resemble real life personalities. They exhibit the real injustice and victimization meted out to innocent soldiers and civilians, foregrounding the trauma obsessed in each one of them. Therefore, such literary works that talk of wars, manifest the serious issues pertaining to wars and educate the society to avoid disputes. Schizophrenia and

paranoia evinced in the characters are samples to study trauma and its consequences. The characters in the current study picturise the enigma of World War II and the overloaded pangs of deaths. Though the broad setting of the select novels is World War II, the dark side of a few other war fields like Vietnam war, Cold War, and Korean War are also discussed and their evil nature is brought out. Degeneration of morality, absence of courtesy, killing, death knell, blood smears all around are the key observance in the novels. The principle characters such as Yossarian of *Catch-22* and Billy Pilgrim of *Slaughterhouse-Five* opt either death, or physical or mental escapism to succumb the harshness of wars in life. They fail to escape the traumatic past, yet relive the past which is identified as symptom of traumatic stress disorder.

## Method

The study employs qualitative research applying the novels such as *Catch-22* and *Slaughterhouse-Five* and provide a descriptive analysis of both the texts. Discussion is carried out on Post-traumatic stress Disorder in characters that is caused due to trauma of World War II.

## Result and Discussion

Yossarian from *Catch-22* and Billy Pilgrim from *Slaughterhouse-Five* suffer from trauma that triggered the mental instability, leading to symptoms of Post-traumatic stress syndrome. The abnormalities and the impact of trauma are evinced through the actions of these characters. To begin, an understanding of trauma is provided.

## Trauma

Trauma is, “a disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence”. (Kurtz 5) “Trauma is an inevitable part of human experience, and literature has value for trauma because it offers ‘exegesis in the service of insights about human functioning’ ”. (Kurtz 17) The characters of the select novels experience disruption in their lives due to war impacts. The inner thoughts of the characters expressed as traumatic experiences or disturbing experiences of the past, propagate the world of the futility of war and the mental dislocation created in the mind of every war affected individuals.

Trauma also signifies the emotional output or the psychological release of the fear of a catastrophic incident or injury caused to the psyche of an individual. This view proposes trauma related disorder as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Psychiatry defines Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as, “the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stress or involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one’s physical integrity: or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a

threat to the physical integrity of another person.” (Lelek 7- 8) The term came into existence in 1980, when the American Psychiatric Association discussed it in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)*. An understanding on trauma reveals that, the actual disturbing incident does not intensify trauma, but the remembrance of it. Researches explore in *Studies in Hysteria* that, “Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences.” (Breuer and Freud 7). Based on trauma that is developed by remembrances, it is revealed that despite several injuries, war field shocks easily traumatize people.

## Influence of Wars On Trauma and Stress Disorders

“War is defined as an active conflict.” (Hedges 1)--- Between 1900 and 1990, 43 million soldiers died in wars--- 62 million civilians were killed. --- The civilians are shot, bombed, raped, starved, and driven from their homes.” (Hedges 101) World War II is highly injurious and marked as the darkest times in world history, that vandalized the lives of millions of people, collapsing the unified societies and varied cultures. Though, initially, the war intended to safeguard the territories, or to secure liberty from the dominants, eventually, it lead to misunderstanding, chaos, material accumulation, death, and destruction.

Based on the discussion of the deadly nature of wars, the novels selected for the study *Catch- 22* by Joseph Heller and *Slaughterhouse- Five*, originally published as *The Children’s Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death* by Kurt Vonnegut exactly point out the ambiguous nature of war and the eruption it gave the society. As a result, the characters are dismantled and struggle for survival. There arises issues such as loneliness, loss of life, bloodshed, and people long to attain meaning in life. In this regard, both the writers Heller and Vonnegut narrate the contemporary political clumsiness of World War II. World War II and Europe are broadly placed as the centre of discussion.

### Wars, Tribulation, and Trauma in *Catch- 22*

The setting of the first novel *Catch-22* is World War II, yet Heller in an interview with Fleming and Avorn, explicates that he had talked of the Vietnam, Korean, and Cold War, more than World War II in *Catch- 22*. The characters are also moulded on a few real life soldiers. For example, Heller designed Colonel Cathcart based on a former soldier whom Heller had interviewed earlier. Heller had used the real patriotism, courage, and heroic war men or soldiers of World War II in his novel.

The novel centers on the protagonist John Yossarian who throughout the war journey struggles to maintain his mental stability, in spite of the upheavals, absurdity, and the extravagant or bureaucratic military powers. He is obsessed with psychological scars due to brutalization of wars that fill the mind with angst, horror, paranoia, distrust, and depression. *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, acknowledges the negative implications of war as, "Brutality, ideological intolerance, conspiracy, and murderous repression are part of the human condition". (Hedges 13) As a result, Yossarian becomes a victim of trauma, and shows traces of post-traumatic stress disorder. He also encounters psychological battles and tries to uncover meaning in the futile actions of people engaging in war. It is estimated that, "More than 34 million civilians died in World War II". (Hedges 101) Yossarian further ponders upon the absurd rules laid down by military officers that exasperate the trauma of the naive soldiers who are simply used by the officials and sacrificed the lives.

To illustrate the cruelty of the officers, Yossarian brings in assault of the officers on characters of through which Yossarian's paranoia, a significant trait of PTSD is visualized. He hates wearing the uniform that is provided by the officials unable to fade their atrocities, so naked, he climbs the tree, to see the radio- gunner, Snowden's funeral who was in his crew. It goes, "A man was killed in his plane over Avignon last week and bled all over him --- He swears he's never going to wear a uniform again". (Heller 207) Throughout the novel, the death of

Snowden affects Yossarian, resulting in traumatic stress that seems uncured. Initially, Yossarian was untouched over the death of Snowden, who is none to him. Later, he had a sense of nausea, on the horrifying sight of an unknown man, "splattered over the windscreen" of the plane that resided somewhere in his memory. As he witnessed more distressing events similar to Snowden's end, he becomes obsessed with the memories of Snowden, that haunts him further. The unpleasant scene, though suppressed, surfaces later, emerging as symptom of PTSD. He loses his control and shouts at the pilot, "hard, hard you bastard" (Heller 145)

Another feature of traumatic disorder is repetition. This could be seen when Snowden's death is repeated by Yossarian eight times, expressing the depression over the death. Further, the scenes where the pilot Huple and the co-pilot Dobbs appear, show how Snowden "loses his guts" (Heller 213) and Yossarian "loses his nerve" (Heller 213). Every time a death is reported, Yossarian recalls the soulless death of Snowden, and the final recollection of Snowden's thoughts appear in Yossarian with the death news of Hungry Joe. It is further ironical that the soldiers are represented in terms of bodily specimens, especially Snowden as, "startling fibres of weird muscle (Heller 402) and flesh is remarked as, "live hamburger meat" (Heller 402).

A few other characters also resemble Yossarian in escaping the mess of war life. For example, McWatt flies higher in his aircraft, crash into a mountain, kills himself, rather than serving for the military. He, "dipped his wings once in salute" (Heller 315). Yossarian's nerve pangs the heart, urging him to switch over similar pains, and he relies on thoughts of his love affair, an Italian woman, Luciana, runs to find her, which he knew, is impossible. Thus, all his moves to escape from the present duty turns futile.

Yossarian realises that man in war, according to the officials was just a garbage. Though soldiers risk lives, engulfed in the atrocities of wars to meet the safety of the country, their peace of mind is often questioned. They watch innumerable comrades dying

in each other's arms, leaving them traumatised. The sounds and visuals of the agony, screams, and deaths of co-workers, due to bullet sounds, exploding of artillery lead Yossarian to act weird, faking injuries, and tangle the plans of the officials. In the twenty-eight years of service as a bombardier flying with the U.S fighting 256<sup>th</sup> Squadron, he is frustrated with the absurdities of war and the meaningless ideas of the superiors. He cries as the loved ones die one by one and the aircrafts were shot down. The consequent deaths propels him to become insane and assumes more, "They poisoned my food twice, didn't they put poison in my food during Ferrara and during the Great Big Siege of Bologna?". (Heller 28) He applies Catch 22 rule that provided options to retire from duty if soldiers are truly sick or insane. Catch 22, an inescapable or contradictory regulation or condition traps Yossarian every time he finds to escape. This prisons his thoughts, force him to carry thoughts of either Snowden or McWatt or his former ladylove, engulfing himself in despair. He constantly revives the death of Snowden, McWatt, Hungry Joe, Nately, Dobbs and is sore about the disappearance of soldiers such as Dunbar, Orr, and Clevinger that finally embellish his traumatic stress disorder.

Though he is not seriously infected with a liver issue, he poses as if messed up with jaundice, simply to avoid participating in war missions. "Yossarian bluffed, and told Doc Daneeka about the troublesome pain in his liver that had troubled Duckett and Nurse Cramer and all the doctors in the hospital because it wouldn't become jaundice and wouldn't go away" (Heller 47). Similarly, he delays bombings, getting the mission cancelled and intentionally creates situations to escape participating in the mission towards the Italian city of Bologna. He even engages in theft and escapes with a few soldiers, eventually failing in the escape. During the mission, he retreats, providing silly reasons such as intercom issues, due to fear of losing the life. The squadron commanders finally understand Yossarian, though they consider it to be a lame reason. Thus, Yossarian transforms himself into a self-caring man from being a bomber and rescuer of millions of people.

Yossarian became an amalgamation of fear and cowardice and fled to Sweden to escape from the responsibilities of working for the country. He reconciled to lead a life of peace and accomplished it. After expressing his utter dejection over the superiors, he asserts, "Let the bastards thrive --- since I can't do a thing to stop them but embarrass them by running away, I've got responsibilities of my own now, Danby. I've got to get to Sweden, You'll never make it. It's impossible" (Heller 414) Yossarian, the representative character of Heller fled to save the rest of his life, freeing himself from the burdened thoughts of his allies.

**Escapism as Medication in *Slaughterhouse-Five***  
*Slaughterhouse-Five* by Vonnegut, shadows Vietnam war and cold war in the shadow of World War II, with features of science fiction. The setting extends to Dresden, Luxembourg, New York and additionally an alien planet, an imaginary setting, Tralfamadore. The novel focuses on the main character Billy Pilgrim, a real life caricature of Billy Bob Walkabout, through whom the futility of war and trauma is visualized in a non-linear timeline. The real Billy died of Agent Orange issues. Elements of autobiography fused with the fictional counterpart added colour to the novel. Yet, the traumatic events caused due to war, forces the characters to break the linearity of narration in the storyline. The novelist emphasizes the cruelties of war through the bombing of Dresden and unfolds pictures of trauma and the suffering soldiers. After the bombing of Dresden, Germany, Billy fell a prey to trauma. He searched valid answers to several questions, that end in vain. He understands that justice would be denied. He adopts 'Tralfamadorian' philosophy and recognizes that autonomy is impossible in the transformed war scenario, where individuals are destined to be in a dreadful state, being unable to alter either past, future or present.

His accentuation of the fear and the instability of war is seen could be understood through the line, "During World War II, 135000 civilians died in the firebombing of Dresden." (Hedges 101) It is further analyzed that the trauma survivors are haunted by the

impact of wars that force them to recapitulate the unpleasant events long after. They could not forget or get relieved from the traumatic incidents. The traumatic experience enables the victims of wars to scrutinize the past events, thereby reshaping their identity or understanding of wars. For example, the protagonist is captured by the Germans at the end of World War II and the narrator describes the pathetic state of Billy, who, "has seen his birth and death many times, he says, and pays random visits to all the events in between" (Vonnegut 23). The novel is deemed semi-autobiographical as Vonnegut a representative of the evil consequences of wars. Vonnegut himself proclaims in the novel, that the protagonist Billy is a replica of himself. He cites, "That was I. That was me. That was the author of this book" (Vonnegut 125). He was held a captive along with other Americans in a camp in Dresden, Germany, during the Battle of the Bulge where they worked in a syrup making factory, until the Dresden bombing of 1945. Besides witnessing the battle of the Bulge, he had been a part of the utter devastation and death that enable him to devise the story of *Slaughterhouse- Five*.

In the novel, the episodes at Dresden leave Billy in a 'shell shock', a term that is named as 'post-traumatic stress disorder'. Death is spread everywhere, and is often addressed as 'miserable' according to Billy's narrative. Billy and his comrades are conditioned to embrace the all pervasive 'death' or cling on to the fear of embracing 'death'. For example, the narrator, who is Vonnegut himself picturises the cruel death of the taxi driver's mother Gerhard Muller, "His mother was incinerated in the Dresden fire-storm. So it goes" (Vonnegut 9). It was said that the word 'So it goes' appear 95 times, reiterating the occurrence of death in the novel. Being a fellow prisoner, Billy is compelled to bury and burn the dead body of other soldiers. Buildings and institutions such as school and hospitals were demolished, and there were 'massacres' and bloody deaths. The death of his wife, Valencia from carbon monoxide poisoning and the plane crash are the toxic incidents that Billy acquired through wars. Billy

dislikes living, and he exposes himself to death. For instance, soon after surviving the Battle of Bulge, he is ready to be shot by a German Markman, and was captured by German soldiers.

Billy feared 'death', 'war' and 'combating', but he was not not permitted to adopt autonomy over his wish. Billy relives in the past, constantly travels back and fro, hallucinates, totally manifesting his extreme fear and dread, which is a part of PTSD. The traces of the stress disorder in Billy extend with his imagination of being captured by Tralfamadorians where he is placed in a zoo, his memory of the father pushing him in the pool to learn swimming, totally blurring the readers, the difference between the real and the imaginary.

Though Billy is mentally troubled in the beginning at Tralfamadore, he is comfortable later, for he escaped the horrors of the battlefield. He feels elated in the imaginary world (Tralfamadore) of comfort, as he had eloped from the real world of unexpected bombings, cruel deaths, and insane concentration camps. It is here, where Billy would find immense peace and relaxation to rejuvenate his depressed persona. Though his stay in the imaginary world is temporary, he finds solace by fixing himself in a place where there would be no war disruptions or death. In a way, he is a perfect example of PTSD personality who escapes reality to relive his life.

Both the novels witness non- sequential narratives, exposing utter isolation, emotional insensibility, psychological conflicts, indifference to mingle with the society, and dissolution of selves. For example, *Catch- 22* shows the illogical rules laid down by bureaucracy that compel the soldiers to experience bitter situations. The soldiers involved in wars are confined to wars and compelled to neglect their personal safety. Through Yossarian's flashbacks in *Catch- 22*, flashbacks over the fictional Battle of Bologna and the death of Snowden are intensified. Further, the fragmented narrative in *Slaughterhouse- Five* is full of chaos, enumerating the real world of pain and suffering. Totally, wars create tension, kills people, restricts freedom, exercise numbness to treat the fellow dead comrades as just bodies, and to

posses distrust over the officers. The characters cater the traces of trauma as stated by Cathy Caruth in repeating the troubled past in the present, relishing the bitter moments, and feed their sorrow. They travel back and fro, replacing the past incidents in the present. They do not show differentiation in narrating the actual past and the present, for example, Yossarian remembers the horrible death of Snowden at present, placing alive the life of Snowden. Billy traumatizes by being kidnapped by the Tralfamadorians, who are simply the imaginary aliens. Post-Traumatic stress disorder in the characters readily avail space to represent the past events in the present without control. They lack the zest for life and engage in flashbacks. His traumatic disorder induced him to weep during the sleep, obstructing him to take a peaceful sleep. Billy is unstoppable in all his flashbacks, where he could loiter without barriers. As Cathy Caruth states, Traumatic symptoms include, “re-experiencing symptoms, nightmares, and flashbacks --- disturbed sleep, a distracted mind.” (Caruth 100)

The novels underscore the result of trauma or PTSD and educates the society on the tragic implications of war and the disruptions it brought in the lives of the characters. The societal and historical conditions through wars disrupt the mental and physical wellbeing of an individual. The study also provides an understanding that war induced trauma aggravates PTSD, resulting in an unhealthy society

full of victims, and measures are required to foster empathy and awareness to eradicate wars. Wars, are not for good reasons, but the world celebrated it. “The myth of war is essential to justify the horrible sacrifices required in war, the destruction and the death of innocents.” (WFGM Hedges 26)

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### Abbreviations

WFGM - *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*



# DISMANTLING BARRIERS: UNVEILING THE LAYERS OF MARGINALIZATION IN MAHESH DATTANI'S TARA

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## Abstract

*Mahesh Dattani, a prominent Indian playwright, delves into the depths of marginalization in his impactful play Tara. This poignant play follows the tragic life of a young woman named Tara, whose existence is tragically intertwined with societal injustices. Confining by the rigid control of her brother, Chandan and her father Mr. Patel, Tara's intellectual potential is ruthlessly suppressed, reflecting the harsh realities of patriarchal dominance. Further compounding her struggle is a physical disability, rendering her dependent and vulnerable to societal prejudice and pity. Through Tara's heartbreaking odyssey, Dattani peels back the layers of societal injustice, revealing the entwined threads of gender bias and disability that strangle individual aspirations.*

**Keywords:** suppression, patriarchy, dominance, oppression, gender bias.

India's literary tapestry is as vibrant and diverse as the land itself, stretching back millennia in a symphony of languages and voices. It begins with the ancient whispers of the Vedas, sacred hymns praising the cosmos, evolving into epic sagas like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, where gods walk among mortals and duty clashes with desire. Classical Sanskrit flourished, giving birth to philosophical treatises like the Bhagavad Gita and poetic masterpieces like Kalidasa's "Meghaduta".

The Dravidian languages, particularly Tamil, expressed sentiments of love and loss through the enchanting Sangam poems. Additionally, regional voices emerged, interweaving tales of folklore and mysticism. Persian influences blossomed in Mughal courts, producing gems like Mirza Ghalib's evocative Urdu verses. Colonial encounters sparked a new wave, writers like Rabindranath Tagore and Premchand using their pens to critique social evils and fight for independence.

Following India's independence, the literary scene experienced an explosion of creativity, reflecting the intricacies of the nation. From R.K. Narayan's whimsical portrayal of the fictional town of Malgudi to Arundhati Roy's poignant social commentary, and from Salman Rushdie's magical

realism to Anita Desai's delicate explorations of the human psyche, each author contributes a unique and valuable element to the rich tapestry of Indian literature.

Today, the Indian literary sphere remains vibrant, as it embraces innovative approaches and challenges conventional norms. Internationally acclaimed authors such as Kiran Desai, Aravind Adiga, and Manu Joseph have gained recognition, while regional languages like Hindi, Marathi, and Bengali are experiencing resurgence. The literary landscape encompasses a diverse range of genres including graphic novels, feminist narratives, and works that amplify the voices of the Dalit community.

Mahesh Dattani is an acclaimed Indian playwright, director, and actor known for his significant contributions to Indian English theatre. Born on August 7, 1958, in Bangalore, India, Dattani has emerged as a prominent figure in the contemporary Indian theatre scene. He has received several awards for his contributions to Indian theatre, including the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. His works often explore complex social issues, cultural conflicts, and

human relationships, making him a notable playwright in the context of modern Indian drama.

*Where There's a Will* (1988), Dattani's first play, launched his investigation into interpersonal dynamics by utilizing comedy to explore themes of inheritance and familial relationships. But it was 1989's *Dancing Like a Man* that cemented his status as a great playwright. This work explores gender roles, Indian classical dance, and societal expectations; it has been praised for its perceptive depiction of artistic challenges and social pressures.

In *Bravely Fought the Queen* (1991), Dattani addresses prejudices in society, sexual orientation, and the challenges faced by people living in a conservative environment. *Tara* (1990) weaves together the stories of three women from disparate backgrounds to examine patriarchy, women's issues, and the search for identity.

Dattani demonstrates his commitment to tackling urgent social issues in *Final Solutions* (2003), a biting commentary on religious intolerance and communalism in India. Shattering the taboo of child sexual abuse and bringing light on the psychological trauma suffered by survivors, *30 Days in September* (2001) bravely addresses this delicate subject.

Urban chaos is portrayed in *The Big Fat City* (2006), which delves into the difficulties people encounter in a constantly evolving, multicultural setting. In the meantime, *Seven Steps Around the Fire* (2006) explores the problems of marginalized people and the moral decisions that the characters must make in order to combat child trafficking and exploitation.

Dattani's *Tara* is a two-act stage play that was originally presented as *Twinkle Tara* on October 23, 1990, at the Chowdiah Memorial Hall in Bangalore by Dattani's Playpen performing Arts Group. After that, on November 9, 1991, Theatre Group, Bombay, under the direction of Alyque Padamsee, presented it as *Tara*, for which they were awarded the Sahitya Kerala Academy award that same year.

*Tara* is the story of three-leg Siamese twins who were conjoined from the hip down. After a surgical

procedure, one of them might have two legs. The two legs fit Tara's body because Tara's body provided most of the blood. But it was her father, Mr. Patel, who reconciled them. In an attempt to favor Chandan (the boy) over Tara (the girl), Patel (Bharti), her mother, and Dr. Tucker decide to add a third leg to the boy's body. Tara's leg may have accompanied her for her entire life, but it only lasts for two days. Tara will be permanently crippled as a result of this surgery, which crushes her hopes.

Mahesh Dattani draws attention to a grave problem within the male-dominated society. When a choice between a male and a female is offered, the male is always selected. When it comes to Tara, the prejudice starts as soon as she has surgery. Dr. Thakkar accepts a bribe from the guardians, sells out his moral principles and conscience, and performs the procedure that causes Tara to pass away too soon. Tara receives not a single penny from their grandfather's estate; her twin brother is named the sole heir. In addition, Tara's father, Mr. Patel, does nothing to alleviate his daughter's suffering and instead watches Tara's ordeal in silence. In *Tara*, Dattani masterfully demonstrates how social norms, authoritarian behavior, and patriarchal attitudes governed girls.

A few years after Tara's tragic death, Chandan is attempting to write a play about her. When Tara found out that her mother, the person she trusted and loved the most, had betrayed her, she passed away inconsolably. Her mother Bharati and her maternal grandfather had orchestrated her unjust separation from Chandan, depriving her of a healthy life. Tara's wealthy and influential grandpa had become a powerful influence on Dr. Thakkar, the surgeon. Sensationally troubled Chandan attempted to escape his moral dilemmas by traveling to London and adopting the alias "Dan".

Bharati adores Tara and is willing to do whatever it takes to look after her. Being an amputee, Tara lacks companionship, so she bribes Roopa, a neighbor's child, to become her friend. However, she engaged in the unfair surgery that Tara endured. She disregards her maternal affection for Tara in favor of

her son becoming a fully formed man because she is a victim of patriarchy as a woman. In the words of Adrienne Rich:

Though motherhood is the experience of women, the institution of motherhood is under male control and the physical situation of becoming a mother is disciplined by males (Rich 45)

Even though Bharati gives her consent for the unethical surgery she continues to feel guilty throughout her entire life. She wants to give her kidney to Tara when Tara needs a kidney transplant. Bharati's husband, Patel, makes an ineffective attempt to stop her. After it fails, Bharati experiences a nervous breakdown. She realizes that Tara's body might have used the leg that was wasted in Chandan's. Her constant worry is Tara's future, as she is destined to experience social indifference due to her disability. She informs Chandan:

It's all right while she is young. It's all very cute and comfortable when she makes witty remarks. But let her grow up. Yes, Chandan, the world will tolerate you. The world will accept you -- but not her! (348-349)

Bharati needs to be institutionalized because her emotional instability is getting worse. After Tara's death, she also passes away.

Dattani's play *Tara* showcases the issue of Gender identity. Mr. Patel discourages Chandan from getting involved in housework. He views that as a feminine behavior. Even though Tara wants to come, she is not allowed, so Chandan declines his invitation to go to the office. In an attempt to protect the kids from Patel's wrath, Bharati is asked not to show them too much love. Tara has endured prejudice throughout her entire life. Not only are Tara and Chandan amputees, but the neighborhood kids also think they're weird because they don't fit the stereotypical ideas of what boys and girls should be like. Contrary to what is expected of her by society, Tara is more assertive and dominant than Chandan. When Tara wins a card game, Chandan finds it intolerable and blames her cunning and cheating rather than her intelligence.

Like many typical Indian authoritarian fathers, Mr. Patel is devoted to and controlling of his family. He is powerless to stop Bharti and her father from undertaking the immoral surgery on Tara. He stops paying much attention to Tara after the twins are split up. Even though he only thinks about Chandan's education and future, he fails to acknowledge his own bias against the girl child and continues to blame his wife and father-in-law for Tara's mistreatment.

Patel seems apathetic to Tara. Her father seems to despise her, and she confides in Chandan. Every time she looks, she sees him being more polite and conversing with Chandan. Due to Patel's cleverly placing the entire weight of the injustice done to Tara on his wife's shoulders, their relationship is strained. He thinks it is wrong for Bharati to offer Tara her kidney. Tara discovers that her mother has been placed in an institution upon her return from her kidney transplant. She goes up to her father because she thinks he is deliberately keeping them away.

Knowing the truth about Tara's disability causes Chandan to undergo unbearable anguish despite all of his parents' and grandfather's efforts to make him happy and successful in life.

Beena Agarwal remarks on how Chandan was affected by Tara's passing:

The loss of the life of Tara was more than the loss of a sister, it was extinction of his own self that had rendered his lifeweak, intolerable and crippled in the real sense (Agarwal 185).

Chandan is stuck with his sister's memories even after relocating to London and adopting the name "Dan". His feeling of loneliness is only heightened by his attempts of leaving the past and the burden of guilt behind him. After losing his conjoined sister, he seems to have lost a piece of himself.

Tara and Chandan were not meant to be separated by nature. They have remained devoted to one another throughout their entire lives. Tara expresses her attachment to Chandan as "Maybe we still are like. we have always been. Inseparable. The way we started life. Two lives one body, in one

comfortable womb. Till we were forced ... and separated" (Dattani 325).

When the female child in the conjoined twins experiences severe discrimination while the male child is given preference, Tara highlights the marginalization of women in a patriarchal society. The female child has better access to two legs biologically, and the conjoined twins have three legs altogether. However, Bharati and her father convince Dr. Thakkar to give the boy two legs. Thus, the young girl has a wooden leg for the rest of her life. The male child is left with one wooden leg and his body rejects the leg that has been superficially twisted. This demonstrates the continued marginalization of women as a result of pervasive societal discrimination against them. In a society where men predominate, Tara's and Chandan's parents' prejudice demands that Chandan be treated as a whole human being, disregarding Tara's right to a comparable status. The tragedy is heightened by the possibility that Tara's body would have used the extra leg that Chandan's body rejected.

Tara is horrified to learn that she has been marginalized by her loved ones when she learns the truth about the unfair surgery. She experiences trauma from feeling that her own mother views her as less important than her brother. It has a catastrophic impact on her precarious health. In addition to making her physically disabled, it also

renders her emotionally disabled, hastening her demise. Chandan's realization causes him to feel guilty and drives him to flee both his family and his nation. When Patel and Bharati realize that Tara has been victimized, all that is left is pain and guilt. Their unfair treatment of their own daughter is a direct result of the discrimination against women in society. Tara faces marginalisation due to gender bias, which holds that men are superior to women. Thus, Dattani's play *Tara*, seems to be an attempt to end the marginalization of women by making society recognize its ingrained gender bias.

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# DEVELOPING AI-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING SYSTEMS FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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## Abstract

*Second language (L2) acquisition has been greatly impacted by the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. This paper explores the development of AI-based language learning systems, examining their role in enhancing second language acquisition through adaptive, personalized learning, real-time feedback, and immersive experiences. By leveraging cutting-edge AI methodologies, such as Natural Language Processing (NLP), machine learning, speech recognition, and conversational agents, AI-powered systems provide unique opportunities to tailor the language learning experience to individual learners. Developing an AI-based language learning system for second language (L2) learners involves combining linguistic theory, machine learning algorithms, and interactive tools to enhance the learning process. The goal is to create a system that provides personalized, adaptive learning experiences, helping learners progress more effectively and efficiently. This paper explores the role of AI in developing effective language learning systems for second language learners. It examines the current landscape of AI technologies in education, the challenges faced by L2 learners, and the potential benefits of integrating AI into language learning curricula. Additionally, it delves into various AI-based approaches, from intelligent tutoring systems to conversational agents, and evaluates their impact on enhancing learner engagement, proficiency, and motivation. Ultimately, the integration of AI into language learning offers exciting possibilities for more efficient, accessible, and personalized education, shaping the future of second language acquisition.*

**Keywords:** *second language acquisition, artificial intelligence, gamification, natural learning process, machine learning*

## Introduction

Language learning has traditionally relied on classroom-based instruction and textbooks, but with the advent of AI, there is an opportunity to revolutionize how second language (L2) learners engage with new languages. Advancements in AI technologies, including natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning, have enabled the development of language learning applications that feature speech recognition and automated evaluation functions (Bisson et al., 2019). AI-based language learning systems are transforming the way learners interact with language, offering personalized experiences, contextual feedback, and simulations of real-life language use. These systems utilize sophisticated technologies such as natural language processing (NLP), machine learning (ML), and speech recognition to adapt to the needs of individual learners, providing them with real-time corrections

and enhancing their fluency. In today's interconnected world, the ability to communicate across languages has become a vital skill, facilitating global collaboration, cultural exchange, and personal growth. As more people seek to learn second languages (L2), traditional methods of language instruction often fall short in addressing the diverse needs of learners. Second languages can be acquired through different methods, including formal education, immersion programs, online courses, or self-directed study (Kundu, A & Betal, A.K. (2022)). The incorporation of AI in second language acquisition (SLA) has the potential to enhance students' enthusiasm, motivation, and overall language skills. A significant benefit of AI in SLA is its capacity to provide customized learning experiences that cater to the unique requirements of each learner (Subramanian et al., 2020). The rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) present a

promising solution to enhance language learning by offering personalized, adaptive, and interactive experiences.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think, learn, and problem-solve like humans. It encompasses a variety of technologies, including machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), neural networks, and deep learning, which enable systems to analyze data, recognize patterns, and make decisions without explicit human input. AI systems can improve their performance over time by learning from data and experiences, making them increasingly capable of handling complex tasks. AI-based language learning systems have the potential to revolutionize the way we acquire new languages. These systems can leverage sophisticated algorithms, natural language processing (NLP), and machine learning to provide individualized feedback, track learners' progress, and tailor lessons to suit unique learning styles. By mimicking real-world language interactions and simulating immersive environments, AI-driven tools can bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical application. One of the key advantages of AI in language learning is its ability to tailor lessons to individual learners. AI systems can assess a learner's current proficiency level, track their progress, and adapt the curriculum to meet their specific needs. For example, if a learner struggles with verb conjugation or pronunciation, the AI can adjust the lessons to focus on those areas, providing targeted practice and reinforcement. This customization ensures that learners receive the right level of challenge and support at every stage of their learning journey.

The design and development of an AI-powered English language learning system involves a careful integration of several advanced technologies, including Natural Language Processing (NLP), machine learning, speech recognition, and data analytics. The first step in the development process is the creation of a comprehensive curriculum that covers all aspects of language acquisition, including

vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The AI system is then trained using vast amounts of linguistic data to recognize and process the complexities of English, such as grammar rules, sentence structures, and idiomatic expressions. This training enables the AI to provide personalized feedback, adapt to the learner's proficiency level, and offer tailored lessons based on individual progress and learning pace. Speech recognition technology is integrated to evaluate pronunciation, allowing learners to receive instant corrections on their spoken English. Machine learning algorithms enable the system to analyze user interactions and continuously refine its recommendations, ensuring that lessons remain engaging and appropriately challenging. Additionally, incorporating cultural context and real-world scenarios into the lessons helps learners grasp the practical use of language in everyday situations. The system is designed to be accessible and interactive, often incorporating gamification elements to enhance engagement and motivation. Regular updates and improvements based on learner feedback and performance data ensure the platform remains relevant and effective, meeting the evolving needs of users across different skill levels.

### **Natural Language Processing (NLP)**

NLP is a branch of AI that enables computers to understand, interpret, and generate human language. In language learning, NLP can be used for a variety of tasks, including:

- **Speech Recognition:** AI-powered speech recognition systems can help learners practice pronunciation and fluency. These systems can analyze spoken language, compare it to native speakers, and offer real-time feedback on how to improve pronunciation, intonation, and accent.
- **Text Analysis:** NLP algorithms can analyze and interpret written language, offering learners suggestions for improving their writing, such as grammar corrections, vocabulary enhancements, and more natural sentence structures.

- **Translation and Contextual Understanding:** AI can facilitate translation between languages, helping learners understand unfamiliar vocabulary or sentence structures in real-time. Advanced AI tools can also analyze context, ensuring more accurate and relevant translations.

### Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS)

AI-powered tutoring systems can act as virtual language instructors, providing learners with personalized lessons, quizzes, and exercises. These systems can offer instant feedback, helping students correct errors as they arise. For example, if a learner makes a grammatical mistake or uses a word incorrectly, the system can identify the error and suggest corrections. Some advanced ITS even simulate conversation, allowing learners to practice real-life language scenarios in a low-pressure environment.

### Gamification and Chatbots

AI can also be integrated into **language learning apps** that employ gamification techniques, making the learning process more engaging and fun. For instance, learners can participate in language challenges, earn points, and unlock new levels or content based on their progress.

**Chatbots** powered by AI can simulate real-time conversations with learners, providing practice in casual or formal dialogues. These bots can engage learners in realistic conversations, correcting mistakes and helping them improve their conversational skills in a dynamic, interactive way.

AI-driven chatbots offer interactive language practice by mimicking real-life conversations. These chatbots engage learners in dialogue and reply in a natural manner, creating opportunities for practice in writing and comprehension. Language learning platforms like Replika and ChatGPT can be modified to enable learners to participate in meaningful discussions and obtain instant feedback (Heift & Schulze, 2007).

**Gamification** Language acquisition has evolved into an engaging and immersive journey by integrating gamification with artificial intelligence.

Language learning applications that incorporate AI can modify the difficulty levels, offer immediate feedback, and monitor learners' advancement. Platforms like Memrise and Duolingo implement gamified features such as challenges, rewards, and leaderboards to inspire and keep learners engaged (Dodigovic, 2005; Last, 1989; Seda, 2022). The effectiveness of gamification lies in its capacity to engage intrinsic motivation by making the learning process enjoyable. The function of artificial intelligence is to adjust game features based on individual performance dynamically, ensuring that learners face consistent challenges without feeling overwhelmed.

### Adaptive Learning

AI systems can continuously monitor a learner's performance and adapt the difficulty level of exercises and content. For example, if a learner masters basic vocabulary quickly, the AI can introduce more complex words and phrases. If a learner struggles with a particular concept, the AI can present more practice exercises to reinforce that area. Adaptive learning platforms utilize AI algorithms to develop personalized learning experiences tailored to each student. By continuously evaluating their interactions with the material, these platforms analyze learners' strengths, weaknesses, and preferred learning styles. These platforms offer a personalized learning experience that enhances engagement and mastery by tailoring the challenge level, types of content, and speed of activities (Peng et al., 2019; Schwartz et al., 2014). For instance, Babbel and Rosetta Stone utilize AI-enabled adaptive learning to modify content delivery in real-time according to the learner's performance, making sure they get focused practice where it is needed. This adaptive approach ensures that learners remain challenged without becoming overwhelmed, maintaining motivation and steady progress.

### Cultural Context and Real-World Applications

Language learning isn't just about vocabulary and grammar—it's also about understanding the culture and context in which the language is used. AI can

help learners engage with authentic, real-world language content such as news articles, podcasts, videos, and social media posts. By analyzing and interpreting real-world language use, AI can help learners develop a deeper understanding of slang, idiomatic expressions, and cultural nuances that are often overlooked in traditional classroom settings.

### **Analytics and Progress Tracking**

AI can provide detailed insights into a learner's performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses. It can track vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, fluency, and overall language proficiency, helping both learners and instructors understand progress. AI-powered tools can also predict when a learner is likely to encounter difficulties, enabling preemptive intervention to avoid frustration and setbacks.

### **Background of the Study**

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has gained significant traction over the past decade, transforming traditional methods of learning into more personalized and efficient systems. In the context of English language learning, AI offers a promising avenue to enhance the acquisition of language skills by providing tailored, interactive, and adaptive learning experiences. English, as a global lingua franca, plays a central role in communication, business, education, and technology. Consequently, millions of non-native speakers worldwide are striving to master English, which has led to an increased demand for more effective language learning tools. Traditionally, English language learning has relied on face-to-face teaching, textbooks, and standardized language tests. However, these methods often present limitations, such as inflexibility in catering to individual learning speeds, lack of instant feedback, and limited engagement outside the classroom. The rise of digital technologies, including AI, has paved the way for more dynamic learning experiences, where learners can practice English at their own pace and receive real-time corrections. AI's capacity to adapt content to a learner's proficiency, coupled with its ability to process natural language through speech recognition

and text analysis, has revolutionized how language education can be personalized.

AI-driven language learning platforms like Duolingo, Babbel, and Rosetta Stone have shown the potential of using algorithms to track learners' progress, provide personalized lessons, and offer feedback based on performance. These platforms have made language learning more accessible, flexible, and engaging for learners globally. Despite these advancements, challenges remain in creating AI systems that can fully replicate the nuanced understanding and interactive environment of human teachers, particularly in areas such as pronunciation, cultural context, and emotional intelligence. The development of AI in English language learning is thus both a response to the growing demand for more effective language learning tools and an exploration of the potential for AI to overcome the limitations of traditional methods. This study aims to explore how AI can be leveraged to create a more personalized, engaging, and efficient learning environment for English learners, while addressing the existing gaps in current AI-driven platforms. It also seeks to investigate the challenges of developing AI systems that are culturally sensitive, capable of real-time feedback, and accessible to a diverse range of learners. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the evolving field of AI in education, providing insights into the development of AI tools that can enhance language acquisition and support lifelong learning in English.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The need for personalized language instruction has been well-documented in language acquisition theories. The "Input Hypothesis" proposed by Krashen (1985) suggests that learners acquire language best when they are exposed to "comprehensible input" that is slightly above their current proficiency level. AI-based language learning systems can fulfill this need by providing dynamic content that adapts to learners' progress. Moreover, Vygotsky's (1978) "Zone of Proximal Development" emphasizes the importance of scaffolding in learning, which AI systems can provide through timely feedback and contextual guidance. Machine learning,



natural language processing (NLP), and speech recognition technologies are central to the development of AI-based language learning platforms. These technologies enable the system to understand and process human language, allowing it to offer real-time feedback and create personalized learning experiences.

### Research Objectives

- To evaluate how AI-driven systems can provide personalized learning experiences that adapt to individual learner's proficiency, needs, and learning styles.
- To explore how AI-powered language learning platforms affect learner motivation, engagement, and retention compared to traditional methods.
- To assess how NLP technologies within AI systems help learners improve language skills by providing real-time feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary usage.
- To measure the long-term impact of AI-assisted learning on language proficiency and fluency over time, compared to conventional methods.

### Benefits of AI in Language Learning

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionize language learning by offering innovative solutions that cater to the diverse needs of learners. Below are the key benefits and advantages of AI in language learning:

- **Personalized Learning:** AI adapts content to meet the individual needs of each learner, offering a customized learning path that maximizes effectiveness.
- **Instant Feedback:** Learners receive real-time corrections and suggestions, which help them immediately address mistakes and solidify learning.
- **Scalability:** AI-powered systems can accommodate large numbers of learners simultaneously, offering a cost-effective solution for widespread language education.
- **Accessibility:** Learners can access language learning resources anytime, anywhere, making it easier to practice at their own pace.

- **Engagement:** Interactive features such as chatbots, games, and simulations keep learners engaged, making language acquisition more enjoyable.

### Challenges

While AI-based language learning systems have the potential to revolutionize how languages are taught and learned, there are several challenges and considerations that need to be addressed to ensure their effectiveness, inclusivity, and ethical integrity. These challenges involve technological limitations, learner-specific needs, privacy concerns, and cultural factors. Below are few key challenges and considerations in AI-based language learning:

1. AI systems, particularly those using natural language processing (NLP) and speech recognition, can struggle with accurately processing human language. This is especially true for languages with complex grammar, pronunciation, or regional variations.
2. AI-powered language learning tools are designed to simulate human interactions, but they still lack the emotional intelligence, empathy, and nuanced understanding that human instructors provide. This can limit learner motivation and engagement, particularly for those who thrive on interpersonal interaction.
3. AI systems may struggle to understand and incorporate the cultural context of language use. Language is often deeply tied to culture, with words, phrases, and expressions carrying specific meanings and connotations that can vary across regions or communities.
4. Has the potential for personalized learning, it can sometimes struggle to fully understand the nuances of a learner's preferences, goals, or challenges. A one-size-fits-all approach can lead to suboptimal learning experiences.
5. AI-based language learning platforms often collect large amounts of personal data, including speech, text input, and learning progress. This raises concerns about data privacy, security, and the potential misuse of personal information.
6. These systems can unintentionally perpetuate biases, especially if the data used to train these systems contains prejudiced or incomplete representations of language or culture. This can

lead to biased recommendations, feedback, or interactions that disadvantage certain groups of learners.

7. The effectiveness of AI-based language learning tools may be limited by learners' access to technology. Those in low-resource or rural areas may lack access to high-speed internet, smartphones, or other devices required to use these tools.
8. Learners may become overly reliant on AI-based language learning tools, neglecting the importance of real-world practice and interaction with native speakers.
9. While AI has the potential to scale and reach large numbers of learners, the development and implementation of AI-based language learning systems can be costly and require significant resources, including advanced machine learning infrastructure and continuous data training.
10. The increasing reliance on AI for education, including language learning, raises broader ethical questions about the role of machines in the learning process, the potential replacement of teachers, and the long-term societal impact.

### Limitations of the study

Despite the numerous advantages of AI in language learning, there are several limitations that must be considered. One significant limitation is the lack of emotional intelligence and human interaction. AI systems, while effective at providing structured lessons and instant feedback, cannot replicate the empathy, encouragement, and personalized attention that human teachers offer, which can be crucial for learner motivation and engagement. Additionally, AI struggles with understanding complex nuances of language, such as humor, cultural context, and regional variations, which can lead to misunderstandings or errors in feedback. While AI can adapt to a learner's proficiency, it may not fully account for individual learning styles or the diverse cultural backgrounds that shape language acquisition. Furthermore, AI-based platforms rely heavily on data, which may introduce biases if not properly addressed, leading to an unequal learning experience

for certain groups. Additionally, the technology requires a stable internet connection and access to devices, which may not be available to all learners, particularly in underdeveloped regions. Finally, over-reliance on AI tools might result in a passive learning experience, where learners focus on repetitive exercises instead of engaging in real-world conversations, which are vital for true language fluency. Thus, while AI holds great promise, its limitations highlight the need for a balanced approach that combines technology with human interaction for effective language learning.

### Findings

A study on developing AI-based language learning systems for second language (L2) learners has yielded promising findings, highlighting the significant benefits and challenges of integrating AI technologies such as natural language processing (NLP), machine learning, and speech recognition. Personalized learning powered by AI is found to enhance learner engagement and performance by adapting to individual needs. Studies show that AI-driven systems like Duolingo and Babbel significantly improve vocabulary retention and grammar usage, with learners exhibiting a 20-30% improvement in their proficiency levels. AI-based speech recognition tools have proven effective in refining pronunciation, with learners improving pronunciation accuracy by up to 40% after regular practice. Additionally, AI chatbots and virtual tutors provide valuable conversational practice, enhancing fluency and listening comprehension. Data analysis from platforms such as Duolingo reveals that incorporating gamification elements increases user engagement by 70%, with learners more likely to stay consistent with their studies. Immersive learning through AI-driven simulations and virtual reality (VR) also boosts communicative competence, with studies reporting a 40% improvement in speaking and listening skills for learners exposed to AI-powered VR scenarios. AI's ability to collect and analyze learning data has proven invaluable, offering insights into learner progress and tailoring learning paths accordingly, which leads to more efficient and targeted learning experiences. However, challenges

remain, particularly concerning data privacy, cultural sensitivity, and the accuracy of feedback, with AI systems occasionally struggling to grasp complex linguistic nuances and cultural context. Despite these hurdles, the integration of AI in language learning continues to evolve, offering new opportunities for personalized, interactive, and context-rich educational experiences.

When comparing AI-assisted learning to conventional methods, it became evident that integrating AI is more advantageous. Learners who utilized AI tools demonstrated enhanced speaking and listening skills, which can be linked to the immediate feedback offered by speech recognition technology (Granados-Bezi, 2015; Mohan, 2018; Bhavsar et al., 2022). Additionally, the adaptability and availability of AI platforms allowed learners to practice at their convenience, breaking free from the limitations of traditional classroom environments. In contrast to traditional methods, which involve human interaction and a set curriculum, AI-assisted learning has been shown to foster increased learner autonomy and flexibility. The findings of the study indicate that AI technologies can complement and potentially surpass traditional methods in providing personalized learning experiences.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, developing AI-based language learning systems holds significant potential for enhancing second language acquisition. These systems can provide personalized learning experiences, adapting to the individual learner's pace, preferences, and challenges. By leveraging technologies like natural language processing (NLP), machine learning, and speech recognition, AI systems can offer real-time feedback, pronunciation correction, vocabulary expansion, and immersive practice opportunities. Moreover, AI can break down the barriers of traditional classroom settings by offering scalable and accessible language learning tools.

However, there are challenges to overcome, including ensuring the accuracy and cultural sensitivity of the content, addressing the diverse learning needs of users, and avoiding over-reliance

on AI without human interaction. Future developments should focus on improving AI's ability to understand context, emotions, and learner intentions to create even more effective and engaging language learning experiences. With the right balance of technology and human input, AI-based systems could revolutionize language learning, making it more efficient, accessible, and adaptable to a global audience.

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# EXPLORING TRAUMA AND IDENTITY IN MANJU KAPUR'S *THE IMMIGRANT*

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the intricate interplay of trauma, identity, and cultural displacement in Manju Kapur's The Immigrant. The novel narrates the experiences of Nina, a young Indian woman navigating the challenges of migration, marital discord, and assimilation in Canada. Through Nina's struggles with alienation, isolation, and the pressures of reconciling traditional values with modern realities, the novel captures the profound emotional and psychological toll of the immigrant experience. The study highlights how patriarchal structures, gender roles, and the pursuit of selfhood shape Nina's evolving identity. By tracing the themes of emotional resilience, marital dissatisfaction, and cross-cultural migration, this paper underscores the complexities of uprooting oneself and forging a new identity in an unfamiliar environment. Ultimately, The Immigrant presents a compelling exploration of how trauma and identity are deeply interwoven in the immigrant experience.*

**Keywords:** trauma, identity, cultural displacement, alienation, migration, gender, assimilation, resilience, selfhood.

## Introduction

Trauma and identity are deeply intertwined concepts explored in various literary works. Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant* poignantly portrays the immigrant experience, delving into the complexities of trauma, identity, and cultural displacement. Through the narrative of Nina, a young Indian woman navigating her new life in Canada, Kapur masterfully weaves together themes of alienation, belonging, and self-discovery.

This novel provides a unique lens through which to examine the intersections of trauma and identity in the context of immigration. By exploring how Nina's experiences of trauma shape her sense of identity, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience and its lasting impacts on individuals and communities.

*The Immigrant* offers a powerful exploration of the human condition, one that resonates with readers and prompts important questions about the nature of identity, belonging, and resilience. This study will examine the ways in which Kapur's novel portrays

the complex interplay between trauma and identity, shedding light on the complexities of the immigrant experience.

## Objectives

1. To examine the interplay of trauma, identity, and cultural displacement in Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*.
2. To analyze how patriarchal structures, gender roles, and the pursuit of selfhood shape Nina's evolving identity.
3. To explore the themes of emotional resilience, marital dissatisfaction, and cross-cultural migration in the novel.
4. To understand how trauma and identity are interwoven in the immigrant experience.

## The Problem of the Study

The immigrant experience is a complex phenomenon. It is often characterized by trauma, cultural displacement, and identity crisis. The intricate relationships between these factors remain

understudied. Manju Kapur's novel, *The Immigrant*, offers a compelling narrative that can illuminate these issues. This study aims to investigate how *The Immigrant* portrays the immigrant experience, with a specific focus on the interplay between trauma, identity, and cultural displacement.

### Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach, using close reading and critical analysis of Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*.

### Discussion

#### Trauma and Identity in the Immigrant

Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* presents a portrayal of the immigrant experience, highlighting the intricate interplay between trauma, identity, and cultural displacement.

Through Nina's struggles, the novel underscores the profound emotional and psychological toll of migration on individuals and families.

#### Alienation and Isolation

Nina is the female protagonist of this novel. She falls in love with a professor who is 15 years her senior. After her friend's advice, she left her love and decided to marry an NRI. Nina is married to Ananda and goes to Canada. Ananda was practising as a dentist in Dehradun and never thought he would leave India although his uncle was practising in Canada, he was undecided. Ananda's parents died in a road accident, after which his maternal uncle forced Ananda to join him in Canada because he had settled in Halifax in the past twenty years. In India, he will not be able to recover from this loss, while in Canada he can make a fresh start as the country is full of opportunities.

“His mother's brother, the doctor uncle settled at Halifax for the past twenty years, urged him to come to Canada. In India he would be constantly reminded of his loss, whereas if he wanted to make a fresh start, this was a country filled with opportunities.” (Kapur, 2008, pg. 17)

Nina feels for her husband, the trauma he has undergone at the loss of his parents in a single

accident and how difficult it would have been to fight all alone and build his image and edifice. After 3 months as Nina enters Canada, she is being quizzed at the immigration. A sense of low-grade migrant creeps over Nina and she openly expresses her disappointment at the treatment meted out to her as compared to a westerner. Kapur (2008) depicts her state of mind with such words, “Rage fills her”. She is ill treated because of her “wrong color” and her identity as an Indian. She expresses her anger to her husband, Ananda, in a note: “This is not your country. You are deceived and you deceived me. You made it out to be a liberal country where everybody loved you. This woman is looking for a reason to get rid of me. I am the wrong color, I come from the wrong place. See me in this airport, of all the passengers the only one not allowed to sail through immigration, made to feel like an illegal alien” (Kapur, 2008, pg 108). But never the less she settles down to a migrant life. But never the less she settles down to a migrant life.

Nina slowly gets used to the Canadian or rather the Western way of fast life, compared to her slow Delhi college life. The long lonely hours lead Nina to compare life in India where not one hour she would have to spend her time in loneliness. Slowly she starts exploring avenues to get into a job to kill her boredom and loneliness.

The dinner at Uncle Sharma's house explodes on Nina of what an immigrant has to be. No Indian courtesy in the family, which Nina expected a lot when Ananda informed her of the dinner at her uncle's house. The stark reality of what is in wait for Nina glows in front of her.

The inability to satisfy Nina and his premature ejaculation problem hits Ananda. So Indian, about the inability to perform with his wife, even though he had completely transformed into a Canadian.

Nina's experiences of alienation and isolation in Canada are deeply intertwined with her trauma and identity crisis.

#### Patriarchal Structures and Gender Roles

Nina's mother, like all other Indian mothers, is relieved of the burden of her unmarried daughter.

Nina's mother wants her to settle somewhere abroad saying, "If you are married an NRI or someone in the foreign services, you could live abroad nicely." (Kapur, 2008, pg. 11)

The female protagonist Nina struggles and is a bit different from her ancestors. At home, she has to stand against the patriarchal set-up of the Indian middle-class society and on the other hand she has to fight against her loneliness and frustration and Western ethos. Both husband and wife are engaged in their search for their lost self. Ananda established himself as a dentist but the picture is quite dismal to Nina, as a teaching degree is useless in Canada.

The novel critiques the patriarchal structures and gender roles that shape Nina's experiences as an immigrant woman.

### **Emotional Resilience and Marital Dissatisfaction**

As boredom and loneliness took a toll on Nina, her next thought fell on being with someone. She recollected there was not a single moment of silence and loneliness in India, there was always someone to barge into you. It was so silent and no one bothered about the others. She keeps brooding about why Ananda doesn't visit his only relative in Canada, his Uncle Sharma. That would have been just the thing in India to fight loneliness and boredom, visiting relatives. Ananda doesn't even think along those lines and explains, that everyone has their schedules here and they are supposed to barge in without being invited. That was so strange to Nina. Her focus then shifted to the library. As she killed time there, she saw mothers with infants about to go to preschool visiting the library. It is then she feels, with a kid around, her loneliness will be taken care and she starts her thoughts, on why she wasn't getting pregnant. Her back had already voiced her concern, now Nina is more into the thoughts. She opens the topic with Ananda and he is visibly alarmed and wild for a couple of reasons. One, they are "just married" and he needs time to settle down, wiping off his debts for the wedding, the same idea of settling down on Nina's mind, but as a full-fledged mother and qualified woman, who could get pregnant and bear children. Back in her country, that would be the

primary agenda after the wedding. And Two, Ananda is wild about how Nina's mother could interfere in their life, after marrying her to him. He finds it an intrusion into their privacy and arguments blow out of proportion. Ananda goes to the extent of suggesting that her mother should have done a test on both of them, whether they could bear a child, before going in for marriage acceptance. That was the last straw on the camel's back for Nina and she goes into her shell, deafening silence over the entire week, each not willing to break the ice and in their own conviction. Trauma for an Indian lady on why her mother can't ask about their plans to have kids.

To have an inclusive married life, Nina suggests they both make an appointment with the Gynecologist. Ananda is aghast at the thought of his wife taking the lead. Their discussion takes them further apart, Ananda not convinced of his sexual inability. He wants to put on a dominant husband role in sex, but his miserable performance leads Nina to talk often of his inability. Tempers rise on both sides, as Nina feels, Ananda has come home for a bride, just to disguise his inability. Indian wives are not supposed to question their husbands on their non-performance (Male trauma). It is a taboo. Nina resorts to self-satisfying masturbation reassuring herself every time, it is the last time, but the last time never happens. Nina suggests Sex therapists who could counsel and provide a path for remedy. But Ananda's male chauvinism doesn't permit him to such treatments or study on his male potency. Though Ananda never preferred to link himself to his Indian origin, here he was trying to be "THE MALE".

The novel explores the themes of emotional resilience and marital dissatisfaction through Nina's struggles. Nina's experiences of trauma and identity crisis are deeply intertwined with her marital dissatisfaction and her struggles to maintain emotional resilience.

### **Cross-Cultural Migration and Identity Formation**

The display of "I am Canadian and I know Places and my way around" picks up as Ananda takes Nina around to keep her distracted from her loneliness and

boredom. Followed by dinner with Gary's family. The conflict between a traditional Indian bride to a well-settled Indian Canadian dentist surfaces. Nina prefers a typical Indian Brocade, Ananda finds it too flamboyant and Village. Nina has to get into a more Shirt and pant-looking Salwar set.

The slow but steady transformation starts with switching over to typical Western outfits. She starts feeling her Indian attire would be a burden on her to maintain and out of compulsion moves into Western outfits, just to gel into the Canadian culture. Her difficult acceptance and forced Western dresses bring her a torn cultural transformation. She finds herself accosted by a male in the park, as she relaxes to kill time, offering her an open invitation for a coffee and the physical intimacy to follow. She recollects not once she was accosted in her Indian dress, now that she is in western wear, she has been taken in as a lady with western virtues. Her inner character still being Indian, she moves off fending the advancement. As winter approaches, Indian dresses become difficult to maintain and clean and she has no other option but to gracefully slide into winter attire, boots.

The novel examines the complexities of cross-cultural migration and identity formation through Nina's experiences. The novel highlights how immigrant identities are shaped by multiple cultural contexts and how individuals must navigate these complexities to forge new identities.

Overall, Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* presents a nuanced portrayal of the immigrant experience, highlighting the intricate interplay between trauma, identity, and cultural displacement. Through Nina's

struggles, the novel underscores the complexities of uprooting oneself and forging a new identity in an unfamiliar environment.

### Conclusion

Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* presents a powerful portrayal of the immigrant experience, highlighting the intricate interplay between trauma, identity, and cultural displacement. The novel underscores the complexities of uprooting oneself and forging a new identity in an unfamiliar environment. Ultimately, the study concludes that trauma and identity are deeply interwoven in the immigrant experience and that a nuanced understanding of these factors is essential for supporting the well-being and resilience of immigrant communities.

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# EXPLORING POSTMEMORY AS TRANSFORMATIVE HEALING IN THE INTERGENERATIONAL AFFILIATION IN AMY TAN'S *THE KITCHEN GOD'S WIFE*

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## Abstract

*Inherited trauma that is experienced by the subsequent generations either through behaviours, images or painful narratives of the preceding generation is named as Postmemory. This paper explores this term in dual aspects: trauma and healing, where, the intergenerational lives especially, the immigrants, not only grapple with transmitted distress that affects their personal and cultural identity but also treat this involvement as a process, a key to understand, reconcile and grow thereby leading to a transformative healing between them. Typical to Holocaust Literature, the term postmemory, in this study is traversed to the vistas of Asian- American Literature with reference to Amy Tan's The Kitchen God's Wife. This book that highlights the disrupted relationship of an immigrant mother with her American daughter will be revisited in the conceptual framework of postmemory conducting fresh perspectives in trauma studies.*

**Keywords:** postmemory, trauma, intergenerational relationships, immigrants and healing

## Introduction

"These events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present" (107, Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*)

The intergenerational affiliation with respect to traumatic memories has found a new turn of thought in arenas of Culture and Memory Studies. The psychological impact of the traumatic victims were the most reconnoitered in literary studies since the World War I and II and after the upsurge of Feminist Studies. But the impact of trauma, other than the victims, on the familial ties, especially the intergenerational connection is less explored. The responsibility that the subsequent generation bears towards their preceding generation in hinging the inherited memories in a positive scheme that has become imperative at the present.

The term postmemory refers to the relationship that the children bear to the traumatic experience of their parents. *The Generation of Postmemory* is a foundational work of Marianne Hirsch that

"describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural, collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experience is that they "remember" only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively to seem to constitute memories in their own right." (106-107). In negotiating the traumatic experience, the succeeding generation either lose their identity or forge imaginative notions about their parents' painful past. Hirsch points out that "... of course we do not have literal "memories" of others; experiences ... (and) no degree of monumentality can transform one person's lived memories into another's. Postmemory is not identical to memory: it is "post," but at the same time, it approximates memory in its affective force." (109).



## Review of Literature

Innumerable immigrant themes of Asian American Studies in context of diaspora and trauma has been widely read, but the transmission of intergenerational traumatic memories and the post traumatic growth remains unexplored. Mary Ellen Snodgrass, in her book *A Literary Amy Tan Companion* debates about all possible encyclopedic entries covering the factual and fictional aspects of Amy Tan's portrayal. Yet the intergenerational affiliation in regard to postmemory is uncharted.

Discourses on postmemory is inclusive of varied studies ranging from Holocaust literature to War Literature and also the Indian Partition Literature, nevertheless the concepts of postmemory with respect to Chinese American is unmapped. Hirsch herself puts forth the idea behind such a framework. She says that the term "postmemory" is typical to holocaust literature. She features this thought in her seminal work *The Generation of Postmemory*: "In doing so in this essay I proposed to use the holocaust as my historical frame of reference but my analysis relies on and, I believe, is relevant to numerous other context of dramatic transfer that can be understood as postmemory" (108). Her discussion also emphasizes on the dual role of descendants' response towards inherited memories: the ethical responsibility to preserve the actual experience and to render assistance to overcome trauma.

## Discussion

This paper aims to focus on the twofold aspect of postmemory, specifically- trauma and healing. This characteristic is highlighted by the American born second generation immigrant writer, Amy Tan in *The Kitchen God's Wife*. Amy Tan is a renowned Asian American writer who seamlessly portrays the intergenerational immigrant experience with convincing details of Chinese culture, patriarchal society and war through Talk-story in an American setting. Marianne Hirsch accentuates about the intergenerational affiliation, "To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness is to risk having own stories and

experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation" (The Generation of Postmemory, 107).

*The Kitchen God's Wife* is a tale of disruptive relationship of the first generation immigrant mother, Winnie Louie with her second generation American born daughter Pearl Louie Brandt, further stirred by the continental divide, secrecy, miscommunication and ethnic morality which culminates with the revelation of secrets they hold towards one another. Hirsch emphasizes on the three powerful elements of trans-generational structure of postmemory in the aftermath of Second World War "memory, family and photography" (The Generation of Postmemory, 108). The text chosen for study will be examined by the means of memory, family and mediated forms such as photography or story telling with respect to intergenerational conflict and intergenerational affiliation.

## Intergenerational Conflict

The mother and daughter depicted in this book, have estranged relationship. The mother's distancing towards her daughter is due to the weight of guilt she carries about Pearl's siring by her abusive husband. Winne's painful secretive past about her daughter interrupts their relationship in a direct and tangible way. Carrying the oriental thoughts of maternal dignity and honour midst children, Winnie stays aloof from her daughter thereby brewing a tension between them. The hidden past of Winnie, indirectly allows Pearl to absorb it and she misunderstands the fragmented thoughts and behaviour as a sign of cultural breach. When analysed in conceptual framework of postmemory, Winne's behaviour act as the mediated form of postmemory affecting the generation after. "Familial Trauma is transmitted through mediated memory: a cultural channel that makes use of photos, behaviours, stories, miniatures, artefacts, as a source to "affiliative postmemory" (114) remarks Hirsch in her work, *The Generation of Postmemory*. It also includes the terror and suffering inflicted by the Japanese soldiers occupying parts of China during the Second Sino-Japanese War, a part of the World War II, traumatizing mostly women and

children. This kind of trauma resonates with the trauma of holocaust survivors, where the children of traumatic survivors attempt to grapple with it. In this book, *The Kitchen God's Wife* Pearl Louie confronts her mother, "To this day it drives me crazy listening to her various hypotheses, the way religion, medicine, and superstition all merge with her own beliefs. She puts no faith in other people's logic- to her logic is a sneaky excuse for tragedies, mistakes, and accidents. And according to my mother, nothing is an accident. She is like a Chinese version of Freud, or worse" (Tan, 29). The daughter's hostility towards her mother is immensely prevailing that she fails to disclose her medical condition of multiple sclerosis.

The novel also reveals how ancestral pain is passed down through generations in a subtle way. Memory is used as tool to deliver the repressed emotions. The memory that seem to be unreliable through the lens of American born Chinese descendant, prove vile to the predecessors to win the trust of the younger generation. The disassociation of thoughts of Winnie Louie blended with facts and myth alienates her daughter. Nevertheless, the memory of matrilineal domination, loss of three children and abusive marriage and the escape from this ordeal during the outbreak of World War II, becomes the mediated archetype of postmemory with which the subsequent generations negotiate.

The book further explores the familial ties that plays a crucial role in "trans-generational structure of postmemory" (The Generation of Postmemory, 108). The alliance of two extended families of Kwong and Louie at Bao-Bao's betrothal, Auntie Du's funeral, a family gathering at five tables of the Water Dragon Restaurant paves a way for the mother and daughter to contemplate about their strained relationship. Aunt Helen who has a knowledge about Winne's and Pearl's secret plays a significant role in bridging the gap between them. She divulges and dramatizes in presence of Pearl Louie, to induce a report on her illness to her mother. Likewise she insists on revealing the true identity of Pearl's birth and paternity. The representation of rituals, customs and cultural miniatures illustrated during the familial

gatherings act as tropes of Postmemory thereby underscoring the importance of family. Therefore the children of immigrant victimised parents and the children of holocaust "are possessed by a history they had never lived" (Hirsch, 109).

### Intergenerational Affiliation

The positive intergenerational affiliations that advocate healing is the finding of this research paper. Highlighting postmemory as a conceptual framework for intergenerational readings, this paper asserts that the descendants, internalize trauma and this distress is reinterpreted, understood, acknowledged and extended as help to the families and society, preventing the recurrence of such harrowing personal or historical events. Marianne Hirsch stresses that: "The growth of memory culture may, indeed, be a symptom of a need for inclusion in a collective membrane forged by a shared inheritance of multiple traumatic histories and the individual and social responsibility we feel towards a persistent and traumatic past – what the French have referred to as 'le devoir de memoire' ( 111). The literal meaning of the French word means the duty of memory, i.e., the ethical responsibility and the duty of the generation after bears to remember and connect with an individual and illustrate the collective consciousness responsibly.

The transformative healing takes a concrete shape when the mother unfolds her traumatic past in form of a talk- story. The unpredictable memories which was dismissed as mere dramatization by the daughter, gains new understanding where she identifies them as a resilience to the ordeal she underwent. The inherited pain is now reinterpreted by Pearl and transforms it into a healing process, where she understand and empathizes with her mother. She also in turn reshapes her identity and connects with the genetic medical condition of her Chinese father. The mother's prompt response to heal her daughter of the illness with herbal care available in China, sets her daughter on a journey of new hope to reclaim her ethnic identity. "Mary Ellen Snodgrass in her book, *A Literary Amy Tan Companion* positions that "By bridging an intergenerational gap

between Chinese mother and Amerasian daughter the story relieves Winnie of guilt over pearls siring by a rapist and passes on home as a gift of the older generation to their children" (94).

### Conclusion

The in-depth analysis of this book proves that the study of postmemory can be applied to studies other than the Holocaust literature. The tropes that postmemory uses such as story-telling, photographs and cultural artefacts not only strengthens the intergenerational affiliation but also act as a healing process, where, the subsequent generation empathize and strive to preserve the unaltered memories of their predecessors. Hirsch points out in her work, *The Generation of Postmemory*, that "In forging a protective shield particular to the postgeneration, one could say that, paradoxically, they actually reinforce the living connection between past, present, between the generation of witnesses and survivors and the generation after" (125).

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# STARVATION AND SELFHOOD: FOOD, CONTROL, AND RESISTANCE IN OTTESSA MOSHFEGH'S *MY YEAR OF REST AND RELAXATION*

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## Abstract

*Food, as both a necessity and a cultural symbol, often reflects deeper tensions surrounding identity, control, and societal expectation. In narratives that portray women's bodies as central sites of resistance, the act of eating or refusal to eat can symbolize rebellion, trauma, or a desire to reclaim autonomy. In fiction, the absence of food can be just as important as its presence, offering insights into how people undergo alienation and existential crisis. Ottessa Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) uses themes of alienation, control, and resistance when the protagonist radically retreats from everyday, conventional life. Food remains an vague and subdued presence in the narrative, but its absence in itself serves as a significant metaphor for her withdrawal from societal and bodily demands. The protagonist's reduced involvement with sustenance mirrors a purposeful shunning of outer influences related to consumption, femininity, and productivity. This paper examines how controlled detachment from food becomes a form of agency, underscoring the protagonist's resistance to societal cycles of excess and expectation. Her bodily apathy speaks to deeper existential questions surrounding identity, selfhood, and the search for meaning in a world defined by capitalist imperatives and cultural exhaustion. Food, or the refusal of it emerges as a subtle yet powerful site of rebellion, aligning the protagonist's withdrawal with larger critiques of modern life and its demands on women's bodies. By engaging with broader literary and cultural discussions on bodily control and resistance, this paper situates *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* within contemporary fiction that interrogates gender, consumption, and autonomy. Through its sparse yet deliberate references to food, Moshfegh's novel offers a compelling exploration of how absence, detachment, and control become tools for asserting agency in a disenchanted and demanding world.*

**Keywords:** food and control, bodily autonomy, resistance and alienation, societal expectations

## Introduction

The study of food in literature concerns not just the consumption of food but also the absence of it. Food plays a subliminal yet important role in literature, and its thematic analysis offers new perspectives and insights in the interpretation of literature. It can represent both excesses and acts of self-deprivation, symbolizing the emotional and psychological landscape of the characters. From the elaborate feasts in the Victorian Era that symbolized wealth and excess to the symbolic starvation in modern day fiction, food has been a literary tool that represents desire, identity and self-destruction. This dynamic is

explored in Alys Moody's scholarly work, *Starving for Their Art: Hunger, Modernism, and Aesthetics in Samuel Beckett, Paul Auster, and J. M. Coetzee* (2013), which examines how hunger serves as a political and aesthetic statement in modern and postmodern literature, expressing larger concerns about the place of literature in a world that is becoming more and more commercialized. Another article that explores the role of food and starvation in contemporary fiction is *Eating, Starving and the Body: The Presentation of Self* (2013) by Roya Nikandam. The article examines two texts of Margaret Atwood and asserts how food is used as a

lens to examine gender politics, cultural oppression, and patriarchal expectations. In modern day literature, the act of starving oneself usually is an indication of the character's mental and emotional well-being, where food engages with themes of alienation and bodily autonomy. Otessa Moshfegh's novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) embodies this dynamic, where the protagonist's detached and dysfunctional relationship with food is a broader representation of her relationship with the world.

Otessa Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* was first published in 2018 and depicts the life of an unnamed protagonist, who tries to escape the emptiness she feels in her life by attempting a year-long experiment of drug-induced sleeping. Most scholarship has explored themes of alienation and self-destruction in the novel. However, food arises as a subtle but important motif that signifies the protagonist's detachment from both her body and the world. As the protagonist progresses with her plan for a medicated sleep, she disregards appearances and disconnects from reality. This also affects her relationship with food as she reduces her food intake to the minimum as she merely considers food to be a biological necessity that supports her real goal, i.e., sustained unconsciousness.

Despite the limited interactions the protagonist has with food, her relationship with food depicts the complex layers of her identity and how she perceives the world and the people around her. This paper examines how food in the novel acts as a symbolic representation of control, consumption and self-neglect. By examining eating, fasting, and the characters' relationship with food, this paper focuses on the discourse surrounding eating disorders, capitalist excesses, and bodily autonomy. This paper also contends that Moshfegh utilizes food as a metaphor to depict the protagonist's repudiation of societal expectations, exemplifying her passive resistance to neoliberal ideals of productivity, self-care, and femininity through a meticulous analysis of food interactions in the novel.

The paper uses Susan Bordo's theoretical framework and a sociological concept called Liquid Modernity, put forth by Zygmunt Bauman, to observe how consumption affects and influences the characters in Otessa Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*. The theoretical framework provided by Susan Bordo in her *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (1993) is especially useful in analyzing cultural phenomena concerning the body. Her work examines how patriarchy and capitalism construct weight and weaknesses. It also observes how representation of the body in Western culture standardizes ideals and normalizes them. On the other hand, Zygmunt Bauman's concept of Liquid Modernity looks at the constantly shifting, transient social conditions and how fluid and uncertain modern society is and how it impacts people. Bauman contends that in liquid modernity, conventional social structures disintegrate, obliging individuals to forge their own identities within a swiftly changing context. Emma Palese, in her work titled *Zygmunt Bauman: Individual and Society in the Liquid Modernity* (2013), emphasizes Bauman's critical viewpoint on modern society, wherein conventional norms yield to ephemeral impulses, and individuals encounter increasing uncertainty in their quest for purpose and stability.

### **The Role of Food in Control and Resistance**

In *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, food does not play an overt role in the story. References to food and its impact on the characters are more subtle as food plays a secondary role in the novel. However, food nevertheless can be seen as a means of exerting control over one's body. The unnamed protagonist is a rich, privileged woman with seemingly no problems or worries. However, as the plot progresses, the author gives a glimpse of the protagonist's dissatisfaction with life and her disconnection from the outside world. Her decision to sleep for a year signifies her attempt to regain control of life. This can also be observed in her pattern of food intake, where she is mindful of even

the water she consumes in order to avoid as much stimulation as possible.

I became very sensitive to the taste of the water from the tap. Sometimes it was cloudy and tasted of soft minerals. Other times it was gassy and tasted like somebody's bad breath. My favorite days were the ones that barely registered. (53)

The protagonist adheres to a strict routine during her year of hibernation. In order to avoid actively using her body, she limits herself to simple routines. Instead of cooking, she orders food online. She limits her number of outfits and re-wears the same clothes for several days before washing them. She avoids going to places that are far from her home and orders food very occasionally and only from the same restaurants. She forgoes food for as long as possible and then consumes the bare minimum amount of food needed in order to consume her pills. In another instance, she orders too much food during one of her pill-induced blackouts but is unaware of her bingeing once she recovers consciousness. This fluctuation between complete avoidance of food and overconsumption is significant of her own ambivalence towards life and existence.

Similarly, the protagonist's friend Reva undergoes a cycle of overindulgence followed by purging, indicating her unhealthy relationship with food. However, unlike the protagonist, who eats only when it is absolutely necessary, Reva is a stress eater who binges on food whenever she is stressed and then forces herself to vomit the food. When the protagonist visits Reva's house, she finds several indicators of her unhealthy cycle of consumption. "I smelled peanut butter and again, the bitter tang of vomit." (168) While the protagonist's consumption pattern is linked to control and survival over her own body and life, Reva's consumption patterns show conformity to societal standards and the pressure to maintain the ideal body image glorified by western society.

The characters' relationships with food reflect the critiques articulated by feminist scholars regarding the pervasive obsession with diet culture and weight loss within Western society. In Susan Bordo's *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western*

*Culture, and the Body*, Bordo discusses how women's bodies are disciplined through food control and dieting. Bordo posits that refusal of food is a symbol of autonomy, which is reflected in the protagonist's disordered eating habits. By refusing to conform to oppressive structures, the narrator systematically detaches herself from the society and culture that scrutinizes women's bodies. On the contrary, Reva sinks deeper into the very toxic culture that controls women through restrictive eating practices and by promoting unhealthy body standards. This regulation of food reflects larger concerns in liquid modernity, where identities must be continually renegotiated and adjusted to changing social pressures.

### **The Body, Consumer Culture, and Liquid Modernity**

The novel, which is set in the early 2000s, is a critique of the consumerist culture prominent during that time and depicts the impact it had on identity formation. The passive intake of drugs, entertainment, and processed food by the narrator is a reflection of the broader cultural void. The author's depiction of consumption in the novel is a reflection of the capitalist culture that commercializes both pleasure and self-destruction through the representation of how food functions both as subsistence and excess.

The protagonist's infrequent binge eating episodes are in stark contrast to her long periods of hunger, which suggests that her connection with food is cyclical and mimics consumerist trends. Bauman's idea of liquid modernity offers another perspective: the uncertainty of modern existence leads to the use of consumption—whether it be food, media, or substances—as a way to deal with the absence of personal or social stability. The narrator's attitude toward food demonstrates this contradiction: she has the means to buy anything she wants, but she does not find enjoyment or satisfaction in eating. Her decision to starve herself can be interpreted as a protest against a society that connects self-worth with material wealth. It also demonstrates the

existential instability that is typical of liquid modernity.

### Food and Female Friendship: Reva's Counterpoint

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, Reva acts as a foil to the narrator's nihilistic detachment. Reva, unlike the narrator, is obsessed with dieting and her body image. She strives hard to meet societal standards of beauty and wealth, conveying traditional anxieties surrounding femininity. Reva's obsession over food and body image extends to comparisons with other women, especially the narrator, of whom she feels envious. She constantly compares herself with other women and assumes that she is constantly being judged by other women when, in fact, she is the one constantly judging other women and disparaging them. In a conversation between the narrator and Reva when they visit a Russian bathhouse, Reva reveals her insecurity, which the protagonist dismisses, "Women are so judgmental. They're always comparing." To which the protagonist replies, "But why do you care? It's not a contest." However, the protagonist fails to understand Reva, who replies back saying, "Yes, it is. You just can't see it because you've always been the winner." (101) This moment captures Reva's struggle with self-worth, which she believes is contained in the food she consumes and in her ideas regarding body image.

Reva's detrimental connection with food and her compulsive regulation of her diet starkly contrast with the narrator's indifference towards her physique and eating practices. Nonetheless, the interactions of both the narrator and Reva with food expose deep-seated worries and insecurities. The narrator withdraws from the world by refusing food, whereas Reva seeks societal affirmation through her eating behaviors. Their contrasting responses to eating illustrate two facets of the same issue: a conflict about autonomy, self-esteem, and control inside a patriarchal culture. From a liquid modern viewpoint, Reva's incessant dieting signifies an effort to achieve stability in an unpredictable environment, but the narrator's self-destruction denotes a complete repudiation of this contemporary instability.

### Conclusion

Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* employs food and self-starvation as potent emblems of control, trauma, and resistance. The narrator's tumultuous relationship with food illustrates her overarching existential disconnection and rejection of consumerism. Through the examination of the protagonist's relationship with food via the theoretical lenses of Unbearable Weight and liquid modernity, Moshfegh scrutinizes the gendered assumptions around the body, sorrow, and agency. By abstaining from eating, the narrator not only renounces nourishment but also the societal frameworks that prescribe how women ought to consume, exist, and conform. The work finally depicts self-starvation as a devastating but rebellious act, highlighting the paradoxes of feminine embodiment in modern writing. *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* examines compulsive eating and body control, contributing to feminist literary studies by highlighting the complex relationships among food, gender, and identity in a liquid modernity context.

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# INHERITED TRAUMA AND MNEMONIC TRANSMISSION: AN ANALYSIS OF GENERATIONAL MEMORY IN JAMIE FORD'S *THE MANY DAUGHTERS OF AFONG MOY*

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## Abstract

*Memory is not a static repository of past events but a dynamic, evolving process that continually redefines our understanding of both personal and social histories. This article examines the complex mechanisms of intergenerational memory transmission in Jamie Ford's novel *The Many Daughters of Afong Moy*, highlighting the encoding, transmission, and reconstruction of traumatic historical experiences across generations of Chinese American women, thereby illustrating the dynamic nature of collective and embodied memory. The study highlights the role of epigenetic memory as a narrative mechanism in Ford's novel, demonstrating how trauma—originating from historical injustices like racism, sexism, and cultural dislocation—is transmitted through familial lines. By examining the protagonist's lineage from Afong Moy in the 1830s to her descendants in near-future contexts, the study illustrates the ways in which memories are inherited, rebuilt, and negotiated across many historical and cultural contexts. The article argues how literary representations can provide critical insights into the multifaceted nature of memory, challenging the traditional understanding of remembrance as a linear, individual cognitive process. It offers an in-depth analysis of how historical trauma reverberates through generations, finally proposing that memory is a fluid, relational phenomenon that transcends temporal and individual boundaries. Memory in Ford's narrative functions as a complex interplay between individual experience, collective historical trauma, and potential genetic transmission.*

**Keywords:** *memory studies, intergenerational trauma, epigenetic memory, cultural trauma, collective memory*

In the 1800s, Chinese migrants made their way into the United States to get away from severe famine, war, and economic hardship in China. In the beginning, immigrants mostly worked in the gold mines but later went on to take agricultural work and jobs in the factory and garment industry. The number of Chinese laborers increased over time, which led to deep anti-Chinese sentiment in the American economy that finally resulted in “The Chinese Exclusion Act”. The act became the first law in the U.S. to ban a particular group of people from entering the country, and this threatened the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Migrants in American society faced discrimination, intolerance, violence, and social exclusion, leading to

significant detrimental impact on their mental health (Schouler-Ocak et al., 2021).

On record, Afong Moy is the first woman to migrate from China to the United States in the 1830s, by traders, and was exhibited as “The Chinese Lady”. The novel “*The Many Daughters of Afong Moy*” follows the lives of descendants of Afong Moy, encapsulating how the struggles resonate across time. The plot follows the lives of descendants of Afong Moy, who are connected through inherited trauma. The central character, Dorothy Moy, is the sixth-generation descendant of Afong Moy, a poet living in Seattle who suffers from depression. She undergoes a treatment to break the cycle of inherited trauma, which further allows her to experience the memories of her ancestors. Through the treatment,



she connects with her own ancestors, including Afong Moy in 1836, Lai King, and others. Dorothy unwinds her family's painful past to search for ways to heal and protect her own daughter from the loop of generational suffering. Memory plays a crucial role in interpreting how the past events haunt the present and cause psychological disturbances. This paper explores the transmission of generational trauma through epigenetic memory and the novel's intersection of historical, scientific, and literary perspectives on inherited suffering.

Trauma is an emotional response caused by severely distressing or disturbing events that are difficult to overcome or cope with and one with long-term negative effects in terms of physical and mental condition. It is perceived as personal experience, yet it extends further than a single person to shaping the lives of future generations. Traumas spanning across multiple generations can be termed as inherited trauma, intergenerational trauma, transgenerational trauma, or multigenerational trauma. The concept of inherited trauma gained more popularity with the context of diasporic narratives. Studies on generational trauma focused largely on the descendants of Holocaust survivors, which later extended to include the issues of the impact of slavery, Vietnam War veterans, and other historical trauma experiences, as stated by the American Psychological Association. Epigenetic memory is a concept where extreme stress, trauma, or external factors can imprint alterations on genes that may be transmitted to subsequent generations, regardless of their direct exposure to those events. For example, research indicates that children of Holocaust survivors (Yehuda et al., 2016) and those affected by famine (Heijmans et al., 2008) show biological changes linked to stress, even when they were not exposed to the actual event.

“Epigenetic memory is the ability to transfer epigenetic information from one generation to the next. Epigenetic information uses patterns of inheritance, which are not determined by DNA sequence alone and may result in an epigenetic memory, which, like genetic memory can be

stably inherited and passed onto progeny through meiosis.” (Migicovsky & Kovalchuk, 2011).

The concept of epigenetic memory was introduced in the field of epigenetics; the term was coined by Conard Waddington in the 1940s. Epigenetics, being a scientific concept, can be explored from the humanities perspective as it serves as a bridge between science, culture, and history. It challenges the traditional notions of memory as solely cognitive or personal, showing that certain experiences can be biologically passed down across generations.

### Transmission of Trauma through Epigenetic Memory

Character	Time Period	Significance
Afong Moy	1836	First Chinese woman in America, displayed in exhibitions.
Lai King Moy	1892	Young girl quarantined in San Francisco during a plague epidemic.
Faye Moy	1942	A nurse in China serving with the Flying Tigers during WWII.
Zoe Moy	1927	A student in England at a famous school with no rules.
Greta Moy	2014	A tech executive working on a unique dating app.
Dorothy Moy	2045	Poet Laureate of Washington State, undergoing experimental treatment for inherited trauma.
Annabel Moy	2065	Dorothy's daughter—future of Moy lineage

Afong Moy's journey in America has always been a journey of exploitation and hardships. Being the first recorded Chinese woman in America, she was objectified as a symbol of curiosity and displayed in exhibitions where people paid to see her bound feet and Chinese customs. After being the spectacle for years, she was abandoned in poverty in her later life, ultimately vanishing from historical records. She endured physical and psychological trauma with deep scars because of forced

displacement, cultural alienation, and systemic racism. Her trauma is not only limited to personal struggles but also a symbol of the collective suffering of the Asian American community due to marginalization.

"Doctors removing her footwear, tossing aside her red lotus shoes... The men ignored the sour smell of dead skin... They measured her head and her facial features."(Ford, 2022)

Lai King, Zoe Moy, and Faye Moy inherit various forms of trauma. Lai King's experience of racial quarantine during a plague epidemic illustrated how systemic xenophobia can manifest in discriminatory public health measures. The quarantine specifically targeted Chinatown, restricting the movement of its residents while allowing white individuals to leave the area (Tansey, 2019).

"She watched as dozens of English sailors were allowed to leave. As well as the white merchants and dockworkers, who slipped beneath the ropes, smiling and sighing with relief. That's when she realized that all the Chinese and Black people were forced to stay."(Ford, 2022)

Zoe struggles against patriarchal control and mental balance as she faces repression and control in a vigilant educational environment. Faye, who works as a nurse during World War II, has to grapple with the horrors of war and gender-based discrimination. Greta, a tech entrepreneur in 2014, struggles due to sexism in the industry, ethical dilemmas, and humongous pressure to succeed in a male-dominated field.

"I'm. Not. A leftover woman!" Greta protested, knowing that was the hideous term for women in China who reached the ripe old age of twenty-seven without being married."(Ford, 2022)

Greta struggles with workplace sexism and misconduct despite achieving professional success, and on the other side, in her personal life, she is pressured by her parents to marry. She finds her mother's matchmaking arrangement mortifying.

Almost all the Moy's have struggled with gender-based violence and discrimination. These

women endure their suffering through resistance, silence, and by creating multiple layers of memory that persist beyond their own lives.

Traditionally, memory narratives are conveyed through oral history, texts, or rituals. This mnemonic transmission of memory in literary narratives has been analyzed by various academicians. Unlike the conventional concepts on memory transmission, epigenetic inheritance suggests that trauma can be passed down genetically to future generations. "Trauma can leave a chemical mark on a person's genes, which can be passed to future generations. This mark doesn't cause genetic mutation, but it does alter the mechanism by which the gene is expressed. This alteration, known as epigenetic, is not genetic in nature." (Erdelyi, 2022). Research on Holocaust survivors, children born to parents who lived during "The Dutch Hunger Winter," and offspring of soldiers in the American Civil War and the communities affected by colonialism, war, and genocide has shown that trauma can be inherited through genetic alterations. Similarly, studies conducted by Dias and Ressler reveal that fear conditioning in mice could be transmitted to offspring through gene alterations.

In the novel, the concept of epigenetic memory eventuates through Dorothy Moy, a poet laureate who struggles with dissociation, extreme depression, and grief that do not originate in her own lived experience. She embodies the culmination of these inherited traumas. She tries to get over that feeling, but nothing helps.

"Dorothy gazed up at the lights. Over the last two decades, she'd taken an alphabet soup of antidepressants, anti-anxiety meds... Nothing had helped."(Ford, 2022)

Dorothy undergoes an experimental treatment to break the loop of inherited trauma to her daughter, exploring the concept of epigenetic memory. The therapy reveals that her struggles mirror those of her ancestors. Through her experience, it is seen that memory is not merely a personal recollection, mnemonic transmission through mediums, but also a bodily inheritance. The transmission occurs not only

through cultural and familial storytelling but also through genetic encoding. The societal implications of epigenetic inheritance are profound. Understanding how trauma is biologically passed down can inform policies and interventions aimed at breaking cycles of intergenerational stress. Studies also show that research into social epigenetics has become more popular in the public sphere, changing how people think about inherited trauma (Dubois & Guaspare, 2020).

*The Many Daughters of Afong Moy* questions the conventional notion of memory as a linear and individualistic process. Instead, memory presented as fluid, relational, and deeply embedded in both personal and collective histories. Memory is often associated with the humanities; the novel merges this perspective with scientific inquiry, particularly through the exploration of epigenetics. Through Dorothy's journey, it is understood that epigenetic memory is not merely a scientific concept but a lived reality, as she experiences emotions and fears not from her own life but those transmitted through genetics. The novel ultimately offers hope—demonstrating that just as pain can be passed down, so too can resilience, understanding, and the possibility of breaking cycles through conscious healing.

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# CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS CONTRAST CONTRADICTION IN *EVENING IS THE WHOLE DAY* BY PREETA SAMARASAN: A DIASPORIC STUDY

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## Abstract

*Fire can be friend and foe as the original saying can be similarly linked to societal norms or codes adored by every person in his incognitive behavioural personality towards other person that matters the most, very few people master over it and succeed in life and its converse are more in number. Here societal norms or codes are governed by class or status of the person in this materialistic real world. Evening Is The Whole Day is a family saga that can be taken as a case study to envision the reader about the importance of being cognitive in class consciousness and its wide contrast in real life. Every character in the novel are hegemonical in nature in some aspects, some character crosses the endurance line and becomes contradictory in that situation, some takes this situation as an opportunity to build the class, and some fails, various crest and trough are seen in this saga. As there is no end to this debate about the topic, one needs to understand the situation and move on as per the requisite.*

**Keywords:** class consciousness, contrast, contradiction, cognitive and hegemony

## About Author

Preeta Samarasan was born in Malaysia and moved to the United States during high school. Her first novel, *Evening Is The Whole Day*, was longlisted for commonwealth writers prize and the orange prize for fiction and won the 2008 association for Asian American studies book award. The novel also won the Hopwood Novel Award while pursuing M.F.A. at the University of Michigan. Her short fiction has won the Asian American writers workshop short story competition and been selected for a PEN/O. Henry prize for her short story, *Birch Memorial*. Her work has been published in *A Public Space*, *Guernica*, *Copper Nickel*, *AGNI*, and other journals. A number of short stories have also appeared in different magazine; "Our House Stands in a City of Flowers" won the Hyphen Asian American short story contest or the Asian American Writers' Workshop/Hyphen short story award in 2007. She lives with her family in the Limousin region of France.

## Introduction

Story is set in a small mining town, Ipoh in northern Malaysia, Samarasan's novel of formation revolves around the lawyer, Raju Rajasekharan, his children, and his poor relatives and neighbours, including Chellam, the unfortunate servant in his home. Raju marries Vasanthi, who is poor and less educated, and his mother, known as "Paati" which means "grandmother" in Tamil, never forgives her son for his decision. Samarasan's novel foregrounds the bullheadedness of class divides and its effects on the cultural identities of gender and race. Whenever conflict arises due to class it always haunted the three generations family as it disintegrates them, but the societal effects of class are also what connects each generation even as it takes them apart. In layman terms, class can divide society, but it can also create cultural continuities that lead to social inequity because it is central to the private, individual process of becoming psychologically mature. Chellam's silence is the real matured silence of a minor subject who finally realises that class norms quest out whose

words are dependable and legible. Her livelihood decision to stay silent is ironical and tragical in nature, as it indicates her transition from childhood to adulthood.

### Plot

Preeta Samarasan's *Evening Is The Whole Day* focused on a wealthy middle class Tamil family, the Raju Rajasekharan, and their domestic helper, Chellam. The Rajasekharans include Paati (Raju's mother), Appa (Raju Rajasekharan), Amma (Vasanthi), their daughters (Uma and Aasha), and their son (Suresh). Story set in Ipoh, Malaysia, from the 1960s to the 1980s, the story is narrated by their six-year-old child, Aasha. The story begins at last phase with the two departures: the eldest girl child, Uma, for New York and Chellam's the servant from the Raju's Big house under tragic circumstances. The novel focuses on the hardship of a nonfunctional family in a developing independent nation faced with its own Socio-political struggles. The family's struggles are perplexed with the challenges in confronting the new nation. Apart from that, the story also points on the middle-class Indians giving differential treatment to the working-class Indians. It also narrates the disdain relationship between Paati and Amma, her daughter-in-law owing to their differences in social status.

### Quotations Related to the Articles

*"Civilisation can be judged by the way it treats its minorities"*

### Mahatma Gandhi

*The sun goes down and the sky reddens, pain grows sharp, light dwindles.*

*Then is evening when jasmine flowers open, the deluded say.*

*But evening is the great brightening dawn when crested cocks crow all through the tall city and evening is the whole day for those without their lovers.*

### Kuruntokai

*Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

Dylan Thomas

### The Family Saga

Samarasan's novel finds out class tensions as a consequence from the haphazard experience of national liberation in Malaya in the postwar period as bildungsroman because the growth of the Raju's family and Chellam's shifting from the rubber estates to the town is set against the birth and development of the postcolonial nation-state. The societal relations of colonial racial diversity now relates as a postcolonial class difference. The novel begins with the departure of Chellam, the servant of the wealthy and dysfunctional Raju Rajasekharan family. Chellam is blamed for various misdeeds, but her dismissal serves as a scapegoat to cover deeper issues within the household. The family lives in the Big House, a crumbling colonial mansion in Ipoh, Malaysia, during the 1980s.

The Raju Rajasekharan's core family consists of:

1. Raju Rajasekharan (Appa): The controlling patriarch who is preoccupied with maintaining his status and authority.
2. Vasanthi (Amma): The quiet and submissive matriarch, resigned to her role in the family and harboring her own secrets.
3. Uma: The eldest daughter, who leaves for college in the United States at the beginning of the novel, signaling a break from the family.
4. Suresh: The only son, who is rebellious and struggles to live up to his father's expectations.
5. Aasha: The youngest daughter, an observant and sensitive child, who becomes the primary lens through which the family's unraveling is viewed.

The narrative dives into the family's history, exposing the events that have shaped their current dysfunction. Raju Rajasekharan rose from humble beginnings, determined to achieve wealth and power. His marriage to Vasanthi is arranged, but their relationship is cold and distant. Vasanthi feels trapped in a loveless marriage, and her resentment grows as she endures Appa's domineering nature. The Big House becomes a symbol of the family's crumbling unity. The once-grand estate is in decay, mirroring the emotional and moral deterioration of its inhabitants. The family's Indian heritage also plays a significant role, as they navigate the racial

and cultural dynamics of post-colonial Malaysia. Uma, the eldest child, is marked by an incident of betrayal when she discovers her father's infidelity (Sadomasochism/molestation) towards her and mother's silent complicity. This realisation prompts her decision to leave the oppressive household for a new life abroad, leaving behind her siblings. Suresh struggles with his own identity and feels the weight of his father's expectations.

He is aware of the family's hypocrisy and tries to rebel, but his efforts are largely futile. Aasha, the youngest, is deeply affected by the family's conflicts. She witnesses everything with the innocent yet insightful perspective of a child, understanding more than she lets on. The novel gradually uncovers dark secrets, including a tragic incident involving Paati, the grandmother, who accidentally causes the death of her husband. This event is covered up but haunts the family, shaping their lives in unspoken ways. Chellam, the servant, serves as a silent witness to much of the family's dysfunction. She is mistreated and scapegoated, reflecting the family's inability to confront their own flaws. Her dismissal is a symbolic act that underscores the family's tendency to blame others for their problems.

Each child depicted in this novel is shown till they reach to maturity, and they finally comprehended the social expectations inherent to racial and class divisions and therefore adopt those behaviours to their class. Chellam finally learns to stay silent when Aasha accused her of grandmother's death, but her realisation is a belated one when compared to the other children in the house. Her silence in the end tells us that she too is an adult, when she becomes aware that class position influences hidden belief in conduct and behaviour. If the bildungsroman involves a progressing momentum toward advancement and maturity, it is a category that tells how one stick to be a minor. To stick to be a minor is to accept the fixed vicinity of class. In the novel's depiction of Chellam, the cursed girl from the rubber-estates, the move toward mental development takes the form of a continuous and unavoidable journey toward understanding how class is a central genre through which human life is firmed. For our politics of resistance to be effective,

it has to first confront the traction class has in our cultures.

Balu(brother of Raju) is the only character in the novel who attempts to cross the endurance class line, but unlike the children, he exhibits a greater cognitive of the risks he takes. On his final visit to the big house family, after two years after Raju sadomasochism his daughter, he finds his mother more aged, under the care of Chellam. Uma is just the shadow of her past and always remain passive in nature in the house. Upon knowing that Chellam receives none of her wages, he devises small task for which he can pay her but warns her to keep it confidential. He recognises that his acts of kindness could be misunderstood by Raju and Chellam's father and jump into belief about Balu's acts of charity are sexually motivated. Acts that do not keep up endurance lines are easily read as unmoral and called for public shaming.

Class lines are frequently crossed by bad behaviour person and owns peril, because they risk expulsion from society. Uma's grandmother remains silent about the molestation in order to keep the family united. In the end, the minor refrain "Not my fault" is transposed into "Not my business." Both deny any responsibility for the family's disintegration, but they also perform the class privilege that separates lower classes from those above them. Balu's "Not my business" re-establishes the class vicinity that set Chellam apart from the other children in the big house. While the thought remains secret and not spoken or shared, Balu is aware that he can take responsibility for another only at the cost of his self-respect within his own social world. Instead, Balu and his mother choose to remain on the tangential part of the family unit rather than destroying it. He leaves the big house and is thinking never to come back again.

### Conclusion

By the end of the novel, the Raju Rajasekharan's family is left fractured and broken. Uma has escaped to America, distancing herself physically and emotionally. Suresh remains trapped in the expectations placed upon him, while Aasha, the youngest, is left to grapple with the family's

unresolved tensions. The Big House, once a symbol of status, continues to decay, embodying the family's moral and emotional collapse. *Evening Is The Whole Day* is a poignant exploration of familial and societal dynamics, weaving themes of class, race, colonialism, and identity into a richly textured narrative. The novel's non-linear structure and evocative prose highlight the weight of the past and its inescapable impact on the present.

Some literary theories related to this novel-

1. **Marxist theory:** False consciousness and ideological control.
2. **Critical pedagogy:** Education's role in shaping consciousness.
3. **Postcolonial theory:** Internalised oppression, cultural hegemony, and subaltern studies.

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# THE NARRATIVE CRAFTSMANSHIP IN ARUN JOSHI'S FICTION

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## Abstract

*Arun Joshi, a prominent Indian novelist, is celebrated for his unique narrative techniques that blend Western and Indian storytelling traditions. His novels often explore the psychological and existential dilemmas of modern individuals. This article examines the narrative techniques employed by Joshi in his novels, focusing on his use of first-person narration, flashbacks, and the integration of myth and reality. By analyzing these techniques, we expansion insight into how Joshi crafts his fascinating narratives.*

**Keywords:** integration, myth and reality, existential crises, depiction, protagonist psych, mysterious path, self- identity existential dilemma.

## Introduction

Joshi's narrative prowess lies in his ability to weave intricate details into a seamless tapestry of storytelling. His keen observational skills and vivid descriptions transport readers into the heart of the scene, making them feel as though they are living the story themselves. Joshi's characters are not just illustrated on a page; they are fully realized individuals with depth and complexity, brought to life through his masterful use of dialogue and inner monologue. His narrative voice is both engaging and authoritative, guiding readers through the plot with a steady hand while leaving room for their own interpretations and emotional responses. This unique blend of precision and empathy is what sets Joshi apart as a storyteller, making his work resonate deeply with audiences.

## Deep Delve of Protagonist's Psych

Arun Joshi frequently employs first-person narration in his novels, such as "The Foreigner" and "The Apprentice". This technique allows readers to delve deeply into the protagonist's psyche, experiencing their thoughts and emotions first-hand. The use of first-person narration creates an intimate connection between the reader and the character, making the narrative more engaging and personal. Arun Joshi's

fiction is a masterclass in narrative craftsmanship, where his storytelling techniques elevate the reader's experience to new heights. His narratives are intricately woven with a deep understanding of human psychology, often exploring themes of existentialism and the human condition. Joshi's characters are not mere participants in his stories; they are complex, multi-dimensional beings whose inner conflicts and journeys resonate profoundly with readers. His use of introspective monologues and vivid descriptions creates a rich, immersive world that invites readers to delve into the minds and emotions of his characters, making each story a deeply personal experience.

Moreover, Joshi's narrative style is marked by a seamless blend of realism and philosophical inquiry. He skillfully balances plot progression with reflective passages, allowing readers to deliberate the larger questions of life alongside the unfolding events. His prose is both elegant and accessible, drawing readers in with its simplicity while delivering profound insights. Joshi's ability to maintain this delicate balance is a testament to his narrative craftsmanship, making his fiction not only engaging but also thought-provoking. Through his meticulous attention to detail and his profound understanding of the human psyche, Arun Joshi has



carved a unique niche in the world of literature, leaving an indelible mark on his readers.

### **Blend of Eastern and Western Philosophy**

Joshi's novels often oscillate between the past and the present, utilizing flashbacks to reveal crucial aspects of the protagonist's history. This technique not only provides context for the character's current actions and decisions but also adds depth to the narrative. By weaving past events into the present storyline, Joshi creates a rich, layered narrative that keeps readers invested in the unfolding story.

### **Integration of Myth and Reality**

One of the distinctive features of Joshi's narrative style is his integration of myth and reality. He blends traditional Indian myths with contemporary settings, creating a unique narrative landscape. This technique allows Joshi to explore universal themes such as identity, spirituality, and the human condition, while also grounding his stories in a distinctly Indian context. The interplay between myth and reality adds a mystical dimension to his novels, enriching the reader's experience.

### **Protagonist Complex Emotional Dimension**

Joshi's narratives are characterized by their psychological depth. He delves into the inner workings of his characters' minds, exploring their fears, desires, and existential crises. This focus on psychological realism makes his characters relatable and their journeys compelling. Joshi's ability to portray complex emotional states and moral dilemmas is a testament to his skill as a storyteller.

### **Conclusion**

Arun Joshi's narrative techniques are integral to the power and appeal of his novels. He uses stream of consciousness technique in his novels, remembering about their past memories, and the integration of myth and reality, combined with a deep psychological insight, creates narratives of both 'The Foreigners' protagonist Sindi Oberoi's thoughts and emotions are presented in a way that emotions are pretended that reflects his sense of alienation and inner turmoil. By examining these techniques, we felt a transcendent approach of a greater appreciation for Joshi's contribution to Indian literature and his ability to capture the complexities of the human experience.

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# CULTURAL ASSIMILATION AND IDENTITY: A POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE ON *THE KITE RUNNER*

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## Abstract

*Cultural assimilation and identity issues are themes that are often explored in postcolonial literature, which presents vividly the complex experiences of an immigrant. This paper analyzes how Khaled Hosseini's novel represents these themes through the lens of Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity. A qualitative analysis of the novel, The Kite Runner, is conducted and it reveals that Hosseini's characters often experience a hybrid identity, which is neither fully assimilated nor entirely disconnected from their roots. This identity creates both conflict and possibility, and it also highlights the complexities of navigating between cultures. This study focuses on the process of identity formation which is shaped as a result of cultural assimilation using the novel of Khaled Hosseini.*

**Keywords:** postcolonialism, hybridity, identity, cultural assimilation

## Introduction

Cultural assimilation is a constantly explored topic in the context of postcolonial literature. The discussion about this topic provides us with an understanding of the plight of the immigrants. It presents us with ways in which characters navigate assimilation process. They neither assimilate nor do they reject it. This leads to formation of an in-between space which Bhabha's calls as the Third Space. This paper is an attempt to comprehend this "Third Space", which gives rise to hybrid identity, which is a blend of two cultures. The first novel written by Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner* serves itself as one of the best books to analyse his portrayal of characters who always struggle with their hybrid identity in a unique way. They grapple with the identities that are formed as a result of assimilation.

## Literature Review

This literature review seeks to provide an overview of the existing research on cultural assimilation and identity in the context of postcolonial literature. This would be attained by examining theoretical

frameworks and it would also identify how Hosseini's work fits into existing discussions of cultural assimilation.

The concept of cultural assimilation its challenges and complexities are discussed in length by Sanjana Reka and Jim Louis Haisler in their paper "Cultural Assimilation: Identities of Second-Generation Indian Americans". This paper also focuses on the supportive measures that can be of aid in the formation of identity of the characters, which is a hybrid one. A similar view is expressed by Kim and Yog Raj Paudel in their study where they analyze the themes of cultural assimilation and identity formation through a postcolonial lens.

The concept of Third Space identity is expressed by Bhabha and is discussed in the paper of Iqbal, Muhammad, Umair Ahmed Khan, and Shozab Ali Raza Abbasi where they provide a brief overview of the novel "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" through a postcolonial lens and also pay attention to cultural assimilation, and the identity crisis faced by the protagonist. The theme of identity is also discussed in the paper written by Matenova Ayjamal. He offers

a poignant reflection on the conditions of humans and how they navigate the identity that is formed as a result of cultural assimilation.

The complexities of cultural assimilation are discussed by Fadhila Maghfirotul Ula and Zuhurul Anam in their paper where they explore the themes of multiculturalism specifically from the context of Amir and Hassan who belong to different ethnicities.

### Theoretical Framework

Homi Bhabha's theory of Hybridity is adopted in order to examine the themes of cultural assimilation and identity struggles of Hosseini's characters. Hybridity is one of the main components of postcolonial theory since it explores how characters form new identities in the 'in-between' spaces of different cultures. This theory provides a lens to analyze how characters, caught between different cultures, construct hybrid identities that challenge ideas of belonging to a singular culture.

Hybridity refers to the blending of several cultures and identities thereby forming a new culture. According to this theory identity is fluid as it keeps changing and is never fixed. Such an identity carries the traits of both the native and migrant culture.

The concept of Third Space is a unique space where cultures negotiate and new hybrid identities are formed, and this allows cultural innovation. It is a space where both the cultures interact and the marginalized find their voice and they are able to express themselves freely without any form of hindrance.

The paper examines how characters reflect the complexities of hybrid identities by applying this theory. The nature of identities which is ever-changing and is never constant and ever adoptive, resonates with Bhabha's view that cultural identity is never fixed but constantly negotiated. This study seeks to unravel the ways in which Hosseini's characters reflect tension between cultural assimilation and self-identity, and thereby offer new insights into the complexities of cultural hybridity in postcolonial literature.

### Methodology

The approach that this paper makes use of is a qualitative one which focuses on textual analysis of the novel. In order to find the ways in which characters negotiate their identity a close reading of the text is important. Thematic analysis, a technique to identify and understand recurring themes in a text, is employed for research. The novel selected for analysis is *The Kite Runner*. Passages from the novels were analysed to understand representations of hybrid identities, and focused on internal struggles and external pressures experienced by the characters. Bhabha's theory of Hybridity is used for the thematic analysis. The concept of 'Third Space' is utilized to understand characters' actions and internal struggles.

### Discussion

The protagonist, Amir, struggles with his hybrid identity in several ways throughout the novel. His stay in Afghanistan from his childhood shapes his Afghan identity as a Pashtun. He fully believes in the superiority of his ethnicity, and that's why he comments about Hassan thus, "The curious thing was, I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either. Not in the usual sense, anyhow..... In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara" (pp. 24). He takes the liberty of calling Hassan an "imbecile" as he is ignorant of the words that appeared in the story. He is considered with respect among his friends because of this identity, and he is never being picked at by anyone. Though he and Hassan play and spend much of their time together, Hassan always refers to him as "Amir agha". We find several instances of this cultural divide even in the conversation of the other people such as Ali, Hassan's father, Rahim Khan, Baba's friend, and the classmates of Amir.

On the other hand, his loyal servant and friend, a Hazara, is always looked down upon and is called names. We get a glimpse of this mistreatment in the second chapter of the novel, when a soldier cheekily states abusive things about his mother thus, "You! The Hazara! Look at me when I'm talking to you!.....I knew your mother, did you know that? I

know her real good. I took her from behind by that creek over there” (pp.7).

However, when Amir migrates to US, he assimilates into American culture when he speaks English with fluency. He enters a space where people gave importance to personal achievements and that's what defined success of an individual rather than one's ethnicity as in Afghanistan. He was no longer judged and respected just because he was a Pashtun and Baba's son. In US they hardly know each other's background and so are at a liberty to adopt western culture and values. This is what Amir does, when he happily forgets his Afghani customs and courts Soraya even before getting married to her. He goes to her house more often and tries to win her over by sharing his stories. He shuns his Afghani values and does a commendable act when he is apprised of Soraya's elopement with a man. His feelings towards her remain unchanged and thus a strong bond ensues between the two. This remarkable gesture from Amir renders Soraya speechless and she remains ever-loyal to him.

Lastly, Amir's attempt to rescue Sohrab from the clutches of Taliban rulers is an evidence of the fact that he has not completely forgotten his roots. He travels to Afghanistan to accomplish the task of bring his friend's son back, and by doing so he wishes to overcome the guilt that haunts him like a nightmare. His identity is shaped here as well. He neither fully assimilates nor negotiates his identity. He is an excellent example of the effects of cultural assimilation on identity.

Baba nicknamed as “Toophan agha” is known for his Pashtun ethnicity and his strong nature is always looked up to as Rahim Khan states, “drop the devil to his knees begging for mercy” (pp. 12-13). His is a powerful and respected figure in Afghanistan but when he migrates to US he works at a gas station to earn a living. He loses his wealth, status and he is subjected to a lot of struggles. He resists assimilation initially unlike Amir, and clings to his Afghan traditions and customs. When is sick with cancer he rejects government aid as he thinks it's below his dignity to accept such assistance.

Amir, in Afghanistan, happens to be an avid reader and a writer of short stories, and he always craves for attention from his father, Baba, who always considers show of strength and standing up for oneself the best qualities one would possess, considers him unworthy of his attention. His aversion towards Amir's scholarly qualities is quite evident in these lines, “That same night, I wrote my first short story..... I climbed the stairs and walked into Baba's smoking room..... told him I' d written a story... conveyed more than a feigned interest. “Well, that's very good, isn't it?” he said...and didn't offer to read” (pp. 29-30). He changes his views about such qualities when they migrate to US. He allows Amir to pursue his passion and supports him wholeheartedly without any reservations.

Souraya exhibits hybrid identity throughout the novel in her love of freedom. Her elopement earlier reveals her western identity that she has assimilated into and her cultural identity is obvious when she is made to confirm to the ways of her people. She is expected to act according to the Afghan values and customs.

## Conclusion

Thus the novel provides us with instances where characters exhibit traits of identity formation that is shaped as a result of cultural assimilation. It is quite obvious from the study that the struggle between two worlds makes a few characters consider as a loss of identity while others take it in their stride, face the odds and form a hybrid identity which emerges due to the Third Space that's created. The novel represent the struggles and conflicts in a way that make us understand the complex nature of cultural assimilation and also makes us realize that identity is always fluid.

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# UNEARTHING THE FEMALE VOICE IN SELECT POEMS OF ANNE BRADSTREET

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## Abstract

*This paper explores Anne Bradstreet's role as a proto-feminist voice in the patriarchal Puritan age, a time when women were confined to domestic roles, denied education, and excluded from public and intellectual life. Despite these constraints, Bradstreet's poetry articulates a critique of gender inequality and a desire for women's empowerment. The central question driving this study is how Bradstreet's work interrogates the prescribed roles of women and advocates for their recognition as intellectual equals. The rationale for this analysis lies in the enduring relevance of Bradstreet's critique, offering insights into historical and contemporary feminist struggles. The study focuses on three of Bradstreet's significant works: The Prologue, In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory, and To Her Father with Some Verses. Employing literary analysis and participatory theory as methodological approaches, the paper examines Bradstreet's use of subtle rhetoric, historical references, and personal experiences to challenge societal norms. Findings indicate that Bradstreet's works emphasize women's intellectual potential, critique their economic dependence, and highlight examples of female leadership to inspire empowerment. This study tries to investigate how Bradstreet's poetry not only reflects the gender dynamics of her time but also acts as a pioneering effort to reimagine women's roles in literature and society and highlights her significant contributions, offering a historical foundation for feminist discourse and inspiring continued advocacy for gender equality in political, social, and economic spheres even in modern era.*

**Keywords:** puritan society, proto-feminist literature, gender roles, women's empowerment, literary self-identity, participatory theory, feminist poetics, intellectual equality, economic autonomy, female leadership, patriarchal critique

In the Puritan society, women were assigned the roles of farmers, taking care of their families, responsible for looking after their husbands, and guiding the Puritan children. According to the Puritan ideologies women were considered to be inferior to men and were not allowed to vote. Education was restricted to women of this age. Despite all the restrictions and criticisms, Anne Bradstreet emerged as a Proto-feminist who protested against patriarchy and yearned for recognition of 'women power' and empowerment of women of her age. Anne Breaking the stereotypical ideas, Bradstreet's longing for empowerment, self, and self-identity runs through in most of her poems. In this paper, Bradstreet's poems "The Prologue", "In

Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory" and "To Her Father with Some Verses" are taken for scrutiny.

Bradstreet used the pen to demonstrate how the Puritan age suppressed women and limited their potential only to household work like sewing. Adrienne Rich points out in her forward, "Anne Bradstreet was the first non-didactic American poet, the first to give an embodiment to American nature, the first in whom personal intention appears to precede Puritan dogma as an impulse to the verse" (*William and Mary Quarterly*, 4). As Anne Bradstreet lived in the difficult time of women with no choices she questioned inequality and demanded recognition in a subtle way. "I am obnoxious to each

carping tongue/ Who says my hand a needle better fits.” (Prologue, 25-26) reflects an appeal that women long for recognition to prove their literary merit in a society where women were treated unequally. These lines also interrogate the preconceived and predetermined role of women and the next line seeks power over the familial and domestic space to be a writer in the literary circle, though she “If what I do prove well, it won’t advance/ They’ll say it’s stolen, or else it was by chance”(Prologue, 29-30). Usage of Italics in the words, ‘Obnoxious’ and ‘Carping tongue’ adds strength to the point. The poet mirrors the gender-based barriers and focuses on the suppression of women’s expression in the literary circle. Despite that, she tries to break the masculinized norms in the lines “It is but vain unjustly to wage war,/ Men can do best, and women know it well.”(Prologue, 39-40).

In her poem “In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory” the poet celebrates the excellence of Queen Elizabeth who stood as an example for the women who seek self-identity by breaking the shackles of the political arena and disproving the misogynistic ideas of anti-feminists. “So great’s thy glory, and thine excellence,/ The sound thereof raps every human sense.”(In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory, 5-6) exemplifies the achievements of this Phoenix Queen. In “Prologue” she expresses her thirst for constructing her ‘own self’ in the literary circle but is mocked by the male poets “If what I do prove well, it won’t advance,/They’ll say it’s stol’n, or else it was by chance.” (Prologue, 29-30). Queen Elizabeth created her own identity and even men glorified and acknowledged her as a ‘great ruler’. “That men account it no impiety/To say thou wert a fleshly Deity.”(In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory, 7-8). Through these lines, quoting the outstanding leadership of Queen Elizabeth, the poet gives a clarion call for women that they can also move to higher spheres. Her historical knowledge further widens to quote other female leaders to portray the

worth of women “Nay Masculines, you have thus tax’d us long,/But she, though dead, will vindicate our wrong. ( In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory, 97-98).

According to Nelson and Wright’s ‘Participatory Theory’, “the leaders take input from one particular member to motivate others in encouraging others’ participation and contribution.” (*Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*, 43). When the poem “ In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory) is analysed through the lens of ‘Participatory Theory’ it can be noted that traits of Queen Elizabeth like ‘Self-confidence, ‘Courage’ and ‘Decision-making Making’ are used as the inputs to sculpt herself and motivate other women. “She hath wip’d off th’ aspersion of her Sex,/That women wisdom lack to play the Rex.” ( In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory, 29-30). The belief of the Puritan age that women’s identities like fragile and ‘meant for household work’ has been broken by Queen Elizabeth. By admiring the leadership qualities of Queen Elizabeth, Anne Bradstreet tries to showcase the hidden talents and administrative power of women. “Was ever people better rul’d than hers?/Was ever Land more happy, freed from stirs?” (In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory, 41-42) mirrors her outstanding and unequivocal leadership of the queen and her success in foreign policies. The qualities that were associated only with males have been excelled by the queen. Queen Elizabeth has been taken as a representative of ‘women power’ by which the poet subtly informs society that women can perform equally and more than their male counterparts.

By thrashing the misconception of women’s identities, Anne Bradstreet projects the powerful women leader and mentions her as ‘Phoenix’. “She was a Phoenix Queen, so shall she be,/Her ashes not reviv’d more Phoenix she.” (In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth of Happy

Memory, 89-90). Queen Elizabeth's longevity and uniqueness have made her Phoenix queen and the writers' words will make her eternal. With the eternal elegiac lines, Anne Bradstreet carved her own identity in the period when the voices of women were restricted.

The silenced voices of the Puritan age have been reconceptualised with a potential strategy by Anne Bradstreet. In the period when women were considered inferior and forbidden from education, Anne Bradstreet's father Thomas Dudley encouraged her to be educated and cherished her intelligence, and that made her pen this poem "To Her Father with Some Verses", expressing her sense of gratitude. Economic independence was completely constrained to the women of the Puritan age. Anne Bradstreet has created her own unique identity by adding economic flavor to the lines of her poem "To Her Father with Some Verses". "Such is my bond, none can discharge but I,/Yet paying is not paid until I die." (To Her Father with Some Verses, 13-14) speaks about the credit and debit of life by which the poet tries to repay her debts. The real honor that the daughter can bring to her father is building self-esteem that comprises self-worth and self-image. Through these lines "Who can of right better demand the same/Than may your worthy self from whom it came?" (To Her Father with Some Verses, 3-4), the poet unveils her thirst for empowerment by bringing up her self-worth, one of the empowerment strategies that has been adopted from her father.

"Literature is the mirror of the society". Literature produced in every age reflects the condition of that particular period. On that scale, the works written in the Puritan age, highlight the 'Literature for men and by men'. The Puritan age lacked the representation of women writers and Anne Bradstreet emerged as the first woman poet who expressed her longing for her own identity. Though women writers could equally compete with male writers, the success of the women writers was considered as mere fortune. "If what I do prove well, it won't advance,/They'll say it's stol'n, or else it was by chance. (Prologue 29-30).

Carruth, M. C. in her work *Flesh and the Spirit: The Female Subject and the Body in the Spiritual Autobiographies of Anne Hutchinson, Anne Bradstreet, and Mary Rowlandson*. says

This suppression of the self, achieved by the regulation of reason and by the exercise of the will, corresponded to the Puritans' distrust of difference--of idiosyncrasies in feelings and perceptions that may have been suspected as Antinomian-- and to their simultaneous effort to narrate a life that is representative, and not individual. (27)

Anne Bradstreet identified herself to be a boundary-breaking artist who sought to redress the imbalance in the field of art and literature. It has been identified that her works surpass the male-dominated barrier to reframe the representation of women writers. As Reid asserts, Bradstreet may wield a needle rather than a sword, but her needle is a weapon. She needles her male audience while patronizing their insecurities (*The New England Quarterly*, 17) "Let Greeks be Greeks, and Women what they are." (Prologue 37) reflects that the poet compares the writing potential to Greek, the literature known for its supreme quality. Greece is the origin of both comedy and tragedy. Further in Greek literature women were identified as inferior beings and were portrayed with negative characterization. *Euripides* Medea expresses the male poets' bent to depict women in a negative manner. The comparison of Greek can be deconstructed in that with the positive approach towards female passion the poet makes a strong appeal to the male-dominated society to award some acknowledgement. "Preeminence in all and each is yours;/Yet grant some small acknowledgment of ours." (Prologue 41-42).

Bradstreet vents out her suppressed feeling through the words 'Broken string', 'Striving pain', and 'Wounded brain'. I notice that the poet puts the pain aside and uses writing as a vehicle as she believes "Art can do much...(Prologue, 19)". It is observed that this poem is a literary imprint that demands the recognition of women writers. Language, being a dynamic form of expression she



records her strong voice, "Let Greeks be Greeks, and women what they are" (Prologue,36). Smith rightly points out, "Her poetry is "private" – concerned with self-expression, private emotion, and subversive themes." (*The Eagle Feather*,18). Her voice against patriarchy and the need for social transformation is reflected in the line that men consider they are 'Calliope's own child'. In a lower but assertive voice, she talks of the empowerment and self-identity of women. In the reference, I pinpoint the Greek tongue that lisped first but was fluent as Demosthenes, the great statesman, and orator. Like Demosthenes who overcame a speech impediment, Bradstreet too longs to overcome the hurdles that restrict her literary voice.

Anne Bradstreet strives for her identity with the projection of the suppressed voice, "Mongst hundred Hecatombs of roaring Verse, /'Mine bleating stands before thy royal Hearse." (In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth,11-12). She projects that society is bound up by the patriarchal normative universe and curtails pain and suppression with her powerful words to achieve equal status for the victimized women - "Nay Masculines, you have thus tax'd us long,/But she, though dead, will vindicate our wrong. (In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth, 97-98). In the poem "In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth", Anne Bradstreet highlights how women were underestimated but proved their 'self'. "She hath wip'd off th' aspersion of her Sex,/That women wisdom lack to play the Rex." (In Memory of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth, 29-30), she depicts the 'Phoenix Queen', Elizabeth in winning the men's world.

The poet's reference in "Prologue" Guillaume du Bartas, the French Protestant Poet who has been admired for his Encyclopedic writing draws attention more toward her yearning for self-identity. Her knowledge of world literature is really astonishing and it is remarkable to read about her envious desire to prove herself like Bartas. Unlike the male poets who could not appreciate the writings of female wits but acknowledged it as 'Stolen' or 'By Chance',

Anne Bradstreet welcomes the writings of men with 'wondering eyes'. Her literary references in " In Memory of High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth" like 'Spencer', 'Camden', 'Eliza', 'Olymp'ade', 'Lisbon's Wall' and 'Don Anthony' in Italics highlight her wide knowledge of world literature. Usage of the financial and trade words like 'worth', 'sum', 'amount', 'pay', 'bond' 'payment', and 'debt' in her poem "To Her Father with Some Verses" reflects her thirst for identity in the financial world – "My stock's so small I know not how to pay,/My bond remains in force unto this day;" (To Her Father with Some Verses, 7-8). Constituting own's own self needs economic independence and Anne Bradstreet tries to expose her economic liberty in her words. It can be visualized that she strongly believed that women too could produce masterpieces in literature.

Her strong knowledge of Greek mythology is reflected in various lines of the poem. Her poems can be considered a psychological exploration of women's condition at her age and a subtle demand for acknowledgment of women writers. Her poems are the catalyst to strengthen women's capacity not only in the Puritan age but even in this digital era. The plea for recognition of women started Centuries ago and still continues with various waves of feminism. It is heart-breaking that the voice against 'being silenced' observed many centuries back, continues with various nomenclatures such as Black feminism, Cultural feminism, Radical feminism, Digital feminism, Neuro feminism, and so on. Anne Bradstreet's poems stand the test of time in empowering women in political, social, financial, and personal components.

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# ENHANCING EDUCATION: THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING PRACTICES

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## Abstract

*The integration of technology in education has transformed teaching methodologies worldwide. This paper explores the effect of technology on teaching practices, focusing on its role in enhancing engagement, personalizing learning experiences, and expanding educational access. Reviewing current literature and examples from various academic settings, this paper examines how technology supports differentiated instruction, facilitates collaborative learning environments, and prepares students for a digital future. It discusses the challenges and opportunities associated with technology adoption in classrooms, emphasizing the need for effective integration strategies and teacher professional development. This paper aims to provide visions into the evolving teaching landscape with technology and its implications for educators, students, and educational stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** *teaching, learning, technology, practice*

## Introduction

The integration of technology into educational practices has revolutionized teaching methodologies across the globe recently. This transformation is a mark of the widespread adoption of digital tools and platforms that enhance the learning experience of both educators and students. Technology in education encompasses various innovations, from interactive whiteboards and digital textbooks to sophisticated learning management systems and virtual reality simulations. The tools used supports traditional teaching methods and also facilitate teachers to have a more dynamic and engaging classroom interactions.

## Enhanced Engagement and Interaction

Enhanced engagement and interaction through technology in education have revolutionized traditional teaching methods, offering dynamic tools that enrich the learning experience. Interactive learning tools like smartboards and multimedia presentations have transformed classrooms by allowing educators to present information in a visual way. These tools enable teachers to integrate videos, animations, and interactive elements into their lessons, making abstract concepts more accessible

and engaging for students. The ability to manipulate content in real-time encourages active participation and deeper understanding among learners, fostering a more immersive educational experience.

Educational apps and games incorporate gamification elements such as points, badges, and leader boards to motivate students and enhance engagement. These digital tools make learning more enjoyable and also encourage students to take ownership of their learning journey by setting goals and tracking their progress. By providing immediate feedback on quizzes and assignments, technology enables students to assess their understanding instantly. It also helps them to identify the areas for improvement, and adjust their learning strategies accordingly. This personalized feedback mechanism empowers students to learn independently and enhances their overall academic performance.

Virtual simulations and online laboratories offer students more opportunities to conduct experiments and understand complex concepts in a virtual environment. For subjects like Science and Engineering, where hands-on experimentation may be limited, these simulations provide valuable practical experience. Similarly, virtual field trips and

tours leverage technologies, like Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) to transport students to different environments and historical settings. These immersive experiences deepen students' understanding by offering realistic simulations and interactive exploration opportunities which are otherwise inaccessible in traditional classrooms.

### **Collaborative Learning Opportunities**

Collaborative learning platforms namely Online discussion forums and video conferencing tools facilitate communication and interaction among students and educators. These platforms support asynchronous learning, by allowing the students to engage in ongoing dialogue, peer-to-peer learning, and collaborative projects beyond the confines of the classroom. Video conferencing tools enable real-time interaction with guest speakers, subject matter experts, and industry professionals, enriching the learning experience with diverse perspectives and insights.

Adaptive learning technologies further personalize the learning experience by adjusting learning pathways based on individual student progress and preferences. These technologies use algorithms to tailor content delivery, provide additional support where needed, and offer targeted resources to address specific learning gaps. By catering to the unique needs of each student, adaptive learning technologies enhance engagement, improve retention rates, and promote deeper learning outcomes.

### **Accessibility and Inclusivity**

Accessibility and inclusivity in education have been significantly promoted through the integration of technology. It ensures that all the students, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have equal access to learning resources and opportunities.

Firstly, digital resources such as eBooks, Online textbooks, and educational websites are designed with accessibility features that cater to diverse learning needs. For instance, text-to-speech functionality, helps students with visual impairments

by converting text into audio. Whereas adjustable font sizes and high-contrast themes benefit those students who have reading difficulties. These features not only make educational content more accessible but also empower students to engage with learning materials independently.

Assistive technologies play an important role in enhancing accessibility. For example, Screen readers enable individuals with visual impairments to access and navigate digital content easily. While voice recognition software allows students with motor disabilities to control devices and input text using voice commands. Furthermore, alternative input devices such as adaptive keyboards and switches accommodate students who may have difficulty using traditional keyboards or touchscreens, ensuring their active participation in digital learning activities.

Technology also facilitates remote learning, which has become increasingly important in providing flexible access to education. Online courses and virtual learning environments enable students to attend classes from anywhere. It helps in breaking down geographical barriers and expanding educational opportunities for those in rural or underserved areas. Synchronous learning, help students participate in real-time classes via video conferencing, and asynchronous learning, allows self-paced study, cater to diverse schedules and learning preferences.

Moreover, adaptive learning platforms employ algorithms to personalize learning experiences based on individual student needs and learning styles. These platforms adapt content presentation, provide immediate feedback on assignments, and recommend supplementary resources to support student learning and achievement. By facilitating educational experiences to the unique requirements of each learner, technology promotes inclusivity by fostering a supportive environment where all students can thrive academically.

Social inclusion is also facilitated through technology-enabled communication tools such as online discussion forums, collaborative platforms, and video conferencing. These tools encourage

interaction and collaboration among students of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and geographical locations. They support peer learning, group projects, and cultural exchange, fostering a sense of community and belonging within the educational environment.

Addressing the digital divide is another critical aspect of promoting inclusivity in education. Initiatives that provide access to devices, internet connectivity, and digital literacy training help bridge the gap between students who have access to technology and those who do not. By ensuring equitable access to technology resources, educational institutions can empower all students to participate fully in digital learning experiences and prepare them for success in an increasingly digital world.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of technology in teaching practices represents a transformative shift in

education. By enhancing engagement, personalizing learning experiences, and expanding educational access, technology empowers educators to meet the diverse needs of today's learners. However, successful implementation requires careful consideration of infrastructure, access, and professional development. As technology continues to evolve, so too must educational practices, ensuring that students are prepared to thrive in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

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