



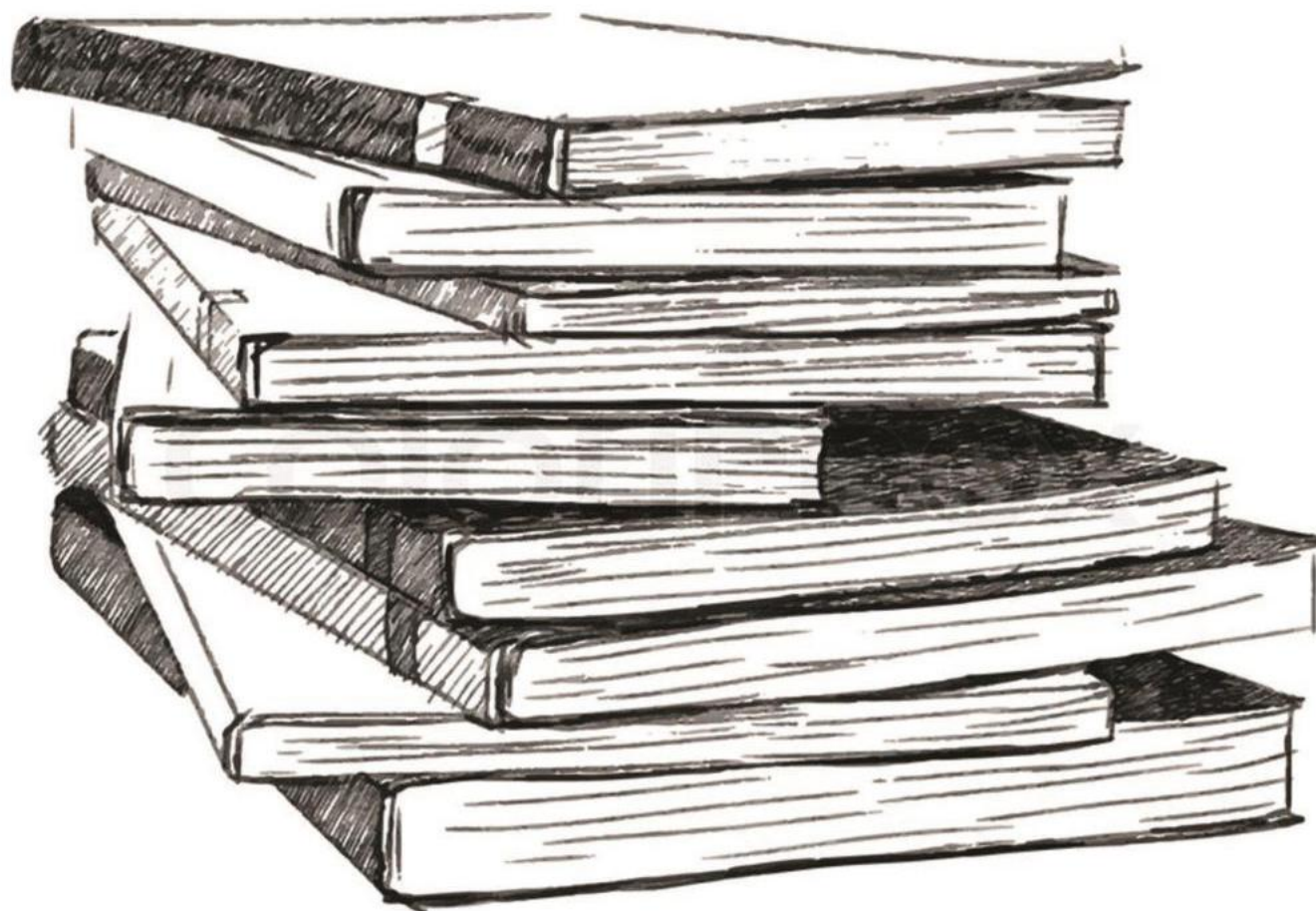
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FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for being so committed to scholarly excellence.

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Mirror of Violence: A Cross-Cultural Exploration of Behaviour Through the Minds of Alex and Baby

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Abstract— Grounded in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, this article particularly focuses on analysing the central characters, Alex and Baby, from Stanley Kubrick's classic film 'A Clockwork Orange' (1972) and the 1985 Malayalam movie 'Irakal' respectively. These two films are set in two completely different cultural and familial backgrounds. While Baby comes from an isolated village in Kerala, from a wealthy family, Alex is presented as a character who lives with his parents in a block of flats in a dystopian England. The study seeks to elucidate the fundamental assertion that human behaviour, far from being a product of innate predispositions alone, is profoundly malleable and subject to the pervasive influence of external forces. It aims to uncover the universal principles governing human behaviour, which go beyond geographic boundaries, by looking at behavioural in Western and Eastern cultural contexts using the medium of film. Films act as texts that can be studied and read to learn about social conventions, cultural trends, and shared concerns. Whether on purpose or accidentally, filmmakers incorporate such social commentaries into their works and thereby films act as an effective tool for learning about and comprehending the people and the world around us. Therefore, we can learn more about human behaviour, varied emotions, and personality traits by analysing film characters, which enables us to explore more philosophical sides of the human mind.



Keywords— aggressive behaviour, dysfunctional family, social cognitive theory, social conditioning, violence.

I. INTRODUCTION

Albert Bandura, a Canadian-American psychologist, in one of his most celebrated works *Social Learning Theory*, gives a 'unified theoretical framework for analyzing human thought and behavior' (Bandura vi). Social learning theory points out the undeniable roles that vicarious, symbolic, and self-regulatory processes play in psychological functioning. Bandura emphasises that human thought, affect, and behaviour can be remarkably influenced by observation, as well as by direct experience. Secondly, the distinct capacity of human beings to use symbols leads them to represent actions and to analyse their conscious experience. This symbolic function extended the range of techniques for analysing their thought and the mechanisms

by which these thoughts regulate action. The third distinguishing feature of social learning theory is the fundamental role it assigns to the self-regulatory processes. According to the self-regulatory process, people are not mere reactors to external influences. Rather, they consciously select, classify, and convert the stimuli that impinge upon them.

The 1985 film *Irakal*, which translates to "Victims," written and directed by the phenomenal maestro K. G. George is a Malayalam psychological thriller. The plot revolves around a web of criminal activity and a dysfunctional family. Baby's portrayal in the film offers a rich tapestry of emotions, conflicts, and psychological nuances. He carries a red wire loop with him right from the

beginning of the film, which he uses to kill those he suspects as his enemies. The multifaceted behavioural patterns exhibited by him throughout this tumultuous narrative underscore the profound influence exerted by cultural and societal norms on individual actions and decisions.

On the other hand, it is worth noting the enduring impact of Stanley Kubrick's influential movie, *A Clockwork Orange*, which debuted in 1971, over five decades ago, adapted from Anthony Burgess's novel of the same name. Malcolm McDowell's depiction of Alex DeLarge as a character exuding extreme violence is a key focal point for delving into complex questions. As the story unfolds, Alex's hedonistic desires, the consequences of his behaviour, and the societal efforts to control his unpredictable nature all come together to paint a grim picture of a world filled with corruption and moral decline.

Considering these characters, it becomes clearer that where novel forms of behaviour can be conveyed effectively only by social cues, modelling is an indispensable aspect of learning. When presented with a variety of models, observers seldom model their behaviour solely after one particular source, nor do they take on all the characteristics of even their favourite models. Instead, observers create new amalgams that are distinct from the constituent parts by merging elements of multiple models. In a thorough analysis of the effects of external factors on the behaviour of the characters in question, a deep exploration of the complicated interplay between individual actions and external influences will illuminate a compelling argument for the considerable impact of external stimuli on behavioural patterns. Therefore, contrary to popular assumption, we can say that modelling can lead to the emergence of novel patterns.

From the Social learning perspective, psychological functioning is a continuous reciprocal interaction between personal, behavioural, and environmental determinants. The term reciprocal is used in the sense of mutual action between events rather than in the narrower meaning of similar or opposite counterreactions (Bandura, 1977, p.199).

In addition, firsthand experience encouraged the creation of observational paradigms for research on the influence of socially mediated experience. Because of our remarkable ability to employ symbols, humans can plan, create, envision, analyse their conscious experiences, connect with others at any distance, in time or space, and take action with foresight. The field of methods for studying thinking and the processes by which thought controls behaviour was broadened by the renewed emphasis on symbolic functions. One of the characteristics that sets

social learning theory apart is the importance it places on self-regulation mechanisms. People are more than just passive recipients of outside forces. They choose, arrange, and modify the stimuli that affect them. They have some control over their behaviour through self-created incentives and penalties.

It is evident that the characters Alex and Baby each embody distinct qualities and motivations in their approach to violence and society. Both of them stand out from other commonly found characters as they offer a comprehensive dive into their familial and societal backgrounds. Their behaviours, although both centred around the act of killing, stem from very different origins and avenues of expression. The film *Irakal* portrays Baby's character as a result of a troubled upbringing and a dysfunctional family setting. This has significantly influenced his inclination towards violence and conduct. The absence of consequences for his violent behaviour only strengthens and continues to fuel his tendency towards violence. On the contrary, Alex from *A Clockwork Orange* offers a distinct view on criminal behaviour. His behaviour is depicted as a reaction to the oppressive and dehumanising environment he lives in. Alex's violent actions are portrayed as a rebellious response to the oppressive and dictatorial aspects of his surroundings when viewed through a critical societal perspective.

II. BABY: A 'VICTIM' OF SOCIAL CONDITIONING

In the Malayalam psychological thriller *Irakal* (The Victims), viewers come across the mysterious and complex character of Baby, expertly portrayed by the talented actor Ganesh Kumar. Using Bandura's social cognitive theory to examine Baby's character enables a thorough analysis of how his actions, individual characteristics, and surroundings all influence his development throughout the story. By examining Baby's behaviours, reasons, and reactions we can discover the hidden forces influencing his choices and decipher the complexities of his character development. K G George has masterfully added different layers to each character surrounding Baby.

Violence was there in the films of K G George as an undercurrent. It is not an explicit portrayal of violence but a subtle way of expression. Most of his characters are from the social situation where they face denial of justice. The situation entrapped them and has made them arrogant inside and violent outside (Smitha & Balasubramaniam, 2021).

The family environment within Baby's household is characterised by toxicity and oppression, primarily attributable to the authoritarian demeanour of his father, the submissive disposition of his mother, and the indifferent attitudes of the siblings. These factors collectively contribute to Baby's psychological distress. Furthermore, the absence of a nurturing and supportive atmosphere exacerbates his mental health issues. The film's socio-economic setting, encompassing the family's prosperity and societal expectations, exerts a formative influence on Baby's perceptions and conduct.

Mathews, Baby's father, a rubber mogul, uses bribery to get around the underworld and amasses his fortune through criminal businesses, including marijuana and bootlegging. The role played by Thilakan is portrayed as a highly astute and commanding figure, carefully employing his intelligence and perceptiveness to assert control. His outlook is imbued with entrenched traditional patriarchal values, reflecting his firm adherence to established principles of male authority and dominance. He consistently exhibits minimal emotional warmth or vulnerability, often engaging in the suppression of softer emotions to uphold control and authority. His main driving force is centred around maintaining the social standing and financial prosperity of his family, sometimes prioritising these goals over the personal welfare of individual family members.

Baby experienced cognitive dissonance, confusion, and profound despair due to the constant pressure from his father's expectations and lack of emotional support from his mother. His emotional suffering increased as he tried to balance his dreams with his family's needs, resulting in public outbursts of aggression and unpredictability. Caught in a tangled web of internal conflicts and negative thought patterns, he struggles with the lasting impact of his authoritarian father's dominant presence and his passive mother's inability to provide a strong counterbalance. These influences have contributed to the complex mesh of emotions and beliefs he recurrently grapples with. Not only Baby but all four children of Mathews are dealing with their own varied set of challenges.

In the case of social behaviour, children within the same family may develop dissimilar personality characteristics by drawing upon different parental and sibling attributes. Successive modelling, in which observers later serve as sources of behaviour for new members, would most likely produce a gradual imitative evolution of new patterns bearing little resemblance to those exhibited by the original models. In homogeneous

cultures, where all models display similar styles of behavior, behavior may undergo little or no change throughout a series of successive models. It is diversity in modelling that fosters behavioural innovation (Bandura, 1977, p. 48).

The family's interests are forcefully enforced by his eldest son, Koshy, who actively participates in criminal activities. He is as ambitious and short-tempered as his father, willing to take risks for mere profit. The second son, Sunny, struggles to escape his father's control but lacks the motivation to do it since he is stuck in a vicious cycle of hatred and dependency. He is entrapped in alcoholism but wants to move to the city with his wife to start a business. Comparatively, he is the only character who stands for justice and questions the wrongdoings happening within his family. The only daughter, Annie, is caught in a tumultuous marriage with Andrews and often returns to her home after fights. Unknown to her father and brothers, who hold Andrews responsible for their marital woes, Annie, enjoys a carefree life. Disobeying her marriage to Andrews, she uses her family strife as a pretext for her extramarital affair with Mathews' goon, Unnunni.

Lastly, there's Baby, the youngest of the siblings. But he is more of a criminal. He has a violent streak and murderous thoughts, which are made worse by drug abuse and social disengagement. Baby goes from abusing a classmate to killing Annie's lover, Unnunni, and then, driven by jealousy, kills his lover Nirmala's fiancé, Balan. Baby tries to kill his companion Raghavan as his mental state worsens, but he is caught, identified, and denounced by the police. In a heartbreaking conclusion that highlights the family's blindness to Baby's mental decline, Baby shoots Koshy in the final confrontation before being slain by his father, Mathews. The story skilfully depicts the depravity, denial, and eventual destruction of a family engulfed in crime and discord among its members.

The differential consequences and social inducements associated with various forms of conduct most likely account for the temporal variations between exemplification and subsequent adoptions. (Bandura, 1977) The divergent outcomes and societal stimuli linked to different behavioural patterns play a crucial role in the fluctuations witnessed in the timelines regarding the demonstration of certain behaviours and their subsequent embracement by individuals. It is widely observed that the prompt acceptance of positive and socially beneficial innovations often elevates the status of the individuals undertaking such actions. Conversely, engaging in activities that contravene legal statutes or societal norms exposes individuals to the looming threat of repercussions or penalties.

Vicarious punishment has been shown to have similar inhibitory effects on transgressive behaviour. People who have seen models punished for violating prohibitions are less inclined to transgress themselves than if modelled violations were either rewarded or simply ignored. In the specific case study of Baby, his unwavering certainty in his father's financial resources acting as a shield against any potential consequences serves as a pivotal factor driving his continued engagement in criminal activities. This apparent sense of invincibility emanating from the perceived shelter of familial wealth seems to embolden Baby in persisting with his delinquent behaviour, as he harbours the belief that any legal or societal repercussions are inconsequential in light of his familial safety net. This unique narrative underscores the intricate relationship between individual psychosocial factors and external influences in shaping behaviour patterns and decision-making processes.

The notion of status enhancement stemming from the early adoption of virtuous or socially commendable practices underscores the inherent societal preference for positive role models and contributors. Those individuals who proactively embrace novel and uplifting behaviours tend to be lauded and esteemed within their respective communities, thereby amplifying their social standing and influence. On the flip side, individuals who flout established norms or laws place themselves at risk of censure, ostracism, or legal consequences, thus highlighting the dualistic nature of the societal response to divergent forms of conduct.

The tragic tale of Baby serves as a moving reminder of the power play within the complex web of human relationships, shedding light on the profound impact of societal expectations and cultural influences on individual destinies. The poignant unravelling of events underscores the enduring relevance of psychological theories in understanding and interpreting the complex nuances of human behaviour, offering insight into the complex interplay between personal agency and external forces in shaping the route of one's life. Baby himself is a victim of the social conditioning. Echoing the tenets of the social cognitive theory, Baby's trajectory exemplifies the never-ending conflict between personal experiences, environmental factors, and learned behaviours, shaping his tumultuous path towards an irreversible fate.

societal violence, bringing to attention themes that remain significant in ongoing conversations. This movie compels viewers to consider the root causes and circumstances that result in violent actions by showcasing the beginnings and influences of such behaviour in society.

In a future UK setting, Alex DeLarge is the vicious leader of a gang named the "Droogs", alongside Georgie, Dim, and Pete as fellow members. The narrative unfolds with a concerning sequence of occurrences driven by a combination of excessive violence fuelled by intoxication. The group perpetrates heinous acts such as assaulting a vagrant on the streets and engaging in a violent altercation with a rival gang, all under the guidance of Alex's malevolent leadership. According to Bandura, the individuals that someone interacts with frequently, by choice or obligation, determine the behaviours that will be consistently witnessed and therefore learned most effectively. Members of violent gangs and individuals in peaceful groups have very different chances to learn aggressive behaviour (Bandura, 1977).

Peer influence is a significant factor in Alex's behavioural patterns, as his gang of friends exert pressure on him to engage in criminal activities. The vigour within his social group, comprised of individuals like Dim, Georgie, and Pete, create a strong sense of camaraderie based on shared deviant behaviours. This sense of belonging within the group reinforces Alex's involvement in acts of violence and rebellion, as he seeks validation and acceptance from his peers. Observational learning also plays a crucial role in shaping Alex's behaviour, as he closely observes the actions and attitudes of his friends within the gang. Through the process of modelling, Alex not only learns new ways of behaving but also internalises the norms and values of his social group. The gang's glorification of violence and disregard for societal rules become ingrained in Alex's mindset through repeated exposure to their behaviours, leading him to adopt similar attitudes and actions.

Moreover, the gang's social approval additionally motivates Alex to continue his violent and antisocial behaviour by rewarding him for being aggressive and disregarding rules. The support and approval he receives from his friends drive him to continue his negative behaviour, as he associates these actions with being included and valued by his peers. This feedback pattern motivates Alex to keep engaging in unlawful actions, as he aims to maintain his reputation and status among his friends. Hence, Alex's actions in *A Clockwork Orange* are significantly influenced by the relationships he has with his companions. The violent and antisocial tendencies of the individual can be understood through peers, observational

III. THE 'CLOCKWORKS' OF SOCIETY ON ALEX

A Clockwork Orange, a modern-day dystopian work of art remains popular worldwide as it explores the concept of "ultra-violence" from the viewpoint of a gang of British troublemaking teenagers. Kubrick's film delves into the complex and occasionally unsettling interactions of

learning, and social reinforcement with the help of social cognitive theory. By examining how Alex's friends interact and impact his social circle, we gain valuable insights into the complex influences on his behaviour and personality in the movie. Albert Bandura's theory of social cognition presents the idea of reciprocal determinism, which is crucial in comprehending and assessing the complexities of Alex's development and transformations throughout his journey. Crucial to understanding this is the continuous interplay between personal factors, behaviour, and the environment, which mutually impact and are impacted by one another in a dynamic exchange.

Alex's family environment is defined by parents who are uninvolved and ineffective, and it does not have any good role models. The movie portrays detachment by examining the complexity in Alex's family, specifically highlighting his strained relationships with his parents. His parents appear largely disinterested and ineffective in their attempts to guide or manage him. The lack of supervision and moral guidance enables Alex to openly cultivate and follow through with his violent tendencies. Alex's father is portrayed as distant and passive, often overshadowed by his wife's more assertive manner. This situation does not provide Alex with a stable role model of a father to emulate. Despite being more assertive, Alex's mother fails to greatly influence him. Alex's lack of respect for authority figures and tendency towards antisocial behaviour is made worse by the ineffectiveness of consequences.

Initially, in the narrative of Alex's life, we witness how his environment and personal traits act as reciprocal reinforcing factors that contribute to his engagement in violent behaviours. The environment he is immersed in, characterised by violence, delinquency, and neglect, coupled with his own predispositions and psychological makeup, creates a toxic cycle where his actions and the environment feed into each other, strengthening the manifestation of his violent tendencies. However, as Alex undergoes treatment and experiences a shift in his surroundings, the role of the environment in influencing his behaviour takes on a different form. While external factors still wield a significant impact, the treatment exposes a fundamental disruption in the balance of reciprocal determinism. Alex, conditioned to act in certain ways through a process of reinforcement and punishment, finds himself struggling to exercise free will in choosing his actions.

Alex's battle with his automatic responses and outside influences shows a decrease in his capacity to make ethical choices. His story's main conflict stems from the clash between societal constraints and personal liberty, showcasing his battle to assert independence and uphold

ethical values. The interplay of these factors highlights an important idea in social learning theory, stressing the intricate connection among personal decisions, environment, and actions. When we take reciprocal determinism into account, we understand the intricate interplay of factors that have shaped Alex's journey - from being encouraged to behave aggressively at first to facing difficulties in asserting independence post-therapy of Ludovico Technique. As we delve deeper into his story, we are prompted to consider bigger questions about individual choice, the limitations imposed by the environment, and the ethical implications of societal systems influencing personal decisions. Thus, the case of Alex illustrates the multi-layered idea of reciprocal determinism, emphasizing the significance of comprehending how personal, behavioural, and environmental elements interact to influence human behaviour and experiences.

Believing in one's capability to achieve success in certain scenarios is an important part of social cognitive theory. Alex's interactions with his family do not help to enhance a sense of moral or social capability. His self-assurance stems from his ability to dominate and control others through aggression and fear, rather than any other source. The permissiveness of his parents inadvertently reinforces this belief, as they neither challenge nor correct his behaviour in meaningful ways. The lack of a supportive and morally instructive family environment deprives Alex of opportunities to develop positive self-regulatory mechanisms. Without guidance, he fails to internalise societal norms and values, relying instead on his immediate social group—the gang—for validation and reinforcement of his behaviour.

Bandura (1977) emphasises the role of the environment in shaping behaviour through reciprocal determinism—the interaction between personal factors, behaviour, and environmental influences. This neglectful and permissive atmosphere in Alex's home greatly influences his behaviours. Lack of proper parental supervision and a lenient environment leads to the formation of behaviours that promote delinquency. The lack of structure and boundaries in Alex's permissive and neglectful family environment hinders healthy psychological development. Alex's actions are not solely determined by his own decisions, but are also influenced by the unsuitable upbringing in his family. The movie implies that Alex's delinquent actions are partly due to the absence of support and proper role modelling in his family environment.

The movie delves into the idea of free will and the ethical implications of behavioural conditioning as one of its main themes. By using the contentious Ludovico

Technique to treat Alex's violent tendencies, Kubrick prompts deep ethical questions about the role of choice and agency in influencing human behaviour. The juxtaposition of individual autonomy against the constraints of external control serves as a powerful allegory for the tensions between personal freedom and societal order. However, this intervention strips Alex of his free will, reducing his capacity for moral agency and self-regulation. This raises ethical questions about the manipulation of behaviour and the role of autonomy in personal development.

Moreover, *A Clockwork Orange* forces the audience to confront the disturbing truth that violence is not only a result of individual problems but is closely connected to societal frameworks and cultural standards. Kubrick illustrates the influence and continuity of violence by setting the story in a dystopian city with decay and disillusionment, emphasising systemic injustices and societal pressures. Today, the lasting importance of this film remains substantial as we confront ongoing issues of violence, crime, and social disturbance. The insightful study of human behaviour, ethics, and societal intricacies in the movie strikes a chord with viewers of all ages, causing us to contemplate the lasting impact of Kubrick's revolutionary examination of the more sinister elements of humanity. The significance of *A Clockwork Orange* is found not just in its distinct style and intricate plot, but also in its capacity to encourage self-reflection and spark discussions on the ongoing issues of violence and social deterioration. Half a century later, Kubrick's extraordinary movie remains a timeless examination of human behaviour amidst ethical challenges and social upheaval.

IV. CONCLUSION

From a Victim to a Victimiser

Albert Bandura's idea of social learning, also known as observational learning, was groundbreaking in the field of psychology. Bandura challenged Skinner's behaviourist views by arguing that learning is not limited to personal actions but can also occur through observation and imitation by both humans and animals. By watching role models, individuals can acquire new skills and behaviours by seeing their actions, attitudes, and outcomes, rather than having to test them firsthand. Watching and learning from others can greatly impact the development of social behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs. His study on social learning has greatly influenced areas like education, psychology, and sociology. Understanding how people learn in a social setting can help educators improve teaching methods, therapists create better interventions, and society encourages positive behaviours.

Bandura's theory emphasises the intricate process of human learning and the significant impact of social factors on behaviour development. In the well-known studies on observational learning, such as the Bobo Doll experiment, inhospitable behaviour involved both harsh language and physical aggression, like hitting and punching. Researchers found that those who had watched the model either received positive reinforcement or no consequences for attacking the doll were more likely to show aggressive behaviour toward the doll (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003).

The interaction of individual choices with external factors such as cultural norms, societal expectations, and power play greatly shapes human behaviour. Baby from *Irakal* and Alex from *A Clockwork Orange*, both of these characters exemplify how societal pressures and evolving dominance influence personal identity and behaviour. This assessment highlights the impact of external factors on personal outcomes and the importance of personal efforts in addressing them. By examining the experiences of Alex and Baby, we can identify shared themes and influences that go beyond borders and limits. This method of comparison helps us understand how human experiences are connected and the common difficulties individuals encounter, regardless of their cultural or societal origins. Through acknowledging these shared experiences, we can cultivate a deeper comprehension and compassion towards others, recognizing the common factors that influence our identities and interactions with the world.

In *Irakal*, the cultural and societal expectations have a significant influence on Baby's life. The movie depicts him as a tragic character, whose fate is mostly influenced by the social context he is born into. The significant impact of cultural norms on Baby's actions implies that he is influenced more by his socialisation than by his own free will. His behaviour is a clear reaction to the demands and scrutiny from his family and community, emphasising the significant impact of external factors on his life. On the other hand, *A Clockwork Orange* depicts Alex as a character whose actions are shaped not just by external influences but also by his own choices within the societal frameworks he belongs to. Although cultural norms and societal expectations influence his behaviour, Alex takes an active role in interacting with these influences, especially through leading a gang. The movie delves into Alex's interactions with his social circle, showing how his actions are influenced by and also impact the world he inhabits. Alex, in contrast to Baby, is not just impacted by his surroundings but also plays a role in the power that shape his life.

The story of the Baby is one marked by victimisation, as his ability to make choices is diminished by powerful cultural and social forces. The movie portrays him as a passive individual whose future is determined by the surroundings he grows up in. This representation highlights how his socialisation shapes his actions and ultimate downfall, showing that they are a direct outcome of the cultural norms and expectations that control his existence. Meanwhile, Alex is depicted as both a victim and an offender, conversely. Although he is impacted by the societal structures and power undercurrents present, he also demonstrates a notable level of agency, especially in his position as the head of his gang. However, this agency is conditional, as evidenced by the eventual betrayal by his friends, who turn against him once he loses his position of power. This shift in group dynamics highlights the fragility of peer influence and the conditional nature of loyalty, underscoring the importance of social status and control in Alex's behaviour.

The analysis of Baby's character focuses on the power dynamics within the family and community that shape his destiny. These dynamics, while influential, are portrayed as external forces that Baby is unable to navigate or manipulate. His story illustrates the overwhelming power of cultural norms in determining individual behaviour, with little room for personal agency or resistance. In contrast, *A Clockwork Orange* delves deeper into the role of power dynamics within Alex's social group. The film presents a more complex interplay between individual agency and social structures, with Alex both shaping and being shaped by the power dynamics within his gang. The narrative explores how these shifts influence his behaviour, particularly in relation to violence and control. Alex's narrative demonstrates how power is dependent on certain conditions and how social standing can serve as both a factor of authority and a potential weakness.

Both characters demonstrate the intricate connection between individual identity, societal systems, and patterns of violence, offering important perspectives on how human behaviour is influenced by the surrounding environment. Such a complex mix of characteristics urges viewers to acknowledge the uneasy truth of how people can play dual roles as both victims and victimisers in society. Several elements related to both the model and the observer play a role in deciding if a behaviour has been acquired through learning. These consist of focus, memory, physical imitation, and drive (Bandura & Walters, 1959). The analysis of these characters highlights the ongoing importance of these theories in comprehending and explaining the subtle elements of human behaviour. Through the analysis of the commonalities between Alex and Baby, it is clear that regardless of their diverse

backgrounds, both individuals are impacted by universal forces that mould human conduct. Through comparing these people, we can learn about how societal, cultural, and personal aspects influence individuals' growth and behaviour, regardless of where they are.

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Texting Trauma: Love, Grief, and Mental Health in the Works of Durjoy Datta

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Abstract— This paper investigates the interrelated themes of love, grief, and mental health in the novels of Indian popular fiction writer Durjoy Datta, with a focus on how trauma is experienced, expressed, and often silenced within the digital cultures of urban youth. Through a close reading of selected texts, the study argues that Datta's fiction serves as a cultural mirror to the shifting emotional landscapes of contemporary Indian society— where emotional repression, romantic disillusionment, and psychological vulnerability are deeply entangled with technology, gender roles, and neoliberal expectations of happiness and productivity. Using a multidisciplinary framework combining affect theory, trauma studies, and masculinity studies, the paper positions Datta's work as an essential yet underexplored contribution to modern Indian literature that demands critical attention for its portrayal of youth mental health and the affective labor embedded in love and loss.



Keywords— love, grief, mental health, trauma, digital youth culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Popular Fiction as Emotional Archive

Durjoy Datta, one of India's most commercially successful authors, has often been dismissed by literary purists for his use of accessible language, romantic tropes, and youth-centric themes. However, this very accessibility allows his work to function as a literary and emotional archive of 21st-century Indian urban youth. His novels chronicle the shifting emotional terrains of love, heartbreak, grief, and psychological crisis— making them not only culturally relevant but also psychologically significant. In a literary landscape that has long privileged elitist narratives, Datta's fiction brings to light the affective struggles of the millennial and Gen Z readers who grapple with digital intimacy, urban loneliness, and the performance of emotional stability. This study reframes his writing as an affective text, asking not what his work lacks in literary refinement, but what it offers in terms of cultural insight and emotional truth (Cvetkovich 13).

2. Romance and Rupture: Love as Loss

Romantic love in Datta's novels is never uncomplicated—it often acts as a catalyst for psychological deterioration rather than emotional fulfillment. In *The Girl of My Dreams*, for instance, the protagonist Daman experiences a traumatic accident that blurs the line between hallucination and memory, love and obsession (Datta, *Girl*). The narrative reveals how romance is haunted by loss, violence, and emotional disintegration.

Similarly, in *Till the Last Breath*, characters confront terminal illness and unfulfilled love, allowing Datta to reframe romance not as a trope of wholeness but as a site of grief, fragmentation, and vulnerability. These depictions challenge the myth of romantic closure, offering instead a vision of love as rupture—a recurring emotional wound that the characters carry within themselves, often without resolution. Such portrayals align with the view that modern love, especially within a capitalist and digitized society, is marked less by permanence and more by ephemerality and emotional risk (Ahmed 32).

3. Grieving Boys and Silent Screens: Masculinity and Emotional Repression

A striking feature in Datta's body of work is the consistent representation of emotionally repressed male characters. These are not traditional macho figures, but rather young men whose lives are marked by emotional fragility, heartbreak, and a deep inability to process grief. In *She Broke Up, I Didn't*, Deb is portrayed as a possessive and emotionally conflicted partner, whose heartbreak manifests not through tears but through denial, anger, and control (Datta, *She Broke Up*). This repression is symptomatic of a larger cultural malaise, where hegemonic masculinity, as theorized by R. W. Connell, discourages emotional openness and teaches men to equate vulnerability with weakness (Connell 77). Datta's male characters are often caught in the contradictions of wanting to feel deeply while being culturally forbidden from expressing such feelings. Their grief becomes internalized, surfacing in unhealthy relationships, self-sabotage, and a performative detachment that masks deep emotional scars.

4. Mental Health Matters: Depression, Therapy, and Social Stigma

Datta's novels also engage directly with the theme of mental health, challenging the stigma that still surrounds psychological illness in Indian society. Characters across multiple novels suffer from depression, anxiety, trauma, and suicidal ideation, yet these struggles are often minimized, dismissed, or hidden—both by those around them and by the characters themselves. In *If It's Not Forever*, the trauma of witnessing a bomb blast leads the protagonist on a journey of emotional unburdening, but also underscores the difficulty of narrating pain in a culture that discourages psychological vulnerability (Datta and Bhagat). Datta's fiction reflects the affective economy of neoliberal India, where young individuals are expected to be successful, attractive, and emotionally well-adjusted, even as they collapse under the pressures of romantic instability, academic failure, and family expectations. Drawing from Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, we see how unspoken trauma persists in characters' behaviors, dreams, and choices—repeating itself not as a memory but as a rupture in the present (Caruth 4).

5. Texts and Texting: Digital Intimacy and Disconnection

Perhaps one of the most innovative aspects of Datta's storytelling is his incorporation of digital technology as both a narrative device and a psychological metaphor. Text messages, social media posts, blog entries, and emails dominate his novels—not merely as modern forms of communication, but as emotional vessels and distancing mechanisms. Love confessions are sent over text;

apologies arrive via email; trauma is blogged, not spoken. In *The Girl of My Dreams*, memory and identity are mediated through online narratives and social media profiles, symbolizing the fragmentation of self in the digital age (Datta, *Girl*). This reflects the concerns of affect theorists like Sara Ahmed and Ann Cvetkovich, who argue that emotions circulate through media in ways that blur the boundary between public and private, intimacy and performance (Ahmed 43; Cvetkovich

58). Datta's use of digital communication dramatizes the affective dissonance of contemporary love—how we are constantly in touch yet deeply disconnected, always visible yet emotionally obscure.

6. Theoretical Frameworks

This study employs an interdisciplinary framework:

Affect Theory: Sara Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* and Ann Cvetkovich's *Depression: A Public Feeling* help explore how emotions are socially constructed, historically conditioned, and politically charged.

Trauma Studies: Cathy Caruth's model of trauma as "unclaimed experience" helps examine how Datta's characters are haunted by what they cannot articulate (Caruth 3). - **Masculinity Studies:** R. W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and Michael Kimmel's insights help interrogate the performance of manhood in Datta's protagonists (Connell 76; Kimmel 22).

Popular Culture Studies: Analyzing Datta's work as part of youth-oriented popular fiction helps bridge high/low literary divides and contextualize youth trauma and emotional labor.

II. CONCLUSION

Toward a New Masculinity in Indian Popular Fiction Durjoy Datta's fiction complicates the landscape of Indian popular literature by offering emotionally nuanced portraits of young men and women navigating the turbulent intersections of love, trauma, and identity. His novels may operate within the genre of commercial romance, but they offer valuable insights into the emotional lives of India's urban youth, many of whom experience love and loss mediated through technology, and often without the emotional vocabulary to process their pain. By placing Datta within the framework of affect, trauma, and masculinity studies, this paper argues for a critical reappraisal of popular fiction as a legitimate site of literary and psychological inquiry. Ultimately, Datta's work signals a shift toward a more vulnerable, fragmented, and emotionally expressive masculinity, and invites

readers to reconsider the costs of silence in a world that never stops talking.

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Overlapping Territories: The Cartography of Home in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*

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Abstract— *Place studies form an important part of modern cultural studies and literary discourse. Place is a physical location bounded with territories. Places at all scales are constructed by means of physical and cultural elements. Borrowing theoretical ideas from modern geographic models, literary studies project home as a geographical unit. Vikram Chandra's Sacred Games published in 2006, abounds with spatial imaginaries ranging from nation to home. Homespace in Sacred Games is not a linear place; it is multiply situated. There are different dimensions for any place at any scale. Home has physical, geographical territories and abstract, cultural boundaries. Homespace is made unique with their boundaries of sight, sound, taste, and tactile experiences. The possibilities of an individualized time sequence and historical existence may highlight any homespace as a new geographic model itself. Its spatial and temporal territories are subject to overlapping. Home is an imagined community wrought with the utopian concepts of companionship and belonging as it is portrayed in Sacred Games. The making of homespace is intertwined with the underlying gendered practices, institutional ideologies and economic structures. Home, as a power ridden place, produces disciplined bodies and acts as a site of conflict. Institution of marriage, religion, nationality, and legal systems are always active in the homescapes. Homespace in Sacred Games is simultaneously a contested place, open to struggle and conflict and an alternative place with subversive power.*



Keywords— *place, homespace, territories, emotional territories, cultural boundaries, imagined community, contested place.*

Introduction

Place studies assume a significant space in contemporary cultural studies and literary discourses. A spatial orientation is evident in the writings of Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Edward Said, Edward Soja, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Place may be identified as a unique location, bounded by territories and defined by the lived experiences of people. They have physical, social, historical, cultural and emotional dimensions. Places at all levels are cultural constructs. They are combinations of material physical locations and abstract cultural elements.

Places ... are combinations of the material and mental and cannot be reduced to either. A church, for instance, is a place. *It is neither just a particular material artefact, nor just a set of religious ideas; it is always both.* Places are duplicitous in that they cannot be reduced to the concrete or the 'merely ideological;' rather, they display an uneasy and fluid tension between them. (Cresswell 13)

The Marxist theorist Henri Lefebvre sees space as 'made up' through a three-way dialectic between the

perceived, the conceived and the lived space. In his view point, cultural practices, representations and imaginations together constitute space. Space in this sense develops from perceptions, practices, and representations (38-39). Places are made of a series of different types of locations: physical, mythological, symbolic, imagined, linguistic, cartographic, perceptual, and representational. Places at different scales are made of the strange combination of all the different spatial locations. As Edward Soja argues in his books *Postmodern Geographies* and *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, a close reading of different places at different spatial scales exposes them as having different layers of meanings- 'third spaces'- in addition to their existence as first space and second space. This is same with places at any scale ranging from global places to local places.

In a broader sense, any place or area (location) at any scale can be treated as a spatial context. Alongside physical and political spaces, there exist a variety of spatial contexts and socially planned spaces. For example, in a macro scale, planet Earth can be taken as a spatial unit; in a micro scale; a home, a room, a street or even a body can be treated as a spatial context (Anderson J. 1-5).

Present studies project home as a geographic unit, highlighting relations among place, space, scale, identity, and power. It is a physical landscape wrought with cultural, institutional, social and economic factors. As Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling defines, "Home is ... a spatial imaginary" (2). The feelings of belonging, desire and intimacy and the feelings of fear, violence and alienation turn home as an emotional landscape (2). Home is hence a complex and multi-layered geographical concept: "Put most simply, home is a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relations between the two" (2-3).

Home is a spatial context that involves multiple factors like physical locale, selected identities and expected practices. It may have its own spatial representations and historical connections; it is a place overladen with boundaries and spatial rules. The material and cultural boundaries of the homespace are shifting and changing. In short, it is a pure spatial construction.

Home as a Multisensory and Non-Linear Space

Vikram Chandra sets out to map the varied faces of Bombay in *Sacred Games*. Published in 2006, *Sacred Games* abounds with spatial imaginaries working at diverse dimensions. The spatial locations that Chandra draws ranges from national places to local places; religious places to linguistic places; from workplaces to homespaces.

As Chandra delineates the linguistic, technological, economic and cultural forces play a significant role in the spatial production of places ranging

from street to home. To describe one's home is to carve it out of a vast spatiality. Its material and cultural borders must be drawn clearly by differentiating it against the outer spaces and possible enemies. The materiality/cultural aspect of home are hinted by Chandra in describing Shalini's views regarding her home: "So now she and her sons had a roof, two rooms, a kitchen, that was their own. That is what he had wanted, to own, to have a patch of earth that was not government property or a landlord's estate, he had wanted the safety of home" (330). The place of home involves the possession of it against the interest of outside forces.

Homespace is not formed in a linear manner. Its territories are overlapping. There are physical, geographical territories and abstract, cultural boundaries. The geographic location of a house, its place in the class-defined locations in a city, the constructed walls, labelling of the house, its size, shape and style contribute to its nature and existence. The connections that a house makes to other houses, along the physical route and through the daily interactions too are deciding factors. Connection that a house establishes along communal factors and community line is also significant. So, there are separate residential areas in Navnagar for Bengali Muslims and Indian Muslims; for Tamil families and Maratha families. The placing of home is decided across class, caste and religious lines.

The style of home making varies from home to home. Thus, a body-trader Jojo's house with varied types of shampoos and soaps, make-up articles and various kinds of threads and sewing needles, shelves full of shoes of different fashions, is contrasted with Sartraj's memories of his house with entire walls of photographs, histories of the family and the branches of it (Chandra 132). The constitution of homespace with selected objects and their careful display convey culturally significant meanings of religious attitudes, professional aspirations, nationalist ideologies and family lineage.

The homeplace and neighborhood sometimes make the city space blurred and confused. The Bengali Bura (a slum) in Navnagar is such a place with a confused history, as its residents are migrated from Bangladesh. They create survival stories about their roots and make false a claim that they are all from Bengal. Yet their Urdu sprangled Bengali reveal other possibilities about their origin. In addition, all these houses share the common history of migration, poverty, crime and estrangement in the city (Chandra 18-21). Thus, even when remaining in the national space of India, people of Bengali bura are treated as outsiders.

Homespaces are made unique with their boundaries of sight, sound, taste, and their tactile

experiences. The part narrating Prabhjot Kaur's perception of her own house in terms of its multiple sensory experiences signal that homespaces are ever shifting and multiple. The homescape are also carved in memory in terms of tactile experiences and body movements: "In the kitchen, Mata-ji slapped the paraunthas back and forth between her hands with a sprightliness that made a quick music, tossed them down on the hot tava, each with a final wristy flick" (163). The emotional territories of the house are marked in terms of varied sounds and sights too: "Prabhjot Kaur had heard the laughter of her mother from the roof. There was a comfortable freedom in the sound" (163). Home thus becomes a site of memory. The individualized experiences of house make it a heterogeneous space.

The uniqueness of homespace is perceived in terms of their unique culinary practices too: Majid's wife's khima is a distinguishing mark of their home; Katekar's and Shalini's home has a special culinary history of Sunday Mutton; Sartraj's home has a Sunday special Rajmachawal, rice with plenty of fried onion (Chandra 159). Like a national flag serves as a symbol of a nation, cooking styles and eating preferences differentiate each homespace.

The odours of persons and products too draw emotional landscape of homes. For instance, Prabhjot Kaur's memories of her parental home are coded by the smell of their servant woman Ram Pari: "It wasn't exactly a bad smell, but strong, it was like damp earth, or the back of a halwai's shop, where you got a little dizzy from all the old milky odours" (164-165). This memory of the smell of an outsider in her house is contrasted immediately with the presence of her sister Navneet Kaur's "the sweet tinge of soap and warm skin. It was a flavour that Prabhjot Kaur had known all her life" (165). The contours of homespace thus become a fluid ever shifting assemblage of multiple fragments.

Chandra presents the auditory markers of homespace in detailing the sensory experiences of Prabhjot Kaur: "Prabhjot Kaur could hear Sartaj sleeping. It was a long way, across and down the hall, but at this time she could hear many things: the slow settling of the ancient dining table, the steady plit-tap, plit-tap of drops from the tap behind her neighbor's house, the shivery movement of small animals under the hedge at the front of the house, the hum of the night itself, that low and living vibration that made all other sounds larger. She heard all this, and loud in it, her son's breathing" (158- 159). Chandra's art of capturing even the minute details thus brings to the reader the very unique soundscape of a homespace. Even in perceiving temporality, each home may follow its own time marker: "she listened for the tapping of the watchman's

lathi at the very last turn of the road, it was time" (160). Prabhjot Kaur's mental mapping of her home is drawn along with a personally appropriated time sense. The possibilities of an individualized time sequence for any homespace may set it as a new geographic model itself.

Gendered Boundaries and Power in the Domestic Sphere

The making of homespace is intertwined with the underlying gendered practices, institutional ideologies and economic structures. Prabhjot Kaur's memories around the armchair in her house at Pune as "the first piece of their small household that had not come in dowry" indicate how the economic relations and social practices like dowry involve in the setting of a homespace (159). The materiality of the homespace is in turn revealed as a product of its cultural relations.

Home is an imagined community wrought with the utopian concepts of companionship and belonging. However, they often remain as a dream only. A place like home is 'a place in imagination' as indicated in K.D.Yadav's ideas about home, "a beautiful, prosperous land that doesn't exist yet" (314). In a similar fashion, Prabhjot Kaur's cherishing of the granted loneliness of her home challenges accepted discourses about homespaces "But she felt it, late at night, hidden under the contours of her face, which she touched and felt as if it were a mask, as she savoured, slowly, the unspeakable pleasure of being alone" (159). Against the grand narratives of home as a happy place of community life, the suppressed reality is just the opposite. Homescape with all its capturing images, often remain as an imagined place and imagined community lacking a real counterpart.

Home is also a place carved with emotional territories. These emotional territories may be fluctuating between a love- hate relationship too. Prabhjot Kaur's memories of her house where she lived with her husband and son is fraught with the feeling of struggle and resistance: "And listening, she heard the tiniest creak of resentment rising from her bones, a very small rub of resistance, barely heard amidst the larger music of happiness, of a life not without pain but lived well: home, husband, son, and her the wife. It was unseemly, after all these years and years, this unvanquished and sullen spark rising from clothes on the floor, this small spurt of anger at having to always do things for men, always" (160-161). The sense of dislike of her house at Pune is contrasted with her love of her childhood home. The widely celebrated images of a nuclear family with a husband, wife and a son are exposed as a myth, the truth of which is the narrative of suppressed resentment and anger.

Homespace experiences are not linear. They very much connected to varied mental mapping processes. One's perception of home is not often linked to its physical reality and material surroundings. Prabhjot Kaur differentiates the territories of her present house in Pune and its past memories and present perceptions with her no-more existing parental home in a distant city: "she was seeing instead a house in a city very far away, immeasurably farther now that it lay on the other side of a new border and a long wire fence that flashed with murderous electricity..." (161). Physical/ psychological experience of one's home, is clustered in mind along with some other homescape in distant past. It lies in tie with some other homes, remote and distant.

The gender-driven nature of homespace is signalled in the word of Navneet Kaur as she makes a reference to the future home of a girlchild: "A girl is born into a house, but her home is somewhere else. This house doesn't belong to you. Your home is elsewhere" (172). The repeatedly made claim of home as one's birth right is challenged. Homespace is projected as well decided by cultural dictums and gender discourses.

Institutional Intrusions: State, Religion, and Law

Homespace is an institutional place too. Home is a site for the situated practices of various institutions. Various events starting from birth to death are constantly monitored by the state institutions. Thus, there is an instance in the novel when a 'No Objection Certificate endorsed by the police' becomes a mandatory condition to release a dead body to the relatives (Chandra 5-6). Biopolitical mechanism of the State observe and regulate the behaviour of homespace. There is another occasion when the abortion cases in the town are noted by police as is indicated in the conversation between Sartaj and Mary: "every year, for one month or two or three after Navratri, all the clinics in town report a rise in abortions" (Chandra 500). There are also references to the Family Welfare Group in Mumbai that instruct women about the lessons of cleanliness (Chandra 500). The homespace is placed within the over brooding clutches of large frameworks of law, religion, communal forces and national discourse.

Spatial and cultural configuration of each home is different. Both the material geographical arrangements and unique cultural selections constitute homespace. The spatial positioning of the house, its possession of modern technological advancements in the form of a fridge, phone or television, its cultural selections in the form of religious characters, sports stars, fashion icons, film stars, etc. together decide the nature of homespace (Chandra 24).

The historical boundaries that decide a house too is multiple. The multi-located history of any homespace is

derived from the unique configurations of the personal histories, family histories, social / communal history. The shifting economic structures and national happenings too affect the homespace in an entangled relation. For example, the event of communal riot in Punjab makes an everlasting impact on Prabhjot Kaur's family history as they lose their sister Navneet Kaur in the religious riots (188).

The multiply located historical layer of a house is composed of the immediate present, distant past and the future aspirations. Prabhjot Kaur's perception of her own house unravels this truth: "the small dissatisfactions of every day and the huge murderous tragedies of long ago Prabhjot Kaur took a deep breath and tried to think of the tasks for tomorrow" (161). The temporality of the house thus become a to and fro movement along the timelines of past, present, and future.

Home as Contested Territory: Conflict and Belonging

House is a contested place, open to struggle and conflict. There are conflicts involving internal forces and external factors. There are violent physical conflicts and intense emotional or cultural conflict. For instance, Mr. Mahesh Pandey of Mirage Textiles and his wife Mrs Kamala Pandey involve in physical aggression, which even necessitates police presence in their house to settle it at least temporarily (Chandra 3-4). There are also occasions when a house turns to be a disciplining force as seen in the episode dealing with a boy named Saileh. Here the parents solicit police assistance to discipline their son Saileh and take him to the police station to regulate his misbehavior (Chandra 11-13).

The divisions within the homespace are presented in the family conflicts of Prabhjot Kaur's family. Even when remaining as a member of the same Sikh family, Alok and his sister Mani has daily quarrels owing to the differing degree of their religious beliefs (196). Navneet Kaur and her mother has daily quarrels over a girl's freedom of education and marriage (165, 172). The daughter is even thrilled at her feeling of leaving her parental home because of her resentment towards her mother (172). Ironically, it is what comforts the girl Navneet Kaur is the thought that at least after marriage she can go to another house.

There are also instances when even as a child, Prabhjot Kaur wanted to go away from her own house: "She wanted to go away. She wanted a place to go to, somewhere very far away, hundreds of miles from her family, thousands of miles from everyone" (191). Difference in lifestyle and attitude place Mary and her sister Jojo at opposite poles. Against the widely spread images of a happy community, it is the loneliness that her home offers, that make Prabhjot Kaur to stick on to her house at Pune. She embraces her home tightly for the solitude and the freedom it guarantees.

It is not the presence others, but it is their absence that bound her to it. In a similar fashion, it is when returning from his mother's house at Pune, to his workplace at Mumbai, that Sartraj experiences the feeling of being at home (198).

There are imbalances of power in the domestic place. The unequal power relations in a house are hinted at in the incident dealing with the quarrel between the character named Rampari and her husband: "He's not been home in a year and a half. She was sure he had another wife somewhere. Then yesterday he came back. Like a *laat-saab* he spread his legs and shouted for his dinner. It's my house, he said" (169). The husband's claim over the house indicates the cultural systems that uphold patriarchal power relations. Amritrao Pawar and his wife Arpana who fight continuously, over Amritrao Pawar's violation of family boundaries in establishing an extra-marital relationship with another woman "refused to part, refused to come closer or divide, they fought and fought" (92). The violation of cultural dictums regarding the institution of marriage drive partners to never ending conflicts. The emotional stiffness is often followed by the fight over economic rights, which make homespaces as intensely contentious sites.

House is a power ridden place and site of conflict: Sartraj remembers his maternal house as a site of "fights, shouted quarrels" (196). Home is no longer a 'haven of contentment. Same is with the character of Mary who once had colorful ideas about a dream home (353). Mary is later reluctant to go back to their parental house: "To my mother? To that house I grew up in, with Jojo? No, I couldn't live there. I couldn't go back.' So even a slum was better, better than that home left far behind" (274). She comes across a similar realization about her new home in the city where she used to live with her husband: "Your own home becomes a hostile borderland. And then one day you knew that this raw wasteland, this garish alien light, was your home. You just had to have patience and will enough to survive the first terrors." Throughout the novel, the happy image of homespace is laid against painful realities of being at home. Homespaces seem to struggle to manage the conflicts that have roots within it. This is not a place people want to cling to, but a place that people want to free themselves from.

Institution of marriage, religion, nationality, and legal systems are ever active in the homespaces. They have a signifying role in the constitution of homespaces. They are not passive factors, but vigilant and ever-active discipling forces. Home is bound with various rules, implicit and explicit. It is evident even in the seemingly simple individual behaviors like that of Major Shahid Khan who insisted on keeping his house "clean, quiet and peaceful" (884). This disciplining power of the homespace is also

indicated in speaking about the policeman Majid's expectations: "Majid thought that a mother who kept an orderly house, who maintained cleanliness and had clear rules about what was right and what was wrong, actually ended up training her sons to be good policemen" (411). House is thus a place with formative powers. There are instances when the members of family may come to follow certain behavioral patterns despite their unwillingness to do the same at first. Thus, Katekar's son Rohit, who was resistant to his father's routine cleaning instructions to wash his hands and feet after play, start to do it voluntarily after his father's death: "Now that his father was really gone, Rohit performed the evening ablutions with a ritualistic seriousness, and led his brother through it with an unrelenting, police-like discipline" (331-332).

Homespace is now revealed as a place that produces disciplined bodies. The normalization and regulation of body behaviors are transferred from generation to generation in a linear fashion. In contrast, there are similar power operations in everyday culture that regulate the individual identities and their domestic existence. Shalini, a widow, faces criticism from her relative Vishnu Ghodke for her engagements and social activities outside her house: "That home will suffer. We have a saying: *gharalapaya rashtrala baya*" (409). This saying that means 'so if the stability and prosperity of a house depended on its foundations, and that of a country on its women,' unravels both the gender discourse that exist through widely spread cultural dictums and the policing action of the agents of power who observe and regulate the bodily behaviors according to these cultural discourse. Homespace are thus turned as constraining territories for the bodies labelled women.

Subversive Possibilities: Home as Heterotopia

There are also instances in the novel when the homespace is presented as an alternate place with subversive power. The territories of the homespace are porous. In detailing the occasion, where a Sikh family gives shelter to a Hindu woman and her children, Chandra points out the heterotopic possibilities of everyday practices. The common cultural interaction between members of different religious groups, as seen in the Sikh policeman Sartraj's visit to various colleagues' houses, also indicate the resistant possibilities of domestic places.

Conclusion

Homespace in *Sacred Games* is simultaneously a contested place, open to struggle and conflict, and is an alternative place with subversive power. As Chandra charts out, home, as an intimate geography, has physical, geographical territories and abstract, cultural boundaries.

Its intertwining boundaries make homespace a dynamic place of cultural formation. The possibilities of an individualized time sequence and historical existence may highlight any homespace as a new geographic model itself.

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Repression, Rejection and Transcendence in a Patriarchal Society: A Psychoanalytic Study of a Woman's Journey in Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*

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Abstract— This paper aims to investigate the complicated dynamics of repression, rejection, and transcendence and evaluate the protagonist's transformative journey in the context of patriarchal society as reflected in Han Kang's novel *The Vegetarian* through a psychoanalytic lens. Based on the findings of scanning the original text and studying the relevant reference books and research articles, we re-examine the far-reaching adverse psychological consequences of societal values and norms on female identity and autonomy. And in this process, we reconsider the protagonist Yeong-hye's narrative in the framework of certain familial and sociocultural factors, particularly the ways of treating a woman which play a pivotal role in determining the course of her life journey. The study further delves into Yeong-hye's unprecedented defense mechanism that she adopts as a means of denying the world of collective oppression in general and transcending the boundary of her existence as a human being at the end.



Keywords— *psychoanalysis, repression, rejection, transcendence, feminine autonomy, patriarchal violence, feminine issues, vegetarianism trauma, identity crisis.*

Introduction

It wouldn't be inappropriate to state that in the vast canvas of contemporary literature, very few works can be found, dealing with the true nature of multilayered chemistry of a woman's identity and the surrounding sociocultural forces, the inimitable way Han Kang does it in *The Vegetarian*. In general, this novel represents substantial insights into the invasive forces persistently affecting female identity in the modern male-dominated South Korean society, particularly from the viewpoint of its protagonist, Yeong-hye. Whereas this research paper endeavors to scrutinize the subtleties and intricacies of repression, rejection, and transcendence that lead Yeong-hye to undertake an awful transformative journey focusing on the psychological implications of societal norms on women's autonomy and self-conception.

Yeong-hye's radical decision to reject meat is at the center of her entire narrative which at the surface level appears to be an action initiated as a means of renouncing the expectations imposed upon Yeong-hye by her family and society. This rejection is symbolic of a broader struggle against the authoritarian social bodies and compelled value-system that define femininity in a patriarchal culture. Psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva clarifies this complex phenomenon more precisely through her proverbial expression, "Identity, substance, causality, and definition are transgressed so that others may be adopted: analogy, relation, opposition, and therefore dialogism and Menippean ambivalence." (Kristeva 86)

It is obvious that Yeong-hye's extraordinary journey, manifested by her denial to conform, intrigues the curiosity of researchers and readers as well to comprehend further the psychosomatic and sociocultural factors

responsible for her actions. As a matter of fact, Yeong's denial of taking meat can be interpreted in many ways like her attempt to overcome biological desires which would pave a path for her to loosen the ties of certain personal and familial bondages, deemphasizing the physical existence, beginning of the process of her long preparation for the ultimate transformation and so on.

But as we proceed further into the interior of the novel following the protagonist's journey of life, we notice that her path gradually getting more unnerving and agonizing with the passage of time.

How Psychoanalytical Framework Fits in Our Scheme

Psychoanalysis as a method of treating certain psychological disorders, was initially developed by the prodigious Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud and as a literary theory, in other words, a theory as a system of interpreting literary texts from a unique perspective, it was significantly framed and improved by the prominent theorists and philosophers like Jacques Lacan, Melanie Klein, and Julia Kristeva. The principal object of psychoanalytical theory is to explore the way conscious and unconscious elements of the human mind interact with each other by bringing them into the conscious mind through a systematic application of techniques like dream interpretation and free associations. On the other hand, psychoanalysis as a literary theory fundamentally throws light on the internal and external factors that determine the behavioral patterns of the characters and ultimately shape the psychic world of them. Internal components include the feelings, emotions and mindsets and the external elements are essentially the socio-cultural, political and ethical norms and values that are carried out by almost all the members of society whether willing or unwilling. Suppression is at core Freudian theory of psychoanalysis and repression also plays a pivotal role in the life of the protagonist Yeong-hye, so we think psychoanalytical approach fits in our scheme the most.

Women in Contemporary South Korean Society

As we delve into the novel, we notice Mr. Cheong, a so-called learned gentleman opting for a lady as his wife because of her "unremarkable" nature (Kang 3). This becomes more evident in the following statement of Mr. Cheong, "The passive personality of this woman...suited me down to the ground" (Kang 3). As a matter of fact, multiple meanings and propositions of the phrases "unremarkable nature," and "passive personality" are clearly indicative of Mr. Cheong's chauvinistic attitude toward women. His preference for a lady with "unremarkable" nature and "passive personality" (Kang 3)

justify his naked and raw intent to dominate females without any resistance whereas husband and wife relationship is expected to be based on mutual love, respect and empathy and unbridled domination ultimately leads to oppressions and injustices which are characteristic of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. And in this context, too, patriarchy's domination and suppression of femininity stand out to be the most significant theme of this novel.

Philosophically speaking, darkness and light move hand in hand in this earth. So to say Han Kang presents a case study chiefly through the life story of the protagonist Yeong-hye and eventually shows the world how pathetically a so called modern progressive and educated society i.e. the contemporary South Korean society fails to ensure a safe and sovereign atmosphere for its female members where they can meet their minimum rights and exercise their freedom as a female member and in a greater sense as a human being. Present-day South Korean society with all the boons of modern science and technology and remarkable progressions in the fields of science and technology, education, healthcare and empowerment show unspeakable rigidity, hostility and polarity in the ways of treating women in different walks of life. Treating women as a subordinate and mere sexual object have been an age-old issue in the history of human race. In other words, this process of subordination and sexual objectification has never stopped rather it has taken new and in cases, more sophisticated and deceptive disguises and forms. So, we think it won't be any exaggeration to assert that the modern civilization with all its extraordinary achievements have failed to ensure a safe and dignified domain for women in general.

Yeong-hye, an ideal South Korean woman, a responsible, mild and completely subservient woman undergoes indescribable pangs and agonies over the years and finally, initiates a unique process of resistance by rejecting meat. Her rejection of meat signifies a symbolic rejection of the patriarchal text of femininity in South Korean context.

Treatment of Feminine Issues in The Vegetarian

As a matter of fact, human beings have survived on this earth through ceaseless struggles. So, in a sense, the history of human civilization is the history of struggles against all the authoritarian forces like social authorities, political authorities and even cultural authorities along with all the adversities and calamities of nature. This observation is truer about the female members of the civilization than their male counterparts. Whatever ways and how many times we address the issues like equality, enlightenment and the empowerment and emancipation of women in the seminars and academic talks, the reality remains almost the same for the females i.e. the foot of the candle is always

surrounded by darkness. The Vegetarian occupies a very special place in the realm of world literature because of its vivid and authentic presentation of feminine issues. More specifically speaking, the way the author delineates Yeong-hye's exemplary struggles against the most brutal and systematic gender oppression and her ways to respond back to society through rejection and transformation, is in a word matchless.

The following statement of Mr. Cheong epitomizes the whole scenario: "As for women who were pretty, intelligent, strikingly sensual, the daughters of rich families — they would only ever have served to disrupt my carefully ordered existence." (Kang 4). It is obvious that he considers women with beauty, sensuality and intelligence as a threat to his existence. So, to say, a society which is almost entirely dominated by the males, leaves no free space for beauty, talent and even the vitality of women. The term equality is a far cry in a context like this.

At a time when we take much credit and pride talking about issues like absolute psychological and physical freedom of women, priceless uniqueness of womanhood and even women's superiority over men in cases like motherhood, parenting and so on, Han Kang questions the authenticity of all these so called highly intellectual, liberal and progressive seminars, writings and slogans through the story of Yeong-hye. In the novel, we observe that Yeong-hye's father tries to force-feed her, her husband rapes her when she denies sex her brother-in-law criticizes her body in the name of aestheticism (Kang 93), and what not! All these rebuking and barbaric actions not only trample the dignity of women but also nullify the identity females. But a glimpse of her experience at the hospital gives us a more horrific picture of torture and humiliation, to quote: "Blood is gushing out of the tube... Yeong-hye convulses against her chest" (Kang 175). This hospital scene surpasses the extreme tortures of the most infamous jails of the world, and we can't help quoting Mr. Kurtz's aphoristic utterance, "The horror! The horror!" (Conrad 116). And the 'horror' reaches a new height when we come across this line in the novel, "They just force me to take medication, and stab me with needles" (Kang 156). Here the pronoun 'they' is highly significant for our purpose because it testifies that the hostility, oppression and objectification of women are parts a masterfully designed, organized and collective scheme. It's a land of collective crimes where even females are compelled to show extreme brutalities towards their 'sisters' i.e. the members of the same sex and that is quite evident in the ways the female members like Yeong-hye's mother-in-law.

Now, the question which naturally arises is whether the protagonist of *The Vegetarian* yields to all these

pressures and predicaments exerted upon her by patriarchy or she renounces and rebels and the straightway answer is she rejects and resists in a unique way. And her unique way of rejection and resistance is one of the focal points of this article.

Patriarchal Oppressive Forces Acting Upon Yeong-hye

The persistent forces of patriarchy trigger both torments and traumas in Yeong-hye. These explicit and sinister oppressive forces function through some common channels like familial structures, gender and matrimonial expectations, social norms etc. and the guiding force of all these agents is patriarchy. Mr. Cheong being a representative of patriarchy, selects Yeong-hye as his wife because of her 'unremarkable nature' and obedience and thus, he always treats her as an object and never as a subject. It is his conviction that an unremarkable woman won't disrupt his 'ordered existence' (Kang 4).

Yeong-hye's father, arguably the most archaic and conservative agent of patriarchy, acts upon establishing an environment of absolute rule, domination and suppression of the authoritarian forces in the novella most nakedly. The way he attempts to force meat into Yeong-hye's mouth and slaps her in the presence of a good number of family members and relatives clearly exemplifies all the violent means that patriarchal authority applies to take an absolute control over female body and psyche. The protagonist's reluctant and passive participation in sexual intercourse with her husband over period time and Mr. Cheong's enforcement of engaging his wife in gratifying his biological needs irrespective of his wife's moods have multi-dimensional meanings. The following words of Mr. Cheong fit in with the context perfectly: So yes, one night when I returned home late and somewhat inebriated after a meal with colleagues, I grabbed hold of my wife and pushed her to the floor. Pinning down her struggling arms and tugging off her trousers, I became unexpectedly aroused. She put up a surprisingly strong resistance and, spitting out vulgar curses all the while, it took me three attempts before I managed to insert myself successfully. Once that had happened, she lay there in the dark staring up at the ceiling, her face blank, as though she were a 'comfort woman' dragged in against her will, and I was the Japanese soldier demanding her services." (Kang 30)

We think that citing the following lines from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* would be appropriate in this context, "It's over, it's all over," she said, "He hands her the comb... She smoothes her hair with automatic hand." (Eliot 13–14). So, raping his own wife is what in the most savage manner is what the so-called modern-day educated does with his own almost regular basis.

And this evidence is strong, vivid and authentic enough to assert that in the context of present-day South Korean context and in a broader sense, in the context of the modern world with few minor exceptions, in the long run, conjugal relationships turn into a kind of legal, familial and social obligation for females to entertain and serve the males as sex-partner, care-giver, cook and entertainer irrespective of their moods and overall psycho-somatic conditions. And males' approaches towards them to enjoy all the services undisputedly are relentlessly safeguarded and ensued by their agents, institutions and written and unwritten values, regulations and stereotypes. So, oppression, humiliation and ill-treatment are everyday facts for females here. And Yeong-hye's non-resistance and passive participation in having sex are indicative of the fact that she had enough of that sort of emotionless, mechanical and barbaric sex.

In-hye's husband and Yeong-hye's brother-in-law, a major male character approaches the protagonist in a better disguised way. This frustrated video artist shows considerable aversion to social norms and values and profound interest in asceticism and based on these two standards, he can very easily be considered as a liberal and enlightened gentleman. But his growing interest in the physical features and beauty of Yeong-hye and particularly his special interest in the birth mark on her buttock along with his having sex with her on camera are obviously indicative of the dark side his character and episode opens another window for a discussion how female is abused in the name of art, in other words, how randomly women are sexually mistreated in the fields of media and performing art. But we have a keen eye on Yeong-hye participation in sex-making with her brother-in-law and would present our own interpretation of it in the last part of the paper. But so far as the actions and interactions between these sister-in-law and brother-in-law are concerned, the male counterpart manipulates the beauty and appeal of a young and pretty woman merely as an object of entertainment disregarding her dignity as a human being.

So, this young lady, ceaselessly being in the process of such torturous situations and inhuman treatment, is indeed relegating her innumerable soft and sublime emotions, desires and wishes into the unconscious mind and we would observe soon how all these suppressed elements work upon her psychic world. As repression is the primary focal point of our study, this reasonably elaborate, factual and textual representation of various forms and natures of suppression would certainly take us one step further to clarify and establish our perspective on a firm pedestal. And so, we can now logically address our second key point: rejection.

Yeong-hye's Response to the Oppressive System

As we attempt to look upon the agenda through the protagonist Yeong-hye's eyes, we notice that the first thing that she denies, or rejects is meat. And in accordance with our proposition, we would consider the significance and various implications of this act of rejecting meat from the psychoanalytical viewpoint. Her father's brutal attempt to compel her to eat meat, turns into a fierce psychophysical battle between the subdued femininity and the aggressive masculinity. As he tries to force meat into her mouth assertively, she refuses to take it thoroughly and in response, her father starts slapping her frantically and she on the other hand, begins slitting her wrists at the dining table helplessly. This catalytic reaction of Yeong-hye replete with symbolic implications and multilayered significance. But in the context of our purpose, its importance and appropriateness in the psychoanalytical framework outweigh everything else!

The protagonist's rejection of meat simultaneously determines the next course of her life and the structure of the narrative. But one of the fundamental purposes of this research is to enquire into the factors responsible for such a rebellious reaction on the part of a compliant and obedient woman and as we have already shown with ample textual references that Yeong-hye's journey of life is predominantly characterized by a prolonged process of suppression and find her indiscriminately repressing her wishes, longings, torments and traumas. And in the final part of this research paper, we would present a psychoanalytical interpretation of these acts of repression and rejection. But as part of a close textual interpretation, it could be mentioned that her rejection of meat is in fact a kind of moral and physical resistance and in doing so she disrupts the deep-rooted familial, social, ethical and linguistic laws, codes and barriers of her society and as a result patriarchy treats it with ruthlessness, violence and humiliation. She is considered as insane and taken to the hospital where the savagery and torture reach another height. On the other hand, Yeong-hye's throwing away the meat from the refrigerator and beginning a vegetarian diet drastically add a movie-like suspension to the story sparks enormous curiosity among the readers. And this far-reaching act of rejection and resistance adds new aesthetic beauty, philosophical depth and moral spirit to this novella and that is where *The Vegetarian* stands apart amid innumerable literary works in the realm of world literature on the same topic.

A great number of scholars consider her response as psychosis, but Han Kang depicts it as a form of transcendence. It is an internal uprising with metaphysical outcomes. In a sense, the author does not recommend any traditional medications for the diseases rather she suggests

transformation or metamorphosis which ultimately turns into a radical critique of a world where sovereignty must be earned at the cost of much blood and life. Han Kang creates a completely unconventional heroine who does not scream, fight, or preach, but who, becomes its most potent critic adopting a highly philosophical form of transformation. The story of her rejection and transformation reminds us of the following observation of Jacques Lacan, “What is realised in my history is neither the past definite as what was, since it is no more, nor even the perfect as what has been in what I am, but the future anterior as what I will have been, given what I am in the process of becoming” (Lacan 300). Lacanian phrase the process of becoming holds a spirit that encourages us to think that another better world is possible and suggests that human beings are in creative process of progression which perceptibly complies with the protagonist's ambition to transmigrate to a higher level of existence.

Yeong-hye's Journey of Life in Psychoanalytical Viewpoint

Much has already been discussed about Yeong-hye's rejection of meat and its significance and meanings, but upon asked why she has done it, she replies, I had a dream — in the dark tunnel, her face flitted by — her face, but unfamiliar, as though I was seeing it for the first time....Dark woods. No people. This place, almost remembered, but I'm lost now. Frightened. Cold. Across the frozen ravine, a red barn-like building... A long bamboo stick strung with great blood-red gashes of meat, blood still dripping down. Try to push past but the meat, there's no end to the meat, and no exit. Blood in my mouth, blood-soaked clothes sucked onto my skin...Running, running through the valley, then suddenly the woods open out....But the fear. My clothes still wet with blood.... My bloody hands. My bloody mouth. In that barn, what had I done? Pushed that red raw mass into my mouth,....slick with crimson blood. Or no, not mine, but so familiar ... nothing makes sense. Familiar and yet not . . . that vivid, strange, horribly uncanny feeling.” (Kang 11-12). Use of imagery is one of the landmark features of Han Kang's writing and the above one is probably the most striking one used in *The Vegetarian*.

If we change this visual image into video format and place it in the canvas of a classic Oscar-winning Hollywood movie, it could certainly have had a tremendous psychological effect on the readers' minds. But a lonely woman in the woods, frightened at the sight of the profusion of blood caused by animal slaughter, trying desperately to flee from the scene but unable to move because her feet were submerged into the ground, with blood being poured into her mouth and unable even to shut it—feeling as if she

were being punished, and finally finding her mouth covered in blood—is an ideal case for psychoanalytical study as well.

We know that working methodologically on the interplay between conscious and unconscious and the role of repression (*Verdrängung*) in this interplay, Freud opens a new window to explore the oceanic unconscious part of human psyche, and he first defines repression in his groundbreaking work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) as a process to eliminate unacceptable desires, thoughts, and memories from consciousness and channel them into unconscious. This expulsion is not a single-time act but a constant dynamic, fundamental to the configuration of neuroses. Freud writes: “The essence of repression lies simply in the function of rejecting and keeping something out of consciousness” (Freud, *Interpretation* 147).

Repression plays a pivotal role in the formation of dreams and, according to Freudian theory, dreams are nothing but the disguised fulfilment of the repressed wishes. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud masterfully defines dream in this way: “The dream is the (disguised) fulfillment of a (repressed or denied) wish” (Freud, *Interpretation* 160). And so, considering the above Freudian definitions and interpretations of repressions and dreams, we can logically state that Yeong-hye's dream is the direct outcome of the numberless unwanted desires, wishes, emotions, and experiences that she willingly or unwillingly excluded from consciousness and passed into her unconscious mind. These include all the barbaric treatments, violent tortures, and vicious attitudes that she has undergone till this stage of her life. As a delicate woman with lively sensibility and compassion, it is not only against her nature to accept all the brutalities, prioritizing] and gratifying biological needs and torturing and trampling others both physically, but also the innate sublime qualities of her mind pushed these extremely unpleasant and undesirable feelings and emotions into the volcano of the unconscious—and the dream is nothing but the eruption of that volcano. So, concisely speaking, all the repressed elements of Yeong-hye's psychic world find expression in this vivid imagery.

In his splendid work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud terms the dream as “the (disguised) fulfillment of a (suppressed, repressed) wish,” transformed through the processes of “condensation, displacement, and symbolization” (Freud, *Interpretation* 164, 277). Each element of Yeong-hye's dream is pregnant with meanings related to the unconscious, leading toward psychic trauma, bodily alienation, and a silent resistance to patriarchal violence. Han Kang skillfully uses the blood-symbol in various overwhelming forms like—“pouring into [her] mouth,” “soaked” into her clothes, and “covering” her face

(Kang 13). In Freudian theory, blood in dreams may symbolize “libidinal violence,” “repressed aggression,” or “the return of repressed trauma,” especially when analyzed within the framework of dream symbolism and the body (Freud, *Complete Works* 4295). Apart from all these, blood also signifies victimhood, complicity, and internalization of violence; most significantly, pouring blood is suggestive of a soulful attempt by the protagonist to reinstate the normal condition of mind, rejecting the unconsciously absorbed trauma of patriarchal domination. In Freudian interpretations of dreams, the woods usually symbolize the unconscious itself—a vast space characterized by disorder and irrationality. It is a space where primal instincts and repressed desires appear (Freud, *Interpretation* 151–153).

The soaked clothes of the protagonist are suggestive of her attempt to shed off her social persona and free her psyche from the potential threat caused by the violence committed upon her to shatter her real identity. Yeong-hye's declaration, “I felt like I was being punished... for what, I don't know,” refers to a kind of “unconscious guilt” stimulated not by any conscious wrongdoing but by the repression of prohibited desires, emotions, and aspirations (Kang 18; Freud, *Complete Works* 4294–4296).

And it is notable here that the agents and forces of patriarchy, with a view to undermining their female counterparts, set the barriers of forbiddances particularly for women to perpetuate their rule. On the other side, the female members who live in this vicious and powerful web of innumerable prohibitions and restrictions don't find any free space to realize even the most spontaneous, humane, and innocent wishes, dreams, and feelings. Naturally, they repress them—but it is intelligible that this kind of indiscriminate suppression is not at all a healthy practice.

And the prolonged process of suppression ultimately creates a sense of guilt in their mind, and they feel a strong urge to isolate themselves from the circle of social life. We think that the protagonist Yeong-hye feels the same inclination at the core of her mind, which is reflected in her activities after refusal to eat meat and adopting a vegetarian style of life. And the image of her blood-covered face symbolizes an overpowering desire for self-alienation.

Our Observations, Findings and Final Comments

To us, the reason why *The Vegetarian* has gained phenomenal appreciation and acceptance both among the scholars and the efficient readers lies in Han Kang's matchless creativity in changing a non-violent act into an immensely powerful tool for rebellion and transcendence. The choice to become a vegetarian can be interpreted in many ways, like it might be related to some issues

concerning health, it sometimes originates from the individual's extraordinary love for animals and in some cases, it is an initiative undertaken for spiritual upliftment. But Yeong-hye's vegetarianism in the context of the novella marks the preparation process of a long struggle for denial, refusal, transformation and finally, transmigration. It signifies the complete collapse of all kinds of imposed identities and an out and out attempt to take part in the process of creative evolution, showing a thumb to all the forces that hinder human beings' wellbeing and freedom. It crosses the boundaries of health science and ethics and demonstrates metaphysical inclinations. Yeong-hye's withdrawal is also deeply connected with some primal existentialistic purposes.

Denying the consumption of meat means her extreme unwillingness to take part in collective social life because taking food means complying with social expectations and accepting the role imposed by society whereas rejection of food means rejection of sex, language and finally human identity itself. And there lies the priceless specialty of this novella because in all considerations thinking of transgressing the boundary of human existence to deny the identities, roles and values formulated and upheld and in many cases manipulated by the greater part of the society, is not merely a radical act, it's an extraordinary leap in the process of creative evolution which requires reconfiguration of selfhood and a total disagreement with all sorts of established norms, values and practices. That is why the protagonist's adaptation of vegetarianism, giving up meat and transformation into a plant or tree are at a time physical, psychological and metaphysical. Her prolonged silence proves to be a deadly weapon to nullify the violence and politics of language of patriarchy. She doesn't commit suicide, nor does she hold arms against the patriarchal and she even doesn't become non-existent, but what she does is something much higher and more powerful than all these. In fact, she endeavors to exist in a different form and on a higher level of reality with a view to standing upright without compromising with anything, whatsoever.

In addition, upon synthesizing the interrelations among all the symbols of the dream scene and their connections and denotations, we reach the proposition that all the symbols collectively constitute a narrative of a vigorous spiritual process of withdrawal, negation and renunciation of all the existing systems and institutions of society. But the protagonist's metaphysical project to transgress the boundary of human identity and to transform herself into a plant adds a mythical status to this narrative and this final twist contributes remarkably to the aesthetic beauty and philosophical depth of the novella and takes it to a new height.

It is obvious that the narrative of *The Vegetarian* has already earned a place of its own, and we believe that over time it will become a classic piece of work on the issues concerning femineity specially because of its revolutionary approach to deal with the most burning issues of the mothers of all generations. So, finally, we would like to assert that the narrative of Yeong-hye's life can be considered as a transcendental journey from social life to isolation, from oppression to freedom, from human existence to a nonhuman entity and finally, from darkness to light.

Conclusion

Yeong-hye's longing to become a tree or plant is evidently indicative of her final rejection of all sorts of patriarchal dominations, collective violence and human subjectivity and her undying urge for a return to a state of nonviolence, purity and silence. This becomes obvious in her statement, "I wanted flowers to bloom from my crotch so I spread my legs; I spread them wide..." Bewildered, In-hye looked across at Yeong-hye's feverish eyes. 'I need to water my body. I don't need this kind of food, sister. I need water.' (Kang 148). This metaphorical metamorphosis of Yeong-hye is essentially rooted in trauma, resistance, and a deep yearning to escape violence. Objectively speaking, the ultimate target is metaphysical, but it involves physical expressions like: she stops eating, speaks less, and begins to mimic photosynthesis, standing motionless in sunlight. These lines loudly echo her extreme contempt for human society and identity and her preference and passion for a non-human identity and world.

In conclusion, this is not a narrative merely about psychological collapse but a complex feminist and psychoanalytic consideration on the price of resistance. It proves how silence can speak louder than words, and how transcendence sometimes lies not in conquering pain, but in personifying it to its fullest. Finally, it must be mentioned that with the touch of Han Kang's superb craftsmanship, refusal becomes revolution, and madness becomes the ultimate truth in an insane world.

And we would like to draw the conclusion to this discussion citing the following lines from the final part of the novella, "Had her body metamorphosed into a sturdy trunk, with white roots sprout-ing from her hands and clutching the black soil? Had her legs stretched high up into the air while her arms extended all the way down to the earth's very core, her back stretched taut to support this two-pronged spurt of growth? As the sun's rays soaked down through Yeong-hye's body, had the water that was saturating the soil been drawn up through her cells, eventually to bloom from her crotch as flowers?" (Kang 170) Her

thoughts, actions and aspirations undoubtedly reflect the influence of Buddhism and Confucianism, and the novella ends in a heartbreaking outcry for peace, shelter, harmony, nonviolence and many positive emotions and epitomes like them, expressed aptly through the symbol of the tree. And she ultimately asserts, "Sister, Yeong-hye said, her voice low and calm as if intending to comfort her. Yeong-hye's old black sweater gave off the faint scent of mothballs. When In-hye didn't answer, Yeong-hye whispered one more time. 'Sister . . . all the trees of the world are like brothers and sisters' (Kang 144)

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Unveiling the Lifeworld of Campus Journalists in a Public Secondary School

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Abstract— This transcendental phenomenological study investigates the lived experiences of the writers in campus journalism, focusing on their lifeworld, contextual experiences, and future self-perception. Twelve high school journalists from Bagumbayan National High School were purposively sampled for semi-structured interviews. Through thematic analysis, the study identified 13 emerging themes: five captured the participants' lifeworld- navigating dual responsibilities, shaping professional identity, guiding hands influence, ethical investigative challenges, and mastering journalistic craftsmanship; seven reflected the contexts of their lived experiences, such as holistic journalism growth, ethical journalism impact, journalism's competitive edge, transformative journalism journey, relentless truth-seeking journalism, journalism-life harmony, and path of journalistic discovery; and one encompassed their future self-perception, highlighting strategic career and passion exploration. The findings revealed that the lived experiences of the writers in campus journalism revolve around skill development, ethical awareness, and career exploration, shaped by academic pursuits, competitive challenges, and mentorship, ultimately influencing their professional identity and future career paths. This study offers a framework for understanding student journalism's unique challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the need for targeted training programs that support their holistic development. Future research should explore the long-term impact of campus journalism on students' career trajectories and adaptability.



Keywords— campus journalists, journalism, lifeworld of campus journalists, lived experiences, phenomenology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Campus journalism significantly enriches students' academic experiences by fostering critical communication skills, promoting freedom of expression, and engaging with issues relevant to educational communities. Many nations acknowledge their significance by organizing competitions and conferences promoting education, fostering collaboration, and supporting professional development. Despite its recognized value, there remains a limited exploration of the lived experiences of student writers themselves, particularly in the context of their

personal and academic development within dynamic regional landscapes like ASEAN (Estella & Paz, 2019).

While previous research has explored the educational value of journalism (Dela Rosa, Lucero, & Vargas, 2021; Omay, 2020), limited studies have delved into the lived experiences and future self-perceptions of campus journalists in these press conference contexts (Macalindog, 2019; Deuze & Witschge, 2018).

This study sought to explore the lived experiences, contexts, and aspirations of Bagumbayan National High School campus journalists. By applying phenomenology and integrating Dewey's theory of expertise, Moustakas'

phenomenological method, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, and the legal foundation of R.A. 7079, the study aimed to contribute insights into how press conferences shape young journalists' personal and professional development.

This study addressed the following sub-questions: (1) What is the lifeworld of the writers in campus journalism? (2) What are the contexts of the lived experiences of the writers in campus journalism? (3) How do the campus journalists view themselves in the future? and (4) What program can be designed for the student journalists?

II. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized the transcendental phenomenological research design. Qualitative research aimed to thoroughly examine, comprehend, and explain social phenomena in their natural environments (Creswell, 2012, as cited in Balinas & Ibojo, 2023). This approach provided a more thorough knowledge of human behavior by enabling accurate data gathering on beliefs and motivations and offering a human-centered viewpoint on the subject matter (Balinas & Ibojo, 2023).

Additionally, phenomenology's philosophical and scientific tradition aimed to investigate and comprehend the essence of human experiences from the viewpoint of people experiencing them (Moustakas, 1994). Thus, this study focused on the experiences of the high school writers in campus journalism who participated in the Division Schools Press Conferences for the school year 2022-2023 of Bagumbayan National High School.

The descriptive technique aimed to comprehend and explain the feelings experienced by the writers in campus journalism. The researcher collected data through purposive sampling and conducted semi-structured interviews. After doing so, the researcher crafted phenomenological narratives to capture the essence of the participants' experiences.

The researcher sought to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of writers in campus journalism, their contexts, and their self-perception of the future. The writers in campus journalism narrated their stories based on their actual experiences.

2.2. Research Participants

The purposeful participant sample selection allowed them to offer unique perspectives on the experiences at the heart of the research (Smith et al., 2009). These participants were 12 high school campus journalists of Bagumbayan National High School who participated in the Division Schools Press Conferences held at Don Juan P.

Garcia Memorial Elementary School, Sultan Kudarat division, for the school year 2022-2023, and were currently enrolled for the academic year 2023-2024. The informants were assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. The volume of replies appeared to align with Dworkin's (2012) suggestion for qualitative research.

The selection of the participants was based on the following criteria: (a) Special Program in Journalism student; (b) number of years practicing campus journalism; (c) number of years as participant in the Division Schools Press Conferences; (d) campus journalist participant in the different events during the Division Schools Press Conference 2022-2023; and (e) willing to share his experiences.

2.3. Sampling Technique

The study participants were the 12 high school campus journalists of Bagumbayan National High School in the Division Schools Press Conferences for the school year 2022-2023.

The informants' selection process was called purposive sampling, a selective, judgmental, or demanding sampling (Pedroso & Pacit, 2022). The objective was to choose people with the knowledge required to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2013).

2.4. Research Instrument

This study employed semi-structured interviews, allowing for a flexible yet targeted approach to data collection. When open-ended questions were used, participants could provide rich and detailed explanations of their experiences by expressing them in their own words. According to Moustakas (1994), in "Phenomenological research methods," the interview was a powerful tool for phenomenological researchers as they attempted to capture the richness and subtleties of participants' experiences.

Moreover, the semi-structured interview was helpful when you were somewhat knowledgeable about a subject, but wanted to allow users to bring up new points. Working with a difficult subject could benefit from semi-structured interviews since they would enable you to explore, enhance understanding, and clarify responses to questions through probes and spontaneous questions (Wilson, 2014).

The researcher meticulously crafted the interview questions utilized in this study, drawing upon a comprehensive literature review and an in-depth understanding of the research objectives. A rigorous validation process was undertaken to enhance the robustness and appropriateness of the questions. This validation involved subjecting the interview questions to scrutiny by experts in the field, which was composed of two master teachers and one campus journalist adviser,

ensuring alignment with the research framework and relevance to the phenomenon under investigation. Through this meticulous validation process, the interview questions were refined and adjusted to maximize their effectiveness in eliciting meaningful responses from participants.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering procedure for this phenomenological study was meticulously structured to adhere to established protocols, ensuring methodological rigor and ethical integrity.

First, the participants were identified through purposive sampling. The researcher sought permission from the School Principal to carry out the study. Second, before the interview started, informed consent was obtained from each participant, emphasizing voluntary participation and confidentiality. Third, the researcher described the goal of the research and its methodology. After that, each participant received individual orientation. Fourth, the study's necessary resources, such as the audio recorder and interview guide, were ready. Fifth, semi-structured interviews commenced, and each session was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to represent participants' narratives accurately. Sixth, the application of thematic analysis, guided by phenomenological reduction, facilitated the identification of recurring themes and patterns in the participants' narratives. This ultimately yielded a thorough knowledge of the lived experiences of campus journalists within the dynamic context of school press conferences. Ethical considerations such as member verification and participant confidentiality were crucial throughout the research process to guarantee the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions.

2.6. Data Analysis Method

This study employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Thematic analysis, as defined by Braun and Clarke, focused on finding, examining, and summarizing patterns and themes in the data. It thoroughly described and arranged all the material. This analysis method has six steps that were covered:

In the initial step, familiarization with the data, the researcher immersed himself in the collected data, which included interview transcripts, to generate a complete picture of the lived experiences of the campus journalists during press conferences—multiple readings were required to fully capture the nuances and complexities woven throughout the participants' accounts. The data was analyzed using systematic coding to find important themes and trends. In this step, generating initial codes, keywords, phrases, and situations that captured the spirit of the press conferences that the campus journalists covered shall be highlighted and labeled.

The next step was searching for themes. The codes were then arranged according to possible topics. The researcher searched for themes, feelings, or incidents repeatedly appearing in various participants' narratives. Throughout the school press conferences, these themes reflected general trends in the experiences of the campus journalists. Then came reviewing the themes. They underwent a rigorous review process to ensure the themes appropriately represent the dataset. The themes were refined and adjusted to fit the richness and complexity of the narratives provided by the campus journalists as the researcher went back and forth between the identified themes and the unprocessed data.

Consequently, the defining and naming of themes. Every well-developed concept was described in detail and assigned a succinct title that encapsulates it. Each theme about campus journalists' real-world press conference experiences had to be thoroughly explained at this level.

Lastly, writing the report. The final step involved organizing the findings into a coherent and insightful narrative. The report presented a detailed account of the identified themes, supported by relevant interview quotes. This narrative aimed to convey the multifaceted nature of campus journalists' experiences during press conferences while maintaining clarity and focus in presenting the themes.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis revealed thirteen (13) emerging themes derived from 176 formulated meanings, 147 initial themes, and 21 clustered themes. These themes represent significant patterns in the lived experiences of the campus journalists from Bagumbayan National High School during their participation in press conferences.

3.1. Emerging Themes of The Lifeworld of the Campus Journalists in Schools Press Conferences

Five (5) emerging themes were articulated through arduous procedural data analysis and interpretation. They were all synthesized from 86 formulated meanings, 86 initial themes, and 10 clustered themes. The five emerging themes are the following:

3.1.1. Theme 1: Navigating Dual Responsibilities

This theme captures the continuous effort of campus journalists to balance their academic and journalistic commitments. It consists of two primary clustered themes: Academic and Journalistic Balance and High Expectations and Pressures.

Campus journalists frequently juggle the demands of journalism with their academic obligations. Balancing these responsibilities requires tenacity and skillful time

management. One participant described this challenge: *“If you are a campus journalist, your time will be divided between being a journalist and a student. That is why I find it difficult to manage my time. Although you are excused from class, you must submit activities and outputs to other subject teachers. That is very challenging”* (P8). This highlights the struggle of maintaining academic performance while fulfilling journalistic duties. One participant described the stress of keeping up with schoolwork: *“As a campus journalist, we have a lot of delayed outputs that we have to submit since we are always out of class and doing our things for the school paper and contests. I struggle to manage my time and do my schoolwork”* (P10). Another participant shared how competitions make it even harder to balance tasks: *“When the press con is fast approaching, we, campus journalists, spend time practicing and preparing, even to the point of being excused from the other classes. That is why I find it hard to answer my periodic exams. It is not easy to cope. There are also pending activities, and you do not know how to do them because you were not in the class, even though you will do it overnight”* (P7).

These accounts align with Medrano’s (2019) findings, highlighting that engagement in journalism-related activities can significantly affect students’ attendance and academic performance. Mateo et al. (2019) similarly emphasize the need for support to help campus journalists manage their dual responsibilities. Beyond time constraints, campus journalists also encounter added stress from expectations and workload. One participant noted: *“Another is that you will be given additional work as a campus journalist. For example, I thought I was already done with my article last time, only to find out I was given another to do. Things like these, sudden tasks will just eat up your time for other school work”* (P8).

Mangompit (2023) argues that student journalists face various obstacles—including stress, adaptability challenges, and connectivity issues—which can further complicate their academic journey. Despite the challenges, campus journalists develop vital qualities such as self-discipline, critical thinking, and organizational skills, which are invaluable for their future career pursuits.

The implications of these dual responsibilities extend beyond personal development, influencing educational practices and institutional support systems. Medrano (2019) suggests that schools often implement remedial and enrichment programs to help student journalists make up for missed lessons and assignments. This emphasizes how crucial institutional support is in juggling academic and journalistic obligations. One participant shared the struggle of maintaining grades, stating, *“Since we are in the SPJ, journalism is our major*

subject. There are also other subjects. When you are a qualifier in the DSPC or RSPC, you still have to manage your time to comply with all the requirements so that you will be able to maintain your grades in other subjects, not just in the major” (P6).

Additionally, Mateo et al. (2024) contend that mentorship and the creation of media-citizen councils can help student journalists properly manage their duties. However, some students are overwhelmed with tasks beyond their initial responsibilities. One participant shared, *“Also, my time management is my biggest problem even in school. I cannot comply with the requirements as a student because sometimes we do more writing practices or drawing exercises than being myself as a regular student”* (P12). By acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges faced by student journalists, educational institutions can implement policies that promote flexibility and well-being, ultimately enhancing student success.

3.1.2. Theme 2: Shaping Professional Identity

This encapsulates the transformative process through which campus journalists form and refine their self-concept as future professionals in the field of journalism. This theme comprised three (3) clustered themes that captured essential aspects of this professional identity formation: Career Growth and Aspirations, Journalism Motivation and Passion, and Personal Development and Growth.

Campus journalists’ career goals, reasons for entering the industry, and personal development through immersive journalism experiences all greatly impact how they build a professional identity. Hanusch et al. (2015) conducted a comparative study across eight countries, revealing that journalism students are largely driven by their love for the field, confidence in their writing abilities, and a strong desire to make a difference in society. Similarly, many campus journalists recognize journalism as a pathway to their future careers. As one participant shared, *“I think it is directly related to the course in the future. I plan to do broadcasting someday, but sometimes I become practical, and the things I have learned from journalism will help me if I take the HUMSS strand in senior high school, for instance, or in a program for college”* (P1). Although some student journalists enter the field out of curiosity or external influence, they gradually develop an appreciation for the profession.

One participant admitted, *“Actually, I have no choice about why I became a campus journalist. My parents wanted me to become one. I do not have any writing talent, but because I went into journalism, I saw my improvements”* (P5). This journey of self-discovery often leads students to embrace journalism as an academic pursuit and a meaningful career path. Another student highlighted, *“What I think is mostly directly related to*

journalism is my desire or dream to be a newspaper writer in the future” (P3).

Beyond career aspirations, journalism enhances students’ critical thinking and awareness. Fierens et al. (2023) examined how Belgian journalism interns saw professional ethics, emphasizing that ethical issues are crucial to forming professional identities. This aligns with a participant’s realization: *“My knowledge about journalism widened and my writing skills improved more. My perspective towards media changed. We should know both sides of the story before writing about them” (P3).* These experiences illustrate how campus journalism fosters professional growth by equipping students with the skills and ethical principles necessary to navigate the media industry.

To support the formation of professional identities, educational institutions should integrate real-world media experiences with career development programs. Hanusch et al. (2015) stress the significance of curricula that address both the love for journalism and the desire to achieve social change. Additionally, Chioma et al. (2015) highlight the need for mentorship programs that guide students through challenges, such as job stability and gender discrimination, ensuring an inclusive environment. By fostering ethical training, practical exposure, and mentorship opportunities, institutions can play a significant role in shaping the generation of journalists.

3.1.3. Theme 3: Guiding Hands Influence

The theme emphasizes the significance of mentorship, collaboration, and support systems in shaping student journalists’ experiences. According to Valencia-Forrester (2020), practice-based learning, such as internships and university-led programs, plays a significant role in training future journalists, especially as traditional newsrooms shrink and media landscapes evolve. Similarly, Casinghino (2015) emphasizes that structured feedback and collaborative projects enhance students’ media literacy and improve learning outcomes. Zheng et al. (2019) also assert that student journalists who engage in collaborative journalism projects develop technical and interpersonal skills, including teamwork, adaptability, and communication. These studies collectively suggest that mentorship and collaborative environments are crucial in fostering confident and capable student journalists.

The experiences of student journalists reflect these insights. One participant noted the influence of their campus paper adviser, stating, *“Maybe, Sir Ralph (campus paper adviser) because he has a lot of unbelievable experiences and he is to be proud of” (P3).* Another journalist shared admiration for a fellow student, explaining, *“I was impressed by Kuya Pono because he*

was able to join the National Schools Press Conference last year” (P1). These examples demonstrate how mentorship and role models inspire aspiring journalists.

Collaborative experiences also play a crucial role in journalism training. One participant described their teamwork experience, saying, *“When there are group works in journalism, yes, school-based. We met and grouped to research on the news. After which, we are writing news together. That makes me enjoy” (P11).* Another participant emphasized the value of competitions, stating, *“As a participant in the DSPC, desktop collaborating English contest, it was fun since I appreciate our teamwork, the laugh, the joy, and the learning we get from each other” (P10).* These reflections align with Casinghino’s (2015) assertion that collaboration fosters technical proficiency and critical thinking skills.

Moreover, student journalists recognize the motivational role of teachers and peers. One participant shared, *“Ma’am Sales told us that it is good to be a campus journalist. That is why I am here” (P8).* Another highlighted the encouragement from family, stating, *“My mother encouraged me to draw and to join DSPC” (P12).* These experiences reinforce the significance of guidance from educators and family members in shaping a journalist’s path.

Finally, press conferences serve as an avenue for both learning and motivation. A participant remarked, *“Another is when we won as third place in radio broadcasting in the press conferences. It is my first to win a press con” (P4).* Another stated, *“First, during competition, it is when you win. It makes me very happy” (P8).* These narratives aligned with Zheng et al.’s (2019) findings that structured collaborative experiences enhance students’ leadership, problem-solving skills, and engagement.

By fostering mentorship and collaborative networks, educational institutions can support student journalists in developing their professional identities and technical skills. Valencia-Forrester (2020) argues that models like pop-up newsrooms and purpose-driven projects provide accessible, real-world learning experiences that prepare students for the evolving media industry. Casinghino (2015) and Zheng et al. (2019) further emphasize that mentorship and teamwork strengthen journalism competencies and build resilience and adaptability. Thus, prioritizing mentorship and collaboration within journalism education ensures that students are well-equipped for future challenges in the field.

3.1.4. Theme 4: Ethical Investigative Challenges

Ethical investigative challenges in campus journalism arise from the tension between truth-seeking and responsible reporting, as student journalists navigate dilemmas related to bias, privacy, and institutional

constraints. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021) stress that journalism must balance truth-telling with minimizing harm, yet campus journalists often face censorship and a lack of legal protection when uncovering sensitive issues. One student journalist acknowledged this challenge, stating, *“Also, the issues that we cover as campus journalists are very controversial; sometimes we have to go to the office of the concerned people or the principal’s office to ask about the school’s budget”* (P6).

Similarly, Hanitzsch et al. (2019) highlight how institutional influences shape press freedom, which in a school setting may limit the scope of investigative reporting. Some student journalists struggle with reporting on issues that cannot be published due to confidentiality, as one participant noted, *“One is the issues that cannot be published and make others aware because it is very confidential; issues that others should not know about”* (P5). Student journalists risk facing backlash without proper ethical frameworks, making it crucial to provide structured ethical guidelines and training.

To address these issues, journalism programs must incorporate ethical education, guaranteeing that students possess the critical thinking abilities necessary to tackle intricate investigative conundrums, as Ward (2018) suggested. One student journalist emphasized the importance of verifying information, explaining, *“I correct my friends whenever they hear news and consider it true without verifying it, and they thank me after”* (P11). However, Deuze and Witschge (2020) argue that strict ethical constraints can sometimes impede investigative activities, resulting in a contradiction between institutional restraints and journalistic integrity. Some student journalists expressed difficulty in covering sensitive issues such as early arranged marriages, as one participant shared, *“Additionally, the issues that we sometimes cover are too private, especially when it is school-based and you know the person. I find it difficult to interview because their privacy will be released in the article”* (P7).

Schools must promote press freedom while imparting ethical responsibility so student journalists can develop investigative perseverance and accountability. One participant reflected on the pressure of crafting news reports, stating, *“It is stressful to be a campus journalist. Sometimes, we still need the guidance and assistance of our co-campus journalist when crafting our news report”* (P4). Educational institutions can help campus journalists navigate ethical dilemmas while maintaining journalistic integrity by equipping them with ethical knowledge and investigative skills.

3.1.5. Theme 5: Mastering Journalistic Craftsmanship

This involves refining both writing and visual storytelling skills, which are essential for effective news reporting. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021) argue that journalistic excellence is rooted in disciplined writing, observation, and verification, emphasizing that student journalists must hone their ability to present clear and compelling narratives. This sentiment is reflected in the experience of one student journalist who shared, *“I did not have any idea about journalism before. When I joined campus journalism, I learned about journalism. I think I had improvements. I learned how to write, which is helpful because some subjects require writing essays or compositions. So, I think I greatly improved my writing skills”* (P1).

Furthermore, Richards (2022) emphasizes that improved writing ability results from the fusion of analytical and critical thinking abilities, which are frequently fostered in journalism education through experiential learning. One participant affirmed this: *“I had more experiences in writing. I became better”* (P5). Similarly, another noted the role of journalism in enhancing both linguistic and observational skills, saying, *“I think I became more observant; my grammar was more improved. I also became updated with news. Like that. Another thing is that I do better in my speaking skills in radio broadcasting”* (P6). These statements highlight the impact of journalism training in developing writing precision, news awareness, and communication skills.

While writing is still a fundamental journalistic skill, Briggs (2019) underscores the increasing importance of multimedia literacy, claiming that contemporary journalism necessitates striking a balance between textual and visual narrative. Beyond writing, student journalists encounter challenges in incorporating artistic elements into their work. One campus cartoonist describes a specific difficulty in press conferences, sharing, *“One challenge I face as a cartoonist is executing every element in drawing during the press conferences. The time is so short.”* This aligns with García and Stark’s (2020) findings that many student journalists lack formal training in visual journalism, making it difficult to integrate artistic components effectively.

Additionally, Deuze (2021) contends that students must develop technical proficiency in photography, video production, and digital editing due to the increasing digitalization of journalism. These viewpoints suggest journalism education should adopt a more multidisciplinary approach, fusing traditional writing instruction with modern digital and artistic skills to prepare students for today’s media landscapes.

3.2. Emerging Themes of The Lifeworld of the Campus Journalists in Schools Press Conferences

Seven (7) emerging themes were articulated through arduous procedural data analysis and interpretation. They were all synthesized from 55 formulated meanings, 55 initial themes, and nine clustered themes.

3.2.1. Theme 1: Holistic Journalism Growth

Holistic Journalism Growth encapsulates how campus journalists develop both personally and professionally through their engagement in press conferences. Their experiences fostered essential skills, adaptability, and a broader understanding of the journalistic field, shaping their identities as future media practitioners. This theme is rooted in two clustered themes: Personal and Professional Growth and Skills Development.

Holistic journalism growth encompasses personal and professional development as campus journalists navigate the rigorous demands of school press conferences. Williams, Guglietti, and Haney (2018) highlight that journalism students' professional identities are shaped by their experiences in reporting, writing, and engaging with real-world journalistic challenges. Deuze (2021) argues that journalism is as much a mindset as a craft, and the quest for greatness, which frequently entails anxiety and uncertainty, promotes resilience and skill development. Additionally, adjusting to demanding broadcasting duties and novel subjects pushes students to think critically about their work, supporting Kovach and Rosenstiel's (2021) assertion that journalism is based on self-discipline, moral obligation, and public duty. These findings suggest that the lived experiences of campus journalists not only refine their technical skills but also cultivate their confidence, adaptability, and ethical awareness.

The accounts of campus journalists further illustrate this holistic development. Many students experience immense pressure when competing in press conferences. P1 admitted, *"Before, when I was in elementary, I was joining the contest confidently. But when I entered high school and joined a press conference, I felt pressure."* Similarly, P6 stated, *"I was culture-shocked because there are many things to accomplish: quizzes and reporting. That is why I am pressured and afraid when I am reporting."* This sentiment aligns with Maniou, Stark, and Touwen's (2020) argument that journalism's high stakes encourage professional discipline, especially when students are required to think critically and produce correct content under pressure. Overcoming this pressure, however, leads to confidence and mastery. P9 reflected, *"Before, I was very timid, very quiet. When I entered SPJ, there were many reporters, and you could not say no. So, you have to do the task, and I have discovered that I excel in speaking and have been making good progress."*

Beyond technical skills, campus journalists develop resilience through personal sacrifices. P8 shared, *"Sometimes, I do not have time to spare for my family since I am busy writing articles."* Meanwhile, P11 described the physical toll of journalism training: *"I have eye bags. When we practice, I stay up late at night, and even when I am very sleepy, I endure it because I want to make excellent outputs."* These experiences underscore the commitment required to thrive in journalism, mirroring the discipline expected in a professional newsroom. Williams et al. (2018) stress that students' confidence and capacity to function in challenging journalistic situations are greatly influenced by experiential learning, and these experiences contribute to their overall growth.

The theme of holistic journalism growth also highlights the importance of curiosity, adaptability, and perseverance. P7 noted, *"I have been curious since the start; until now, I have still been curious about things."* This curiosity drives one to pursue stories and develop deeper analytical skills, reinforcing Deuze and Witschge's (2018) perspective that journalism is an evolving craft requiring continuous learning. P4 reflected on their transformation: *"As a campus journalist, personal growth is evident in me, from hesitation to confidence. I was shy to ask questions, but now I have learned to speak up."* Such narratives reflect how students transition from uncertainty to proficiency, ultimately shaping their professional identity.

As students juggle their personal and professional obligations, the strain of journalistic duties also offers growth opportunities. According to P10, *"My advice to the younger ones, do not be shy when you interview people."* This statement highlights the evolving self-assurance of campus journalists. Similarly, P12, a cartoonist, noted, *"I have learned so much here more than any regular student, because there are special subjects that are given to us just like journalism. Another is being a cartoonist because I have learned so much about the topic that my coach gave me."* These reflections demonstrate that students cultivate technical expertise and personal growth through sustained effort, mentorship, and hands-on experience.

According to these perspectives, journalism education must incorporate both technical and psychological training to prepare students for the realities of the field. Schools can equip campus journalists with the resources needed to thrive in the evolving media landscape by fostering a learning environment that supports skill acquisition and personal development. By embracing the challenges of press conferences, students emerge as confident, disciplined, and ethically aware individuals ready to navigate the dynamic world of journalism.

3.2.2. Theme 2: Ethical Journalism Impact

It reflects how campus journalists navigated ethical challenges and responsibilities in their reporting. The concept of Ethical Journalism Impact emphasizes how important honesty, precision, and responsibility are to campus journalism. Student journalists frequently encounter ethical dilemmas, including threats to editorial independence, the need for thorough information verification, and the obligation to advocate through their reporting. To meet these obstacles, a strong dedication to ethical decision-making and professional standards is necessary.

Some participants reflected on their evolving ethical awareness in journalism. P3 admitted their perspective shifted after realizing the impact of their words: *"Before, I did not care about the people, even though they received words which hurt them, because they are wrong. But now, even though I know they are right, if I uttered hurtful words, I was already guilty, especially when I already knew both sides of the coin."* Similarly, P8 emphasized the importance of verifying both sides of a story: *"Before, I was like, when I hear one side of the story, I immediately believe. Nowadays, I should know both sides of the story. Also, accurate information should be pushed forward so you will not get in trouble."*

This aligns with Díaz-Campo and Segado-Boj (2015), who argue that digital journalism introduces news ethical challenges, requiring updates to journalistic codes of ethics to address misinformation and bias. The responsibility to report truthfully becomes even more significant when personal relationships are involved. P3 shared an experience writing an editorial about a close friend, revealing the emotional and ethical difficulties that arise: *"Once, when Sir and I were writing an editorial story, he gave me an assignment on the story, and the person involved was a close friend. Writing an editorial is like judging someone; sadly, my close friend did something wrong. That is why I was guilty of telling her the truth."*

Beyond campus settings, ethical journalism education influences the broader media landscape. Creech (2021) promotes a civic and public values curriculum, preparing campus journalists to engage in ethical decision-making. This perspective is reflected in P5's realization of journalistic integrity: *"What I have learned is to be a voice for others, that will not let money work instead of doing things right."* Ethical journalism also involves recognizing media biases and external pressures. P3 recounted a personal experience that altered their perception of journalists: *"My mother was killed without justice, that is why I hated the media men, because it seemed like they had received money from the big people, so they would not speak the truth. That is the reason why I hated them. But*

today, things have changed. I have realized that it was right for them not to speak the truth because their lives might be in danger, so my perspective about them changed." This account echoes broader concerns. Brainstorming is a journalistic safety tool and reporters' ethical dilemmas when covering sensitive issues. Peterlin and Peters (2019) suggest that incorporating creative teaching strategies, such as analyzing media portrayals in TV shows like *The Newsroom*, can help student journalists address complexities.

Lastly, ethical journalism fosters awareness of societal issues. P10 reflected on the privilege and responsibility of being a competitive journalist, which promotes professional development and friendship among journalists: *"I became aware of the issues in my surroundings, even in the country. As a campus journalist, I realized there is always a positive and negative side. You get to know the things that others need to know."* By emphasizing ethical consciousness in journalism education, student journalists can develop the critical thinking skills needed to uphold responsible reporting standards and navigate the moral complexities of the profession.

3.2.3. Theme 3: Journalism's Competitive Edge

This theme captures how campus journalists navigated the high-stakes press conference environment, where competition drove skill enhancement, resilience, and adaptability.

The interaction of fundamental abilities, teamwork, and learning shapes journalism's competitive edge and reflects the varied experiences of campus journalists. One essential technique that helps journalists generate concepts, hone their viewpoints, and create compelling stories. One participant noted, *"Brainstorming. If you are there already, you do not know what to do, that is why you are required to brainstorm so that you can have more ideas"* (P6). Craft and Davis (2016) stress that to maintain truth and credibility, journalism is a verification discipline that necessitates critical thinking and idea production to maintain truth and credibility furthermore, because press conferences offer a forum for healthy rivalry and mutual learning. As a campus journalist described, *"Press conferences are a friendly competition and memories"* (P8). Hanitzsch and Vos (2017) emphasize that journalism is a team effort as much as an individual one, with cooperation bolstering industry standards and rivalry providing motivation.

Keeping up with current affairs and obtaining pertinent information strengthens journalistic proficiency and the profession's influence on public opinion. One participant shared, *"Gathering data and being involved in news being talked about"* (P9), highlighting the importance of staying engaged with timely events. Carlson (2020)

asserts that journalism flourishes when journalists actively participate in events as they happen, guaranteeing that they give society relevant and timely information. The findings suggest that experiences in competitive journalism enhance social credibility and emotional fortitude in addition to honing technical abilities. Writing under pressure is common experience for campus journalists, with one stating, *"We are just writing and writing,"* (P5), while another reflected, *"When you are writing, you might feel pressure and at the same time you are excited. Mixed emotions. So, I think it is good to be a campus journalist"* (P6). This supports the conclusions of Harcup (2021), who emphasizes that to educate prospective journalists for industry demands, journalistic training should incorporate real-world issues.

Additionally, as journalists are expected to maintain ethical standards and provide reliable information, participating in journalism-related events fosters a sense of responsibility and trustworthiness. One campus journalist advised, *"Read more books because you will need that in the future. You need to read a lot. You need to seek more information. Be friendly. Be respectful to people and the things around you"* (P7). Tandoc and Thomas (2021) emphasize that journalists establish credibility by being dependable, open, and dedicated to reporting the truth. This credibility is something that student journalists also recognize, as one noted, *"It is good to be a campus journalist because people will trust you when they know that you are a campus journalist"* (P11).

Furthermore, competitive journalism is not just about winning but also about personal growth. As another participant expressed, *"I am happy. When I first joined the DSPC, it seemed like nothing to me because I was drawn into the experience and what it is like to join a contest"* (P8). Competitive journalism experiences help campus journalists develop holistically by promoting information acquisition and interpersonal skills, giving them the professionalism and integrity needed for professional practice.

3.2.4. Theme 4: Transformative Journalism Journey

This theme captured how campus journalists underwent personal and professional growth through their participation in press conferences.

The Transformative Journalism Journey reflects the profound emotional, social, and professional growth that campus journalists experience. Journalism is not just about reporting facts—it is a journey of self-discovery, adaptability, and perspective-building. Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen (2021) emphasize that journalists engage in emotional labor that shapes their storytelling and interactions. This is evident in how student journalists navigate their emotions, as P4 shares, *"Nervousness,*

shyness, being friendly to others, and the way I interact with others." Press conferences and journalistic work provide an avenue to overcome these challenges, fostering confidence and resilience.

Beyond emotional growth, journalism also transforms perspectives on society. Wahl-Jorgensen (2019) argues that journalism connects deeply with audiences by capturing hidden narratives and emotions. This aligns with P1's realization: *"It changed my views or perspective on many things, like politics; how the everyday scenarios are similar to TV series. Accidents happen, and kept secrets are revealed. Just like that."* Through reporting, campus journalists develop a more critical understanding of real-world events, seeing beyond the surface to uncover deeper societal patterns.

Moreover, journalism fosters adaptability and lifelong learning. Thomson (2021) highlights the importance of resilience in high-pressure reporting environments, a skill journalists cultivate over time. P7 captures this mindset, stating, *"Life is not easy. You should not focus on things that you have and on things that your eyes see. You should explore more and think widely because life has many better opportunities."* Journalism encourages a broader worldview, pushing individuals to seek knowledge and challenge their assumptions.

Ultimately, the transformative journey of campus journalists extends beyond professional skill-building—it shapes their ethical awareness, resilience, and role in society. Voltmer, Christensen, and Wasserman (2019) emphasize the media's role in shaping public narratives and fostering critical discourse. As student journalists navigate emotional and intellectual challenges, they grow as individuals and contribute to a more informed and ethical media landscape.

3.2.5. Theme 5: Relentless Truth-Seeking Journalism

This theme captures how campus journalists are driven by a commitment to uncovering and reporting the truth despite challenges. Their pursuit of accuracy, fairness, and integrity reflects their dedication to responsible journalism. It embodies an unwavering dedication to factual accuracy, ethical reporting, and investigative depth, ensuring journalism remains a pillar of democracy. Wahl-Jorgensen (2019) emphasizes that journalists must navigate evolving digital landscapes, utilizing fact-checking tools and data-driven verification to combat misinformation. Similarly, Carlson (2017) asserts that public skepticism increasingly challenges journalistic authority, necessitating greater transparency in sourcing and editorial processes. Given that journalists must constantly adjust to shifting public expectations while upholding their position as social watchdogs, this change emphasizes the growing significance of informed research procedures and truth-

seeking awareness. As P7 noted, *“For me, it is about learning to read more or to research things as a campus journalist. You need to know the facts first.”* This underscores the necessity of thorough verification before disseminating information.

Beyond media organizations, truth-seeking journalism has an impact on public confidence and social discourse. Vos and Thomas (2018) suggest that viewers are more willing to interact with transparent news organizations about their corrections and verification processes, which emphasizes the importance of truth reporting. However, truth-seeking is not without its moral and ethical dilemmas. As P3 reflected, personal experiences with media bias can shape perceptions. *“My mother was killed without justice, that is why I hated the media men, because it seemed like they had received money from the big people so that they would not speak the truth. That is the reason why I hated them. But today, things have changed. I have realized that it was right for them not to speak the truth because their lives might be in danger.”* This illustrates journalists' difficult reality when navigating ethical constraints and personal safety. Similarly, P2 acknowledged the prevalence of misinformation, stating, *“In journalism, it is two-faced; you would not know which one is true or fake. One must do deeper research to know the truth behind every controversy.”*

Despite these challenges, truth-seeking journalism strengthens democratic accountability and fosters an informed society. Wasserman (2019) notes that in politically divided settings, journalists encounter growing antagonism, searching for the truth, a moral and professional dilemma. Still, those who uphold investigative rigor and ethical integrity reinforce public trust. As P6 affirmed, *“The first thing is that if you hear or know any news, you should check whether it is fact or fake because nowadays, the spread of fake news is rampant, and many people are manipulated by it. You better check if it is factual.”* In an era of widespread disinformation, the role of journalists as gatekeepers of truth remains critical, ensuring that news serves its fundamental purpose of informing rather than misleading the public.

3.2.6. Theme 6: Journalism Life-Harmony

This explored the challenge of balancing the often-demanding nature of journalism work and the need to maintain personal well-being. The balance journalists aim to attain between their hard work obligations and personal lives is known as journalism-life harmony. The nature of journalism frequently involves erratic schedules, demanding work settings, and the need to fulfill deadlines, all of which can interfere with personal routines and family relationships.

Snyder et al. (2019) highlight that digital technology has further blurred the lines between work and personal life, making it harder for journalists to detach from their professional responsibilities. Journalists' well-being and interpersonal relationships may suffer due to overwork and stress from this constant connectedness. As P6 said, *“It is stressful to manage our time because you will be divided between being a campus journalist and a student. Workloads are heavy, added with piles of school tasks to accomplish.”*

The emotional and physical toll of journalism extends beyond time management. Chaudhary (2023) found that female journalists frequently work extra and have their time invaded by job-related obligations, which results in lost family time and elevated stress levels. This is evident in P2's experience: *“We are always stressed because of our massive workloads as campus journalists. We cannot attend classes in other subjects and find it hard to comply with the outputs for the other subjects. I also sometimes had a mental block.”* Similarly, P1 and P5 emphasized the impact of journalism on their sleep, with P5 stating, *“Lack of sleep. I usually stay up late at night to read and read more articles to learn. Sometimes, I worked up late to finish the articles.”*

Moreover, the emotional strain of journalism is heightened when expectations are unmet. As P1 recalled, *“When we lost, we were disappointed because we expected to win. Of course, we had our rigorous training. This experience was my hardships, suffering, and sacrifices during the training.”* Such experiences highlight how journalism, while rewarding, can lead to emotional fatigue when efforts do not yield expected results.

Addressing these challenges requires structural adjustments in journalism programs and media institutions. Hughes et al. (2021) argue that while professional identity can help journalists cope with stress, excessive workloads often diminish these coping mechanisms. Huda and Azad (2015) further emphasize that unclear objectives, tight deadlines, and inadequate managerial support contribute to an unbalanced work-life dynamic. To foster a more sustainable environment, organizations and academic institutions must implement strategies such as flexible schedules and mental health support to help journalists maintain professional excellence and personal well-being.

3.2.7. Theme 7: Journalistic Discovery Path

This theme encapsulates how campus journalists evolved in their careers as they experimented, adapted, and refined their journalistic skills and approaches. Through the journalistic discovery route, aspiring journalists can explore new learning possibilities, deepen their grasp of real-world situations, and acquire a wide range of life views. As an investigative field, journalism enables

people to interact with various subjects critically and form a comprehensive viewpoint on current social issues.

According to Deuze and Witschge (2019), journalists undergo a lifelong learning process as they hone their craft by engaging in investigative work and adjusting to changing media environments. Through exposure to real-world situations, journalists gain a greater understanding of world events and cultural quirks, which improves their capacity to report sensitively and accurately. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2019) further assert that journalistic inquiry develops flexibility and fortitude, empowering reporters to handle challenging circumstances while maintaining moral principles.

The theme implies that an investigative journalistic path fosters personal and intellectual development. Investigative and field reporting activities push journalists to question assumptions and embrace a more holistic perspective. According to Harcup (2021), journalism experiential learning fosters critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, both of which are necessary for successful reporting. Furthermore, examining many viewpoints encourages empathy and inclusivity in narrative, supporting Tandoc, Jenkins, and Craft's (2021) contention that multiple voices and narratives should be reflected in responsible journalism. In addition to broadening their professional knowledge, journalists who engage in exploratory learning opportunities strengthen their bonds with the communities they cover and uphold journalism's moral and revolutionary role in society.

P12 underscored the expansive learning opportunities within journalism, stating, *"I encourage you to join here (SPJ) because it is nice (to be a campus journalist); it will give you more learning and more to explore. Your skills will improve, especially in drawing, and you will learn many techniques."* This perspective highlights how journalism fosters skill enhancement and ongoing learning. Similarly, P1 reflected on the transformative impact of journalism, explaining, *"It changed my views or perspective on many things, like politics; how the everyday scenarios are like a TV series. Accidents happen, and kept secrets are revealed. Just like that."* This observation illustrates how journalism broadens perspectives and deepens critical thinking about societal realities. P7 further emphasized the importance of exploration and intellectual growth, asserting, *"Life is not easy. You should not focus on things that you have and on things that your eyes see. You should explore more and think widely because life has many better opportunities."*

Beyond expanding their professional knowledge, journalists who embrace exploratory learning strengthen their connections with the communities they cover,

reinforcing journalism's ethical and transformative role in society.

3.3. Emerging Theme on Campus Journalists' Future Self-Perception

One (1) emerging theme was articulated through arduous procedural data analysis and interpretation.

3.3.1 Emerging Theme 1: Strategic Career and Passion Exploration

The only theme underscored the strategic nature of campus journalists' career planning. Campus journalists' perspectives on their future careers reflect a balance between practical decision-making and personal aspirations. As both a profession and a passion, journalism requires individuals to weigh career stability against the fulfillment of public service and storytelling. Zelizer (2018) notes that journalists often struggle to maintain their commitment to truth-seeking while securing stable employment, leading many to explore alternative career paths within and beyond the media sector. Hanusch (2019) further emphasizes that external factors, such as job market conditions, changes in the media industry, and ethical issues, significantly shape journalists' long-term career planning.

The findings suggest that financial security, family influence, and personal passion shape campus journalists' future career choices. Some students feel constrained by parental expectations, as P1 expressed: *"My parents once told me to be practical. The college program I should take should be a way of acquiring money easily, because nowadays, life is much harder. But deep inside me, I wanted to pursue journalism. Maybe after finishing the course, my parents permit, I might as well chase after journalism."*

For others, journalism poses ethical and safety concerns. P2 admitted, *"I am so not sure because of the risks and possible harm it might bring in consequence of the truth."* Similarly, P9 hesitated, stating, *"I am thinking about it, but I am also scared about some news that journalists receive threats."* These concerns highlight how safety considerations impact students' willingness to pursue journalism as a profession.

Some participants see journalism as a valuable experience rather than a long-term career. P4 reflected, *"Maybe, I can still use my knowledge from SPJ in writing, especially English and grammar. It will also be helpful in my college journey, especially regarding how I should talk with people."* Likewise, P8 stated, *"I have learned so much, so it is going to be a waste if I do not utilize it."*

However, some students have already decided on alternative career paths. P10 affirmed, *"I think journalism is not for me. I do not have the talents to become one, so I will pursue a different career."* Meanwhile, others

remained undecided, such as P6: “*I’m debating between law and journalism. Because I am not good at Math, I think I will be in English.*”

These findings underscore that financial realities, personal interest, and risk assessments shape career decisions among campus journalists. According to Deuze and Witschge (2020), modern journalism careers extend beyond traditional newsroom roles to digital media, content creation, and strategic communication, offering broader career prospects. Usher (2021) further suggests that the creative aspect of journalism allows students to explore multimedia storytelling beyond news reporting. Ultimately, career flexibility, lifelong learning, and strategic decision-making play essential roles in shaping the professional futures of campus journalists.

IV. CONCLUSION

Campus journalism shaped students’ identities through resilience, ethical decision-making, and teamwork. It fostered adaptability, discipline, and a commitment to truth, despite ethical dilemmas and work-life balance challenges. While it reinforced democratic values, institutional support was crucial for sustainability. Ultimately, it equipped campus journalists with essential skills and a lifelong passion for storytelling.

The contexts of campus journalists’ lived experiences underscored the transformative impact of journalism on their personal and professional growth. Through ethical and competitive journalism, they developed resilience, critical thinking, and a strong commitment to truth, enhancing their role as responsible media practitioners. Institutional support was essential to sustaining their well-being and ensuring their integrity in the evolving media landscape.

Campus journalists’ future self-perception was shaped by their ability to balance passion with practical career considerations, exploring diverse paths within and beyond traditional journalism. Their engagement in extracurricular and professional experiences refined their career orientation, equipping them with industry-relevant skills for evolving media landscapes. Emphasizing career flexibility and lifelong learning, their journey highlighted the need for strategic decision-making to navigate the challenges and opportunities of modern journalism. This study recommends the following:

4.1. Educational institutions can provide structured training programs, mentorship opportunities, and resources to help campus journalists balance academic and journalistic responsibilities while ensuring their well-being.

4.2. Journalism educators may integrate workshops on

ethical decision-making, censorship, and institutional constraints to equip students with the skills needed for responsible reporting.

4.3. Establishing mentorship programs with professional journalists, media practitioners, and alumni can provide campus journalists with industry insights, career guidance, and real-world exposure. Schools can foster partnerships with media organizations to offer internships, training, and networking opportunities.

4.4. Future research may explore how campus journalism influences students’ career trajectories and skill development. Studies could investigate the impact of campus journalism on professional success, ethical decision-making, and adaptability in the ever-changing media industry.

4.5. Since this study focused on a specific group of campus journalists, future research may consider a broader sample across various regions and school settings. This could provide a more comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities faced by student journalists in diverse contexts.

4.6. The findings can be applied to other fields that require critical thinking, communication skills, and ethical decision-making. Public relations, marketing, and communications training programs can benefit from the holistic development approach observed in campus journalism.

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Contemporary Indigenous Narratives and Environmental Concerns: Reimagining Santhal's Sustainable Synergy with the Environment

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Abstract— This paper examines the intersection of contemporary indigenous narratives and environmental concerns, with a focus on the Santhal community's traditional ecological knowledge and its representation in modern literature. Drawing from oral traditions, folk tales, and recent works by indigenous authors such as Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar and Rejina Marandi, the study examines how Santhal narratives articulate a deep-rooted and symbiotic relationship with the natural world. These narratives do not merely reflect environmental themes but reimagine sustainability through the lens of indigenous wisdom, spiritual ecology, and community-centric stewardship of nature. By foregrounding Santhal cosmology, rituals, and subsistence practices, the paper highlights how such narratives critique exploitative development, deforestation, and displacement, while offering alternative modes of environmental ethics. This reimagining of the Santhal worldview underscores the urgent need to integrate indigenous perspectives into contemporary environmental discourses. Ultimately, the paper argues that Santhal stories serve as both cultural repositories and tools of resistance, fostering a sustainable synergy between humanity and the environment.



Keywords— Santhal narratives, indigenous literature, environmental concerns, sustainability, eco-criticism

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, environmental discourse has witnessed a growing recognition of the role of indigenous knowledge systems in fostering sustainable ecological practices. Among the many indigenous communities in India, the Santhals, one of the largest Adivasi groups, offer a compelling case for understanding the deep interconnection between culture and nature. Their narratives, both oral and written, articulate a worldview in which the environment is not merely a backdrop to human activity but a living entity, animated by spiritual forces and communal responsibilities (Damodaran, 2015). This ecological consciousness, embedded in myths, rituals, and storytelling traditions, provides valuable insights into alternative frameworks of sustainability that challenge dominant anthropocentric paradigms.

Contemporary indigenous literature has become a powerful medium for articulating these concerns. Authors like Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar and Rejina Marandi have brought Santhal voices into the mainstream literary sphere, reflecting the community's enduring relationship with the environment and their resistance to ecological exploitation. In *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015), Shekhar portrays the impact of mining and industrialization on Santhal lands, illustrating how traditional ecological knowledge and lived experiences serve as tools of cultural and environmental resistance. Similarly, Marandi's *Becoming Me* (2021) reclaims the indigenous female voice, linking gendered experiences with land, water, and forest in ways that affirm a holistic and sustainable view of life.

Environmental degradation, resource displacement, and climate change disproportionately affect indigenous

communities, yet their narratives often remain marginal to mainstream environmental discourse (Shiva, 2005; Baviskar, 2003). By re-centering Santhal cosmology and narrative traditions, this paper seeks to challenge such exclusions and foreground indigenous epistemologies in reimagining sustainability. These stories do not merely preserve ecological knowledge but actively engage with contemporary issues from deforestation and land alienation to identity politics and cultural survival.

Through an ecocritical and postcolonial lens, this study argues that contemporary Santhal narratives reimagine sustainability as a synergistic relationship between humans and the environment, a relationship rooted in respect, reciprocity, and resilience. In doing so, they invite a rethinking of development and ecological responsibility, asserting that indigenous worldviews are not relics of the past but vital resources for envisioning a sustainable future.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of indigenous narratives and environmental concerns has increasingly garnered scholarly attention, particularly in the fields of ecocriticism, postcolonial studies, and indigenous literature. Scholars emphasize that indigenous communities across the world possess ecological knowledge systems that are rooted in sustainable practices and spiritual relationships with the natural world (Shiva, 2005; Kothari, 2010). This knowledge is often encoded in oral traditions, stories, and rituals, forming an alternative epistemology that counters exploitative developmental paradigms. In the Indian context, the Santhal community represents a significant example of this ecological worldview, as reflected in both traditional and contemporary narratives.

Indigenous storytelling traditions are integral to the preservation of ecological knowledge and cultural identity. According to Berkes (2012), traditional ecological knowledge is not just about the management of natural resources but about the relational understanding of nature as kin. This kinship-based view is echoed in Santhal cosmology, where forest, land, and water bodies are not inert resources but sacred entities imbued with life and agency. Damodaran (2015) notes that the Santhal understanding of nature is deeply embedded in their folklore, songs, and rituals, offering a holistic model of sustainability that predates modern environmentalism.

Contemporary Santhal writers have begun to document and reinterpret their community's ecological consciousness through written narratives. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015) is a pioneering text in this regard. The collection of short stories brings to the fore the lived experiences of Santhal individuals grappling with

the consequences of industrial encroachment, displacement, and environmental degradation. One of the stories, for instance, critiques coal mining operations that not only devastate the environment but also rupture the socio-cultural fabric of the community. As Kujur (2021) argues, Shekhar's work resists the romanticization of tribal life while simultaneously highlighting how modern development imperils indigenous connections to land and ecology.

Similarly, Rejina Marandi's *Becoming Me* (2021) explores the intersectionality of gender, identity, and the environment within Santhal society. Marandi reclaims the indigenous female voice by portraying the environment not as a backdrop but as a nurturing and spiritual force. Her narratives reflect the ecofeminist idea that women and nature are co-exploited under patriarchal and capitalist systems (Merchant, 1980), and that indigenous women often bear the brunt of environmental violence while also leading resistance movements rooted in cultural memory and ecological stewardship.

Ecocriticism has evolved from analyzing representations of nature in literature to incorporating the perspectives of marginalized communities, including indigenous peoples. As Huggan and Tiffin (2010) suggest, postcolonial ecocriticism seeks to decolonize environmental thinking by incorporating indigenous epistemologies that challenge Western binaries between nature and culture. In this context, Santhal narratives offer an important contribution to reimagining sustainability through a relational and communitarian lens. Scholars such as Baviskar (2003) and Kothari and Joy (2017) have emphasized that the marginalization of Adivasi knowledge in national environmental policy reflects broader patterns of epistemic injustice. Incorporating Santhal voices in environmental discourse thus becomes not only a literary project but a political act of reclaiming space for indigenous agency and wisdom.

The reviewed literature affirms that indigenous Santhal narratives both oral and contemporary, are rich sources of ecological knowledge and resistance. These stories not only preserve environmental ethics but actively challenge the destructive tendencies of modern industrial development. Contemporary authors like Shekhar and Marandi exemplify how literary expression can bridge cultural memory with ecological consciousness, offering sustainable alternatives rooted in indigenous worldviews. However, there remains a need for more scholarship that centers Santhal voices within environmental studies, particularly through frameworks that are decolonial, feminist, and ecocritical.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology grounded in literary analysis, ecocriticism, and indigenous studies. The study primarily involves close textual analysis of selected contemporary Santhal literary works, particularly Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015) and Rejina Marandi's *Becoming Me* (2021), to examine how environmental concerns and indigenous ecological knowledge are represented and reimagined through narrative.

The research is interpretative in nature and relies on textual evidence to uncover patterns, themes, and symbolic frameworks that reflect the Santhal community's sustainable relationship with the environment. An ecocritical lens is employed to analyze how the natural world is depicted in these texts, and how such depictions challenge dominant anthropocentric and capitalist environmental discourses (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). This is complemented by insights from postcolonial theory, particularly its concern with representation, marginality, and the politics of voice (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002), to contextualize the narratives within broader socio-political realities affecting Adivasi communities in India.

To further ground the literary analysis, the study engages with secondary sources, including ethnographic accounts, ecological studies, and critical works on indigenous epistemologies and environmental justice. These sources help illuminate the cultural, historical, and ecological contexts in which Santhal narratives are embedded. Works by scholars such as Vandana Shiva (2005), Felix Padel (2010), and Amita Baviskar (2003) are used to frame the intersection of indigenous identity, environmental degradation, and resistance in South Asia.

Data collection is limited to publicly available primary texts (i.e., published literary works) and scholarly articles relevant to the Santhal community and ecocriticism. No fieldwork or ethnographic interviews were conducted, though published ethnographies and historical analyses have been used to contextualize narrative themes.

The methodology also considers the positionality of the researcher in interpreting indigenous narratives. Efforts are made to approach the texts with cultural sensitivity and to foreground indigenous voices rather than speaking on their behalf. The research privileges the authority of indigenous authors and aims to amplify their perspectives in the ongoing discourse on environmental sustainability and cultural survival.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that draws from ecocriticism, postcolonial theory, and indigenous epistemology. These approaches together provide a robust lens to examine the environmental dimensions of contemporary Santhal narratives and to interrogate the ways in which indigenous communities articulate sustainability, ecological resistance, and cultural continuity through storytelling.

Ecocriticism serves as the primary theoretical lens for analyzing the relationship between literature and the environment. As defined by Glotfelty (1996), ecocriticism is "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment," concerned not only with how nature is represented but also with how literary texts engage with pressing ecological issues. This framework allows for an exploration of how Santhal authors narrate environmental degradation, deforestation, and extractivism, while simultaneously preserving a vision of harmony and sustainability rooted in traditional ecological knowledge.

Within ecocriticism, deep ecology and ecojustice perspectives are particularly relevant. Deep ecology, as articulated by Arne Naess (1973), emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and advocates for a biocentric worldview, one that aligns closely with Santhal cosmology, where forests, rivers, and animals are regarded as kin. Ecojustice, meanwhile, addresses the disproportionate environmental burdens borne by marginalized communities (Gaard & Murphy, 1998), making it an essential tool to understand the Santhal critique of industrial exploitation and environmental racism through literature.

Postcolonial theory adds another crucial dimension to the analysis by foregrounding the historical and political marginalization of Adivasi communities within the Indian nation-state. Scholars such as Spivak (1988) have emphasized the silencing of subaltern voices, while Guha (1997) has argued for the recognition of peasant and tribal agency in resisting colonial and postcolonial state violence. This theoretical lens enables the study to situate Santhal narratives within a continuum of resistance literature that contests dispossession, cultural erasure, and ecological imperialism. Postcolonial ecocriticism, as developed by Huggan and Tiffin (2010), further bridges the two disciplines by advocating for a decolonized understanding of environmental justice, rooted in indigenous knowledge and local traditions.

Lastly, the framework incorporates indigenous epistemology, which values oral traditions, spiritual relationships with nature, and communal worldviews as legitimate and sophisticated forms of knowledge. Scholars like Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) have stressed the

importance of decolonizing research methodologies and recognizing the intellectual sovereignty of indigenous peoples. For the Santhal community, this means validating their narratives—not merely as cultural artifacts, but as repositories of ecological wisdom and lived resistance. By foregrounding Santhal authors such as Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar and Rejina Marandi, the study aligns with Smith's call to center indigenous voices and to treat literature as a mode of cultural survival and ecological expression.

Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a nuanced and culturally sensitive foundation for analyzing how Santhal narratives reimagine environmental ethics and sustainability. They facilitate a critical reading that honors indigenous worldviews while interrogating the structures of ecological injustice imposed by the modern state and capitalist development.

V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section delves into the intricate relationship between the Santhal community and their environment, as portrayed in contemporary indigenous narratives. By examining the works of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar and Rejina Marandi, we explore how these authors articulate environmental concerns and reimagine sustainable living through the lens of Santhal traditions and experiences.

1. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's Ecocritical Perspective

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, a prominent Santhal writer, intricately weaves environmental themes into his narratives, reflecting the community's deep-rooted connection with nature. In his collection *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, Shekhar portrays the Santhal people's harmonious coexistence with their environment and the disruptions caused by industrialization and modernization. The stories highlight how the Santhals' livelihoods, rituals, and cultural practices are intertwined with the natural world, emphasizing a symbiotic relationship that is threatened by external forces (Shekhar, 2015).

Shekhar's narratives serve as a critique of exploitative development projects that disregard indigenous knowledge systems and environmental ethics. The ecological concerns presented in his works resonate with the principles of deep ecology, advocating for the intrinsic value of all living beings and the need for a biocentric worldview (Naess, 1973). By foregrounding the Santhals' ecological wisdom, Shekhar challenges anthropocentric paradigms and calls for a reevaluation of development practices that harm both the environment and indigenous communities.

2. Rejina Marandi's Exploration of Identity and Environment

Rejina Marandi's novel *Becoming Me* offers a poignant exploration of the intersection between environmental degradation and the erosion of indigenous identity. Set against the backdrop of ethnic conflicts and displacement, the narrative follows the protagonist's journey of self-discovery and resistance. Marandi illustrates how the loss of ancestral lands and ecological disruption contribute to a crisis of identity among the Santhal people (Marandi, 2014).

The novel underscores the importance of land and nature in shaping cultural identity and collective memory. Marandi's portrayal aligns with the concept of ecofeminism, highlighting how environmental exploitation and patriarchal structures jointly oppress marginalized communities, particularly indigenous women (Merchant, 1980). Through her storytelling, Marandi emphasizes the resilience of the Santhal community and the necessity of preserving both environmental and cultural heritage.

Rejina Marandi's *Becoming Me* (2021) approaches environmental consciousness through a gendered and spiritual lens. Her protagonists often find solace, strength, and identity through their interaction with forests, rivers, and ancestral lands. The narrative voice in several of her poems and short stories draws from Santhal mythologies, where nature is personified and revered. For example, the forest is not a backdrop but a living presence — both protector and witness to the protagonist's transformation.

This ecospirituality resonates with the principles of deep ecology (Naess, 1973), which emphasizes the intrinsic value of non-human life and the interconnectedness of all beings. Marandi's writing not only celebrates Santhal beliefs but also subtly critiques modernity's alienation from nature. The feminine voice in her narratives often becomes a metaphor for both environmental and cultural fertility, situating women as vital custodians of ecological knowledge (Merchant, 1980).

3. Reimagining Sustainable Synergy through Indigenous Narratives

The works of Shekhar and Marandi collectively reimagine sustainability by presenting indigenous narratives that emphasize balance, reciprocity, and respect for nature. These stories challenge dominant narratives that prioritize economic growth over ecological well-being and cultural preservation. By centering indigenous perspectives, the authors advocate for a model of sustainability that is rooted in traditional ecological knowledge and communal values.

4. Gender, Environment, and Resistance

Both Shekhar and Marandi highlight how environmental and gender injustices intersect within indigenous societies.

Marandi's stories frequently depict women as both victims and agents of environmental resistance, drawing attention to the gendered experience of displacement, water scarcity, and loss of forest livelihoods. These stories reflect the ecofeminist claim that women, particularly those in indigenous and rural contexts, are disproportionately affected by environmental destruction but also play central roles in sustaining ecological balance (Gaard & Murphy, 1998).

In *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, Shekhar also explores these intersections. For instance, women characters who labor in polluted or degraded landscapes—such as coalfields, carry the psychological and physical burdens of environmental degradation, even as their resilience fuels communal survival. These portrayals serve to expand the conversation around environmental justice by foregrounding the double marginalization of Adivasi women.

Storytelling in both Shekhar's and Marandi's works functions as a mode of resistance and reclamation. These narratives not only preserve endangered ecological practices but also embody what Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) describes as a decolonizing methodology, a way of asserting indigenous presence and knowledge in the face of cultural erasure. By writing in English or bilingual modes, these authors bridge oral traditions with contemporary literary forms, making Santhal environmental knowledge accessible to wider audiences while preserving its authenticity.

The act of storytelling thus becomes an ecological practice in itself—a way to resist the violence of forgetting and to ensure the transmission of cultural memory and ecological wisdom across generations.

The analysis of Santhal narratives reveals a richly layered understanding of sustainability that is inseparable from identity, spirituality, and resistance. Authors like Shekhar and Marandi offer counternarratives to dominant environmental discourses, foregrounding indigenous ethics that prioritize relationality, reciprocity, and respect for the land. Their work affirms that the path to ecological justice must include the voices, values, and visions of indigenous communities, not as passive victims of environmental crises, but as active architects of sustainable futures.

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Echoes of Resilience: Trauma and Resistance in the Intersecting Narratives of Mona and Anjum

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Abstract— *Mona and Anjum*, two literary characters shaped by systematic oppression and marginalisation, are the subjects of this paper. The study delves into the theme of trauma and resilience in Mona's narratives in *Mona's Story* by Urvashi Butalia and *Anjum in The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Arundhati Roy. It examines the experiences of Mona and Anjum through the lenses of trauma studies, feminist theory, and intersectionality. The paper highlights that trauma is not just a personal affliction but a socio-political construct that affects those on the fringes of society. Drawing on Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, Judith Butler's concept of precarity, and G.A Bonanno's view of natural recovery after trauma, the paper explores how the journeys of these two transgender individuals reflect the broader struggles of transgender people and marginalised communities in navigating imbalanced power and social structures. Notably, the paper underscores the broader societal implications of the experiences of two transgender characters, underlining the need for systemic change.



Keywords— *Trauma, Resistance, Challenges, Psychological, Gender.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Resilience, Trauma, and Resistance: Defining the Concepts

The fundamental concepts of resilience, trauma, and resistance are essential to understanding survival narratives. Cathy Caruth explains that trauma affects the individual psychologically, leaving emotional scars and distressing memory, identity, and perceptions. Caruth says, "It is a rupture in a person's existence often emerging in displaced, fragmented forms. Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena (Caruth, 1996, p. 11). Caruth concentrates and redefines trauma as a psychological injury more than a personal crisis, a disturbance in the flow of identity and memory. Caruth explains that trauma comes back in a broken pattern. It does not tell the story; instead, it shows reactions like hallucinations, flashbacks or disturbing thoughts. Describing trauma as "a rupture in a

person's existence," Caruth clarifies that it disrupts an individual's sense of self. These effects do not appear to be all of a sudden; they return unexpectedly and can be frightening. Caruth finds trauma is not only about the event itself but how the mind fights with it gradually. To Caruth, trauma can cause lasting pain to the victim. In contrast, Bonanno refers to resilience as the ability to adapt and recover from the experience of trauma that varies depending on social, cultural, and psychological factors. Bonanno's research underlines that most people's exhibition of resilience is natural, without professional intervention. Understanding Judith Butler's concept of resistance offers a socio-political aspect to trauma and survival. Butler finds resistance an ethical and political way to fight against oppressive systems. This emphasis on resistance can make the audience feel empowered and inspired. Resistance is a new avenue to live and connect with others. "Let us face it. We are undone by each other. And if we are not, we are missing something."— (Butler, 2004, p. 28). When societal injustice causes individuals suffering, resistance becomes a

means of survival and evidence of still-existing power. People and communities reject to be overlooked using actions of resistance, therefore making their existence known. Butler urges us to see past trauma's suffering and concentrate on how individuals act to challenge authority, restore their dignity, and reconstruct their common identity.

II. METHODOLOGY

A comparative analysis is executed through a close reading of two characters Mona and Anjum, investigating their narratives of trauma resistance and framing of their identity. The Study investigates through the lens of gender, caste and religion and social exclusion. Qualitative interpretation method is applied with a socio-political and cultural context. The study engages in the recurring themes such as silence, defiance and survival of the two transgender characters that marks how each character steers marginalization and seeks agency.

III. DISCUSSION

Trauma marks a profound impact on the identities of Mona and Anjum, the two characters whose intersecting narratives bring the complexities of resilience and resistance within the framework of cultural and societal challenges. Both the characters structure their identities through personal experiences and trauma. Mona's story tells how she had to limit seeing herself as fitting to the family problems and meet societal expectations. Anjum experiences discrimination of gender and religion, showing how identity is affected by multiple layers of social bias. The authors Urvashi Butalia and Arundhati Roy depict the intricate narratives of the two transgender characters and set the fundamental examples of how trauma and resistance are demonstrated within the socio-political and cultural landscape of present India. Both the characters are part of the tumultuous history of their times. Mona and Anjum's stories depict their pain and the collective struggle caused by social violence. Both the characters incorporate gender experiences, bringing out the themes of resilience and identity from a feminist perspective. The life of Mona is marked by a series of traumatic experiences that she derives from intersections between gender, loss and dislocation. On the background of a rich plot, the narrative of *Mona's Story* reveals Butalia's deep exploration of not only the personal scars but also the aftermath of the emerging adversities. The author showcases how memories of pain, shared and personal, shape a woman's identity. She survives in a broken world and attempts to find direction despite gender inequality.

In a juxtaposition, the powerful character of Arundhati Roy's Anjum questions traditional ideas on gender and identity. Anjum's life is a constant balancing act of personal desire and societal expectations. Roy fills Anjum's life with a sense of belonging and a cognizance of the ongoing battle against dominant power structures of gender. Anjum's layered existence challenges broader feminist movements and aids and inspires to rethink how marginalized identity can contest oppression and produce space for new stories.

Mona and Anjum's story focuses on a broader feminist perspective that questions the role of gender allotted by patriarchal systems. Both the characters stand as symbols of resistance in their worlds. Mona reclaims her voice amid historical silence, and Anjum shows an example of fluid identity challenging strict gender rules. Their stories become the tool of resistance—using a way to affirm identity and strength on the surface of trauma.

Trauma in the Life of Mona

Gendered trauma is especially the central theme in many of Butalia's writings. Prominent feminist, historian, and writer she regularly accents silenced voices—especially those of women—whose lives have been moulded and damaged by political, social, and cultural upheavals. In Mona's story, she creates a close-knit story that shows how profound trauma could affect one person's life—Mona. Using Mona, Butalia raises awareness of the human expenses of abuse, neglect, and society's indifference towards the suffering of women. Mona's trauma arises from personal experiences and the larger patriarchal arrangements that shape her world. Mona's story is marked by emotional neglect, sexual abuse, abandonment and social isolation. Her childhood environment is devoid of love and safety. The lack of emotional security in the family is coupled with instances of physical abuse. The unspoken feelings turned out to be a trauma in her life. The silence for such abuses compounds her suffering. As she grows up, she is marked as 'different'. Her mental struggles and unaddressed trauma make her an object of ridicule instead of being empathetic to her. Societal unacceptance and lack of emotional support add another layer of trauma. She faces detest

One day, the *maulana* molested me. I remember.....At first he admitted he had done this and later he swore he had not. So, my father punished me by sending me back to him. I hated it, I was frightened of him. My mother fought with my father about this, but he refused to change, he was adamant. He insisted the fault was within me (Butalia Web).

The use of silence is the most powerful narrative technique of Butalia, which conveys that trauma is not always about

visible scars but often remains hidden. Marking silence also indicates the failure of society to address trauma as experienced by the victim, Mona. The mental state of Mona is marked by confusion, withdrawal and unstable emotion. Butalia portrays Mona's trauma not to reduce her but to vehicle suffering as an absolute, complex lack of familial support. Sometimes, Mona may seem incomprehensible, which Butalia intends to convey as trauma does not follow a neat narrative arc.

Mona's psychological state—marked by confusion, withdrawal, and emotional instability—is a testament to how unresolved trauma can grind down one's sense of identity and belonging. Butalia does not reduce Mona to her trauma but portrays her as someone whose suffering is real, complex, and shaped by a lack of institutional or familial support. Butalia questions the role of family and establishes the truth of the failure of family, legal institutions and mental health system to prevent Mona's suffering. Mona is a representative of silenced voices. The narrative highlights how trauma is often shared, a collective experience amidst marginalised women.

Anjum's Trauma of Gender Identity and Social Exclusion

Anjum, born Aftab, is the protagonist in Arundhati Roy's novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Roy crafts Anjum and uses her to symbolise resilience and marginalisation, portraying multiple layered personal, social, political and existential traumas. Anjum realises her different identity, which causes confusion and emotional pain. The familial unacceptance leads her to alienation. The mother, Jahanara, could not understand whether every child is a girl or a boy, but Aftab's identity is binary. The father, Mulaqat Ali, tried to instil manly valour in Aftab and imparted stories that would inspire him to fight like men, but all in vain as the woman inside him was more prominent. The love of Jahanara for Aftab, the so-called son, was subdued due to societal pressure of conformity, which dictated that Aftab should conform to the gender assigned at birth, pushing Anjum away from her biological home into the hijra community: "Aftab stepped through an ordinary doorway into another universe" (Roy, 2017, p. 25). This act of self-exile marks the beginning of her lifelong confrontation with rejection and trauma. Anjum's fluid identity and society's binary constructs offer no space for her. Trauma occurs in Anjum's life during the 2002 Gujarat riots. While travelling to Gujarat, she was caught in violence where Muslims were systematically targeted, which was the after-effect of the Godhra incident in which pilgrims from Ram mandir were attacked. The brutal killings and her narrow escape from death scar her deeply. Anjum escaped being a hijra, where the binary identity saved her. She hides in a graveyard to

safeguard herself. The communal violence deeply affects her psyche. The trauma is not only of violence but also of identifying fragile identity in a politically charged and polarised nation.

Post-riot, Anjum returns to Delhi and cannot reclaim her old life. She is a changed person now. The Trauma Anjum has undergone forced her to be another self-imposed and spiritual person. She starts living in a graveyard and builds a Jannat guest house, a place for marginalised and outcasts. She turns the graveyard into a metaphor for survival, where life coexists with death.

The mainstream society constantly made her feel like 'other', which is another trauma Anjum faced besides events. She suffers a conflict of identity and is mentally a victim of loss of faith in relationships, and all these reflect emotional trauma and existential longing. The invisible trauma of Anjum is a national narrative. As a hijra and a riot survivor, she stands at the intersection of manifold forms of marginalisation. Her pain critiques the state's failure to protect the marginalised. Roy uses Anjum as a mouthpiece to bring the silenced histories and neglected narratives of modern India often shared, a collective experience amidst marginalised women.

Mona and Anjum: Two Stories of Quiet Strength and Resistance

Resistance does not always come with protest. Sometimes, it comes silently through survival, refusal to give up, or small acts. Mona and Anjum exhibit two ways of standing firm against pain and injustice. The two different people teach us how to fight back in their own ways and confirm that life challenges are to be handled not only with defiance but also with dignity, resilience and courage. Mona's life is full of silence. No one listens to her hidden pain, but Butalia, as a speaker, makes people hear Mona's life. Mona does not shout but endures. Mona shows strength by staying alive.

However, Anjum resists more openly. Anjum faces social rejection and cruelty. "Quote to be added." After the riot in Gujarat, she survived and realised her existence was not to live a life of oppression but to live her life on her own terms. Leaving her life behind, she moves into a graveyard. She creates a Jannat Guest House, a home for the forgotten and rejected, a new space where all are accepted. She creates something new, a paradise where she can live with her ancestors and live in her Utopia.

Mona resists pain, quietly surrenders, and accepts her fate, whereas Anjum is bold and recognises her marginal state; she creates a paradise where equality is a prime concern. However, both women fight back in their processes. Mona taught extreme endurance and Anjum protests by creating a new space for the downtrodden. Together, they show

resistance in many forms through speaking, remembering or accepting challenges in the world unfair to them.

Comparative Journey: Mona and Anjum

Aspects	Mona	Anjum
Resistance Type	Silent defiance, endurance	Radical defiance, communal resistance
Community	Women's solidarity groups	Khwabgah: Alternative family structure
Intersectionality	Gender oppression	Gender, religion, caste-based oppression
Outcome	Personal survival	Structural change, new community formation

IV. CONCLUSION

Mona's Story is not merely a narrative of marginalised women but a powerful experience of trauma survivors highlighting the social structures that continue violence against women. Butalia urges readers to protest the uncomfortable truths, abuse, neglect and the invisible mental health of Mona and many other women of the country who remain silent, resist the pain and accept life as it comes her way. The life of Mona is marked by pain, and the exhibition of the status demanded change. The author does not merely count Mona's experiences. She digs the layers of quietness that surround her to give voice to unsaid words. Butalia's narrative is a testimony of resilience not only of Mona but of countless women who suffer visible suffering due to societal indifference and loss of identity. Mona's journey is representative of a wide reality where women's lives are shaped by regular oppression, but speaking remains a form of resistance. Mona's stories are often buried, but the narrative stands as a beacon that reminds us that healing begins with truth-telling and the fight for justice begins with the courage to challenge uncomfortable realities. *Mona's Story* is not about survival but about the transformative power of perceiving the responsibility that comes with it, which refers to the idea that acknowledging one's own suffering and the suffering of others is the first step towards healing and change.

Anjum survives amidst trauma, a narrative that depicts endurance that refuses the simplistic definition of

victimhood. Roy does not create Anjum as a passive sufferer but as a courageous, complex and profoundly transformative character. Born as Aftab in old Delhi and later embracing her identity as Anjum, her life reflects the complexities of gender, social exclusion and religious violence. Anjum's trauma does not remain a private wound. She situates it within the broader political landscape of India. The Gujarat riot marks a massive scar in her psyche that changes her life completely; additionally, it becomes a turning point in her life. Her going to the graveyard is initially a withdrawal from mainstream society and the juncture of transformation in the process she builds the Jannat Guest House. Creating an improvised shelter for outcasts, broken and abandoned—Anjum asserts a radical community, a community that challenges societal norms and provides a safe space for those who are marginalized. It is here where living comes to heal. Anjum emerges as a powerful force of resistance. Her body becomes a site of resistance, and her voice sabotages silence. Roy allows Anjum to live with dignity on her terms and invites readers to witness the political tensions that aid in turning people's lives into disasters. Anjum is the most memorable character in contemporary Indian literature, for universality is embedded in her fight for belonging. She speaks to everyone, makes them feel like a family, and redefines love. Anjum binds the broken being empathetic and secures justice in the fragile mind. She epitomises hope, reminds us to face relentless marginalisation, and teaches us to rebuild from ruins and love again. Her story is not about survival but about demonstrating to others how to live in a world that refuses humanity.

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Denial of Performance: A Study of Gender Performativity and Resistance in *The Color Purple* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

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Abstract— The present paper will attempt a comparative study of the two female characters, Celie from *The Color Purple* (1982) by Alice Walker and Janie from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) by Zora Neale Hurston, through the lens of gender performativity, a concept by Judith Butler. Butler argues that gender should not be seen as something constant or given. Rather, it is a performance that is imposed upon us by narrative heterosexuality. Celie and Janie initially fulfilled the patriarchal expectations of their gender by performing various gender roles expected of them. Gradually, as their journey progressed, they resisted and rejected the roles assigned to them, such as an obedient wife, caring mother, and a woman who does all the household work. On the one hand, Celie rejects the role of a subservient wife after achieving financial independence by setting up a pants business. On the other hand, Janie fights for autonomy through her rejection of the control of her husband over her. There are numerous scenes in both novels that illustrate how gender performance is enforced upon them and is eventually rejected by both. By analysing the characters of both the protagonists through the lens of gender performativity, this paper will elaborate upon how those two women reasserted their autonomy and identity by resisting what was expected of them because of their gender.



Keywords— Gender, roles, Performance, Gender Performativity, Judith Butler, Autonomy, Identity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender Performativity and Patriarchal Control

Simone de Beauvoir's assertion that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (de Beauvoir 267) marked the foundation for the understanding of gender as a socially constructed phenomenon. For Beauvoir, sex refers to biological differences, but gender is shaped by cultural norms, social expectations, and lifelong conditioning. According to her women are not inherently passive but are made to occupy that position through a process of internalization. Her distinction between sex and gender becomes especially relevant when examining women's lived experience in literature.

Based on Beauvoir's groundwork, Judith Butler redefines the conversation by arguing that gender is not only constructed but also performed. In *Gender Trouble*, she

posits that gender is constituted through repeated behaviors and actions. She says, "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performativity constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results." (Butler 25). It means that gender is not something we are, but something we do through repeated actions, behaviors, and roles. Society creates expectations for how men and women should act. This is how gender performativity shapes gender and social roles, which restricts how one has to behave in certain roles and situations.

At the outset of the respective texts, Celie and Janie are expected to fulfill idealised expectations of how a woman should be—obedient, enduring, and quiet. At the beginning of the novel *The Color Purple*, Celie embodies a gender performance marked by subjugation and silence.

Her gender identity is formed by how others see and treat her, and she internalises the notion that her worth is defined by her ability to please and serve the men in her life. Silence and acceptance are used against her, imposed by patriarchal figures who teach her to associate submission with virtue. She learns to be obedient from the very beginning. In the beginning, she is warned by Pa, “You better not never tell nobody but God. It’d kill your mammy” (Walker 3). He introduces Celie to a world where silence is survival. This marks the start of Celie’s journey of internalised silence and trauma. This continues when she is forced into marriage with Mr. _____, who treats her as property but not a partner. She says, “He (Mr. _____) beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don’t never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, git the belt. The children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie you a tree. That’s how come I know trees fear man” (Walker 23), here, her emotional numbness and dehumanization reflect the deep impact of prolonged oppression.

It shows her as a passive and silent character who accepts abuse as part of her role as a woman. This is not an inherent trait but socially rehearsed behaviors that align with cultural expectations of womanhood in her context. Her obedience is not just a result of social conditioning, but it is a performance rehearsed through her encounters with trauma.

On the other hand, in Zora Neale Hurston’s novel *Their Eyes were Watching God*, Janie’s identity is shaped by others’ expectations of how a woman should look, act, and speak. Her grandmother pushes her into marriage with Logan Killicks, hoping that she will get a protective environment, and she is told to be obedient and to prioritise her domestic life to lead a happy married life. Her voice is frequently silenced by the men in her life. First by Logan Killicks, then by Joe Starks, who insisted her to remain quiet in public, especially in the store, because her place is to be “seen and not heard”. These expectations show a performed gender role rooted in survival. Janie is taught to perform the role of a dutiful and obedient wife, but she finds herself stuck in a relationship where love and emotional connection are absent, and she realises that she has to find a way out.

Bell Hooks emphasises that, “oppressed people resist by identifying themselves as subjects, by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, telling their story.” (Hooks 43). This is true of both the protagonists understanding they have to break the socially constructed roles to assert their autonomy. Gradually, they both evolve from passive subjects of patriarchal control to the owner of their own identities. Silence is often interpreted as submission, but in both of

these novels, silence becomes a form of resistance. Celie’s early muteness is a form of survival. Her act of writing letters to God is a seminal act of resistance. It creates a space for her inner voice to grow as it cries for help. When she writes to Nettie, “I am so happy. I got love, I got work, I got money, friends and time” (Walker 218), she reflects that she is no longer performing the roles assigned by society. Gradually, this voice becomes a force of resistance when she finally says to her abuser, “That jail you plan for me is the one in which you will rot” (Walker 187), here her language shifts from coping to confronting. She asserts her autonomy further when she starts her business of sewing pants. It also symbolises the stitching and designing of her new self. This business is symbolic of autonomy, and with this, she reclaims the power to define her work, value, and identity.

In contrast, Janie’s silence works differently. She speaks only when it is needed, and even her silence becomes charged with meaning. Gradually, she sheds the roles that others had scripted for her as she says, “Ah done live grandma’s way, now Ah means tuh live mine” (Hurtson 156). Her quiet refusal to mourn on Tea Cake’s death is not just an act of mourning on her terms; it is a defiance of societal rituals that reduce women to performative roles even in moments of pain. She rejects the role of a woman who mourns over the death as “she was too busy feeling grief to dress like grief” (Hurtson 239). She also rejects her loveless marriage and asserts her desires. She says, “Ah wants things sweet wid mah marriage lak when you sit under a pear tree and think” (Hurtson 56). Her assertion of her bodily desires reaffirms her position as a subject, not a mere object.

II. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Both the characters redefine what it means to be a woman- not through conformity, but through resistance, creativity, and love. They challenge Butler’s notion of gender as a performative act, not by completely escaping it but rewriting the script. They do not only refuse to perform passively assigned roles but craft new identities rooted in autonomy. They challenge traditional definitions and restricted norms of femininity and assert their individuality and through resilience, Celie and Janie reclaim their subjectivity, asserting that womanhood is not a role to be played, but a life to be lived freely.

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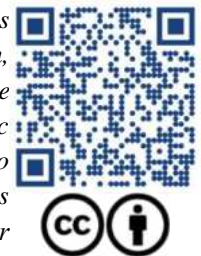
Reimagining Society: A Critical Study of Taslima Nasrin's Lajja

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Abstract— *Taslima Nasrin's Lajja (Shame)*, first published in 1993, is a landmark novel that transcends its immediate socio-political context to present a broader critique of communalism, religious fundamentalism, and gender oppression. While the novel documents the anti-Hindu violence in Bangladesh following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in India, it goes beyond mere reportage to propose a secular, humanistic vision for society. This article critically examines *Lajja* as a novel that not only reflects reality but also reimagines a society free from communal divisions. Using textual analysis and critical perspectives, this study highlights how Nasrin's narrative structure, characterization, and ideological stance contribute to her broader goal of social transformation.



Keywords— *Secularism, Communalism, Nationalism, Gender Oppression, Religious Fundamentalism, Identity, Humanism, Feminist Critique.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature has long served as a powerful medium for social critique, and Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja (Shame)* stands as a compelling example of how fiction can challenge societal norms and provoke discussions on fundamental human rights. First published in 1993, *Lajja* is a novel that captures the horrors of communal violence, particularly the persecution of the Hindu minority in Bangladesh following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in India.

While deeply rooted in the socio-political climate of the early 1990s, the novel transcends its immediate historical context to offer a broader critique of religious fundamentalism, gender oppression, and the fragility of secular nationalism. Rather than simply documenting violence, Nasrin uses her narrative to question the very foundation of identity and belonging in a society that prioritizes religious majoritarianism over inclusivity.

The novel revolves around the Dutta family—Sudarshan Dutta, his wife Kironmoyee, their son Suranjan, and daughter Maya—who have lived in Bangladesh for generations and consider it their homeland. However, as communal tensions escalate, their religious identity as

Hindus makes them targets of persecution. The abduction of Maya becomes a pivotal moment in the novel, symbolizing the vulnerability of women in patriarchal and religiously charged societies. Suranjan, once an idealist who believed in secularism, undergoes a transformation as he realizes that the land he loves no longer guarantees him safety or dignity. Through the disintegration of the Dutta family's faith in Bangladesh's secular promise, Nasrin raises urgent questions about the nature of nationalism, citizenship, and the possibility of coexistence in an increasingly polarized world.

At its core, *Lajja* is not just about the suffering of one family; it is an allegory for the betrayal of secular ideals in postcolonial South Asia. While Bangladesh was founded on the principles of linguistic nationalism and secularism in 1971, Nasrin's novel suggests that these ideals were gradually eroded by the growing influence of religious fundamentalism. This shift is not unique to Bangladesh; rather, it reflects a broader pattern in many postcolonial nations where majoritarian religious identity has been used as a tool for political dominance. Critics such as Shabnam Tejani argue that *Lajja* "mirrors the disillusionment of

secularists across South Asia, where the dream of an inclusive nation-state has been repeatedly undermined by communal politics" (Tejani 67).

Furthermore, *Lajja* does not limit its critique to communal violence alone. It also examines the intersections of gender and religious persecution. Maya's abduction is not merely an act of communal revenge; it underscores the way in which women's bodies are often used as battlegrounds in ethnic and religious conflicts. As scholar Sanchita Islam notes, "Nasrin's portrayal of Maya's fate challenges the patriarchal structures that render women disposable in times of socio-political crisis" (Islam 201). In this sense, *Lajja* functions as both a political and feminist text, calling for a reimagining of society where human rights, rather than religious identity, determine an individual's place in the nation.

This article explores how *Lajja* goes beyond its immediate socio-political context to serve as a visionary text advocating for a secular and egalitarian world. By analyzing the novel's narrative structure, thematic concerns, and critical reception, this study highlights Nasrin's role in reshaping discourses on nationalism, religion, and gender. The discussion will be divided into three key areas: the novel's critique of religious fundamentalism and its impact on national identity, its feminist interrogation of gender-based violence, and its ultimate call for a humanistic society free from communal divisions. In doing so, this paper aims to illustrate how *Lajja* remains as relevant today as it was at the time of its publication, offering a crucial perspective on the ongoing struggles for secularism and gender justice in South Asia and beyond.

II. COMMUNALISM AND THE FRAGILITY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

One of the central themes of *Lajja* is the fragility of national identity when religion becomes a divisive force. The Dutta family has always identified as Bangladeshi first and Hindu second, believing that their place in society is secure. However, as anti-Hindu sentiments rise following the Babri Masjid demolition in India, they become outsiders in their own land. Nasrin illustrates this through Suranjan, who initially refuses to believe that his Muslim friends and neighbors would turn against him. However, as the violence intensifies, his faith in national unity is shattered: "He felt like a refugee in his own country. The land he had loved so deeply no longer seemed to belong to him" (Nasrin 142).

This disillusionment reflects Nasrin's broader argument that nationalism based on religious identity is inherently unstable. As critic Niaz Zaman observes, *Lajja* "exposes the limits of a nationalism that excludes minorities

from its fold, turning them into perpetual outsiders" (Zaman 56). Nasrin's depiction of Suranjan's crisis of identity is a powerful indictment of communalism. She suggests that a truly secular nation must be built on inclusivity, where citizenship is not determined by religious affiliation.

III. PATRIARCHY AND THE DOUBLE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

While *Lajja* is often analyzed for its critique of religious fundamentalism, its portrayal of gender oppression is equally significant. The character of Maya, Suranjan's sister, symbolizes the vulnerability of women in a patriarchal and communal society. When she is abducted by fundamentalists, her fate becomes a metaphor for the dual oppression faced by women—both as religious minorities and as female bodies subjected to male control. Nasrin describes Maya's abduction in stark terms: "Her body was not hers anymore. It belonged to those who had claimed her as their victory trophy" (Nasrin 88).

Critic Roushan Jahan argues that "Maya's fate reflects Nasrin's broader feminist critique, where women are rendered voiceless in both nationalist and religious discourses" (Jahan 123). Unlike Suranjan, who can still resist, Maya's body becomes a battleground for religious vengeance. Nasrin does not merely depict Maya as a passive victim. Instead, she uses her story to question the intersection of gender, religion, and violence. As scholar Sanchita Islam notes, "Maya's abduction is not just about religious persecution; it is about the systemic devaluation of women's autonomy in societies shaped by patriarchy" (Islam 201).

IV. SURANJAN'S DISILLUSIONMENT: A MICROCOSM OF A NATION'S BETRAYAL

Suranjan's character arc is central to Nasrin's argument. Initially a believer in secularism, he resists the idea of leaving Bangladesh, even when his family urges him to consider migration. However, as events unfold, he begins to see the reality of a society that has abandoned its secular ideals. His transformation is evident when he finally confronts his father: "I thought love for my country was enough. But love means nothing if the land itself does not want you" (Nasrin 178). Critic Shabnam Tejani interprets Suranjan's journey as an allegory for the failed promises of postcolonial nationalism: "Suranjan's heartbreak mirrors the disillusionment of secularists in South Asia, where the ideal of a pluralistic nation-state has repeatedly been eroded by religious majoritarianism" (Tejani 67). Nasrin's depiction of Suranjan challenges the romanticized notion of

nationalism and calls for a reimagining of national identity based on humanism rather than religious affiliation.

V. REIMAGINING SOCIETY: NASRIN'S VISION FOR A SECULAR FUTURE

While *Lajja* is often regarded as a bleak novel, its underlying message is one of hope. Through the destruction of the Dutta family's belief in the system, Nasrin calls for a radical restructuring of society. She proposes a vision where:

- a) **Religious Identity Does Not Define Citizenship:** A truly secular state must ensure that minority communities do not live in fear of persecution.
- b) **Women's Autonomy is Protected:** Maya's story underscores the need for legal and social frameworks that protect women from being used as symbols in communal conflicts.
- c) **Nationalism is Rooted in Humanism, Not Religious Identity:** The novel's tragic ending is a call to rethink the very foundations of national identity.

Critic Pradeep Sharma observes: "Nasrin's *Lajja* is not merely a lament; it is a manifesto for a future where secularism is not an ideal but a lived reality" (Sharma 220).

VI. CONCLUSION

Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja* is a novel that goes beyond topicality to offer a radical critique of communalism, patriarchy, and nationalism. Through the Dutta family's experiences, Nasrin exposes the fragility of secularism when religion becomes a political tool. At the same time, she provides a vision for a society where justice is not determined by religious majorities but by universal human rights. As the world continues to grapple with rising religious intolerance and gender-based violence, *Lajja* remains as relevant today as it was at the time of its publication. It is not just a novel about the past or the present—it is a blueprint for the future.

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Transformative Horizons: The Changing Landscape of Indian Tourism through the Empowering Contributions of Women Entrepreneurs

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Abstract— *The tourism sector is steadily expanding and is viewed as a promising domain for entrepreneurial endeavours. Due to its swift and persistent expansion, tourism is recognized as a potent avenue for attaining development. Women entrepreneurs, engaging in tourism as a developmental approach, can make positive contributions to the local or national economy. In fact, the increasing significance of women in the entrepreneurial landscape has emerged as a noteworthy phenomenon in the past few decades in the tourism sector. This paper delves into the crucial involvement of women in entrepreneurship within the vibrant domain of tourism in India. It attempts to highlight the contributions made by women entrepreneurs in recent years in reshaping and making their mark in Indian tourism.*



Keywords— *Entrepreneurship, Indian Tourism, Leadership, Tourism, Women Entrepreneurs.*

I. INTRODUCTION

“Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. In matters connecting them, who are you”- Swami Vivekananda.

One of the key sectors of the economy any country is tourism. In fact, it is one of the key potential areas of economic development and transformation in the world. This service industry creates enormous opportunities for employment generation as well as entrepreneurial practices, especially for the developing countries.

The economy of India is fast progressing and interestingly entrepreneurship, specifically speaking women entrepreneurship, is considered to be one of the main reasons for our growth. Women entrepreneurs create opportunities for employment as well as provide consultancy services to different business issues by planning and making correct decisions. Like any other industry, tourism also welcomes and encourages women participation not only as trained and untrained manpower,

but also as a business leaders and entrepreneurs. As a parent industry, tourism supports and encourages other allied areas to contribute more and create employment and business opportunities. The number of women entrepreneurs are increasing day by day and their contributions are also recognized and appreciated globally.

This paper delves into the crucial involvement of women in entrepreneurship within the vibrant domain of tourism. Against the backdrop of India's swiftly advancing economy, women entrepreneurs are recognized as substantial contributors to progress, not only providing employment opportunities but also offering consultancy services through strategic decision-making. The tourism sector, integral to the nation's economy, not only embraces women as an invaluable workforce but actively promotes their engagement in leadership roles and entrepreneurial endeavors. The main objective of this paper is to illuminate the factors shaping the success of women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry, underscoring their pivotal role in reshaping the dynamics of Indian tourism

and present success stories of four women entrepreneurs who are making their mark in the Indian tourism sector.

Utilizing a descriptive and exploratory methodology, the paper draws upon a diverse array of sources, including academic journals, government reports, industry publications, and pertinent books. The compilation of secondary data from newspapers, government bulletins, official websites, textbooks, video lectures, and blogs contributes to establishing a comprehensive contextual backdrop. I have presented four instances of successful women entrepreneurial ventures in India. With this, the paper attempts to show the influence of women entrepreneurs within the Indian tourism sector. It acknowledges the growing numbers of women entrepreneurs and the global recognition of their substantial contributions to the field.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper uses a qualitative and exploratory design to explore and understand how women entrepreneurs are changing the Indian tourism sector. The study is based on secondary data. It draws from existing sources like newspaper articles, academic journals, government reports, official websites and media coverage. Also additional insights were gathered through blogs, video, interviews and online platforms that share stories of tourism businesses that are led by women.

The study also uses case studies of four women entrepreneurs who played an important role in re-shaping tourism in India. These cases were shown to reflect diversity in background, type of business and level of innovation. Each of the cases show how women are using tourism not only as a business opportunity but simultaneously a way to promote culture, community engagement and social change.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India, the travel and tourism sector stands as the largest service industry, encompassing commercial, sports, medicinal, cultural, and historical tourism. The sector's primary objectives include fostering growth and promotion of tourism, ensuring India's competitiveness as a travel destination, and expanding and diversifying industry offerings to support job creation and economic development.

Initiated by the Government of India through the Ministry of Tourism, the "Incredible India" campaign strives to position India as an alluring and distinctive global travel destination. Since its commencement in 2002, the campaign has played a pivotal role in captivating the

imaginations of global travelers, presenting them with the sheer splendor and diversity that India encompasses.

The "Incredible India" initiative strategically utilizes a range of multimedia platforms, such as television, print, and digital media, to unveil the enchanting stories of India's landscapes, monuments, festivals, traditions, and culinary delights. This campaign has been instrumental in reshaping India's image into a must-visit destination, spotlighting its exceptional fusion of modernity and tradition.

At the core of India's tourism principles lies the ancient Sanskrit phrase, "*Atithi Devo Bhava*," which translates to "The Guest is God." This age-old philosophy encapsulates the essence of hospitality deeply ingrained in Indian culture. Anchored in the belief that guests mirror the divine, this concept underscores the paramount importance of treating visitors with the highest regard, warmth, and generosity.

Forecasts indicate that by 2028, India's tourism and hospitality sector is poised to generate revenue surpassing \$59 billion, with Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) estimated to reach 30.5 million during the same period. Given India's G20 Presidency and the celebrations of India@75 Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Ministry of Tourism has designated 2023 as the 'Visit India Year' to stimulate inbound travel. The Prime Minister envisions a mission-oriented strategy to boost tourism during the Amrit Kaal, with a strategic roadmap spanning the next 25 years. The overarching objective is to position India as the premier global travel destination by the time of India@100 celebrations in 2047, establishing unparalleled allure for visitors worldwide.

In alignment with these goals, the Ministry of Tourism plans to convene a Global Tourism Investors Summit in collaboration with Central Ministries and State/UT Governments. This summit aims to showcase investment and trade opportunities within the Indian tourism sector, enabling global investors to explore the diverse array of products and services it has to offer. The Prime Minister's vision includes a mission mode approach to tourism development during Amrit Kaal, with a strategic roadmap for the next 25 years, aspiring to position India as the foremost global travel destination by India@100 in 2047. As part of this initiative, the Ministry of Tourism is preparing to organize a Global Tourism Investors Summit in collaboration with Central Ministries and State/UT Governments, providing a platform for global investors to explore investment opportunities in the diverse landscape of Indian tourism.

Similar to other sectors, the tourism industry holds significant potential to foster sustainable economic growth

and empower local communities. The key to harnessing this potential lies in comprehending tourists and the intricacies of tourism processes. Recognized as a promising domain, the tourism industry is acknowledged for its capacity to generate employment, contribute to economic sustainability, and promote stability within communities.

Exploring entrepreneurial prospects within the Tourism Industry reveals an expansive landscape of opportunities. The industry, characterized by evolving travel patterns, a competitive market, and diverse tourist demands, provides a fertile ground for innovative ventures. Entrepreneurship in this domain thrives on creativity and the willingness to venture into new endeavors. Below are domains where emerging entrepreneurs can flourish:

- **Accommodation Sector:** Embracing a variety of options such as Boutique Hotels, Heritage Houses, Theme Villages, Motels (along highways), Guest Houses, Bed and Breakfast Accommodations, Farm Houses, and Home Stays.
- **Transportation:** Diversified opportunities encompassing Airlines and related businesses, Car Rental services, and specialized transportation services tailored for tourists.
- **Travel Services:** Entrepreneurial ventures in this category span Travel Agencies, Tour Operators, Guide Services, Language Interpreters, and Event Management.
- **Allied Industries:** Exploration of opportunities in Handicrafts and Souvenirs, as well as entertainment offerings like dance, music, shows, and communication services.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The societal progress is intricately linked to the advancement of women. In fact, women's entrepreneurship has been recognized as a pivotal catalyst for the economic growth and development of a nation. The contributions of women entrepreneurs extend beyond mere financial gains, as they play a crucial role in generating employment opportunities and offering innovative solutions to various managerial and business challenges through strategic planning and decision-making processes. The impact of women entrepreneurship is not only felt in the business realm but also extends to the social and economic well-being of families by fostering women empowerment, promoting self-development, and establishing financial independence (Skoglund 2011, Serafimova and Petrevska 2018).

Women entrepreneurship is shaped by a diverse set of factors that impact the opportunities and challenges encountered by women in business. An understanding of these elements is crucial for creating an environment conducive to the growth and success of women entrepreneurs. Listed below are the key factors that play a significant role in influencing women entrepreneurship.

- **Education and Skill Enhancement:** Access to quality education and skill development programs serves as a fundamental factor shaping women entrepreneurship. Education equips women with knowledge and enhances their capabilities, preparing them to navigate the complexities of starting and managing businesses.
- **Financial Independence:** The pursuit of economic independence is a compelling driver for women to venture into entrepreneurship. The aspiration to achieve financial autonomy and contribute to household income motivates women to explore entrepreneurial opportunities, challenging traditional gender roles.
- **Supportive Family Environment:** The presence of a supportive family environment is paramount for women entrepreneurs. Encouragement from family members, particularly spouses and parents, plays a crucial role in empowering women to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions without societal constraints.
- **Access to Financial Resources:** Adequate access to financial resources stands out as a critical factor influencing women entrepreneurship. Difficulties in obtaining loans, investments, or capital can significantly impede women's ability to initiate or expand their businesses. Simplifying access to finance is essential to overcome this obstacle.
- **Networking Possibilities:** Networking offers valuable connections, mentorship, and business prospects. Women entrepreneurs benefit from engaging in networks that foster collaboration, learning, and mutual support. Establishing robust professional connections helps overcome gender-related challenges in the business sphere.
- **Mentorship and Exemplary Figures:** Mentorship and exposure to successful role models are influential in shaping the journeys of women entrepreneurs. Guidance from experienced mentors and the visibility of accomplished women in business inspire confidence, offer insights, and aid in navigating the unique challenges faced by women in entrepreneurship.

- **Government Policies and Assistance:** Supportive government policies and initiatives play a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurship. Policies addressing gender biases, providing financial incentives, and promoting equal opportunities contribute significantly to breaking down systemic barriers.
- **Cultural and Social Norms:** Cultural and social norms can either encourage or hinder women's entrepreneurial pursuits. Societal acceptance of women in leadership roles and a departure from traditional gender stereotypes are essential for fostering a culture that embraces women entrepreneurship.
- **Technological Progress:** Technological advancements have leveled the playing field for women entrepreneurs. Access to digital platforms, e-commerce, and online marketing opens up new avenues, allowing women to reach a broader audience and overcome geographical constraints.
- **Educational and Awareness Initiatives:** Targeted educational and awareness programs focusing on entrepreneurship empower women with the necessary skills and knowledge. These programs also play a vital role in dispelling myths, addressing gender biases, and instilling confidence in aspiring women entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurs in India's tourism sector face numerous obstacles that can hinder their progress and success. These challenges encompass:

- **Gender Bias and Stereotypes:** Women in the business world often confront ingrained gender biases and stereotypes. Preconceived notions associating specific roles and industries with men can limit opportunities and create hurdles for women in the tourism sector.
- **Access to Finance:** Securing financial support and capital poses a significant challenge for women entrepreneurs. Biases in lending practices may make it difficult for women to obtain loans or investments, restricting their ability to initiate or expand businesses.
- **Limited Networking Opportunities:** Accessing essential networking opportunities can be challenging for women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. Male-dominated networks may exclude women, limiting their ability to form valuable connections crucial for business growth.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Juggling work and family responsibilities remains a persistent challenge for women entrepreneurs. Cultural expectations and

traditional gender roles may hinder women's ability to effectively manage both business and family commitments.

- **Lack of Training and Education:** Quality education and training programs specific to the tourism industry may be scarce for women. This deficiency in education and skill development opportunities can impede their competitiveness in the market.
- **Safety Concerns:** Safety concerns, particularly related to travel and interactions in the tourism industry, can deter women entrepreneurs. Fear for personal safety may influence their willingness to engage in specific business activities.
- **Market Access and Visibility:** Gaining visibility and accessing markets can be challenging for women entrepreneurs due to potential discrimination or exclusion in business dealings. Establishing credibility and breaking through existing market structures can prove difficult.
- **Social and Cultural Barriers:** Societal norms and cultural expectations act as barriers for women entrepreneurs. Some communities may discourage or stigmatize women involved in entrepreneurial activities, hindering their pursuit of business goals.
- **Lack of Mentorship:** The absence of female role models and mentors in the tourism industry is a hindrance for aspiring women entrepreneurs. Mentorship is crucial for guidance and support, and its absence may impact their professional development.
- **Policy Challenges:** Existing policies and regulations may not support women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. Advocacy for gender-inclusive policies and the elimination of discriminatory practices is vital to creating a more supportive environment.

Addressing these challenges necessitates collaborative efforts from diverse stakeholders, including government bodies, industry associations, and society at large, to establish an inclusive and supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in India's tourism industry.

Contributions made by women entrepreneurs in Indian tourism Sector

Considering the myriad advantages of exploration and travel, we now see many accomplished women entrepreneurs in India having ventured into the realm of travel startups. Remarkably, their endeavors have not been in vain. Rather, it is shaping and giving a new dimension to travel and tourism in India. Here, I present four

trailblazing women entrepreneurs whose tourism startups are currently reshaping the landscape of travel in India.

Firstly, Mrs. Chitra Gurnani Daga, who has experience working in various multinational corporations such as Infosys, joined forces with her partner to initiate a tour startup known as Thrillophilia. According to her, the purpose behind Thrillophilia was to create a platform for travelers where they can plan and book various activities. She is a travel enthusiast herself, and had a clear vision of an unconventional career propelled her to success. She was awarded by the Ministry of External Affairs, India for her outstanding contribution to travel and tourism. Chitra has also been featured in leading magazines and digital channels, and is recognized as one of India's most influential entrepreneurs. Chitra's vision was to create a platform that would allow free migrants, including corporates, to book adventures in the regions they were visiting, whether it be yoga in Himachal, scuba diving in Ladlakwad, or sky-diving in Tamil Nadu, among others. Abhishek, a graduate of IIT, Varanasi, had the same vision as Chitra, and they both decided to pursue an unconventional career. They were determined to make their dream a reality. Started in 2009, Thrillophile Tours Pvt.l. Ltd. was a result of extensive research, discussion, and a core team made up of travel experts. The goal was to allow people to book experiences from all over the country and compare them at the same time.

It also increased the credibility of the markets and the vendors and the hand picked guides from all over the country. Thrillophilia is now India's largest travel booking platform. In 2020, it had over 3 million users with 12,500 activities in 125+ destinations. Chitra started the company from the ground up with the goal of establishing her brand through a website, a Facebook page, a Twitter account, a blog, and using SEO practices to make her platform better and best to provide customers with a pleasant experience. Her dream has never been to make money from her travel plans, but rather to contribute to the country and make life easier for people. She is able to do this because her company has many warehouses and service desks. The main activities offered by the company are Scuba Diving, Camel Safari, Biking, Caving, Paragliding, Wildlife Explorations, and many more.

Some key contributions made by Chitra Gurnani Daga in tourism in India include:

- **Business Innovation:** Chitra Gurnani Daga has played a pivotal role in steering business innovation at Thrillophilia. The platform is distinguished by its extensive selection of carefully curated travel experiences,

encompassing adventure sports, cultural tours, and unique activities.

- **Market Expansion:** Under her guidance, Thrillophilia has broadened its horizons beyond India, extending its offerings to encompass travel experiences in numerous countries. This strategic expansion has propelled the platform into a prominent position within the global travel industry.
- **Digital Presence and Technology Integration:** Chitra is likely responsible for enhancing the platform's digital footprint and integrating technology to streamline the user experience. Thrillophilia's online platform now facilitates effortless browsing, booking, and payment for a diverse array of travel experiences.
- **Promotion of Local Experiences:** Guided by Chitra Gurnani Daga, Thrillophilia has gained recognition for actively promoting local experiences and supporting businesses at the grassroots level. This emphasis aligns with the prevailing trend toward responsible and sustainable tourism.
- **Customer Engagement and Community Building:** In the travel industry, establishing a community of travelers and fostering customer engagement is crucial. Chitra may have played a key role in initiatives aimed at cultivating a robust Thrillophilia community and enhancing overall customer satisfaction.
- **Recognition and Awards:** Chitra Gurnani Daga's impact on Thrillophilia may be evident in any accolades or awards the platform has received. Such recognition often underscores the entrepreneurial success and positive influence within the travel and tourism sector.

Secondly, it is significant to mention about SeekSherpa - a mobile-based marketplace designed to link locals and travelers for distinctive travel encounters. It was established in 2014 by Sukhmani Singh and Dhruv Raj Gupta, both 23-year-old graduates from Shri Ram College of Commerce in Delhi. Motivated by their own challenges during frequent travels due to a lack of local insights, both Singh and Gupta chose to leave their jobs at AT Kearney and Google, respectively, to concentrate on bringing their concept to life – connecting locals with travelers. Through the platform, travelers can engage with locals who provide guided experiences, enabling them to discover cities in a manner that is both unique and authentic. This model involves engaging local experts or "Sherpas" to lead experiences. Sukhmani's contribution likely includes the focus on empowering locals by providing them with

opportunities to showcase their expertise and earn income. Under Sukhmani Singh's guidance, SeekSherpa has expanded its presence into new cities or regions. The platform's growth has established SeekSherpa as a significant player in the travel experience industry.

In terms of user Experience and technology Integration, Sukhmani has played a part in improving the user experience on their platform. This involve integrating technology to streamline booking processes, enhance communication, and create a more user-friendly platform. With regard to community building, she has accomplished in establishing a community comprising both travelers and local experts. As per her interviews, she has actively participated in initiatives focused on building a vibrant community, fostering connections, and encouraging interactions among users. Regarding, the promotion of local and cultural experiences, SeekSherpa's has emphasised on offering travelers unique and culturally enriching experiences. Her contributions and efforts are significant in India's tourism industry to promote local and authentic experiences that extend beyond conventional tourist attractions.

Thirdly, it is interesting to talk about the women-only 'Girls on the Go Travel Club', which began with a zero-cash business plan. This initiative was started by Piya Bose, a lawyer by profession. Her journey into travel began during an unexpected vacation when she had to overland from Lucknow to Nepal and then Tibet. Experiencing challenges related to oppression and fundamental issues during this trip, she found herself standing on the highest Everest mountain in Tibet, pondering her life's direction. It was then that she realized her desire to "not only make a living but also genuinely live."

Having worked for travel firms briefly at the age of 24, Piya developed a connection with clients and identified a lack of originality in travel companies. Amidst her quest for discovery, the idea of creating a Women Travel Agency struck her as midnight fuel. Being a solo wanderer since the age of 16, Piya noticed the scarcity of Indian women traveling globally, inspiring her to share the thrilling and life-changing experiences she had encountered through her trips with the Girls on the Go travel club.

In 2008, she took the leap by organizing her first planned trip to Ladakh, promising more trips if the initial one proved successful. Since then, Piya has led women on various expeditions, from Antarctic journeys to photographing the Northern Lights in the Arctic, staying with Nagaland's headhunters, camping in Mongolia, trekking up a volcano, and reaching the Everest Base

Camp. The primary focus of the GOTG club has always been to encourage women to travel, yet Piya has observed and addressed the preconceptions women face when it comes to travel.

Piya Bose's work on empowering and reforming women in their travels has led her to explore the historical aspects of women traveling. She finds it intriguing that the challenges faced by women in travel today are reminiscent of those encountered in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. Being recognized for her efforts in empowering women through travel experiences, Piya Bose has contributed significantly to various aspects of women's travel, including community building, promoting solo travel, organizing travel events, advocating for women's travel safety, maintaining a digital presence, and fostering collaborations and partnerships within the travel industry.

In the dynamic landscape of travel and tourism, certain individuals stand out as pioneers who have significantly influenced the industry. One such luminary is Kamiya Jani, a multifaceted entrepreneur and travel enthusiast whose contributions have left an indelible mark on the way we perceive and experience travel. Through her ventures and initiatives, Kamiya Jani has reshaped the travel industry, inspiring countless individuals to explore the world with a fresh perspective. Her journey into the world of travel began with a deep-rooted passion for exploration. In 2015, Kamiya Jani initiated a transformative venture by establishing *Curly Tales*, a pioneering travel and lifestyle platform that revolutionized the way individuals explore and interact with diverse destinations. At its essence, *Curly Tales* functions as a digital hub for avid travel enthusiasts, presenting a wealth of experiential insights, recommendations, and travel narratives.

With a dedicated team of storytellers, *Curly Tales* crafts compelling content spanning travel, food, culture, and lifestyle. Utilizing various mediums such as videos, articles, and social media, the platform delivers a comprehensive and immersive portrayal of the destinations it explores. Guided by Kamiya's visionary leadership, *Curly Tales* has metamorphosed into a preferred destination for travel enthusiasts in search of genuine and inspiring travel experiences. This category transcends conventional travel suggestions, meticulously crafting distinctive journeys that deeply immerse participants in the heart of local cultures. From culinary escapades to unconventional explorations, *Curly Tales Experiences* revolutionize the way individuals engage with travel, placing a strong emphasis on authenticity and meaningful connections.

Kamiya's innovative approach to content creation on *Curly Tales* has resonated with audiences, making it

India's number one food and travel discovery content platform. Her focus on achievable and relatable experiences sets Curly Tales apart in the digital media landscape. It is noteworthy to mention that her influence extends much beyond traditional travel content. She has recognized the power of storytelling as a means to connect with audiences on a deeper level. Through Curly Tales, she introduced a fresh and relatable approach to travel narratives, focusing not only on picturesque landscapes but also on the people, traditions, and stories that make each destination unique. The platform's success lies in its ability to blend information with entertainment seamlessly. Whether it's uncovering hidden gems in popular tourist destinations or exploring offbeat locales, Curly Tales under Kamiya's guidance has successfully captured the essence of travel, making it accessible and appealing to a diverse audience.

Kamiya Jani's influential contributions have earned her accolades and acclaim within the industry. Her leadership and inventive approach have been acknowledged through various awards, underscoring the positive impact she has had on shaping the trajectory of travel content creation. She has garnered recognition in the travel and tourism industry through several accolades. In 2018, Upper Story awarded her the Top Social Influencer of The Year. The World Marketing Congress Awards, in 2019, honored her as The Most Influential Content Marketing Professional. In 2022, Exhibit Magazine acknowledged her as the Best Food Influencer of The Year. These prestigious awards underscore her significant influence and impact on the industry, solidifying her position as a notable figure in travel journalism and content creation.

In January 2023, Kamiya engaged in a conversation with Rahul Gandhi during his Bharat Jodo Yatra in a village in Rajasthan. This interaction provided valuable insights into Rahul Gandhi's personal life, highlighting Kamiya's adeptness in connecting with diverse personalities. Additionally, she participated in a TEDx event at NIT Srinagar in October 2018, where she shared her life experiences, contributing meaningfully to the TEDx platform.

She has emerged as a vocal proponent for empowering women to fearlessly explore the world. Through Curly Tales and various initiatives, she has championed women to embark on solo adventures, challenging stereotypes and fostering a community of bold and adventurous female travellers. Her endeavors have played a pivotal role in reshaping perceptions about women's travel capabilities and cultivating a more inclusive travel culture.

In the ever-evolving realm of travel and tourism, Kamiya Jani has showcased resilience and adaptability. The

industry confronts constant challenges, ranging from shifting consumer preferences to global disruptions, yet Kamiya has consistently led the charge in navigating these transformations. Her capacity to embrace change, coupled with an unwavering commitment to innovation, has positioned Curly Tales as a pioneer in the field of travel content creation.

Kamiya Jani's journey from a finance writer to a renowned travel journalist and entrepreneur is nothing short of inspiring. Her passion for exploration, dedication to responsible tourism, and innovative approach to content creation have not only earned her accolades but also positioned her as a role model in the travel industry. As she continues to shape the narrative of travel content in India, Kamiya Jani stands as a testament to the transformative power of following one's passion.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the dynamics of the Indian tourism sector are experiencing a significant shift, propelled by the empowering endeavors of women entrepreneurs. Echoing the sentiments of Swami Vivekananda, the pivotal role of education in empowering women to spearhead necessary reforms is evident. This conviction holds particular relevance in the context of the tourism industry, where societal progress is intricately connected to the advancement of women.

The involvement of women in entrepreneurship within the tourism sector transcends mere financial gains; it acts as a driving force for economic expansion, employment generation, and the introduction of innovative solutions to managerial challenges. The impact extends beyond the confines of business, making substantial contributions to the social and economic well-being of families by promoting empowerment, fostering self-development, and cultivating financial independence.

A comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing women entrepreneurship becomes imperative for fostering an environment conducive to their advancement. Key elements such as education and skill enhancement, financial autonomy, supportive family structures, access to financial resources, networking opportunities, mentorship, government policies, cultural and social norms, technological advancements, and educational initiatives collectively shape the landscape of opportunities and challenges encountered by women in the business domain.

Nevertheless, it is acknowledged in this paper that women entrepreneurs in India's tourism sector confront specific challenges, encompassing gender biases, limited financial access, networking obstacles, work-life balance concerns,

insufficient training and educational opportunities, safety considerations, constraints in market access and visibility, social and cultural impediments, the absence of mentorship, and policy-related hurdles. Effectively addressing these challenges necessitates concerted efforts from diverse stakeholders, fostering collaboration to establish an ecosystem that is not only inclusive but also supportive of women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.

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Trauma and Resilience: A Comparative Study of Healing in Harry Potter Series and Shiva Trilogy

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Abstract— Over the past century, psychological studies have greatly contributed towards mental health awareness. However, present times demand focusing on milder issues than extreme psychological disorders, since the seemingly inconsequential issues in isolation have the potential to become a cause for severe mental health issues as they begin accumulating. This research follows the Origin and evolution of Trauma through the works of medicals, academics, theorists, and researchers to create a cohesive picture, covering the vast span of the human psyche from the foundations in Psychoanalytic theory to the Pluralistic Trauma theory in literature and it's correlation to the issues on a spectrum of trauma from mild to severe, faced by literary characters in the Shiva Trilogy and Harry Potter. The researcher analyses through this study that trauma cannot be limited to just mental health disorders severe enough to require professional attention. Rather, it requires an inclusive approach that works on recognizing and dealing with these apparently insignificant events before they reach an extreme stage.



Keywords— Shiva trilogy, Harry Potter, trauma, psychoanalytic theory, pluralistic trauma theory.

Origin and Evolution

The interrelation between literature and human psychology is a complex and convoluted one which cannot be unravelled to separate the two. Literature and Reality are considered to be reflections of each other in their essence; the way reality creates literature, and the way literature influences reality.

The world is a massive web built by a diverse system of strings that is always branching and evolving, and this evolution process could be followed through the literature. The psyche of human minds as individuals and as a society influences the literature produced, which in turn manipulates the human psyche. This research's interest lies in exploring the literature that has had a notable impact on mentality through time and space, and how that mass mentality has, in turn, influenced the present-day literature, media, and society in totality.

Since the advent of Psychology, researchers from various fields have been exploring and establishing numerous branches of the study. One such branch is the focus of this research: Trauma.

Since its origin, the world has followed one single fundamental practice, War. Be it for land, food, water, capital, religion, caste, creed, colour, gender, sexuality, nationality, species, language, clothing, rights, education; International wars, political wars, personal wars, financial wars, psychological wars, domestic wars; our world has been at war since its genesis. And will continue its wars long after we are gone.

Human forays into war and their effects on the world at both large and small scales can be found within the literature written around the times of a particular war. The collections of these recollections that influenced these literary works, the people who experienced those horrors

first-hand, even second-hand, have affected the psyche of those who haven't.

The literary works revolving around the trauma of war become sympathetic read for those who haven't experienced War themselves but have gone through some manner of trauma in their lives. That in turn affects the literature they create. And hence, the cycle continues unbroken.

It was the effect of the World Wars that generated the urgent requirement of delving deeper into the psychological impact of the large-scale destruction and carnage on the minds of people who actually fought the wars on the front lines, as the lingering effects continued to plague them long after their return from the front lines.

Psychological trauma has been studied extensively since its genesis and has been interpreted and explained in numerous ways over time. But even as people have tried to explain it, they have still agreed that there is no singular explanation for Trauma that could encompass it in its entirety.

Evolution of the Understanding of Psychological Trauma:

The following timeline focuses on the major milestones in chronological order that doesn't consider an equal amount of the passage of time between them. This leads to a timeline that covers only a few year's worth of studies for a few decades, and then picks up speed as the psychological studies gained traction. It glosses over a lot of the 20th century when there were no major findings or results of the studies, and details the last decade in-depth due to major breakthroughs.

1880s:

Jean-Martin Charcot

Trauma has been a subject of study as a component of various medical and psychological studies in the past. One of the earliest mentions of trauma includes the investigation of hysteria in women by Jean-Martin Charcot in the 1880s through his work with traumatized women in the Salpetriere hospital. He is attributed as the first person to have studied, documented and understood it as a mental issue instead of the common belief that hysteria originated from the uterus, and to have established that physiological symptoms originate from psychological issues (Mohácsi, 2021).

Sigmund Freud- Psychoanalytic theory

The study of Psychology and its inclusion into literary works developed with Charcot's follower Sigmund Freud's forays into the inner workings of the brain in the form of a seedling that has slowly been growing into a vast

ecosystem of a tree, whose roots lie in his Psychoanalytical theory. The theory of psychoanalysis was developed from the observations of traumatised patients and the conclusion that verbalizing the traumatic memories had an impact in alleviating the symptoms and hence the causes.

In the simplest terms, Psychoanalytical theory states that: "Our childhood experiences and unconscious desires influence our behaviour" which encompasses the human psyche in its entirety. Freud postulated that these unconscious desires are manifested and can be recognized through our dreams. His division of the levels of consciousness has proved to be the paving stone in our current understanding of human behaviour (Abubakar, 2017).

The Psychoanalytical theory was introduced into literature in the 1960s in the post-war era that advocated that following the same vein as dreams express unconscious desires, literary texts also express the author's unconscious desires. A Psychoanalytical reading of the literary text strives to uncover the inner workings of the author's mind through the analysis of their creations.

While Freud's major focus has been on the unconscious and repressed sexual desires, the consequent psychological theories, terms and definitions that have been formed, evolve from the theory of Psychoanalysis, and explore various aspects of the human psyche in depth.

Since a lot of the theories are interconnected and overlap at times, some of those theories would be used within the research to further enhance the understanding of the inner workings of the brain.

WWI:

Sandor Ferenczi

One of the notable contributions to the study of Trauma as its own study has been made by Sandor Ferenczi during the First World War. His work as a medical officer laid the foundations for his research into psychological trauma on the basis of his observations of the soldiers. His papers and fragments of notes that provide a deeper insight into psychological trauma have been consolidated by Jay B Frankel in "Ferenczi's trauma theory" (Frankel, 1998).

1900s:

Long-term effect on returning soldiers

The terms 'combat exhaustion' and 'shell shock' were coined and used in relation to the experiences of soldiers in the world wars to describe their nervous symptoms in an attempt to understand the impact of their experiences in battle and their long-term consequences. The initial analysis believed that the extreme exhaustion due to physical stress and lack of sleep for the fear of the enemy

experienced in combination by the soldiers in the immediate vicinity of the exploding bomb shells were affected by the sudden shock of the force and noise (Mohácsi, 2021).

Freud's statements on the recurring dreams of the war veterans in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as a means the brain came up to deal with the experiences to bring up the memories in dreams, unable to recall them while awake, was later used by Cathy Caruth to build the foundations of Trauma theory. Freud believed that the mind experiencing such severe shock was unable to comprehend and process the event consciously, so it was pushed into the unconscious brain. The dreams became the only way for the brain to deal with the experience, which led to the repeated dreams until it was processed by the conscious brain (Freud, 1920).

1980s:

Recognition of term PTSD by APA in 'Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders'

Trauma gained official recognition for the first time in the 1980s with the addition of the term PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) by APA in 'Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders'. The term was used in relation to the returning war veterans and the lingering long-term effects of the battlefield they still carried with them in the form of severe anxiety, panic attacks, flashbacks, hallucinations etc.

Sophie Isobel et al. have presented this problem of a definitive definition in "Psychological Trauma in the Context of Familial Relationships: A Concept Analysis" asserting the trauma doesn't exist as a unitary concept, which exhibits a massive potential for further exploration into the concept of psychological trauma. It does place emphasis on comparison and contrast between different definitions and terms of trauma in an attempt at understanding it, and quotes various forms of trauma definitions synthesised from literature, and insists on the impossibility of binding the overall concept of trauma into one definition (Isobel et al., 2017).

Instead of falling into the trap of comparisons and justifications between the unending explanations of Psychological Trauma, this research considers as a guideline, Trauma that has been defined by the APA Dictionary of Psychology. Over time the definition of Trauma has been coalesced into a simple explanation by the American Psychology Association. The APA Dictionary of Psychology defines trauma as "any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person's attitudes, behaviour, and other aspects of functioning. Traumatic events include those caused by human behaviour as well as

by nature and often challenge an individual's view of the world as a just, safe, and predictable place" (Baldick, 2008).

Examples of such an event could be a war zone, an accident, an abusive situation, a culmination of stressful incidents, a natural disaster, a loss, a physical or emotionally threatening situation etc. Trauma is highly subjective and is experienced and perceived differently by everyone, and the intensity varies over a broad spectrum. But generally, the response to trauma often results in a feeling of breathlessness, shock, helplessness, dejection, dizziness, and being overwhelmed. A person may even have trouble processing the traumatic event. The response could be felt both immediately after the event, and even in long term. Trauma can affect a person adversely even long term. Sometimes, due to the persistence of these symptoms, trauma could even evolve into a mental health disorder known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Baldick, 2008).

1990s: Trauma in Literature

Traditional Trauma Theory

The reality of trauma has been reflected in literature since time immemorial, even when there was no explicit recognition until a few decades ago. The concept of Trauma theory was first introduced into literature through the works of Cathy Caruth in the 1990s, who pioneered the Traditional Trauma Theory model, which views trauma as an event that fragments consciousness and prevents direct linguistic representation. This model was largely based on the works of Sigmund Freud (Caruth, 1996).

Cathy Caruth put a new spin on trauma through *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* where she explores the unspoken consequences of trauma on its survivors through literary and media works instead of using them as case studies from a psychiatric perspective. She explores the long-term effects of traumatic events and references to the works of Freud and Lacan to provide an obvious insight into the causes and effects of trauma.

The Caruthian model of trauma asserts that trauma is a wound on the mind, invisible to the eye, instead of the visible wounds on the body, inflicted with a sudden abruptness that cannot be comprehended by the mind, and the consequent suffering is unrepresentable. "At the heart of these stories is thus an enigmatic testimony not only to the nature of violent events but to what, in trauma, resists simple comprehension" (Caruth, 1996)

Trauma theory takes it a step deeper than the unconscious desires, and strives to uncover the trauma buried in the unconscious over time, that affects a person's quality of life, their actions, reactions and choices.

Since its introduction into literature, the concept of Trauma theory has encouraged academics to look at literary

texts with a new perspective, identifying the elements of trauma.

Pluralistic Trauma Theory

This model was felt lacking in certain aspects towards the understanding of human psyche in its entirety and was soon followed by a new model into a more wholesome concept that expands upon the previous model and makes an attempt at overcoming any of its shortcomings.

Pluralistic Trauma Theory suggests that linguistic fragmentation is just one aspect of trauma instead of being the centralised effect as postulated by Traditional Trauma Theory. It encompasses the Traditional trauma theory approach and evolves around the foundations laid by the previous researchers. This approach provides a considerable amount of attention to the variability of Traumatic representations, in terms of its causes, effects and expression (Balaev, 2018).

Michelle Balaev provides the lifespan of trauma theory from its genesis as a side note in Sigmund Freud's research into the human psyche, follows it to the introduction into literature through the Traditional Trauma theory model pioneered by Cathy Caruth, to its present form developed by Criticism as Pluralistic Trauma theory in "Trauma Studies".

Pluralistic trauma theory proves to be a more wholesome evolution of the numerous psychological theories, and focuses on the entirety of the broad spectrum of experiences that affect the mind negatively, instead of taking a comparatively narrower approach of focusing on one of the extreme aspects. This theory works as a conduit between the scattered aspects of all the psychological theories to create a deeper understanding of the human mind and provides clarity into its complexities (Balaev, 2018).

The Pluralistic approach to trauma attempts to cover the range of trauma from as severe as that of a war, sexual assault, an abusive situation to as mild as a day-to-day occurrence of social rejection, loss of a relationship or an academic setback. It focuses on an inclusive perspective that attempts to understand the subjectivity of trauma depending on the life experience of the subject in question (Balaev, 2018).

Harry Potter and *Shiva Trilogy* both portray the protagonists elevated on a pedestal of the saviour, chosen one and a hero for the new world they have stepped into. The journey of these characters has a lot of similarities with Joseph Campbell's depiction of a Hero. Joseph Campbell chronicles the journey of a typical hero in stages (Polkowska, 2020). The first stage begins with the hero dwelling in the ordinary world, oblivious to any special attributes that might differentiate him from the masses. The

next begins with the discovery of a world previously hidden from, where he belongs through his heritage. The discovery is usually accompanied by a call to take up arms and set off on an adventure to save the world. He is thrown into this new world with barely any introduction and instruction, only equipped with some sort of supernatural gift to aid him in his quest, and usually companions to help share his perils with. Next, he undertakes a perilous and often fatal journey rife with trials, character development, gaining wisdom and a final fight for his reward. Once the journey is completed and the goal reached, it's time for him to go back home to the ordinary world again, having acquired enlightenment. Katarzyna Polkowska in "Rick Riordan's 'Percy Jackson' as Joseph Campbell's Hero with a Thousand Faces" scrutinises the journey and struggles undergone by Percy Jackson in order to determine whether it fits the mould of a hero created by several schools of thought (Polkowska, 2020).

The twenty-first century has seen an integration of mythology into contemporary literature as an attempt at the revival of the oft-forgotten stories of older civilizations, the elements of which can be seen in the works of both the authors.

In "Death as a Beginning: The Transformation of Hades, Persephone, and Cleopatra in Children's and Youth Culture" by Viktoriya Bartsevich et al. explores the representation of these mythological characters as depicted to suit present-day beliefs. The research focuses on the transformation of the mythological characters who used to be portrayed as intimidating and untouchable to their seemingly mocking present-day representations. While the Older texts present the mythological figures in an all-powerful, dangerous and downright scary light, *Harry Potter* is the prime example of modernising and using these figures as convenient to the plot. The Kraken has been depicted as the friendly squid, the Sphinx has been reduced to a piece of a game, the dragons likewise a comparatively tamer version of the mighty beasts of the old, are just a task to be completed; while the bogeyman- Lord Voldemort, a human wizard has been demonized in comparison to seem a vastly more dangerous foe (Bartsevich et al., 2019).

Shiva trilogy on the other hand is an attempt to view mythology in the currently understandable manner by moving backwards in time, attempting to humanize the Gods, and depicting their lives through the glass of human perspective. Amish Tripathi has given new meaning to the blend of myth and reality through the story of a man of flesh and blood elevated to the status of God through his Karma. The trilogy follows Shiva on his quest to provide better opportunities for his tribe, turning him towards the path of a Saviour facing the tests and trials in order to meet

expectations and ultimately triumph. The work has been heavily influenced by Hindu mythology and the origin stories of the deities. Abhinaba Chatterjee explores the influence of Hindu mythological works in the fictional world created by Amish Tripathi in “Humanizing Theography through Mystical Mythology: Amish Tripathi’s Shiva Trilogy” (Chatterjee). In a similar vein, Dharmapada Jena has traced the elements of trauma depicted throughout the mythological texts and presented it through “Negotiating The Mahabharata as a Trauma Narrative” and “Narrative Tools and Strategies: Representation of Trauma in The Mahabharata” which paves the pathway towards the search for the elements of Trauma in Amish Tripathi’s *Shiva Trilogy* from both the modernised and original perspective (Jena, 2022).

J K Rowling has created a completely different world existing within our world that functions on the same foundations, but varies vastly in its integral structure. Her creation has seen a drastic transformation into the perspective of the general populace on everything ominous, different, and unexplained. *Harry Potter* has elevated magic from a feared phenomenon to a household conversation topic. At the same time, it has shown the magicals as sentient beings, just as we are. They also feel pain, fear and happiness. They can also be recognized as good and evil, the same as humans. They are also human. They just have magic, and Magic doesn’t solve all the problems with just a wave of the wand.

Nurul Fitri explores the life of Lord Voldemort from a Psychoanalytical perspective in “THE CHARACTERIZATION OF LORD VOLDEMORT IN NOVEL HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE BY J.K ROWLING SEEN FROM PSYCHOANALYSIS” in an attempt to understand the Antagonist, his motives, experiences, choices and actions. The research follows the life of Tom Riddle, abandoned by his father even before he was born, lost his mother during his birth, growing up in an orphanage. Always vilified and bullied for being different he grew up resenting others and once strong enough to turn the tables, turned into a bullying tyrant himself. Fitri delves into the experiences and motivations that shaped Tom Riddle from a helpless child into the self-fashioned fearsome tyrant Lord Voldemort (Fitri, 2018).

Both these works provide a peep into vastly opposing political scenarios, set in the Ancient time and the turn of the present Century. While the political and cultural scenario of *Harry Potter* follows along in the same vein as the corresponding society, Dr. Dushyant Nimavat has explored the emergence of the socio-cultural transformation in Amish Tripathi’s work from the Ancient times to the

present in “Political and Cultural discourse in Amish Tripathi’s Scion of Ikshvaku” (Nimavat, 2019).

You-shuan Shiong and Ya-huei Wang focus on the impact of the type of reinforcement received during adolescence on the development of self-identity through “Trauma, Love, and Identity Development in Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*” in a bid to explore the Protagonist and his choices as influenced by the actions of others around him. The research focuses on Harry’s adolescence period in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and the difficulties faced by him in the form of lack of a loving family, trials in a bid to survive and save an innocent godfather- his last hope for a family; and his perseverance into a healthy self-identity despite all the hardships. Puberty is a massive milestone in human life, even more so when one adds mythological aspects to said life. Harry is no different than any other teenager in that aspect, and goes through really catastrophic and seemingly-catastrophic events (Shiong and Wang, 2022).

It is common to have an identity crisis after a drastic cultural shift, which is depicted in “Cultural Analysis of Amish Tripathi’s Shiva Trilogy” by R. Devendiran and Dr. B. Kathiresan (Devendiran and Kathiresan, 2020).

Both these works begin with the character’s journey leaving their natural habitat towards a new environment. While Shiva migrates with this tribe to Meluha, leaving his harsh and exacting homeland behind completely, Harry must return to face the reality of his dismal home every year. Both have been offered better living circumstances and a chance at true happiness, but Shiva has mixed feelings before the migration due to his attachment to his roots, while Harry jumps for joy at leaving Privet Drive due to a less-than-ideal life.

Both these works imbibe the concept of the beast within as can be seen in “From Spirituality to Animality of Humanity: An Eschatological Study of the Shiva Trilogy” by Albin Shaju Paul; and in “THE CAT WHO READS THE MAP: Posthumanism and Animality in Harry Potter” by Jose Rodolfo da Silva (Rodolfo da Silva, 2009).

These elements can be seen in the *Shiva trilogy* through the Nagas, the deformed, the exiled and the outcasts, giving a visual representation of the spirit animal. The concept of the animal instincts has been a prevalent part of Hindu mythology, from the well-known Avatara of Lord Vishnu in the form of Narsimha, Lord Shiva’s incarnation as Lord Hanumaan and Sharabha to the actual replacement of the heads of King Daksha and Lord Ganesha with animal heads to resurrect them. *Harry Potter* depicts the essence of the animals through a Patronus that takes the shape of your inner animal, or the animal you feel most connected to. The

ability to transform into an animal also translates the traits of those animals into the human form (Tripathi, 2010).

Society is an intricate web structure that functions in connection to each other as a whole, but that connection overlooks the broken strands on the edges as long as the structure remains intact. Hussein, Azmi & Al-Subaihi explore the multifaceted aspects of alienation and marginalization faced by various characters and species, its impact on the psyche, and the consequences at the edges of this structure through “Alienation in Harry Potter”. The article takes into account specific characters as examples of the alienation experienced by their entire species, such as the muggles and the house elves (Hussein et al., 2021).

Both the works also make ample use of symbolism throughout the character’s journey, as has been depicted by Louise Jensby in “Athene McGonagall and the Devine Owl – The Use of Ancient Greek Myths as Imagery in Harry Potter” (Jensby, 2019) as well as by G. Aiswarya and Dr. P. Madhan in “Symbolism in Amish Tripathi’s *Shiva Trilogy*: A Study” (Aiswarya and Madhan, 2018).

In ““They like being enslaved”? British Imperialist Rhetoric and the Wizards’ Hegemonic Discourse in Harry Potter”, Juliana Valadão Lopes analyses the oppression of subaltern species like house-elves, goblins and centaurs by the superior magicals and how the hierarchy is subverted by the subalterns. The focus of this research lies in the political and social interactions of different species, especially between those that can be categorised as the oppressor and the oppressed, such as wizardkind suppressing the centaurs, goblins, elves etc. and the actions of the suppressed species in order to combat their treatment (Lopes, 2019).

The marginalized sects in Amish Tripathi’s works have been explored by Suresh Kumar in “Giving Voice to the Marginalized: A Study of Amish Tripathi’s *The Immortals of Meluha*” (Kumar, 2014)

John Pennington investigates the presence of mainstream frivolity and fictional reality with a ‘no pain, no gain’ approach to magical fantasy fiction in “From Elfland to Hogwarts, or the Aesthetic Trouble with Harry Potter”. The article contemplates whether Rowling’s magical world truly forces the readers to broaden their horizons to look past the obvious and explore the hidden, or is it simply a different form of entertainment that plays on the fantasies of an active mind for popularity, the teachings forgotten as soon as the books are closed (Pennington, 2002).

Keeping to the present wave of mythology inclusion in literature, Saman Abdulqadir Hussein Dizayi explores the blending of the ancient and modern, realistic myth and mythical reality through “Mythmaking In Modern Literature: Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling”. The series consists of mythological figures, as a supplement to the

major focus. The figures such as a Cerberus, dragons, sphinx, Death etc, are embedded in the story in such a casual manner that gives the impression of them being a normal commonplace occurrence within the magical world. The only real surprise felt at their existence comes from the muggle-borns and raised due to the cultural difference (Dizayi, 2022).

G. Aiswarya and Dr. P. Madhan explore the depiction of mythological figures present throughout the ancient Hindu texts in “Mythology in Amish Tripathi’s *Immortals of Meluha*: A Study” (Aiswarya and Madhan, 2018).

Manasi Saxena explores the numerous aspects of death that can be seen scattered throughout the series in the article “Death, the Last Enemy: Grief and Loss in the Harry Potter Series.” This paper explores the various characters’ views on their deaths, the feelings attached to them, and the incarnation of death and its influence through the *Tales of Beedle and Bard*. The physical journey Harry undertakes in order to defeat his enemy Voldemort by destroying his anchors of immortality is internalised to follow the process of loss, grief and healing from the deaths of his loved ones.

The transcendence of humans to ethereal figures has been explored in “Humanly Gods or Godly Humans: Representation and Anthropomorphism of Mythical Characters in Amish Tripathi’s *Shiva Trilogy*” by Aritra Basu (Basu, 2020).

The works also follow the spiritual journey of the characters as an undertone that has been observed and explored through J K Rowling’s works by Signe Cohen in “The Two Alchemists in Harry Potter: Voldemort, Harry, and Their Quests for Immortality” (Cohen, 2018) and through Amish Tripathi’s works by Prof. Dr. Lata Marina Varghese in “Selfies of the Soul: Spiritual Regeneration in New Age Fiction” (Varghese, 2015).

Shiva and Harry, the protagonists of both these works, begin their journey towards hope of healing with the invitation to a change- physical and emotionally. The elements of their trauma experienced in the past, as well as current trials, crop up throughout their entire journey. But hope burns eternal and they have taken the first step towards healing by changing their environment. The healing process is slow, and there are instances where they seem to be shoved backwards, but at the end, both Shiva and Harry have overcome their trauma and found peace and contentment, if not some semblance of happiness.

The real-life implications of these characters’ journeys boiled down to the fundamentals provide a simple solution- removal from the current environment. It is not conducive to healing and would only heap further trauma on the already existing issues and would not allow a person

to recover. If it is within one's power to remove themselves from the hurtful conditions, to do so; if not, there is never only one way to do something. Thinking outside the box could sometimes provide unorthodox situations. And if all else fails, there's great power in asking for help.

But no matter how extensively a fictional character is sculpted, it cannot hope to replicate a live human in its entirety; nor the intricacies of life, no matter how much detail goes into creating the life of that character. This diminishes its relatability to reality and its nuances. Keeping this drawback in mind, this Research is an attempt at a pathway into understanding one's own journey of struggles and potential guidelines in if not overcoming it, then at least living in a wholesome manner with it, through the pseudo-reality of the literary characters as a singular subject of analysis.

While the existing research does grant a peek into the characters that have had their fair share of hardships, failure and trauma, it allows a lot of room for exploration into the long-term effects of trauma, as well as its impact in relation to other characters, society and environment, either experiencing the same event with them or experiencing similar events in another work; as the human psyche is a vast field still in the initial phases of its investigation.

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Gender-Based Violence and the Media's Role: Exploring Arundhati Roy's "The Great Indian Rape Trick."

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Abstract— Arundhati Roy's essays "The Great Indian Rape Trick" offer a critical analysis of the representation of reality in media, focusing on Shekhar Kapur's film "Bandit Queen" and its portrayal of Phoolan Devi's life. Roy challenges the film's claim of being a "true story," arguing that it distorts Devi's narrative by overemphasizing her experiences of sexual assault and reducing her identity to that of a victim. The study explores how media narratives often sensationalize violence while failing to address underlying societal issues, reinforcing existing power dynamics and perpetuating systemic discrimination. Roy's critique examines the ethical implications of asserting "truth" in films portraying real individuals, highlighting the oversimplification of complex situations and the potential exploitation of subjects. The essay raises significant questions about the nature of representation, power dynamics in storytelling, and the complexities of translating lived experiences into visual media. Roy's analysis encourages readers to consider the ethical responsibilities of filmmakers when handling sensitive biographical content and the possible repercussions of presenting a single narrative as definitive truth. The study contributes to the broader discourse on media representation and its implications for social awareness and policy-making, emphasizing the need for responsible and nuanced portrayals of sensitive issues.



Keywords— *Bandit Queen, Justice, Media, Reality, Violence*

I. INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy, born on November 24, 1961, in Shillong, Meghalaya, India, is renowned for her literary achievements and political activism. Beyond her novels, she is actively engaged in human rights and environmental advocacy. Despite facing legal challenges, she remains unwavering in her pursuit of justice. Roy's essays and speeches address critical issues such as global capitalism, social inequality, and environmental degradation. She is a vocal critic of injustices against individuals. Her involvement extends beyond writing, as she actively participates in protests, campaigns, and advocacy efforts. Her unapologetic advocacy for marginalized communities, environmental conservation, and human rights continues to influence public discourse. Roy's activism focuses on

marginalized communities, amplifying the voices of the oppressed, particularly women. She highlights the intersectionality of oppressive systems, which create unique forms of marginalization. Roy's commitment to social justice extends to her support for various grassroots movements, including those advocating for indigenous rights and environmental protection. Her writings often intertwine personal narratives with broader societal issues, creating a powerful narrative that resonates with readers worldwide. Through her work, Roy challenges dominant power structures and encourages critical thinking about the complex socio-political landscape of contemporary India and beyond.

Roy's activism is fundamentally anchored in her profound empathy for individuals situated on the

peripheries of society. Through her non-fiction works, she vividly portrays the severe challenges encountered by the most impoverished and marginalized groups in India and beyond, who frequently become victims of governmental oppression, corporate exploitation, and military interventions. A persistent theme in her oeuvre is her critique of globalization, particularly the manner in which economic strategies have exacerbated inequality and undermined indigenous cultures. Her publications, such as *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) and *Listening to Grasshoppers* (2009), provide a pointed critique of capitalism-driven globalization, which she argues leads to the displacement and isolation of the world's most impoverished populations.

I. OBJECTIVE

This study aims to investigate the representation of reality in media through an analysis of Roy's essays entitled "The Great Indian Rape Trick" based on the movie *Bandit Queen*, directed by Shekhar Kapur, which in turn claims to be adapted from the biography of Phoolan Devi, written by Mala Sen. The research explores how these works challenge traditional narratives and present alternative perspectives on societal issues. By examining the portrayal of gender, violence, and power dynamics in both the literary and cinematic mediums, the study seeks to uncover the complexities of representation in Indian media. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on the ways in which Roy and Kapoor's works contribute to broader discussions about social justice and the role of media in shaping public perception.

II. THE GREAT INDIAN RAPE TRICK

"The Great Indian Rape Trick," is a powerful critique of Kapur's film *Bandit Queen*, which portrays the life of Phoolan Devi, a dacoit turned politician. Roy challenges the film's claim of being a 'true story,' pointing out that Kapur never met Phoolan Devi and relied solely on Sen's biography, which itself presented multiple versions of events. Kapur did not exhibit curiosity. He has openly acknowledged that he did not feel the necessity to meet Phoolan (Roy 837). Roy argues that the film distorts Devi's life by focusing excessively on her experiences of sexual assault, reducing her identity to that of a victim. This portrayal, Roy contends, not only misrepresents Devi's multifaceted life but also trivializes the broader reality of rape and its impact on survivors.

Here Roy explores the intricate influence of media in sustaining gender and caste-based violence within India. Her analysis reveals that media narratives, especially

those related to sexual violence against women, and caste-based injustices, often serve to uphold existing power dynamics and perpetuate systemic discrimination and oppression. Roy argues that these media narratives frequently sensationalize incidents of violence while failing to address the underlying societal issues that contribute to such acts. She contends that this approach not only trivializes the experiences of victims but also diverts attention from the need for structural reforms. Roy suggests that the media's selective focus on certain cases, often those involving upper-caste victims or perpetrators, reinforces existing hierarchies and obscures the pervasive nature of violence against marginalized communities.

In her essays, "The Great Indian Rape Trick I and II," Roy adopts a humanistic perspective on the life of Phoolan Devi, also known as the 'Bandit Queen.' Rather than perceiving Phoolan Devi solely through the prism of her gender, Roy advocates for societal recognition of her as a human being endowed with emotions, desires, and feelings. Roy interrogates the ethical implications of 'restaging the rape of a living woman without her permission' and accuses Kapur of exploiting Devi and misrepresenting the significance of her life. The film is adapted from the book *India's Bandit Queen: The True Story of Phoolan Devi* by Mala Sen, which is informed by newspaper reports, interviews, meetings, and written accounts during Phoolan Devi's incarceration. Roy amplifies Phoolan Devi's voice, illuminating her experiences and challenging societal perceptions. In this context, Roy underscores the complexity of Phoolan Devi's identity beyond mere gender, inviting readers to perceive her as an individual wronged by systemic injustices. Phoolan Devi's narrative serves as a potent critique of both the caste system and patriarchy in India, highlighting the challenges faced by marginalized women in a profoundly stratified society.

In this analysis, Roy offers a critical examination of the complex narrative presented in the film *Bandit Queen* and its portrayal of Phoolan Devi's life. Through her incisive critique, Roy interrogates the notion of 'Truth' as articulated by filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, delving into the intricacies of ambiguity, manipulation, and representation. At the premiere of *Bandit Queen*, Shekhar Kapur asserted that he prioritized 'Truth' over aesthetics, proclaiming that 'Truth is Pure.' The film's commercial success was largely contingent upon this claim of authenticity. Kapur consistently emphasized that the film was a 'True Story,' a designation that set it apart from conventional narratives of rape and retribution in Indian cinema. The alleged authenticity of the film functioned as a defence against criticism, effectively marginalizing dissenting perspectives.

Roy's analysis delves deeper into the problematic nature of Kapur's claim to 'Truth' in *Bandit Queen*. She argues that the film's narrative, while purportedly based on real events, is a carefully constructed representation that blurs the lines between fact and fiction. Roy suggests that Kapur's insistence on the film's authenticity serves to silence alternative interpretations and experiences, particularly those of Phoolan Devi herself. The author contends that by presenting a singular, definitive version of events, the film potentially oversimplifies a complex life story and reinforces certain stereotypes about caste, gender, and violence in India.

According to Shekhar Kapur's film, every landmark-every decision, every turning-point in Phoolan Devi's life, starting with how she became a dacoit in the first place, has to do with having been raped, or avenging rape (Roy 839).

In the essay's second section, Roy continues her examination of the film *Bandit Queen*, probing further into the ethical and moral issues of portraying Phoolan Devi's life without her approval. She questions the filmmaker's choice to emphasize scenes of sexual violence, contending that this sensationalism not only misrepresents Devi's narrative but also reinforces damaging stereotypes about women and rape survivors. Roy points out that the film reduces Devi's identity to her victimhood, overshadowing her strength and autonomy. She also investigates the wider cultural and political factors involved in the commercialization of Devi's life story. Roy criticizes the exploitation of marginalized individuals for profit and entertainment, highlighting how the film industry often favours dramatic stories over truth and authenticity. Her essay acts as a call to action, urging filmmakers and audiences to handle stories of trauma and survival with care and respect. Through her sharp analysis, Roy highlights the necessity for ethical storytelling that respects the complexity of human experiences rather than simplifying them into mere spectacle. Her essay challenges the audience to reflect on the impact of such portrayals on societal views of rape and the dignity of survivors.

In their quest for Classic Cinema, they've stripped a human being of her Rights. Her Dignity. Her Privacy. Her Freedom. And perhaps, as I will argue later, of her Right to Life itself (Roy 857).

Roy's critique examines the broader implications of asserting 'Truth' in films that portray real individuals and events. She contends that such assertions can be fundamentally flawed, as they often involve oversimplifying complex situations, omitting contradictory perspectives, and potentially exploiting the subjects involved. Roy's analysis encourages readers to

consider the ethical responsibilities of filmmakers when handling sensitive biographical content and the possible repercussions of presenting a single narrative as the definitive truth. This critique raises significant questions about the nature of representation, the power dynamics inherent in storytelling, and the complexities of translating lived experiences into visual media. The essay suggests that the film's claim of being the 'Truth' is questionable and serves as a defence against criticism.

Whether or not it is the Truth is no longer relevant. The point is that it will, (if it hasn't already)- become the Truth (Roy 837).

III. THE TRUE STORY OF PHOOLAN DEVI

Phoolan Devi, widely recognized as the 'Bandit Queen,' was an Indian dacoit who later became a politician, with a life characterized by adversity, defiance, and perseverance. Born into a poor family in Uttar Pradesh, she experienced oppression from an early age, including being married off at the age of eleven and suffering abuse. Eventually, she joined a group of dacoits, targeting villages of the upper caste and gaining a reputation akin to Robin Hood among marginalized groups. Her most notorious act was the Behmai massacre in 1981, where twenty Thakur men were killed, reportedly as revenge for her own mistreatment. This incident triggered a large-scale manhunt, which ended with her surrender in 1983 as part of a negotiated agreement. She spent eleven years in prison before being released in 1994, with the charges against her being dismissed.

After her release, Phoolan Devi entered the political arena, securing a position as a Member of Parliament with the Samajwadi Party in 1996. She championed the rights of lower-caste groups and fought for justice for the marginalized. Despite her efforts, her past continued to shadow her, and in 2001, she was murdered outside her residence by Sher Singh Rana, who claimed his actions were in retaliation for the Behmai massacre. Her life story attracted global attention through the contentious film *Bandit Queen* and several biographies, including her own dictated autobiography, *I, Phoolan Devi*. Despite the differing accounts of her life, she remains a symbol of defiance against systemic oppression and caste-based violence in India.

Phoolan Devi, a historical figure of considerable significance, transcended her personal narrative to become a legendary icon, shaped by a multitude of narratives. Kapur's adaptation, drawing inspiration from Sen's book, *India's Bandit Queen: The True Story of Phoolan Devi*, achieved notable recognition. Sen's work itself offers a multifaceted examination of events, incorporating

Phoolan's personal account, a journalist's perspective, and eyewitness testimonies. This approach results in a richly layered, humanistic exploration of Phoolan's life. Sen adeptly integrates Phoolan Devi's diaries, letters, interviews, and police records to construct this compelling narrative of resilience, defiance, and transformation. The book underscores the life of an extraordinary woman who challenged societal norms and left an indelible impact on India's history.

In her works, "The Great Indian Rape Trick I and II", Roy shifts from a strictly feminist viewpoint to a more humanistic approach. These essays give a voice to Phoolan Devi, a woman who faces dual marginalization in India's caste-focused society. Roy encourages people to look past the myth and see Phoolan as a person, acknowledging her hardships and the intricacies of her life. Roy finds it notable that Kapur showed little interest in Phoolan Devi, as he admitted he didn't feel it was necessary to meet her. His producer, Bobby Bedi, shared this view, suggesting Kapur would have met her if he thought it was important. Roy challenges this mindset. How can a filmmaker claim to portray the 'True Story' without directly interacting with the person involved? She questions how Kapur determines that Sen's account of Phoolan Devi's life is the 'Truth'.

Roy expresses concern about the choice not to show the film to Phoolan Devi, maintaining that this claim is true even though the individual whose life inspired the film has never watched it. Known for her perceptive socio-political insights and literary prowess, Roy delves into the complexities of Phoolan Devi's life and its portrayal in cinema. In her critique, Roy not only scrutinizes the artistic choices made by Kapur but also brings attention to the broader discourse on gender, caste, and violence in Indian society. A significant element of Roy's critique is her analysis of the viewpoint from which Phoolan Devi's story is depicted in the film. She meticulously examines how the film portrays Devi's experiences with trauma, abuse, and violence, highlighting that these narratives are predominantly viewed through a male perspective. Roy contends that Kapur's film fails to adequately convey the intricacies of Phoolan Devi's agency and individuality, simplifying her complex identity to that of a one-dimensional victim or a shallow symbol of defiance. Roy argues that by perpetuating such simplistic narratives, the film not only diminishes Devi's character but also reinforces existing stereotypes about gender and caste in Indian society.

Roy delves into the film's portrayal of caste dynamics, particularly focusing on how Phoolan Devi's interactions with her oppressors are depicted. She critiques the film for turning caste-related violence into mere

spectacle, arguing that this approach overlooks the structural inequalities and systemic injustices that are the root causes of such acts. Roy highlights that the film's focus on sensationalized violence often obscures the socio-political realities underlying these issues, thereby diminishing the significance of Devi's struggle against caste oppression. She questions the ethical considerations of cinematic representation, especially in relation to Phoolan's real-life experiences. Roy raises important questions about the filmmakers' responsibility when depicting sensitive topics like sexual violence and caste discrimination, emphasizing the need for nuance, empathy, and ethical reflection. She argues that by prioritizing sensationalism over sensitivity, Kapur's film risks causing harm and exploitation, particularly to marginalized communities whose stories are being portrayed.

Roy's critique of Kapur's *Bandit Queen* extends beyond a mere aesthetic assessment; it represents a profound examination of power, representation, and ethics within the cinematic domain. Through her incisive analysis, Roy encourages a critical reflection on the narratives we consume and the broader socio-political implications they encompass. In doing so, she challenges us to envision alternative storytelling methods that are more empathetic, inclusive, and ethically responsible. Roy addresses the events omitted from the source material of the film *Bandit Queen*, namely Sen's book *India's Bandit Queen: The True Story of Phoolan Devi*. Her examination of these omissions underscores the selective nature of cinematic adaptation and its potential to reshape historical narratives. By scrutinizing these editorial choices, Roy reveals the power dynamics inherent in the film's production and its portrayal of Phoolan Devi's life. This critical approach highlights the importance of considering not only what is depicted on screen but also what is excluded, and how these decisions influence our understanding of complex social issues and marginalized individuals.

Roy meticulously highlights a pivotal moment in the book that underscores the systemic violence and misogyny experienced by Phoolan Devi. Roy sharply focuses on the scene depicting the removal of Phoolan's uterus without her consent by a prison doctor, a harrowing incident emblematic of the gross violations of bodily autonomy and reproductive rights faced by countless women, particularly those from marginalized communities. She underscores the profound implications of this act of medical violence, emphasizing how it epitomizes the erasure of Phoolan Devi's agency and autonomy as a woman. By depicting the doctor's actions as a manifestation of patriarchal power and control, Roy exposes the broader socio-political dynamics at play,

wherein women's bodies are often subjected to exploitation and violation under the guise of medical authorities. Roy draws attention to the deeply ingrained sexism and racism embedded within the doctor's remarks during the procedure. It is recorded in "The Great Indian Rape Trick I":

One last terrifying thing. While she was still in jail, Phoolan was rushed to hospital bleeding heavily because of an ovarian cyst. Her womb was removed. When Mala Sen asked why this had been necessary, the prison doctor laughed and said, "We don't want her breeding any more Phoolan Devis (Roy 848).

Roy critiques the physician's comments, which are characterized by anti-humanistic, anti-feminist, and racially charged undertones, as they not only dehumanize Phoolan but also perpetuate harmful stereotypes related to gender and race. Roy condemns these remarks as indicative of a broader culture of misogyny and racial prejudice prevalent in Indian society, highlighting the intersections of gender, caste, and race in shaping experiences of oppression and violence. Through her analysis of this pivotal scene, Roy reveals the insidious mechanisms by which systems of power intersect to perpetuate violence and injustice against marginalized individuals. By centring Phoolan's experience of reproductive violence within a broader critique of patriarchy and casteism, Roy challenges viewers to confront the systemic inequalities that underpin such acts of oppression. In doing so, she underscores the urgent need for feminist solidarity and resistance in the face of systemic violence and injustice.

Roy critically examines the media's portrayal of narratives surrounding incidents of violence, with a particular focus on sexual violence against women. She contends that the media frequently sensationalizes these incidents, emphasizing graphic details rather than addressing the systemic issues that contribute to gender-based violence. Roy argues that the film *Bandit Queen* attempts to depict Phoolan Devi as a victim—a woman who endured rape and abuse and seeks solace in the man she loves. The film portrays Phoolan Devi as a 'one-man woman,' eliciting sympathetic reactions from viewers, as the Indian middle-class audience often expects a woman to love and remain with a single partner throughout her life.

Roy elucidates how media portrayals frequently reinforce stereotypes based on gender and caste. She examines the depiction of Dalit women as victims of sexual violence, which perpetuates the stereotype of Dalit women as inherently vulnerable and powerless. Similarly, media representations of gender-based violence often attribute blame to the victim or emphasize factors such as the

victim's attire, thereby perpetuating victim-blaming attitudes. Roy underscores the media's selective reporting of violent incidents, particularly concerning marginalized communities such as Dalits and Adivasis. She contends that mainstream media often neglects to report atrocities committed against these communities, thus perpetuating their marginalization and invisibility in public discourse. Roy discusses how media coverage of violence, especially when it becomes routine or normalized, desensitizes the public to these issues. This normalization of violence contributes to a culture of impunity, where perpetrators feel emboldened to commit further acts of violence.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

Our observations reveal a stark contrast in the portrayal of socio-political issues between the literary work and the cinematic adaptation. While the novel delves deeply into the complexities of social inequality and political corruption, the film glosses over these themes in favour of a more action-oriented narrative. This shift in focus significantly alters the overall message and impact of the story, potentially diluting its social commentary. As a result, viewers of the film may miss out on the nuanced exploration of societal issues that made the original literary work so compelling and thought-provoking.

Previous research has extensively documented the influence of media on public perception, particularly in the context of social justice and human rights. This influence extends to shaping public opinion on critical issues such as racial equality, gender rights, and environmental justice. Media coverage can amplify or downplay certain perspectives, potentially swaying societal attitudes and policy decisions. Understanding the mechanisms of media influence is crucial for fostering a more informed and equitable public discourse on social justice matters.

Understanding how media representations shape societal views is crucial for addressing misconceptions and fostering informed discourse. Media portrayals often serve as a primary source of information for the public, influencing perceptions and attitudes towards various social issues. These representations can either reinforce existing stereotypes or challenge them, playing a significant role in shaping public opinion and policy decisions. By critically analysing media content and promoting diverse and accurate portrayals, we can work towards a more nuanced understanding of complex societal issues and promote positive social change.

Despite their common theme, the two works occasionally present contradictory viewpoints on the impact and interpretation of the events depicted. The differing perspectives offered by the authors provide

readers with a nuanced understanding of the complex historical narrative. These contrasting interpretations challenge readers to critically examine the events from multiple angles, encouraging a more comprehensive analysis. By presenting divergent viewpoints, the works ultimately contribute to a richer, more multifaceted exploration of the subject matter.

This study contributes to the broader discourse on media representation and its implications for social awareness and policy-making. By examining the portrayal of homelessness in news media, we gain insights into how public perception is shaped and influenced. This understanding can inform strategies for more accurate and empathetic reporting on vulnerable populations. Furthermore, it highlights the need for media literacy education to help audiences critically evaluate the information they receive and its potential biases.

The findings have significant implications for media creators, suggesting the need for responsible and nuanced portrayals of sensitive issues. Media producers should consider the potential impact of their content on audience perceptions and attitudes. Collaborations between media professionals and mental health experts could lead to more accurate and empathetic representations. Additionally, media literacy programs could be developed to help viewers critically analyse and contextualize the portrayals they encounter.

It is important to approach the analysis with caution, recognizing potential biases and the subjective nature of media interpretation. Researchers should employ a diverse range of methodologies, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, to gain a comprehensive understanding of media representations. Cross-cultural comparisons can provide valuable insights into how different societies perceive and portray similar events or issues. Additionally, considering the historical context and evolving media landscape is crucial for a nuanced analysis of contemporary media content.

This research offers a novel perspective by juxtaposing a literary work with its cinematic counterpart, providing unique insights into media representation. The comparative analysis reveals nuanced differences in character development and thematic emphasis between the two mediums. By examining the adaptation process, we gain a deeper understanding of how narrative elements are transformed and reinterpreted across different artistic platforms. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches our comprehension of both the original text and its film adaptation but also sheds light on the broader cultural implications of storytelling in diverse media formats.

V. LIMITATIONS

The study is limited by its focus on only three works, that is, Roy's essays, Mala Sen's book on Phoolan Devi and the movie titled *Bandit Queen* directed by Shekhar Kapur, which may not fully capture the diversity of media representations on the topic.

Further research could explore a wider range of media sources, including news articles, documentaries, and social media discussions, to provide a more comprehensive analysis of Phoolan Devi's portrayal. Additionally, a comparative study examining representations of other female bandits or outlaws in different cultural contexts could offer valuable insights into gender dynamics and media narratives. Future investigations might also benefit from incorporating audience reception studies to understand how these media representations influence public perceptions and attitudes towards female criminality and social justice issues.

VI. CONCLUSION

To sum up, Arundhati Roy's essay, "The Great Indian Rape Trick," offers a critical perspective on how the media contributes to the perpetuation of gender and caste-based violence in India. Roy's sharp analysis reveals that media narratives often uphold existing power dynamics, reinforce damaging stereotypes, and further marginalize victims from already marginalized communities. She emphasizes the necessity for journalism to adopt a more ethical and responsible approach, one that prioritizes truth and social justice. Additionally, she acknowledges the potential of alternative media platforms and grassroots movements to challenge prevailing narratives and amplify the voices of those historically silenced. As we continue to explore the intricate intersections of media, violence, and social inequality, Roy's insights serve as a powerful reminder of the media's significant role in shaping public perceptions and discourse, highlighting the urgent need for media practices that foster inclusivity, empathy, and accountability. Roy's essay questions the very foundations of truth, representation, and storytelling, urging us to scrutinize the narratives that shape our understanding of real lives and to engage more deeply and compassionately with the complexities of human existence. As a writer-activist, Roy calls for media representations that are free from gender and caste biases.

Roy's analysis extends beyond critique to propose a transformative vision for media practices. She envisions a journalism that not only reports facts but actively works to dismantle systemic inequalities and give voice to the

voiceless. This approach calls for a fundamental shift in how stories are sourced, framed, and presented, with a focus on amplifying diverse perspectives and challenging entrenched power structures. Roy's essay invites readers to become more critical and engaged consumers of media. By encouraging a deeper examination of the narratives we encounter, she empowers individuals to question the status quo and seek out alternative viewpoints. This active engagement with media can lead to a more informed and empathetic society, one that is better equipped to address complex social issues and work towards meaningful change.

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Ecological Migration: An Ecocritical Study of *Padma Nadir Majhi*¹

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Abstract— The study of climate change or environmental humanities have evolved as a new epoch in literature during the latter half of the twentieth century. Many researchers and critics argue that human activities have altered the geographical and environmental aspects of the earth and that it is now impossible to reverse the process. Consequently, cyclones, floods, and other natural disasters have become more frequent and they have contributed to human migration, displacement, and loss of biodiversity. For a few decades, researchers have been studying the consequences of ecological imbalance on the co-existence of humans and animals. Ironically, South Asian novelists and authors have seemingly overlooked this complex phenomenon of climate change in their writing as well. As the sense of climate refugees looms large in the backdrop, this multidisciplinary article explores Manik Bandyopadhyay²'s *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1936) from a postcolonial eco-critical perspective in order to understand how a Bangladeshi novel depicts the lives of marginalized people who are fighting for their lives and livelihoods while living on the banks of Padma, one of the largest rivers in the Ganges delta. This paper also delves into postcolonial literary theory to draw conclusions on the observations.



Keywords— Anthropocene, Climate Change, Ecological Migration, Ecocriticism, *Padma Nadir Majhi*.

I. INTRODUCTION

The novel *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1936) by Manik Bandyopadhyay is one of the most acclaimed and accomplished novels in Bengali literature due to the multifaceted literary elements which it elegantly depicts, including the class conflict, hegemonic socio-political condition, Freudian psychoanalysis, and more importantly, environmental concerns. Although written in Bengali, this novel also maintains a wide English readership as a few translators interpreted this into English. For example, Ratan K. Chattopadhyay translated this as *The Boatman of the Padma* (2012) seemingly considering its wide readership and contemporary relevance. In addition, an eponymous Indo-Bangladesh feature film was also produced by

director Goutom Ghosh based on this novel in 1993 that earned many accolades, including the National Film Award for Second Best Feature Film in 1994 (Das, 2022).

Generally speaking, *Padma Nadir Majhi* portrays the struggles of a fishing community who are living in a fictional village called Ketupur on the bank of the river Padma, one of the largest rivers of the Ganges delta. Their boundless hurdles push them to the socio-political periphery where it seems even the gods and goddesses have left them to suffer. The protagonist Kuber, a lowly fisherman who works as a laborer in someone else's boat, resonates with the narrator saying, "God lives in those rich societies. He is never to be found here [Ketupur]". (Nure Saba Tahura, 2022, p. 56) [My Translation]. All these poor

¹ The English translation of *Padma Nadir Majhi* is *The Boatman of the Padma* by Ratan K. Chattopadhyay, published by Orient BlackSwan in January 1, 2012.

² Both Bandyopadhyay and Bandyopadhyay are acceptable spellings for the author's surname. Md. Amir Hossain used the spelling Bandyopadhyay in Social Picture and Livelihood of the Boatmen in Manik Bandyopadhyay's *Padma Nadir Majhi: An Ecocritical Study*. Manik Bandyopadhyay is also known as Manik Banerjee.

and marginalized people, however, are awkwardly supported by a Hussein Miah, a *nouveau riche* who owns a mysterious island somewhere in the middle of Padma. As Miah plans to populate his barren island, he forces— not by physical force but a force which the villagers of Ketupur cannot ignore or accept— the inhabitants of Ketupur and nearby villages to be its citizen. Miah shows empathy towards people; he gives them employment and he brings them food. In return, he only wants them to live in his island, Moyna Dweep. Surprisingly, it is not their poverty, lack of decent employment, or lack of food in the mainland, nor it is that unprecedented love from Hussein Miah that encourages them to leave their motherland and settle in Moyna Dweep. As the readers read on, they come to realize that natural calamities also play a role in their migration and displacement. Flood, cyclones, and river erosions are some of the things they face frequently. These unparalleled natural disasters, as the novelist depicts, shape and redirects their lives. The authors of this article believe that it is mainly the ecological imbalance that leads to the migration and displacement of people. This study, unlike other researchers who mostly dealt with class conflict and psychoanalysis on this text, explores the representation of climate change and its effects on the lives of people of Ketupur, with a particular focus on the ecological migration. In doing to, the authors employ postcolonial theoretical and epistemological perspectives into the novel, especially ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism or ecological criticism investigates the global ecological crises as it looms large in the backdrop of our so-called development narratives. According to *Oxford Bibliographies of Ecocriticism: Literary and Critical Theory*, the term "Ecocriticism is a broad way for literary and cultural scholars to investigate the global ecological crisis through the intersection of literature, culture, and the physical environment (Gladwin, 2019)". In 1978, William Rueckert first coined the term Ecocriticism in his essay *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. Following Rueckert's adoption of the term, the first wave of ecocriticism began in the 1980s. Following that, in 1996, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm published *The Ecocriticism Readers: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, which helped to formally introduce the term "ecocriticism" as a recognized discipline of literary and cultural studies (Slovic et al., 2019). The study of ecocriticism is important to understand the natural changes and their consequences in human lives, especially displacement and human migration.

Migration is typically defined as a relocation from one place to another in search of better living conditions. Migration is often willing or sometimes forceful. Ecological migration is often a forceful migration. It is

considered as displacement caused by environmental factors. In an Anthropocene age, the study of ecological migration has attracted many researchers' attention, especially in the African and South Asian regions which are mostly victims of climate change. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on their article, *Climate Change in South Asia: Strong Responses for Building a Sustainable Future* (2010), shows concern about climate change and its' impact on South Asia. The abrupt increases in urban-rural mobility brought on by climatic changes and other forces will exacerbate the region's infrastructure gaps, social service shortages, and urban management problems (Asian Development Bank, 2010). Besides, sea level rising is an outcome of climate change. According to the article, sea level is expected to increase 45 centimeters by 2050 in Bangladesh, affecting 10%- 15% of the land area and an estimated 35 million people (Asian Development Bank, 2010). The article also stated that "the grave risks posed by sea-level rise could trigger large-scale migration, with ripple effects across borders. (Asian Development Bank, 2010)." Overall, this paper investigates what impacts climate change has on the lives of the characters in the novel. The paper also tries to explore why the villagers went to Moyna Dweep. Is it because of their socio-economic condition in Ketupur or is it the climate change that is accountable for their migration.

II. PADMA NADIR MAJHI AND CLIMATE CHANGE:

Climate change is now so imminent that it can no longer be ignored. This is also evident in contemporary literature, as an increasing number of authors express their concerns through their writings. Although Marxist philosophy has had a great impact on Manik Bandopadhyay' writing, he also shows his concerns about climate crisis, and *Padma Nadir Majhi* is a great example of this. In *Padma Nadir Majhi*, the author shows how the Padma riverbank residents are divided by class and socio-economic background. The author portrays how the climate crisis and peoples' lives are interlinked in a complicated way. Climate crisis will not just distress one particular individual, rather, it will have an impact on the entire humankind. Intense droughts, rising sea levels, flooding, water scarcity, catastrophic storms, destructive fires, melting polar icecaps, a decline in biodiversity, poverty, and displacement are just a few of the effects of climate change. United nation in a press conference regarding Climate Action defines climate change and stated that "Climate change refers to long term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning

of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. (United Nations, n.d.)” Climate change is mainly caused by two major entities; nature and humans. However, humans are damaging nature in such a way that the world is getting polluted every day. As a result, the climate is rapidly changing. Adam Trexler, in *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*, commented that “the principal impact is the anthropogenic emission of greenhouse gases, increasing atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide by 30 percent and methane by 100 percent, triggering significant changes in global temperature and climate. (Trexler, 2015)” Nowadays, anthropogenic activities like the burning of fossil fuels and the conversion of land for agricultural purposes are the main contributors to climate change. Anthropogenic impacts have had a cumulative warming effect that is principally caused by the emission of carbon dioxide and increased by the release of other greenhouse gases. To build big infrastructures or industries, humans are cutting down trees. Besides, cars and factories produce poisonous gases for the environment. Unfortunately, humans do not show enough concern about climate change and label all these as ‘development’. Similarly, in the novel, due to the background and lack of knowledge in climate change, the characters do not show their concern regarding sudden storm or river erosion. Additionally, the characters in the novel are more relying on God for the natural disasters than climate change. In the text, when the storm hits Ketupur, “women set up pindi³ in the yards of each home to persuade the storm god to take a seat and ease up a little.” (Nure Saba Tahura, 2022, p. 95-96) [My Translation]. The novel also illustrates that many characters suffered greatly due to the sudden storm in Ketupur. In that storm, Aminuddin has lost his entire family except his unnamed daughter and Gopi has severely injured her leg. To intensify the situation of that storm, the narrator described that, “several trees and plants were uprooted, and half of the houses in the village were destroyed.” (Nure Saba Tahura, 2022, p. 95) [My Translation] These traumas left a scar on the characters’ mind. Consequently, the characters in the novel also want to migrate, hoping for a better life. At the end of the novel, Kuber, the main character, also decides to move from Ketupur to Moyna Dweep. The novel focuses on climate change and its unparalleled impact on both the environment and the lives of characters. Kuber and his fellow fishermen struggle every day to survive and often get a hard time due to natural crises like floods, river erosion, and storms. Not only Kuber but also the entire village suffers the same fate. Many has lost their loved ones and homes. In order to leave behind this traumatic experience, some villagers want to leave the

village and migrate to Moyna Dweep. At first, Moyna Dweep is portrayed as a utopian place where everyone will be treated equally and no disaster can harm them. Eventually, this misconception is also broken when Rasu flew from Moyna Dweep. Rasu is a fisherman like Kuber, who left Ketupur to live a better life. However, Moyna Dweep took away his entire family. It seems like Rasu is shuffling between Moyna Dweep and Ketupur. Like Rasu, the ecological migrators also abandon their birthplace in the hope of a safer place. But the question arises if there is any safe place in this world. This in turn leads to some more questions. The author portrays the river Padma as a mysterious entity and shows how the villagers are adapting to its adversities. In the novel, natural disasters and the effects of climate change have been made worse by anomalous monsoon patterns and frequent but unannounced storms. The wrath of nature forces the characters into a life-or-death struggle. According to the narrator, “as time passes, the earth settles on the bank of the Padma, and new char⁴s may be seen there. However, the chars again submerge in the waters of the Padma.” (Nure Saba Tahura, 2022, p. 55) [My Translation] Padma alternates between being the divinity of kindness and taking on a monster avatar that engulfs the lives and livelihoods of the residents. In the novel, the fictional village, Chordanga, Mala’s father’s village, is the victim of Padma’s wrath. Chordanga’s villagers have been uprooted as a result of the flooding. The most tragic incident occurs when a mother is sleeping with her one-month-old newborn during the flood, and the child falls and drowns in the water unexpectedly. The mother failed to realize that her child fell into the water and died that night. Both parents are in shock after that incident. When Kuber arrives at Chordanga, he discovers that he is unable to see any dry land. In all his years, Kuber has never before seen anything on this scale. Similarly, the narrator also describes the flood in Ketupur that happened in the rainy season. The harvests were damaged, and the water never rose high enough to reach Pritam Majhi’s backyard, which is located on higher land in the village. The water suddenly surged to an extent that for a week, the tree in the backyard was about a foot underwater. In this context, Md. Amir Hossain, in his paper, “*Social Picture and Livelihood of the Boatmen in Manik Bandopadhyay’s Padma Nadir Majhi: An Ecocritical Study*” comments that “all boatmen have to rely upon the mercy of the Padma; sometimes the mighty river grasps and devours the lives of the poor communities when the tidal waves blow during the rainy season. (Hossain, 2018)” The aftermath of climate crisis also plays a significant role in human lives. For example, in the novel, the villagers face miserable

³ A pindi is typically a tiny, low wooden tool used for seating.

⁴ lands surrounded by the waters of an ocean, sea, river, or stream;

generally, any extension in a river channel or estuary.

conditions after the flood. Without shelter, both people and animals contracted a variety of illnesses, while others suffered severe injuries. Moreover, most crops have been ruined by the flood, and the narrator fears that "the impending famine brought on by the destruction of Aush⁵'s crops are already beginning to show signs." (Nure Saba Tahura, 2022, p. 90) [My Translation] Moreover, the aftermath of the storm in Ketupur is a surprising turn in the novel. The storm brings out the vicious side of nature and creates a great shift in the characters' lives. Gopi's life turns upside down because of the storm. Kuber and Mala had planned to arrange her marriage with Jugal, but she is severely injured in her right leg during the storm, and Jugal later refuses to marry her. Besides, both Kuber's personal and work life has taken a new turn. Kuber has lost his previous job and began working for Hossain Miya. His entire family goes through mental and economic pressure. The climate crisis influences one's psychological aspect as well. For instance, because of the storm, within a span of two days, Aminuddin lost his entire family except for his daughter. This event leaves a scar on Aminuddin's mind. He wanted to leave the village to forget that traumatic night. Gopi's mental health has also been affected by her external injury and the distressing nights she spent in the hospital. Climate change have been a great impact on the villagers. All villagers lead complex lives through "living in the darkness of ecology" (Hossain, 2018). Throughout the novel, the author describes the catastrophe of climate change like floods, river erosion, or sudden storms that have become the parts and parcel of the characters life and how all living beings are suffering the consequences.

III. ECOLOGICAL MIGRATION IN *PADMA NADIR MAJHI*:

In *Padma Nadir Majhi*, Manik Bandopadhyay writes about the fisherman community, who lives from hand to mouth and is in a constant struggle with nature. The village is located near the mighty Padma, which is infamous for erosion and the constant shifting of streams. The river dominates the lives of the characters. Padma is the primary source of income for the villagers, but it also takes a great deal from them. Throughout the novel, the author demonstrates the characters' unwillingly escape their birthplace to avoid financial difficulties and natural disasters. It appears that characters like Rasu, Aminuddin, and Kuber are migrating from one location to another as refugees because it is nearly impossible for them to make a decent livelihood in their current location. In the Anthropocene age, many people are migrating due to

climate crisis. Floods, cyclones, and river erosion all have a significant influence on human lives. People are moving, both voluntarily and involuntarily, to escape the environmental crisis. Unfortunately, climate change is a global problem. According to Adam Trexler, due to environmental crisis "over one billion people will face risks from reduced agricultural production" (Trexler, 2015). In near future, this will lead to famine and people will migrate from their motherland to ensure the basic human needs. Additionally, due to climate change, South Asia is in great danger. According to ADB's article, *Climate Change in South Asia: Strong Responses for Building a Sustainable Future*, "Climatic risks such as sea-level rise, rising temperatures, and extreme weather events will amplify the vulnerability of South Asian cities. About 14% of the region's urban population, totaling about 400 million, live in coastal and major river delta areas that are 10 meters or less above sea level. (Asian Development Bank, 2010)" United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees defines the term refugee and state that, "Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict, or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country. (UNHCR, n.d.)" Although in the novel, characters like Rasu and Aminuddin did not cross an international border, they did leave their birthplace for natural conflict and migrated to Moyna Dweep to lead a better life. They can be labeled as "climate refugees". The term "climate refugee" is not usually recognized by the politicians and other organization as they have to take responsibilities regarding that. However, many NGOs and civil society organizations have started to pay attention to this issue and acknowledged that people have been forcibly displaced due to environmental factors that result from climate change and natural disasters, such as earthquakes or floods. Climate change increases challenges, and its impacts continually make pre-existing social, economic, ecological, political, or demographic issues worse. As a result, displacement could rise, and it might become more difficult to find a sustainable solution. According to Adam Trexler "flooding, drought, and water shortages will lead to mass migration and regional conflicts. (Trexler, 2015)" Similarly, in the novel, the characters frequently face natural disasters that create unbearable difficulties in their lives. Climate crisis not only affects their economic lives but also has a huge impact on their mental health. The "Climate Refugees" also leave the place to forget the traumatized past. In the novel, Hossain Mian tries several times to pursue Aminuddin to move to Moyna Dweep. However, Aminuddin has always declined the proposal but the sudden storm in Ketupur changed the decision. The

⁵ Aush is the name of a season of rice, which is mainly produced in Bangladesh. It is generally cultivated in July- August cropping

season.

storm takes his wife, son, and home away from him. Luckily, his daughter survives the horror. But Aminuddin's pain is greater than his daughter's life. He desperately wants to forget the traumatic event and finally decided to leave Ketupur, and move to Moyna Dweep. This event indicates that the "Climate Refugees" also migrate to leave their past behind. However, Aminuddin was not sure about settling in Moyna Dweep. Rasul, who is also a refugee like Aminuddin, unwillingly decides to move from his birthplace, Malur Char. Padma has taken away his home and now he is also migrating in Moyna Dweep in the hope of a better life. These incidents show that climate change generates a huge impact on migration. In the near future, it will be one of the major concerns for the world. According to National Geographic "over the last decade, nearly 700,000 Bangladeshis were displaced on average each year by natural disasters, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (McDonnell, 2019)" By realizing the gravity of this topic, Manik Bandyopadhyay intended to aware the readers through his writing. In *Padma Nadir Majhi*, the author mentioned Channar Char, which was heavily flooded a few years ago. Out of fear, a majority of the residents left the land. In the novel, the narrator comments that "the char Padma birthed a long time ago, who knows when she may consume it again." (Nure Saba Tahura, 2022, p. 86) [My Translation] The uncertainty of Padma makes it difficult for the inhabitants to survive there. Therefore, many people shuffle here and there to save their lives. Besides, the characters, Rasul and Aminuddin may have different reasons for their migration, but both of them are victims of the climate change crisis. After reaching there, Aminuddin and Rasul immediately want to return to their village. Unfortunately, they do not have the courage to speak up against Hossain Mian. Ironically, the idea and reality of Moyna Dweep are not the same. The place is nothing like Hossain Mian described. Moyna Dweep has no facilities, rather, the inhabitants of Moyna Dweep are barely surviving. Furthermore, the narrator also draws a parallel scenario between Rasul and Aminuddin. Rasul leaves Ketupur to free himself from poverty. But after reaching Moyna Dweep, his entire family lost the battle with malaria in Moyna Dweep. As a consequence, Rasul comes back to Ketupur to avoid his traumatic experience. On the contrary, Aminuddin has lost his family in Ketupur. The storm leaves nothing for him. Both of them move to places because of climate change, but it seems that none of the places can give any assurance of a secure life and the impact of climate crisis is unescapable. At the end of the novel, Kuber is also determined to move from Ketupur. In Kuber's case, his reasons for the migration might be seen as economic and political, but climate change plays a significant role in it. Hossain Mian tricks Kuber and lures

him with money to trap him. Out of greediness, Kuber also starts to work with Hossain Mian. Kuber helps Hossain Mian to supply drugs in Calcutta. When Kuber realizes that Hossain Mian deceives him, Kuber cannot find any room to escape. Moreover, Rasul also takes revenge on Kuber and blames him for a false accusation of stealing. Kuber knows if he goes back to Ketupur, the police will arrest him. Hossain Mian will also put him in jail to punish him. Therefore, when Kapila suggests moving Moyna Dweep, Kuber agrees with Kapila and decides to migrate there. However, these reasons are only the surface area of Kuber's migration. The climate crisis is a major cause of Kuber's migration. In that storm, Kuber also faces the same fate as the other villagers. He has lost his house, and his daughter was severely injured. Eventually, he had no job and money to feed his family. Jugal also declines to marry his daughter after the accident. In that dark time, Hossain Mian helps him financially. He gives Kuber a job as a boatman. Slowly, Kuber got involved in this darkness. It is quite noticeable that this catastrophe changes Kuber's life upside down. In short, all the characters' lives were changed after the storm. Some of them chose to stay and some decided to go.

IV. CONCLUSION

The novel *Padma Nadir Majhi* offers, among other things, an interesting insight into the coexistence of humans and Nature. Although the characters in the novel struggle due to their socio-economic and political status, their suffering intensifies due to the climate change crisis and environmental issues. As the significant characters move from their homeland to Moyna Dweep, the ecological migration becomes very prominent in the novel. Ahead of his time, Manik Bandyopadhyay portrays a contemporary vision on the effects of climate change which is to become more embedded into the lives of people of this region. The novelist subtly illustrates the horror of climate change for postcolonial readers. The novel also examines how the climate crisis is affecting society on a micro level, as well as why the characters have no choice but to leave their homeland. Gopi's injury, the migration of the characters, floods, and storms are the burning examples of climate change. The author also demonstrates how a sudden storm can drastically alter an entire community. All the villagers witness the wrath of nature and suffer its consequences. The psychological challenges faced by the characters in determining whether to leave or stay are also evident in the novel. It is quite evident that the characters do not wish to leave their home, but due to natural disasters, they are forced to migrate. However, no matter where they go, they cannot escape the grasp of climate change. It appears that no land is safe from natural disasters, and humans would obviously be displaced from their home.

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Awareness and Acceptance of Artificial Intelligence among English Pre-Service Teachers in a State Tertiary School

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Abstract— Artificial Intelligence is transforming education, and English pre-service teachers play a significant part. Few studies have examined their views on AI, emphasizing the need to understand its effects on student performance. This study examined English PSTs' AI awareness and acceptability at Sultan Kudarat State University. This study examined their viewpoints to understand what drove AI tool adoption in English language teaching. The findings were intended to guide curriculum development, teacher training, and instructional methods, assuring AI's responsible and ethical use in education. Employing a descriptive-correlational approach, the study involved total enumeration sampling of English pre-service teachers. It utilized statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient to interpret the data effectively. Findings revealed that English PSTs were "Very Familiar" with AI-powered learning platforms, indicating high knowledge or experience. Moreover, English PSTs showed a positive attitude towards the benefits of AI, particularly in addressing diverse learning needs and enhancing student engagement. It reported generally favorable perceptions of the ease of use of AI tools and found that English PSTs had a high level of agreement regarding their intentions to use AI in the classroom. However, they remained neutral in using AI to craft learning activities and assessments, lesson plans, and checking attendance and grading. Hence, there was a significant relationship between AI awareness and acceptance, with a moderate positive correlation, indicating that as English PSTs become more aware of AI's capabilities and applications, their acceptance and intention to use AI in their teaching practices increase. Based on the results, a program can be designed to enhance English PSTs' understanding and application of AI in education, including workshops and training sessions focusing on the practical use of AI tools, strategies for integrating AI into lesson plans, and addressing ethical considerations. These findings may help educational institutions better integrate AI, preparing future instructors to use technology to its maximum. Educational institutions can improve teacher and student learning by applying the proposed measures to create a supportive environment that promotes ethical AI use.



Keywords— *Acceptance, Artificial Intelligence, Awareness, Ease of Use, Intention, Training Design, Usefulness*

I. INTRODUCTION

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues transforming education, English pre-service teachers' awareness and acceptance of AI must be assessed. There is a scarcity of research that has investigated the viewpoints of English PSTs about AI in contrast to the opinions of in-service teachers. English PSTs are the next generation of educators who affect AI technology applications in educational settings. Understanding artificial intelligence can greatly impact student academic performance. This study examines how state tertiary English PSTs accept AI.

AI can revolutionize education by boosting learning, helping instructors, and offering personalized instruction. For instance, "bots," machine learning algorithms, and software were created in education to mimic human intelligence (Durey, 2023). Students who utilize artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT, become lazy (Gordon, 2023).

Stakeholders, legislators, and educators have debated and taken action due to artificial intelligence (AI)'s significant impact on education. Whether one likes it or not, artificial intelligence (AI) has become entrenched in education, with far-reaching effects (Duckworth & Fujiwara, 2023).

International institutions like Toronto English schools value AI-powered solutions because they can speed up English language acquisition and improve vocabulary learning (Cezar, 2023). However, the widespread availability and convenience of AI tools threaten academic integrity. AI-powered platforms that can write essays and address difficult challenges change the rules of plagiarism, academic integrity, and AI misuse, which can subtly weaken the educational experience (Duckworth & Fujiwara, 2023).

Nationally, Eborá (2023) asserts that Filipino students increasingly use AI for academic help as technology advances. Use AI-powered writing tools for essays, AI-assisted study systems for exams, and endless possibilities. Additionally, Cajuday (2023) asserts that AI-driven tools like grammar checks, clarity suggestions, and creative prompts improve writing. If they overuse AI-assisted study programs and writing tools, kids may struggle to think creatively and critically (Eborá, 2023).

Duterte has asked school leaders and academics to consider the benefits and drawbacks of AI and technology in the classroom. She stressed the importance of technology in improving educational accessibility, quality, and equity. However, it is noted that AI's uncertain status in education

creates dread and shame. Despite these challenges, she believes AI can inspire a "paradigm shift" in education. Technology is used to give students high-quality education (Marcelo, 2023).

Local government officials in the Philippines are moderately to highly interested in AI. It emphasizes the importance of overcoming technical know-how and anxiety to promote AI use in local government. Thus, local government officials are moderately interested in AI adoption but face fear and technological know-how (Zabala, 2023; Distor et al., 2023).

Studies on AI only centered on mostly international research, which includes designing, developing, and validating students' conceptions, key competencies, student performance analysis, education review for students and teachers, causability and explainability, trends in education, higher education: early recognition, and students' success, development and application, medicine, evolution and revolution in education (Cheng et al., 2023; Huang, 2021; Chen et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2020; Holzinger et al., 2019; Chassignol et al., 2018; Ciolacu, 2018; Kim & Park, 2017; Hamet & Tremblay, 2017; Roll & Wylie, 2016). However, there are limited and recent studies on AI, especially on awareness and acceptability among students in a developing state university.

Considering the inevitable problems, an investigation must be carried out to examine future educators' views and preferences toward AI integration in English language instruction. It is a good opportunity, given the unique setting of the university and the changing landscape of educational technology. This study provides insights into the factors influencing awareness and acceptance of AI tools among English PSTs at Sultan Kudarat State University. Understanding the aspects of AI acceptance in English language teaching can have significant implications for curriculum development, teacher training, and the enhancement of teaching practices, as well as for engaging and ideating with AI technologies safely, responsibly, and ethically.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The study examined English pre-service teachers' awareness and acceptance of AI. It answered the following questions:

1. To what extent of English pre-service teachers' awareness of using AI in education?
2. What is the level of English pre-service teachers' acceptance of using AI in education in terms of:

- 2.1 usefulness;
 - 2.2 ease of use; and,
 - 2.3 intention to use?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the awareness and acceptance of English pre-service teachers' acceptance of using AI in education?
 4. Based on the results, what program can be designed for the English pre-service teachers on the employment of AI in education?

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative research design. Quantitative research is a systematic approach researchers employ to examine theories on individuals' attitudes and behaviors, relying on numerical and statistical evidence. Researchers collect data from many users through surveys to indirectly gather objective and unbiased information on users in relevant scenarios (Sreekumar, 2024).

According to Zhang et al. (2023), this study is best suited for quantitative research because it requires the use of established models like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to accurately measure the level of acceptance of artificial intelligence (AI). Quantitative approaches enable the systematic measurement of various elements influencing behavioral intention, including AI self-efficacy, reported delight, AI anxiety, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, work relevance, and subjective norm, as described in the TAM.

Hence, descriptive study and correlational analysis were used. The study employed descriptive research to describe the characteristics, behaviors, and attributes of a specific population of English pre-service teachers. According to Sirisilla and Sirisilla (2023), descriptive research provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject, providing valuable insights for future research, policy decisions, and programs. Moreover, correlational analysis is a statistical tool used to quantify the relationship between two variables, examining their degree and direction. Both methods provided valuable information and insights for future research and policy decisions (James, 2022).

2.2 Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at Sultan Kudarat State University, specifically at the ACCESS Campus in Sultan Kudarat. The institution is in EJC Montilla, Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The ninety-three (93) pre-service teachers specializing in English at Sultan Kudarat State University, ACCESS Campus, were the respondents. This group was divided into two sections: English 4A, consisting of fifty (50) students, and English 4B, with forty-three (43) students. These pre-service teachers represented a crucial segment for the study, as their experiences and perspectives provided valuable insights into the current educational landscape and the effectiveness of the university's teacher training programs.

To gather data, the respondents were surveyed using an online questionnaire. This method ensured a convenient and efficient means of collecting responses, allowing respondents to complete the survey at their own pace and in their preferred setting. The online format facilitated the seamless collation and analysis of data, ensuring that the feedback from all 93 students was accurately captured and assessed. This approach was well-suited for the technologically adept cohort, ensuring high response rates and reliable data quality. Moreover, each participant was informed about the study's objectives.

2.4 Sampling Technique

Given the small population size of 93 respondents, consisting of 50 students from English 4A and 43 from English 4B, the researchers employed total enumeration sampling or a census. This method studies every unit within the population, ensuring a complete count. Total population sampling is efficient for small, well-defined populations, offering comprehensive data collection, eliminating sampling bias, and minimizing the margin of error. It also provides timely results. These benefits make it a preferred method for instructors and research advisers conducting studies with small populations, ensuring high-quality, accurate data (Canonizado, 2021).

2.5 Research Instrument

The study used a structured questionnaire to assess the awareness and acceptance of English pre-service teachers at Sultan Kudarat State University. Specifically, a Likert scale format was used for quantitative responses. The Likert scale measured respondents' awareness and acceptance of different teaching methodologies, allowing them to express their opinions on a scale from strongly disagree to agree and not familiar at all to extremely familiar.

The questionnaire, which the researchers developed, subsequently underwent validation with the assistance of three faculty members specializing in teacher education at Sultan Kudarat State University. Furthermore, a pilot test was conducted on the data collection instrument, and its reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. This

assessment ascertained the trustworthiness of the questionnaire items or statements.

The researchers developed a verified questionnaire checklist using an online tool (Google Form). The survey form was used to collect data on the awareness and acceptability of artificial intelligence. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first part examined English PSTs' awareness of using AI in education, and the second part examined the level of English PSTs' acceptance of using AI in education regarding usefulness, ease of use, and intention.

In interpreting the results for the Awareness and Familiarity with Artificial Intelligence (AI), the following mean interval and qualitative interpretation were used:

Scale	Mean Range	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Extremely Familiar	Exceptional level of knowledge or experience
4	3.40 – 4.19	Very Familiar	High level of knowledge or experience
3	2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Familiar	Fair level of knowledge or experience
2	1.70 – 2.59	Slightly Familiar	Limited level of knowledge or experience
1	1.00 – 1.69	Not Familiar at All	No knowledge or experience

In interpreting the results for the level of English pre-service teachers' acceptance of using AI in education in terms of usefulness, ease of use, and intention, the following mean interval and qualitative interpretation were used:

Scale	Mean Range	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Strongest level of agreement
4	3.40 – 4.19	Agree	High level of agreement
3	2.60 – 3.39	Neutral	Neither in agreement nor disagreement
2	1.70 – 2.59	Disagree	Low level of agreement

1	1.00 – 1.69	Strongly Disagree	Strongest level of disagreement

In interpreting the results for the significant relationship between the awareness and acceptance of the English pre-service teacher's acceptance of using AI in education, the following table was used:

Size of Correlation	Interpretation
0.90 to 1.00 (-0.90 to -1.00)	Very High Positive (Negative) Correlation
0.70 to 0.90 (-0.70 to - 0.90)	High Positive (Negative) Correlation
0.50 to 0.70 (-0.50 to -0.70)	Moderate Positive (Negative) Correlation
0.30 to 0.50 (-0.30 to -0.50)	Low Positive (Negative) Correlation
0.00 to 0.30 (0.00 to - 0.30)	Negligible Correlation

2.6 Statistical Treatment

Using a comprehensive statistical treatment, the study analyzed awareness and acceptance of artificial intelligence among English pre-service teachers in a state tertiary school. The problem statement outlined in Chapter One was addressed using the following statistical instruments.

The researchers used the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient to interpret the data effectively. The mean and standard deviation were employed to analyze the awareness and familiarity with Artificial Intelligence and the level of English pre-service teachers' acceptance of using AI in education regarding usefulness, ease of use, and intention. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between awareness and acceptance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an overview of the findings, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected from the questionnaires distributed to the ninety-three (93) respondents, which are relevant to the study. The respondents were students pursuing a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a major in English. The students were enrolled in the College of Teacher Education at Sultan Kudarat State University, ACCESS campus.

3.1 Extent of English Pre-Service Teachers' Awareness of Using AI In Education

Table 1. Summary of the Extent of English Pre-Service Teachers' Awareness of Using AI in Education

	Statement	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
1	I am familiar with the existence and concept of AI powered learning platforms (e.g., ChatGPT, Perplexity, Bard AI, etc.).	4.26	0.69	Extremely Familiar
2	I am familiar with the utilization and functionalities of AI-powered learning platforms.	3.99	0.81	Very Familiar
3	I am familiar with how AI are applied in educational settings.	4.11	4.06	Very Familiar
4	I am familiar with the potential benefits of incorporating AI in teaching.	4.06	0.72	Very Familiar
5	I am familiar with the process of evaluating the effectiveness of AI-generated teaching materials.	3.84	0.88	Very Familiar
6	I am familiar with and have explored the use of AI-powered grammar and vocabulary checkers to support student learning.	3.92	0.78	Very Familiar
7	I am familiar with the potential of AI-powered writing assistants for improving students' grammar, vocabulary usage, and writing fluency.	3.99	0.79	Very Familiar
8	I am familiar with the potential benefits and limitations of using AI-powered chatbots to facilitate language acquisition outside the classroom.	3.98	0.72	Very Familiar
9	I am familiar with the risks of using AI-powered tools in English classes, particularly when it comes to protecting student data privacy.	4.02	0.81	Very Familiar
10	I am familiar with different applications of AI-powered tools in the education sector beyond language learning.	3.89	0.77	Very Familiar
Average Mean		4.01	0.61	Very Familiar

The results in Table 1 reveal that English pre-service teachers (PSTs) are highly familiar with Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a learning platform, with an overall mean score of 4.01 (SD = 0.61) indicating a “Very Familiar” level. Among the areas assessed, the highest mean score of 4.26 was recorded for general familiarity with AI technologies such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Bard AI, suggesting that English PSTs are well-informed about AI's existence and conceptual framework in education. High mean scores were also noted in understanding AI's educational applications (4.11), awareness of its potential teaching benefits (4.06), and the importance of protecting student data when using such tools (4.02). Familiarity extended to the practical use of AI-powered platforms (3.99), grammar and vocabulary checkers (3.92 and 3.99, respectively), and the use of AI chatbots for language learning (3.98), indicating a strong grasp of AI's usefulness in enhancing student learning.

This familiarity reflects English PSTs' preparedness to integrate AI in future teaching practices. Research supports these findings; studies by Lau and Lee (2021), Zhang and Aslan (2021), and Holstein et al. (2020) emphasize that exposure to AI training significantly boosts pre-service teachers' confidence and competence in using AI tools effectively. The slightly lower score in evaluating AI-generated teaching materials (3.84) suggests a potential area for further development. Nonetheless, the results affirm that English PSTs not only understand the benefits and limitations of AI but are also equipped to apply AI in innovative and responsible ways, underscoring the importance of including AI education in teacher training programs.

3.2 Level of English Pre-Service Teachers' Acceptance of Using AI In Education in Terms of Usefulness

Table 2. Summary of the level of English Pre-Service Teachers' Acceptance of Using AI in Education in Terms of Usefulness

	Statement	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
1	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools provide valuable support for addressing diverse learning needs in English language classrooms.	3.76	0.77	Agree
2	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools are user-friendly and accessible for English language teaching.	3.68	0.71	Agree
3	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools can be a powerful tool for enhancing my engagement in English language learning.	3.67	0.81	Agree
4	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools can suggest relevant resources and materials.	3.80	0.75	Agree
5	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools can assist in creating engaging and interactive English language learning activities.	3.74	0.86	Agree
6	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools can help me with my writing skills.	3.65	0.83	Agree
7	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools can help me with my reading skills.	3.56	0.79	Agree
8	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools can support feedback and evaluation.	3.52	0.82	Agree
9	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools have the potential to make teaching more accessible and manageable for educators.	3.69	0.74	Agree
10	As an English Pre-service teacher, I believe AI-powered tools can help in managing time more effectively.	3.65	0.88	Agree
	Average Mean	3.67	0.63	Agree

Table 2 presents the English pre-service teachers' (PSTs) level of acceptance regarding the usefulness of AI in education, showing a favorable attitude with an overall mean score of 3.67 (SD = 0.63), interpreted as "Agree." The highest-rated items include AI's ability to suggest relevant resources (3.80) and support diverse learning needs (3.76), as well as its usefulness in creating engaging English language activities (3.74). PSTs also agreed that AI tools are user-friendly (3.68), enhance student engagement (3.67), and help make teaching more manageable (3.69). Additionally, they acknowledged that AI assists with time management (3.65), improves writing (3.65) and reading skills (3.56), and supports feedback and evaluation (3.52). These results highlight that English PSTs recognize AI as a valuable tool for enriching instruction and streamlining classroom tasks.

The overall positive reception of AI's usefulness aligns with findings from Hew et al. (2021), who emphasized that perceived usefulness strongly influences teachers' intention to adopt AI in their teaching strategies. English PSTs' belief in AI's practicality suggests they are optimistic and prepared to integrate it into their future classrooms to improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Their readiness is grounded in the belief that AI can enhance engagement, personalize learning, provide interactive support, and improve academic performance. These insights point to a growing acceptance of AI as a reliable and impactful component in modern educational practices, reinforcing the importance of incorporating AI-related training in teacher education programs.

3.3 Level of English Pre-Service Teachers' Acceptance of Using AI In Education in Terms of Ease of Use

Table 3. Summary of the Level of English Pre-Service Teachers' Acceptance of Using AI In Education in Terms of Ease of Use

	Statement	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
1	AI-powered tools are easily to navigate because it provides clear instructions and guidance for users.	3.65	0.76	Agree
2	AI-powered tools potentially manageable for students with varying levels of tech-savviness.	3.60	0.66	Agree
3	AI-powered tools often provide clear error messages, which help users identify and troubleshoot technical issues easily.	3.59	0.76	Agree
4	AI-powered tools as mobile-friendly interfaces, making navigation and exploration of features even more convenient for various learning contexts.	3.68	0.69	Agree
5	AI-powered tools as increasingly offering multiple language options, which makes it more accessible for diverse users.	3.77	0.72	Agree
	Average Mean	3.66	0.60	Agree

Table 3 illustrates the English pre-service teachers' (PSTs) acceptance of using AI in education regarding ease of use, with an overall mean score of 3.66 (SD = 0.60), indicating a high level of agreement. The highest-rated item was the accessibility of AI tools through multiple language options (3.77), suggesting inclusivity for diverse users. This was followed by recognizing AI tools' mobile-friendly interfaces (3.68) and ease of navigation due to clear instructions (3.65). PSTs also agreed that AI tools are manageable even for users with varying degrees of technical skills (3.60) and that they typically provide clear error messages to support troubleshooting (3.59). These results suggest that English PSTs perceive AI tools as accessible and user-friendly, supporting their openness to integrating such technologies into classroom environments.

These findings align with the research of Malik et al. (2021) and Almahri et al. (2020), who emphasize the impact of perceived ease of use on building trust in educational technologies. According to Malik et al., trust and adoption rates increase when technologies are easy to use. Similarly, Almahri et al. found that user-friendly AI tools such as chatbots encourage future use and foster favorable attitudes among students. In this study, English PSTs' favorable perceptions of AI usability imply a readiness to incorporate such tools into their lesson plans. Ultimately, the data underscores the importance of intuitive and accessible AI design in ensuring successful adoption and positive attitudes toward educational technology.

3.4 Level of English Pre-Service Teachers' Acceptance of Using AI In Education in Terms of Intention

Table 4. Summary of the level of English Pre-Service Teachers' Acceptance of Using AI in Education in Terms of Intention

	Statement	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
1	I intend to use AI-powered tools in my future teaching career.	3.54	0.88	Agree
2	I intend to use AI-powered tools to enhance student engagement and motivation in the classroom.	3.58	0.78	Agree
3	I intend to use AI- powered tools in education to improve learning outcomes and academic performance.	3.56	0.79	Agree
4	I intend to use AI- powered tools because it helps to address the diverse learning needs of students effectively.	3.58	0.78	Agree
5	I intend to use AI- powered tools in creating learning activities and assessments.	3.46	0.95	Agree
6	I intend to use AI-powered tools in making my lesson plans.	3.00	1.03	Neutral
7	I intend to use use AI- powered tools in checking attendance and grading.	2.98	1.14	Neutral
8	I intend to explore and experiment with new and innovative AI tools in my personal and teaching needs.	3.54	0.83	Agree
9	I intend to explore new AI-driven teaching methodologies in my future English language classrooms.	3.55	0.71	Agree

10	I intend to participate in various programs such as, seminars, workshops, etc. about the usage, benefits, and risks of artificial intelligence in educational context.	3.69	0.82	Agree
Average Mean		3.45	0.70	Agree

Table 4 reveals that English pre-service teachers (PSTs) exhibit a generally positive intention to use AI in education, with an overall mean of 3.45 (SD = 0.70), interpreted as “Agree.” The highest-rated intention was to participate in professional development programs such as seminars and workshops on AI (3.69), indicating a strong interest in further learning about AI’s educational applications. PSTs also expressed high intentions to use AI-powered tools to enhance student engagement, motivation, and to address diverse learning needs, with mean scores around 3.58. Other intentions, such as improving learning outcomes (3.56), exploring AI-driven teaching methods (3.55), and experimenting with innovative AI tools (3.54), also reflect their openness to incorporating AI into future classrooms.

However, the study found more neutral responses regarding AI use for administrative tasks, including lesson

planning (3.00) and checking attendance or grading (2.98). This suggests a distinction between AI’s perceived value in enhancing teaching and learning versus its role in routine classroom management. These findings align with Baydas and Goktas (2017), who emphasized that perceived usefulness, ease of use, and ICT self-efficacy are key predictors of teachers’ intention to adopt technology. Their study underlines the need to strengthen pre-service teachers’ confidence and competence in technology to encourage its integration into constructivist, student-centered teaching practices. Overall, English PSTs demonstrate a strong willingness to embrace AI tools that enrich learning but remain cautious about their role in administrative tasks.

3.5 Significant Relationship Between the Awareness and Acceptance of the English Pre-Service Teachers' Acceptance of Using AI in Education

Table 5. Results on the Relationship Between the Awareness and Acceptance of the English Pre-Service Teachers' Acceptance of Using AI in Education

Variables	Usefulness	Ease of Use	Intention	Acceptance of using AI	Interpretation
Awareness and Familiarity of AI	.481	.530	.371	.501	Moderate Positive Correlation

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results reveal a moderate positive correlation between English PSTs’ awareness and acceptance of using AI in education, as shown by the Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.501$. This statistically significant relationship indicates that as pre-service teachers gain a deeper understanding of AI technologies, their willingness to adopt and integrate these tools into their teaching practices also increases. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, affirming that awareness and acceptance are significantly linked. This finding emphasized the importance of awareness as a key factor in encouraging the effective adoption of AI in educational settings.

Supporting studies, such as those by Kim and Kim (2022) and Wood et al. (2005), emphasize that educators’ familiarity and comfort with everyday AI applications positively shape their openness to classroom integration. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2023) stress that pre-service teachers’ perceptions evolve with experience, suggesting that teacher training programs should include targeted interventions and hands-on exposure to AI tools. These initiatives can build confidence and promote informed

decision-making regarding AI use. In conclusion, raising awareness through structured training and real-life applications may be vital in fostering greater acceptance and adoption of AI among future educators.

3.6 Proposed Program for English Pre-Service Teachers on the Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Education

A comprehensive Seminar-Workshop on Fostering Awareness and Acceptance of Artificial Intelligence can be designed based on the identified need to raise awareness and build competence in Artificial Intelligence among English pre-service teachers. This program is designed to equip pre-service teachers with the essential knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills to integrate AI into English language teaching effectively.

The proposed program includes the following components:

- **Awareness-building sessions** introduce the fundamentals of AI and its relevance in modern classrooms.

- **Hands-on workshops** that allow participants to explore AI tools applicable to English instruction.
- **Panel discussions** will address common concerns and misconceptions about AI.
- **Collaborative activities**, such as lesson planning and group brainstorming, are used to encourage the application of AI in real teaching scenarios.
- **Evaluation and action planning** to help participants develop concrete steps for future AI integration.

This design responds to the evident gap in AI literacy among pre-service teachers and aligns with current trends in education that demand digital fluency. It ensures that participants are informed and empowered to implement AI-enhanced strategies in their future teaching careers.

IV. CONCLUSION

AI-powered learning platforms hold a positive perception of AI's usefulness in education. They particularly appreciate AI's potential to address diverse learning needs and boost student engagement. This positive attitude, coupled with their favorable view of the ease of use of AI tools, plays a critical role in their willingness to adopt AI in their teaching practices. Overall, English PSTs show a clear intention to incorporate AI into their classrooms, reflecting openness to leveraging AI to enhance their instructional methods.

However, their enthusiasm is more cautious when using AI for specific tasks such as designing learning activities, assessments, lesson plans, attendance, and grading, where they remain neutral. This indicates a need for additional support and training to build confidence and competence in these areas. The study also highlights a significant positive correlation between AI awareness and acceptance, emphasizing that increased knowledge about AI directly boosts PSTs' readiness to integrate it into their teaching. Therefore, ongoing professional development through seminars, workshops, and training programs is essential to empower English PSTs to utilize AI and maximize its benefits for student learning effectively.

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Beyond the Text: Marxism and the Social Context of Literary Creation

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Abstract— *This article explores the intersection of Marxist theory and literary creation by examining the social and economic contexts that shape literary works. Building on the foundational Marxist concepts of base and superstructure, class struggle, and ideology, the paper argues that literature cannot be understood in isolation from the material conditions in which it is produced. The article challenges traditional formalist approaches that prioritize the text itself over its external influences, advocating instead for a reading of literature as a product of its socio-economic environment. By analyzing literary works as reflections and critiques of class relations, the paper demonstrates how authors engage with and respond to the social forces around them, consciously or unconsciously reflecting the contradictions of their time. Furthermore, the article interrogates the role of ideology in literature, showing how dominant cultural narratives often serve the interests of the ruling class, while subversive works can reveal the tensions and potential for change within capitalist societies. Drawing on examples from both canonical and contemporary texts, the paper examines how Marxist criticism can uncover the ways in which literature both shapes and is shaped by the material realities of class, power, and production. The article concludes by asserting that a Marxist approach to literary criticism not only illuminates the historical and political forces at play in literary creation but also provides a powerful tool for critiquing the ongoing social inequalities in today's world.*



Keywords— *base, class struggle, social reality, superstructure.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Marxism views various phenomena in society as interconnected parts of a larger social structure. Social reality, according to Marxism, is shaped by the collective thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of individuals. As people engage in production and distribution, there is an ongoing conflict between different social classes—those with power and wealth (the "haves") and those without (the "have-nots")—each group striving to assert or maintain its dominance within the social hierarchy. Marxism asserts that class struggle is the fundamental driving force in any society, and that no aspect of societal life can be fully understood without considering this conflict.

At a higher level, Marxism uses a method of investigation and analysis that is objective, scientific, and superior in its approach—known as the dialectical method. This method views the opposing and conflicting elements of a

phenomenon as interrelated and mutually influential. The structure of society, therefore, is built upon the tension between these two groups.

The survival and evolution of society depend on a productive clash between these conflicting groups, where the resolution of class struggles leads to progress and change. From a dialectical perspective, historical phenomena are both shaped by existing conditions and the result of opposing forces. Marxism places significant emphasis on the concepts of "society" and "social reality," reminding us that society is dynamic and constantly evolving, governed by historical forces like class struggle, state functions, and revolutionary political changes. Ultimately, the resolution of conflicts between social groups contributes to growth and development, and only by seeing these interconnected facts can we fully understand the nature of social reality.

II. OVERVIEW OF MARX'S ESSENTIAL IDEAS: CLASS STRUGGLE, MATERIALISM, AND IDEOLOGY

Class Struggle

Marx posits that society is fundamentally divided into two main groups: the "haves" (those with power and resources) and the "have-nots" (the working class or proletariat). These two groups are locked in constant conflict as they seek to assert or preserve their dominance within the societal framework. Marxism emphasizes that class struggle is inherent in all societies and is essential for societal progress and development. According to Marx, the clash between these groups is not only inevitable but should be productive and positive for the advancement of society. Growth and societal evolution emerge from the resolution of these conflicts. Thus, Marxism assigns significant importance to the concepts of "society" and "social reality," underscoring that these forces shape the way society functions.

III. MATERIALISM AND IDEOLOGY

Dialectical Materialism:

Dialectical materialism is the scientific method developed by Marx to interpret history. Influenced by the French school of materialism, particularly Ludwig Feuerbach, Marx's materialism posits that matter, not ideas, is the ultimate reality. In this view, ideas are reflections of material conditions within society.

Historical Materialism:

Historical materialism is the application of dialectical materialism to the study of history. It offers an economic interpretation of history by applying the Marxian approach of dialectical materialism. According to this perspective, the processes of economic production and distribution are central to societal existence and the structure of social relations. These processes depend on the available resources and how they are utilized within a society. However, these economic factors also influence how people live, think, and interact, as they are guided by cultural norms that shape their beliefs and actions.

For example, two transformative events in Europe—the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution—illustrate the impact of material conditions on society. The French Revolution, occurring at the end of the 18th century, introduced the idea of equality and challenged the hierarchical structure of society. The uprising against feudal lords sparked revolutionary changes, leading to the establishment of democracy and free enterprise.

In contrast, the Industrial Revolution in England, which took place in the 19th century, transformed the social fabric

by prompting massive migration from rural areas to urban centers in search of work. This shift drastically altered the economic landscape, with urban economies booming while rural economies suffered.

The Industrial Revolution also had a profound impact on literature. Many writers of the time became sympathetic to the plight of the working class, choosing to focus on characters from the lower classes to highlight deep human struggles. In comparison, characters from the upper classes often appeared uninspired and shallow. Literary works from this period reflect a new outlook, one that emphasizes the lived experiences of common people. From a Marxist perspective, literature is not merely myth or fantasy; rather, it serves as a representation of real, material conditions and the struggles that shape human lives. In this way, literature becomes a crystallized expression of the societal forces at play during this time.

IV. MARXIST VIEW ON LITERATURE

The Marxist perspective on literature has had a profound and lasting impact on 20th-century criticism and thought, primarily because of its focus on history and society. According to Marx, history is shaped by human action, with people influencing society based on the resources available to them. It is the collective will of individuals that determines the course of human life within a society. Changes in society, Marx argues, come through class struggle, with the social reality of Marxism asserting that society is always biased in favor of the dominant class. The new productive force—the industrial working class or proletariat—has the potential to alter the societal structure and address its inherent injustices.

From a Marxist viewpoint, the individual is an inseparable part of society, and one cannot hold contradictory views about the society in which they live. However, we often encounter individuals who present multiple perspectives at different times, leading to the emergence of two opposing social groups. These groups come into conflict, with one becoming the dominant class and the other the subordinate class. One strategy used by the dominant group is to encourage the middle class to adopt an "independent" and seemingly objective stance, questioning the validity of both the dominant and subordinate groups' positions. The middle class often believes this stance allows for a more neutral perspective, but in reality, it serves the interests of the dominant group. The ruling class knows that ultimate power rests in its hands, and thus, it doesn't need to worry about middle-class assertions. Marxism asserts that social reality is always biased, and that the proletariat has the potential to change the unjust structure of society.

The concept of “social reality” refers to the social environment specific to a given time, encompassing economic, political, and ideological aspects. This reality reflects the structure within which a limited number of people carry out key activities related to the production and distribution of goods. For Marx, production is the most fundamental aspect of human existence. He believed that what distinguishes humans from animals is their ability to produce their means of subsistence—a process influenced by their physical and social conditions. As humans produce the means of their survival, they are indirectly shaping their material life. Their identity and existence, therefore, are intertwined with what they produce and how they produce it. The nature of individuals is thus determined by the material conditions that govern their production processes.

The owning class and the working class are constantly engaged in shaping society, resulting in ongoing tension between these two groups. Despite the productive nature of enterprises, hostility between the classes persists. Marx argues that human social productivity is inherently progressive—it continually increases and expands, leading to the production of greater quantities of goods and services.

This brings us to the concept of class struggle, which is central to Marxist theory. The two opposing sections of society—those who own the means of production (the bourgeoisie) and those who do not (the proletariat)—are locked in a perpetual conflict. This struggle is a driving force of historical movement and progress, as the distribution of socially produced goods remains deeply unequal. While goods are produced collectively, their distribution is individualistic, benefiting those who own the means of production. According to Marx, the owners appropriate the surplus value generated by the workers, leaving them with only the wages necessary for subsistence. This exploitation of labor, Marx argues, is a key element of capitalist society.

V. BASE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE IN MARXIST THEORY

The concepts of **base** and **superstructure** are central to Marxist thought and play a crucial role in understanding societal change. According to Marx, significant transformations in society often come about through violent upheavals. This is because the ruling class—the owners of wealth, land, and privilege—resist change and are reluctant to relinquish their power for the benefit of the working masses, who Marx saw as the true producers of society’s wealth. The ruling class tends to focus on preserving their own power, enjoying wealth, prestige, and influence, while neglecting the well-being of the laborers who sustain the economy through their daily toil. This inequality and

oppression lead to uprisings and revolutions among the working class against the elite.

For instance, in 17th-century England, the common people’s dissatisfaction with the aristocracy culminated in violent confrontations. This conflict led to the execution of King Charles I and the subsequent exile of his son to France. Though the power of the people did not endure in the long term, the shift that occurred at the base of society was undeniable. The existing social structure was drastically altered: land relations were transformed, and the merchants—who previously had less power—grew in influence, ultimately gaining more control over the direction of Parliament. The political system shifted from a feudal absolutist monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. This represented a fundamental change in the **base**, where the old order was overthrown, giving rise to a new system driven by the common people’s demands for change.

Superstructure and its Transformation

In contrast to the base, the superstructure—which includes the legal, ideological, and cultural institutions of society—experiences change more gradually. According to Marx, while the superstructure follows the changes at the base, it does not necessarily undergo violent shifts. Instead, as the economic base transforms, the superstructure adapts to accommodate the new system. A key example of this transformation is the legal system, which must eventually align with the new economic relations and help legitimize and enforce the new order.

However, the shift in superstructure is not always so straightforward, especially in areas like philosophy, ideology, and culture. Often, people begin to sense the possibility of social change, along with its potential positive and negative effects, before the changes in the base fully materialize. This sense of dissatisfaction and desire for change is often reflected in literature and culture long before it manifests in the political or economic systems. In this way, the superstructure—especially through art, culture, and ideology—can intensify the conflict within the base rather than simply follow its transformation.

The Relationship Between Base and Superstructure

The critical question that arises is how people become conscious of their conditions within the superstructure if the changes in the base come first. In other words, how do individuals become aware of the need to overthrow the old base when that base has become obsolete, and societal change is necessary to unleash the productive forces of humanity?

Marx’s theory clarifies this relationship between base and superstructure. While these components of social reality can be studied in theory in isolation, their true nature can only

be understood in practice, particularly by the **proletariat**, the real producers in society. Marx argued that social reality should no longer be left to the philosophers but should instead be analyzed and shaped by those who truly drive social change—the working class. The interaction between the superstructure (ideas, culture, politics) and the base (economic production) ultimately leads to the evolution of society. It is through the collective consciousness and action of the proletariat that the old structures can be overthrown, and a new social order can emerge.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Marxist literary criticism draws heavily on the political and economic theories of German philosopher Karl Marx, applying his analysis of society to the realm of literature. This approach connects literary texts to the broader social, historical, cultural, and political contexts in which they are produced. Marxist criticism focuses on the ways in which literature not only reflects but also reinforces or challenges the underlying economic and social structures of a society. This perspective has remained influential over time and continues to evolve, with contemporary interpretations branching into fields such as post-colonialism, cultural studies, and other critical approaches that examine power dynamics, identity, and societal change.

At the heart of Marxist literary theory is the idea that literature is deeply intertwined with the material conditions of the time in which it is written. Karl Marx's emphasis on class struggle, materialism, and the economic forces that shape human existence forms the foundation of this critical approach. Marx believed that society is divided into classes, each with its own material interests, and that these divisions create inherent conflicts, which literature can either expose or perpetuate. Marxist literary critics analyze how texts engage with these conflicts, often questioning how literature either reflects or challenges the dominant ideologies of its time. For instance, does a work of literature uphold the values of the ruling class, or does it give voice to the oppressed and marginalized, seeking to expose social inequalities?

Furthermore, Marxist criticism examines how literature functions as a tool of power. It asks how the ideas and narratives presented in literary works may serve to legitimize existing power structures or question their legitimacy. The portrayal of class, labor, and economic systems in literature becomes central to understanding how authors interact with—and potentially critique—the dominant social order. By considering the material conditions under which literary works are produced, Marxist critics reveal the ways in which literature can either sustain or challenge the status quo, highlighting the

importance of ideology in shaping both the content of the text and the societal forces at play.

In this way, Marxist literary theory offers a lens through which we can understand the role of literature as both a product and a reflection of the socio-economic structures that shape our world. It is not merely concerned with what is represented in the text, but also with how those representations engage with issues of power, class, and ideology, ultimately offering insights into the complex interplay between art, culture, and society.

In conclusion, the article emphasizes the profound connection between literature and the socio-economic conditions that shape it. By analyzing literary works through a Marxist lens, we gain insight not only into the text itself but also into the material and historical forces that influence its creation. Marxism reminds us that literature is not produced in a vacuum; it is deeply embedded within a society's class structure, political dynamics, and economic relations. The article underscores that literature both reflects and challenges the power dynamics of its time, serving as a tool through which class struggles, ideologies, and social tensions are explored and often critiqued.

Moreover, it highlights the importance of considering the social reality that informs literary production. By situating literary texts within their historical context, we can better understand how they both shape and are shaped by the society in which they are written. Marxism's focus on the base-superstructure relationship, class conflict, and ideological forces provides a powerful framework for unpacking the complexities of literature and its role in societal transformation.

Ultimately, it argues for a Marxist approach to literary criticism that goes beyond surface-level analysis, advocating for a deeper engagement with the socio-political realities that inform literary creation. Through this lens, literature becomes a vital site for understanding the contradictions, struggles, and potential for change within the broader social order. The article concludes by reaffirming the relevance of Marxism in contemporary literary studies, showing how it continues to offer critical insights into the intersection of art, society, and power.

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Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Gendered Language and Ideology on Social Media Platforms

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Abstract— This paper will analyse women representation in social media discourse by applying Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis and will investigate how women are represented linguistically and visually on social media platforms like Instagram, Sanpchat, X and Utube. The data has been gathered from verified and unverified social media accounts with the help of convenient random sampling. The material is in the form of photos, written texts, and videos for a thorough examination. The chosen accounts include X handles like Richard Cooper, the Instagram accounts parity_colorism and thesolidaritysisters. The select Snapchat handles include DRESS CODE, Girls Only. Care has been taken that these posts represent both male and female worlds and the researcher will make the case that the social media content is fundamentally ideological, and that regular events, actions, and issues posted on social media articulate dominant (and occasionally alternative) ideological discourses about the prejudiced nature of our society. It shall be argued that gender politics is present in all types of social media comments and platforms, not so much in terms of formal politics but a more banal and everyday kind. The marketing of these accounts is the hidden motivation behind posting such posts and they do not support the idea that these technologies are democratic or impartial by nature. This paper will also investigate the social contexts within which symbolic forms are employed and deployed to determine whether such forms establish or sustain relations of domination and whether ideological analysis of all elements of the social media content come together to tell the same story that is, patriarchal capitalism. Considering the insights that social media discourse is structured by male dominance; that every discourse is historically produced and interpreted and that dominance structures are legitimated by ideologies of powerful groups(male), this paper will specifically consider gender and social media discourses in the broadest sense, to testify overt relations of gender bias and social inequality. It will also dissect sexism and female objectification by using the Dialectical Relational Approach and suggest ways to reduce gender bias through social media.



Keywords— Social media, Gender, Language and Ideology, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, Dialectical Relational Approach.

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the term 'social media' has still not been clearly defined in social sciences, but its popularity and penetration resulted in a never-before-seen amount of influence on ordinary people's language use and online public discourse (Tamássy, Zsuzsanna 94). The 21st century was male

dominated in terms of technology and a survey report in 2000 showed that males are twice engaged in online media in comparison to women (Dasgupta 44). Technological advancements have been a tool of masculine power because of this lack of imparity in participation in the online world between men and women (Dasgupta 44). The Pew Research

Report of 2000 showed that women started using social media much more than men to maintain relationships (Dasgupta 44). Despite this different research studies show that men upload pictures that make them seem independent and active while women focus more on looking attractive. Social media for long is reinforcing the notion of gender stereotyping through its content, be it through the underrepresentation of women on social media or the portrayal of gender stereotypes (Dasgupta 42). The recent example of Radhika Merchant being trolled for getting engaged to Anant Ambani and the stereotypical portrayal of women marrying rich men for money despite coming from an affluent family bears testimony to the fact that stereotyping can be used to direct and distort cognition and can have, a profound impact on the perception and judgments, of the people who come across such social media posts. Social media platforms are intimately bound up with patriarchal capitalism. In the paper, "Portrayal of Women in Advertising on Facebook and Instagram", Luo and Hao state that the media may not really be an agent of change but may help reinforce the societal ideology that already exists (Nkem, Fab-Ukozor, et al. 149). When this ideology has to do with gender, social media may go ahead to reinforce gender biases. For example, believing that all women love to shop or that 'boys don't cry'. Society has unconsciously given gender roles and it is these gender roles that are used by social media users to spread prejudice against women in society.

II. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The term 'discourse analysis' was first used by the linguist, Zelling Harris in his 1952 article entitled 'Discourse Analysis' which is a method for the analysis of connected speech or writing, for continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limit of a simple sentence at a time (Kamalu et al. 169). Critical discourse analysis emerged from 'critical linguistics' and was developed at the University of East Anglia by Roger Fowler and fellow scholars in the 1970s, and the terms are now often interchangeable (Wodak 1). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to study the discourse that views language as a form of practice. It focuses on the properties of 'naturally occurring' language use by real language users, larger units than isolated words and sentences, the study of action and interaction, and the extension to non-verbal aspects of interaction and communication (Wodak 3). The paper shall study the language (verbal and non-verbal) used in selected social media uploads through Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis and three concepts which are indispensable in all CDA: the concept of power, the concept of history, and the concept of ideology shall be addressed in

the paper (Wodak 2). CDA regards 'language as social practice' and takes into consideration the context of language especially the relation between language and power (Wodak 1). Habermas claims that 'language is also a medium of domination and social force and it serves to legitimize relations of organized power (Wodak 3).

Nevertheless, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis aims to examine the way language, images, and other forms of semiotic resources are used to construct meaning and power relations in different social and cultural contexts. It involves examining the use of different modalities, such as color, font, layout, and sound, to understand how they contribute to the overall meaning of a text and how they may reinforce or challenge dominant power relations (Quan-Haase, Anabel, and Luke, eds 246). In fact, as Kaindl also states, "non-verbal elements in multimodal texts not only perform the function of illustrating the linguistic part of the text but also play an integral role in the constitution of meaning, whether through interaction with the linguistic elements or as an independent semiotic system" (Kaindl 176).

Another aspect of CDA and of immense importance is Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Feminist CDA implies a perspective that is comparativist rather than universalizing, attentive to the discursive aspects of the forms of oppression and interests that divide as well as unite groups of women. Underlying a critical feminist analysis of discourse in the domain of social media is based on the principle of 'gender relationality', which may be signalled explicitly or maintained implicitly in the studies (Lazar 12). Gender relationality entails a Feminist CDA focus on two kinds of relationships. First, and primarily, the focus is on the discursive co-constructions of ways of doing and being a woman and a man in particular communities of practice (Lazar 12). Second, gender relationality entails an analytic focus also on the dynamics between forms of masculinity specifically, in terms of how these participate within hierarchies of oppression that affect women (Lazar 12).

III. POSTMODERNIST FEMINIST MEDIA THEORY

One focal idea in postmodernist media hypothesis is hyperreality, which includes the obscuring of limits among the real world and its portrayal in media (Lazar 18). As indicated by postmodernist scholars, media portrayals are not simple impressions of the real world but rather effectively built inside social and authentic settings. Curiously, these portrayals frequently feel more genuine to us than the real occasions they depict (Lazar 18). One more huge thought in postmodernist media hypothesis is simulacra, which alludes to duplication or impersonations of reality that become more genuine than the first (Lazar

18). In this point of view, social media portrayals fill in for the real world, supplanting the genuine itself (Lazar 18). Postmodernist media hypothesis likewise stresses the job of force in moulding media depictions, especially regarding how predominant gatherings use media to control accounts encompassing race, orientation, class, and gender (Lazar 18).

Inside postmodernist women's activist media hypothesis, a key idea is diversity, perceiving that people hold numerous crossing characters — like orientation, race, class, sexuality, and capacity — that shape encounters of persecution and honor (Lazar 18). In this unique situation, media portrayals are built through social and verifiable settings as well as through the convergences of these characters (Lazar 18).

IV. DISSECTING SEXISM AND OBJECTIFICATION: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS USING THE DIALECTICAL RELATIONAL APPROACH

Postmodernist women's activist media scholars contend that media frequently decrease ladies to sexual items or support customary orientation jobs, for example, the assumption that ladies ought to be overseers while men are the providers (Lazar 18). Moreover, the idea of the male look in postmodernist women's activist media hypothesis features how media portrayals much of the time embrace the viewpoint of a hetero male watcher, generalizing and sexualizing ladies while sustaining conventional orientation jobs (Lazar 18).

An approach of CDA that shall help us to understand sexism and objectivism in a better way is the Dialectical Relational Approach which is guided by several distinct stages. The first focus of Stage 1 is on locating instances of wrongdoing that have the potential to be investigated in a useful way by looking at the complex interactions between semiotic and extra-semiotic aspects (Fairclough 227). The crucial issue that must be answered before moving on to Stage 2 is: What elements of the current social order contribute to the perpetuation of this wrongdoing (Fairclough 227)? As we go into Stage 3, a crucial question arises: Does the observed social wrongdoing result from basic faults in the current social order, necessitating a radical shift in the societal framework to address it? Or is it a problem that can be solved without calling for such extensive structural changes (Fairclough 227)? The next step, Stage 4, digs into the investigation of various methods to overcome the challenges identified in Stage 2 (Fairclough 227).

And in context of sexism, the Whorfian hypothesis also stated that language and categories shape how people see

the world, and that a sexist world has been created by men, the inventors of those categories. Spender articulated the same idea in a stronger way when she talked about English language as a gender-biased system as opposed to a linguistic system within which usages have acquired a masculine orientation (Sunderland 10). Prompted by the identification of sexist language as language that defined, trivialised and degraded women and rendered them 'invisible'. Invisibility' referred to the use of 'generics' ('man' and 'he') and 'man'-compounds, with their masculine bias (Sunderland 34). The American feminist Robin Morgan claimed strongly in 1968 in "Going Too Far" that, 'The very semantics of the language reflect women's condition (Sunderland 10). By 1970 Emily Toth, in her famous "Female Eunuch", notes how 'terms of endearment' for women are also terms for food ('honey', 'sweetie'). Through lexical items such as 'Mrs/Miss', 'son-of-a-bitch' and 'manageress', the English language was said to 'define, degrade and stereotype' women, and through the so-called 'generics' 'he' and 'man', to render them invisible (Sunderland 10).

Another example can be illustrated, in the post given below, at first glance, the statement in the Instagram post by parity_colorism. It may appear to be a compliment, but upon closer examination, it reveals a variety of problematic assumptions and implications.



By singling out the person's skin colour and using it as a qualifier for their beauty, the statement reinforces the idea that lighter skin is more desirable and beautiful than darker skin. Additionally, the use of the word "for" suggests that the person's beauty is unexpected or surprising given their dark skin. This implies that dark-skinned people are generally considered less attractive, which is not only untrue but also perpetuates harmful stereotypes. The statement is an example of microaggression, which refers to subtle forms of discrimination that can have a cumulative negative impact on individuals and communities. By devaluing and marginalizing people based on their skin colour, language like this perpetuates systemic inequalities and reinforces harmful social norms.

Even fashion and beauty standards articulate a postfeminist ideology through notions of empowerment via sexuality and consumption and engages a postfeminist aesthetic of the

'sexy', desirable young woman (Vänskä et al. 2). According to Hirschberg, Lurie has a semiotic approach to clothing, viewing it as a language consisting of signs that convey meaning within specific social and cultural contexts (Hirschberg 143). She sees clothing, along with hairstyles, accessories, and body decoration, as an expressive vocabulary that communicates intentions, emotions, values, and beliefs. Theoretically, this vocabulary is vast and includes every garment and style ever created, but in practice, an individual's resources may be limited (Hirschberg 143). The most significant sign in clothing is color, which has an immediate impact on the viewer. As someone approaches, the hue of their clothes becomes more noticeable and affects our nervous system. In some situations, certain hues are considered impolite, much like an inappropriate tone of voice (Hirschberg 147). For instance, a bride wearing a black wedding dress or a stockbroker greeting clients in a shocking pink three-piece suit would be akin to screaming out loud.

Beauty is concerned with physical and mental health as both are intimately related. Short-term decisions to alter one's body structure irrespective of genetic, environmental, occupational, and nutritional needs can leave medium and long-term effects. Episode 19 of Season 1 (<https://t.snapchat.com/6tMbCpLU>) of the handle Girls Only on Snapchat explains how do women take recourse to actual surgeries like the Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL) in which they take fat from your body and inject it in the buttocks to make them look a certain way. Women who opt for such surgeries end up having a painful recovery and at times, fail to survive. Everyday a new body trend or new face trend becomes popular, and women are constantly challenged to look skinnier, sexier and several women go through such surgeries knowing the risk of losing their lives.

Sexism which is a modern form of prejudice characterized by the denial of the continued discrimination and antagonism toward women's demands. According to Brown, the agenda behind posting sexist content is limiting women's self-identified ambitions, and disproportionately reducing female political candidates (Brown 3). A critical analysis of the post given below will highlight the gendered implications and stereotypes embedded in the comparison between a tiger's tongue and a woman's tongue.



Firstly, the comparison between the strength of a tiger's tongue and a woman's tongue perpetuates the stereotype of women as inherently more emotional and talkative than men. This stereotype has been used historically to justify the exclusion of women from public discourse and positions of power. Secondly, the characterization of a woman's tongue as "more dangerous than a tiger's tongue" reinforces the stereotype of women as manipulative and malicious, using their words to harm and control others. This stereotype is often used to undermine women's credibility and authority in interpersonal and professional contexts. Thirdly, the comparison between a tiger's tongue and a woman's tongue reinforces the gender binary and heteronormative assumptions about gender and power. It suggests that women are inherently weaker than men and that their only source of power is through their words.

Sexism is predominantly of two types: Benevolent Sexism and Hostile Sexism. Benevolent sexism is defined as a generally positive attitude towards women in traditional roles that continues the male gaze and male privilege (Brown 4). Benevolent sexism includes the idealization of women for their sexual purity or availability, protective paternalism, and/or the general perception that women are weak or fragile (Brown 4). Benevolent sexist comments to women are commonly misunderstood as "compliments", like the use of phrases such as "No man succeeds without a good woman beside him" and "they're probably surprised at how smart you are, for a girl" (Brown 4).

Hostile sexism is generally defined as a person's negative perception of women that can be shown through dominative paternalism, derogatory beliefs or actions toward women, or heterosexual hostility. Hostile sexism is related to many negative outcomes both in the workplace and home settings. Within the workplace, it can enforce the "glass-ceiling" effect, when women are often unable to reach leadership or managerial positions due to hostile sexism (Brown 4).

For instance, the statement in the post given below that "employers favour men not because they are prejudiced against women, but they have a perception that men perform

better on an average in certain tasks" is problematic from a feminist perspective as it reinforces gender stereotypes, ignores systemic discrimination, and fails to acknowledge the intersectionality of gender with other forms of oppression.



Firstly, it reinforces gender stereotypes and perpetuates the idea that certain tasks are inherently "male" or "female" which is a result of patriarchal socialization, which assigns specific roles and characteristics to each gender. Secondly, the statement ignores the systemic discrimination that women face in the workplace, and it has a significant impact on hiring, promotion, and pay decisions. This is known as "implicit bias," and it can result in women being overlooked for opportunities and undervalued in their work. Finally, the statement fails to acknowledge the ways in which gender intersects with other forms of oppression, such as race, class, and sexuality. Women who belong to marginalized groups may face additional barriers and discrimination in the workplace, which exacerbates existing gender inequalities.

Upholding sexism, whether hostile or benevolent, continues to increase associating them with these negative stereotypes, increasing mental burnout, and upholding outdated views of women that push in the direction of inequality.



The statement in the above tweet by Richard Cooper presents a stark double standard when it comes to loyalty, depending on a person's gender. It reinforces traditional societal expectations of men and women, with men being

seen as successful and powerful, and women being viewed as passive and supportive. It suggests that a man's loyalty is measured based on his success, implying that the more successful a man is, the more he deserves loyalty from his partner. Therefore, men are expected to be dominant and successful in all aspects of life, including relationships, while their partners should be submissive and supportive, even if they are unhappy or mistreated. On the other hand, it suggests that a woman's loyalty is tested when a man is unsuccessful, implying that her loyalty is contingent on her partner's success. This reinforces the idea that women are supposed to be supportive and nurturing, even when their partners are failing, and that their worth is tied to their partner's success. The statement ignores the complexity of relationships and the fact that loyalty is not something that can be reduced to a simple test. Richard Cooper has also written a book, *The Unplugged Alpha: The No Bullsh*t Guide to Winning with Women & Life*, and the fourth Chapter, "20 Red Flags" is full of many such stereotypical statements. For instance, the chapter starts with a statement: "She has more red flags than a Chinese communist parade." This statement is a metaphor comparing someone's warning signs or indicators to the number of red flags that might be seen in a Chinese communist parade. The use of "more" suggests that the person (woman in this case) being described has an excessive or unusually high number of warning signs. The metaphor of a Chinese communist parade is used to emphasize the abundance of these warning signs, as such parades are known for their abundance of red flags. However, it's worth noting that using "Chinese communist" in this context might be considered insensitive or offensive to some people, as it reinforces negative stereotypes about a specific culture or political ideology.

V. MISGUIDED FEMINISM

Feminism is urgently needed, and social media significantly contributes to women's empowerment and equality with men. One might be astonished to learn that there are still some facilities offering virginity tests, especially in developed western nations like the UK. The World Health Organization (WHO) claims that there is no scientific way to determine if a woman is virgin or not, promoting a myth about women's health, physical appearance, and sexuality (Stonehouse, 2020). Therefore, feminism is needed. But feminism is not anti-male; feminism is anti-patriarchy. It is an effort to put a stop to oppression, exploitation, and misogyny.

In *Reflections on language* (1998) it has been mentioned that Eugene R. August believes that sexist language is not one-sided and can also stereotype and dehumanize men. (Hirschberg 246). While the political correctness movement

addresses sexist language, it may overlook the extent to which men are victims of it. Psychologist Herb Goldberg rejects the notion of masculine privilege and provides statistics showing higher rates of early death, disease, suicide, crime, accidents, emotional disorders, alcoholism, and drug addiction among men (Hirschberg 246). However, breaking away from traditional gender roles can lead to hostile opposition expressed through gender-biased terms. Unlike girls who are allowed to behave in a "boyish" way, boys who display "girlish" behaviour are often stigmatized as homosexual without an equivalent term like "tomboy" (Hirschberg 247). The English language has a rich vocabulary of insults to ridicule boys who are gentle, quiet, and emotional. Even though some terms may be used playfully, they can still be used to insult males from childhood to adulthood (Hirschberg 247).

Feminism opposes cultural systems and attitudes that prioritize men over women. It refutes the idea that all men are the same or that they all practice sexism. But there are a few "feminists" who despise men and are best described as feminazis. The furthest end of feminism is represented by feminazis, who believe that women are superior to men. For instance, political activist and radical feminist Sally Miller Gearhart made a declaration in her essay "The Future, If There Is One, Is Female" that "the proportion of men must be decreased to and maintained at around 10% of the human race". This is the extreme kind of feminism because it has never been about subjugating or dominating males; rather, it is about granting everyone the same chances and privileges regardless of gender.



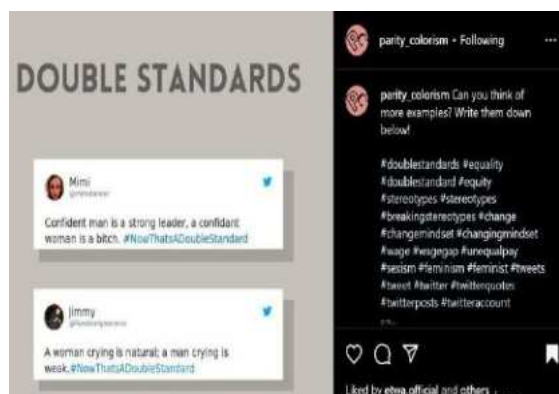
The above X post by Rachel Foster states, "TURN UP THE CHEAT. All women should have an affair in their life - it made me feel sexier AND look younger " is not only a problematic statement but also offensive. Such a statement perpetuates harmful and sexist attitudes towards women and their relationships.

Firstly, the phrase "turn up the cheat" suggests that cheating or being unfaithful in a relationship is acceptable or even desirable. This reinforces the idea that fidelity is not a

crucial aspect of a healthy relationship, which can be damaging to both individuals and the relationship itself. Secondly, the statement implies that all women should have an affair, which is a gross generalization and ignores the diversity of women's experiences and desires. This reinforces the idea that women's sexuality is something that can be controlled and manipulated by external factors or social norms. Thirdly, the phrase "it made me feel sexier and younger again" implies that women's value lies in their youth and sexual attractiveness, which is a sexist and ageist assumption. This reinforces the societal pressure on women to conform to a narrow and unrealistic standard of beauty and femininity. Finally, the statement reflects a power dynamic where men are often seen as the ones who can grant or deny women sexual satisfaction and fulfilment. This reinforces the patriarchal idea that women are passive and dependent on men for their sexual needs. However, there have been instances of false accusations against men, and it seems that feminism is not progressing in the right direction in society. For example, there is a case (<https://youtu.be/Zkkmap7sVnI>; <https://youtu.be/tEa6zvNpOko>) in India where two girls encouraged a group of 25-30 thugs to brutally attack two men over a trivial parking dispute and falsely accused them of molestation. One of the men died as a result, and the other was taken to the intensive care unit. There is also a video (<https://youtu.be/PLvFFywU48A>) circulating on social media of a woman violently assaulting a cab driver in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The woman claimed that the driver tried to run her over, but surveillance footage showed that the driver was initially speeding and then braked abruptly in front of the woman at a pedestrian crossing. In these cases, the freedoms granted to women under feminism were misused, and the women exploited their gender to garner support and further their own interests. The cab driver was immediately attacked by the public.

VI. CONCLUSION

Culturally constructed gender roles and relationships continue to remain same in both mainstream and social media. Hence a need is suggested for a broader discussion of social media. Social media can be a powerful tool to help remove gender stereotypes by promoting positive representations of diverse gender identities, breaking down stereotypes and increasing acceptance of gender diversity. Sharing content that portrays women and men in a range of roles, highlighting the experiences of individuals who have been impacted by gender stereotypes and that challenges traditional gender norms.



These statements in the above post by parity_colorism suggests that confidence is a desirable trait in men, but when a woman is confident, she is seen as aggressive and unfeminine. This reinforces the idea that men should suppress their emotions, which can have negative effects on their mental health and overall well-being. But such posts on social media can be a useful tool to at least point out such gender stereotypes, raise awareness and spark conversations. Individuals can use social media to share articles, videos, and other resources that promote gender equality and diversity. Social media platforms are a great place to use gender-neutral language. When we use gendered language, we reinforce gender stereotypes. For example, instead of using “he” or “she,” use “they” or “people”. It can be used to promote inclusive practices and policies that support gender diversity. Share information about initiatives, programs, and policies that promote gender equity and inclusivity, and encourage others to support them.

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The River as a Witness: Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Identity in Mamang Dai's *Small Towns and the River*

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Abstract— Mamang Dai's poem evokes the timeless bond between her people and their homeland. Flowing through the lines is the perpetual river, symbol of enduring ties between the living and those passed on. Its waters reflect facets of existence entwined with the natural realm and spirit world, as generations arise and find rest in an eternal cycle. Towns dotted along shorelines witness this ongoing rhythm, community born again each spring as life stirs and revives. Though scripts now capture her verses, the essence remains unchanged tradition flows as constant, oral legends and written word joining to convey ancestral wisdom through the ages. Dai's reflection on the existential musings of Indigenous communities speaks to their profound interconnectedness with the natural order. This poem investigates how a poem safeguard inherited insight, emphasizing the sustaining role of Indigenous literature as a living repository of collective remembrance and a people's source of themselves.



Keywords— Indigenous, mortality, spirituality, Tradition, wisdom

I. INTRODUCTION

Indigenous works act as a significant conduit for safeguarding ancestral tales, vocal customs, and knowledge bases. Mamang Dai, a notable bard from Arunachal Pradesh, crafts verse heavily grounded in the traditions and ideologies of Northeast India's original inhabitants. Her poem *Small Towns and the River* gifts a profound reflection on being, perishing, and religion, placed inside the scenery of her local geography. Rivers hold significance for spiritual practices and sustaining life, just as storytelling traditions strengthen cultural identities across generations. While change alters landscapes over time, the eternal human experiences of birth, love, community, and passing on remain universal through art like Dai's lyrical meditation on the connections between land and people. The river flows as both a constant and changeable presence across time, observing yet untouched by human joys and sorrows along its banks. In Dai's poem, its waters reflect not only the physical landscape but also

the deeper currents of tribal spirituality, mythology, and character that sustain cultural roots. The simple words capture profound insight, preserving for future eyes a glimpse into the collective Indigenous soul where literature and identity intertwine as intimately as the reeds along the shore.

II. THE RIVER AS A CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL METAPHOR:

The winding river cuts through the valley, its waters speaking of all they've seen. Small towns clung to its banks like a memory refusing to fade, permanent though people come and go. Dai wandered those familiar streets where joy and grief in equal measure had walked, seeing in each stone and wall an echo of generations past. The poet's mind turned, as the seasons turned, to deeper matters of nature's constancy amid the swift passage of mortal days, of traditions that outlived even the towering pines.

And in the flowing of the river, ever now yet always was, a lesson for all who stop to listen: that some things transcend even time itself.

The soulful river flows through the poem, its sentient waters holding centuries of memory and meaning. Dai writes that *the river knows, stretching past the town*, seeing and sensing in a way that evokes Indigenous perspectives of nature's animate spirit. From one generation to the next, the guarding river bears witness, its discernment and omniscience reflecting the cosmologies of local Indigenous peoples. For them, living landscapes like this river hold inherent life force and agency, voices and visions that speak across the ages. Here, then, a single river embodies the long tradition of a land and its people, past and present flowing together as one living story.

The poem likens the river to a torrent of grief, embodying nature with human emotion. Its sorrow mirrors the sadness of Indigenous peoples forced to abandon ancestral lands and traditions. Witnessing dispossession and dissolution of their culture through colonial expansion, urban growth, and modernization, communities experienced deep mourning. Both the powerful flowing of water and heavy hearts of those displaced cut deeply through the terrain. Its melancholic course reflects their bleak loss of what once was and collective struggles to preserve remaining ties to who they are amid changing tides. The statement *sometimes, I think it holds its breath seeking a land of fish and stars* alludes to a desire for a pristine, unspoiled life and may be a metaphor for the Indigenous way of life that is in danger of disappearing due to outside influences.

In addition, the poem's depiction of rituals highlights how cultural traditions endure despite the fleeting nature of life and death. *Life and death, life and death, / only the rituals are permanent*, Dai notes, highlighting the notion that rites and customs act as pillars for Indigenous societies. Death rituals in many tribal societies include directing the deceased soul toward the afterlife, as exemplified by the line, *The dead are placed pointing west. When the soul rises it will walk into the golden east, into the house of the sun*. The eastward orientation, which is symbolic of rebirth and divinity, reflects Indigenous mythologies that surround the sun as a deity and the final destination for departed souls.

As the poet puts it, *In small towns by the river we all want to walk with the gods*. This emphasizes the shared desire for spiritual transcendence. The Indigenous belief in coexistence with divine energies and the desire of balance between the spiritual and human realms are summed up in this sentence. In spite of contemporary concerns about the future, *the cool bamboo, restored in sunlight*, symbolizes

rebirth and continuity, highlighting the tenacity of Indigenous customs. Bamboo, traditionally a sign of strength and flexibility in Indigenous cultures, is represented as thriving in the sunlight, symbolizing the ways in which Indigenous identities continue and grow despite historical and contemporary challenges.

Small towns' concern is also conveyed by Dai in the line, *Small towns grow with anxiety for the future*. The conflict between tradition and modernity, which is a major issue for Indigenous tribes trying to preserve their cultural identity in a world that is changing quickly, is reflected in this passage. The poem makes the argument that although material change is unavoidable, the spiritual and cultural foundation of Indigenous life embodied in nature, oral traditions, and rituals remains strong and sacred. A major issue in Indigenous writing is the conflict between continuity and change, where the past is constantly reinterpreted in the present rather than lost.

III. CONCLUSION

Mamang Dai's *Small Towns and the River* is an in-depth reflection on Indigenous identity, awareness of the environment, and the spirituality ingrained in tribal cultures. The poem's use of the river motif describes the connection between human existence and nature, revealing the perspectives of Indigenous peoples that regard the land and its elements as sacred. Dai's work emphasizes the importance of poetry as a means of passing on ancestral wisdom, ensuring that Indigenous knowledge systems endure in a world that is changing quickly. By preserving cultural narratives and spiritual traditions through literature, *Small Towns and the River* adds to the larger conversation on Indigenous representation and resistance, as well as the value of storytelling in maintaining tribal heritage.

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Reframing Resistance: A Critical Discourse on *I Am Malala* as a Memoir of Gendered Activism, Identity Politics, and Global Iconicity

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Abstract— In this research paper, *I Am Malala*, the memoir written by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb, is treated as a witness to courage, identity, and action. Malala, born in Pakistan's Swat Valley, was one of the world's symbols for girls' education after surviving a Taliban assassination attempt. It presents her progress from being a schoolgirl in a local place to an international icon. This viewed as the context of only academic and critical sources, this paper examines the structure and themes, and the genre specific traits of memoir while exploring how Malala's personal story is implicated within global discussions on Islam, gender, and education. The article includes discussion surrounding its reception, cultural importance and symbolism both within and outside of Western setting. The analysis of this study of its features and impact demonstrates that *I Am Malala* is not only a literary product, but is also a tool of socio-political mobilization. Having come to an end, it concludes by validating the capacity of personal narrative to negate the effects of oppression and rally wide scale inclusion for woman's rights and education all around the world.



Keywords— *Malala, Memoir, Islam, Woman's Rights, Woman's Education*

I. INTRODUCTION

Malala Yousafzai was born in 1997 in Pakistan's Swat Valley and has become a symbol of bravery and education around the world after surviving a near fatal assassination attempt by the Taliban in 2012. Malala was personally targeted for her outspoken resistance to Taliban restrictions on girls' education, catapulting her into the limelight of the world. Her memoir telling of her life, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* (Lamb & Yousafzai, 2013), was written in collaboration with journalist Christina Lamb. The memoir is no simple personal tale, but a rich political and cultural text challenging socio-religious orthodoxy and patriarchal bounds in the local and to the world at large.

Malala looks back at the life that took her from a peaceful, culturally rich Swat Valley kid to a globally famous man or woman's rights crusader in her memoir. Rather, it was an assault in the sense of an act of violence but also a snapshot

of an ongoing ideological conflict over what kind of gender education parents want for their daughters, and what constitutes adhering to religious orthodoxy (Ashraf, 2020). Her survival and later actions encompass more than victim of terror—they are also the actions of a powerful tenacious woman whose voice continues to define the mutual work of advancing feminist narratives on the agency of Muslim women, human rights, and girls' education. The argument of an article (Ryder 2015; Olesen 2016) is that the memoir form fundamentally mediates Malala's shift from provincial schoolgirl to worldwide symbol at the juncture between personal witnessing, public resistance, and transnational politics.

The experience of warzones gave rise to world awareness of girls suffering: that point was a big release for *I Am Malala*. But not everyone has lauded the book as a strong testimonial of young people's fight against extremism and gender-based injustice. 'Sometimes the narrative and time

around it is complicit with the neo-colonial and the in the Western lens,' say critics. As argued within the confines of formal schooling in Pakistan by Ali (2015) and Patrascu (2017) the story of Malala is part of a Western liberal apparatus that makes her suffering exotic, and supports negative binaries between a "liberated" West and an "oppressive" Muslim world. The highlight of this reaction manifests the dual nature of the memoir as a source of the motivation and as an object of dispute regarding its meaning in the world debates around self and representation.

But Malala's voice, crossing political borders, has had something to say not only to grassroots activism, but also to high level diplomacy. She won the Nobel Peace Prize at 17, spoke at the United Nations, and founded the Malala Fund to support other girls to go to school everywhere. *I Am Malala* fits neatly, as Reynolds (2019) and Syamsiah (2016) among others put it, with the struggle for a greater justice and empowerment and so comes beyond the personal narrative. Choudhury in her article points out that the conflict of universal human rights and cultural relativism as Muslim communities often mandate as well as reinforce gender roles through religious and social institutions.

As a work of literary criticism, *I Am Malala* speaks about larger socio-political contexts, yet adheres to some of the genre norms of the memoir – subjectivity, retrospection of the chronological narrative order. Consequently, the text is also a social documentation as well as a self-representation. It extends the reader into the spirit and intellect as well as the lived reality embedded in the historical factors, leading to militarism, media representation, and post-9/11 geopolitics (Ashraf & Jan, 2018; Kunnummal & Esack, 2015).

I Am Malala is the subject of this research as it is a multidimensional text. It also engages the memoir's relation to identity, resistance and worldly justice and its autobiographical material. Drawing on the work of Ullah et al. (2023), Zia (2018), and other scholars, the study maps how Malala's narrative operates as a global witness that binds the personal and political as well as the local with the whole world. This study also argues that it is Malala's story, though immensely particular to her cultural and historical context, ultimately transcends geographical, linguistic, cultural or ideological barriers to become a universal plea for justice, education, and human dignity.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Malala Yousafzai: Life and Origins of the Memoir

Born in 1997 in Mingora, Swat Valley, Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai is the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize winner and a well-known champion for girls' education. Malala,

who grew up in a household that highly valued education—particularly her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, an educational activist—was motivated to speak out against the Taliban's rising influence in her area (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2013). The Taliban's ascension to power in Swat came with a prohibition on girls attending school, a choice Malala strongly opposed by writing anonymously for BBC Urdu and appearing on media outlets to spread awareness (Khan, 2014). A Taliban gunman shot Malala in the head on her way home from school on October 9, 2012. Her evacuation to Birmingham, UK, for medical care was prompted by this attack, which generated global indignation and extensive media attention (Baker, 2016).

After her recovery, Malala wrote the book *I Am Malala* with journalist Christina Lamb, released in 2013. The book covers the larger socio-political scene of Pakistan under extremism as well as her personal narrative. Woven together with personal stories, the memoir mixes historical, political, and autobiographical features with worldwide relevance. The creation of the text was both a tribute to Malala's fortitude and a symbolic act of defiance against those trying to quiet her (Nussbaum, 2015). By publishing the book, Malala was able to become a worldwide symbol for education and peace, so proving the transforming power of story and memory (Cook, 2016).

2.2. Characteristics of a Memoir and Their Use in *I Am Malala*

The literary genre of memoir is defined by its close, contemplative, and personal tone. Often emphasizing particular times in the author's life, it weaves memory, emotion, and factual events together to create a story that exposes more general truths about identity, society, and human resilience (Couser, 2012). A memoir stresses emotional authenticity above chronological accuracy and usually highlights personal change and social critique, unlike a conventional autobiography (Smith & Watson, 2010).

These qualities are clearly seen in *I Am Malala*. Focusing on Malala's adolescence—a period defined by intellectual enlightenment, family love, and socio-political turmoil—the memoir the book exposes her inner thoughts on faith, justice, and freedom as well as her experiences. Malala creates a strong feeling of urgency and honesty by means of vivid narrative and personal voice (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2013). Moreover, the autobiography mixes the personal with the political by including historical background such as the founding of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq's influence, and the War on Terror (Fisk, 2015). Through diary-like admissions and philosophical reflections, hallmarks of

memoir writing, Malala shapes her identity as both an average girl and a brave campaigner (Brockmeier, 2015).

2.3. Storyline of *I Am Malala*

Although the plot of *I Am Malala* is set chronologically, it is enhanced by historical and cultural background. Starting with Malala's early life in Swat, a lovely valley formerly renowned for its cultural liveliness and tourism, the book explores her home life, her close bond with her parents, and her father's emphasis on education (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2013), which shape her narrative. Soon, the rising Taliban presence disturbs this perfect setting, which signals a turning point in her life and community. The story's main conflict is the Taliban's prohibition on girls' education, which drives Malala's transformation from student to vocal campaigner (Ali, 2014).

The second part of the narrative covers her media interviews and her BBC Urdu blog, as well as her public involvement activities. These experiences highlight her evolving awareness and the risks associated with taking action in a hostile environment. Threats don't stop Malala from speaking out; her family and local community are behind her (Cook, 2016). Her growing profile puts her as a young leader in the battle for education, attracting notice from foreign media and charities. But this exposure also targets her. The story develops toward the culminating moment: the attempted murder on her school bus.

The memoir changes tone after the shooting. Her recuperation in the UK, the help of the worldwide community, and her choice to keep fighting for change on a global platform are all told in the last part. Malala thinks back on her transformed identity—not as a victim but as a symbol of hope and resistance (Nussbaum, 2015). Her moving to Birmingham also brings up topics of diaspora identity, cultural adaptation, and displacement. Malala, emotionally and politically, stays closely linked to Pakistan despite distance.

2.4. Episodes and Events Speaking About Her Courage

Several important events show Malala's bravery. Her BBC blog under the alias "Gul Makai," where she described life under Taliban control, is one such occurrence. Writing from the viewpoint of a schoolgirl, she exposed the terror, tenacity, and hidden pleasures of girls denied education (Khan, 2014). These writings were both a way to record

history from an underprivileged viewpoint and a kind of resistance. Knowing her remarks would incite retribution, Malala showed incredible emotional maturity and moral clarity in her essay despite her youth.

Her choice to publicly appear on Pakistani television and foreign media, under death threats, was another notable show of her bravery. In one interview, she quietly said, "They cannot stop me. Whether it is at home, at school, or in any other location, I shall obtain my education". Her visible presence in an area where girls were often suppressed was a resistance. Malala's comments were honest expressions of her conviction in human rights, not practiced acts. Rooted in an ethical dedication to justice, education, and gender equality, her bravery was often challenged in patriarchal and militant settings (Nussbaum, 2015).

Furthermore, her post-attack rehabilitation and ongoing action expose another degree of courage. Many might have gone quiet after suffering such horror; Malala came out stronger. Her 2013 speech to the United Nations was forceful; she claimed, "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world" (United Nations, 2013). This speech marked her change from local activist to worldwide humanitarian. Her capacity to transform personal pain into a worldwide demand for justice shows the greatest kind of bravery—resilience in the face of persecution (Ali, 2014; Baker, 2016).

2.5. Commentary and Analysis of Malala's Voice

Rooted in the fight for educational equality and freedom, *I Am Malala* is a socio-political statement rather than merely a personal story. Malala's story questions Western perceptions that frequently portray Muslim women as passive victims. Rather, she represents a complex identity: religious yet progressive, conventional yet radical. Her story challenges easy binaries and encourages readers to grasp the complexity of gender, religion, and resistance in a globalized society (Cook, 2016; Aslam, 2017). The book also emphasizes the need for narrative as a weapon for social change and the transforming power of young activism. Malala's consistent, unambiguous voice motivates a worldwide movement for equality and justice.

2.6. Key Findings of Literature Summary

Table 1 Systematic Literature Review of Scholarly Engagements with *I Am Malala*

Author(s)	Year	Focus Area	Key Themes	Methodology	Findings/Insights
Lamb & Yousafzai	2013	Memoir & Self-Narration	Education, Identity, Resistance, Gender	Autobiographical narrative	Malala's personal testimony contextualizes the fight for education within a political and religious framework.

Ali	2015	Western Representation of Malala	Orientalism, Victimhood, Media	Critical Discourse Analysis	Highlights how Malala's image is co-opted into Western savior narratives and soft power diplomacy.
Olesen	2016	Global Activism & Transnational Feminism	Solidarity, Global Citizenship, Youth Activism	Thematic Content Review	Frames Malala as a transformative global figure connecting local issues to international advocacy.
Ryder	2015	Youth Resistance & Popular Culture	Feminism, Resistance, Public Memory	Narrative & Cultural Analysis	Analyses Malala as a media phenomenon and the power of her story in Western feminist contexts.
Patrascu	2017	Identity Construction & Gender Politics	Intersectionality, Geopolitics	Postcolonial Feminist Lens	Argues that Malala's identity is filtered through both local patriarchy and Western narratives of freedom.
Choudhury	2015	Human Rights & Education in Islam	Universalism vs. Relativism, Education	Normative Textual Analysis	Investigates how Malala challenges traditionalist Islamic educational views through personal narrative.
Zia	2018	Feminist Discourse in Pakistan	Secularism, Postfeminism, Media Politics	Feminist Media Analysis	Explores the contradictory reception of Malala within Pakistan and the power struggle in feminist spaces.
Ullah, Ali, & Zeb	2023	Educational Policy & Activism	Youth Agency, Education Policy, Gender Equity	Policy Analysis	Identifies long-term policy impact of Malala's activism on education and gender equality in Pakistan.
Syamsiah	2016	Structural Analysis of the Memoir	Literary Structure, Chronology, Conflict	Literary Structuralism	Discusses how narrative structure enhances the emotional impact

The methodical literature review uncovers a rich and varied academic interaction with *I Am Malala* spanning several fields, including literary studies, feminist theory, political science, and educational policy. Each of the three main subject areas in the table provides different perspectives on how Malala Yousafzai's book operates as both a personal and political story.

The first thematic thread looks at *I Am Malala* as a political and literary relic. Foundational writings by Lamb & Yousafzai (2013), Reynolds (2019), and Syamsiah (2016) emphasize the memoir's function in telling resistance via human witness. These academics emphasize how Malala's autobiographical narrative transforms her story into a symbol of collective pain and resilience beyond personal experience. The memoir's structure and rhetorical devices are shown to promote ethical involvement, hence attracting worldwide notice to problems of extremism, gender inequity, and educational injustice.

The focus of the second thematic emphasis centers on the local and worldwide feminist viewpoint of the memoir. Ryder (2015), Olesen (2016), and Kunnumall & Esack

(2015) among others, see Malala's advocacy as an extension of global feminism. In their studies they frame her as a generational icon whose personal journey from the Swat Valley to stole the hearts of young people across the globe and challenged established views of Muslim women's agency. These studies validate that Malala has contributed to the reworking of dominant discourses of feminism by placing her voice both within Islamic and within secular frameworks of empowerment.

The last thematic category provides controversial and critical views concerning the representation and figuration shown on the Malala's story. Zia (2018), Ali (2015), and Patrascu (2017) argue *I Am Malala* of the suffering of the girls' education and females' rights is not without political co-optation. As a result, these academics do decry the lack of treatment that the memoir has received in Western medias—cautioning against their emphasis on an impotent victim, or ornament space in the Enlightenment, as easy targets for the memoir. It warns against Orientalist consequences that could arise when looking at human stories through the world power system.

Together the literature connects *I Am Malala* as both a dynamic stance of cultural negotiation in which personal memory comes together with sociopolitical ideas, religious narratives, and human rights discourses. The memoir is a mixed document, a strategic political communication with autobiographical evidence. However, there is a clear lack of research in this study. Although Malala's work has been recognized worldwide as an activist, yet very few empirical studies have been examined the local effect of her work particularly in rural Pakistani settings where her activism is most significant. This void could be dealt with to yield insight to how her 'legacy' is viewed and is revisited by those who are confronted with the socio-political reality that she attempts to change.

III. CONCLUSION

A powerful story that chronicles the crossroads of personal tenacity and worldwide advocacy, *I Am Malala*: Malala Yousafzai's path from a child in Pakistan to a Nobel Peace Prize winner is shown not only by a story of bravery but also by deliberate autobiographical techniques that speak to people all around. The book shows the strength of narrative in fighting injustice, supporting education, and changing views of Muslim women. Despite political debates and ideological polarization surrounding her image, the narrative remains grounded in her real experiences and vision for justice. This paper confirms the importance of personal narrative as both testimony and an instrument for sociopolitical transformation by means of a memoir. In the end, *I Am Malala* shows how the voice of a little girl can cross boundaries, countries, and ideas, hence supporting the timeless relevance of education and bravery in the face of injustice.

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Analyzing Fidelity and deviations in the T.V. Adaptation of the Vendor of Sweets by R.K. Narayan

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Abstract— This paper examines how R. K. Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets* was turned into the Doordarshan TV show *Mithaiwala*. It focuses on how closely the show sticks to the book and where it changes things, including the characters, story, themes, and cultural background. The study analyzes how the adaptation shows Jagan's character, focusing on his moral and spiritual struggles, while also highlighting Mali's Western dreams to connect with today's viewers. *Mithaiwala* uses visual storytelling to show Jagan's inner struggles with expressive camera work and meaningful images, which is different from Narayan's quiet, thoughtful writing style. The adaptation adds new scenes and changes some lines to make things more exciting and easier to understand, changing Narayan's subtle humor and calm storytelling style. *Mithaiwala* keeps the main story about family conflict and the battle between old ways and new ideas, but it changes things up by showing some characters with stronger feelings, unlike Narayan's simpler style. The study looks at how the TV adaptation shows cultural details by bringing Malgudi to life as a lively but tricky place, representing the clash between old and new India. This visual further explores Narayan's fictional world in a new way. It gives a clearer look at the social and cultural themes in the novel, but it might oversimplify them. Through close analysis of specific scenes, dialogues, and character interactions, the study shows how *Mithaiwala* sticks to and changes the original story, making Narayan's detailed tale more accessible for TV viewers. The study says that *Mithaiwala* does a good job showing themes like generational conflict and cultural differences. However, it also changes some characters and the tone a bit, trying to keep the story true while also making it visually and emotionally engaging.



Keywords— Adaptation, Vendor of sweets, R.K.Narayan, Mithaiwala

I. INTRODUCTION

R. K. Narayan is a well-known Indian author famous for his great stories about everyday life in the fictitious town of Malgudi. His works are simple, funny, and really understand people. They have changed Indian English literature a lot. *The Vendor of Sweets* came out in 1967. The book shows the struggle between old ways and new ideas. It also looks at family conflicts, cultural differences, and personal reflection. Narayan tells a simple but powerful story that shows how complicated human relationships can be during changes in society and culture. In 1987, Doordarshan made an adaptation of *The Vendor of Sweets* for the *Malgudi Days* series called *Mithaiwala*. Shankar Nag directed the show, trying to bring Narayan's book to

life on screen. They made some changes to keep TV viewers interested. The adaptation keeps the main story but makes big changes to the characters, dialogue, and visuals to fit the TV format. *Mithaiwala* takes Narayan's thoughtful writing and adds some funny bits and moral lessons. It uses expressive visuals, strong emotions, and dramatic character interactions to bring the story to life. The adaptation really highlights some conflicts, especially between Jagan and Mali. It uses close-ups, cool images, and interesting sounds to make the emotions stronger. These changes look good for the visuals, but they make you wonder how much the adaptation sticks to Narayan's original story. *Mithaiwala* shows Malgudi in a lively and colorful way, which is different from Narayan's more subtle and calm style. This changes the social and cultural feel of the story. This study

looks at how faithful or different *Mithaiwala* is when moving from book to screen. It focuses on how characters are shown, how the story is structured, and what themes are highlighted in the adaptation. This paper looks at certain scenes, conversations, and film techniques to see how the adaptation deals with the cultural and moral themes in *The Vendor of Sweets*. It also checks how these storytelling methods affect how the audience sees things and how culture is represented. This study looks at how Narayan's stories are changed for TV. It checks how to keep the original feel while making it work for the screen.

Objectives

1. To identify and analyse the significant deviation in characterizations, plot structure, and thematic emphasis between *Mithaiwala* and the original text *The Vendor of Sweets*.
2. To assess how well the adaptation keeps the cultural, social, and moral parts of Narayan's story while moving to a visual format.
3. To explore how the visual and film techniques in *Mithaiwala* contribute to Narayan's narrative technique and thematic concerns.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, comparative methodology, involving close textual analysis of both the novel and its adaptation. Secondary sources such as scholarly articles, and reviews are also studied. Key scenes and dialogues are examined to identify instances of fidelity and deviation, with particular attention to character interactions, cultural motifs, and visual representation. Additionally, thematic analysis is conducted to assess how *Mithaiwala* modifies Narayan's exploration of generational conflict and cultural identity.

Research gap

Scholars have often looked closely at *The Vendor of Sweets* in relation to post-colonial Indian literature. They mainly focus on how it shows generational conflict and cultural change. But not much has been said about its TV adaptation, *Mithaiwala*, especially when it comes to how it keeps the story true while also making it look good on screen. Past studies have not really looked at how the adaptation changes character portrayals, increases emotional conflict, or shifts themes to connect with a wider TV audience. This study looks at the differences in storytelling methods, visual symbols, and cultural representation. It helps to add to adaptation studies and broadens the discussion about Narayan's works in visual media.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

R. K. Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) shows the struggle between old ways and new ideas. It focuses on the relationship between Jagan, a sweet seller who follows Gandhian values, and his son Mali, who is modern and ambitious. The story takes place in the made-up town of Malgudi. It uses light humor to look at Jagan's struggles with his beliefs and his success in life. The book shows how Jagan doesn't get why Mali turns away from old values. It highlights the gap between generations made bigger by changes in culture. Narayan's humor and straightforward writing show the deep emotional and ideological gaps between the father and son. This makes *The Vendor of Sweets* a strong look at the changes in society in 1960s India. The book shows a small version of the bigger fights between the old ways and the new, tradition and moving forward.

Mithaiwala (1987) is part of the popular Malgudi Days series. It turns R.K. Narayan's book *The Vendor of Sweets* into a T.V. series, keeping the main themes and story intact. The series has eight episodes. The adaptation shows Jagan's struggles and tough choices as he deals with his son's rejection of family values and the resulting family issues. The show uses real places and natural acting to bring the feel of Malgudi to life, making the story more relatable and emotional. *Mithaiwala* shows the characters in the novel and how they change. It looks at the clash between old traditions and new ways, personal dreams and family hopes, and the tricky bond between fathers and sons. This adaptation helps more people see Narayan's work and shows that its main themes are still important today.

Meenakshi Mukherjee's *The Twice Born Fiction* (1971) is an important book in Indian English literary criticism. She says that Narayan's way of telling stories and using symbols makes him a storyteller of middle-class Indian life dealing with modern times. Mukherjee shows Jagan as a typical "twice-born" Indian. He's stuck between old traditions and new global trends. Her framework helps us get the main idea of the novel's theme about East-West conflict. The *Mithaiwala* adaptation makes this even stronger with its visuals and dialogue.

M. K. Naik takes a closer look at R.K. Narayan in his book *R.K. Narayan: A Critical Approach* (1983), showing how Narayan uses humor and irony to challenge strong beliefs. Naik points out how Narayan criticizes both sticking to old ways and being too trusting of new ideas, but he doesn't fully support either one. *Mithaiwala* doesn't have as much balanced irony. It leans more towards being dramatic and clear about morals. Naik's analysis helps spot where the adaptation moves away from the book's subtle tone and goes for clearer emotional moments.

William Walsh's *R.K. Narayan: A Critical Study* (1962) looks at Narayan's stories in a big way. It talks about being detached, the gray areas in morals, and how much control people really have. Walsh thinks Jagan's giving up isn't brave but more like running away from action. The adaptation changes this by making Jagan's goodbye feel more emotional and meaningful. Walsh's critique is really important for understanding how the adaptation strays from the book's simple spiritual and philosophical ideas.

C. D. Narasimhaiah, in *The Swan and the Eagle* (1969) agrees with Walsh by highlighting the Gandhian idea of restraint in Narayan's work. He shows Jagan as someone looking for meaning, influenced by Indian culture. His quiet departure represents finding himself by letting go. Narasimhaiah points out that Jagan's withdrawal is a common theme in both the novel and the series. He also shows how the adaptation gives this journey a more emotional ending.

Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (1999) is really important for understanding the creative choices made by *Mithaiwala*. Hutcheon says that adaptations aren't just copies; they're "re-interpretations" influenced by the medium, context, and audience. Her idea helps explain why *Mithaiwala* makes Grace talk more, Jagan shows his feelings more, and family issues more obvious. These changes show how TV wants emotions to feel real and relatable.

Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan's book, *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* (1999) goes well with Hutcheon's ideas. It shows how adaptations change themes using performance, visuals, and writing. They talked about "narrative economy" in TV, which helps explain why the adaptation focuses on conflicts and wraps things up in a short episode format. Their ideas also help look at how the series mixes modern sayings and current values into Narayan's mid-century setting. Postcolonial ideas make this theme analysis even better.

Nivedita Tripathi's article *Translating Narayan for the Screen: A Study of Mithaiwala*, (2020) published in *Studies in Adaptation and Narrative*, gives a clear framework for this comparison. Tripathi carefully lists certain episode choices and says that *Mithaiwala* "keeps the spirit, if not the exact words, of Narayan's text" (Tripathi 44). She looks at Jagan and Mali and how their characters are made bigger for drama. She talks about Grace and Mali's story, showing how *Mithaiwala* makes things feel more emotional and gives a sense of closure, especially compared to the unclear parts of the novella. Tripathi's article is super helpful for understanding adaptation theory, especially when it comes to how characters change.

III. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Turning a book into a TV show means changing the story a bit and also thinking about how the characters sound, where they are, how they feel, and what it means to different people. The 1967 novella *The Vendor of Sweets* by R.K. Narayan looks like a simple story but it dives deep into family clashes, cultural beliefs, and personal ideas. The Hindi TV series *Mithaiwala*, directed by Shankar Nag, became a visual and emotional experience for Indian audience. The adaptation sticks to the main plot and characters from the original, but also changed a lot from the original story to fit the screen and reach more people. The main ideas are still there, but the adaptation changes things up with the story, characters, feelings, and social issues. This essay looks at how *Mithaiwala* is similar to and different from *The Vendor of Sweets*. It shows the differences and connections using lots of quotes and Hindi dialogues from the series, mentioning episode numbers when needed.

Narayan's novella is about Jagan, a sweet vendor in the made-up town of Malgudi. He takes pride in sticking to Gandhian values. The first chapter shows how simple Jagan's life is. He reads *The Bhagavad Gita* every morning, wore only khadi, stayed away from English medicines, and followed Ayurvedic principles, believing that these kept him healthy in body and spirit. (Narayan 7). He thinks Ayurveda and homeopathy are great. He likes spinning khadi and stays away from aspirin, which he calls a "deadly poison" (Narayan 22). The TV show really shows these elements well. In the show, Jagan, played by Girish Karnad, talks with a calm and straightforward style. He wears traditional white khadi and often quotes Gandhi. In one part, when a customer says they have a headache, Jagan asks, "Aspirin?" Yeh toh poison hai. Main tulsi aur adrak ka kadha use karta hoon." This shows how the novel highlights Jagan's dislike for modern medicine and his focus on natural remedies.

The early match between the book and the series shows they both stick to the same vibe and ideas. But TV needs good visuals and clear talking. A lot of Narayan's story happens inside Jagan's head, with his thoughts and quiet moments. Jagan's strong beliefs in the book come out in what he does and thinks, not so much in fights with others. For example, when he won't use Western medicine for his ongoing headaches, he calmly says that Ayurvedic remedies are better:

"He collected them, fried them in ghee, and consumed the ambrosia for all its worth once a week." (Narayan 21).

In *Mithaiwala* Episode 2, Jagan won't go to the doctor even though Mali tells him to. He says,

“Main aazadi ke samay se angrezi dawaiyon se door hoon. Tumhare kehne se main apni zindagi ka soch nahi badal sakta.”

Here, he shows his defiance more clearly, and the fight between father and son is louder, which works well for the drama on TV. One big difference in how characters are shown is that Jagan's quiet moments are turned into conversations in the adaptation. In the book, a lot of Jagan's feelings come through silence, thinking, and what he does without saying much.

When Mali comes back from America with Grace and talks about their unusual relationship, Jagan doesn't react or complain right away.

“Jagan said nothing. He couldn't decide whether this was a marriage or not, and preferred not to ask.” (Narayan 71)

Mithaiwala Episode 5 takes this scene and turns it into a big emotional moment. When Jagan sees Grace for the first time, he asks Mali,

“Who is she?” Tumne mujhe kabhi nahi kaha. “Kya tumne shadi ki hai?” Mali, annoyed, says, “Papa, aapko har baat batani zaroori toh nahi hai. Yeh meri Zindagi hai.”

The show keeps Jagan's feelings of confusion and loneliness, but it changes the book's calm sadness to show his pain more dramatically. *Mithaiwala* shows Jagan's relationship with Grace differently than how it was originally shown. In the story, Jagan isn't really mean, but he feels uneasy and keeps to himself. Narayan says,

“He was polite to her, but avoided conversation, unsure of how to behave with someone he could neither accept nor reject.” (Narayan 73).

In the series, Jagan's fight is both external and strong. In Episode 6, when Grace tries to help out in the sweet shop, Jagan looks really annoyed and says,

“Yeh kaam auraton ka nahi hai, aur angrez aurton ka toh bilkul bhi nahi”

This line shows his discomfort more clearly than the book does. Later in the same episode, Grace gives Jagan some Ayurvedic herbs for his headache. He starts to soften a bit and says,

“Tumhare liye alag hai... tum samajhne ki koshish karti ho.”

This moment shows how the story helps Jagan grow emotionally. It gives him a clearer path to understanding, which the book only hints at.

Mali, Jagan's only son, shows how modern stuff and Western ideas are pulling us in. In the novella, Mali's choice to head to America feels sudden and a bit harsh:

"I don't want to study, that's all." (Narayan 23)

Jagan listened but couldn't understand what was being said. In *Mithaiwala* Episode 3, this moment is really intense. Mali says,

"Main yaha ki padhai se bore ho chuka hoon, papa. Main America jaa raha hoon, likhna seekhne.”

Jagan, surprised, says, " Bina poochhe, bina samjhe, bas chale jaoge?" The conversation here adds feeling to what was a quiet, personal struggle in the story.

This exchange makes the scene feel more intense, showing Mali's choice as more direct and less distant than in the novella. The TV show uses this moment to highlight the clash between generations with voice and expression, instead of the quiet storytelling of the original.

The series does a great job of showing the deep feelings in the text while adding cool visuals and sounds. But, while the adaptation keeps Jagan's thoughtful journey, it really focuses on other parts—especially Mali coming back from America. In the book, Mali comes off as a bit full of himself, and we see how he changes mostly through Jagan's confused view:

“Jagan felt that he was following a stranger. When Mali approached him extending his hand, he tried to shrink away and shield himself behind the cousin.” (Narayan 59).

On the other hand, the Episode 2 in the adaptation shows Mali in a flashy way—wearing western clothes, sunglasses, and loud music playing—when he gets out of a car and says: “Papa, main badal gaya hoon. Yeh Hindustan mujhe suit nahi karta”

The visuals and bold dialogue quickly show the conflict, losing some of the mystery that made Mali's character interesting in the book. When he comes back from America, he brings Grace along but doesn't say what their relationship is. He simply says,

"This is Grace. We are married.” (Narayan 59)

then went on to talk about his idea for a story-writing machine.

This laid-back intro shows he cares more about ambition than about relationships. In Episode 5 of *Mithaiwala*, the same scene is shown in a more dramatic way.

Mali says, " Yeh Grace hai. Hum saath rehte hai.” Jagan looks uncomfortable as he says, “Toh tumhari shadi ho gayi?” Mali shrugs and says, " Shaadi zaruri hai kya papa? Zamana badal gaya hai.”

This strong line, which isn't in the novella, shows Mali's modern ideas and lack of care for old traditions. The series shows Mali's dreams and how she interacts with others in different ways. Mali in the novella feels more like an idea than a real person—representing Western influence. He says,

"I'm going to start a factory to produce stories, like cars" (Narayan 87).

Jagan can't believe how crazy his dreams are, and the way the story is told makes it even funnier. At *Mithaiwala*, the ambition really stands out and feels strong.

The fight between the father and the son turns into a real struggle over machines and being real, making the conflict feel stronger than in the story. Mali doesn't really pay attention to his dad's feelings in the story. Whenever Jagan tries to reach out, he keeps getting ignored. Mali usually says,

"I'm busy." (Narayan 92).

His dad's questions about right and wrong go ignored. The TV show really shows this coldness with the way people talk and move. In Episode 8, Jagan gives Grace a traditional sari, and Mali laughs,

"Papa, yeh sab purane zamane ki baatein hai. Grace ko apne tareeke se jeene do." The novella shows that Mali doesn't care by being quiet, but *Mithaiwala* speaks up, making him more direct and opinionated.

The TV show *Mithaiwala* gives a new take on Grace, Mali's fiancée. It changes her role a bit and shifts what she represents in the story. The series keeps Grace as a link between Eastern and Western values, but it adds new talks, behaviours, and interactions that sometimes move away from Narayan's simple yet strong style. The result is a version of Grace that shows more feelings and is more social. It gives viewers a version of the character that's easier to connect with, even if it's not as strong as the original.

In the book, Grace comes across as polite and really wants to fit in. Narayan shows this with his usual subtle humor. She tries to understand Indian traditions with respect, like when she puts her hands together and says "Namaste" to Jagan. This little act shows how much she respects Jagan and his culture. Narayan's Grace is not pushy or on the defensive; she is respectful and genuine. Mali tells Jagan,

"She's only too willing to do what you say," (Narayan 97)

showing how easy-going Grace is. She never really gets to take the spotlight, but this makes her a good contrast to Mali's dismissive attitude. She tries to bring father and son together, saying softly,

"He's not angry with you. He's only tired and a little confused" (Narayan 100),

showing that she might help sort things out. *Mithaiwala* really helps Grace get noticed a lot more. She gets more time on screen and talks more, sharing thoughts that are just hinted at in the book. She comes off stronger in *Episode 4* than she does in the book. She walks into the house wearing

a kurta, touches Jagan's feet, and says, "Aapka aashirwaad chahiye, Papaji," which surprises Jagan. He mumbles something in Tamil and gives a hesitant nod. This story changes her from a quiet guest to someone who actively takes part in Indian customs. Her Hindi works fine, and she often says things like "Main samajhne ki koshish kar rahi hoon" (I'm trying to understand), showing that she's ready to adapt. This conversation isn't in the book, but it helps the series make her more relatable to Indian viewers.

In both versions, she is shown connecting with Indian traditions by cooking and eating food. Narayan says she "ate with her fingers" and "liked curds and rice" (Narayan 96), which shows how much she was into her culture. This scene shows how different cultures can come together and highlights Grace's real wish to create a family bond. But the adaptation also changes things by adding a closer emotional bond between Grace and Jagan that isn't really there in the book. Narayan's writing makes their relationship feel far away, more about being polite than being close emotionally.

Grace is just a side character in Jagan's personal story. In the book, when Grace goes missing toward the end, no one talks about it or seems to care, which shows how unimportant she is.

"One day she was no longer there," Jagan says (Narayan 136).

Her sudden exit shows how Narayan focuses on being distant. In *Mithaiwala*, Grace talks to Jagan for a long time in Episode 9. She says in slow, serious Hindi,

"Mujhe lagta hai yeh ghar ab sirf ek jang ka maidan ban gaya hai" (I feel this house has become nothing but a battlefield).

She leaves in tears with sad music playing, showing she's not as calm as Narayan. This extra emotion helps viewers feel satisfied, but it takes away from the original's thoughtful style. Even with all these changes, Grace's main character—the kind outsider trying to fix a family divide—stays the same. Whether she's eating curds and rice with her fingers or making idli, she still plays a key role in sharing her culture. She tried to fix the gap between Mali and Jagan. Her polite gestures and efforts to communicate match what Narayan shows, even though the feelings are much stronger. The new parts of the series change things up a bit, but they still show the same big ideas—modern life against old ways, East against West, and the struggle between being yourself and being part of a family—that are in the book.

Grace in *Mithaiwala* is an interesting take. It changes the emotional feel, story focus, and background a bit, but still keeps the main idea of what Narayan wanted. The show makes Grace's character more interesting for TV. It gives her a bigger voice, more feelings, and better understanding

of different cultures. Even though she goes from being quiet to speaking up, Grace is still a link between two very different worlds. She shows the same careful balance that is important in *The Vendor of Sweets*. These faithful changes and smart twists make Grace a more interesting, even if not completely true, presence on screen.

Jagan's cousin is another character that gets a lot of attention in the series. In the novella, he just listens:

"He nodded often and asked no questions." (Narayan 39).

In *Mithaiwala* Episode 6, he turns into a wise friend. He is transformed into more active voice of reason. When Jagan talks about his worries about Mali's plan to start a sweet factory, his cousin says,

"Jagan bhai, har baap ko ek din yeh manna padta hai ki uska beta uska ansh hai, par uska akar alag hota hai."

In Episode 9, Mali and Grace have a chat that goes off in a different direction. Mali says, "In India, nothing is really professional." Everything's fine. Grace says, "But this is your country, you can fix it." This made-up exchange shows the cultural critique and hope that the novella lacks. It focuses more on Jagan's personal beliefs than on any criticism of Indian society. The setting is important in both the book and the series.

The novella talks about the sweet shop in a simple way—"a small room with glass jars and a wooden counter" (Narayan 13).

But in *Mithaiwala*, the set design is really detailed. Episode 2 shows a fancy shop with pictures of Gandhi, the smell of ghee, and some nice music playing in the background. These details turn the shop from just a place into a special spot, showing Jagan's commitment to his work and his beliefs. Episode 10 has a festival scene right in front of the shop, showing how the store is a place for the community.

The music in the adaptation makes the themes stand out even more. Jagan's scenes have traditional ragas, and Mali's scenes use Western music or jazz. In Episode 8, we see a big difference: Jagan is praying in a temple with the sound of a veena, while Mali is typing away on his typewriter in a room full of American posters and soft rock music. This sound contrast highlights the difference between East and West.

Episode 9 has a side story where Grace helps out at a local school. This shows that she cares more about Indian society, which isn't in Narayan's version. Language is a big part of what makes us different. Narayan writes in a clever and funny way, while the series uses colloquial Hindi with occasional English phrases from Grace and Mali to signify their Westernised identities.

Moving from keeping feelings inside to talking about them shows a big change in how things feel. In Episode 10, Jagan goes to a temple and quietly asks the deity, "What did I do wrong?" *Kya main apne beta ko nahi samajh paaya?* The ending of *The Vendor of Sweets* is calm and thoughtful. Jagan leaves it all behind:

"He walked barefoot into the sunrise, carrying nothing, not even his name" (Narayan 124).

Mithaiwala makes this a really heartfelt goodbye. In Episode 11, Jagan writes a letter to Mali saying, "I'm leaving, kid." *Mann ki shanti dhoond rahe hain. Jab tum mujhe yaad karoge, main tumhare dil mein aa jaunga.* The episode wraps up with Jagan showing village kids what Gandhian values are. It's a more hopeful and active ending compared to the book's deep thoughts.

Grace's goodbye in the series gives a nice emotional wrap-up. In the novella, they don't talk about her leaving. In Episode 11 of *Mithaiwala*, she tells Jagan, "You understood me, and that's enough for me." *Main kabhi nahi bhoolungi.* This conversation gives her respect and a sense of ending that the novella doesn't provide.

The adaptation changes some things for the sake of the visuals—swapping quiet moments for dialogue and thinking for action—but it still respects Narayan's main ideas. The back and forth between new ways and old ways, the mixed feelings about family connections, and the path to finding peace alone are still important. Some Hindi lines can really add to the drama—like when the cousin tells Jagan, "Tumhara beta koi devta nahi hai!" in Episode 5—but they also show the tough truth the novel hints at. In both ways, Jagan isn't a hero or a victim. He's just a man looking for peace in a world that doesn't make sense to him anymore.

The adaptation, in Episode 4, includes a courtroom scene where Mali gets arrested for driving without a license and maybe for drunk driving. In the book, the arrest is shown in a laid-back way and makes Jagan really disappointed in his son, but the show makes it more dramatic. The police officer says to Jagan, "Aapke bete ne nashakia hai. License bhi nahi tha. Kanoon sab ke liye ek hai". This scene shows that Jagan gets that he doesn't really get the world his son lives in anymore. It's a big change, but it fits with the book's theme of losing morals and feeling disconnected.

The adaptation also shows cultural duality in a big way through its visuals. The book looks at the difference between East and West by showing how Mali loves technology while Grace feels out of place in Indian society. The TV show shows these worlds side by side. Mali remembers America with its bright, modern classrooms and electronic typewriters. Jagan's world is different, filled with clay pots, hand-spun cotton, and incense smoke. Jagan sees

Grace cooking on an electric stove, then it cuts to him making tulsi tea on a coal stove. These side-by-side images show the big gap between different generations and their ideas.

The adaptation uses everyday Hindi with some English phrases from Grace and Mali to show their Westernized identities. This mix of languages makes the sound feel real, which wasn't there in the English book but works really well on screen. For instance, when Grace talks about her part in Mali's life, she says, "I respect your culture, Jagan-ji. I want to learn. Please, give me a chance." Her accent and the way she talks show that she's a foreigner trying to fit in with Indian family expectations. Jagan not saying anything says a lot. It's a tense moment that feels more powerful through acting than words.

Music has a quiet but important part in the adaptation. Jagan's scenes have traditional Carnatic music, and Mali's scenes have more Western background music. This difference shows how their views clash and adds to the story's emotional flow. One really touching moment is when Jagan is by himself at the riverbank at dusk. He hears a bhajan coming from the temple and softly says, "Sab kuch chhod dene ka samay aa gaya hai." This moment isn't taken straight from the book, but it really shows what it's all about.

As a conclusion, it can be said that the adaptation might make some scenes easier to understand or more intense, but it always keeps the book's spiritual and cultural vibe in mind. The Hindi dialogues can be a bit more direct, but they help make the themes easier to understand for more people. The way we share things changes, but the main idea stays the same. *Mithaiwala* keeps the main message of *The Vendor of Sweets* but changes how it shows it for a more visual and emotional experience. There's a clash between generations, some cultural differences, and deeper ideas that are still important. But the adaptation changes the tone, structure, and focus on characters. It makes hidden tensions clear and adds more drama, conversation, and social-political themes. It's up to you to decide if these changes make things better or worse, but they definitely change how it's seen for a new crowd and reason.

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Edgar Allan Poe and the Gothic Triad: Supernatural, Obsession and Death

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Abstract— *Edgar Allan Poe's Gothic literature masterfully intertwines supernatural horror, psychological obsession, and death. His works, featuring unreliable narrators, eerie atmospheres, and macabre themes, redefine the genre. His significant influence is also shown, and his contribution to Gothic literature is mentioned. This study explores Poe's unique contributions, examining how his narratives of madness, guilt, and mortality continue to shape Gothic fiction and modern horror storytelling.*

Keywords— *Gothic Literature, Supernatural, Obsession, Death, Madness, Mortality*



INTRODUCTION

Edgar Allan Poe stands as one of the most influential figures in Gothic literature, a genre that flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries, characterized by themes of horror, the supernatural, psychological torment and death. Poe's unique contribution to the Gothic tradition was his ability to blend elements of supernatural horror with psychological depth, creating narratives that not only evoke fear but also explore the complexities of the human mind. His works delve into the dark recesses of human nature, where obsession, guilt and mortality intertwine to form haunting tales that linger in readers' minds. This article examines how Poe's works encapsulate the themes of the supernatural, obsession and death, shaping the landscape of Gothic fiction and leaving an enduring legacy in literature.

Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19, 1809, in Boston, Massachusetts, to actors David Poe Jr. and Elizabeth Arnold Poe. Tragically, his father abandoned the family and his mother died of tuberculosis when he was just three year old. Orphaned, Poe was taken in by John and Frances Allan, a wealthy couple from Richmond, Virginia, though they never formally adopted him. His strained relationship with John Allan, particularly over

financial matters, would plague him throughout his life. Poe briefly attended the University of Virginia in 1826 but was forced to leave due to gambling debts and lack of financial support from Allan. In 1827, he was enlisted in the U.S. Army and later attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, though he was expelled for neglecting his duties. This marked the beginning of his full commitment to a literary career. Poe's literary career began with poetry. His first published work, *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827), went largely unnoticed. However, he gained recognition as a short story writer, particularly after winning a literary contest in 1833 for *MS. Found in a Bottle*. He later worked as an editor and critic for several literary magazines, where his sharp reviews earned him a reputation for being both brilliant and harsh. In 1839, he published *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, which included some of his most famous short stories, such as "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia".

Poe's innovative blend of psychological horror, mystery and the macabre distinguished him from his contemporaries. In 1841, he introduced the modern detective story with "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", a work that influenced later writers like Arthur Conan Doyle. His 1845 poem "The Raven" catapulted him to

literary fame, earning widespread acclaim for its melancholic beauty and haunting refrain of “Nevermore.” Despite this success, financial stability continued to elude him. Poe’s personal life was filled with hardships. In 1836, he married his 13-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm, whom he deeply loved. However, she suffered from tuberculosis and died in 1847, plunging Poe into despair. His battles with depression, alcoholism and illness worsened in his final years. On October 3, 1849, Poe was found delirious on the streets of Baltimore under mysterious circumstances. He died four days later at the age of 40. The exact cause of his death remains unknown, with theories ranging from alcohol poisoning and rabies to foul play. Despite his tragic life, Edgar Allan Poe’s contributions to literature are immeasurable. His mastery of Gothic horror, psychological complexity and the supernatural continues to inspire writers and readers worldwide. His legacy endures as one of the greatest and most haunting voices in literary history. Edgar Allan Poe remains one of the most influential figures in Gothic literature, with his works profoundly shaping the genre. His masterful exploration of the supernatural, obsession and death highlights the darker aspects of human nature, setting a blueprint for many writers to follow. Poe’s ability to weave these elements into his narratives not only solidified his legacy but also expanded the boundaries of Gothic fiction.

The term “Gothic” originates from medieval architecture of the Goths, inspiring a literary genre known as Gothic Literature during the Romantic Era. Characterized by elements like terror, horror, suspense and romance, Gothic novels were favoured by writers enamoured with medieval themes, establishing its defining characteristics in literature. Edgar Allan Poe made a profound impact on Gothic literature by shaping its themes, style and narrative techniques. His works introduced psychological horror, unreliable narrators and a deep exploration of madness, death and the supernatural. Unlike traditional Gothic tales that relied on haunted castles and external horrors, Poe delved into the complexities of the human mind, crafting narratives filled with obsession, paranoia and existential dread.

His stories often feature unreliable narrators, whose distorted perceptions create ambiguity and tension, leaving readers questioning reality. Works like “The Tell-Tale Heart” and “The Black Cat” showcase this technique, immersing the audience in the psyche of characters consumed by guilt and madness. The themes of death and decay are central to his writing, as seen in “Ligeia” and “Berenice”, where loss, mourning and the grotesque are intricately woven into the narrative. His ability to construct an eerie atmosphere, whether through the haunted mansion

of *The Fall of the House of Usher* or the claustrophobic crypt in *The Cask of Amontillado*, elevates the terror and unease in his stories.

Poe’s influence extends far beyond his time, inspiring generations of writers, including H.P. Lovecraft and Stephen King, as well as filmmakers like Alfred Hitchcock and Tim Burton. His mastery of Gothic storytelling transformed the genre into a psychological and philosophical exploration of fear, ensuring his legacy in literature and popular culture.

The Supernatural in Poe’s Works:

One of the most defining characteristics of Gothic literature is its use of supernatural elements, and Poe masterfully employs them in his stories and poems. His supernaturalism, however, is often ambiguous, leaving readers questioning whether the horrors are real or figments of a disturbed mind. This uncertainty heightens the sense of unease and paranoia, making his stories even more effective in evoking fear. Poe’s supernatural elements frequently manifest in eerie atmospheres, ghostly apparitions and the suggestion of an unseen, malevolent force. In *Ligeia* (1838), for instance, the narrator becomes obsessed with his deceased wife Ligeia, who seemingly returns from the dead by possessing the body of his second wife. The story remains deliberately ambiguous – does Ligeia actually return, or is it the narrator’s grief-stricken mind that conjures the illusion? This blending of psychological instability with supernatural horror is a hallmark of Poe’s Gothic storytelling.

Similarly, *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) blurs the lines between supernatural horror and mental delusion. The decaying Usher mansion seems to be imbued with a sinister life of its own, mirroring the mental and physical decline of its inhabitants, Roderick and Madeline Usher. The story’s climactic moment – when Madeline, presumed dead, returns from the grave – culminates in the mansion’s destruction, suggesting a supernatural retribution that binds the family’s fate to the house itself. Poe’s use of the uncanny – a psychological experience of something being eerily familiar yet disturbingly strange – adds to the tension, making the supernatural feel both real and surreal.

The supernatural in Poe’s works often serves as a reflection of guilt, madness, or repressed desires. In *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843), for example, the narrator murders an old man but is later haunted by the sound of the man’s still-beating heart. Though there is no explicit supernatural entity, the ghostly heartbeat embodies the narrator’s overwhelming guilt, illustrating how Poe uses supernatural elements to explore psychological trauma.

The narrator's descent into madness is made tangible through the auditory hallucination, reinforcing the idea that the supernatural is often a manifestation of inner turmoil.

In *The Raven* (1845), a mysterious talking bird becomes an ominous symbol of the narrator's despair and descent into madness. While the raven may not be truly supernatural, its presence as an unrelenting harbinger of doom heightens the eerie, otherworldly atmosphere that is central to Gothic literature. The repetition of the word "Nevermore" creates a hypnotic, almost incantatory effect, reinforcing the narrator's obsession with his lost Lenore and his ultimate doom. The theme of the supernatural is a defining element of Gothic literature, and Edgar Allan Poe masterfully employs it to evoke fear, mystery, and psychological unease. His works often blur the line between reality and the supernatural, leaving readers uncertain about whether the eerie occurrences stem from external forces or the disturbed minds of his characters

Obsession as a Recurring Motif:

Poe's characters frequently display obsessive tendencies, whether it is an all-consuming love, a fixation on revenge, or an overwhelming desire to escape death. His portrayal of obsession contributes to the psychological complexity of Gothic literature, illustrating how unchecked emotions can lead to madness and destruction. This thematic preoccupation makes his works particularly compelling, as they offer a deep psychological insight into the nature of human obsession.

Obsession with Love and Loss:

Poe often explores the theme of obsessive love, particularly in the context of mourning and death. His poem *Annabel Lee* (1849) exemplifies this theme, portraying a narrator who remains consumed by grief over his lost love. He believes that angels, jealous of their love, caused her death and he continues to sleep beside her tomb, suggesting a morbid attachment that transcends the boundaries of life and death. The romanticization of love beyond the grave is a recurring motif in Poe's works, emphasizing the destructive nature of longing and obsession.

Similarly, *Berenice* (1835) tells the disturbing tale of a man obsessed with his cousin's teeth. His monomania becomes so overpowering that he desecrates her grave to extract them, only to realize, too late, that she was still alive when he performed the gruesome act. This extreme portrayal of obsession underscores Poe's interest in the fragility of the human mind and the terrifying consequences of unchecked fixations. The story highlights how obsession can lead to acts of horror, driven by a warped perception of reality.

Obsession with Death and the Inevitability of Decay:

Many of Poe's characters exhibit an obsessive fear of death, which often drives them to madness. In *The Masque of the Red Death* (1842), Prince Prospero attempts to escape a deadly plague by secluding himself and his courtiers in an opulent abbey. However, his obsession with avoiding death proves futile when the personified Red Death infiltrates the sanctuary, demonstrating the inevitability of mortality. The story serves as an allegory for the inescapable nature of death, emphasizing that no amount of wealth or power can protect one from fate.

Likewise, *The Premature Burial* (1844) reflects a deep-seated fear of being buried alive, an anxiety that was widespread in the 19th century. The narrator becomes consumed by this fear, to the point that it dominates his existence. Poe taps into the era's medical uncertainties and social anxieties, transforming them into a tale of obsession that resonates with the Gothic tradition. The story serves as a commentary on human vulnerability and the paranoia that arises from an overwhelming fear of death.

One of the most compelling aspects of Poe's portrayal of obsession is its inextricable link to madness. Many of his protagonists are unreliable narrators whose obsessive thoughts consume them, distorting their perception of reality. In *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the narrator fixates on the old man's "vulture eye," convinced that its presence is intolerable. This irrational obsession drives him to murder, and even after disposing of the body, his guilt manifests as auditory hallucinations – the sound of the victim's still-beating heart. This relentless preoccupation with the eye and its imagined power ultimately leads to the narrator's confession, demonstrating how obsession can spiral into psychosis.

Similarly, in *The Black Cat*, the protagonist's obsession with his pet cat transforms into violent hatred, culminating in an act of brutal murder. When he later adopts another cat eerily resembling the first, his guilt manifests as paranoia, and he becomes convinced that supernatural forces are punishing him. The weight of his obsession intensifies until he ultimately exposes his crime, reinforcing the idea that fixation can unravel the human mind.

Themes of Death and the Macabre:

Death, decay, and the macabre are central to Poe's Gothic vision. His works frequently explore the inevitability of death and the terror it brings. In *The Masque of the Red Death*, a wealthy prince and his guests attempt to avoid a deadly plague by secluding themselves in an opulent castle, only to be confronted by death itself in the form of a spectral figure. This story reflects Poe's fascination with mortality and the futility of trying to escape it. Similarly,

Ligeia and *Morella* explore themes of resurrection and the persistence of the dead, as deceased women seem to return from the grave in eerie, supernatural ways. Poe's fixation on death added a new depth to Gothic literature, making it not just about external horrors but also about existential fears.

Death as an Inescapable Force:

Poe frequently employs supernatural elements to emphasize the inevitability of death. *The Masque of the Red Death* personifies death itself in the form of a spectral figure infiltrating Prince Prospero's masquerade. The presence of figure serves as a grim reminder that no wealth or power can shield one from mortality. This theme recurs in *The Raven*, where the titular bird acts as a supernatural messenger of grief and despair, haunting the narrator with the relentless refrain of "Nevermore."

The supernatural in Edgar Allan Poe's work is multifaceted, ranging from ambiguous psychological horror to explicit ghostly apparitions. His ability to intertwine the supernatural with themes of madness, obsession and death has cemented his status as a master of Gothic literature. Poe's haunting tales continue to captivate readers, demonstrating the timeless power of the supernatural to evoke fear and fascination

Death and Mortality:

Death is a central theme in Poe's works, often serving as the catalyst for horror and existential reflection. Stories like *The Masque of the Red Death* confront the inevitability of death, portraying it as an inescapable force that renders human attempts at avoidance futile. In *Annabel Lee*, the lingering grief over a lost love highlights the permanence of death and its emotional toll. Poe's frequent meditation on mortality contributes to the macabre atmosphere that permeates his writing, reinforcing the genre's preoccupation with life's fragility.

Death and Mortality in Edgar Allan Poe's Work:

Death and mortality are central themes in Edgar Allan Poe's works, forming the foundation of his Gothic storytelling. Through his use of macabre imagery, dark symbolism and existential dread, Poe explores the inevitability of death and the psychological turmoil it inflicts upon his characters. His tales and poems often depict death as an inescapable force, reinforcing the fragility of human existence and the futility of resisting fate.

The Inevitability of Death:

Poe's works frequently highlight death as an unstoppable force that no amount of power, wealth or intellect can overcome. *The Masque of the Red Death* epitomizes this theme, as Prince Prospero attempts to avoid a deadly

plague by isolating himself and his guests within an opulent abbey. Despite their revelry, the spectral figure of the Red Death infiltrates the gathering, demonstrating that mortality spares no one. The story serves as a stark reminder that death is an inevitable part of life, rendering human attempts to escape it futile. Similarly, in *The Premature Burial*, Poe examines the fear of being buried alive, a widespread anxiety in the 19th century. The protagonist's obsession with avoiding premature burial ironically leads to intense paranoia and suffering, illustrating how the fear of death can consume one's life. Poe masterfully conveys how the awareness of mortality can become an all-consuming obsession, often leading to madness.

Edgar Allan Poe's Contribution to Gothic Literature:

Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most significant figures in Gothic literature, shaping the genre through his masterful use of psychological horror, macabre themes and eerie settings. His work not only contributed to the Gothic tradition but also transformed it by delving into the darkest aspects of the human mind. By combining elements of terror, madness, death and the supernatural, Poe created a unique and unsettling literary style that continues to influence writers today.

Poe's impact on Gothic literature cannot be overstated. His unique blend of psychological horror, the macabre and the supernatural set the stage for modern horror fiction. His influence is evident in the works of H.P. Lovecraft, Stephen King and other writers who explore the darker aspects of human nature. Additionally, his detective stories, such as *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, laid the foundation for the modern mystery genre, showing his versatility as a writer.

To conclude through his exploration of the supernatural, obsession, and death, Edgar Allan Poe made an indelible mark on Gothic literature. His stories continue to captivate readers with their psychological depth and haunting imagery. By delving into the most unsettling aspects of human existence, Poe not only defined the conventions of Gothic fiction but also elevated the genre to new literary heights.

Edgar Allan Poe's contribution to Gothic literature is unparalleled in its depth and complexity. Through his masterful use of supernatural elements, he heightened the psychological terror that defines the genre. His portrayals of obsession revealed the fragile and destructive nature of the human psyche, while his meditations on death offered a multifaceted perspective that encompassed horror, beauty and philosophical contemplation. His works continue to inspire contemporary horror and psychological fiction, ensuring his legacy endures in the literary world.

By intertwining supernatural horror with psychological realism, Poe redefined Gothic literature, making it not only a genre of external terrors but also one of internal struggles. His chilling tales of the supernatural, obsession and death remain timeless, haunting readers for generations to come.

CONCLUSION

Edgar Allan Poe's contribution to Gothic literature is profound and enduring. His psychological depth, mastery of horror and innovative narrative techniques helped shape the genre, inspiring generations of writers. Through his tales of madness, mystery and the macabre, Poe solidified his legacy as the master of Gothic fiction. Edgar Allan Poe's contributions to Gothic literature extend beyond mere storytelling; they transformed the genre into a vehicle for exploring the darkest corners of the human mind. His ability to evoke fear, suspense and psychological unease set new standards for horror fiction. By shifting the focus from external supernatural forces to the internal struggles of his characters, Poe deepened the emotional and intellectual impact of Gothic storytelling. His influence can be seen in later Gothic and horror writers, including H.P. Lovecraft, Shirley Jackson and even modern authors like Stephen King. The themes he popularized – madness, isolation, the macabre and the blurred line between reality and hallucination – continue to shape contemporary horror and psychological thrillers. His techniques, such as unreliable narrators and intricate symbolism, remain staples of Gothic and horror literature. Beyond literature, Poe's legacy extends into film, music, and popular culture. His works have been adapted into countless movies, television shows and stage productions, proving the timeless appeal of his dark and haunting vision. His poetic and literary theories also continue to be studied, offering insights into the mechanics of suspense and emotional intensity in storytelling. Ultimately, Edgar Allan Poe's impact on Gothic literature is immeasurable. His mastery of psychological horror, atmospheric storytelling and poetic melancholy ensured his place as a literary icon. By pushing the boundaries of fear and human emotion, he left behind a body of work that continues to captivate and terrify readers worldwide.

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Gender and performativity Theorizing Vijay Tendulkar's Kamala and Kanyadaan

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Abstract— This work explores the themes of gender and performativity in Vijay Tendulkar's plays *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan*, specifically how the playwright examines societal conventions and the dynamics of gendered identities. Drawing on Judith Butler's theory of performativity, the paper contends that Tendulkar's representation of women in these plays shows the performative aspect of gender, in which identities are produced and reinforced by social rituals rather than being intrinsic or natural. *Kamala* emphasises the devaluation of women and the transactional aspect of gendered roles, while *Kanyadaan* explores the connection of caste, class, and gender within the context of arranged marriage and societal responsibility. The study explores into how the characters' actions, both visible and internal, mirror patriarchal structure/codes and often contradictory demands put on women. By studying the conflict between societal expectations and individual agency, the research reinforces Tendulkar's assessment of how gender roles are enacted, reinforced, and resisted in Indian society. This dissertation contributes to a greater understanding of gender performativity in postcolonial Indian theatre, as well as its relevance to current issues about gender justice and equality.



Keywords— identity, Cast and Class, Social reform, Moral hypocrisy, Human nature, Women, individual agency

Introduction

This work will examine the works of Vijay Tendulkar, a very creative dramatist who made a significant contribution to the theatre. We will examine his themes unique writing style, and impact on theatre industry. His mixture of uniqueness and simplicity in his writing has made him a highly influential author. He depicts Indian society in a way that highlights the issues that the country faces. He was a famous Marathi-language dramatist, screenwriter, and social critic. His plays often talk about social and cultural norms and focus on complex people. He used to write a little bit on stereotypes that are rooted in our culture. In addition, he was a political journalist and a television writer. His writings changed Indian theatre and stoked readers' interest in both the art form and his works. Tennessee Williams had influence on him in the way he used to write about social issues.

About his life: Renowned Indian dramatist, screenwriter, social critic Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar (1928-2008) was renowned for his insightful insights into human nature and social dynamics. His childhood in Maharashtra and the political and social environment of his time had a significant impact of his life. Tendulkar was born in Kolhapur, Maharashtra on January 1928, into a family that placed a high importance on reading and education. His fascination in storytelling was sparked by his publisher father, who exposed him to literature and theatre at an early age. Tendulkar's lifelong interest in drama and social criticism began when he penned his first play at the age of eleven.

Tendulkar's life was defined by his intense curiosity for human interactions and society structures. He frequently discussed how his surroundings, especially the political and cultural changes he saw in early years, influenced his outlook on the world. His viewpoint and later projects were impacted by his experiences with social injustices and the

complex nature of human relationships. Tendulkar was known for his intellectual credibility and his bravery in facing challenges throughout his life. He was always open to discussing morality, fairness, and human nature and felt that it was important to challenge social standards. He had in-depth understanding of the complexities of society as a result of his contacts with people from all backgrounds. His dedication to understanding human nature and his intellectual curiosity were evident in his personal life. Tendulkar was renowned for his simplicity, humility, and ability to interact with people from all walks of life. He was respected by friends, coworkers, and family members because of his empathy and open-mindedness. Tendulkar won multiple honors for his contributions to the arts and society, such as the Maharashtra State Government's Lifetime Achievement Award, the Padma Bhushan in 1984, and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. He was seen as one of India's most significant cultural icons, and his fame went beyond Maharashtra. On May 19, 2008, Vijay Tendulkar departed from this life. Beyond his writings, his life is a tribute to the value of relationships, critical thought, and observation. He is still regarded as a significant figure in Indian intellectual and cultural history because of his strong commitment to the truth and his compassionate knowledge of human nature.

His Literary Works: Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar was a well-known Indian dramatist, screenwriter, and social critic who lived from 1928 until 2008. His socially realistic literature challenged accepted social mores and offered perceptive observations on human nature. One of Tendulkar's most well-known plays is "*Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe*" (1967), a daring criticism of inequalities between genders and societal hypocrisy. While "*Sakharam Binder*" (1972) challenged traditional morality with its thought-provoking depiction of relationships, "*Ghashiram Kotwal*" (1972) examined power dynamics and political manipulation.

He also wrote screenplays for influential movies including "*Nishant*" (1975), "*Manthan*" (1976) and "*Ardh Satya*" (1983). Tendulkar worked with filmmakers like Govind Nihalani and Shyam Benegal to popularize social themes including police brutality, rural exploitation and caste injustice. Tendulkar's topics often caused controversy due to their unabashed portrayal of societal injustice, gender inequality, and brutality. His work received worldwide recognition and critical acclaim despite of the criticism. Several high honors, including as the Padma Bhushan in 1984, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, and the Maharashtra State Government's Lifetime Achievement Award, were given in recognition of his literary and cinematic contributions. His plays are still produced all over the world and have been translated into many different

languages. Vijay Tendulkar is a legendary figure in Indian theatre and literature because of his work's honest study of social reality. Through his works, he usually tried to present an accurate picture of our culture. He talks briefly about the role that men play in our culture. The sociocultural and political realities of life for humans are portrayed in Vijay Tendulkar's play. He exposes the awfulness and masculinity of society in his drama. Tendulkar's play's philosophy depends on how society is viewed. He says in one of his interviews that neither of his characters are stereotypical; neither do I speak their language nor do they serve as my spokespersons. They exist and express themselves independently.

Philosophical Inspiration: One of the main sources of Vijay Tendulkar's philosophical inspiration, in addition to his interest in literature and critical thinking, is his exposure to the sociopolitical realities of his time. His writings demonstrate how his observations of societal injustice, power struggles, and the complexity of human nature have influenced his philosophy. His early exposure to social realism, existentialism, and Marxist ideas shaped his worldview, and he was influenced by writers who exposed social injustices and questioned the status quo. Authors such as Bertolt Brecht, whose theories on alienation and the use of theater as a vehicle for social commentary, and Anton Chekhov, whose research into human psychology and societal paradoxes, helped Tendulkar focus on the complexity of human relationships. Karl Marx's focus on class struggle and power dynamics, as well as Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism with its emphasis on responsibility and individualism, also had an impact on Tendulkar's developing viewpoint. Reading and thinking about these various philosophical schools gave him a more sophisticated understanding of human behavior and social structures, which enabled him to form a critical opinion regarding the effectiveness of social reform. Tendulkar uses his evolving philosophical viewpoints to critique social norms, exploitation, and the futility of idealistic attempts at reform in his plays, such as *Kamla*, *Kanyadaan*, and others like *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972) and *The Vultures* (1970). Tendulkar's exposure to social realism and humanist philosophy led him to study the exploitation of women in *Kamla* (1981), specifically how social structures oppress and commodify them. The play's denunciation of the moral hypocrisy of a society that claims to value women but still exploits them demonstrates his faith in the harsh realities of human nature and social structures. The play's somber portrayal of exploitation and commodification reflects his exposure to Marxist critiques of capitalism, which hold that individuals are the product of socioeconomic systems. *Kanyadaan* (1990) makes use of Tendulkar's evolving philosophical stance on social change, which reflects a

deeper existential understanding of the limitations of idealism. The play centers on a progressive family who, in spite of their belief that caste divisions may be resolved through intercaste marriage, eventually learn that their well-meaning attempts are powerless to overturn deeply ingrained social standards. Tendulkar questions the notion that social reform actions could genuinely bring about change in this manner. Here, he emphasises the difficulty of overturning long-standing prejudice and power structures, reflecting his growing dissatisfaction with simplistic solutions to complex societal issues. Sartrean existentialism, which emphasises how human agency is usually constrained by more potent structural constraints, is reminiscent of this. Additionally, *Ghashiram Kotwal* demonstrates Tendulkar's philosophical concern with the darker aspects of human nature and the misuse of power by examining the relationship between power, corruption, and human ambition through historical drama. The rise to prominence and subsequent fall of the play's title character serve as an example of the cyclical nature of exploitation and how the oppressed can become oppressors if given the chance. Tendulkar's philosophical development, shaped by his studies and ideas on humanism, Marxism, existentialism, and social realism, thus enabled him to approach his plays from a critical and often disillusioned perspective. In addition to offering a sobering critique of the limits of idealism and the persistence of oppression despite supposedly progressive efforts, his writings-*Kamla*, *Kanyadaan*, and *Ghashiram Kotwal* in particular-shed light on the complexities of relationships and societal institutions. Ultimately, Tendulkar's plays force audiences to confront harsh social realities and question whether quick fixes for persistent social problems are really effective. Vijay Tendulkar writes about a variety of subjects, including social injustice, power, and human nature. In plays like *Kamla* and *Kanyadaan*, he criticises the discrimination against vulnerable communities based on gender, caste, and class. Tendulkar examines the corrupting effects of power, as demonstrated in *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Sakharam Binder*, where characters become oppressors after gaining power. Additionally, as *Kamla* demonstrates, his writings highlight human exploitation, particularly that of women. Tendulkar shows how symbolic measures, like intercaste marriage, usually fail to result in significant change in his analysis of the failure of idealistic changes. His characters grapple with moral ambiguity and challenging internal conflicts. Tendulkar addresses concerns of human relationships and societal structures from a critical standpoint.

Thematic concern in Vijay Tendulkar's Works : In his writings, Vijay Tendulkar explores topics such as human nature, power, and social injustice. He criticizes gender,

caste, and class prejudice, which marginalizes vulnerable communities in plays like *Kamla* and *Kanyadaan*. As seen in *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Sakharam Binder*, where characters turn into oppressors after acquiring power, Tendulkar explores the corrupting effects of authority. His writings also draw attention to human exploitation, especially that of women, as demonstrated in *Kamla*. In his assessment of the failure of idealistic changes, Tendulkar demonstrates how symbolic actions, such as intercaste marriage, frequently fall short of bringing about substantive change. His characters deal with difficult internal struggles and the issue of moral ambiguity. Tendulkar offers a critical perspective on human connections and society organizations while addressing issues of violence, alienation, and the boundaries of social change. The plays *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan* by Vijay Tendulkar present strong critiques of patriarchal systems and social conventions while looking into the complex relationship between gender, identity and societal expectations. Caste, class, and gender inequality are topics covered in both plays, with an emphasis on how these structural factors influence and often restrict women's roles. *Kanyadaan* explores the intricacies of marriage, caste and gender in modern Indian society, whereas *Kamala* focuses on the exploitation of a tribal woman who is objectified and exploited by males. Gender is portrayed in both plays as a socially manufactured identity that is developed by repeated behaviours and performances that are imposed by social conventions, rather than as a fixed or natural excellence. This idea, which has received a lot of attention in modern feminist theory, argues that gender identity is something that is performed in conformity with social norms rather than something that is natural. The article will examine how Tendulkar's characters- especially the women- manage the roles that are given to them, questioning and occasionally reversed the performance aspect of gender through this lens.

Ideological implications : Vijay Tendulkar's personal convictions and life experiences had a significant influence on his writing, often reflecting his pessimism about society and the state of humanity. Because Tendulkar was born during a period of significant social and political change in India, he was exposed to the complexities of class, caste, and gender relations at a young age. His personal experiences, which included witnessing the struggles of the oppressed and disadvantaged, had an impact on the subjects and characters in his plays. By encouraging a critical viewpoint on social structures and human nature, Tendulkar's exposure to existentialist and Marxist concepts influenced his own philosophy. He believed that idealistic solutions to social problems were usually insufficient and that it was difficult to overcome deeply rooted systems of power and inequality. Plays like *Kanyadaan*, in which a

progressive family attempts to address caste inequalities through intercaste marriage but ultimately fails, reflect Tendulkar's dissatisfaction with simplistic answers to complex issues. In his autobiographical writing and philosophical reflections, Tendulkar discussed his experiences with literature and philosophy, his observations of human nature, and his struggles with social conventions. These thoughts have a big impact on his dramatic work, where characters usually battle with internal conflict, the failure of social change, and the consequences of repressive governments. In *Sakharam Binder*, for example, Tendulkar explores power dynamics and interpersonal relationships, reflecting his own critique of social norms and the complexity of human nature. Based on his personal views and experiences, Tendulkar used his plays to critique social structures, address the complexities of interpersonal

relationships, and make the audience confront challenging social realities. His writings reveal his distinct perspective on the world, as well as his belief that idealism has its boundaries and that human imperfections remain.

Fluid Gender perception : Tendulkar used his plays, which were based on his own opinions and experiences, to address the intricacies of interpersonal relationships, criticize social structures, and force the audience to face difficult social realities. His writings reveal his distinct perspective on the world, as well as his belief that idealism has its boundaries and that human imperfections remain. Butler's concept of gender performativity challenges the traditional binary view of gender-male and female-as distinct, biologically determined categories. Instead, the woman argues that gender is flexible and dynamic, shaped by social, cultural, and historical factors. According to the concept of performativity, gender is something that people actively create and enact-often unconsciously-through their speech, behaviour, attire, and other kinds of expression rather than just being a label or identity. This viewpoint places more emphasis on the norms and power structures that determine how gender should be performed than on biology. Butler contends that gender is something that is constantly created through conversation and repetition rather than a biological nature. This concept is relevant to the works of Vijay Tendulkar, particularly his plays *Kamla* (1981) and *Kanyadaan* (1990), which critique the inflexible social structures and gender norms that restrict individual freedom. In *Kamla*, Tendulkar tells the tale of Jaisingh, a middle-aged journalist, who, as part of a mission to "study" a prostitute named Kamla, invites her into his house. The play criticises the monetization of women because Kamla's gender is determined by the position society assigns her. Kamla is a tool for male dominance and consumption because of the demands placed upon her, which totally define who she is. Because she is confined to a role that is

prescribed by social conventions, her gender is performative in this situation. Similarly, by portraying himself as a strong, patriarchal man who represents his own gender, Jaisingh serves to further emphasise the power imbalance between them. Kamla's constant submission to her role serves as an example of how gender identity is socially created and preserved rather than innate. Kamla and *Kanyadaan* both demonstrate how gender roles are passed and perpetuated by social norms rather than being fixed. Jyoti's fight against her family and society's expectations and Kamla's acceptance of her status as a prostitute serve as examples of how social standards shape and limit gender. The male characters in *Kamla*, particularly Jaisingh, reinforce patriarchal institutions by using power and control to perform their role. Savitri's gender in *Kanyadaan* is influenced by her family's progressive beliefs, but she is ultimately constrained by the conventional roles that are expected of her as a woman .

Tendulkar's characters are locked in a loop of carrying out their gender roles in ways that conform to social norms, which can be explained by Butler's theory of gender performativity. According to these plays, gender is a socially constructed set of performances that people has to navigate rather than a fixed identity. Jyoti and Kamla are both torn between the constrictive duties that society imposes on them and their aspirations for independence. Tendulkar demonstrates how gender is both a site of resistance and a tool of control in these plays by criticizing the social conventions that restrict human freedom and the power systems that determine gender identities.

GENDER AS PERFORMANCE The idea of gender as performance has its roots in feminist theorists' work, especially that of Judith Butler, who questions conventional notions of gender as a fixed or determined by biology trait. Butler argues that gender is something one does rather than something one is born with. Repetitive acts, behaviours and performances that conform to social norms create gender identity. These performances serve as an instrument for the construction and maintenance of gendered identities rather than being manifestations of an underlying truth or essence. This gender performativity theory provides a framework for examining how people negotiate social expectations and how these performances affect their sense of self. Character experiences, particularly those of the ladies, are significantly shaped by gender performance in Tendulkar's plays. Both *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan* show how social norms and the roles that women are forced to play influence their identities. The title protagonist in *Kamala* is reduced to a sexual object, and the males in her life constantly mold and alter her identity, showing the close connection between gender performance and power dynamics. Similar to this, Jyoti in *Kanyadaan* finds herself

torn between her wish to live up to progressive ideals and the traditional gender norms that limit her freedom, particularly in relation to caste and marriage. The characters' identities based on gender in *Kamala* and *Kanyadaan* are fashioned by their ongoing struggle to balance their own wishes with the strict roles that society expects them to play. For example, Kamala gets caught in the expectations of others around her in addition to being forced to perform as a victim and sexual object. Her identity continually changes by the males in her life, especially the journalist, to suit their stories, which serves as a way to objectify her. Her failure to escape these gendered performances is the primary cause of Kamala's tragic journey, which eventually shows how deeply rooted social norms can restrict a person's agency.

In *Kanyadaan*, Jyoti also faces a deep internal struggle between her progressive beliefs and the gender norms that control her everyday life. She wants to question social norms, especially those related to caste and marriage, but she can't fully break free from drawbacks imposed on her as a woman. In addition to being a performance of gender with serious consequences, her choice to marry against family's wishes also becomes an act of rebellion. Jyoti's internal conflict and the social criticism she encounters highlights the complexity of gender as performance, where rebellion can sometimes strengthen the very stereotypes it aims to challenge rather than be free.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF KAMALA

Nearly five years after writing his drama *Sakharam Binder*, *Kamala* was written in 1981. The drama in *Kamala* is genuine. Tendulkar highlights the irony of a younger generation that works for themselves rather than for others in this drama. Additionally, it depicts a male-dominated culture that treats women like slaves and prioritizes gender more than personal qualities, which is something that this society takes for granted. Tendulkar also reveals the career-focused Jaisingh Jadhav, one of the play's central characters, who most men in even modern society can identify with. In *Kamala* (1981), a moving study of gender, power, and identity by Vijay Tendulkar, Kamala, the main character, represents the ways in which women are objectified, exploited and limited to roles that are prescribed by male-dominated social institutions. The play centres on Jaisingh Jadhav, a middle-aged journalist who, thinking he is saving her from a life of poverty, buys Kamala from a brothel and takes her home. Tendulkar exposes how patriarchal standards limit women's identity and liberty by critiquing the roles that women are supposed to play through Kamala's experience.

Kamala's character loses her individuality as a result of being compelled to perform a gender role. Her role as a

prostitute defines her at first, and she is expected to take on the role of a wife after moving into Jadhav's house. But this change is simply the replacement of one repressive position with another; it is by no means a release. The conflict between individual identity and social expectations is reflected in Kamala's emotional battle to make sense of the past and her new life. Her personal desires, ideas and feelings belong to the role she must play in order to live up to society's standards of respectability, and her actions are influenced by the role she is forced to play as Jadhav's wife. The hero who saves Kamala from her background is Jadhav, who thinks himself a modern thinker. His "rescue", however, is filled with flaws. Despite his claims to be saving Kamala, he treats her like an asset. Instead of liberating her, his attempts to "redeem" her by making her a bride serve to maintain the patriarchal mentality, where males saw themselves as women's protectors, deciding their responsibilities and value, is reflected in Jadhav's portrayal of the kind male character. The level of detail of gender roles is highlighted in large part by the character of Sarita, Jadhav's wife. At first, Sarita is portrayed as a traditional lady who meets with patriarchal standards of marriage and family. Her devotion to Jadhav's choice to welcome Kamala into their home shows how women, even in patriarchal societies, are often involved in the upholding of gender norms. But over time, it becomes clear that Sarita finds Kamala's presence uncomfortable. Sarita's character highlights the social pressures women experience to maintain the limits of decency she struggles with the realities of living with a woman who was formerly a prostitute. Her internal conflict shows the conflict between one's own moral principles and the urge to live up to society norms concerning marriage and femininity. Kamala requires an awareness of Judith Butler's theory of gender as performance. Butler argues that gender is carried out through societal signs and repetition rather than being a natural identity. Kamala's transformation from a sex worker to a wife was completely influenced by outside norms rather than being an intentional choice. She feels obligated to play the part of the "perfect wife", even if this role fails to reflect who she is, because Jadhav's narrative controls her gender performance. Kamala's situation shows how gender identities are created by society, performed and imposed on others---particularly women---whose identities and voices are often ignored. In the play, Jadhav's approach to Kamala in private contrasted with his public image as a progressive journalist. The hypocrisy of the social system he seems to maintain is shown by the imbalance. When it comes to his relationship with Kamala, he returns to traditional gender standards despite his academic background and obvious progressive goals. Instead of viewing her as a living being, he views her as an object that he can "fix" and "redeem."

This dynamic highlights the ongoing imbalance between men and women in both the public and private areas, where women's positions are determined by men's expectations and desires. So, Tendulkar's *Kamala* shows how gender is an action accomplished under the influence of patriarchal standards rather than an innate characteristic. The limitations of these gender roles are brought to light by *Kamala*'s journey, which demonstrates how they deny women the freedom to define themselves and limit them to established identities.

"Gender is not something that one is, it is something one does, an act... a 'doing' rather than a 'being'." (Butler 25)

Butler contends that gender is performative rather than innate challenge the convention view of identity as fixed. The title character in *Kamala* continuously negotiates her identity through her relationship and activities rather than having it as an innate quality. From discreetly defying social norms to conforming to them, *Kamla*'s Actions reveal how she does gender in her day-to-day activities. Because thus performance is shaped by cultural expectations and. Conventions that define what it means to be a woman, she has little control over it. As *Kamala* navigates her social environment, these assigned roles both support and restrict her attempts to express her uniqueness.

"There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results." (Butler 25)

Judith Butler asserts that there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; the very expression that are said to be its result performatively constitute that identity. This is evident in *Kamla*, where woman such as Sarita and *Kamla* are perceived through the lens of their respective roles submissive wife, voiceless victim or obedient wife instead of reflecting her true self, *Kamla*'s silence and obedience are shaped by social norms. Sarita is also aware that society acceptable behaviours not her own free will, have shaped who she is Butler argues that rather than being innate, there gender roles are produced through repeated expressions. The play critiques this performativity and shows how these gendered identity works.

Critical analysis of *Kanyadaan*

Even though Vijay Tendulkar's play *Kanyadaan* revolves around the union of a Dalit boy named Arun Athavale and a Brahmin lady named Jyoti Yadunath Devlalikar, it is difficult to analyze the play as a play that simply addresses the issue of intercaste weddings. It has certainly sparked criticism from several kinds of social groups, and the reasons for the disturbance range from the stereotypical depiction of a Dalit youngster to the negative portrayal of Gandhian liberalism. Studying the play in the context of

father-child relationships is also necessary because it addresses a number of social issues, such as intercaste marriage, physical violence after marriage, neglect by parents of their children, the negative effects of patriarchy, parents forcing their beliefs on their kids, alcoholism, etc. *Kanyadaan* (1990), written by Vijay Tendulkar, explores the intricate relationships between gender, caste, and social expectations. The protagonist of the play is Jyoti, a young woman from an upper-middle-class, progressive family who decides to wed a Dalit man named Arun Athavale. The play's examination of norms of society and the repressive systems that control caste relations and gender roles in India revolves around this choice.

The standard responsibilities that women in her class and family are supposed to play are challenged by Jyoti's marriage to Arun, a man from a lower caste. Jyoti has fallen between her own wishes and her family's expectations throughout the play, especially her father, who is a strong supporter of social justice. Despite his outward support for caste equality, his strongly held beliefs about caste hierarchy and women's traditional responsibilities are on display when he finds it difficult to accept his daughter's choice of a Dalit marriage.

The central theme of the play is Jyoti's gender identity, which is influenced by the more general social conventions that specify what is suitable for women as well as the progressive values of her family. The limitations of gender performativity are revealed by her choice to wed Arun, whom society considers unfit for her because of his caste. Jyoti's gender is not only a personal issue in her life; it is also a social performance that must conform to caste, class, and family honor systems. Therefore, Jyoti's act of defiance can be seen as a performance of rejection in which she tries to express her own agency by rejecting the roles that are traditionally expected of her as a lady in an upper-middle-class household. Jyoti's personal rebellion against caste-based agreements is incompatible, despite her progressive ideals and desire to question the societal order. Her decision is ultimately influenced by the social forces she seeks to criticize, even if she marries Arun to show her independence. The conflicts between social pressure and personal agency are exemplified by her father's opposition to the marriage. Jyoti's interaction with males and the social performance of respectability continue to have a significant influence in shaping her identity as a woman. Her behavior is nonetheless influenced by caste and gender norms, despite her attempts to act in a dramatic departure from them. Arun was a cunning and nasty man who would beat Jyoti up, drink, and make a scene while accusing him of being a bad man. He loves her very much and wants to slash his hand. Arun would frequently declare his love for her, yet his words went against his words.

Hear that? Jyoti doesn't want to see me. My Jyoti doesn't want to see me. My Jyoti is telling me to go away. It is not her fault, not her fault at all. It is I who am at fault. I am the offender, a great offender in her eyes. Whatever I do, I will not be forgiven. Never can I be forgiven. I am a great scoundrel, rascal, motherfucker, I I beat her, with these bloody hands. I beat her badly, with these very hands I beat her up. I beat Jyoti. I make her suffer. I behave worse than an animal. She will never forgive me, I know it. Jyoti, you are not destined for me, this is the truth, Jyoti. After all scavengers like us are condemned to rot in shit. But Jyoti, I loved you from the heart. My love is not false, Jyoti, it is true. With these hands, I hurt you... I must break them, throw these fucking hands away.

(taken from *Kanyadaan* by Vijay Tendulkar page no. 42)

From this, we can see he wants to pretend that he loves her a lot yet he used to beat her up even when she was pregnant. He used to beat and kick her cruelly, she used to have an internal wound in her stomach. Arun repressed his anger of the upper society, but he let it all out on his wife after they were married.

picture of society. Jyoti is a bright, independent woman. Even though Arun had slapped Jyoti before to their marriage, I believe her idealistic father forced her to wed him. However, Jyoti's father backed him and showed sympathy for the hardships he had faced. I believe that he failed Nath as a father and should to have ejected Arun when he came back to pick up Jyoti. Nath ought to have stood up for her daughter and stopped her from returning with him. Similar to earlier Tendulkar plays, this one depicts how a woman's life is destroyed by physical abuse. It also depicted the interaction between a man and a woman, as Jyoti tried to help Arun but he was a beast who would physically attack her. The fact that Arun simply suppressed and vented his rage at his wife strengthened his inferiority complex. *Kanyadaan* was also affected by the theory of existence, Industrialization, and the author's Psychology.

The play also critically looks at the ways patriarchal structures continue to affect women's identities. Jyoti's decision to wed Arun represents the intricacies of societal justice, familial duty, and gendered expectations rather than being a simple act of personal liberation. Although her choice is presented as an act of personal agency, the play emphasizes how socially imposed boundaries on women restrict even such options. It is impossible to completely escape the performance of gender and caste in a deeply rooted social system, as proven by Jyoti's attempt to transcend her given gender role. Tendulkar emphasizes in *Kanyadaan* the fragile nature of gender performance and the ways in which cultural norms influence personal identities. The difficulties of opposing patriarchal and caste-based

systems are made clear by Jyoti's journey, which also shows how deeply rooted societal structures limit even progressive acts. In the conclusion, the play questions the idea that gender is a stable, fixed identity and highlights how gender is constantly created and reshaped in a world where social norms and power dynamics rule society.

"Gender is not something that one is, it is something one does, an act... a 'doing' rather than a 'being.'" (butler 25)

Jyoti decision to marry Arun could be seen as "performance" of liberty or rebellion. Nevertheless, her attempt to reinterpret her identity through this act is still influenced by patriarchal norms and caste. Her doing of modernity and autonomy is complicated by violence she experiences, suggesting that social norms are hard to challenge.

"The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of 'identities' cannot exist." (butler 24)

Arun and Jyoti, an upper cast woman and dalit man, marry in a way that defies social and gender expectations. However society and even Jyoti's parents struggle to accept the identity, showing how certain forms of love or identification are incomprehensible within hegemonic.

"Subversive confusion and proliferation of gender identities... open up the possibility of a failure of gender norms." (butler 148)

The drama explores the failure of liberal idealism (through Nath Devalikar) and revolutionary wrath (through Arun). Caste boundaries cannot be broken or progressive ideals performed in order to achieve emancipation. Instead, its failure highlights the pervasiveness of violence and hierarchy in identity.

"The construction of gender operates through exclusionary means." (butler 24)

Butler's claims that "the construction of gender operates through exclusionary means"

Butler 24 is aptly reflected in the characters of Jyoti in Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan*. At first, Jyoti believes she is exercising her rights to autonomy when she marries Dalit Arun, but her experience in the marriage demonstrates how patriarchal, traditional norms still limit her gender identity. She can think that society has made her free, modern, and forward thinking, but only in a certain way. As soon as she breaks caste and gender norms, she faces resistance, violence, and emotional loneliness. By systematically reducing identities that don't fit the mould, gender stereotypes are maintained, as evidenced by the way she is excluded from the marriage and the subsequent lack of autonomy she experiences. Arun also symbolised a complex combination of caste and masculinity. His internalised oppression and theatrical aggression also show

how caste and gender are shaped by social exclusion. Butler's method clarifies how Kanyadaan questions the appearance of gender role choice within rigid cultural institutions and class hierarchy.

Conclusion

The play *Kamla and Kanyadaan* by Vijay Tendulkar offer a scathing indictment of the gender reality of Indian society. When Butler's theory of gender performativity is applied to these texts, it becomes clear that gender is not a fix identity but rather a socially enforced performance that is repeated until it feels natural. The ladies in these plays *Kamla*, *Sarita*, *Jyoti* are not born into these roles rather institutional social, and cultural factors teach and compel them to perform them. Even apparently progressive households, subtle patriarchal influences are art plays, as demonstrated by *Sarita's* gradual realization on her own inadequacy in *Kamla*. *Kamla's* quite is not a reflection of who she is rather it is a result of her upbringing, which was shaped by systematic oppression. Both women are thus required to performed femininity in ways that that follow to patriarchal norms. One as wife other as commodity. Butler contends that rather than being a basic self, their identities are performatively created through social surveillance expectations and behaviour. In similar vein, *Jyoti's* journey from a strong idealistic young women to a submissive, abused wife in *kanyadaan* serves as an example of how gender identity can be dismantled and reassembled through the repetition of specific roles and actions even in the mindset of political idealism and cast consciousness, her gendered body becomes the site of ways that follow to patriarchal norms Her father's failure to foresee the consequences of his philosophy further exposes the connection of cast and patriarchal structures, of which the woman's body and agency are often collateral damage. Butler argues that the same repetitious activities that established

Gender norms can also disrupt them, opening the door to potential opposition. Through

Sarita's disobedience and *Jyoti* developing consciousness Tendulkar seems to hint at possibility. Although the play do not offer clear answer, they emphasised that the first step forward resistance is nothing one's performance The bolster Butler's argument that performative can be a catalyst for change despite its drawback. As a result, Tendulkar's play's effectively illustrate Butler's theoretical idea's they show how gendered identities are not expressions of inner reality but rather the result of social and culture conditioning. Through the emotional challenges of their female characters, *Kamla* and *Kanyadaan* illustrate how gender, caste, and class work together to enforce conformity and suppress agency. They also remind us that awareness of this

performance can result in short lived but significant disruptions to the structures that impose limitations on women

In the end Butler's theory not only helps us comprehend the psychological and social realities of the characters in these plays, but it also reinforces how literature and theatre can reveal and confront the performative aspect of oppression.

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Evolution of Economics and Job Opportunities: A Study in Context of Present Situation

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Abstract— The four main factors of production are Land, Labour, Capital, and Organisation. Economists study how a society distributes scarce resources, such as land, labour, raw materials, and machinery, to produce highest possible production say, goods and services at lowest possible cost. They search issues such as energy cost, inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, business cycle, taxes or employment levels. Objective: The study has tried to explore the evolution of Economics and its job opportunities in context of present situation. Materials: Evolution of Economics can be divided into two parts: (a) in India and (b) in the World. In context of India, the beginning of economics in India can be traced back to the ancient period, but the formal study and development of economics as a distinct discipline began during the colonial era. Economics has a fascinating and centuries-long history that has evolved from a simple array of ideas about trade and wealth to a complex discipline with its own sub-disciplines, theories and methodologies in the world. A history of Economics is a string interconnected event. Results And Discussions: Economics has a finance ministry, either at the state or federal level, but there isn't a subject-based ministry. There are many job options in a variety of areas and companies after earning an M.A. in Economics. Graduates in economics can work in a variety of positions and are prized for their excellent analytical, mathematical, and problem-solving abilities. Conclusion: A master's degree in economics opens up a wide range of employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors. Graduates can work as consultants, policy advisers, researchers, analysts, or even entrepreneurs. The degree's adaptability enables graduates to customize their professions according to their preferences



Keywords— Land, Labour, Capital, Organisation, Inflation, Interest Rates, Exchange Rates, Business Cycle

I. INTRODUCTION

The four main factors of production are land, labour, capital, and organisation. Economists study how a society distributes scarce resources, such as land, labour, raw materials, and machinery, to produce the highest possible production of goods and services at the lowest possible cost (Mankiw, 2020). They conduct research, collect and analyze data, monitor economic trends, and develop forecasts (Samuelson & Nordhaus, 2010). They investigate issues such as energy costs, inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, the business cycle, taxes, and employment

levels. Economists also devise methods and procedures for obtaining data. For example, sampling techniques may be used to develop forecasts (Blanchard & Johnson, 2012). Preparing reports, using tables, charts, and mathematical tools to present research results is an important part of an economist's job.

A course in economics opens career options in government agencies, business firms, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions (Colander, 2019). The subject offers ample job opportunities to its students. Economists who are skilled in quantitative techniques and their application to

economic modeling and forecasting, and who possess strong communication skills, tend to have better job prospects. Graduates with bachelor's degrees can find jobs in industry and business as management or sales trainees or as administrative assistants. Economics is also regarded as a subject that supplies more productive labour to the workforce (O'Sullivan, Sheffrin, & Perez, 2016).

OBJECTIVE

The study has tried to explore the evolution of Economics and its job opportunities in context of present situation.

II. MATERIALS

EVOLUTION OF ECONOMICS

Evolution of economics can be divided into two parts: (a) in India and (b) in the world. In the context of India, the beginning of economics can be traced back to the ancient period, but the formal study and development of economics as a distinct discipline began during the colonial era (Rangarajan, 2004).

EVOLUTION OF ECONOMICS IN INDIA

1. Historical and Medieval Era:

(a) In the third century BCE, *Arthashastra* by Kautilya (also called Chanakya) was an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft, economic policy, various forms of taxation, and military strategy. It is considered one of the earliest comprehensive works on economic philosophy in India, covering topics such as commerce, taxation, agriculture, and resource management (Shamasastri, 1915/2000).

(b) Texts such as the *Manusmriti* and various *Smritis* also included ideas about property, wealth distribution, and economic behavior in ancient Indian society (Bühler, 1886).

2. The Colonial Era of the 18th and 19th Centuries:

(a) During British rule, the formalization of economics as a topic in India began when Western economic principles were introduced to Indian intellectuals. The Indian economy was significantly impacted by the policies of the British Empire (Ray, 2011).

(b) Indian thinkers like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Raja Rammohun Roy, and Dadabhai Naoroji addressed economic issues such as poverty, colonial exploitation, and wealth exodus (Chandra, 2008).

(c) Dadabhai Naoroji is best known for his "Drain of Wealth" theory, which criticized British economic policies and their detrimental effects on Indian development. He was one of the first to articulate the economic exploitation of India during British rule (Naoroji, 1901).

3. The Period Following Independence (1947 forward):

(a) After India gained independence in 1947, formal economics education gained institutional importance. Economics became a core subject in Indian colleges and universities (Dutt & Sundaram, 2006).

(b) The establishment of the Planning Commission and the launch of the First Five-Year Plan in 1951 marked a key moment in India's economic policy, focusing on state-led industrial growth and self-sufficiency (Government of India, 1951).

(c) Renowned Indian economists such as P.C. Mahalanobis, K.N. Raj, and later Amartya Sen made pioneering contributions in the fields of planning, poverty reduction, and development economics (Sen, 1999; Mahalanobis, 1955).

Because of these developments, economics evolved into a recognized academic discipline in India during the colonial era—particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries—and underwent major transformation after independence in 1947.

EVOLUTION OF ECONOMICS IN THE WORLD

Some of the points that may be discussed on the evolution of economics in a global perspective are as follows:

Economics has a fascinating and centuries-long history that has evolved from a simple array of ideas about trade and wealth to a complex discipline with its own sub-disciplines, theories, and methodologies. The history of economics is a string of interconnected events (Backhouse, 2002).

1. Ideas from the Ancients and the Middle Ages

Before economics was acknowledged as a subject for study, many ancient and medieval intellectuals produced theories about trade, wealth, and the ordering of human society.

(A) Ancient Civilizations: c. 3000 BCE to 500 CE:

(a) Greco-Roman and Mesopotamian economies are considered among the first to display structured economic concepts (Schumpeter, 1954).

(b) Aristotle argued that wealth is not an end in itself and distinguished between natural and unnatural modes of acquisition, critiquing the pursuit of money for its own sake (Aristotle, trans. 2009).

(c) Roman philosophers like Cicero emphasized laws around contracts, trade, and property, laying groundwork for legal and economic institutions (Finley, 1999).

(B) Medieval Economic Thought (500–1500 CE):

(a) Theology and economics were deeply linked; thinkers such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas believed moral considerations should guide economic behavior (Roll, 1992).

(b) Aquinas promoted the concept of "just price," where prices should reflect fairness and morality rather than market power (Lowry, 2003).

(c) Mercantilism and the regulation of trade through tariffs emerged toward the late medieval period, laying early foundations for national economic strategy (Heilbroner, 1999).

2. The Classical School: Late 18th to Mid-19th Century

Classical economics arose from systematic inquiry into economic systems, production, commerce, and the creation of wealth. It provided the framework for modern economic thought.

Adam Smith (1723–1790): Regarded as the "father of economics," he authored *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), introducing the concept of the "invisible hand," where self-interest drives public good. He laid the foundation for laissez-faire economics and market systems (Smith, 1776/2007).

David Ricardo (1772–1823): Formulated the theory of comparative advantage, suggesting nations should specialize in goods they can produce at lower opportunity costs to enhance trade efficiency (Ricardo, 1817/2004).

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873): Expanded on classical economics by promoting utilitarianism and social reforms, advocating education, women's rights, and labor protections in economic thought (Mill, 1848/2009).

3. The Late 19th-Century Marginal Revolution

The marginal revolution introduced the idea of marginal value and emphasized the importance of individual decision-making in economics.

(a) **Leon Walras (1834–1910), William Stanley Jevons (1835–1882), and Carl Menger (1840–1921):** (a) These economists developed the marginal utility theory, asserting that individuals make economic decisions based on the added utility (satisfaction) from consuming one more unit of a good or service (Blaug, 1997).

(b) This movement transitioned economic focus from large aggregates to individual preferences and laid the groundwork for modern neoclassical economics, which continues to dominate economic analysis today (Ekelund & Hébert, 2007).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

JOB MARKETS IN INDIA FOR THE STUDENTS OF ECONOMICS

To investigate the job opportunity in Economics, we have to discuss the different courses of Economics to be taught depending on which the demand of jobs can be sought.

A. COURSES: Specializations and Career Options in Economics

1. The various specializations or courses in Economics include Agricultural Economics, Financial Economics, Labour Economics, Industrial Economics, International Economics, Econometrics, Development Economics, Human Resource Development Economics, Health Economics, Environmental Economics, Rural and Development Economics, Business Economics, Mathematical Economics, Public Economics, Urban and Regional Economics, Behavioral Economics, Industrial Organization, Computational Economics, Data Science for Economists, and Research Methods in Economics. These specializations are typically offered at the postgraduate (Master's) level. However, different universities may offer different combinations or emphases depending on their academic priorities and resources (Mankiw, 2020; Blanchard & Johnson, 2013; Varian, 2014).
2. A degree in Economics opens a wide array of career options. Graduates often find employment in government agencies (such as central banks or planning commissions), private businesses (in finance, consulting, or analytics), non-profit organizations (focused on development and policy), and academic or research institutions. The flexibility and analytical rigor of economics education make it suitable for both theoretical and applied career paths (Siegfried & Stock, 2004; Krugman & Wells, 2018).

B. JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN ECONOMICS

Economics has a finance ministry, either at the state or federal level, but there isn't a subject-based ministry. There are many job options in a variety of areas and companies after earning an M.A. in Economics. Graduates in economics can work in a variety of positions and are prized for their excellent analytical, mathematical, and problem-solving abilities. Some of the most important career options for graduates with an M.A. in Economics are listed below.

1. Economic Analyst/Researcher

Function: Investigating and evaluating economic data in order to identify patterns, predict future economic circumstances, and offer policy suggestions.

Sectors: International organizations, think tanks, research institutes, and government agencies.

Employers: The United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), central banks, and economic consulting businesses are a few examples of employers.

2. Policy Analyst

Function: Examining and advising international organizations, governments, and non-governmental organizations on economic policies and their possible effects.

Sectors: International organizations, NGOs, research institutes, think tanks, and the government.

Employers: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Institute for Fiscal Studies, RAND Corporation, and the U.S. Department of Treasury are a few examples of employers.

3. Financial Analyst

Function: Examining financial information, determining potential investments, and offering advice to companies or private customers.

Sector: Industries: businesses, private equity firms, insurance companies, financial institutions, and investment banks.

Employers: Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, HSBC, Deloitte, and Morgan Stanley are a few examples of employers.

4. Economic Consultant

Function: Offering advice on market analysis, policy choices, and economic trends to companies, governmental organizations, and nonprofits.

Sectors: non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business strategy divisions, consulting companies, and government advisory positions.

Employers: Employers include McKinsey & Company, Accenture, KPMG, and Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

5. A statistician or data analyst

Function: Applying statistical techniques to evaluate and decipher intricate economic data, offering perspectives for academic, corporate, or policymaking endeavors. Sectors: Financial institutions, private businesses, healthcare, research corporations, and government entities.

Employers: The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), Nielsen, IBM, Bank of America, and government agencies are a few examples of employers.

6. Market Research Analyst

Function: Gathering and evaluating market information to assist companies in comprehending customer preferences, behavior, and market dynamics.

Sectors: Product development departments, marketing companies, advertising agencies, and corporations.

Employers: Examples of employers include market research divisions at major businesses, Nielsen, Gartner, and Ipsos.

7. Investment Banking

Function: Underwriting and issuing securities, overseeing mergers and acquisitions, and providing financial advising services to help governments and businesses raise funds.

Sectors: Industries: hedge funds, private equity firms, and investment banks.

Employers: Employers include, for instance, Deutsche Bank, Citigroup, Barclays, and Goldman Sachs.

8. Corporate Economist/Strategist

Function: Examining the economic landscape and offering advice to assist companies in making strategic choices about pricing, entering new markets, or mergers and acquisitions.

Sectors: Consulting firms, international corporations, and large corporations.

Employers: Microsoft, General Electric, Apple, Shell, and McKinsey are a few examples of employers.

9. An actuary

Function: Assessing risk and uncertainty in the domains of investments, insurance, and pensions using statistical and mathematical models.

Industries: actuarial consulting businesses, pension funds, and insurance companies.

Employers: Prudential, Allianz, Zurich Insurance, and Towers Watson are a few examples of employers.

10. Expert in International Development

Function: Planning and carrying out initiatives to support economic growth in developing nations, examining worldwide economic patterns and how they affect regional economies.

Sectors: Development agencies, international organizations, and nonprofits.

Employers: The World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, USAID, and Oxfam are a few examples of employers.

11. Expert in Public Finance and revenue:

Functions: Duties include examining government budgets, tax laws, and fiscal policies and offering recommendations on how to maximize public expenditure and revenue.

Sectors: International organizations, government agencies, and think tanks focused on public policy.

Employers: Employers include the Ministry of Finance, the OECD, PwC, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

12. Environmental economists: Environmental economists study how environmental policies affect the economy and provide advice on resource management, sustainability, and climate change economics.

Sectors: International organizations, research businesses, government agencies, and environmental NGOs.

Employers: The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Greenpeace, the World Resources Institute (WRI), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are a few examples of employers.

13. Education/Academy

Function: Educating college and university students in economics, carrying out scholarly research, and publishing in scholarly publications.

Sectors: Universities and research institutes are among the sectors.

Employers: Colleges and universities, as well as institutions of economic research, are examples of employers.

14. Financial Services and Banking

Function: Holding positions in corporate banking, risk management, or financial planning. These experts support the management of investments, client interactions, and financial operations.

Industries: financial advising businesses, banks, and credit institutions.

Employers: State Bank of India, Citibank, Bank of America, and ICICI Bank are a few examples of employers.

15. Development and Social Economist

Function: Emphasizing how economic forces impact social concerns including social welfare, poverty, and inequality. To solve economic inequality, they could collaborate with governmental or non-governmental groups.

Sectors: government agencies, research institutes, NGOs, and international organizations.

Employers: The World Bank, Oxfam, Save the Children, and the UNDP are a few examples of employers.

16. Real Estate Economist

Function: Examining housing markets, property valuations, and market trends to assist customers in making well-informed choices regarding real estate development and investment.

Industries: banks, financial firms, and real estate enterprises.

Employers: Real estate investment trusts (REITs), CBRE, JLL, and real estate consulting businesses are a few examples of employers.

17. Entrepreneur/Start-Up Founder

Function: Using economic knowledge to launch and run a firm, seeing market possibilities, and making sure business plans fit the state of the economy are the responsibilities of an entrepreneur or start-up founder.

Industries: self-employment and startups.

Employers: Your own business or start-up are examples of employers.

18. Economist

Function: Economists examine economic facts, trends, and policies to offer insights and suggestions to governments, corporations, and international organizations.

Workplaces include government agencies (like the Ministry of Finance), research institutes (like NITI Aayog and RBI), global institutions (like the World Bank and IMF), think tanks, and big businesses.

Skills Needed: Strong analytical abilities, mastery of statistical tools, familiarity with economic theories, and data interpretation skills are necessary.

IV. FINDINGS

From the above discussion, we see that there are many scopes for jobs either in public or non-public sectors. Even after clearing JRF NET in Economics, the candidate can enroll in Ph.D. He/she gets handsome stipend up to 5 years though he/she gets a nominal stipend without JRF NET. After clearing Ph.D., one may never sit without job.

V. SUGGESTIONS

1. Students of Economics never be frustrated for job.
2. Jobs are waiting for them.
3. They should not sit idly. They should keep always updated.
4. They should try for job nationally and internationally either in public or non-public sectors.
5. They should avoid home sickness.
6. They can establish a new startup where they may be job giver instead of job seeker.

Economics now means innovation. Innovation and creativity can only occur when people are skilled enough to know how to operate with different technologies. Better methods are always used by educated individuals to solve their difficulties.

VI. CONCLUSION

A master's degree in economics opens up a wide range of employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors. Graduates can work as consultants, policy advisers, researchers, analysts, or even entrepreneurs. The degree's adaptability enables graduates to customize their professions according to their preferences, whether they would rather work in social policy, academia, or the business sector. In today's contemporary, industrialized world, economics is a significant factor. To thrive in this cutthroat environment, students require a solid economics education. People with high standards of living and education, who are better equipped to handle problems, form the basis of modern civilization. Students studying economics in particular are able to adapt to the present labor market situation with ease. We may draw the conclusion that economics is the most powerful instrument for enacting global change.

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Bama from *karukku* and Sethe from *beloved* comparative analysis with the lens of intersectionality

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Abstract— This paper compares two strong women Bama from *Karukku* and Sethe from *Beloved* and shows how they deal with different forms of oppression. Bama is a Dalit woman from India who faces caste and gender discrimination. Sethe is a Black woman in America who suffers from slavery and racism. Bama and Sethe are treated badly because of they are, and their struggles are shaped by more than one problem like race, caste, gender, and class. This idea is called intersectionality, which means looking at how different types of discrimination come together and affect a person's life. The paper shows how Bama and Sethe fight back in their own ways. Sethe uses her strength as a mother to survive slavery, while Bama uses education and writing to fight caste discrimination. Even though they live in very different places and times, their stories show that marginalised women face complex challenges, but also have the power to resist and bring change.



Keywords— Discrimination, Intersectionality, Oppression, Slavery, Race

I. INTRODUCTION

The rhetoric on women in postcolonial literature constantly presents them victims of violence, oppression and race. however, characters like Bama from *karukku* and Sethe from *beloved* challenge this stereotype by showing their agency patriarchal oppression and psychological scar of slavery.

The intersectionality theory regularly uses in feminist, ethnic, postcolonial and subaltern studies, provides a useful framework to research these characters. Intersectionality highlights the how inhabitants interact and create unique experience. Kimberlie Crenshaw "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" (1989) argues that *intersectionality*, showing how Black women face both racial and gender discrimination in ways that are different from Black men or white women. After applying these theories, this paper examines the intersectional strategies of Bama and Sethe highlighting how resistance and survival through the education and love and depression. Although lots of research on these texts, but this paper reflects in contrast between these texts. After applying these theories,

this paper examines the intersectionality strategies of Bama and Sethe, highlighting how they navigate patriarchal control, social rejection, and the trauma of Postcolonial.

Sethe, as an enslaved Black woman, exists within a brutal system of racial oppression. She is denied autonomy over her own body, family, and labor. Her suffering is not just about being enslaved but about being a Black woman in a system that specifically targets her reproductive rights. The taking of her milk represents white control over Black motherhood. Even after slavery, racism continues to haunt her. She struggles to find economic security and is stigmatised by the community for her past actions. On the other hand, Bama (Dalit Oppression in India's Caste System) Bama, born into an oppressed Dalit caste, experiences discrimination that is systemic and deeply entrenched in Indian society. Like Sethe's dehumanisation under racism, Bama faces social exclusion and untouchability. The caste system dictates that Dalits cannot access certain spaces, education, or resources. The story in *Karukku* where she sees an elder Dalit man carrying food

for an upper-caste person with “untouchable” caution mirrors the forced servitude of Sethe under slavery.

Sethe (Black Womanhood and Motherhood) Sethe’s experience as a mother is central to *Beloved*. The institution of slavery not only commodifies her body but also severs her maternal bonds. She is seen as a “breeder” rather than a nurturing mother. Her decision to kill Beloved rather than let her return to slavery is an act of both trauma and agency. It highlights how Black women were forced into impossible choices under white supremacy. The expectation that Sethe must be endlessly resilient and self-sacrificing reflects a patriarchal and racialized burden placed on Black mothers. Alternatively, Bama (Dalit Womanhood and Social Expectations) Bama faces both caste and gender discrimination. As a Dalit woman, she is oppressed by both upper-caste communities and patriarchal structures within her own caste. Dalit women, like Black enslaved women, were historically exploited for labor and denied agency over their own bodies. In *Karukku*, Bama’s decision to become educated and independent is a radical act against both casteism and patriarchy.

Sethe (Poverty and Post-Slavery Exploitation) Even after escaping slavery, Sethe struggles economically. She works tirelessly but remains in a vulnerable position because of racial discrimination. The post-slavery reality in *Beloved* reflects how Black people were systematically denied economic independence, leading to generational poverty. In contrast, Bama (Dalit Economic Exploitation) Dalits were historically assigned menial, low-paying jobs. In *Karukku*, Bama highlights how economic opportunities for Dalits remain restricted. Education becomes Bama’s tool to fight against this oppression, but she faces barriers due to both caste discrimination and gender norms.

Sethe (Haunting of the Past in *Beloved*) Sethe is haunted both literally by Beloved and metaphorically by the trauma of slavery. Her past shapes her present, making it impossible for her to fully heal. Morrison portrays trauma as cyclical, affecting not just Sethe but also Denver and the Black community at large. Conversely, Bama (Caste Trauma and Resistance in *Karukku*) Bama’s work is centered around the trauma of caste oppression but also on the resilience of Dalit communities. While Sethe struggles to move beyond her past, Bama actively resists her oppression by choosing education and activism.

II. CONCLUSION

The experiences of Sethe in *Beloved* and Bama in *Karukku* illustrate the profound impact of intersectional oppression, where race, caste, gender, and class intersect to create unique and layered forms of marginalization. Through an intersectional lens, it becomes clear that neither woman’s

oppression can be understood in isolation Sethe’s struggles cannot be reduced to race alone, just as Bama’s cannot be solely attributed to caste. Instead, their identities as Black and Dalit women respectively shape their lived realities in deeply complex ways. Despite facing overlapping systems of violence, both women engage in acts of resistance, though their approaches differ based on their historical and social contexts. Sethe’s resistance is deeply personal and physical, rooted in survival and motherhood her escape from slavery, her fight to reclaim autonomy over her children, and her endurance in the face of trauma reflect the ways Black women have historically resisted oppression within systems designed to erase them. On the other hand, Bama’s resistance is intellectual and collective, as she challenges caste-based discrimination through education, storytelling, and activism. While Sethe’s resistance is tied to reclaiming her bodily and emotional agency, Bama’s is a fight for knowledge, representation, and structural change. This comparison highlights how intersectionality shapes both oppression and resistance. The layered discrimination faced by Sethe and Bama underscores the need to move beyond single-axis analyses of oppression, recognising instead how multiple systems of power operate simultaneously. Their stories reflect the broader struggles of marginalised women across different geographies and histories, emphasising the necessity of contextualized resistance strategies whether through personal acts of survival or systemic interventions like education and literature.

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From Trauma to Triumph: The Intersection of Art, Therapy and Resilience in Acid Attack Survivors

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Abstract—This article, titled *From Trauma to Triumph: The Intersection of Art, Therapy, and Resilience in Acid Attack Survivors*, explores how art functions as a medium of healing and empowerment for acid attack survivors through the lens of resilience theory. Grounded in psychological frameworks, the study examines how individuals cope with and adapt to the profound physical and emotional trauma resulting from acid violence. Drawing from selected narratives—'Being Reshma', 'The Book of Shadows', and 'I Am Still Alive: Journey of Acid-Attack Victims'—the article investigates how creative expression, including visual arts, storytelling, fashion, recitation etc., contributes to identity reconstruction and emotional recovery. It emphasizes art therapy as a powerful tool for enhancing self-worth, fostering personal growth, and promoting psychological resilience. Through detailed case studies, the article underscores the transformative role of art in supporting survivors to reclaim their voices, challenge societal stigma, and rebuild their lives with strength and dignity. While acknowledging its limited scope, this study highlights the broader implications of integrating art into trauma recovery and resilience-building frameworks.



Keywords— Acid attack, Art, Healing, Identity reconstruction, Resilience, Therapy

I. INTRODUCTION

Resilience, derived from the Latin word '*resilire*' meaning "to rebound" or "spring back"[Concise Oxford Dictionary, tenth edition] refers to the human ability to recover from adversity, adapt to change, and thrive despite trauma or stress. It is more than just enduring hardship; it is about growing through challenges and emerging with a renewed sense of strength and purpose. In the context of acid attack survivors, resilience signifies the reclaiming of identity, the will to overcome stigma, and the courage to rebuild life. Resilience is not a fixed trait but a dynamic process, shaped by both internal capacities and external support systems.

Resilience Theory provides a multidisciplinary framework to understand how individuals cope with adversity. In psychology, researchers like Emmy Werner and Michael Rutter pioneered studies on children exposed to trauma, identifying key protective factors such as strong

relationships, problem-solving skills, and self-belief. Ken Ginsburg's 7Cs model—competence, confidence, connection, character, contribution, coping, and control—offers a practical guide to building resilience, especially in vulnerable populations. Meanwhile, in ecology, resilience describes how ecosystems recover from environmental stress, and in sociology, it reflects how communities confront collective trauma and inequality. Resilience manifests in several forms: psychological (mental strength to navigate stress), emotional (ability to regulate emotions during crises), physical (capacity to recover bodily health), and community resilience (collective recovery from disasters or violence). These dimensions often overlap, particularly in the lives of acid attack survivors who face complex and interconnected challenges. For them, resilience becomes a deeply personal yet socially

constructed journey, involving both self-reconstruction and communal support.

Literature has long explored the theme of resilience, even before the term was formally theorized. From classical works to modern narratives, authors have portrayed characters enduring grief, violence, and loss, while ultimately emerging with hope and healing. Novels and memoirs such as *Desert Flower* by Waris Dirie, *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, *Room* by Emma Donoghue, and *Speak* by Laurie R. King highlight the human capacity to endure trauma and rebuild identity. These texts underscore the transformative power of storytelling and art in recovering from deep emotional wounds.

Acid attacks represent one of the most heinous forms of gender-based violence, leaving survivors with not only physical disfigurement but also psychological and social trauma. Despite enduring permanent scars, societal rejection, and emotional devastation, many survivors demonstrate extraordinary resilience. A crucial part of their recovery is the use of art as a therapeutic outlet. Art therapy allows survivors to express pain, rebuild identity, and challenge stigma in a non-verbal, creative way. It fosters empowerment, agency, and emotional healing, aligning closely with the goals of resilience.

This article explores how art intersects with therapy and resilience in the lives of acid attack survivors. Using *Being Reshma* by Reshma Qureshi with Tania Singh (memoir), *The Book of Shadows* by Namita Gokhale (fiction), and *I Am Still Alive: Journey of Acid-Attack Victims* by Aman Kapur (non-fiction), this study examines how creative expression aids recovery. These texts offer powerful insights into the lived experiences of survivors and showcase how art becomes a transformative force—enabling them to move from trauma to triumph.

II. BEYOND SCARS: NARRATIVES OF RESILIENCE

An acid attack, also known as acid throwing, vitriol attack, or vitriolage, is a

form of devastating violence that has destroyed the lives of many all over the world. Irrespective of gender, many people have been victims of this heinous crime, even though women are more common victims of such attacks. Day by day, this violence is seen to be on the increase. In the current scenario, little girls are also being affected by vitriolage. This act of intentional acid throwing on someone's body and face leads to permanent disfigurement, blindness, and even death. It causes serious mental and emotional trauma. Acid attack leaves a life-long scar on the victim's body and psyche. The easy availability and low expense of acid

encourage the perpetrators to use acid as a weapon against victims. Despite their severity, acid attacks remain a pervasive issue, and patriarchal norms and gender-based violence, rejection of marriage, and rejection of romance are the reasons for the heinous crime. In recent years, the voices of acid attack survivors have begun to come out, exchanging their true stories of resilience and courage in the face of unimaginable suffering.

This chapter aims to examine the existing works on acid attacks, including documentaries, memoirs, and novels for a better understanding of the issues and suffering of those affected. Those who have survived acid attacks encounter several obstacles on their path to recovery, from social integration to physical therapy. It has a long-lasting impact on the survivors' mental health and welfare. Therefore, it is crucial to research the psychological effects of these attacks. Today, these acid assaults are reported commonly in developing countries. Men attack women as there is a dominance over female victims, for refusing to marry or refusing to make sexual advances. In Bangladesh, acid attacks are labelled as a “Gender crime” (Acid attacks). In some other places, women throw acid on other women about fights over male partners. Men are the bulk of victims in the UK, and gang violence is frequently a factor in these attacks.

Over time, the body of research on acid attack survivors has expanded and evolved. In the beginning, there was very little research or discussion about acid assaults. But as people came to understand about this serious issue, researchers and activists started to work on this topic. A few groundbreaking studies and publications that detail the frequency and effects of acid attacks in specific areas first surfaced in the early 2000s. These works laid the foundation for further research on the need for support services, legal action, and community involvement to avoid and react to such heinous crimes. As concern and awareness increased, acid attacks became more varied and widespread. Scholars began examining the intersection of elements that contribute to acid attacks such as gender, class, and race along with the patriarchal norms, and power dynamics included. In the early days, the focus was only on documenting the problem and its effects. As time passed, scholars started to examine the trauma and experiences of survivors themselves.

In recent years, the literature on acid attacks has enlarged to include personal

narratives, memoirs of acid attack survivors, and documentaries that give a deeply intimate, and humanising perspective on the experiences of these individuals. Documentaries and films have also played a pivotal role in raising awareness often featuring the stories and struggles

of survivors. Autobiographical works promote a sense of empathy in them. Later, the researchers explored the intersection of psychological factors, trauma, feminist perspective, mental health, etc with acid attack survivors. A few have talked about the resilience of these victims, their coping strategies, support systems, etc. There were also fictional works related to acid attacks, which may be according to the author's imagination. The literature on acid attacks has developed over time, becoming more sophisticated, multidisciplinary, and international in scope, which reflects the seriousness and complexity of this issue. A wide range of documentaries and books emerged as powerful insights into the lives of acid attack survivors and the intricate issues underlying the assault.

Saving Face (2012) is a documentary film directed by Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy and Daniel Junge, which explores the lives of acid attack survivors in Pakistan. This short subject, *Saving Face* depicts the harsh reality of assault against women in South Asia. This film follows the stories of Zakia and Rukhsana, as they overcome their challenges and seek justice against their attackers. Many women are being victimized by these brutal attacks in Pakistan, with countless cases not reported. In many cases of acid attacks, the attackers are the victim's husband or family members. They had no remorse for the act they did and blamed the victims of the attack. Attackers in this film are deeply rooted in a patriarchal culture that leads to gender-based violence and discrimination.

The article *I am Zakira: I'm an Acid Attack Survivor; I Won't Cry and I Won't Die* is

about an acid attack and domestic violence survivor Zakira. This article is a first-person account of Zakira, who is determined to face the challenges. The article was published in 2020. The strong narration of her experiences put forward a poignant analysis of the connections of gender, violence, and resilience. Zakira was attacked by her husband in 2017, which left her with severe burns causing permanent disfigurement and disability. Gradually, she rebuilt her life through makeup artistry and became a beacon of hope for other survivors. This article highlights the issues including gender-based violence, trauma, victim blaming, and the need for social and legal support for survivors. Through her strong narrative, Zakira showcases her strength and determination to face challenges and restore her life. She also challenges societal norms that perpetuate violence against women. Zakira is an icon of resilience and economic empowerment even in her physical and emotional trauma.

Acid Attack: My Story, a documentary, tells the story of Naomi Oni, a British woman who survived a brutal acid assault in 2012. It was directed by Clare Richards in 2020. Naomi was only twenty, when she was attacked with acid

by her friend, Mary Konye who used a veil to pretend to be someone else. This documentary contributes a raw account of her experiences and the long journey to recovery. The documentary depicts several sensitive scenes and shows her journey - applying, and removing makeup, her hospital appointments, spending time with family and friends, etc.. This documentary provides the themes of betrayal of trust, trauma, resilience, empowerment, hope, justice, etc. This short subject highlights Naomi's strength and determination to bounce back from her adversities and she spoke publicly about her sufferings and pain, which makes people aware of the harsh reality of acid attack.

Being Reshma: The Extraordinary Story of an Acid-Attack Survivor Who Took

the World by Storm is a memoir by Reshma Qureshi and Tania Singh, published in

2019. The book tells the journey of Reshma Qureshi as an acid attack survivor and her

growth as a model, vlogger, and antacid-sale activist. Reshma belongs to a middle-

class Muslim family in Mumbai. This book unfolds the harsh realities of a heinous

crime. As Shashi Tharoor says:

Being Reshma, is a powerful story of courage, perseverance and triumph. This crisp yet emotionally grounded narrative not

only enables the reader to connect with acid attack victim Reshma

but also brings to life the reality of violence and humiliation that

many women in India continue to face. A significant achievement

and a compelling read (*Being Reshma*).

Tania Singh, co-author says that seeing how harsh the world can be to women and she

compared her life to that of Reshma's was the most challenging aspect. She came to know

about the fact that it was a challenge to understand what Reshma goes through and so

she needed to protect Reshma from reliving the most horrifying memories she had

gone through. Change originates at the grassroots level rather than at the top.

Through this book the writer truly believes that it is the true journey of millions of survivors of gender-based abuse. This book

hits close to home for many, yet survivors are afraid of speaking out.

By putting the face to acid violence this book tries to inspire those

women who are stuck in violence and abusive relationships. This book

is a true epitome of harsh realities that women face in India (Bhana).

Reshma described herself as “a rotten piece of flesh”, which conveys the emotional pain, and

shame that she experienced as a result of the attack. She undergoes multiple surgeries and suffers a lot of physical and psychological difficulties including a financial crisis. She was very passionate about makeup and the fashion industry before the attack. Despite the challenges and trauma, she overcomes her adversities with the help and support of her

family, Ria Sharma, CEO of Make Love Not Scars Organization, and Tania Singh.

She restores her life and pursues her dream through her strong determination and

willpower. This book is inspirational to all victims who are still in fear of bouncing

back and challenging their difficulties. She became the face of Make Love Not Scars,

an organization that supports acid attack survivors.

Uyare (2019), a Malayalam film directed by Manu Ashokan explores the

powerful portrayal of acid attack survivorship, resilience, and the connection between

trauma, identity, and empowerment. The movie talks about the journey of a young

and strong woman Pallavi, who survives an acid attack by her ex-boyfriend, Govind.

The film expertly portrays the sufferings and experiences of acid violence victims, the

emotional and physical pain they undergo. Pallavi surrounds herself with a strong supportive network including family and friends, which help her to cope with the trauma and in the process of recovery. Even though she is not ready to give up, she fights for justice, and with strong determination and support, she becomes an air hostess, where she finds a new sense of purpose and fulfilment, can rebuild her life, and accepts her new identity.

Namitha Gokhale, a writer and publisher, is a prominent figure in the Jaipur

literature Festival. Her work of fiction *The Book of Shadows* (1999) opens the tale

around the matter of acid assault. This kind of violence against women made there

lives even worse. In the novel, Rachitha Tiwari the protagonist is the acid attack

victim, after the attack she sought refuge in a remote village in the Himalayan

foothills. The author has also lived in that house, as Gokhale says in the Author's note:

I too have lived in the house I have written about. This is a novel

which has its core in truth. It has been written, or it has written itself,

under circumstances which would appear strange to most people. It has

been a vehicle to resolve my personal pain, but there is more to it than

that (Gokhale).

From the beginning of the novel, we learn that Rachitha is a person who wishes to live alone. Her fiancé commits suicide by hanging himself. The suicide note justifies that he was not happy in that relationship. “Goodbye, cruel world! I bid thee farewell! You have tried me sorely; you have abused my trust! My trust with time is over! Tell the faithless one, the Delilah, that her betrayal will cost her dear” (Gokhale 5). After his death, his sister threw acid on Rachitha's face. So, she wanted to move away from society and family because of this incident. She rejects social life; she finds herself out of place in this pathetic condition. She thinks that after the incident she lost her identity. She says,

I have come to the hills to heal, to hide, to forget. To forgive, to be

forgiven. My friends all resisted my decision. My sister even insisted

on accompanying me here, but I knew that I needed solitude and

soliloquy to come to terms with what had happened (Gokhale 6).

In the novel, Rachitha's character goes through a transformation from being a victim to a resilient character. She shows her extraordinary strength and determination in her journey towards recovery while facing a traumatic experience. It is a gradual and nuanced process, made possible by the journey to the hills. Art of storytelling, nail painting, connection with nature, supernatural encounters, and self-discovery helps her to empower herself by taking control of her own life, her voice, and her story. Her process

of healing is a complex and deeply human one, marked by setbacks, which shows that healing is possible, even in the hardest of times. As a coping mechanism she indulges in nature, she goes into retrospection, and she starts enjoying her own company, so it is a process of self-discovery for her. This novel is a reminder, which shows the capacity of individuals to transform the struggles to

rebuild our lives.

I Am Still Alive: Journey of Acid Attack Victims (2016) by Aman Kapur is a collection

of ten stories of women who have survived acid attacks. This book is all about acid

attack survivors in India. The author wrote the book, by travelling to Agra to meet

them at Sheroes Hangout Cafe and writing down their true stories by interviewing the

women. The stories of ten women are told in their own words, their struggles,

experiences, and their resilience. Also, it describes the section of Indian law which

deals with acid attacks. This book takes the readers deeply into the stories of the survivors. The emotional and physical pain they undergo gives a sense of empathy to the readers.

The author succeeds in balancing the brutality of acid attacks with their resilience and the process of recovery. Each chapter focuses on each one's story of pain, struggle, determination, and resilience. **Sheroes Hangout Cafe** run by acid attack survivors in India,

which was established to empower the survivors. The cafe can be seen as an embodiment of support and a ray of hope. The ten women mentioned in the book come out of their ordeals and fight to restore their lives.

From among the various types of works on acid attacks which include documentaries, books, research articles, films, short films, etc., three books, *Being Reshma: The Extraordinary Story of an Acid-Attack Survivor Who Took the World by Storm* co-authored by Reshma Qureshi and Tania Singh, *The Book of Shadows* written by Namitha Gokhale and *I Am Still Alive: Journey of Acid-Attack Victims* written by Aman Kapur have been selected for study in this article. These books give a nuanced analysis of the struggles experienced by acid attack survivors and make us aware of the harsh realities of acid assaults. These books offer uniquely personal, raw accounts of the victims' experiences. Critically it sheds light on gender-based violence. Moreover, these three books offer an analysis of the role of art in the process of their healing. These are inspiring and informative. Therefore, in a framework of resilience theory, these books form the base for this study

that focuses on art as a creative expression and therapeutic outlet for acid attack survivors.

III. HEALING AND GROWTH THROUGH CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Art therapy is a technique rooted in the idea that creative expression can promote resilience and mental well-being. It enhances social skills, promotes self-worth and self-awareness, and fosters insight into reducing and resolving conflict and pain. This is a creative process that enriches the lives of individuals, families, and communities. Adrain Keith Graham Hill is considered to be the founder of art therapy. His 1945 book, *Art Versus Illness* documents the origin of this field, while recovering from tuberculosis in a clinic. Hill overcame his boredom through the "simple art of drawing" (Hill, 14). He writes, "I became ... a diligent and leisurely composer of precise pencil productions, each of which in the terms of my restricted medium, sought to express my reactions to the unreality of my existence" (Hill 14).

According to Hill, art evolved as a means by which to pass the time and convey his discontentment with his current circumstances (Bush). Art therapy helps people to manage their stress and trauma through a creative outlet of art, which promotes resilience. Through the process of creative expression, people can improve their social support, post-traumatic growth, stress reduction, emotional regulation, promoting personal growth which are essential for building resilience. By facilitating these resilience factors, art therapy enables individuals to navigate challenges, thrive in difficult circumstances, and ultimately enhance their overall well-being and quality of life.

Art therapy has developed as a therapeutic outlet across different fields, giving a creative and expressive medium for people to deal with trauma, stress, and mental health challenges. It has been utilized in the realm of mental health to help individuals who suffer from depression, anxiety, and sadness. Art therapy has proven to be a valuable tool in the field of trauma healing for one who has undergone abuse, violence, or natural disasters. Through this one can analyse their experiences, express their emotions, and can rebuild their sense of identity and self-worth. Resilience theory provides a framework for understanding how art therapy can help people build the ability to endure and bounce back from adversity. According to resilience theory, art therapy can improve resilience factors that one can develop like emotional control and self-esteem. Art therapy presents a distinctive chance to foster resilience for acid attack victims too. They have to experience long-term extreme physical, and psychological trauma and a sense of shame, feelings of

guilt, and social isolation. They can start reconstructing their identity and confidence through art, as well as create coping mechanisms to deal with their trauma. Art can help in their journey towards healing and empowerment.

The concept of art as a therapeutic outlet for acid attack survivors by analysing the books *Being Reshma: The Extraordinary Story of an Acid-Attack Survivor Who Took the World by Storm* by Reshma Qureshi with Tania Singh, *The Book of Shadows* by Namitha Gokhale, and *I Am Still Alive: Journey of Acid Attack Victims* by Aman Kapur through the framework of resilience theory. Resilience is being able to bounce back from difficult life experiences and eventually, being successful in overcoming those challenges. To adapt, we have to be flexible cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally. The four main factors that help an individual bounce back from challenges are adaptability, social support, coping mechanisms, and post-traumatic growth. The commonly referred to “3Cs” by resilience theory are coping (effective coping mechanisms), comfort (social support), and control (adaptability) (Citrin). The three books illustrate the 3Cs of resilience in different ways and art stood as an important part in the life of acid attack survivors to overcome their experiences. Each factor is essential for acid attack survivors to restore their lives. Adaptability refers to the ability to adapt to new circumstances and to navigate life from trauma. Art plays an important role in the process by providing a medium through which survivors can express their emotions and experiences, helping them to accept their new identity. Art as a creative expression leads to a sense of control and empowerment which is needed for adaptability. Social support or comfort is another significant factor that contributes to resilience. It involves support from family, friends, and communities. Through the process of empathy, encouragement, love, and care from the support system which helps the victims to heal. The interactions with others help victims feel less isolated and have a sense of being more supportive and valued. Coping mechanisms involve finding healthy ways to manage their stress and emotional pain. Art reduces the feeling of anxiety and promotes mental well-being. Through art, survivors can explore and express their inner growth leading to a deeper understanding of themselves. Art therapy becomes a significant tool in the process of healing for acid attack survivors (Grothberg and Malchiodi).

Being Reshma, co-authored by Reshma Qureshi and Tania Singh, gives an understanding of the pathetic yet motivating journey of an acid attack survivor. The narrative surpasses individual experiences, illustrating the role of art and how it became a therapeutic outlet. In the framework of resilience theory, which analyses how one can adapt and bounce back from adversity. Reshma Qureshi's chronicle is

evidence of human capabilities and creativity as a process of healing. Her foremost battles with art after her attack play a significant role in her journey towards overcoming. She retells how captivating artistic works contributed to getting out of her trauma. The ideas proposed by resilience theory focus attention on optimistic reconstruction through coping mechanisms. Creative expression allowed Reshma to express her emotions, turning her internal conflicts into tactile expressions of her resilience. The process of healing here is not just a creation of art but a shifted experience, restoring her identity from a victim of violence to a survivor of rebuilding her dreams. The book also emphasises the importance of the collective aspect of art therapy, which shows its relation among survivors. Reshma tells about her participation in combined art projects, Resilience theory holds up this by highlighting the importance of social support in overcoming the difficulty. The collective artistic attempts provided Reshma and her group with a bearing community, which enforces resilience through mutual encouragement and harmony. Additionally, this book showcases how art makes possible a re-examination of her self-worth and the role of society. Indulging in art allowed her to claim back her narrative, and maintain control over her life and public view. The reaffirmation of identity is very important in resilience, where one can rebuild their self-reflection in the face of trauma. Here, art makes Reshma capable of redefining herself by promoting a sense of purpose and future thought which is essential for resilience.

The real-life tale of Reshma Qureshi, which came out to make people aware

and inspire, demonstrates the role of art as a therapeutic outlet for acid attack survivors through the lens of resilience theory. Her invasion into the world of fashion started with her ramp walk at New York Fashion Week in 2016. This was not only a significant moment for Reshma but it was a breaking down of traditionally constructed stigma on acid attack survivors. She challenges the traditional concept of beauty in the world of fashion and encourages everyone. Later, she modelled for fashion campaigns and photo shoots to raise awareness of the heinous crime. Her work with Make Love Not Scars NGO also indicates her dedication to reconstructing the survivors' life. Reshma's life offers a clear path to resilience that changes personal trauma into an artistic triumph.

Namitha Gokhale's fictional work *The Book of Shadows* offers a nuanced exploration of trauma, healing, and resilience. The protagonist Rachita Tiwari, is an acid attack victim, who was attacked by her fiancé's sister in revenge for her brother's suicide. Rachita who lost her love, and identity, feels the pain, wishes to be alone, and finds her

mamaji's home in the foothills to heal herself. She states, "I have come to the hills to heal, hide and forget. To forgive, to be forgiven. My friends resisted my decision.. but I knew I needed solitude and soliloquy to come to terms with what had happened" (Gokhale 6-7). Gokhale delves into the power of art as a therapeutic outlet, which shows it as a powerful means of survival and self-expression through resilience theory.

This book portrays a different set of aspects of the resilience of Rachita. Her journey towards healing, connected deeply with the influence of nature, which modified her challenges, choices, and changes (3Cs). After the attack, she was totally in a physical and emotional struggle, which left her with permanent scars, fear, shame, and herself questioning her security and confidence. She used to cover her face with a Muslin Chunni, she didn't even look into the mirror either. She says, "I have not looked into a mirror for months now, and my face, that familiar index of my being, has dissolved into absurdity and abstraction. Even my fingers do not recognize the changed contours of my cheeks, or the injured flesh." (Gokhale).

She needs a change from her urban life and to be alone. She needs to hide from everyone and heal herself in her own company. Thus, she decides to go back to her roots in the hills. It was the turning point in her life. Here, nature plays an important role in the process of self-discovery and resilience. Her connection with nature is beautifully explored such as the tranquil beauty of rolling hills, clear skies etc... Her influence on nature changed her physical condition and made her somewhat confident. The healthy environment of the rural village has also influenced, she states, "As we neared the house a familiar sense of elation overtook me. The air here is different, it is thinner and purer than city air, its pine-scented effervescence made me feel heady and expectant" (Gokhale 9).

In the rural setting, she adapts to a simple, natural lifestyle, this transition harmonises her with the environment. She immersed herself in nature and surroundings, and engaging with the local community gave her relief because there was no one to stare at her. She was insecure in her urban life after the attack, the news spread everywhere and she was in the news.

The press took a morbid interest in all that has happened in the course

of that summer madness. Pictures of my face it has been started back

at me from everywhere. Reality pressed upon me with the weight of

the unshed August clouds, it confronted me in the eyes of strangers,

it afforded me no relief in that crowded relentless city I had once called

my home [Gokhale 6].

She discovered herself within her ancestral heritage and understanding of the

family's past. The coping mechanism she adapted was nail painting. Here, nail painting acts as a therapeutic outlet for her in the process of healing. This art therapy provides mindfulness, self-care, and creative expression. It helps to distract from haunting thoughts and helps one to be in the present moment. "Another part of the drill is nail polish... I change my nail polish every two days. The ritual of the acetone and the cotton wool and the two clear quick strokes of colour is immensely reassuring. It works better than tablets... As I concentrate on my nail polish my state of grace is complete" (Gokhale 18-19). This technique of art is more effective in managing one's physical and emotional distress. This practice helps Rachita to maintain their sanity, which gives her a sense of contentment and achievement.

Another factor that helps Rachita to overcome is the art of storytelling. Lohaniju, the manservant of Rachita's ancestral home used to narrate stories, which provided her with a means to express and release her emotions through catharsis. This framework helps to restore her sense of control over her circumstances and to challenge them. The art of storytelling provides new perspectives to her life and helps her in her overall development. The art of reading books also helps Rachita to survive trauma. She states, "I spend the nights reading" (Gokhale 17). Towards the end of the novel Rachita Tiwari regains her strength and anticipates her future, "the garden will bloom again, the roses by the veranda, the weeds and forget-me-nots by the gravel path. I think I know that I will remain" (Gokhale 232).

I am Still Alive: Journey of Acid-Attack Victims by Aman Kapur is a collection

of real-life stories of ten acid attack victims and their inspiring journey towards

healing through the process of art. The book elaborates on the chronicles of Laxmi, Ritu, Dolly, Madhu, Geeta, Neetu, Shabnam, and Ruquyya, and here, Sheroes

Hangout Cafe stands as the symbol of resilience, empowerment, and community for acid attack survivors. This cafe managed and run by acid attack survivors, provides a supportive and empowering environment that fosters healing. This cafe provides a therapeutic outlet through art, it serves healing through different forms of artistic expression including painting, craft-making, fashion designing, etc which gives a sense of relief from their pain and encourages them to come out of their physical and

emotional distress. Through the art of painting, sculpture, and other artistic forms, these victims articulate their pain, anger, and hope. The process of creating art enabled them to restore and transform their identity from a victim to a survivor and an artist. According to resilience theory, this indulges with the concept of agency, where individuals actively engage in behaviour that promotes their well-being and recovery. The Cafe hosts programs like artistic exhibitions, recitations, storytelling ..to foster an environment of healing. While working in the cafe they have to confront different types of people, which allows them to interact with the community and be able to express their identity. Engaging with art and creative expression they can express themselves and are an inspiration for others. By engaging in art like painting and drawing too can heal wounds.

The three books illustrate the role of art in promoting resilience among acid

attack survivors, they do so with different focuses and approaches. The key similarity

across these works is the portrayal of empowerment through expression. Each book highlights how art, be it makeup, artistry, photography, storytelling, or other forms of art like drawing, fashion design, etc provides a powerful medium for survivors to restore their identities and express their stories. Therefore, art is shown to be a crucial step in the journey towards self-acceptance and empowerment for the survivors.

IV. CONCLUSION

Resilience is an innate quality that is deeply implanted within human

prerequisites, pivotal for existence and adaptation throughout history. From an

evolutionary paradigm, resilience can be considered as a survival trait necessary for

facing and triumphing over various hurdles, and sustaining species propagation. Many people hold an intrinsic power for resilience that often goes unnoticed until important challenges emerge. This inherent adaptability can be exhibited in many ways, by showing courage, unused potential, unexpected nimbleness, and solution-oriented skills. In day-to-day life, one should cope with handling daily stress, navigate to change, and recover from small obstacles, often without knowing these actions as resilience. Major challenges, however, can act as stimulus, awaken one's inner strength, and reveal a hidden source of ability to adapt that they didn't know they had. Understanding and affirming an individual's resilience can be severely empowering as self-assessment and this realisation will help

to identify the strengths and techniques already implemented to handle difficulties. Resilience may naturally be present, but it can also be developed and promoted through conscious approaches such as fostering supportive networks, encountering uplifting moments, and acquiring successful coping techniques.

The resilience shown can vary according to the situation and is strongly

influenced by matters like supportive relationships and a caring community, which enable one to access and make use of their inherent resilience more efficiently. Ultimately, resilience represents an interplay between inborn potential and external influences. It is both a natural and fundamental aspect of human survival, lying latent until activated by challenges. Identifying and promoting this through a positive environment and resourceful practices can help one not only to overcome but also to flourish in the face of difficulties. This dual nature of resilience reinforces the strength of human flexibility and the intense capacity for revival and development. Resilience theory focuses on the ability of individuals to bounce back in the presence of adversity. The key factors that promote this theory include adaptability, which is the capacity to adjust a new circumstance; social support, which shows the importance of relation or communication with others, community which fosters resilience; and positive self-perception, which involves maintaining a hopeful outlook and confidence that one should have to overcome challenges. These elements help one to recover from traumatic events and promote long-term well-being and development.

Acid attacks are a form of violence that involves throwing acid substances into another to harm, disfigure or destroy them. The victims of this heinous crime, need to suffer severe physical injuries, including disfigurement and long-term health complications. Beyond these they have to face profound psychological trauma. Resilience theory that shows resilience is a dynamic process that involves the interaction between an individual and their environment. Art therapy has emerged as an important field in trauma recovery, which offers self-expression and healing, especially in acid attack victims. Existing literature on this suggests that engaging in artistic activities helps individuals to survive the trauma and rebuild their identities.

The integrative analysis gives an idea of how art helps in healing for trauma survivors. Emotional expression and catharsis are important for one who deals with trauma. "Every act of creation is first an act of destruction" (Picasso). Engaging in creative art forms like painting, music, and writing allows trauma survivors to express their internal feelings, which might be very painful to express verbally. Creating this form of art experiences emotional

relief from anger, sadness, and fear. This will also be both empowering and therapeutic which gives a sense of control over themselves. These activities can influence a state of flow which can reduce stress and enhance psychological well-being. Engaging in art also plays a crucial role in helping trauma survivors to rebuild their identities. Trauma, especially from acid violence, can severely affect a person's sense of self, often leading to a sense of loss and fractured identity. Artistic activities allow for exploring and redefining their identities and true selves. It serves as a way to reconstruct their self-image and evokes a sense of identity as more than a victim. Social support also nurtures an environment in the healing Community spaces like Sheroes Hangout Cafe provide a sanctuary where survivors can connect with other people who have shared similar experiences. These communities provide a sense of connection and good understanding, which is essential for emotional healing. These supportive groups reduce feelings of isolation and promote resilience. The scope of this study is limited by the literature and sources chosen for analysis. The selected works offer insights into the therapeutic use of art within the acid attack survivors, it represents only a small part of a broad area. This focused selection consciously provides a deep understanding of resilience theory through specific studies and creative expressions. The lack of literature on acid attacks is a great drawback, as the low availability of books showcases the restriction to explore a wider area and its impacts. So, the study must focus only on a small number of texts that might not represent different artistic methods used by survivors. Many of the victims still are victims, they are not able to come out of it and express their experiences. This analysis of three books gives a narrow understanding of the art of healing for acid attack survivors. This study showcases how art assists in emotional healing and self-identity, pointing to the possibility of creative methods to improve therapeutic approaches. This could lead to more productive and supportive treatment tactics that classify artistic expression as a key element in recovery. This study also highlights the important role of art in the recovery and empowerment of acid attack survivors, underlining the need for policy changes that integrate art therapy into treatment plans.

In conclusion, this article underlines the profound impact that art can have on

the resilience and recovery of acid attack survivors. Engaging with artistic expression in therapeutic practices, survivors can find solace in healing. Also, this study showcases the importance of widening our understanding of beauty and strength beyond superficial appearances, recognizing the immense courage and resilience demonstrated by these individuals.

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A User Experience-Centered Design Framework for Optimizing English Learning on All-in-One Multimedia PC

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Abstract— This research aims to develop a user experience (UX)-centered design framework for educational content delivered through All-in-One Multimedia Personal Computers (AOMPCs), focusing specifically on optimizing English learning and enhancing teaching effectiveness. By analyzing existing AOMPC-based English learning applications, the research explores how content presentation influences students' motivation, classroom engagement, and academic performance. The findings reveal that user experience optimization relies on multiple interrelated dimensions, including interface design, interactivity, visual aesthetics, and multimedia integration. These elements collectively shape a more engaging and immersive learning environment. Furthermore, the study integrates theoretical perspectives with empirical data to identify core drivers of an effective AOMPC learning experience, such as real-time feedback, adaptive content, and interactive task design. These factors significantly elevate learner motivation and cognitive engagement. The study not only offers practical insights for designing multimedia teaching tools but also contributes a theoretical foundation for future research and innovation in educational technology.

Keywords— User Experience (UX), All-in-One Multimedia PC (AOMPC), Classroom Learning Engagement, Multimedia-Assisted Learning, Cognitive Load Theory, Educational Technology Innovation



I. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of education, driven by rapid advancements in information and communication technologies, is fundamentally reshaping pedagogical

models, instructional delivery, and learner engagement. Multimedia-assisted instruction—through the integration of text, visuals, audio, and video—has demonstrated considerable potential in enhancing teaching quality,

stimulating student interest, and fostering deeper cognitive processing (Abdulrahman et al., 2020; Austin, 2009). As educational institutions increasingly adopt digital platforms and smart devices, the demand for seamless, intuitive, and effective learning environments has intensified.

Within this evolving landscape, the All-in-One Multimedia Personal Computer (AOMPC) has emerged as a powerful educational tool, offering a compact and integrated solution that combines computing power, display functionality, audio systems, video capture, and touch-based interactivity. Compared to conventional, single-functional teaching equipment, AOMPCs streamline instructional delivery by eliminating the need for multiple devices and facilitating a centralized control of multimedia resources (AlShaikh et al., 2024). Their increasing deployment across primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions, and training centers signifies a broader shift toward digital, intelligent, and multimodal learning environments.

However, while AOMPCs provide the technological infrastructure for interactive and immersive learning, the true impact of such systems on educational outcomes hinges critically on the design of the user experience (UX) and the structuring of digital learning content. Research has shown that UX design in educational settings must not only accommodate learners' cognitive and emotional needs but also stimulate their motivation, foster interaction, and scaffold complex conceptual understanding (Bai et al., 2019; Barraza, 2021). Furthermore, studies have emphasized the multidimensional nature of classroom engagement—comprising emotional, behavioral, and cognitive components—each of which is directly influenced by the structure and presentation of digital content (González-Peño et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2023).

Interactive multimedia teaching, particularly when facilitated by devices such as AOMPCs, offers a viable pathway for enhancing all three dimensions of student engagement. Rich media elements can evoke emotional resonance, promote active behavioral participation through real-time feedback and collaboration tools, and foster deeper cognitive involvement via scenario-based learning and personalized recommendations (Alsadoon, 2023; Li et al., 2024). These affordances align with cognitive load

theory and multimedia learning principles, which emphasize that well-orchestrated multi modal content can enhance knowledge acquisition, reduce extraneous load, and improve transfer ability of skills (He & Wu, 2023; Kalyuga, 2007).

Nevertheless, there exists a significant research gap at the intersection of UX design, multimedia learning, and integrated educational hardware such as AOMPCs. While prior studies have explored UX in web applications, mobile learning platforms, and traditional PC-based educational systems, few have systematically investigated the unique design considerations and pedagogical affordances of AOMPCs (Nakamura et al., 2018). These all-in-one systems demand a novel approach to instructional design—one that harmonizes hardware capabilities with learner-centered UX principles and empirically validated multimedia learning strategies.

This study seeks to address this gap by developing a UX centered design framework tailored to AOMPC-based English learning environments. Drawing from theories in UX, multimedia learning, and classroom engagement, the research aims to identify the critical design factors that influence learner motivation, interaction, and academic performance. Through a combination of design science methodology, empirical experimentation, and mixed-methods evaluation, the study constructs a comprehensive model for optimizing digital content in AOMPC supported classrooms.

The objectives of this research are threefold. First, to analyze key UX design dimensions—such as interface intuitiveness, interactivity, visual clarity, and multimedia coherence and their impact on learner engagement. Second, to propose design strategies that enhance cognitive efficiency, emotional resonance, and participatory behavior. Third, to offer an actionable framework for educators and developers, enabling the creation of adaptive, engaging, and pedagogically sound learning environments through AOMPC platforms.

Ultimately, this research contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it expands the scope of UX research in educational technology by integrating design principles with pedagogical outcomes. Practically, it provides educators with concrete guidelines for leveraging AOMPCs in a way that transcends mere technology

adoption, advancing toward truly transformative learning experiences. By bridging the gap between interface design and instructional effectiveness, this study lays the foundation for a new generation of intelligent, interactive, and learner-centered educational environments.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of digital learning environments has ushered in an era where user experience (UX) is no longer a peripheral concern, but rather a foundational element in the design and effectiveness of educational platforms. Particularly within the context of language acquisition in secondary education, a growing body of interdisciplinary research—spanning educational technology, human-computer interaction, and cognitive psychology has emphasized the centrality of UX in shaping learner engagement, cognitive processing, and academic performance. This section synthesizes existing theoretical and empirical work related to UX design, multimedia learning theory, and classroom engagement, with a specific focus on the application of All-in-One Multimedia Personal Computers (AOMPCs) in junior secondary English classrooms.

2.1 User Experience (UX) Theory in Educational Contexts

UX theory encompasses the holistic perceptions, emotions, and responses users experience when interacting with a digital system or interface. In educational settings, particularly those involving emerging technologies such as AOMPCs, UX design determines not only the usability of the platform but also its ability to sustain attention, foster motivation, and facilitate deep learning. Effective UX design within this domain is predicated on the alignment between cognitive ergonomics and pedagogical goals. This entails creating interfaces that are intuitive, non-intrusive, and emotionally engaging, allowing learners to focus on the instructional content rather than the mechanics of system navigation (Bai, 2019; Barraza, 2021). Recent studies have shown that middle school students, whose cognitive development and attention regulation are still in formative stages, are particularly sensitive to UX design (Li et al., 2023; Shao et al., 2025). Elements such as visual appeal, response immediacy, and interactive feedback loops significantly influence emotional and behavioral

engagement. For instance, reward systems (badges, progress bars), gamified elements, and peer interaction features have been empirically linked to improved motivation and sustained classroom participation (Alsadoon, 2023; Capatina et al., 2024).

2.2 Multimedia Learning Theory and Cognitive Load Management

Multimedia learning theory, notably articulated by Mayer and supported by dual-coding theory (He & Wu, 2023), posits that individuals learn more effectively when instructional materials engage both visual and auditory channels. In practice, this means that multimedia instruction—when designed correctly—can facilitate deeper cognitive encoding and stronger knowledge retention. However, there exists a critical caveat: cognitive load theory warns that when multimedia elements are poorly integrated or excessively complex, they may overload working memory and hinder rather than enhance learning outcomes (Kalyuga, 2007; Skulmowski & Xu, 2022). In the context of AOMPC-based instruction, managing this balance becomes essential. Research indicates that multimedia interfaces should adhere to minimalist design principles, presenting only essential information to avoid overloading cognitive capacity (Sozio et al., 2024; AlShaikh et al., 2018). Content should be sequenced progressively, with increasing complexity scaffolded by system-generated prompts and feedback. This approach not only aids knowledge construction but also supports learners' metacognitive regulation, allowing them to monitor and adjust their learning strategies.

2.3 Dimensions of Classroom Learning Engagement

Learning engagement has emerged as one of the most reliable predictors of academic success. Contemporary engagement models conceptualize it as a tripartite construct—emotional, behavioral, and cognitive (Wong & Liem, 2022). Each of these dimensions plays a distinct role in shaping the learning process and can be strategically influenced through UX design. Emotional engagement, involving interest, enthusiasm, and a sense of belonging, is closely linked to the design of affective affordances within the AOMPC interface. Interactive storytelling, digital avatars, and real-time performance feedback (e.g., points, animations) have been found to enhance emotional resonance and classroom morale (Pietarinen et al., 2014;

Shao et al., 2025). Behavioral engagement, referring to students' active participation in tasks, is fostered through interactive modules that promote agency and task ownership. Features such as live polls, embedded quizzes, and collaborative simulations—when seamlessly integrated—encourage learners to participate more frequently and meaningfully in classroom activities (Nguyen et al., 2016; González-Peño et al., 2021). Cognitive engagement involves the learner's psychological investment in understanding and mastering the material. Deep learning is facilitated by well-structured content that challenges students intellectually, supports exploration, and allows for knowledge application in realistic scenarios. Tools such as scenario-based tasks, AI-driven personalized feedback, and adaptive learning paths align with this dimension by fostering critical thinking and sustained attention (Richardson, 2006; Lv et al., 2022).

2.4 Core Design Principles for AOMPC-Based Learning Content

An emerging consensus in the literature suggests that the pedagogical effectiveness of integrated teaching platforms like AOMPCs is contingent on four interlocking design dimensions: usability, interactivity, visual design, and content presentation (Keenan et al., 2022; Tong et al., 2022). Usability ensures that the system is easy to learn, navigate, and operate under real-time instructional conditions. For instructors, this translates into interfaces with streamlined access to teaching tools and minimal procedural complexity. For students, it means reduced friction in accessing and completing learning tasks, thereby maximizing instructional time and minimizing distraction (Ferreira et al., 2020; Lewis & Sauro, 2021). Interactivity is pivotal in translating passive learning into active construction. Real-time student response systems, voice and handwriting recognition, and role-play simulations are shown to significantly boost classroom dynamics and engagement metrics (Srivastava et al., 2024; Tai & Wei, 2023). Moreover, when interactivity is linked to feedback mechanisms—such as instant performance analytics—students are more likely to maintain motivation and self-regulate their learning. Visual design contributes not just to aesthetic appeal but to functional clarity. Research underscores the need for consistent color schemes, semantic iconography, and hierarchical text

structures (Austin, 2009; Masina et al., 2020). Customizable modes (e.g., light/dark themes) and minimal visual noise also reduce visual fatigue and enhance attention span. Content presentation, the most pedagogically critical dimension, must follow evidence-based learning theories. Multimodal presentation—combining text, video, animation, and interactivity—has proven effective in language acquisition tasks such as vocabulary building, pronunciation, and grammar comprehension (Abdulrahman et al., 2020; Zhang, 2022). The integration of AI recommendation engines further refines this process by adapting content delivery based on student performance and preferences, thereby supporting personalized learning trajectories.

2.5 Synthesis and Theoretical Implications

In sum, the literature affirms that optimizing AOMPC-based instructional environments requires a holistic design philosophy—one that integrates UX principles, cognitive science, and pedagogical theory into a cohesive framework. The convergence of usability, interactivity, visual clarity, and multimodal content forms the backbone of an engaging and effective learning system. However, most existing studies remain fragmented, with few offering a unified model that addresses the specific affordances and constraints of AOMPCs in secondary language education. This study aims to bridge that gap. By synthesizing insights from user-centered design, multimedia learning, and engagement theory, we propose a novel UX-centered framework tailored for AOMPC-based English instruction. This framework not only addresses the technical and cognitive dimensions of digital learning but also aligns with the motivational and emotional needs of adolescent learners. As the educational landscape continues to digitize, such integrative models will be critical in shaping the next generation of intelligent, inclusive, and effective classroom technologies.

III. METHODOLOGY

To systematically investigate and validate the proposed user experience (UX)-centered design framework for English learning content on the All-in-One Multimedia Personal Computer (AOMPC) platform, this study employs a Design Science Research (DSR) methodology. DSR is particularly suited for addressing real-world

educational challenges that demand iterative solution development, empirical testing, and refinement. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, this methodological framework ensures that the resulting design model is not only theoretically grounded but also pedagogically effective and practically deployable.

This study unfolds across three interrelated dimensions: (1) the structured development of the UX design framework via DSR, (2) a mixed-methods evaluation combining experimental and observational data, and (3) the theoretical underpinnings rooted in multimedia learning theory and interface design principles. The goal is to develop a robust, adaptive, and empirically tested interface and content model that enhances classroom engagement, facilitates cognitive processing, and improves academic performance in middle school English classrooms.

3.1 Design Science Research Framework

Design Science Research provides a structured, iterative process for creating and evaluating technological artifacts aimed at solving complex problems. The DSR process adopted in this study encompasses the following key stages:

Problem Definition: An initial needs assessment was conducted to identify specific pain points in existing AOMPC-based educational content. Issues such as cognitive overload, low emotional engagement, and poor interface intuitiveness were identified as primary barriers to effective learning.

Goal Setting: Based on the problem analysis, a set of design objectives was articulated. These included enhancing user engagement through intuitive interface design, reducing cognitive load through structured multimedia content, and improving academic outcomes through adaptive learning pathways.

Development of UX Design Guidelines: A comprehensive set of UX design principles was established, focusing on interaction mechanisms, visual aesthetics, feedback systems, and multimedia coherence. These guidelines served as the foundational blueprint for system development.

Framework Construction: Using the design principles as scaffolding, a modular AOMPC-based English learning content framework was constructed. The framework integrates features such as voice-activated interactions,

multimodal instructional assets, real-time feedback systems, and personalized learning modules.

Evaluation and Iterative Refinement: The framework was subjected to empirical evaluation through controlled experimentation, user surveys, and classroom observations. Based on the results, iterative refinements were implemented, aligning the design with actual classroom needs and learner preferences.

Validation: The effectiveness of the optimized design was assessed through post-intervention tests and a one-month follow-up, ensuring not only short-term performance gains but also sustainability of learning outcomes.

The iterative nature of the DSR approach allows for continuous feedback loops between theory, design, and practice—ensuring that the framework remains adaptable to diverse educational contexts and technological advancements.

3.2 Mixed-Methods Research Design

To comprehensively assess the impact of the UX-optimized AOMPC platform on student learning, this study adopts a mixed-methods research design. Quantitative methods allow for statistical generalizability, while qualitative insights provide depth and contextual understanding.

3.2.1 Quantitative Methods

Experimental Design: A between-subjects experimental design was implemented, involving two matched groups of 30 students each. The experimental group used the UX-optimized AOMPC interface, while the control group followed traditional instructional methods without digital enhancement. Both groups received equivalent instructional content over a four-week period.

Metrics: Data were collected on academic performance (via standardized English tests), task completion time, and classroom engagement frequency. These metrics provided objective indicators of learning efficiency and behavioral engagement.

Survey Instruments: Validated tools such as the System Usability Scale (SUS) and the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) were administered to assess students' perceptions of usability, learnability, and overall satisfaction.

3.2.2 Qualitative Methods

Semi-Structured Interviews: Post-intervention interviews

were conducted with both students and instructors to gain nuanced insights into interface preferences, interaction quality, emotional responses, and perceived learning effectiveness.

Classroom Observations: Researchers conducted structured observations during AOMPC-integrated lessons, focusing on interaction dynamics, attention patterns, and task engagement. The observational data helped triangulate findings from surveys and interviews.

3.3 Theoretical Foundation

This study draws on two interrelated theoretical frameworks—Multimedia Learning Theory and Interface Design Theory—to inform the development and evaluation of the learning platform.

Multimedia Learning Theory posits that students learn more effectively when information is delivered through multiple sensory channels, such as text, audio, and visuals, provided cognitive overload is managed. In this study, instructional content was designed using dual-coding and segmenting principles, allowing learners to absorb complex information progressively and contextually.

Interface Design Theory emphasizes ergonomic alignment and cognitive accessibility. AOMPC interfaces were designed to match user expectations and cognitive processing patterns, using clear visual hierarchies, consistent iconography, and responsive input systems to streamline interaction.

Together, these theories provided a principled basis for system design that harmonizes technological affordances with pedagogical objectives.

3.4 UX-Centered Content and Interface Design

In alignment with UX and cognitive load principles, the AOMPC content was constructed to incorporate multimodal assets (e.g., images, videos, interactive simulations), organized to minimize extraneous processing and enhance retention. For instance, vocabulary instruction was paired with dynamic audio-visual examples, while grammar tutorials included drag-and-drop sentence builders and voice feedback mechanisms. Interfaces featured real-time progress indicators, personalized task recommendations, and interactive storytelling components designed to foster sustained attention and emotional engagement.

3.5 Experimental Protocol

The empirical evaluation proceeded across three phases:

Intervention Phase (Weeks 2–5): The experimental group received instruction via the AOMPC system, engaging with interactive tasks such as speech recognition, virtual simulations, and touch-based activities. The control group received parallel content through traditional teaching methods.

Post-Test Phase (Weeks 6–7): Both groups completed a battery of assessments, including standardized English proficiency tests, engagement self-reports, and learning motivation questionnaires. Differences were analyzed using ANOVA and regression modeling to determine the statistical significance of the intervention effects.

Follow-Up Phase (One Month Later): A delayed post-test was conducted to assess knowledge retention, sustained engagement, and attitudinal changes. These data provided evidence of long-term efficacy and UX durability.

3.6 Experimental Design Validity and Ethical Considerations

To ensure scientific rigor, several procedural safeguards were employed:

Randomized Group Assignment: Participants were randomly distributed into experimental and control groups, matched by baseline academic performance.

Incentive Structures: Gamified reward systems (points, badges) were integrated into the AOMPC platform to maintain motivation and reinforce task completion behaviors.

Participant Anonymity: All data were anonymized to protect student privacy, and all observations were conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards.

Informed Consent: Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from students, parents, and teachers. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), ensuring compliance with ethical research practices.

3.7 Summary

Through a rigorous, multi-phase methodology grounded in established design and learning theories, this study provides a robust empirical foundation for the UX-centered optimization of AOMPC-based educational platforms. The integration of design science with

mixed-methods research enables both theoretical validation and practical applicability. Results from this study are expected to inform the future design of multimedia educational interfaces and offer evidence-based guidance for developers, educators, and policymakers seeking to enhance learning experiences through user-centered design. The methodological framework established herein serves not only as a blueprint for UX evaluation in educational technology but also as a catalyst for broader innovations in digital learning environments

IV. RESULTS

The evaluation of the UX-centered AOMPC learning environment yielded a series of significant empirical findings across multiple dimensions of user experience and educational effectiveness. The results are presented under four core domains: user experience factors, classroom engagement, learning efficiency, and user satisfaction, followed by a data-driven comparison of academic outcomes between experimental and control groups. Each domain is supported by both quantitative and qualitative evidence, enabling a multidimensional analysis of how UX-optimized design influences middle school students' English learning performance.

4.1 User Experience Dimensions and Their Pedagogical Impact

To assess the educational affordances of UX-driven AOMPC design, four critical UX domains were analyzed: usability, interactivity, visual design, and learning efficiency.

4.1.1 Usability

Participants in the experimental group reported significantly higher ease of use when interacting with the AOMPC interface. The learning environment, characterized by intuitive layout, responsive navigation, and consistent feedback, facilitated rapid student acclimatization. Survey data showed that 80% of students rated the interface as either "very user-friendly" or "relatively user-friendly." Observational records confirmed that students were able to navigate between modules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, and listening tasks) with minimal instructional scaffolding. These results underscore the importance of cognitive ergonomics in digital learning

design, particularly in reducing operational friction for adolescent users (Kalyuga, 2007; Lewis & Sauro, 2021).

4.1.2 Interactivity

Interactivity emerged as a central mechanism linking user engagement with improved academic performance. Compared to the control group, students in the experimental group exhibited a 35% increase in classroom interaction frequency. This was attributed to multimodal input methods such as voice recognition, drag-and-drop mechanics, and real-time response tasks. For instance, in listening comprehension exercises, students engaged with dynamic touch-based quizzes and speech recognition modules, which prompted immediate feedback and peer discussion—substantially elevating participation levels (Alsadoon, 2023; Capatina et al., 2024).

4.1.3 Visual Design

The AOMPC interface employed high-contrast color schemes, consistent visual hierarchies, and icon-based navigation to minimize cognitive load and visual clutter. 85% of students rated the visual design as "very appealing" or "relatively appealing." Eye-tracking and classroom observation indicated that students were more likely to remain visually focused on AOMPC tasks, as compared to chalkboard or textbook-based activities. Visual coherence appeared to support attention regulation and knowledge retention, particularly during grammar visualization tasks and contextual vocabulary acquisition (Barraza, 2021; Esplendori et al., 2022).

4.1.4 Learning Efficiency

A key finding of the study was a 25% reduction in task completion time within the experimental group, highlighting the impact of UX optimization on cognitive efficiency. Learning modules were designed to sequence content progressively and adapt to user performance. As a result, students exhibited quicker task navigation, lower error rates, and more targeted corrective behavior. Notably, the real-time assessment features of AOMPC allowed learners to identify and rectify misconceptions immediately, accelerating their path toward mastery (Skulmowski & Xu, 2022; Sozio et al., 2024).

4.2 Classroom Engagement and Academic Outcomes

The empirical comparison between the control and experimental groups revealed statistically and educationally significant differences across several

learning dimensions.

4.2.1 Enhanced Learning Outcomes via Interactive UX

Post-test results revealed a 12-point average improvement in English test scores among the experimental group (from 72 to 84), compared to only a 1-point gain in the control group. Notable gains were recorded in listening comprehension and oral expression, directly attributable to the voice-enabled and multimedia components of the AOMPC platform. Students noted that real-time pronunciation feedback and simulated conversational tasks provided immersive, practical language use opportunities that were absent in conventional instruction (Aljehani, 2022; Austin, 2009).

4.2.2 Elevated Classroom Participation

Behavioral and emotional engagement showed the largest inter-group divergence. Students using AOMPC demonstrated a 30% increase in classroom participation relative to the control group. Emotional engagement, measured via self-reports and behavioral proxies, rose sharply due to gamified incentives and multimedia stimuli. Behavioral engagement—such as voluntary answering, group discussion frequency, and task persistence—was significantly enhanced by interactive task structures and reward systems (e.g., badges and progress bars) (Nguyen et al., 2016; Ogunyemi et al., 2022).

4.2.3 Longitudinal Retention and Motivation

Follow-up assessments conducted one month after the intervention confirmed the sustainability of learning gains. The experimental group maintained elevated scores in vocabulary retention, speaking fluency, and classroom participation. Moreover, survey responses indicated a continued sense of self-efficacy and interest in English learning, suggesting that the motivational effects of AOMPC’s UX design extend beyond short-term novelty effects (Capatina et al., 2024; Shao et al., 2025).

4.3 Stratified Effects Across Learner Profiles

A stratified analysis revealed differentiated impacts based on learner characteristics:

Visual and Kinesthetic Learners: Demonstrated particularly strong responses to AOMPC’s touch- and image-based modules. Vocabulary retention and reading comprehension were markedly improved in these subgroups (Ferreira et al., 2020; Masina et al., 2020).

Auditory Learners: Benefited most from voice recognition, listening feedback, and oral response features, with measurable gains in listening comprehension and speaking proficiency (He & Wu, 2023; Maslov et al., 2021).

These findings suggest that the AOMPC platform aligns well with multiple learning modalities, fulfilling a core objective of differentiated instruction through personalized, multimedia-rich pathways.

4.4 Quantitative Evidence: Comparative Tables

Table 4.1 Changes in Student English Scores

group	Average Score (Pre-Experiment)	Average Score (Post-Experiment)	Score Change
experimental	72	84	12
control	73	74	1

Interpretation: The experimental group exhibited a substantial improvement in test performance, supporting the hypothesis that UX-optimized multimedia interfaces foster deeper learning and application in second language acquisition.

Table 4.2 Classroom Engagement Scores Comparison

Engagement Dimension	Experimental Group (Average Score)	Control Group (Average Score)	Improvement
Emotional Engagement	8.2	6.5	1.7
Cognitive Engagement	7.9	6.8	1.1
Behavioral Engagement	8.5	6.4	2.1

Interpretation: All engagement dimensions showed statistically and pedagogically meaningful gains. Behavioral engagement showed the greatest change, reflecting the strong influence of interactive task mechanics.

Table 4.3. Task Completion Time

Learning Efficiency Improvement Comparison			
Group	Average Task Completion Time (Pre-Experiment)	Average Task Completion Time (Post-Experiment)	Time Difference
Experimental	45 minutes	34 minutes	-25%
Control	46 minutes	45 minutes	-2%

Interpretation: UX-centric design substantially reduced cognitive friction and redundant task navigation, leading to more efficient content mastery .

Table 4.4 User Satisfaction Survey Results

Satisfaction Level	Percentage of Experimental Group Students
Very Satisfied	45%
Satisfied	40%
Neutral	12%
Dissatisfied	3%

Interpretation: An overwhelming majority (85%) of participants expressed strong satisfaction with the AOMPC interface, citing intuitive navigation, responsive feedback, and engaging media as key strengths. Negative feedback (3%) was primarily associated with initial device unfamiliarity, suggesting potential for improvement through onboarding strategies.

4.5 Summary of Results

The cumulative evidence across quantitative and qualitative dimensions confirms the efficacy of the AOMPC platform when optimized through UX principles. Students demonstrated marked improvements in academic performance, emotional and behavioral engagement, and learning efficiency. The multi-sensory, multimodal interface design contributed to sustained learner motivation, particularly among students with diverse cognitive profiles. Importantly, the UX-optimized system not only produced short-term gains but also exhibited positive retention effects over time, underscoring its pedagogical robustness and long-term applicability. These findings establish a strong empirical foundation for the claim that UX design is not merely an interface consideration, but a pedagogical catalyst that can meaningfully shape learning behavior and academic trajectories in digitally enhanced classrooms (Capatina et al., 2024; Kalyuga, 2007).

V. DISCUSSION

The study’s results affirm the hypothesis that UX-centered design significantly enhances learning outcomes, especially in language learning contexts where

engagement and motivation are pivotal. Compared to prior research, this study introduces a more structured and empirically validated design framework tailored specifically for AOMPC environments. The integration of interactivity, visual clarity, and multimedia elements contributes not only to improved performance but also to deeper emotional and cognitive engagement. The design guidelines proposed in this study are refined based on the findings. Visual and interface design should prioritize simplicity, consistency, and legibility, employing high-contrast colors and clear fonts to minimize cognitive load. Interaction design must ensure smooth, responsive operations, with features that promote peer collaboration and teacher-student engagement. Content presentation should be adapted to the nature of language learning, leveraging multimedia tools such as animations, videos, and audio clips to create immersive, context-rich learning scenarios. From an educational perspective, the study provides practical implications for secondary school English instruction. Teachers are encouraged to integrate AOMPCs not merely as tools for content delivery, but as platforms for active learning and digital collaboration. This approach fosters a more interactive and student-centered classroom

environment, promoting digital literacy, independent thinking, and teamwork.

6. Conclusion

This study aims to explore the impact of user experience (UX) design based on an integrated multimedia personal computer (AOMPC) on classroom learning outcomes. Through experimental design and data analysis, the study systematically evaluates the effectiveness of AOMPC in enhancing students' English proficiency, classroom participation, and learning motivation. The findings indicate that AOMPC's interactivity, usability, visual design, and optimization of learning efficiency significantly improved student learning outcomes, with particularly notable results in promoting classroom participation and learning motivation. By comparing the experimental and control groups, the study reveals the advantages of interactive design and multimedia elements in language learning, further validating the important role of UX design in educational technology. Combining both quantitative and qualitative research, this study provides valuable insights into the optimization direction of AOMPC platform design and offers a practical reference framework for the development of future educational tools.

6.1 Research Contributions and Practical Implications

6.1.1 Research Contributions

The main contributions of this study include: filling the gap in user experience (UX) research within educational technology by providing empirical evidence that demonstrates the impact of UX design in AOMPC-based learning environments on classroom learning outcomes; validating the positive effects of multidimensional UX design (such as interactivity, usability, visual presentation, and learning efficiency) on learning motivation, classroom participation, and academic performance; and, based on the experimental results, proposing a set of UX design guidelines to guide the optimization and development of AOMPC and similar educational technology platforms to enhance teaching effectiveness.

6.1.2 Practical Implications

The practical significance of this study is reflected in several key areas: First, it provides educators with theoretical support on the use of multimedia teaching tools, helping them understand how to leverage innovative

teaching tools (such as AOMPC) to enhance student performance, particularly in improving classroom participation and learning motivation. Second, it offers specific user experience (UX) improvement recommendations for educational technology developers, especially in the areas of interactivity design and content presentation. The findings provide valuable insights for the interface design and functional optimization of AOMPC and similar platforms, contributing to enhanced usability and teaching effectiveness. Finally, the study offers insights for policymakers and education administrators, emphasizing that integrating AOMPC and similar technological tools into the classroom can help improve educational quality, particularly in terms of student participation and motivation, thus driving education reform and modernization efforts.

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Michelin Stars and Digital Plates: A Discourse Historical Analysis of U.S. Food Posts on Instagram

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Abstract— *The point of this paper is to look at how the words and pictures used in Instagram posts about Michelin Guide restaurants show how power works in the U.S. food industry. It looks at how these digital artefacts support or challenge social norms and food hierarchies by focussing on posts from 2020 and later. The study uses Discourse Historical Analysis (DHA) to look at how these posts are ideological texts that shape how people think about restaurants with Michelin stars and boost their reputation. The paper shows that Michelin's influence goes beyond food quality and includes cultural capital and identity formation through textual and visual elements. Language, power, and digital representation are all brought together in this study to show how American food culture is changing.*



Keywords— *Michelin Guide, Instagram, Food Posts, Historical Discourse Analysis, United States*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Michelin Guide has a big impact on food cultures around the world because it has been seen as a standard for fine dining for a long time. The United States has been especially affected by it, where restaurants with a Michelin star are often associated with high status, cultural capital, and new food ideas. In this digital age, social media sites like Instagram have become important places to show and talk about this kind of cultural power. This essay looks at how Instagram posts about Michelin Guide restaurants affect the ongoing construction of culinary prestige and authority. It does this by showing how larger social changes affect the U.S. food scene. The study looks at how these posts reflect and reinforce the power structures that shape modern food culture through the lens of DHA.

II. DISCOURSE HISTORICAL APPROACH (DHA)?

DHA is a great way to look at Instagram food posts because it focusses on putting conversations in their proper

historical, social, and cultural contexts. DHA is different from traditional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which only looks at power and ideology in language. It also looks at how historical events affect modern stories in a more complex way. This way of looking at things is important for studying posts about Michelin because it lets us see how digital images of food interact with old cooking traditions and new cultural trends. By including historical background, DHA gives us a complete way to comprehend the symbolic power present in Instagram's various forms of communication, such as pictures, captions, hashtags, and user interactions. This method also considers the platform's part in both supporting and questioning established food hierarchies.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method is used in this study, which includes parts of both discourse analysis and cultural studies. When people post on Instagram with tags like "Michelin Guide," "Michelin Star," "Michelin Restaurant," and "Michelin

Green," starting in 2020, data will be gathered from those posts. During this time, there were big changes in U.S. food culture, like how the COVID-19 pandemic affected fine dining and how sustainability became a major issue. The study will look at both written and visual parts, using DHA's multi-layered method to see how language, images, and cultural stories work together. This method makes sure that a thorough study of how content related to Michelin works as a place where ideas are made is possible.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) uses the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to look at how language and power are used in the past. It is a well-known framework that stresses the importance of historical context. DHA was first created to look into anti-Semitic stereotypes during Kurt Waldheim's controversial campaign for president of Austria in 1986. It showed hidden power dynamics by revealing Waldheim's covert Nazi ties in public discourse (Datondji, Cocou, & Amousou, 2019, p. 70). DHA is different from other CDA approaches because it uses ideas from linguistics, sociology, history, and political science. This makes it perfect for looking at complicated social and political issues (Wodak, 2009, p. 65). It is based on problem-oriented analysis, interdisciplinary research, and methodological triangulation, which means combining different data sources, theoretical perspectives, and contextual insights to lower analytical bias (Wodak, 2009, p. 65). This way of looking at things sees discourse as historically connected to both current events and situations from the past. It shows how language, power, and social structures are always changing (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 417). DHA also stresses the important part of context, which is thought of as the mental representation of important social and situational factors that shape discourse (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 417). Wodak (2001, p. 65) says that a full DHA analysis should include past experiences, current discursive events, and expected future outcomes. This shows that the researcher has a deep understanding of how discourse can be connected to the past. This approach from different points of view lets us criticise dominant ideologies in a more nuanced way, even ones that support social inequality or cultural hierarchies (Reisigl, 2017, p. 44). DHA also puts a lot of weight on rhetorical strategies, especially argumentation. This is done by connecting the descriptive, explanatory, and evaluative stages of discourse analysis to find out how power works behind the scenes (Datondji, Cocou, & Amousou, 2019, p. 77). Using these different ways of looking at things, DHA creates a strong framework for looking at how power and ideology are constructed through discourse. This makes it especially useful for studying digital media and cultural discourse, like looking at Instagram posts about the Michelin Guide.

IV. DATA SAMPLING

The information for this study will be gathered in a planned way by using both random sampling and digital analytics tools, like Traackr or similar platforms, that let us filter very precisely based on location, engagement metrics, and content themes. The keywords found, such as "Michelin Guide," "Michelin Star," and "Michelin Green," help find accounts that have a big impact on the food conversation surrounding Michelin. This study uses a method called purposeful sampling to make sure that the posts chosen to show a range of views in the American food industry. Levels of engagement, content themes, and the presence of explicit or implicit language related to power are some of the things that are used to choose which ones to show. Posts are further divided by type, such as promotional, narrative-driven, or advocacy-oriented, to include all kinds of conversations about Michelin. This all-around approach tries to show how larger cultural and social factors affect how people think about great food. The goal of this paper is to add to the growing field of digital food studies by critically examining how talk about Michelin affects modern food culture in the US. This will help us understand how language, power, and digital representation interact.

V. POST 1



Fig.5.1 Collage composed of screenshots from "Huge congrats to Chef @canna_queen71 and the entire team at @lowellcafe for their monumental opening in LA." By [sensimagazine]. [Instagram], [2 October 2019].

5.1 Description of the Instagram account and the post

This post was chosen from the MICHELIN Guide's official Instagram account, @michelinguide, which is followed by people all over the world. Fine dining, culinary innovation, and gastronomic excellence are the topics that this account

curates for its more than 3,3 million followers and 8,600+ posts. Featured content increasingly focusses on sustainability and includes elite restaurants, renowned chefs, luxury experiences, and more. The featured post promotes Chef @canna_queen71 as the embodiment of an exciting new culinary concept infused with cannabis. Even though it showcases local chefs and interesting restaurants, the post is hand-picked and shared by an internationally acclaimed organisation. According to Johnston and Goodman, the MICHELIN Guide takes part in the "spectacular foodscape"—the process by which local authenticity is presented to an international audience—by framing local culinary stories within a globalised framework of prestige, quality, and innovation (Food, Culture & Society 210). Despite the ethical underpinnings provided by sustainability and plant-based themes, this is more of a global marketing story than a grassroots movement for local food.

5.2 Visual and Textual Description of the Post

First Image: The image showcases a chef, likely Chef @canna_queen71, standing proudly in a professional kitchen. She's wearing a crisp white chef's coat that signals professionalism, paired with a brown apron that adds a relaxed yet functional vibe. Her wrist is adorned with bracelets and a watch, and her serious, determined expression reflects her commitment to her craft.

Second Image: The cafe's interior bursts with life and warmth, highlighted by a wall adorned with lush green plants that bring a bit of nature indoors. A neon sign shaped like a cow adds a fun and creative twist, merging rustic charm with modern flair. The bar area boasts a wooden counter, stylish bar stools, and neatly arranged shelves, creating a cozy yet chic vibe.

Third Image: A broader view of the cafe's dining space reveals a decor that feels both earthy and refined. Greenery dangles from the ceiling, infusing the space with life and a connection to the outdoors. Wooden tables and chairs are neatly set up, and the branding, "Whole Plant," emphasizes the cafe's cannabis-inspired theme. The lighting is soft and inviting, enhancing the relaxed atmosphere.

5.3 Discourse Historical Analysis of the Instagram Post

The Instagram account @michelinguide plays a crucial role in shaping conversations about global cuisine. As the online face of the MICHELIN Guide, the content shared here significantly impacts how people view gastronomy, the power dynamics in the food industry, and the changing stories around sustainability. This discourse historical analysis takes a closer look at a post that celebrates the launch of the first cannabis cafe in the U.S., using a framework that considers historical, social, and ideological contexts.

Historical Context: The MICHELIN Guide has long been a hallmark of excellence in the culinary world. Initially launched by the Michelin tire company in 1900 to promote automobile travel, it has transformed into a trusted authority on fine dining (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003). Today, its influence goes beyond just restaurant ratings; it also shapes trends in gastronomy, including sustainability and inclusivity. The post we're examining highlights the opening of the first cannabis cafe in the U.S., placing it within a larger historical shift in how society views cannabis consumption. Traditionally, cannabis has faced stigma, criminalization, and ties to countercultural movements (Chapkis & Webb, 2008). However, as legalization and acceptance grow, its presence in fine dining marks a notable cultural shift. The farm-to-table movement, which emphasizes local sourcing and sustainability (Guthman, 2003), connects the cafe's culinary approach to global food trends. This link reinforces the MICHELIN Guide's role in legitimizing new gastronomic practices and framing them within the elite culinary conversation.

Cannabis consumption has really transformed over the years, moving away from its old-school ties to rebellious countercultures and stepping into the spotlight as a regulated, wellness-focused industry. This change fits right in with our current neoliberal consumer culture, where experiences and ethical choices are turned into commodities (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). The imagery and caption in the post really drive this point home, showcasing the cannabis cafe as a desirable dining destination instead of just a place for casual indulgence.

The chef, shown in a confident and professional pose, represents the growing acceptance of cannabis in the culinary world. Dressed in a crisp white chef's coat and a brown apron, she not only conveys professionalism but also adds a personal touch to an industry that has often been male dominated (Harris & Giuffre, 2015). By putting the chef front and center, the post shines a light on individual talent while also elevating the importance of culinary experts in changing the way we think about cannabis consumption.

The cafe's interior, filled with lush greenery, warm lighting, and a blend of rustic and modern design, reflects today's food trends that prioritize authenticity and sustainability (de Solier, 2013). This cafe is positioned as a crossroads of gastronomy, wellness, and environmental awareness, catering to well-off consumers who are on the lookout for dining experiences that are both ethical and luxurious (Lewis & Huber, 2015).

The MICHELIN Guide holds a powerful position in shaping the culinary landscape. By highlighting certain

topics, it promotes a narrative where sustainability and cannabis culture are not just alternative movements but rather markers of exclusivity and privilege. As Bourdieu (1984) points out, cultural capital is key in differentiating the consumption habits of the elite from those of the public. By focusing on farm-to-table dining and cannabis-infused cuisine, the post elevates both to the status of high culture, further solidifying the MICHELIN Guide's influence in defining what is considered gastronomically legitimate.

Additionally, the post sheds light on the evolving power dynamics within the cannabis sector. Historically, marginalized groups, especially Black and Latino communities, have faced significant challenges due to cannabis-related criminalization (Alexander, 2010). The shift of cannabis into a mainstream, lucrative industry primarily benefits corporate entities and elite culinary establishments, prompting important discussions about economic and racial disparities in this context (Small, 2018). By highlighting fine dining and sustainability, the MICHELIN Guide plays a role in rebranding cannabis as a luxury item rather than a substance that has been stigmatized for so long.

On the topic of local and global influences, the café serves as a prime example of how global food trends can be localized. The farm-to-table movement, which gained traction in fine dining across Europe and North America (Friedmann, 2007), is now a key part of the cannabis café's identity. At the same time, the café is helping to globalize cannabis gastronomy, aligning itself with broader culinary trends that intertwine food with wellness and ethical consumption (Goodman, DuPuis, & Goodman, 2012). Moreover, the post encourages interaction through its direct acknowledgments and celebratory tone, highlighting how digital connectivity is essential to modern gastronomic conversations (Abidin, 2016).

5.4 Caption Analysis

The caption takes a thoughtful approach to how it constructs its message, presenting Waters as a leading voice in sustainability. By highlighting her initiatives like the Chez Panisse Foundation and the Edible Schoolyard Project, it aligns with the idea that sustainability is not just a choice but a necessary change (Fairclough, 1992). Waters' quote, "To relate to nature is critical for our future. It's not just an option, it's an imperative," serves two purposes: (1) it emphasizes the urgent need for sustainability, echoing eco-critical discussions (Stibbe, 2015), and (2) it places her in a role of visionary leadership, like how eco-activists use persuasive language to establish their authority in climate conversations (Dryzek, 2013). Moreover, the engagement strategies like "Swipe right to check out" encourage interaction, tapping into digital

discourse studies that highlight the importance of audience participation in social media narratives (Zappavigna, 2012). Plus, giving credit to contributors—like illustrators and photographers—boosts transparency and fosters a sense of community, which aligns with theories of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006).

5.5 Hashtag Analysis

The chosen hashtags act as intertextual markers that place the post within a larger conversation about sustainability while also making it easier to find online (Page, 2012). Each hashtag plays a role in shaping the post's theme:

#MICHELINGreenStar and **#MICHELINSustainability**: These hashtags tie the post to the MICHELIN Guide's sustainability narrative, reinforcing its prestigious culinary reputation while advocating for ethical food practices. This reflects a strategy of legitimization, where sustainability is presented as a vital standard for culinary excellence (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

#MICHELINrestaurants and **#MICHELINPlate**: These tags really help to expand the post's reach beyond just sustainability, linking it to the prestigious MICHELIN network. While they boost visibility, they also create a bit of a clash between the exclusivity of fine dining and the inclusivity that sustainability promotes (Johnston & Baumann, 2015).

#restaurant and **#chef**: These more general hashtags help people find the post, but they don't really dive into any specific themes. Their use shows a smart mix of broad and niche topics, striking a balance between reaching a wider audience and staying relevant to the subject matter (Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

#portrait: This hashtag highlights the visual aspect, which is key in digital storytelling. It emphasizes how social media combines text and visuals to create meaning together (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

#MICHELINGuideCA: By focusing on California, this hashtag connects the post to local sustainability initiatives and the state's unique culinary scene. This approach shows how regional discussions can boost authenticity and engage the audience more effectively (Coupland, 2010).

VI. POST 2



Fig. 6.1 Collage composed of screenshots from “*Chez Panisse has become a proponent of the slow food trend requiring regenerative methods of growing, raising and cultivating ingredients*” by [michelinguide]. [Instagram], [4 January 2021].

6.1 Description of the Instagram account and the post

The chosen post is from Alice Waters' Instagram handle (@alicelouisew...), who has an influential role in the sustainable food movement. With 252K followers and over 1,380 posts, her account serves as a platform for advocating farm-to-table practices, food education, and sustainable gastronomy. As the founder of the Edible Schoolyard Project, Waters emphasizes the intersection of food, culture, and education, engaging with a community that includes prominent figures in sustainable food and hospitality. Her content likely highlights themes of accessibility, aesthetics, and the commercialization of sustainable food practices, making it a valuable subject for discourse-historical analysis. Although it echoes with worldwide sustainability principles, Alice Waters's post is more in line with the local food movement in the United States. Consistent with the tenets of the local food movement—which advocate for regional agriculture, seasonal eating, and place-based food knowledge—Waters has placed an emphasis on farm-to-table practices, food education, and community-based programs such as the Edible Schoolyard Project. Her work calls for more decentralised food systems that put an emphasis on ecological responsibility, fair trade, and long-term sustainability. But her message helps shape larger conversations about sustainable gastronomy, connecting local values with global food ethics, thanks to her extensive online following and influence in the world of international cuisine.

6.2 Textual and Visual Description

Image 1: Alice Waters is sitting outside at a charming wooden table, nestled under a sprawling tree. She's dressed in a simple dark blouse that exudes elegance and tranquility. With a relaxed posture, she leans slightly on one arm, her expression calm and serene. In front of her, there's a plate filled with fresh, colorful food and a cup, symbolizing her deep connection to sustainability and mindful eating. The natural outdoor setting beautifully reflects her philosophy of simplicity and living in harmony with nature. The vibrant, fresh food on the table draws attention to her commitment to organic and sustainable practices. The earthy tones of the table and the surrounding environment evoke a sense of warmth and authenticity, perfectly aligning with her values of sustainability and farm-to-table dining.

Image 2: A quote from Alice Waters stands out against a plain white background, highlighting her insights on sustainability and biodiversity, all stemming from her passion for taste. This quote reflects her journey from culinary enthusiasm to embracing ethical food practices. Below the text, her name appears in a clean black font, accompanied by a green clover logo that reads “Sustainable Gastronomy.” The design is sleek and minimalistic, featuring a crisp white background with bold black text. The green clover logo in the bottom left corner adds a splash of color, symbolizing sustainability. The uncluttered layout ensures that the quote takes center stage, while the clean font and green logo convey a sense of simplicity and professionalism, reinforcing the themes of ethics and sustainability.

Image 3: Imagine a visually stunning dish featuring a bright green soup that looks almost too good to eat. It's elegantly topped with a delicate swirl of cream and garnished with fresh herb sprigs. The vibrant green color really highlights the freshness and purity of the ingredients, perfectly reflecting the principles of organic and sustainable cooking. This dish is served in a simple white bowl, which allows the eye-catching green soup to take center stage. The swirl of cream and the small herb garnish add a touch of elegance and balance to the overall look. The bright colors and refined presentation really showcase the visual appeal of high-quality, organic ingredients, making the dish not just appetizing but also sophisticated.

Image 4: Here we have the entrance of Chez Panisse, with its name beautifully displayed on a rustic wooden archway. The surrounding lush greenery really emphasizes the restaurant's commitment to sustainability and nature. This setting perfectly reflects its farm-to-table philosophy and rustic charm. The wooden archway, proudly displaying “Chez Panisse,” is enveloped by dense greenery, creating a

warm and earthy atmosphere. The rustic wood and natural surroundings lend the space a timeless and authentic feel, visually reinforcing the restaurant's connection to its sustainable, farm-to-table ethos.

Image 5: This piece features a black-and-white line sketch of a person, likely Alice Waters. The individual is portrayed with short to medium-length swept-back hair and a composed expression, dressed in a collared shirt or jacket. The sketch is clean and minimalist, with "Sustainable Gastronomy" alongside a green clover logo in the lower-left corner, and the initials "AMW" in the lower-right. The sketch is minimalistic, using clean black lines against a plain white background. The figure's features are detailed yet understated, emphasizing a sense of simplicity. The vibrant green clover logo really brightens up the otherwise black-and-white image, emphasizing the theme of sustainability. Plus, the initials "AMW" tucked in the corner give it a personal touch, turning it into a heartfelt nod to Alice Waters' impact on sustainable gastronomy.

6.3 Discourse Historical Analysis of the Instagram post

Layer of Context: Power and the International Food Movement: The discussion of ethical gastronomy and sustainability is becoming more and more entangled with international power dynamics. A leading figure in this field, Alice Waters, deftly negotiates these complexities by observing what Fairclough (1995) calls the "naturalisation" of ideologies, the process by which prevailing cultural norms are accepted as common sense. She is in harmony with alternative food networks (AFNs), which oppose industrial farming, in her support of organic, regional food. But these movements frequently re-inscribe elitism by advocating consumption patterns that are mainly available to the wealthy, as Guthman (2003) contends. The discursive site where these power dynamics are negotiated is Waters' Instagram, which is visually and textually appealing to simplicity, natural beauty, and artisanal food.

Building Authority and Ethos through Text and Visual Discourse: Sitting outdoors in a setting that evokes genuineness and a pastoral ideal, Waters is embraced by organic vibrancy and rustic elegance in the first image. This context is consistent with Bourdieu's (1984) idea of "cultural capital," according to which aesthetic sensibilities are not objective but rather socially coded markers of socioeconomic status. The poised and refined way Waters presents herself—in casual yet tasteful attire—reinforces her authority in the lifestyle industry and the validity of her food philosophy from a moral standpoint. According to Allen (2004), there is a connection between this visual narrative and historical depictions of the American agrarian ideal. These depictions have frequently helped to hide the sexism and racism that are inherent in the food system.

Subtly bolstering Waters' privileged position within a complex power structure, the depiction of idyllic simplicity masks the larger global inequalities associated with food production and distribution.

Recontextualization and the Semiotic Nature of Brands: Wodak and Reisigl (2001) coined the term "recontextualization" to describe the process of incorporating older discourses into new contexts. The second image, which features a quote graphic with the tagline "Sustainable Gastronomy," serves this purpose. At this point, a person's love of cooking becomes an ethical stance. In keeping with the "moralisation of taste" described by Johnston and Baumann (2015), the minimalist design and green clover logo indicate environmentally conscious branding. Ethical consumption is portrayed as desirable, fashionable, and elite by this aesthetic choice. Using semiotic resources, the visual content constructs a "green" identity through repeated emphasis on minimalism, purity, and organic vibrancy. The neoliberal belief that people's consumption decisions alone can resolve systemic environmental and health crises is what Julie Guthman (2011) calls "healthism" and it demands a critical examination of this discourse. Waters runs the danger of adding to this depoliticised narrative through her progressive writing, which portrays food ethics as an issue of individual virtue rather than a collective fight.

Symbolic Capital and Gastronomic Representation: Barthes (1972) would describe the third image as a "mythologization" of food; it depicts a verdant green soup with delicate garnishing. The picture makes eating look like a sophisticated performance where aesthetics play a major role in upholding ethics. The rich colour palette and white bowl emphasise the symbolic value of organic food by signalling freshness and purity. However, neoliberal food politics—in which authenticity and sustainability are turned into commodities for commercial gain—is intricately linked to this portrayal (DeLind, 2011). Visual discourse like this subtly promotes one kind of sustainable living—one that is frequently exclusive—through a strong emotional appeal. Food deserts and economic inequality disproportionately affect marginalised communities, making this beautiful and ethical food rarely accessible (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011).

The Validity of Institutions and the Beauty of Space: The fourth image firmly establishes Waters' ethos with its depiction of Chez Panisse surrounded by verdant surroundings and rustic architecture. Rootedness and locality are fundamental AFN values, and the picture visually embodies them. This aesthetic of space-making evokes what Gieryn (2000) terms "place-making," the

process by which a specific location becomes a symbol of cultural and moral authority. Still, it's a selective depiction that leaves out the larger socioeconomic systems that support these establishments, such as the restaurant industry's labour hierarchies and the international supply chains that are frequently required to achieve consumer expectations.

Personal Legacies and Iconography: As an iconographic condensation of her brand, the fifth image is a minimalist sketch of Waters with "Sustainable Gastronomy" and her initials. By fusing her individuality with her ideological purpose, Waters becomes a symbol of the movement through this stylised portrayal. The image's understated beauty belies its persuasive power: it elevates Waters to the status of a gastronomic philosophy moral compass, not merely a chef or educator. The importance of collective action and structural critique could be overshadowed by this individualisation of sustainable ethics. The "ethical entrepreneur" becomes a stand-in for deeper, systemic reform, according to Chatterton and Pickerill (2010). This tension is portrayed by Waters's representation, which shows how charismatic individuals can drive political agendas to the sidelines.

6.4 Caption Analysis

Validity of Institutions and Symbolic Assets: Using the MICHELIN Green Star as an example, the caption taps into what Bourdieu (1984) calls "symbolic capital"—the prestige of an institution that can transform cultural power into greater social and political clout. Referring to Chez Panisse as a "temple of Californian cuisine" elevates the restaurant to the status of a sacred place, making it a destination for cultural and ethical pilgrims. This is in line with the idea put out by Fairclough (1995) of interdiscursivity, in which the subject's moral standing is elevated within a secular domain by borrowing metaphors from religion and ethics.

Strengthening Conversations on Sustainability: A deliberate use of positive self-presentation is shown by the focus on regenerative agriculture, local sourcing within 50 miles, and minimal landfill waste (Wodak, 2001). These word choices place Waters and Chez Panisse in the context of worldwide ethical eating trends while also building a story of environmental virtue. As Guthman (2003) warns, these alignments may misrepresent sustainability as a lifestyle choice for the elite rather than a systemic necessity, which could obfuscate issues of class access and labour.

Ethos Expansion via Interaction with Society and Politics: Waters' impact goes beyond the culinary realm into civic and educational spheres as the caption moves from restaurant practice to educational activism, mentioning the

Edible Schoolyard and Chez Panisse Foundation. The incorporation of Waters' culinary philosophy into larger social discourses like food education and environmental justice exemplifies recontextualization (Wodak and Reisigl, 2001). Waters' status as a moral leader in the worldwide sustainability movement is further solidified by the caption.

Emotional and Convincing Oratory: "For our future, it is critical to be connected with nature," the quote said. "It's not just an option, it's an imperative"—aims to mobilise emotional resonance and ethical urgency, grounded in pathos, as stated by Aristotle (quoted in Kennedy, 2007). Such wording is characteristic of what Chouliaraki (2006) calls "cosmopolitan compassion," in which universal solidarity is fostered using abstract ethical claims, frequently without resolving the underlying structural injustices.

Engaging Audiences and Fostering a Culture of Participation: A good example of the kind of participatory discourse prevalent in digital media, the sentence "Swipe right to check out..." encourages engagement and belonging among users (Jenkins, 2006). Although the post originates from a very institutionalised platform, it reflects the discursive strategy of inclusion by recognising photographers and illustrators, which helps to cultivate a collaborative image that is in line with grassroots values (Wodak and Reisigl, 2001).

6.5 Hashtag Analysis

In addition to building ideological alignments, hashtags serve as digital indexical signs, classifying content for discoverability. Hashtags are seen by DHAs as more than just technical tools; they are also acts of discourse positioning that can be performed (Zappavigna, 2015).

Sustainable practices and the MICHELIN Green Star program: These hashtags firmly place the post within a discourse of sustainability that is elite and institutional. Even though they claim to be advocating for ethical cuisine, MICHELIN is strengthening its brand power by linking moral excellence with its own evaluation system. Such practices are indicative of what Johnston and Goodman (2015) term "ethical branding," in which companies use sustainability initiatives to win over sceptical customers and gain respect in the eyes of the general public. According to DeLind (2011), there is a danger that food ethics will become commodified as lifestyle consumption instead of collective praxis due to this dual positioning, which aims to please both sustainability and luxury.

#foodie spot and #chef: The post's algorithmic visibility is increased by using these generic hashtags, but its thematic focus is diluted. In what Freidberg (2004) calls "ethical

globalisation," progressive principles circulate within profit-driven platforms, and their inclusion shows the conflict between targeted advocacy and mass-market appeal.

#photo and the MICHELIN GuideCA: Hashtags make posts more specific to a certain area and person. California is often romanticised for its sustainable innovations, and #MICHELINGuideCA places the story within that terroir. The regional perspective in this discussion adds to the "Californian exceptionalism" myth in the realm of food (Guthman, 2011), which downplays the racial and socioeconomic inequalities that impact land access and food equity in the state.

The hashtags combine personal principles, official power, and local pride to form a multi-faceted discursive identity. By influencing how people perceive the post and bringing its message into line with certain political and social ideals, they perform dual marketing and ideological purposes. But they also help make sustainability a fetish, replacing critical analyses of systemic food injustice with more superficial, aestheticised content (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011).

VII. POST 3



Fig.7.1 Collage composed of screenshots from "[Since its grand opening in 2018, @atomixnyc has received numerous accolades](#)" by [atomixnyc] [Instagram], [6 April 2024]

7.1 Description of the account and the post

The post features ten photos from @atomixnyc's Instagram account, which boasts an impressive 90.7K followers, reflecting its popularity and the attention it garners, likely due to the restaurant's stellar reputation and accolades. Interestingly, the account showcases only nine stories, emphasizing a brand-focused approach that gives off an air of exclusivity. The profile bio highlights the restaurant's

owners, Chefs Junghyun and Ellia Park, along with their other ventures (@atoboynyc and @naro.nyc) and the restaurant's location. The selected post features sleek, simple images that highlight the dishes, the interior design, and behind-the-scenes moments, showcasing a commitment to modernity and sophistication that aligns perfectly with Atomix's fine-dining concept.

7.2 Visual Description

Image 1: The way this meal is presented has an earthy vibe that really connects it to its surroundings. With elements like moss, wooden bowls, and beautiful garnishes, it strikes a perfect balance between rustic charm and culinary skill. Picture a small, boat-shaped dish nestled in a wooden bowl lined with moss. Inside, you'll find carefully sliced fish (or a similar protein), sprinkled with black seasoning and delicate green leaves. The display beautifully blends natural and artistic elements.

Image 2: This image captures the essence of professional synergy and friendship. The neutral background really makes their coordinated outfits and gestures pop, reflecting a shared vision and harmonious collaboration. Two individuals dressed in black stand close together. The man, with a warm smile, sports short, purple-dyed hair and light facial hair. The woman, with her dark hair tied back, exudes understated elegance in a high-neck sweater.

Image 3: This dish emphasizes purity, balance, and high-quality ingredients, showcasing a simple yet sophisticated presentation. The blend of neutral tones with bold accents conveys a modern yet timeless elegance. On pristine white ceramic plates, a beautifully arranged dish features a core protein adorned with golden crispy garnishes, a yellow sauce, and delicate white edible flowers. Fresh green herbs add a touch of vibrancy.

Image 4: The simple presentation and harmonious color palette of this dish embody fine dining. It celebrates texture and subtlety, showcasing an artistic approach to cuisine. On a dark brown plate, thin, translucent orange slices are layered over a creamy white sauce, with crumb-like textures scattered throughout to add complexity to the plating.

Image 5: This avant-garde dish highlights the art of molecular gastronomy. The striking color contrasts and innovative plating reflect a commitment to culinary artistry and precision. In the center of a sleek black bowl filled with vibrant green liquid sits a square-shaped object. This square has a textured surface, topped with a smooth green layer adorned with cheerful yellow blooms and lush green leaves.

Image 6: A simple area features beige ribbed walls and lofty ceilings, with natural light streaming in through rectangular skylights. The modern elegance is highlighted by a dark gray sofa and abstract ottomans, complemented by a stylish black staircase and a sculptural seat. This setting showcases seasonal ingredients and visual diversity, capturing the essence of fine dining. Each meal tells a story of creativity and a deep connection to nature.

Image 7: A black stone table is adorned with an array of gourmet dishes. Highlights include grilled fish on a smooth puree, scallop shells garnished in a rustic style, and vibrant salads embellished with edible flowers. The color palette ranges from earthy tones to bright greens and yellows.

Image 8: Designed for communal dining and seamless interaction, this space embodies modern luxury. Warm lighting enhances the natural wood tones, creating an inviting atmosphere for guests. A cozy, warmly lit area dominated by wood features an open kitchen at the back, centred around a stone countertop with soft cushioned chairs. Stainless steel elements add a touch of utility to the welcoming environment.

Image 9: With its rich appearance and intricate details, this dessert is the epitome of high cuisine. Focusing on precision and elegance, the monochromatic color scheme creates a striking visual impact. Image: A dessert presented in a matte black bowl, featuring a spherical, textured white component drizzled with golden caramel. Surrounding the dessert are decorative black rolling elements with marble patterns.

Image 10: The dishes are presented in a rustic yet elegant way that really highlights their freshness and seasonal ingredients. Each component reflects a sense of refinement and a love for organic materials. Nestled among decorative grains or wheat, a scallop shell cradles delicately sliced shellfish. The setup includes a bowl of vibrant red-yellow relish, a small, stacked dish, and colorful salads. Seared protein drizzled with green sauce adds a charming rustic-modern twist.

7.3 Discourse-Historical Analysis of the post

The post in question reveals the tensions between authenticity, commodification, and the impact of the internet, all while showcasing the evolution of culinary traditions in the global fine-dining landscape.

Culinary Commodification and Cultural Representation: The Instagram images beautifully blend the old with the new, pairing simple plating techniques with rustic elements like moss, grains, and wooden surfaces. This visual style aligns perfectly with modern cuisine, as chefs intentionally craft visual narratives that resonate with elite tastes while maintaining a sense of authenticity (Bourdieu 67).

Incorporating Korean cooking methods into a fine-dining framework exemplifies cultural commodification—essentially reinterpreting traditional dishes to meet Western fine-dining expectations.

As Sousa et al. (“The paradox of Authenticity”³¹⁹) point out, highlighting local food traditions in global dining spots serves as both a form of cultural recognition and a way to reframe those traditions, where authenticity is either preserved or tweaked to fit current culinary trends. Additionally, this post delves into the idea of “gastro-nationalism,” where national dishes become powerful symbols of identity in fiercely competitive global markets (DeSoucey 433).

The balance between accessibility and exclusivity. The post’s emphasis on luxury, uniqueness, and meticulous craftsmanship reinforces the hierarchical nature of fine dining. By presenting Korean food as elevated or modern, the discussion aligns with Western culinary norms that prioritize taste, precision, and artistic presentation (Johnston and Baumann “Foodies: Democracy and Distinction” 132). This approach subtly supports cultural gatekeeping, where fine-dining establishments, rather than everyday food culture, control access to authentic culinary experiences. At the same time, the inclusion of community elements—like open kitchens, shared dining areas, and interactive service—hints at a thoughtful move towards inclusivity. While fine dining has traditionally relied on exclusivity to maintain its status, contemporary gourmet restaurants are increasingly adding interactive features to engage guests more directly (Pietrykowski 256). As Bae and Jeon (“Luxury Dining and Social Signalling” p.147) argue, the fine-dining experience is more than just a meal; it’s like stepping into a performance where diners participate in a ritual that showcases cultural capital, going beyond just the food itself. By immersing themselves in this beautifully crafted culinary narrative, consumers reinforce their status within the global food hierarchy.

Food as a Digital Consumptive Visual Object: Food has evolved into something we consume not just for nourishment but also as a visual and aspirational object, largely thanks to social media (McDonnell “Visual Consumption in the Digital Age” p.112). The concept of “visual hunger” illustrates how seeing food images on platforms like Instagram can spark cravings, heighten sensory expectations, and influence consumer behavior (Spence et al. “Visual Hunger” p.57). An Instagram post often features high contrast, meticulously arranged food photos designed to grab attention, ensuring that the visual allure takes precedence over the actual eating experience. Moreover, Instagram fosters a culture of conspicuous consumption, where individuals select dining experiences

to project an idealized lifestyle (Siepmann “Instagram and the Curation of Digital Identity” 412). This aligns with Baudrillard's (99) idea that consumer society thrives on symbols and images rather than basic needs. In this context, the act of visually savoring a dish becomes just as significant as the act of eating it.

Modernity's Stories and Chefs' Role in Them: Chef portraits of Chefs Junghyun and Ellia Park, and personalized hospitality further emphasize the evolving role of chefs as creative visionaries and cultural ambassadors. In the past, cooks were often stuck in labor-intensive roles within rigid kitchen hierarchies; however, today's culinary landscape increasingly portrays them as artistic creators (Lastariwati et al. 94). This shift can be traced back to Auguste Escoffier, who revolutionized kitchen operations by introducing the brigade system—a structured hierarchy that still exists in modern cooking (Salsabila and Jony “Kitchen Hierarchy”, 2020 p.211). By tapping into this digital stratification, Instagram positions chefs as symbols of innovation, sophistication, and global acclaim. Additionally, Instagram's verification system reinforces power structures within the culinary industry. The blue checkmark distinguishes established chefs from lesser-known figures, signifying authenticity and trustworthiness (Vaidya et al. “Does being verified make you” p. 272). This digital endorsement illustrates how online and offline hierarchies interact in today's culinary discussions, reflecting traditional culinary awards.

How Instagram Influences Consumer Buying Behavior: The process of making a purchase is a cognitive journey where consumers transition from awareness to action, driven by aesthetic appeal, perceived quality, and social validation (Indika and Jovita “The Digital Shift in Consumer Behaviour” 109). When it comes to this process, there are a few key elements to keep in mind: first, seek out more information about the products. Next, align the product with your personal tastes and individuality. Also, consider making a purchase based on social cues and visual signals. Hartanto and Haryanto (“Understanding Consumer Buying” p.112) identify four main indicators of buying interest: 1. Transactional Interest: Your likelihood of making a purchase. 2. Reference Interest: Your tendency to recommend a product to others. 3. Preference Interest: A strong inclination towards a specific brand. 4. Exploratory Interest: The desire to gather more information before buying. High-quality images, endorsements from influencers, and user-generated content on Instagram like this post really highlight these trends. Beautifully curated dining experiences draw in consumers, often placing aesthetics above traditional factors like price or nutritional value (Foster 78)✂

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in our digital food consumption: In today's world, FOMO has become a significant driver of how we engage with content and such posts create FOMO amongst the users. Przybylski et al. (321) describe FOMO as “a pervasive anxiety that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent.” This anxiety keeps people glued to social media, influencing how they interact with online food content. Research indicates that people often experience FOMO when they come across visually appealing food or exclusive dining events on Instagram (Rifkin et al. “FOMO and Impulse Buying” p. 143). This urge leads to impulsive eating, as users prioritize visually stunning food to stay in the loop. Moreover, there are noticeable trends where individuals choose food products based more on their shareability than their personal taste (Wai and Osman “Conspicuous Consumption” p.198). The broader implications of this behavior particularly touch on issues like food waste and ethical consumerism. As noted by Lahath et al. (“The Social Media Influence” p.231), the pursuit of “instagrammable” food can promote unhealthy eating habits, where visual appeal takes precedence over mindful consumption.

7.4 Caption Analysis

The caption cleverly references prestigious accolades and rankings—think Michelin stars, The World's 50 Best Restaurants, and James Beard nominations—to place Atomix within the global fine-dining scene. The term “New Korean” acts as a bridge, connecting traditional Hansik with a modern, worldwide culinary identity. This situates Atomix in a historical narrative where Korean cuisine evolves with a growing institutional awareness (Sousa et al., “Cultural Adaptation” 2020). Mentioning esteemed culinary schools like Les Grandes Tables du Monde and notable figures such as Chef Junghyun Park and Ellia Park adds to Atomix's credibility in the realm of global gastronomy (Johnston & Baumann, “Spectacular Foodscapes” 2015).

Power Relations and Cultural Portrayal: The caption positions Atomix as a beacon of Korean cuisine, challenging the Eurocentric dominance often seen in high gastronomy (DeSoucey, 2010). By incorporating Korean terminology (like “Hansik”) and highlighting unique, handcrafted dishes, the restaurant is framed within an authentic yet cosmopolitan context. Presenting Korean food in a fine-dining atmosphere exemplifies culinary commercialization, where aligning with Western gastronomic standards helps local traditions gain recognition (Bourdieu, 1984).

Linguistic Techniques

(a) Lexical Decisions: By strategically employing language that conveys prestige (terms like "boundaries," "global perspective," and "new vision"), the caption positions Atomix as a trailblazer rather than a traditionalist (Baudrillard, 1998). By using praise and a touch of fancy language—like "one of the finest" and "world-renowned"—Atomix asserts its influence in the fine-dining world (Bae & Jeon, "Luxury Dining" 2021). (b) Descriptive imagery: The lively descriptions in the caption—think "dark stones, calm earth tones" and "elegant bar"—capture the audience's attention beyond just taste, crafting a visually rich experience. This emphasis on textures and atmosphere aligns perfectly with Instagram's culture of visual consumption, where dining becomes an artistic and sensory celebration (Spence et al., "Eating with eyes" 2016). (c) Active Role Chef Junghyun Park and Ellia Park are portrayed as dynamic agents of change, working to elevate Korean cuisine on the global stage. By tailoring their contributions, the caption highlights culinary authorship, a hallmark of fine dining (Lastariwati et al., 2019). 4. Cultural Narratives The caption weaves a narrative of cultural blending, where contemporary techniques breathe new life into traditional Korean cooking. This aligns with Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality, where authenticity is curated for consumption and status (Baudrillard, 1998). By reimagining tradition through innovation, the message makes Korean cuisine attractive to a global fine-dining audience and secures its place in haute cuisine (Sousa et al., "Cultural Adaptation" 2020). 5. Engagement and Social Dynamics In today's dining landscape, which emphasizes connection and experience, Atomix's caption highlights hospitality as a core aspect of its brand (Pietrykowski, 2018). By featuring Junghyun and Ellia Park in Les Grandes Tables du Monde, this act of inclusion signifies a shift in culinary appreciation that moves beyond Eurocentric views.

7.5 Hashtag Analysis

No Hashtag Strategy: The Prestige of Absence

Choosing not to use hashtags is a deliberate choice that aligns with the principles of luxury brand identity (Guerrero, 2022). Atomix stands out by steering clear of mass marketing, influencer promotions, and the typical algorithm-driven reach that often comes with hashtags. Instead, it relies on its established reputation, word-of-mouth referrals, and direct engagement with a discerning audience (Bae & Jeon, "Luxury Dining" 2021).

The Role of Exclusivity in Social Media Branding

Luxury brands, including high-end restaurants, often avoid hashtags to create an aura of scarcity and uniqueness (Fielding, 2023). Atomix opts for carefully curated content, prestigious partnerships, and visually compelling

storytelling to foster genuine engagement rather than relying on algorithmic visibility tactics. This approach resonates with Baudrillard's concept of symbolic capital, where exclusivity itself becomes a coveted asset (Baudrillard, 1998).

Visibility vs. Authenticity: Atomix prioritizes depth over mere visibility (Siepmann, "Conspicuous Consumption" 2022), differentiating itself from influencer-led dining events that thrive on hashtag engagement. Atomix cultivates a highly selective audience by foregoing hashtags, reinforcing its status as a cultural and culinary authority rather than just another viral trend.

VIII. POST 4



Fig.8.1 Collage composed of screenshots from "🍣% SUSHI IKKO (Sapporo) || 鮨一幸(札幌)" by [Andrew Gyokudari]. [Instagram], [28 July 2024].

8.1 Description of the Instagram account and the post

The selected post comes from @andrew_gyokudari's Instagram account. In the realms of fine dining and Japanese cuisine, this meticulously curated and impactful Instagram account radiates authority and authenticity. With a follower count of 42.9K, it caters to a specialized audience of food enthusiasts and industry professionals, emphasizing quality over quantity. His impressive accolades, including a third-place ranking from OAD (Opinionated About Dining) and his role as a judge for the "World's Top 10 Restaurants," further bolster his reputation and influence in the fine dining scene. The account features posts that likely showcase fine dining experiences, collaborations with renowned chefs, and insights into high-end products, blending Japanese cultural traditions with global culinary perspectives.

Photo 1: The first image shows two pieces of sushi topped with sea urchin (uni), captured in close-up on an Instagram account managed by @andrew_gyokudari. The uni, a

brilliant orange and creamy delicacy, rests atop small rice balls wrapped in seaweed, or nori.

Photo 2: Continuing from the same Instagram post, this image presents a unique type of sushi—grilled black throat sea perch (nodoguro) served over rice. It's beautifully arranged on a rustic, textured ceramic platter, with the fish appearing slightly seared and garnished with a green topping, likely wasabi.

8.2 Visual Description

The first picture highlights a striking sea urchin sushi (uni gunkan) displayed on a clean, simple hardwood board. The vibrant orange of the sea urchin stands out beautifully against the deep black of the seaweed. The minimalist presentation emphasizes simplicity.

In the second image, a slice of grilled black throat sea perch sushi is elegantly presented on a handcrafted ceramic plate with interesting textures. The lightly seared fish enhances the artisanal quality and attention to detail in the dish, showcasing its golden-brown finish.

8.3 Discourse Historical Analysis of the post

Globalization and Commodification of Sushi: As seen in discussions on social media, the globalization of food has led to the blending and commercialization of traditional culinary practices. This post dives into the socioeconomic and psychological impacts of culinary stories shared on social media, sitting right at the crossroads of commercial influence and cultural authenticity. The post points out premium ingredients in Japanese cuisine, particularly focusing on uni (sea urchin) and nodoguro (blackthroat seaperch). By targeting customers who have some extra cash to spend and a taste for fine dining, the selection of these high-end ingredients elevates the dining experience into a top-tier culinary adventure. According to social identity theory, people tend to make choices about their actions and tastes based on the aspirational groups they want to be part of, aiming to shape their desired social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979). In this light, Instagram users who engage in status consumption deliberately select their materials to project exclusivity and prestige (Han et al. 2010). The visual representation of high-end dining reinforces cultural capital, where food experiences symbolize social distinctions (Bourdieu 1984). However, as Yang, Xun et al. (2016) point out, luxury dining can lose its exclusivity when it becomes too accessible, prompting status-conscious consumers to seek out new ways to stand out.

Visual Rhetoric and Food Aestheticization: The visual elements of the post emphasize craftsmanship and uniqueness, appealing to those who appreciate carefully curated experiences. The use of natural tones, like ceramic

plates and wooden surfaces, aligns with minimalist aesthetics and the "clean eating" trend, suggesting purity and artisanal quality. Especially on Instagram, social media platforms underscore the significance of visual appeal in food consumption, fueling the trend of "visual hunger," where people often replace actual meals with stunning food photos (Spence et al. "Visual Hunger" 2016). The emphasis on presentation and plating suggests that food transcends mere sustenance; it becomes a form of art and performance, blurring the lines between dining and visual spectacle. When it comes to intertextuality and cultural reinterpretation, the meal is deeply rooted in its cultural origins, using Japanese culinary terms like "uni" and "nodoguro." Yet, the post also recontextualizes Japanese cuisine for a global audience, showcasing sushi in a digitally savvy environment. Often, culinary authenticity is commodified, transforming local traditions into marketable experiences for affluent customers (de St. Maurice 2018). This trend reflects the broader phenomenon of culinary globalization, where food adapts to suit international tastes while still preserving its essence. The historical backdrop of the sushi restaurant's relocation to Ginza highlights shifting culinary power dynamics. Tokyo has long been seen as the heart of Edo-mae sushi, but this move positions local sushi chefs as innovative players in the fine dining arena. This aligns with Harrington et al. (2013), who note that Michelin ratings and global travel have reshaped perceptions of culinary excellence.

As for the role of social media in food discussions, the Instagram landscape of 2020 has amplified the impact of social media on food discourse. An account's verified status enhances the author's authority in the food blogging realm, reinforcing influencer culture as a key player in shaping culinary trends (Murtarelli et al. "Digital Food Communication" 2022). The inclusion of Taylor Swift's songs also cleverly ties into pop culture, appealing to millennials and Gen Z. These groups increasingly appreciate the blending of food, music, and lifestyle branding, reinforcing the idea that fine dining is about rich, multi-sensory experiences rather than just flavor (Spence et al., "Eating with our Eyes" 2016).

Social media and Consumption: Social media has a way of promoting flashy consumption, where people showcase experiences instead of material possessions to enhance their social standing (Bronner and de Hoog "Conspicuous Consumption" 2018). The carefully curated quality of food images like the ones posted in this post, inspire viewers to aspire to a certain lifestyle and encourages them to mimic high-status activities (Roy Chaudhri et al. "Conspicuous Consumption" 2011). However, this behavior can lead to psychological pressures, including the fear of missing out

(FOMO)—a phenomenon where individuals feel compelled to participate in trend-driven events to maintain their social relevance (Argan & Argan 2020). The term "fomsumerism" captures the intersection of consumption and social comparison, highlighting how users often feel more discontent when they see carefully crafted lifestyles (Przybylski et al. 2013). Beyond its psychological impact, social media promotes visually appealing yet impractical consumption habits, which in turn exacerbates food waste issues. Research shows that food waste at the retail-consumer level has significant financial and environmental consequences; digital platforms contribute to sustaining unsustainable consumption patterns (Spang et al. 2019; Thyberg and Tonjes 2016). Highlighting the ethical dimensions of food representation on social media, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 emphasizes the need to reduce global food waste by 50% by 2030 (United Nations 2018).

Prestige and Culinary Narratives: By reiterating the concept of scarcity to enhance the allure of dining experiences, the post points to Michelin recognition, OAD rankings, and the challenges of securing reservations. In the realm of fine dining, word-of-mouth, review ratings, and Michelin stars significantly influence consumer choices, shaping perceptions of exclusivity (Chiang, Hung and Guo, Wen 2021). Kiatkawsin and Han (2019) argue that awareness of Michelin ratings enhances the allure of luxury brands, which in turn boosts demand among those who prioritize status. The journey of Sushi Ikko illustrates this transformation, showcasing its evolution from a local business to a high-end dining experience. This aligns with the views of Svejnova et al. (2007), who suggest that shifts in culinary hierarchy are linked to the rise of fine-dining venues.

8.4 Caption Analysis:

The caption and hashtags in @andrew_gyokudari's Instagram post employ strategic linguistic and discursive techniques to engage diverse audiences, emphasizing the commercialization of local sushi within a global fine-dining context.

Two languages used in the caption and representation of culture: The thoughtful dual-audience approach in the caption, which incorporates both English and Japanese, really stands out. While the English translations make it easier for international viewers to connect, the Japanese phrases, like "鮨 ONE幸" (Sushi Ikko), add a layer of authenticity that resonates with locals familiar with the nuances of high-end sushi culture. This bilingual tactic aligns with previous studies on language use in digital spaces, where multilingual subtitles help create a global yet culturally rich business identity (Lee, Jennifer 2021). In

discussions about food, bilingualism plays a key role in the global spread of sushi, transforming a deeply rooted culinary tradition into an international sensation. By weaving Japanese terms into English descriptions—like "uni" and "nodoguro"—we see what Heller ("Language, Capitalism and Colonialism" 2013) calls "linguistic commodification," where language itself becomes a marketing asset that enhances perceived authenticity.

Power Dynamics in Cooking and Regional Identity: The description positions Sushi Ikko as an emerging star in Japan's high-end sushi scene, shifting the culinary spotlight from Tokyo to local eateries. This challenges the traditional hierarchy of sushi restaurants, where Tokyo-based chefs have long held the global stage (Ikezawa, 2019). The mention of Junya Kudo's move to Ginza highlights the fluid nature of culinary influence and reflects a broader trend in fine dining, where top chefs gain recognition by relocating to urban hubs (Johnston & Baumann, "Spectacular Landscapes" 2015). The caption really highlights what makes Sushi Ikko special, mentioning phrases like "Michelin two stars" and "reservation difficulties" to emphasize its exclusive vibe. It points out the irony of authenticity in fine dining, where traditional sushi techniques and local sourcing are packaged for a global audience, creating a tension between preserving cultural heritage and commercializing it (Beriss & Sutton, 2007).

When it mentions the "final visit before relocation," the caption adds a historical layer that makes the experience feel even more significant. This ties into the broader discussion about culinary temporality, where the idea of "last-chance dining" boosts interest (Finkelstein, 2019). The narrative of Sushi Ikko "raising the level of regional sushi" connects the restaurant to larger historical trends in gastronomy, where innovation and accessibility are constantly reshaping fine dining (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2019).

On a personal note, saying "excited to see what transpires during Sushi Ikko 3.0" shows a genuine connection and helps weave a community-focused story. By sharing personal insights, the article shifts from a straightforward analysis to a more engaging narrative style, reflecting current trends in digital food discussions where audience engagement is heavily influenced by personal experiences and subjective authenticity (Murtarelli et al., "The Impact of Digital Image based features" 2022).

8.5 Hashtag Analysis

On social media hashtags they act like indexing systems that enhance the visibility of the posts (Zappavigna, "Searchable Talk" 2018). The hashtags used in this article are intentionally crafted to mix local authenticity, global

reach, and visual appeal, which boosts interaction and fosters a sense of exclusivity.

A. Bilingual and Contextual Hashtags

#鮨一幸 (Sushi Ikko), #予約困難店 (Reservation difficulty): These Japanese-language hashtags resonate with local followers, food critics, and anyone who understands the exclusivity of high-end sushi spots, firmly rooting the post in its local scene. Customized hashtags like Andrew's Sushiikko and Andrew's Sapporo help create a unique brand identity, transforming the poster into a digital culinary authority. Research shows that branded hashtags can enhance audience loyalty and engagement by catering to niche communities (Page, 2012).

B. Global Discourse on Food

#sushi, #sushigram, #sushilovers: These hashtags ensure that the post is discoverable to international audiences by placing it within the broader global conversation about sushi. #michelintwostars, #oadtop100, #gastronomy: Highlighting awards and rating systems emphasizes the culinary credibility that's so important in online food culture. Once a traditional guide, the Michelin Guide has transformed into a digital currency where online reviews and social media buzz shape how consumers perceive dining options (Chiang, Evelyn and Guo, Yushan "Understanding the Role the Michelin Stars" 2021).

C. Sensual and visual appeal: Hashtags like #artofplating, #wonderfulcuisine, #gastroart help the photo align with Instagram's visually driven algorithm, where food is not just about taste but also about how it looks. The rising importance of food porn images in influencing dining choices highlights how visual allure often overshadows nutritional value or the actual experience of eating (Çelik et al., "The Effects of Consumers FOMO" 2019). #foodporn, #foodgasm, #eggeats: These exaggerated hashtags tap into the pleasure-seeking side of food culture, reinforcing Instagram's role in promoting consumption narratives centred around enjoyment.

D. Engaging with Broader Culinary Trends (#japanesefood, #instafood, #foodiegram): These hashtags connect the post to wider movements celebrating Japanese cuisine within global food photography trends. #eattheworld, #gastronomia: These tags frame sushi as an artistic and cultural experience rather than just a meal, fostering cultural exchange and culinary exploration. This emphasis on cuisine over mere consumption reflects the increasing intellectualization of food, where culinary enjoyment is seen as a sophisticated cultural practice (Johnston & Baumann, "Spectacular Landscapes" 2015).

IX. POST 5



Fig.9.1 Collage composed of screenshots from "Mixing it up this weekend with a star prediction in Brooklyn!" created by [thestarcrawl]. [Instagram], [14 October 2024].

9.1 Description of the post and the Instagram account

Originally shared by the Instagram account @thestarcrawl, this image is a collage created from screenshots of a selected reel. This unique narrative follows Ellen Hunter as she embarks on a journey to dine at every Michelin-starred restaurant in New York City. With 451 posts and 24.6K followers, the account offers a blend of personal storytelling, detailed reviews, and stunning food photography. Ellen's bio, which playfully states she's "not an inspector," emphasizes her independence and positions her as a relatable guide rather than a formal critic. Her content makes fine dining accessible and appealing to her audience by striking a balance between professional aesthetics and genuine reflections. Through her connections to her jewelry business and YouTube channel, she actively engages with over 5,000 accounts, fostering a sense of community and expanding her brand identity. Food enthusiasts will find @thestarcrawl to be an intriguing and inspiring space, thanks to this unique combination of personal passion and thoughtful curation.

In this Instagram reel, a passionate food critic dives into the dining experience at Mason's Son, a Brooklyn restaurant that's still on the hunt for its first Michelin star. The reel artfully showcases close-ups of the chef in action, the inviting atmosphere of the restaurant, and beautifully plated dishes. Among the highlights are:

- A sophisticated appetizer featuring foie gras and pear canapé
- A luxurious cauliflower velouté topped with caviar
- A vibrant octopus dish paired with sweet potato foam
- A meticulously presented black cod, caught fresh from the wild
- Duck that showcases the chef's innovative touch with a house-made koji rub
- A5 Wagyu, described as "melting in the mouth," this exquisite cut of beef

The reel also captures the premium wine pairings, including tailored selections like Montrachet, which elevate the dining experience. For fine dining, the \$125 tasting menu is considered quite reasonable. Soft background music enhances the visuals, adding a touch of elegance. The narrative wraps up with a call to action, urging Michelin to award the restaurant a star, encouraging viewers to pay a visit.

9.2 Visual Description:

In terms of visuals, the Instagram post emphasizes texture, symmetry, and color contrasts, with a simple yet artistic plating style. Each element is thoughtfully highlighted to showcase creativity, like the glistening caviar pearls atop the smooth cauliflower velouté. The ambiance is warm, featuring sophisticated lighting and an industrial-chic interior typical of upscale Brooklyn dining spots. The photos include glimpses of well-dressed chefs behind the scenes and a shot of the influencer enjoying her meal, reinforcing the restaurant's upscale vibe and exclusivity. A close-up of a premium wine bottle, such as Montrachet, is also featured.

9.3 A Historical Discourse Analysis of the Instagram Post

Michelin Star: Building on the established culinary hierarchy, the Instagram post featuring Mason's Son's dream of earning a Michelin star places the restaurant within a global reputation system. The post underscores the wealth, exclusivity, and cultural significance that the Michelin rating system embodies, drawing on the historical ties between fine dining and European aristocracy. In this way, the potential for Michelin recognition serves to enhance Mason's Son's reputation, positioning it within a prestigious culinary landscape and boosting its appeal.

The Michelin Guide has long been seen as a key player in the world of fine dining, shaping restaurant reputations and establishing culinary prestige. Originally launched in France back in 1900 to boost tyre sales and promote car travel, it gradually made its way across Europe, introducing the iconic star-rating system in the 1930s (Harp, 2001). By

the mid-20th century, the Michelin Guide had become synonymous with culinary excellence (Durand et al., 2007). Although it started in Europe, its global influence was solidified in 2005 when it set up its headquarters in New York City. The arrival of Michelin in the U.S. was highly anticipated; as the executive director put it, "New York is the gateway. New York makes you discover other cuisines" (Fabricant, 2005). In its very first year, 39 restaurants earned stars, reinforcing Michelin's dominance in the American market and marking a significant moment in the history of American cuisine (Fabricant, 2005). Research indicates that Michelin stars have gained such power that they sometimes overshadow local critics, like *The New York Times* (Sytsma, Daniel 2012).

The impact of Michelin's presence in New York has truly transformed the city's dining landscape, influencing not just the restaurants themselves but also the entire value network surrounding them. Research shows that restaurants with Michelin stars often receive higher consumer ratings for both ambiance and food quality (Gergaud et al., "The Economic Effects of Michelin Stars" 2015). Additionally, many eateries tweak their menus to align with what Michelin seems to expect (Favaron et al., 2022). However, the repercussions extend far beyond individual establishments. For instance, some businesses struggle to stay afloat as landlords leverage Michelin recognition to justify rising rent prices (Strong, "Why are so many great" 2016). Restaurateur Danny Meyer (2014) noted that the surge of Michelin-rated restaurants in New York contributed to soaring rental costs, forcing some businesses to relocate. Suppliers also gain an advantage as restaurants seek out top-notch ingredients to meet Michelin's standards, further driving up expenses. Plus, having a Michelin star allows staff and chefs to negotiate better job opportunities or higher salaries (Chae et al., "Michelin Star and Employee Wages" 2021). While Michelin stars undoubtedly boost customer traffic and revenue, they also place significant financial and emotional pressure on restaurant owners and their teams. The stress of maintaining a Michelin star can be overwhelming; as Michelin-starred chef Skye Gennell put it, her star feels like a "curse" (Kashner, "The Michelin Star " 2015), highlighting the emotional strain of striving for continuous excellence.

Social Economic Obstacles and the Language of Exclusivity: The Instagram post cleverly uses a specific culinary vocabulary to highlight socioeconomic exclusivity. Terms like "foie gras," "A5 Wagyu," and "premium wine pairing" evoke images of wealth, luxury, and high social standing. When the post refers to the \$125 tasting menu as "relatively accessible," it underscores the irony of fine dining, suggesting that this luxurious

experience is still primarily available to those who can afford it. This choice of words reveals the truth that fine dining has long been a playground for the affluent, perpetuating socioeconomic divides (Bourdieu, 1984). In this context, the language not only reflects culinary elitism but also reinforces cultural capital as a marker of social distinction.

Elegance and Aspirational Branding: The visual presentation of the Instagram post enhances its message of high status. It paints a picture of sophistication, elegance, and exclusivity through carefully selected images of beautifully plated dishes, soft lighting, and stylish industrial interiors. Close-ups of luxurious ingredients like caviar and Montrachet wine showcase the craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail associated with Michelin-starred cuisine. Additionally, the portrayal of chefs in action and the influencer's dining experience invites the audience into an aspirational lifestyle, emphasizing that fine dining is not just about the food; it's also about participating in a prestigious cultural experience.

Appropriation and Commodification of Culture: When the post talks about world cuisine, like foie gras and koji rub, it touches upon a bigger issue of cultural appropriation in fancy dining. These traditional cooking methods and ingredients, often tied to specific cultures and places, get a makeover and are sold to a wealthier crowd. Unfortunately, this often strips away the cultural significance of these elements, turning them into symbols of luxury and status (Lupton, 1996). Fine dining establishments, perhaps without realizing it, contribute to a form of cultural commodification, where the richness of cultural diversity is reduced to just a marketing gimmick aimed at making a profit, all while catering to an elite audience.

Gentrification and Spatial Dynamics: The socioeconomic narrative becomes even more intricate when we consider the restaurant's location in Brooklyn, a place with a rich history of working-class and diverse communities. Upscale spots like Mason's Son in Brooklyn reflect broader gentrification trends, where affluent businesses gradually take over traditional, often minority-owned establishments. The Instagram post subtly highlights the economic and cultural displacement that accompanies culinary gentrification by placing fine dining in a gentrified neighbourhood. This situation brings to light the ongoing struggle in urban areas between preserving cultural heritage and pursuing economic development (Zukin, 2009).

FOMO and Digital Influencer Relationships: By cleverly tapping into FOMO (fear of missing out), the Instagram post encourages viewers to check out Mason's Son while

highlighting its Michelin star accolades. The influencer's presence adds a layer of credibility, positioning them as a go-to authority in the fine dining world. Research on FOMO in digital marketing indicates that appealing to our innate desire for social connection and status can really boost social media engagement (Przybylski et al., 2013). As the post gains traction on social media, it heightens consumer interest, often leading to increased foot traffic and a higher demand for reservations at Michelin-rated restaurants.

9.4 Analysis of a caption and hashtag

The post's aspirational vibe is further amplified by its caption and hashtags. By directly engaging the audience and making them feel like part of an exclusive culinary adventure, the caption adopts a lively and conversational tone. Phrases like "Have you been yet?" and "Worth the simple journey to Brooklyn" serve as a friendly nudge to get involved. The influencer's confident prediction of a Michelin star builds trust and establishes them as a knowledgeable figure in the food scene. As luxury becomes more relatable for aspirational consumers, the emphasis on the "affordable" \$125 tasting menu makes it even more enticing. Interactive phrases like "Give 'em a star!" invite participation and foster a sense of community around the post.

When it comes to boosting the visibility and engagement of a post, hashtags play a crucial role. For instance, #StarPrediction taps into the ongoing conversation about Michelin star speculation, which helps to foster social interaction. On the other hand, #MichelinGuide connects the post to a globally recognized benchmark of culinary excellence. Additionally, hashtags like #OneStar and #BrooklynEats ground the post in the aspirational world of Michelin recognition and Brooklyn's emerging food scene. Meanwhile, #MyStoryWithMichelin links the influencer's personal journey with the Michelin brand, resonating with readers who value storytelling and personal ties to food culture, making the post feel more relatable.

This Instagram post strategically positions Mason's Son as a contender in the elite culinary landscape dominated by the Michelin Guide, utilizing both text and visuals. By harnessing the influence of digital personalities and the prestige of Michelin recognition, the post sheds light on the socio-economic and cultural tensions inherent in fine dining, while also reinforcing existing culinary hierarchies. The Michelin Guide, a key arbiter of culinary excellence, continues to shape public perceptions, restaurant practices, and the availability of high-end dining options. However, its influence extends beyond individual restaurants; it also impacts urban development, market competition, and broader socio-cultural dynamics within the fine dining

realm. In contrast to the elitist tone of this post, other culinary narratives—like those surrounding street food culture—highlight accessibility, cultural diversity, and the role of everyday diners in shaping culinary preferences.

X. CONCLUSION

The Michelin brand is used to show quality, independence, and belonging in a competitive dining scene. The analysis of the posts, suggests that while Instagram makes food culture more open by giving different voices a place to be heard, it also reinforces traditional hierarchies by putting a lot of value on high-end ingredients, fine dining, and status symbols like the Michelin star. This paradox shows how there is a constant struggle between cultural inclusion and socioeconomic exclusion in digital food narratives. It also shows how gentrification and commodification affect American food culture.

The study also shows how digital influencers play a part in shaping these food hierarchies. They often mix personal stories with high-end food to create content that is both inspiring and relatable. This mix of personal branding and food criticism not only changes how people think about fine dining, but it also changes the cultural meaning of it in the post-pandemic era, where digital platforms are very important for keeping brand prestige.

It also shows how powerful symbolic capital is in a world that is becoming more visual and connected. More research could be done in the future to see how these dynamics relate to cultural appropriation, gentrification, and how people's tastes in food are always changing in different U.S. communities.

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Warriors of Light: Healing and Transformation in Harry Potter Series and Shiva Trilogy

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Abstract— The landscape of mental health research has evolved significantly, broadening its scope from a narrow focus on severe psychiatric disorders to a more comprehensive understanding of psychological well-being. This shift recognizes the cumulative impact of seemingly minor emotional challenges, which can escalate into significant mental health concerns over time. Contemporary approaches emphasize the importance of early intervention across the spectrum of psychological experiences, acknowledging that prevention and timely support are crucial for maintaining overall mental wellness. This research presents an in-depth comparative analysis of trauma representation and healing processes in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series and Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy. These influential works, emerging from distinct cultural backgrounds, offer complementary perspectives on trauma recovery. The study explores how these narratives employ their respective magical and mythological frameworks to convey complex psychological concepts accessibly. By examining character development, narrative structures, and cultural contexts, the research illuminates how contemporary fantasy literature serves as a powerful medium for exploring intricate psychological themes. The analysis reveals that while Harry Potter reflects a Western psychological approach emphasizing individual resilience supported by community, the Shiva Trilogy presents an Eastern paradigm integrating personal growth with societal transformation. This comparative study contributes to the growing body of literature on trauma representation in fiction, offering valuable insights for both literary analysis and practical therapeutic applications. It demonstrates how these works bridge diverse cultural approaches to healing, enriching our understanding of trauma processing and recovery across different philosophical traditions.



Keywords— trauma theory, psychological development, comparative literature, healing narratives, cultural perspectives, magical metaphors, mythological frameworks

Origin and Evolution of Trauma

The understanding of psychological trauma has undergone significant evolution since its initial recognition in medical literature. The journey began with early studies focusing on war veterans' "shell shock" during World War I, progressing through various theoretical frameworks to our current comprehensive understanding of trauma's multifaceted nature. This evolution reflects a growing awareness that

trauma exists on a complex spectrum, from severe acute incidents to subtle chronic stressors, all capable of profoundly impacting individual development and social dynamics.

The historical development of trauma theory can be traced through several key phases, each contributing essential insights to our current understanding. Early psychiatric observations of combat veterans revealed patterns of

psychological distress that couldn't be explained by physical injuries alone. This led to the recognition that psychological wounds could be as debilitating as physical ones, fundamentally changing how mental health was understood and treated.

The field expanded significantly with the emergence of psychoanalytic theory, which provided the first systematic framework for understanding how traumatic experiences influence psychological development. Sigmund Freud's work on repression and the unconscious mind laid crucial groundwork for understanding how trauma affects mental processes and behavior patterns. His observations about how traumatic memories might be stored differently than ordinary memories continue to influence contemporary trauma theory.

The mid-20th century brought increased attention to civilian trauma, particularly through studies of Holocaust survivors and their children. This research revealed how trauma could be transmitted intergenerationally, affecting family dynamics and social relationships across generations. The concept of collective trauma emerged, acknowledging that entire communities could be affected by shared traumatic experiences.

Contemporary trauma theory has evolved into a sophisticated framework that recognizes the biological, psychological, and social dimensions of traumatic experience. Modern neuroscience has revealed how trauma affects brain development and function, while social psychology has illuminated its impact on relationships and community dynamics. The field now acknowledges that trauma responses exist on a spectrum, ranging from acute stress reactions to complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The evolution of trauma theory has yielded several profound insights that fundamentally reshape our understanding of psychological responses to adverse experiences. Modern research recognizes that what we often label as trauma responses are actually natural adaptations of the human psyche attempting to cope with abnormal circumstances. Rather than viewing these reactions as pathological, contemporary approaches acknowledge them as the mind's inherent protective mechanisms, even when these adaptations may create challenges in daily functioning.

A crucial understanding that has emerged is the concept of cumulative trauma. While historically, trauma was often associated with single catastrophic events, current research demonstrates that the accumulation of seemingly minor stressors can be equally, if not more, damaging to psychological well-being. This understanding has particular relevance in modern society, where chronic stress and

repeated minor traumas often characterize daily life. The impact of these accumulated experiences can manifest in ways similar to those observed in survivors of single catastrophic events, highlighting the need for comprehensive approaches to trauma treatment.

The role of cultural and social contexts in shaping trauma experiences has become increasingly recognized as fundamental to understanding and treating psychological wounds. Different societies interpret and process traumatic experiences through their unique cultural lenses, influencing both the manifestation of trauma symptoms and the pathways to healing. This recognition has led to more culturally sensitive approaches in trauma treatment, acknowledging that what constitutes effective healing may vary significantly across different cultural contexts.

Perhaps most significantly, current trauma theory emphasizes the interconnected nature of individual and collective healing. Trauma cannot be fully addressed solely at the individual level, as it often exists within broader social and historical contexts. Effective healing requires attention to both personal recovery and the transformation of traumatic social conditions. This dual focus recognizes that individual healing is inherently connected to collective well-being, and that sustainable recovery often requires addressing both dimensions simultaneously. This understanding has profound implications for therapeutic approaches, suggesting the need for interventions that can bridge personal and societal healing processes.

Psychological Trauma in Literature

Harry Potter Series

The wizarding world created by J.K. Rowling presents a unique framework for examining trauma through magical metaphors. While ostensibly a children's series, Harry Potter delves deep into themes of loss, grief, and resilience, offering sophisticated psychological insights through its fantastical elements.

The series begins with foundational trauma - the murder of Harry's parents - and traces its ripple effects through his development. This early loss shapes his character arc and relationships throughout the series. The psychological impact manifests in various ways: his difficulty trusting adults, his intense desire for connection, and his complex relationship with death and sacrifice.

The magical elements of the series serve as powerful metaphors for psychological processes. Dementors, for instance, represent depression and anxiety, literally feeding on happiness and forcing individuals to relive their worst memories. The Patronus charm, a corporeal manifestation of a person's happiest memories and feelings, as a defense against these creatures, symbolizes the development of

psychological resilience and coping mechanisms. The fact that each person's Patronus takes a unique animal form suggests the individualized nature of healing and protective strategies.

The series also explores collective trauma through its depiction of the wizarding world's response to Voldemort's reign of terror. The community's inability to speak his name reflects real-world responses to collective trauma, where avoidance and silence become coping mechanisms. The Ministry of Magic's initial denial of Voldemort's return mirrors societal patterns of trauma denial and suppression.

The educational setting of Hogwarts provides another layer for examining trauma and healing. The school itself functions as both a sanctuary and a battleground, mirroring how trauma survivors often navigate spaces that simultaneously offer safety and trigger painful memories. The Defense Against the Dark Arts curriculum, particularly under competent teachers, serves as a metaphor for developing psychological resilience and coping strategies.

Particularly significant is the formation of Dumbledore's Army, which represents a grassroots approach to healing and empowerment. This student-led group demonstrates how community support and shared purpose can facilitate recovery from trauma. The practical skills taught in these sessions parallel real-world therapeutic techniques, where individuals learn to face their fears in a controlled, supportive environment.

The series explores various manifestations of trauma through its diverse cast of characters. Neville Longbottom's story parallels Harry's in many ways, but his trauma response manifests differently, highlighting how individual personalities and support systems influence recovery. Luna Lovegood's apparent eccentricity can be interpreted as a creative adaptation to social trauma, while Severus Snape's complex character arc demonstrates how unresolved childhood trauma can shape adult behavior patterns.

Shiva Trilogy

The Shiva Trilogy presents a distinct framework for understanding trauma and healing through its integration of Indian mythology and philosophy. Amish Tripathi's reimagining of the divine figure Shiva as a human warrior who achieves godhood through his actions provides a unique lens for examining personal and societal transformation.

The trilogy's setting in ancient India creates a rich backdrop for exploring how cultural and social structures influence trauma and healing. The strict social hierarchies, religious beliefs, and political systems of Meluha serve as both sources of trauma and potential pathways to healing. The concept of karma, central to the narrative, offers a

philosophical framework for understanding how actions and their consequences shape both individual and collective destiny.

Unlike the more individualistic approach seen in Harry Potter, the Shiva Trilogy emphasizes the interconnected nature of personal and societal healing. Shiva's journey from tribal chief to divine figure involves not just personal growth but also challenging and transforming societal structures that perpetuate trauma. The treatment of the Nagas, representing those marked by physical differences, explores how societal rejection and discrimination create collective trauma that requires systemic change to address.

The trilogy's exploration of evil differs significantly from the more straightforward good-versus-evil narrative of Harry Potter. Through Shiva's quest to understand and combat evil, the narrative suggests that trauma often stems from systemic imbalances rather than individual malevolence. This perspective aligns with contemporary trauma theory's recognition of how societal structures can perpetuate psychological harm.

Comparative Analysis: Trauma Representation and Processing

When examining how both series represent and process trauma, several key differences and similarities emerge. Both works acknowledge the profound impact of early childhood trauma on character development, but they approach this theme through different cultural lenses.

In Harry Potter, trauma is often depicted through magical manifestations - Dementors feeding on happiness, Boggarts revealing deepest fears, and Pensieves storing memories. These elements serve as concrete representations of psychological processes, making complex concepts accessible to readers. The series emphasizes individual resilience while highlighting the crucial role of supportive relationships in healing.

The Shiva Trilogy, conversely, presents trauma through philosophical and societal frameworks. Physical deformities become metaphors for social exclusion, while the concept of karma provides a framework for understanding how past actions influence present suffering. The trilogy suggests that true healing requires addressing both individual pain and the societal structures that perpetuate it.

Both series explore how trauma affects leadership and responsibility. Harry's reluctant hero status contrasts with Shiva's more conscious choice to embrace his destined role. This difference reflects distinct cultural perspectives on individual agency versus societal duty in responding to trauma.

1. Individual vs. Collective Trauma Processing

The contrast between individual and collective trauma processing becomes particularly evident in pivotal moments of both series. In Harry Potter, we see this dynamic unfold dramatically during the Dementor attack near the lake in "Prisoner of Azkaban." This scene encapsulates both individual and collective trauma processing: Harry initially faces the Dementors alone, experiencing his most terrible memories - his mother's screams, his father's last words. As Rowling writes, "From far away, he heard screaming, terrible, terrified, pleading screams..." This moment represents individual trauma in its rawest form.

However, the resolution of this scene demonstrates the interplay between individual and collective healing. Harry's ability to cast the Patronus comes not just from his individual strength, but from the accumulated love and support he has received. His success relies on accessing happy memories created with others - flying on his broomstick, friendship with Ron and Hermione, the knowledge that his parents loved him. The Patronus itself, taking the form of his father's Animagus shape, symbolizes how individual healing connects to family and community legacy.

In contrast, the Shiva Trilogy presents trauma processing through a more interconnected lens. When Shiva confronts the deformity of the Nagas, his response isn't purely personal. Tripathi writes of Shiva's realization that the Nagas' condition reflects not individual curse but societal imbalance: "The Nagas weren't evil. They were victims. Victims of a society that had forgotten its dharma." This understanding leads to a broader movement for social change, demonstrating how individual enlightenment catalyzes collective healing.

2. Cultural Frameworks of Healing

The cultural frameworks for healing in both series reveal deeply rooted philosophical differences. Harry Potter's approach to healing often involves direct confrontation with fear and pain, exemplified in Professor Lupin's lessons about Boggarts. "What really finishes a Boggart is laughter," Lupin explains, introducing a Western therapeutic concept of facing and transforming fear through positive reframing.

The series consistently presents healing through practical, tangible actions: chocolate as a remedy for Dementor exposure, specific counter-curses for harmful spells, and the Room of Requirement providing exactly what is needed for healing and growth. This reflects a Western medical model of identifying specific problems and applying targeted solutions.

The Shiva Trilogy, however, approaches healing through more holistic and philosophical frameworks. When Shiva struggles with his role as the Neelkanth, his healing comes

not through specific remedies but through understanding the interconnected nature of existence. Tripathi describes Shiva's revelation: "The universe itself is your guru." This Eastern perspective suggests that healing comes through alignment with universal principles rather than through isolated interventions.

3. Manifestation of Trauma Symptoms

The manifestation of trauma symptoms in both series reveals sophisticated psychological understanding through different metaphorical frameworks. In Harry Potter, the physical and psychological symptoms of trauma are often intertwined with magical phenomena. Consider Harry's recurring nightmares and his scar pain - physical manifestations of psychological wounds that intensify with emotional distress. This connection becomes particularly evident in "Order of the Phoenix" when Harry's mental state directly affects his connection to Voldemort.

The Dementors serve as perhaps the most powerful metaphor for depression and trauma responses in the series. Their ability to force people to relive their worst memories mirrors the intrusive thoughts characteristic of PTSD. When Harry first encounters Dementors, he experiences not just fear but a complete emotional shutdown: the world goes cold, joy seems impossible, and he's forced to relive his mother's death. The visceral nature of these encounters demonstrates how trauma can suddenly overwhelm normal functioning.

Similarly, Harry's difficulty with Occlumency lessons reveals how trauma can make one vulnerable to further psychological harm. His inability to clear his mind and protect himself from Voldemort's intrusions parallels how unprocessed trauma can leave individuals susceptible to emotional manipulation and further psychological damage.

The Shiva Trilogy approaches trauma manifestation through a different lens, often expressing psychological wounds through physical and social metaphors. The Nagas' deformities serve as visible manifestations of societal trauma, while their exile represents the psychological isolation that often accompanies trauma. When Shiva encounters these outcasts, their physical conditions mirror internal struggles with rejection and prejudice.

4. Support Systems and Healing Mechanisms

The role of support systems in trauma recovery is central to both narratives but manifests differently. In Harry Potter, we see the gradual building of a chosen family that becomes crucial to Harry's healing process. The Weasleys, particularly Molly Weasley, provide the nurturing family environment Harry never had. This is powerfully illustrated when Mrs. Weasley's Boggart reveals her greatest fear - seeing her family members dead, including Harry. This

moment demonstrates how genuine love and inclusion can help heal attachment trauma.

Dumbledore's Army represents another crucial support system, showing how shared purpose and mutual support can facilitate healing. When members practice the Patronus Charm together, they're not just learning defensive magic - they're creating a community of healing where individual traumas can be addressed collectively. The Room of Requirement itself becomes a physical manifestation of this safe space needed for recovery.

In contrast, the Shiva Trilogy presents support systems within hierarchical and spiritual frameworks. Shiva's relationship with Sati demonstrates how romantic partnerships can facilitate healing while respecting cultural boundaries. Their connection challenges societal norms while working within traditional frameworks, showing how support systems can both preserve and transform cultural structures.

The guru-shishya relationships in the trilogy offer another model of healing support. When Shiva learns from various teachers, these interactions go beyond mere knowledge transfer - they represent the transmission of wisdom that helps process both personal and collective trauma. This reflects an Eastern understanding of healing as something passed down through established relationships and cultural traditions.

5. Intergenerational Trauma

Both series provide rich explorations of how trauma passes between generations, though they approach this theme through different cultural lenses. In Harry Potter, intergenerational trauma manifests most prominently through family legacies and the lingering effects of the First Wizarding War.

Harry's own trauma isn't just from his parents' death - he inherits the weight of their unfinished battle against Voldemort. This inheritance manifests physically through his scar and psychologically through his connection to Voldemort. The prophecy that shaped his life was set in motion before his birth, demonstrating how previous generations' conflicts can predetermine their children's struggles.

Neville Longbottom's story provides another powerful example of intergenerational trauma. His parents' torture by Death Eaters leaves them permanently institutionalized at St. Mungo's, unable to recognize their own son. Neville's struggles with confidence and his eventual emergence as a leader show how children of trauma survivors must navigate both their parents' unresolved pain and their own secondary trauma.

The Black family presents a different aspect of generational trauma through their pure-blood ideology. Sirius's rejection of his family's values and subsequent ostracization demonstrates how breaking generational cycles of toxic beliefs can itself be traumatic. His childhood home at Grimmauld Place, with its severed elf heads and family tapestry of burned-out faces, serves as a physical manifestation of this dark legacy.

In the Shiva Trilogy, intergenerational trauma is explored through societal structures and religious practices. The caste system represents institutionalized trauma passed down through generations, while the treatment of Vikarmas shows how social stigma can create cycles of trauma that affect entire family lines.

6. Resolution and Transformation

The paths to resolution in both series reflect different philosophical approaches to healing. Harry Potter's journey culminates in his willing sacrifice in the Forbidden Forest - a moment that transforms his personal trauma into universal redemption. This sacrifice works because it's rooted in love, demonstrating how facing death with acceptance can break cycles of fear and violence.

Significantly, Harry's final confrontation with Voldemort involves understanding rather than mere opposition. His realization about the Elder Wand's true allegiance shows how knowledge and comprehension can be more powerful than brute force. The scene in King's Cross with Dumbledore represents a spiritual reconciliation with death and loss, suggesting that complete healing involves accepting rather than avoiding painful truths.

The Shiva Trilogy presents resolution through a more comprehensive transformation of consciousness. Shiva's journey from tribal chief to Mahadev involves not just personal growth but a fundamental reimagining of social order. His understanding of good and evil evolves beyond simple opposition to recognize their interconnected nature.

The trilogy's resolution suggests that true healing requires addressing root causes rather than symptoms. When Shiva finally confronts the source of evil, it's not through combat but through understanding the complex balance between progress and tradition, innovation and wisdom.

7. Role of Memory and Identity

The treatment of memory and its relationship to identity differs significantly between the series. In Harry Potter, memories are tangible things that can be extracted, stored, and revisited through the Pensieve. This concrete representation of memory allows for direct confrontation with traumatic experiences. When Harry views Snape's memories in "Deathly Hallows," he gains not just

information but a transformed understanding of identity - both Snape's and his own.

The Pensieve scenes serve multiple functions in trauma processing. When Harry witnesses his father's bullying behavior through Snape's memories, it forces him to confront the complexity of inherited legacy and challenge his idealized version of his parents. This represents how healing often requires integrating difficult truths into one's identity narrative.

Memory in Harry Potter also functions as a source of power and protection. The Patronus Charm works through accessing happy memories, suggesting that positive experiences can serve as psychological shields against depression and despair. This is particularly evident when Harry teaches Dumbledore's Army - each student must find their own powerful positive memory to create their Patronus, demonstrating how personal histories can become sources of strength.

The Shiva Trilogy approaches memory and identity through a more fluid, interconnected framework. Past lives and karmic memory suggest that identity extends beyond individual experience. When Shiva begins remembering events he hasn't personally experienced, it represents a broader understanding of consciousness and identity that transcends individual existence.

8. Symbolism and Metaphorical Representation

The symbolic language of trauma and healing in both series reveals sophisticated psychological understanding. In Harry Potter, the Horcruxes serve as powerful metaphors for psychological fragmentation. Each Horcrux represents a piece of Voldemort's soul, split through acts of murder - a literal representation of how severe trauma can fragment the psyche. The process of destroying Horcruxes parallels the therapeutic process of integrating split-off parts of the self.

The Room of Requirement represents the psyche's ability to manifest what is needed for healing. Its ability to transform based on the user's needs mirrors how psychological healing requires different approaches at different times. When used for DA meetings, it becomes a safe space for community healing; when Harry needs to hide the Half-Blood Prince's book, it becomes a place to contain dangerous knowledge - much like how the psyche protects itself by hiding threatening information.

In the Shiva Trilogy, symbolism operates through mythological and philosophical frameworks. The blue throat of Shiva (Neelkanth) represents the capacity to transform poison into medicine - a powerful metaphor for how trauma can be transformed into wisdom. This transformation isn't about eliminating the poison but about containing and transmuting it, suggesting that healing

involves integration rather than elimination of painful experiences.

9. Narrative Structure and Trauma Processing

Both series construct their narratives to reflect different approaches to trauma processing. Harry Potter's year-by-year structure mirrors the therapeutic process, with each year bringing new challenges and opportunities for growth. The increasing darkness of each subsequent book parallels how trauma work often requires facing progressively deeper layers of pain.

The culmination of Harry's journey in the Forbidden Forest, where he must willingly face death, represents the ultimate integration of traumatic experience. His conversation with Dumbledore in the ethereal King's Cross station provides a space for final processing and acceptance, suggesting that complete healing sometimes requires a metaphorical death and rebirth.

The Shiva Trilogy's narrative structure is more cyclical, reflecting Eastern concepts of time and transformation. The story moves between personal and collective experience, past and present, suggesting that trauma healing involves understanding broader patterns of existence. This structure supports the idea that individual healing is inseparable from collective transformation.

10. Gender and Trauma

In both series, gender intersects with trauma in complex ways that reflect and challenge cultural norms. Harry Potter presents diverse models of trauma response across gender lines, often subverting traditional expectations. Hermione's intellectual approach to fear represents a rejection of the stereotype that emotional responses are inherently feminine. Her systematic preparation for danger, exemplified by the enchanted beaded bag containing everything they might need during their horcrux hunt, shows how analytical thinking can serve as a valid coping mechanism.

Ginny Weasley's recovery from her traumatic possession by Tom Riddle's diary demonstrates remarkable resilience. Her transformation from a shy, traumatized first-year student to a powerful witch and leader in Dumbledore's Army shows how trauma survivors can reclaim their agency. Luna Lovegood's apparent eccentricity represents another feminine response to trauma - using creativity and unconventional thinking as protective mechanisms against social isolation and loss.

Male characters in Harry Potter also challenge traditional gender expectations in their trauma responses. Neville's journey from fearful boy to resistance leader shows emotional vulnerability can coexist with courage. Snape's lasting grief over Lily's death demonstrates deep emotional attachment in male characters, while Sirius's emotional

volatility after Azkaban shows how trauma can disrupt traditional masculine stoicism.

The Shiva Trilogy approaches gender and trauma through the lens of ancient Indian society while suggesting possibilities for transformation. Sati's character challenges traditional gender roles while working within cultural frameworks. Her status as a Vikarma woman and her journey to reclaim her dignity represents how gender-based trauma can become a catalyst for social change.

Synthesis

The comparative analysis of Harry Potter and the Shiva Trilogy reveals sophisticated approaches to trauma representation and healing across cultural frameworks. Both series demonstrate how fantasy and mythology can make complex psychological concepts accessible to diverse audiences while offering different but complementary models for understanding trauma and recovery.

Harry Potter's Western psychological framework emphasizes individual agency while acknowledging the crucial role of community support. The series shows how personal choice and love can transform trauma into strength, as evidenced by Harry's ultimate victory through sacrifice rather than power. The magical elements serve as concrete metaphors for psychological processes, making abstract concepts tangible for readers.

The Shiva Trilogy's Eastern philosophical approach presents healing as inseparable from spiritual and social transformation. Through Shiva's journey from warrior to deity, the trilogy suggests that complete healing requires understanding the interconnected nature of individual and collective experience. The mythological framework provides a model for how personal transformation can catalyze broader societal change.

1. The Importance of Cultural Frameworks in Shaping Trauma Responses and Recovery Paths

Both series demonstrate how cultural contexts fundamentally shape how trauma is experienced, understood, and healed. In Harry Potter, the Western individualistic framework is evident in how characters process trauma. Harry's journey often emphasizes personal choice and individual responsibility - "It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." This reflects a Western therapeutic approach that emphasizes individual agency in healing.

The magical world's approach to trauma healing often mirrors Western medical models. The use of specific remedies (chocolate for Dementor exposure), targeted interventions (Occlumency lessons), and professional help (Mind Healers at St. Mungo's) reflects a systematic,

categorized approach to treating psychological wounds. Even magical healing methods follow a clinical pattern: identify the problem, apply the appropriate remedy, monitor recovery.

However, the Shiva Trilogy presents a contrasting Eastern framework where trauma and healing are viewed through a holistic, interconnected lens. When Shiva encounters the Nagas, their physical deformities are not seen as individual medical conditions but as manifestations of societal imbalance. The concept of karma provides a framework for understanding how past actions influence present suffering, suggesting that healing requires addressing root causes rather than just treating symptoms.

The trilogy's treatment of the Somras (the drink of the gods) demonstrates how cultural beliefs influence perceptions of healing. What one society views as medicine, another might see as poison, suggesting that cultural frameworks determine not only how we experience trauma but also what we consider healing.

2. The Value of Community Support in Individual Healing Processes

Both series emphasize that while trauma may be experienced individually, healing often requires community support. In Harry Potter, this is powerfully demonstrated through multiple relationships and organizations:

Dumbledore's Army represents more than just a resistance group - it becomes a therapeutic community where members share their fears, support each other's growth, and collectively develop coping mechanisms. The Room of Requirement itself transforms into whatever the group needs, symbolizing how community support can adapt to individual healing needs.

The Weasley family demonstrates how chosen family can provide crucial emotional support for trauma survivors. Their acceptance of Harry offers him a model of healthy family relationships that helps heal his early attachment trauma. Mrs. Weasley's maternal care, the twins' humor, and Ron's loyal friendship each contribute different aspects of support necessary for healing.

The Order of Phoenix shows how intergenerational support networks can help process collective trauma. Members who survived the First Wizarding War help guide the younger generation through their own traumatic experiences, demonstrating how shared experience can facilitate healing.

In the Shiva Trilogy, community support operates through more structured social and spiritual frameworks:

The guru-shishya relationship provides a model for how wisdom and healing can be transmitted through established cultural relationships. When Shiva learns from various teachers, these interactions represent more than knowledge

transfer - they demonstrate how cultural wisdom can guide trauma recovery.

3. The Role of Narrative in Making Psychological Concepts Accessible

Both series use their respective genres - fantasy and mythological fiction - to make complex psychological concepts understandable and relatable. Harry Potter employs magical metaphors that brilliantly illustrate psychological processes:

Dementors provide a tangible representation of depression and PTSD. Their ability to force people to relive their worst memories mirrors flashbacks, while their soul-sucking kiss represents the ultimate emotional numbness that can result from severe trauma. The physical effects of their presence - cold, darkness, despair - make abstract psychological concepts concrete and understandable.

The Patronus Charm demonstrates how positive memories and emotional resources can combat psychological distress. The fact that each person's Patronus takes a unique form suggests how healing strategies must be individualized, while the ability to teach others the charm shows how coping mechanisms can be learned and shared.

4. The Potential for Personal Trauma to Catalyze Positive Social Change

Both series powerfully demonstrate how individual trauma can become a catalyst for broader societal transformation. In Harry Potter, personal trauma often leads to the development of empathy and the motivation to prevent others from experiencing similar pain.

Harry's own traumatic experiences make him particularly sensitive to others' suffering, leading him to form Dumbledore's Army as a way to help his peers protect themselves. His childhood trauma under the Dursleys' abuse makes him especially compassionate toward house-elves like Dobby, demonstrating how personal pain can create awareness of systemic injustice.

The transformation of Neville Longbottom provides another striking example. His trauma from his parents' torture evolves into leadership strength during the resistance against the Carrows at Hogwarts. His personal pain becomes the foundation for protecting younger students and standing up against tyranny. His growth from fearful victim to resistance leader shows how processed trauma can fuel positive social action.

Luna Lovegood's experience of social isolation and loss (her mother's death) leads her to develop unique perspectives that ultimately help others see beyond conventional wisdom. Her apparent oddity becomes a strength in challenging rigid thinking and supporting others through their own traumas.

In the Shiva Trilogy, Shiva's journey from witnessing tribal suffering to becoming a force for societal change demonstrates how personal exposure to trauma can lead to systemic transformation. His encounter with the Nagas' suffering catalyzes his questioning of established social orders and his commitment to addressing root causes of societal pain.

5. The Necessity of Addressing Both Individual and Collective Dimensions of Trauma

Both series emphasize that complete healing requires addressing trauma at both individual and societal levels. Harry Potter demonstrates this through the parallel tracks of Harry's personal healing journey and the wizarding world's collective recovery from Voldemort's reign of terror.

The series shows how these dimensions interweave - Harry's personal healing journey becomes inseparable from the collective healing of the wizarding world. His confrontation with Voldemort represents both individual and collective trauma resolution.

The symbolism of the lightning bolt scar itself embodies this duality - it's both a personal wound and a symbol of collective hope, marking Harry as both an individual trauma survivor and a figure of societal transformation. Its dual nature as both curse and blessing reflects how trauma can be both personally wounding and collectively transformative.

In the Shiva Trilogy, this dual approach is even more explicit. Shiva's personal journey of understanding and healing becomes inextricably linked with societal transformation. His role as the Neelkanth requires him to address both individual suffering and systemic causes of trauma.

Both series ultimately suggest that true healing requires addressing trauma at multiple levels simultaneously - personal, familial, institutional, and societal. They demonstrate how individual healing can catalyze collective transformation, while societal change creates conditions that support individual recovery.

The enduring relevance of both series suggests that their approaches to trauma and healing resonate with fundamental human experiences while offering hope and guidance for those on their own healing journeys.

Conclusion:

The comparative analysis of Harry Potter and Shiva Trilogy reveals profound insights into the nature of trauma, healing, and psychological transformation across cultural frameworks. These works, while emerging from distinctly different literary traditions, demonstrate the universal human capacity for resilience while highlighting the diverse paths to recovery shaped by cultural perspectives. Through

their respective uses of magic and mythology, both series successfully bridge the gap between complex psychological concepts and accessible narrative storytelling, making profound truths about trauma and healing available to a broad audience.

The synthesis of Western and Eastern approaches to trauma processing, as represented in these works, offers a comprehensive understanding of healing that transcends cultural boundaries. Harry Potter's emphasis on individual agency supported by community healing, combined with the Shiva Trilogy's integration of personal and societal transformation, presents a holistic model for understanding trauma recovery. This dual perspective suggests that effective healing requires both the personal empowerment emphasized in Western approaches and the systemic transformation central to Eastern philosophies.

The enduring impact of these narratives extends beyond their immediate cultural contexts, offering valuable insights for contemporary approaches to trauma healing. Their success in engaging readers across cultural boundaries demonstrates how creative storytelling can facilitate cross-cultural understanding of psychological processes. Moreover, their continued relevance suggests that while the specifics of trauma experiences may vary, the fundamental human need for healing and transformation remains constant across cultures and times.

These works ultimately point toward a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of trauma and recovery, one that recognizes both individual and collective dimensions of healing. They suggest that while personal transformation is essential, lasting healing often requires addressing broader societal issues that contribute to trauma. This understanding has significant implications for both therapeutic practice and social change initiatives, highlighting the need for approaches that can address both individual suffering and systemic causes of trauma.

As contemporary society continues to grapple with various forms of individual and collective trauma, the insights offered by these works become increasingly relevant. They remind us that healing is possible through multiple pathways and that different cultural frameworks can offer complementary approaches to recovery and transformation. Their enduring appeal lies not just in their entertaining narratives but in their profound understanding of human suffering and the universal yearning for healing and growth.

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Psychoanalytic Explorations of the Spectral Horror in *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Haunting of Bly Manor*

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Abstract— This study offers a comprehensive psychoanalytic examination of horror elements in Henry James's seminal Gothic novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) and its contemporary Netflix adaptation, *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) created by Mike Flanagan. Employing Freudian concepts of repression, the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*), and dreamwork alongside Lacanian theories of the Symbolic Order and the Real, this paper conducts a rigorous comparative analysis of how psychological horror manifests across literary and visual mediums. The research demonstrates how Flanagan's adaptation not only preserves but amplifies James's central themes of unreliable narration, subconscious fears, and psychological disintegration through modern cinematic techniques and narrative innovations. Through close textual analysis of James's novella and frame-by-frame examination of Flanagan's visual storytelling, this study reveals how both works employ Gothic tropes as externalizations of internalized trauma. Key findings indicate that while James's work operates through deliberate ambiguity, Flanagan's adaptation makes trauma visually manifest while maintaining psychological complexity. This evolution reflects broader cultural changes in how we understand and represent mental distress, positioning *Bly Manor* as both a faithful adaptation and a significant reimagining for contemporary audiences. By bridging literary analysis, film studies, and psychoanalytic theory, this research contributes new insights to adaptation studies while demonstrating the enduring relevance of Freudian and Lacanian frameworks for understanding horror across media. The study ultimately argues that both versions use the Gothic mode to explore fundamental questions about perception, memory, and the haunting persistence of unresolved trauma.



Keywords— Psychoanalysis, Gothic Horror, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, Freud, Lacan, Adaptation Studies, Trauma Theory

I. INTRODUCTION

Horror fiction and film have long served as powerful **psychological mirrors**, reflecting society's deepest **repressed fears** and **unconscious desires**. As Linda Williams (1991) argues, the horror genre operates as a **cultural dreamscape** where collective anxieties manifest through **symbolic narratives**. This psychological function becomes particularly evident in **Gothic literature**, where the boundary between **external terror** and **internal**

turmoil consistently blurs to reveal profound truths about the human psyche. Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) stands as a **cornerstone of psychological horror**, masterfully weaving **Gothic conventions** with **modernist ambiguity**. The novella's ingenious narrative structure - featuring a **potentially unreliable governess-narrator**, **ambiguous supernatural events**, and **layered storytelling** - has spawned over a century of critical debate. As Tzvetan Todorov (1973) might categorize it, the text exists in the **fantastic hesitation** between supernatural and

psychological explanations, forcing readers to confront their own interpretive frameworks. The work's rich **themes of repression**, particularly regarding **Victorian sexual mores** and **childhood innocence**, have made it **fertile ground for psychoanalytic criticism**.

Mike Flanagan's *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) represents a **significant evolution** of James's narrative, transposing its **psychological horror** into the **21st century media landscape**. As part of Flanagan's **haunting anthology series**, the adaptation maintains the source material's **psychological complexity** while introducing **contemporary trauma narratives**. The series expands James's framework through **modern cinematic techniques** like **visual distortions** and **non-linear storytelling**, **explicit character psychology** including Dani's **queer identity** and **survivor's guilt**, and **contemporary horror aesthetics** featuring **slow-burn tension** and **atmospheric dread**.

This paper employs **Freudian** and **Lacanian psychoanalytic theory** to conduct a **comparative analysis** of both texts. From Freud, we draw upon **repression theory** (especially regarding **sexual anxiety** and **traumatic memories**), **the uncanny** (das Unheimliche) as it manifests in **ghostly apparitions**, and **dreamwork mechanisms** in narrative construction. Lacanian theory informs our examination of the **Symbolic Order's collapse** in haunted spaces, **desire and lack** in character motivations, and **the Real** as manifested through **supernatural intrusions**.

Our investigation centers on three **core research questions**: how **repression** and **the uncanny** operate differently in James's text versus Flanagan's adaptation (comparing the governess's possible **hallucinations** with Dani's **visually confirmed ghosts**); what role the **Symbolic Order** plays in shaping and distorting the protagonists' **perceptions of reality** (analyzing **narrative reliability** and **visual storytelling techniques**); and how Flanagan's version **reinterprets psychological horror** for modern audiences while preserving James's **core themes** (examining **added backstories** and **contemporary trauma representation**).

This study contributes to multiple **academic discourses** including **adaptation studies** (how literary horror translates to visual media), **trauma theory** (evolving representations of psychological distress), **Gothic studies** (the persistence and transformation of Gothic tropes), and **media studies** (horror's cultural work in different historical periods). Our analysis employs **close reading** of James's text focusing on **narrative ambiguity**, **visual analysis** of Flanagan's series examining **cinematography** (use of mirrors and reflections), **editing patterns** (temporal distortions), and **sound design** (subjective audio cues), along with

psychoanalytic interpretation of key scenes in both versions.

The paper will first establish the **theoretical framework**, then conduct **parallel analyses** of both texts before concluding with **broader implications** for understanding **horror's psychological dimensions** across media forms, demonstrating how *Bly Manor* both **honors** and **transforms** its source material for a new generation of horror audiences.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The critical discourse surrounding *The Turn of the Screw* has long been polarized between **supernatural** and **psychological interpretations**, a debate that intensified with Edmund Wilson's 1934 Freudian reading. Wilson famously posited that the governess's visions of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel were **hallucinations stemming from sexual repression**, arguing that her neurosis projected spectral figures onto mundane reality. This interpretation gained traction in mid-20th-century criticism, with Wilson's adherents highlighting Freudian symbols—such as Quint's tower (phallic) and Miss Jessel's lake (feminine)—as evidence of the governess's psychosexual turmoil.

However, Wilson's thesis faced robust opposition. **Peter Beidler (1989)** and other **apparitionists** contended that the ghosts were **objectively real** within the narrative, citing Mrs. Grose's immediate recognition of Quint from the governess's detailed description as proof of their existence. Beidler further noted that James's preface to the New York Edition framed the tale as a "fairy tale" with authentic supernatural elements, aligning it with Gothic tradition rather than psychological pathology.

Shoshana Felman's Lacanian intervention (1977) shifted the debate by focusing on the **linguistic and epistemological instability** of the governess's narrative. Felman argued that the text's ambiguity—whether the ghosts are real or imagined—mirrors Lacan's concept of the **Symbolic Order's collapse**, where language fails to mediate reality. The governess's "madness," in this view, reflects a crisis of signification, not just repression. Felman's analysis underscored how James's prose traps readers in the same hermeneutic loop as the governess, making interpretation itself a "ghost effect".

Recent scholarship on *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (Flanagan, 2020) has expanded this discourse by **recontextualizing James's themes for modern audiences**. Critics like **Curtis (2021)** and **Piatti-Farnell (2022)** observe that Flanagan's adaptation replaces the governess's sexual repression with **explicit trauma narratives**, particularly through Dani's survivor's guilt and

queer identity. Where James's text thrives on ambiguity, *Bly Manor* uses **cinematic techniques** (e.g., mirrors, non-linear editing) to externalize psychological horror, rendering trauma visible while preserving the original's Gothic unease.

Despite these advances, a **systematic psychoanalytic comparison** of the two works remains underexplored. Few studies examine how Flanagan's adaptation translates James's **Freudian subtexts** (e.g., repression, the uncanny) into **Lacanian visual metaphors** (e.g., the "Lady in the Lake" as the Real) or how modern trauma theory reshapes the governess/Dani's narrative authority.

Table 1: Key Scholarly Interpretations of *The Turn of the Screw*

Scholar	Argument	Theoretical Lens	Key Evidence
Edmund Wilson (1934)	Ghosts as governess's hallucinations; sexual repression drives the narrative	Freudian psychoanalysis	Quint's tower (phallic symbol); governess's romantic fixation on the uncle.
Shoshana Felman (1977)	Narrative unreliability as Lacanian <i>jouissance</i> ; language fails to signify	Lacanian psychoanalysis	Governess's circular logic; reader's entrapment in ambiguity.
Peter Beidler (1989)	Ghosts are real; governess is reliable	Traditional Gothic studies	Mrs. Grose identifies Quint from description; James's preface frames ghosts as authentic.
Robert Heilman (1949)	Rejects Wilson's Freudianism; emphasizes Gothic conventions	Literary formalism	Text's ambiguity as intentional artistic device.
Nicole Smith (2011)	Classifies text as "psychological thriller" via reader-response theory	Gothic/modernist hybridity	Narrator's unreliability as genre convention.

Research Gap

While *The Turn of the Screw* has been extensively analyzed through **psychoanalytic** frameworks, *Bly Manor* has received limited scholarly attention in this regard. This study fills the gap by:

1. Comparing **Freudian** and **Lacanian** readings of both texts.
2. Examining how adaptation choices (e.g., **Dani's backstory**) modernize psychological horror.

Rationale of the Study

Understanding how horror evolves across mediums provides insight into **cultural anxieties** and **psychological storytelling techniques**. This study contributes to:

- **Adaptation Studies** – How Flanagan reinterprets James's ambiguity.
- **Psychoanalytic Criticism** – How repressed trauma is visualized in film.
- **Gothic Studies** – The evolution of psychological horror tropes.

Objectives of the Study

1. Analyze *The Turn of the Screw* and *Bly Manor* using Freud's **repression** and the **uncanny**.
2. Examine Lacan's *Symbolic Order* and the *Real* in both narratives.

3. Compare how the adaptation translates psychological horror from text to screen.
4. Explore how modern trauma theory influences Flanagan's reinterpretation.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that both *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Haunting of Bly Manor* employ **Gothic horror** to manifest **repressed trauma**. Flanagan's adaptation, however, renders these **psychological elements** more **explicit** through cinematic techniques, **character backstories**, and **visual symbolism** compared to the novella's more **ambiguous approach**.

Methodology and Analysis Type

This study employs **qualitative textual and visual analysis**, applying:

- **Freud's *The Uncanny* (1919)** – Examining repressed desires and the return of the repressed.
- **Lacan's *Mirror Stage* and *Symbolic Order*** – Analyzing subjectivity and narrative unreliability.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis Framework

Aspect	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i> (Text)	<i>Bly Manor</i> (Adaptation)

Narrative Ambiguity	High (ghosts may be imagined)	Reduced (ghosts are real but tied to trauma)
Trauma Representation	Implied (governess's repression)	Explicit (Dani's dead fiancé, LGBTQ+ themes)
Cinematic Techniques	N/A	Flashbacks, visual distortions, eerie sound design

Psychoanalytic Approach to *The Turn of the Screw* and *Bly Manor*

1. Freudian Perspective: Repression and the Uncanny

- **The Governess's Visions:** Freud's *return of the repressed* suggests Quint and Jessel symbolize her suppressed sexual anxiety.
- **Dani's Trauma in *Bly Manor*:** Her dead fiancé's apparitions mirror Freud's *melancholia*, where grief becomes pathological.

2. Lacanian Interpretation: Desire and the Real

- **The Governess/Dani's Unreliability:** Their inability to distinguish reality aligns with Lacan's *Real*—the traumatic core that resists symbolization.
- **The Ghosts as *Objet Petit a*:** The ghosts represent an unattainable desire (e.g., Dani's wish to escape guilt).

3. Adaptation Analysis: *Bly Manor* as a Modern Trauma Narrative

- **Visualizing the Uncanny:** Flanagan uses mirrors, water, and looping corridors to externalize psychological horror.
- **Expanded Character Psychology:** Unlike James's governess, Dani's backstory (LGBTQ+ repression, survivor's guilt) makes trauma explicit.

III. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The adaptation of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* into Mike Flanagan's *The Haunting of Bly Manor* offers a compelling case study in the translation and transformation of **psychological horror** across different media. Our psychoanalytic analysis reveals significant differences in how horror is represented, reflecting both the inherent qualities of **text versus screen** and evolving **cultural landscapes**.

Text vs. Screen: Navigating Ambiguity and Visual Confirmation:

James's *The Turn of the Screw* is renowned for its masterful use of **ambiguity**, particularly concerning the reality of the **spectral apparitions**. The novella's reliance on the governess's first-person narration forces readers to grapple with the **questionable reliability** of her perceptions (Sedgwick, 1974). For instance, the descriptions of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are filtered entirely through the governess's eyes, leaving open the possibility that these figures are **projections** of her own **anxieties**, **repressed desires**, or even a manifestation of her burgeoning **hysteria** (Heilman, 1968). The horror, therefore, resides not just in the potential presence of ghosts but in the **uncertainty of reality itself**, compelling readers to engage in their own **psychoanalytic interpretations** of the events.

In contrast, *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, as a **visual medium**, takes a different approach. While it retains elements of psychological unease, the series **visually confirms the existence of ghosts** (e.g., the consistent depiction of Peter Quint and Rebecca Jessel by multiple characters). However, this confirmation does not diminish the psychological horror; instead, it **deepens it by exploring the trauma and unresolved emotional burdens** that bind these spirits to Bly Manor (Caruth, 1996). For example, the extended backstories of Hannah Grose and Viola Willoughby vividly illustrate how **past traumas** and **emotional fixations** can lead to a perpetual state of haunting. The visual manifestation of these ghosts serves not to negate psychological interpretations but to **externalize** and make tangible the **lingering impact of trauma and repression** on both the living and the dead. Flanagan utilizes **cinematic techniques** such as **slow zooms**, **unsettling close-ups**, and the **pervasive atmosphere of decay** to visually represent the characters' **internal anxieties** and the **oppressive presence of the past**.

Cultural Shifts: Reflecting Modern Discourses:

Flanagan's adaptation also reflects significant **cultural shifts** since the publication of James's novella. While *The Turn of the Screw* can be read through the lens of Victorian anxieties surrounding **sexual repression** and the precarious position of women (Showalter, 1977), *The Haunting of Bly Manor* engages with more contemporary discourses on **mental health**, **queer identity**, and **grief**.

Dani Clayton's backstory, revealing her past trauma and her **same-sex relationship**, brings a **queer perspective** to the narrative that is largely absent in James's text. Her journey through **grief** and her eventual sacrifice highlight modern understandings of **trauma** and the complexities of **love and loss**. Similarly, the explicit exploration of Rebecca Jessel and Peter Quint's relationship, though ultimately tragic, acknowledges and gives visibility to **LGBTQ+ experiences** in a way that would have been largely

subtextual, if present at all, in the Victorian era. The series' willingness to openly address **mental health struggles**, such as Dani's anxiety and the overall sense of psychological fragility among the characters, resonates with contemporary conversations surrounding **mental well-being**. The ghosts in *Bly Manor* are not simply malevolent entities but are often portrayed as **victims of trauma and circumstance**, reflecting a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of suffering.

Table 3: Key Differences in Horror Representation

Element	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>	<i>Bly Manor</i>
Ghosts	Possibly imaginary	Real, but tied to trauma
Narrator Reliability	Highly questionable	More sympathetic, clearer trauma
Themes	Sexual repression, Ambiguity	Grief, LGBTQ+ identity, Trauma

In conclusion, while both *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Haunting of Bly Manor* effectively utilize **Gothic horror tropes** to create a sense of unease and dread, **Flanagan's adaptation** provides a more **explicit** and **culturally contemporary** exploration of the underlying **psychological themes**. By leveraging the **visual capabilities of the screen** and engaging with **modern discourses**, *Bly Manor* offers a compelling reinterpretation of James's ambiguous masterpiece, deepening the **psychological horror** by making the spectral manifestations tangible while simultaneously exploring the **complex emotional landscapes** of its characters.

IV. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

This study, while offering a detailed **psychoanalytic exploration of horror** in *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, is not without its **limitations**. Primarily, the psychoanalytic framework employed herein predominantly draws upon the theories of **Sigmund Freud**, particularly his concepts of the **uncanny**, **repression**, and the **structure of the psyche**, and implicitly touches upon aspects that resonate with **Jacques Lacan's** ideas regarding the **symbolic order** and the **Real**. While these approaches provide valuable insights into the **psychological underpinnings of the horror** experienced by the characters and evoked in the audience, they represent only a segment of the broader psychoanalytic landscape. Future research could benefit from incorporating alternative psychoanalytic perspectives. For instance, exploring **Julia Kristeva's**

theory of abjection might offer a compelling lens through which to analyze the **visceral reactions** to the spectral figures and the sense of **boundary violation** they represent (Kristeva, 1982). Similarly, a **Jungian analysis** focusing on **archetypes** such as the **shadow** or the **anima/animus** could illuminate deeper **symbolic meanings** embedded within the characters and the haunting itself (Jung, 1968).

The scope of this study is also limited by its focus on a **single literary text** and its **direct web series adaptation**. While this allows for a focused and in-depth comparative analysis, it does not account for the diverse range of **adaptations** of *The Turn of the Screw* across different cinematic and theatrical forms.

Future research could fruitfully expand upon this study in several directions:

- **Comparative Analysis with Other Adaptations:** Conducting a comparative analysis with other notable **adaptations**, such as Jack Clayton's 1961 film *The Innocents*, could reveal how different **historical and cinematic contexts** influence the interpretation and representation of the novella's **psychological horror**. Examining the choices made in *The Innocents* regarding **ambiguity**, the portrayal of the children, and the nature of the ghosts could offer valuable points of contrast with Flanagan's approach in *Bly Manor*.
- **Exploring Gender and Queer Theory:** Future studies could delve deeper into the representation of **gender** and **queer identity** in *The Haunting of Bly Manor*. Analyzing how Dani's **lesbian identity** and her relationships within the manor are portrayed, and how these intersect with themes of **trauma** and **sacrifice**, could offer significant insights. Similarly, examining the **gender dynamics** and **power structures** within both texts through a **feminist lens** could reveal nuanced interpretations of the horror experienced by the female characters.
- **Focus on Specific Psychoanalytic Concepts:** Future research could dedicate itself to a more in-depth exploration of a **single psychoanalytic concept** across both texts. For example, a study solely focused on the **return of the repressed** as it manifests in the narrative structures, character behaviors, and spectral appearances in both *The Turn of the Screw* and *Bly Manor* could yield rich insights.
- **Audience Reception Studies:** Investigating how **contemporary audiences** interpret the **psychological and horror elements** of *The*

Haunting of Bly Manor could provide valuable perspectives on the effectiveness of Flanagan's adaptation in resonating with modern sensibilities.

By addressing these **limitations** and pursuing these **avenues for future research**, the understanding of the complex interplay between **literature, adaptation, and psychoanalytic interpretations of horror** can be further enriched.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) and Mike Flanagan's *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) powerfully exemplify how the **Gothic horror genre** serves as a potent vehicle for **externalizing profound psychological turmoil** (Freud, 1919). While James's novella masterfully crafts an atmosphere of **pervasive unease** and **lingering doubt** through its **narrative ambiguity** and focus on the governess's subjective experience (Sedgwick, 1974), Flanagan's adaptation takes a more **direct approach**, rendering the **manifestations of trauma** and its enduring impact **visibly** through cinematic techniques and explicit character backstories (Caruth, 1996).

James's brilliance lies in his ability to evoke horror through **suggestion and implication**, forcing the reader to confront the **unreliable nature of perception** and the potential for psychological breakdown (Heilman, 1968). The spectral figures, whether real or imagined, function as potent symbols of **repressed anxieties** and the **uncanny intrusion of the past** into the present (Freud, 1919). The very act of reading *The Turn of the Screw* becomes an exercise in psychoanalytic interpretation, with the reader actively engaging in deciphering the governess's psyche and the true nature of the haunting.

Conversely, *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, while rooted in James's narrative, utilizes the **visual language of cinema** to make the **abstract realities of trauma and grief palpable**. The ghosts are not merely shadowy figures but are often depicted in states of **emotional distress and repetitive suffering**, their physical presence serving as a constant reminder of unresolved past tragedies (Caruth, 1996). Dani Clayton's own history of trauma and her empathetic connection to the ghosts further underscore the series' exploration of how **psychological wounds can linger and shape perceptions of reality**. The adaptation's willingness to address themes of **grief, mental health, and queer identity** reflects a contemporary understanding of the multifaceted nature of psychological horror, moving beyond the more veiled anxieties of the Victorian era (Showalter, 1977).

Ultimately, this comparative psychoanalytic analysis reveals how storytelling, across different media, can tap into fundamental human fears and anxieties. James's *The Turn of the Screw* demonstrates the enduring power of **psychological suspense** generated through internal conflict and narrative uncertainty, while Flanagan's *The Haunting of Bly Manor* illustrates how **visual storytelling** can make the invisible wounds of the psyche strikingly visible, resonating with evolving cultural understandings of **mental horror** in media. Both works, in their distinct ways, leave a lasting impression, highlighting the enduring fascination with the spectral manifestations of our deepest psychological struggles.

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Integrating Phonetics into Language Pedagogy: A Key to Communicative Competence

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Abstract— *Phonetics, the scientific study of speech sounds, serves as a cornerstone in the development of communicative competence, especially in the context of second language acquisition. Despite its relevance, phonetics is frequently overlooked in language pedagogy, often relegated to optional content. This article argues for the systematic integration of phonetics into mainstream language instruction. Drawing upon insights from applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, and educational theory, the study explores how phonetic training enhances pronunciation, fosters listening and speaking skills, and builds intercultural communication. With globalization shaping English into a global lingua franca, learners must not only understand vocabulary and grammar but also produce intelligible, rhythmically appropriate speech. The paper further explores the pedagogical challenges and offers practical strategies—including technology integration and multisensory learning—for classroom implementation. The article concludes that phonetics must no longer be seen as ancillary but as an essential element of language pedagogy aimed at meaningful, fluent, and confident communication.*



Keywords— *phonetics, language acquisition, pronunciation, communicative competence, language pedagogy, intelligibility, listening skills, suprasegmentals.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language learning in many educational systems is often reduced to grammar instruction and vocabulary acquisition, leaving behind the oral-aural components essential to effective communication. While these traditional elements serve as the backbone of linguistic knowledge, they fall short in developing real-world speaking skills. Learners may master grammar rules and vocabulary lists but still fail to speak fluently or be understood due to poor pronunciation or intonation. This disconnect reveals a serious gap in language pedagogy that must be addressed.

Phonetics, the study of speech sounds, is instrumental in bridging this gap. It offers a scientific and structured approach to understanding how speech is produced and perceived. When learners are trained to understand the articulatory processes behind sounds, they are better equipped to replicate them. Moreover, phonetics helps

learners notice subtle distinctions in speech that are crucial for comprehension and accurate communication. From minimal pairs like ship/sheep to complex suprasegmental features like intonation and stress, phonetics provides a toolkit for effective oral communication.

Unfortunately, phonetics remains undervalued or neglected in many classroom settings. Teachers either lack training or perceive it as too technical for regular instruction. Furthermore, standardized curricula often omit phonetics, prioritizing exam-oriented content over practical language use. This paper argues that phonetics is not an optional enrichment but a necessary foundation. By integrating phonetic principles into language pedagogy, educators can enhance learners' confidence, intelligibility, and communicative competence in both academic and social contexts.

II. PHONETICS AND LANGUAGE MASTERY

Phonetics contributes fundamentally to linguistic competence by equipping learners with the ability to perceive and produce sounds accurately. This precision is essential when learning a second language, particularly English, which is fraught with inconsistencies between spelling and pronunciation. For example, words like *cough*, *though*, and *through* illustrate the unpredictability of English orthography. Without phonetic awareness, learners may mispronounce such words, leading to confusion and communication breakdowns. Understanding the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) can demystify these inconsistencies and provide learners with a reliable system to navigate pronunciation.

Moreover, phonetics helps learners overcome the influence of their mother tongue. Each language has a unique phonetic inventory, and second-language learners often carry over the phonological rules of their first language into the new one, leading to accented or unintelligible speech. Through structured phonetic training, learners can retrain their articulatory habits and develop a new set of motor skills aligned with the target language. This transformation not only improves their speech but also boosts their listening comprehension, as they become attuned to sounds previously unfamiliar to them.

Phonetics also plays a role in building intercultural competence. In global communication, being able to accommodate different accents and pronunciation styles is key. Learners trained in phonetics are more tolerant and adaptable listeners. They can decipher regional and non-native accents with greater ease, which is vital in today's interconnected world. Therefore, phonetics should be viewed not just as a tool for mastering sounds, but as a broader skill that supports mutual understanding, empathy, and cross-cultural dialogue.

III. PRONUNCIATION INSTRUCTION THROUGH PHONETICS

Pronunciation is often the most noticeable marker of language proficiency, and phonetics provides the foundation for teaching it effectively. Traditional pronunciation instruction relied heavily on drills and imitation without much explanation of how sounds are produced. Phonetics introduces a systematic approach by helping learners understand the physical mechanisms of sound production—such as place and manner of articulation, voicing, and airflow. By learning the articulatory features of sounds, students are able to make conscious changes to their speech.

The integration of technological tools has revolutionized phonetics instruction. Applications such as PRAAT, ELAN, and AI-driven pronunciation software offer learners the opportunity to analyze their own speech using spectrograms and waveforms. These tools give visual feedback on pitch, duration, and intensity, which helps learners refine their pronunciation. Additionally, flipped classroom techniques allow learners to engage with pronunciation material at home—watching tutorial videos, practicing with mobile apps, and then using class time for guided practice and peer feedback. This method fosters autonomy and maximizes the use of classroom interaction.

Furthermore, pronunciation should not be isolated from other language skills. Effective language pedagogy integrates pronunciation into speaking, listening, reading, and even writing. For example, when reading aloud, students can apply their phonetic knowledge to practice rhythm and stress. When listening, they can identify intonation patterns and connected speech phenomena like assimilation and elision. Embedding pronunciation into everyday classroom tasks normalizes its use and reinforces its importance, ensuring that learners regard it as a vital component of their overall language ability.

IV. IMPROVING LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Listening and speaking are the most immediate and dynamic aspects of language use, and both are significantly enhanced by phonetic training. Listening comprehension is not just about vocabulary recognition; it involves decoding continuous streams of speech, which are often rapid and reduced. Phonetics trains learners to recognize features of connected speech, such as linking sounds, weak forms, and elisions (e.g., *gonna*, *wanna*, *didja*), which are common in natural conversations. Awareness of these features enables learners to process spoken language more efficiently and respond appropriately.

In terms of speaking, phonetics enhances articulation, fluency, and prosody. Learners who understand syllable structure, word stress, and sentence-level intonation patterns are more likely to produce speech that is clear and natural-sounding. For instance, mastering rising intonation in yes/no questions or falling intonation in statements adds nuance to speech. Learners also gain confidence as they become more aware of how their speech is perceived by others. This is especially beneficial for public speaking, interviews, or presentations where clarity and delivery are crucial.

Additionally, phonetic competence supports performance in standardized language assessments such as IELTS, TOEFL, and PTE, which evaluate pronunciation and

fluency. Many test-takers fail not due to lack of content knowledge, but because of unclear pronunciation and poor intonation. Phonetic training equips them with the tools to meet these challenges. Activities like shadowing (repeating after native speakers), using tongue twisters, and participating in pronunciation workshops help build muscle memory and auditory discrimination—skills that are indispensable for academic and professional success.

V. PEDAGOGICAL INTEGRATION

For phonetics to be effectively taught, it must be embedded into the curriculum rather than treated as supplementary content. Language teachers need targeted training in phonetic theory and practical instruction techniques. Unfortunately, many teacher training programs either overlook phonetics or present it as an abstract subject without classroom applicability. Institutions must prioritize phonetic pedagogy in pre-service and in-service training modules to ensure that educators are equipped to teach it confidently and meaningfully.

Curriculum designers should incorporate phonetic content progressively across language courses. Beginning with basic sound recognition and minimal pairs in early stages, instruction can gradually introduce IPA transcription, stress patterns, and intonation in intermediate and advanced stages. Assessments should also evaluate phonetic skills through listening tasks, pronunciation rubrics, and speech samples. When phonetics is systematically integrated, it reinforces other language skills and becomes a natural part of communicative instruction.

Classroom strategies must also adapt to the needs and interests of learners. Activities such as role plays, songs, poems, and debates can incorporate pronunciation practice in an engaging and meaningful context. Peer feedback, self-recording, and multisensory techniques (like visual diagrams of the vocal tract) help accommodate diverse learning styles. Teachers should foster a non-judgmental environment where learners feel safe to experiment with sounds, make errors, and improve over time. Ultimately, phonetics should not feel like a daunting science lesson, but an empowering tool for better expression and understanding.

VI. CONCLUSION

Phonetics is not an academic luxury but a practical necessity for meaningful language acquisition. Its role in facilitating accurate pronunciation, fluent speech, and effective listening underscores its value in any language curriculum. Despite this, phonetics is often underutilized

or sidelined due to lack of awareness or teacher preparedness. This must change if learners are to achieve genuine communicative competence in today's globalized world.

By understanding and applying phonetic principles, learners gain not only technical knowledge but also practical confidence in their ability to speak and understand a second language. They become more attentive listeners, clearer speakers, and more effective communicators. These gains are especially critical in professional, academic, and intercultural contexts, where miscommunication can have serious consequences.

As this paper has argued, integrating phonetics into language pedagogy requires intentional curriculum design, robust teacher training, and creative classroom strategies. When implemented thoughtfully, phonetic instruction enriches every aspect of language learning. It is time to reframe phonetics not as a supplementary topic but as a foundational component of 21st-century language education.

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From “Secondary” to “Multidimensional”: The Innovative Path of Recitation Creation

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Abstract— At present, recitation should go beyond the narrow realm of "secondary creation" focused on text language and move towards a "multidimensional" creative space that includes "pan-secondary," "primary," and "tertiary" creation, forming a comprehensive and three-dimensional space that encompasses "primary—secondary—pan-secondary—tertiary." Recitation has seen diverse breakthroughs and transformations in terms of the creative subject, object, elements, dissemination, and communication relationships. This will inevitably lead to a brand-new creative pattern for recitation.

Keywords— Recitation, Secondary Creation, Multidimensional Space, Innovation



I. THE ORIGIN OF RECITATION THEORY

At present, when reciters use theories to explain and evaluate recitation, they often mention that they are using theories from broadcasting studies, such as secondary creation, the "three internals and four externals," perception-understanding-expression, and so on. It seems that without broadcasting studies, there would be no theoretical basis for recitation. Is there no theory for recitation? The reality is not the case!

Here, we do not discuss the long-standing traditional chanting and related literary theories. Looking only at the past century in China, influenced by Western drama and propelled by the Chinese vernacular language movement, the new-style recitation that emerged in the early 20th century has always been a focus of theoretical attention. Just looking at the 20 years from the 1930s to before the Cultural Revolution, scholars such as Qian Jibo, Zhu Ziqing, Huang Zhongsu, Hong Shen, Zhao Yuanren, Shu Xiowen, Xu Chi, Gao Lan, Ke Zhongping, Sun Qian, and Guo Xiaochuan have all provided theoretical discussions

and explorations on recitation from the aspects of literature, linguistics, and performance studies, and a number of discourses and monographs have been published in the media. For example, Huang Zhongsu's "Recitation Method" published in 1936, Xu Chi's "Poetry Recitation Manual" published in 1942, Hong Shen's "The Speech in Drama and the Recitation of Poetry" published in 1943, "The Recitation of Literary Works" published in 1956, and Wu Lang's "On Recitation" published in 1957, and so on.

Learning from history and reflecting on the present, many linguistic expression theories in Chinese broadcasting and performance studies have largely drawn nourishment from recitation. When we talk about recitation now, we always mention broadcasting and performance studies, which is nothing but a disregard for the history of recitation and ignorance of recitation theory.

Since recitation has a theoretical basis, why is it that no one mentions it at present, but instead frequently borrows theories from other disciplines? There are three reasons: 1. The traditional linguistic research that focuses

on written language and neglects spoken language has ignored the study of verbal expression, resulting in theoretical lag; 2. The recitation itself focuses on practice and neglects theory, leading to stagnation in theoretical research; 3. The rapid development of disciplines such as broadcasting and performance studies has promoted their theories to cover all types of verbal artistic expression.

Recitation, rooted in linguistics, has gradually lost its theoretical research forefront and depth under the influence of the linguistic discipline's research orientation. Recitation itself, influenced by political orientation, has been attached to literary and political activities, with many people involved but few focusing on research and summary. The discontinuity or weakness of theory has made it increasingly dependent and narrowed its path. More importantly, the rapid development of mass media and the vigorous advance of the broadcasting discipline have led to the broadcasting theory, which draws on recitation theory, to integrate it into a broader theoretical framework with its relatively broad vision. To some extent, the expansion of the field of broadcasting theory has a strong discursive hegemony. Over time, recitation itself has lost its voice. However, broadcasting studies do not deny that it draws on the nutrients of recitation theory. For example, Mr. Zhang Song mentioned in the preface of "The Foundation of Broadcasting Creation": "For a long time, the foundation of broadcasting creation has drawn too many rules from other linguistic arts and has few of its own characteristics." However, many broadcasting workers have gradually forgotten this.

We know that the initial establishment of broadcasting theory was limited to the narrow field of news broadcasting. When Mr. Zhang Song interpreted the concept of "the correct creative path of broadcasting," he pointed out that the creative subject of broadcasting is "journalists." However, since both are linguistic arts, they naturally have similarities and commonalities. Whether it is the perception-understanding-expression of the text or some specific techniques, it is feasible to explain recitation with broadcasting theory without knowing the theory of recitation. However, this feasibility is limited. The genres, contexts, forms of dissemination, and reception expectations that recitation faces are quite different from those of broadcasting. If this is not recognized, recitation

will become broadcasting and lose its independent artistic personality. This kind of recitation studies derived from broadcasting also directly affects our aesthetic evaluation of many elements of recitation, such as timbre, vocal cavity, and the subjectivity of expression. It seems that only Mandarin can be recited, and only the so-called "professional timbre" can be recited. These are all caused by the strong influence of broadcasting theory and the neglect of the characteristics of recitation itself.

II. "SECONDARY CREATION": THE SHACKLES OF RECITATION INNOVATION

The preceding section devoted considerable space to clarifying the status of recitation theory, primarily because recitation has been profoundly influenced by theories from broadcasting and performance studies. It has confined itself to a narrow theoretical domain, thereby impeding its own development. At the core of this issue lies the concept of "secondary creation."

"Secondary creation" refers to the linguistic expression creation based on the primary creation of the text. The object of this creation is "text language," emphasizing the perception and understanding of language, as well as the emotional mobilization and vocal creation based on this. This type of creation is clearly the core of the main creative work in recitation. It is the essence of recitation as a linguistic art. However, when we return to the essential theory of recitation, this creation limited to the "secondary" level is a dependent type of creation. It is a creation that significantly loses the personality of the creator. I refer to this as the narrow sense of "secondary" creation.

On the one hand, reciters want to highlight the individuality of their recitation, but on the other hand, they are constrained by the "primary" control of the text and the author. Therefore, within the realm of "secondary creation," it is very difficult, or almost impossible, to find space for innovation. Many so-called "innovations" are nothing more than new understandings and expressions of the text from a certain perspective, but none can break free from the strict confines of the text. This "secondary creation," which is strictly dependent on text language, on the one hand, clarifies the importance of the text and the

path of creation based on the text. On the other hand, it severely restricts the innovation and development of recitation. This is by no means an exaggeration.

III. FROM "SECONDARY" TO "MULTIDIMENSIONAL": THE INNOVATIVE PATH OF RECITATION CREATION

"Multidimensional creation" is a reflection on "secondary creation." It represents a breakthrough in the inherent thinking of reciters and even creators of other types of art. The "multidimensional" aspect can be manifested in three ways:

(1) "Pan-Secondary" Creation: The so-called "pan-secondary" creation is in contrast to the traditional "secondary" creation, where the object of creation is merely the single element of "text language." That is, based on "text language," it uses a broader range of linguistic expression elements to more three-dimensionally present the deeper spiritual core of the text. We say that recitation is an art of spoken language. More broadly speaking, recitation is an art of sound, and even an audio-visual art. This is by no means an exaggeration! If recitation were only a narrow art of spoken language, then the visual presentation of recitation would be meaningless; if recitation were only a linguistic art, there would be no need for elements like music to enhance and reflect it. Recitation can completely break free from the narrow understanding of language and incorporate many expressive elements, such as music, sound effects, and visual images, which are broader "languages," to enhance the three-dimensional presentation of poetry and prose. However, it is important to note that no matter how many elements are included, spoken language remains the core element and occupies the dominant position. This is crucial for recitation. Otherwise, it would deviate from recitation and become another form of art.

In addition to the introduction of diverse elements, "pan-secondary" creation also emphasizes creative interpretation of the primary text. For example, it includes the external expression of inner speech in poetic texts, the multi-element enhancement of context, and the soundscape expression of historical background, among others. What is emphasized here is a kind of "secondary creation" with an adaptive nature, based on the primary creation.

(2) "Primary" Creation: The "primary" creation of recitation is not something new but has existed historically. This primary creation is first manifested in the creation of poetry and prose that belong to recitation itself. That is, the creation by reciters or literary authors is aimed at recitation. Their texts are created in accordance with the characteristics of recitation. The "recitation poetry" movement in China in the 1930s was the ultimate expression of recitation's "primary" creation. Among them, Mr. Gao Lan, an advocate of recitation poetry, created and recited a large number of recitation poems, which caused a strong response nationwide.

In the history of poetry development, there are many "recitation poems." Many classic works in classical poetry are also expressions of recitation's "primary" creation. Many poems were created and recited on the spot, and many poems and verses were widely sung as soon as they were created. This is because the poetry in classical poetry and verse was created for "recitation." There are also many such works in modern Chinese poetry, such as Dai Wangshu, Xu Zhimo, and Zhu Xiang, who emphasize musicality and vocal quality. However, influenced by Western poetry, the path of Chinese poetry creation has gradually transformed from "auditory" poetry to "visual" poetry. Many poems are becoming more and more distant from recitation. By "distant from recitation," it does not mean that these poems are not readable, but rather that they are becoming weaker in terms of vocal quality. The use of imagery, the refinement of language, and the narrowness of thought, among others, have made modern and contemporary poetry lack the power of "auditory" dissemination. This is also why many "recitation masters" still find it difficult to popularize many modern and contemporary "masterpieces."

Therefore, recitation needs primary creation and needs to create literature that belongs to recitation. Due to space limitations, this article will not elaborate on the issue of recitation literature. The characteristics and types of recitation literature will be discussed in a separate article in the future.

(3) "Tertiary" Creation: Recitation is a multidimensional activity composed of reciters, authors, audiences, contexts, and so on. The subject of "secondary" creation is the reciter; in "pan-secondary" creation, the

function of the reciter is expanded; the subject of "primary" creation is expanded from the reciter to the reciter or the creator of recitation literature; then the "tertiary" creation proposed here further expands the subject of creation.

"Tertiary" creation places recitation in the three-dimensional space of recitation activities, composed of reciters and audiences. The expression of the reciter and the reaction of the audience in the context form an echo. In the "secondary," "pan-secondary," and "primary" creations of the reciter, the reaction of the audience needs to be considered. When expressing on the spot, this comprehensive consideration is combined with the scene, and the immediate feedback of the audience is integrated into the recitation, forming another element of recitation, and can adjust the presentation of recitation in real time according to the feedback of the audience. This is similar to the small theater performance in drama.

As can be seen from the above, the "tertiary" creation of recitation can be divided into two contexts. One is the stage recitation on the spot; the other is the recitation that relies only on sound expression and has a dissemination distance from the audience, and cannot be created in real time. The former can integrate the reaction of the audience in advance and implement and adjust it on the spot; the latter is limited by the dissemination distance and only has the expected integration of the audience's reaction in the early stage of creation.

"Tertiary" creation is an experimental proposition. So far, no real recitation attempts have been seen. However, in terms of creative elements and interrelationships, this idea is feasible.

Moving from "secondary" to "multidimensional" is a breakthrough in concept and a macro expansion and innovation of recitation itself in terms of functional positioning, element composition, creative thinking, dissemination concept, and audience acceptance. In this way, recitation creation forms an open, diverse, and three-dimensional space.

Breaking free from the narrow realm of "secondary" creation focused on text language and moving towards a "multidimensional" creative space that includes "pan-secondary," "primary," and "tertiary" creation, and forming a comprehensive and three-dimensional space that

covers "primary—secondary—pan-secondary— tertiary," recitation has seen diverse breakthroughs and transformations in terms of the creative subject, object, elements, dissemination, and communication relationships. This also has great value for recitation teaching. This innovation will inevitably lead to a brand-new creative pattern in recitation theory, practice, and educational teaching.

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Psychopolitics and the Papered Self: Female Suffering in Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*

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Abstract— *In a room wallpapered with madness, a woman crawls in circles, not just across the floor, but through the thick residue of a culture that has pathologized her very being. What begins as quiet discomfort with the décor becomes a descent into psychological collapse—a collapse orchestrated not by an inner weakness, but by the tightening noose of patriarchal medical care. The Yellow Wallpaper is not merely a gothic tale of nervous breakdown—it is a mirror turned toward the psychiatric practices and domestic ideologies of the 19th century, reflecting the cost of silencing women in the name of science and love. This paper explores the intersection of psychopolitics, melancholia, and female suffering in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's work, drawing on theoretical insights from Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, and Gilman's autobiographical experiences. By contextualizing the protagonist's descent into madness within 19th-century medical discourse and sociocultural expectations of femininity, this study interrogates how gendered notions of mental illness were both pathologized and politicized. Through this multidisciplinary lens, the paper argues that *The Yellow Wallpaper* not only critiques medical misogyny but also performs a proto-feminist poetics of rebellion against the silencing of women's mental distress.*



Keywords— *Madness, medical misogyny, psychopolitics, female suffering, feminist literary criticism.*

"There are things in that paper which nobody knows but me, or ever will."

—Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "*The Yellow Wallpaper*"

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly attention to *The Yellow Wallpaper* has spanned feminist, psychoanalytic, and historical approaches. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's influential *The Madwoman in the Attic* positioned literary madness as a subversive response to the silencing of female voices in patriarchal literature. Elaine Showalter's historical work on hysteria and the rest cure further contextualized the story within nineteenth-century psychiatry. More recent feminist theorists have drawn on Kristeva's work to explore female melancholia as a structural condition tied to repression and loss of identity.

Michel Foucault's historiography, less often directly applied to literary texts, has become increasingly relevant in examining how madness is socially constructed and

institutionally policed. Scholars such as Shoshana Felman and Dianne Hunter have noted the usefulness of combining Foucauldian analysis with literary narratives that depict madness because of social power dynamics. This paper builds on these works by synthesizing Foucault's theory of madness and Kristeva's melancholia in a close reading of Gilman's text.

II. INTRODUCTION

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) endures as a seminal feminist text that uncovers the fraught nexus of mental illness, gender, and domestic ideology. "*The Yellow Wallpaper* has since become a case study of the psychical consequences of the masculine

refusal to listen to a woman's words." (Thrallkill, 526) Written after Gilman's own traumatic experience with the "rest cure" prescribed by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, the story allegorizes a woman's psychological unravelling under the guise of medical and marital care. Long read as a critique of Victorian domesticity and patriarchal medicine, the narrative invites a deeper examination of the structures that pathologize and politicize female suffering.

Examining *The Yellow Wallpaper* through the lenses of Julia Kristeva's melancholia and Michel Foucault's psychopolitics, this paper situates its analysis within Gilman's biographical context. Kristeva's conception of melancholia as a psychic disorder rooted in a loss that cannot be acknowledged or assimilated illuminates the narrator's fragmentation and repression of selfhood. Foucault's insights into the power dynamics of psychiatric discourse help unravel the husband-physician's disciplinary role, casting the narrator's madness not as deviance but as resistance. Finally, Gilman's autobiographical writings, especially her reflections on the failures of the rest cure, offer a first-person lens through which the story can be read as both testimony and critique.

Reclaiming Gilman's haunting short story as a psychopolitical text, the paper reads the protagonist's "madness" not as an aberration but as a response to systemic repression. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's theory of melancholia, it explores how female suffering is internalized and rendered unspeakable within symbolic language. Michel Foucault's critique of institutional power offers a framework for analysing the "rest cure" as a disciplinary technology that rewrites female subjectivity under the guise of care. Finally, Gilman's biography—specifically her firsthand experience with psychiatric treatment—grounds the narrative in a historical reality that is as disturbing as the fiction it produced.

In fusing biography, theory, and narrative, this paper contends that *The Yellow Wallpaper* is a work of strategic resistance: a story that breaks down as its narrator does, exposing the structures that demand women suffer in silence. Madness, in this case, is not failure—it is revolt.

By integrating these voices, this study positions *The Yellow Wallpaper* not merely as a tale of personal madness, but as a potent political intervention—one that reveals how gender, medicine, and language converge to produce and silence the suffering woman. In doing so, the paper contributes to ongoing feminist and literary conversations about the aesthetics and politics of mental health in literature.

Adopting an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, this paper integrates literary analysis with critical theory to examine *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Michel Foucault's

Madness and Civilization provides the historical and philosophical foundation for understanding how madness is constructed and regulated by institutional forces, particularly within the medical establishment. Foucault's work reveals how modern societies have framed mental illness not solely as a clinical issue but as a political and social construct, often enforced through spatial confinement as a form of discipline. Complementing this structural critique, Julia Kristeva's *Black Sun* offers a psychoanalytic perspective on melancholia as a response to unmourned and unrecognized loss, particularly within the context of female subjectivity. Through close textual analysis, the paper explores how the story's narrative form, imagery, and character dynamics reflect these broader theoretical concerns. While Foucault exposes the mechanisms of institutional control, Kristeva's insights illuminate the internal psychic toll of patriarchal repression. In *Black Sun*, she theorizes melancholia as a psychic rupture resulting from a loss that cannot be symbolized or socially mourned—an experience that, for women, often manifests as a fragmented self. Anchoring this analysis in the historical context of nineteenth-century psychiatry, the paper also engages with the rest cure prescribed by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, whom Gilman explicitly critiques in both her fiction and autobiographical writings. Ultimately, the study situates *The Yellow Wallpaper* within evolving discourses on gender, mental illness, and domesticity.

Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* reconfigures madness not as an intrinsic pathology but as a construct produced through historical processes of exclusion and institutionalization. Foucault asserts that, by the nineteenth century, madness was sequestered, categorized, and treated under a "medical gaze" that sought to normalize and control deviant behaviour (Foucault). Particularly, women's bodies became sites upon which social anxieties about domesticity, sexuality, and autonomy were inscribed.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the narrator's descent into madness is not a natural deterioration but a consequence of the so-called "rest cure" imposed by her husband, John, a physician. This cure, which enforces passivity, confinement, and the denial of creative expression, mirrors what Foucault terms the "great confinement"—a mechanism to silence those who disrupt the social order. The narrator's mental collapse thus emerges not from internal pathology but from the external, systemic oppression that demands her submission and erasure.

"The physical pain is incontestably real, that it seems to confer its quality of 'incontestable reality' on that power that has brought it into being" (Thrallkill, 525)

Julia Kristeva, in *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, offers a psychoanalytic lens to understand melancholia as a profound, pre-linguistic grief, often tied to a loss that cannot be fully mourned or articulated. For women, Kristeva argues, melancholia often results from the internalization of patriarchal prohibitions that foreclose avenues for self-expression and autonomy.

In this context, gendered hermeneutics becomes essential to the paper's approach, offering a critical method for understanding how patriarchal systems of interpretation shape the meaning of madness, identity, and expression. The narrator is not simply misdiagnosed—she is misread and denied interpretive agency by both medical institutions and societal norms. Her melancholia can be seen as stemming from a loss of self that the dominant patriarchal culture refuses to recognize. Her confinement strips her of meaningful language and social agency, leaving her to identify with the inanimate—the grotesque wallpaper pattern that increasingly mirrors her fragmented psyche. In peeling away the wallpaper, the narrator performs an act of symbolic mourning and self-liberation, albeit through madness. “For as I will explain, Gilman’s historical moment is marked by the incursion of the literary into the medical, within the nascent discourse of psychotherapeutics.” (Thraillkill, 527)

The “woman behind the wallpaper” becomes a metaphor for the buried, melancholic self. As Kristeva notes, melancholia is “a language that is not a language,” and the narrator’s increasing obsession with the wallpaper constitutes a symbolic, though fragmented, form of expression (Kristeva, p. 43)

Her identification with the trapped woman culminates in a moment of transgressive liberation when she declares: “I’ve got out at last... And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back!” (Gilman, 1892). In this moment, madness becomes an assertion of subjectivity, albeit through destruction. Kristeva would interpret this as the melancholic subject reclaiming her lost identity through the collapse of the symbolic order that had erased her.

The creeping figure in the wallpaper becomes an emblem of all women trapped by domestic ideology. The act of tearing down the wallpaper is thus revolutionary, symbolizing the rejection of imposed roles. The narrator’s creeping around the room, her identification with the “woman behind the wallpaper,” becomes a transgressive act that blurs the boundaries between sanity and insanity, private and public spheres. As feminist scholar Sandra Gilbert notes, the story “dramatizes the ways in which patriarchal definitions of female sanity serve to imprison women in infantilized roles.” (Gilbert and Gubar, p. 735–739)

Gilman’s text locates madness within the seemingly benign space of the home, revealing how the domestic sphere, idealized as a site of feminine virtue, also served as a carceral institution. In line with Foucault’s analysis, the home becomes a microcosm of the asylum, where surveillance, control, and normalization are enacted under the guise of care.

John’s paternalistic control over his wife exemplifies the medicalization of female behaviour that pathologized emotional expression, intellectual ambition, and creative desires as signs of hysteria or nervous disorders. The narrator’s persistent journaling in *The Yellow Wallpaper* functions as both an act of resistance and a melancholic effort to preserve a sense of self within a repressive, medicalized domestic environment. Although her husband forbids intellectual activity, claiming it exacerbates her “nervous condition,” the narrator continues to write in secret. This act of disobedience is central not only to her narrative agency but to understanding how mental illness is gendered and controlled through language, or more precisely, through the denial of a woman’s access to meaningful expression.

In Michel Foucault’s analysis of madness in *Madness and Civilization*, the mad subject is denied the right to speak, as the modern medical system replaces the voice of the afflicted with the voice of the expert. (Foucault) Under the “medical gaze,” the body becomes a site of observation, discipline, and silence, particularly when the subject is female. This gaze is present in *The Yellow Wallpaper* in the figure of John, the narrator’s husband and physician, who insists that she avoid all “stimulating” activity, including writing, reading, and thinking. He tells her, “You are gaining flesh and colour, your appetite is better, I feel really much easier about you.” (Gilman, 1997) His assessment is not based on what the narrator feels, but on what he observes and prescribes. She, in turn, writes secretly: “I must say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!” (Ibid., 9.)

This covert journaling can thus be read as an act of Foucauldian resistance—an effort to reclaim subjectivity in a system designed to render her voiceless. It is a transgressive assertion of agency, in direct opposition to the institutionalized role imposed on her. The diary becomes the only space in which the narrator can record her inner reality, which the rest of the world seeks to erase.

Furthermore, Kristeva’s notion of melancholia as an “unspeakable grief” elucidates why the narrator’s attempts at self-articulation through writing are repeatedly thwarted. John’s prescriptions further police language already insufficient for expressing her condition. In this context, her breakdown can be read as a refusal of linguistic and social

frameworks that refuse to accommodate female differences. While the journal serves as an act of defiance, it also reveals the narrator's increasing entrapment in what Julia Kristeva would call melancholia—a form of mourning for a loss that cannot be consciously articulated or socially recognized. For Kristeva, melancholia is distinguished from normative mourning by its structure: the subject cannot locate or name what has been lost and therefore cannot process it through language. The loss is psychic and pre-symbolic, disintegrating the speaking subject.

In this light, the narrator's writing is an attempt to resist the descent into inarticulate despair. Yet her entries are fragmented, erratic, and increasingly irrational, reflecting the psychological disintegration Kristeva describes. Early in the story, her language is relatively coherent, but as the narrative progresses, the syntax becomes disrupted, and the entries become shorter and more obsessive, mirroring the fracturing of her identity. She writes, "There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will. Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day." (Gilman, 1997)

This statement reflects a shift: her writing becomes not a mirror of reality, but a projection of her internal breakdown. The journal records a melancholic merging with the other—the "woman behind the wallpaper"—a Kristevan figure of the abject, the unassimilated, and the excluded. The narrator's inability to mourn the loss of her freedom, creativity, and autonomy leads her to embody that very loss in her writing, which becomes a form of speech from the margins of subjectivity.

Gilman's story does not simply depict a descent into madness—it stages madness as a critique of the social structures that define and enforce it. The narrator's madness is at once the symptom of her repression and the vehicle of her resistance. Her descent is not into irrationality, but into a different rationality—one that exposes the absurdity of the norms around her.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* is far more than a tale of personal psychological decline—it is a searing indictment of the sociomedical systems that defined, confined, and silenced women in the name of care. Through the lenses of Michel Foucault's psychopolitics and Julia Kristeva's theory of melancholia, the story emerges as a multifaceted exploration of how madness is produced not simply as a medical condition but as a response to systemic repression. Foucault's analysis reveals the narrator's domestic space as a microcosm of the asylum—her husband as both caregiver and jailor—while Kristeva's melancholia illuminates the internal devastation wrought by a loss of identity, voice, and meaning.

In this context, the narrator's madness is not pathology but protest. Her descent is a radical act of disobedience—a breakdown that doubles as a breakthrough, a rebellion against the symbolic and material conditions that render her voiceless. Her obsessive fixation on the wallpaper, her clandestine writing, and her eventual identification with the "woman behind the wallpaper" all mark a refusal to be contained by the interpretive frameworks of medicine, marriage, and domestic ideology.

Gilman's narrative strategy mirrors this rebellion: as the narrator's mind fragments, so too does the structure of the text, disrupting coherence and resisting the authority of rationalist discourse. This textual instability becomes its mode of resistance, suggesting that the act of writing, even in disarray, is a form of reclaiming subjectivity. The story thus becomes both a critique and an enactment of the struggle for female autonomy.

Ultimately, *The Yellow Wallpaper* stages madness not as personal failure but as political revolt—a revolt against a world that refuses to listen to women unless they are silent. By uniting critical theory with historical and biographical analysis, this paper affirms Gilman's story as an early feminist intervention, one that exposes how deeply the personal is entwined with the political, and how madness can serve not only as a symptom of oppression but also as a language of resistance.

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Culinary Narratives on Instagram: The Power Dynamics and Cultural Implications of Digital Food Influencers

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Abstract— This paper will examine the role of food influencers on Instagram in shaping contemporary culinary culture and identity. It will explore how these influencers use visual storytelling, hashtags, and self-presentation strategies to craft digital food narratives that resonate globally. The study will also address the broader cultural implications of these narratives, including their role in reinforcing or challenging traditional food norms, influencing taste perceptions, and creating digital food hierarchies.

Keywords— Digital Food Influencers, Hashtags, Self-Presentation, Food Hierarchies, Instagram.



I. INTRODUCTION

The digital age has transformed the way food is consumed, not only in a physical sense but also in the virtual spaces where culinary cultures are shared, performed, and redefined. Instagram, as one of the most influential social media platforms, has emerged as a critical site for the construction and dissemination of culinary narratives, creating new forms of cultural capital and power dynamics within the global food industry. Digital food influencers, through meticulously curated images and evocative storytelling, have become powerful cultural intermediaries, shaping public perceptions of food, taste, and identity. This paper examines the cultural and historical contexts that have shaped contemporary food discourse on Instagram, exploring how digital food influencers perpetuate or challenge established hierarchies in the culinary world. By tracing the evolution of food and dining practices from medieval Europe to the present, it highlights the ongoing impact of social status, technological innovation, and globalization on food culture. It also interrogates the visual and performative aspects of online food content, revealing how platforms like Instagram have redefined the act of eating into a form of visual consumption, where the image of food can be as significant as the taste itself. As the line between personal expression and commercial influence continues to blur, this paper seeks to unravel the power

dynamics embedded in digital food narratives, offering a critical perspective on how Instagram influencers are reshaping global food cultures and influencing culinary trends. In doing so, it situates digital food discourse within broader cultural and historical frameworks, providing a nuanced understanding of the social forces that shape contemporary food consumption.

II. THE GROWTH OF INSTAGRAM AS A VISUAL PLATFORM

Instagram, launched in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, began as a photo-sharing app for iPhone users, with a focus on visual storytelling and real-time updates (Laestadius, 2018). Initially promoted as a "fun and quirky way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures," it quickly evolved into one of the world's most popular visual social media platforms (Highfield & Leaver, 2015). By June 2016, Instagram boasted over 500 million active users, generating 95 million posts daily and receiving 4.2 billion likes (Laestadius, 2018, p. 573). This rapid growth reflected its appeal, particularly among teens and young adults, positioning it as a key player in digital culture (Duggan, 2015). Despite its popularity, academic research on Instagram has lagged that on platforms like Twitter, partly due to Instagram's relative youth and the

visual nature of its content, which resists typical "big data" analytical approaches (Highfield & Leaver, 2015). The platform's name itself reflects its founders' original mission to connect the world through instant, image-based sharing, drawing on the concept of "instant" photography and "telegram"-like communication (Instagram, 2018).

Facebook's acquisition of Instagram for \$1 billion in April 2012 marked a turning point, adding features like filters, video uploads, and algorithm-based feeds that have significantly shaped user behavior (Metz, 2012). The introduction of Instagram Stories in 2016, modeled after Snapchat's disappearing posts, further shifted the platform's structure, encouraging more frequent and ephemeral content sharing (Sloane, 2017). This blend of permanent and transient media has reinforced Instagram's emphasis on visual content, setting it apart from text-heavy platforms like Twitter (Marwick, 2015, p. 139).

2.1 User Engagement and Algorithmic Timelines

Instagram's transition from a chronological feed to an algorithmic one in June 2016 sparked widespread user backlash, highlighting the tensions between platform design and user expectations (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). This shift reflected a broader trend toward algorithmic curation, where user interests, past interactions, and relationship strength determine content visibility (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2018, p. 34). These algorithms, which continually evolve, shape not only the visibility of individual posts but also the broader power dynamics within the Instagram ecosystem, influencing whose voices are amplified and whose are marginalized (Gillespie, 2018).

Research suggests that algorithmic feeds can reinforce existing inequalities by prioritizing content from high-engagement accounts, often those with the financial and technical resources to optimize their visibility (Bucher, 2018, p. 112). This has significant implications for digital food influencers, who rely on platform visibility to maintain their brand identities and audience reach. Despite user protests, including the viral #RIPInstagram hashtag, overall engagement levels have remained stable, suggesting that users adapt to these algorithmic shifts over time (Bucher, 2018).

2.2 Community Guidelines and Content Moderation

Instagram's community guidelines are designed to create a "safe place for inspiration and expression," but they also reflect the platform's power to shape public discourse (Gillespie, 2018, p. 49). These guidelines regulate everything from spam to nudity, imposing a corporate vision of appropriate content that often conflicts with the diverse cultural norms of its global user base (Instagram, 2025). The platform's evolving approach to sensitive content, such as its handling of eating disorder-related

posts, highlights the complex relationship between community standards and corporate interests (Cobb, 2017). Moderation practices on Instagram, including automated content filtering and human review, illustrate the tensions between platform control and user autonomy. For instance, while Instagram has banned certain pro-eating disorder hashtags, users often circumvent these restrictions through creative tagging, reflecting the ongoing struggle between platform governance and user agency (Cobb, 2017).

2.3 Hashtags as Cultural Markers

Hashtags are a fundamental part of Instagram's ecosystem, serving both as tools for content discovery and as markers of digital identity (Laestadius, 2018, p. 576). They facilitate community formation by creating searchable, context-rich clusters of content that reflect shared values and cultural practices (Baym, 2015, p. 73). Instagram's generous hashtag limit (up to 30 per post) and its restriction on excessive tagging reflect the platform's efforts to balance user creativity with spam prevention (Instagram, 2025). Certain hashtags, like #foodporn or #tbt (Throwback Thursday), have become central to the cultural identity of Instagram, blending personal storytelling with digital nostalgia (Humphreys, 2018, p. 111). This dynamic supports the formation of micro-communities around specific food cultures, from veganism to gourmet dining, reinforcing the platform's role as a cultural archive as well as a marketing tool (Carah & Shaul, 2018, p. 69).

III. THE RISE OF DIGITAL FOOD INFLUENCERS

Digital food influencers occupy a unique space within the Instagram ecosystem, blending aspirational branding with authentic self-presentation to cultivate loyal followings (Abidin, 2018, pp. 15-16). Unlike traditional celebrities, these influencers often engage in microcelebrity practices, using strategic self-disclosure to build intimate, ongoing relationships with their audiences (Abidin, 2018). Sponsored content, lifestyle showcases, and carefully curated feeds are all part of this influencer toolkit, reflecting a broader shift toward entrepreneurial self-branding in digital spaces (Leaver, 2018, p. 125).

3.1 Online Reputation Management, E-Personality, and Trolling in the Context of Digital Food Influencers

Social media platforms like Instagram have become powerful tools for identity construction, reputation management, and self-presentation, particularly in the context of digital food influencers. These influencers carefully curate their online personas to create desirable narratives around their culinary experiences, often using selective image display and strategic language choices to

craft a specific digital identity (boyd & Ellison, 2007). This performative aspect of social media is crucial to understanding how power dynamics unfold within digital food cultures.

The creation of a digital identity on Instagram involves a complex process of self-presentation, where users consciously select images, captions, and interaction styles to shape how they are perceived by their audience (Hogan, 2010). For food influencers, this often means highlighting aesthetically pleasing dishes, upscale dining experiences, or artisanal food preparations that signal sophistication and exclusivity (Hogan, 2010). This curated self is not merely a reflection of offline identities but rather an extension that selectively amplifies certain traits while downplaying others (Amichai-Hamburger, 2002). As Zhao et al. (2008) note, social media acts as a stage where users perform identity through a mix of visual and textual cues, creating a digital self that is often more polished and aspirational than its offline counterpart.

The concept of an e-personality is particularly relevant to digital food influencers. This term refers to the unique, often exaggerated, online persona that individuals craft to engage their audiences and enhance their digital reputations (Aboujaoude, 2011). For example, an influencer known for fine dining might emphasize traits like elegance and refinement, while those focused on street food might adopt a more playful, adventurous tone. These carefully managed personas can diverge significantly from offline identities, reflecting the performative nature of digital self-representation (Kenrick et al., 2005).

3.2 Impact of Personality Traits on Digital Narratives

Research indicates that while core personality traits are generally stable, the context of social media can lead to context-specific modifications in self-presentation (McCrae & Costa, 1987). On Instagram, where visual appeal and social validation are highly valued, food influencers might emphasize creativity, refinement, or authenticity depending on their target audience (Marcus et al., 2006; Michikyan et al., 2014). For instance, those promoting farm-to-table narratives might foreground sustainability and authenticity, aligning their digital identities with broader social movements (Amichai-Hamburger, 2005).

3.3 Trolling and the Challenge of Authenticity in Digital Food Cultures

However, the authenticity of these carefully curated online personas can be challenged by the presence of trolls—users who deliberately disrupt digital narratives for amusement or provocation (Buckels et al., 2014). Trolling can undermine the credibility of food influencers by injecting cynicism, sarcasm, or outright hostility into their comment

sections (Phillips, 2015). For example, a troll might mock the perceived elitism of organic or farm-to-table influencers, exposing the power dynamics that shape online culinary cultures (Hogan & Quan-Haase, 2010). This dynamic reflects the broader cultural tensions between mainstream and subcultural movements within digital food discourse (Coleman, 2012).

Understanding these dynamics requires a nuanced approach to data analysis, as Big Data alone cannot fully capture the complexities of online identity performance (Anderson, 2008). While large-scale data analytics can identify broad patterns, the interpretive context of digital self-presentation, including the effects of trolling and e-personality construction, is essential for accurate analysis (Lohr, 2012; Lazer et al., 2014). Without this context, researchers risk oversimplifying or misinterpreting the rich, multilayered interactions that define Instagram food cultures (Caspi & Gorsky, 2006).

IV. INSTAGRAM'S INFLUENCE ON CULINARY CULTURE

Food has always been deeply intertwined with cultural identity, reflecting both the unique heritage of a region and the broader forces that shape global cuisine (Bell & Valentine, 1997). National dishes often become symbols of entire civilizations, like India's richly spiced curries or France's renowned cheeses and wines. These culinary traditions have evolved through processes of colonization, migration, trade, and cultural exchange, making food a powerful marker of identity and status (Mintz, 1986). Today, platforms like Instagram have amplified this relationship, transforming the ways food is perceived, presented, and consumed globally (Turner, 2020). Instagram, with its highly visual format, has revolutionized food culture, making local dishes globally recognizable and allowing culinary narratives to cross borders with unprecedented speed. However, this digital democratization of food culture comes with significant challenges. The platform's focus on visual aesthetics often reduces complex culinary traditions to shareable snapshots, reinforcing certain hierarchies and power dynamics within the food industry (Dyche, 2012). For instance, the popularity of certain dishes can obscure the labor and cultural knowledge required to produce them, reflecting broader inequalities in the global food system (Mintz, 1986).

4.1 The Role of Digital Food Influencers in Shaping Cultural Narratives

Digital food influencers play a crucial role in shaping these narratives, acting as cultural intermediaries who control the visibility of certain cuisines and food practices. These

influencers often present idealized versions of culinary experiences, reinforcing specific cultural narratives that may or may not reflect the reality of the foods they promote (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). For example, the #AdEnough campaign led by British chef Jamie Oliver aimed to reduce children's exposure to junk food advertisements. The campaign utilized Instagram's visual culture, encouraging users to share images of themselves with their eyes covered, symbolizing the need to protect children from harmful food marketing (Turner, 2020). This campaign, which led to the banning of high-fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS) advertisements on London's public transportation system, highlights the platform's power to influence public policy (Turner, 2020).

4.2 Culinary Hierarchies and Social Status

The way food is portrayed on Instagram also reflects historical culinary hierarchies. In the classical period, the diet of a society was closely linked to its social structure. The elite consumed complex, multi-course meals, while the lower classes relied on simple grains and locally available foods (Montanari, 1999). The act of sharing lavish meals was both a display of wealth and a reaffirmation of social status (Amouretti, 1999). This tradition persists in the digital age, where food influencers often emphasize luxury and exclusivity in their posts, promoting high-status foods like truffles, caviar, and wagyu beef while downplaying the value of everyday, staple ingredients (Dalby, 2000).

This digital representation of food often overlooks the economic and cultural significance of rural food practices, reinforcing long-standing power imbalances. Historically, rural communities relied on self-sufficiency and local production, while urban populations depended on market economies for their food supply (Montanari, 1999). On Instagram, this divide is often replicated, with street food and traditional dishes sometimes portrayed as more "authentic" but less prestigious than the refined, curated plates associated with high-end dining (Morineau, 1999). This dichotomy reflects a broader tendency to associate urbanity with progress and sophistication, while rural practices are seen as traditional or even backward (Heal, 1990). Beyond individual influencers, Instagram has become a significant platform for food politics. Movements like the #SugarTax and #BiteBack2030 campaigns have used the platform to build public support for policy changes, demonstrating the potential for digital food narratives to shape real-world outcomes (Turner, 2020). These campaigns challenge the dominance of corporate food producers and promote more equitable, health-focused approaches to nutrition, reflecting a broader push to democratize food systems (Mintz, 1986).

4.3 History of Culinary Hierarchies

The social dynamics surrounding food consumption have historically reflected broader societal structures, with significant implications for both the past and present. As Mennell (1996) notes, food practices in medieval Europe varied less by region and more significantly by social class, emphasizing the deeply entrenched power structures that dictated who had access to diverse and luxurious foods. For instance, Duby's (1961) study on the Knights Hospitaller at the Commanderie de Saliers in 1338 revealed stark differences in the food budgets of preceptors, brothers, and ploughmen, highlighting the material divisions in medieval society. This pattern of dietary stratification underscores the ways in which food can serve as a marker of social status, a concept still visible in contemporary digital food cultures, where the aesthetics of food can signal class and lifestyle (Mennell, 1996; Duby, 1961).

The preference for specific food items also reflected available resources. In Northern Europe, limited access to fresh ingredients led to a reliance on preserved foods, such as salted or dried meats, complemented by costly spices for flavor enhancement (Tannahill, 1975). Black (1985) further emphasizes that such spices, while rare in England due to their high cost, were more commonly used in other parts of Europe, reinforcing the idea that culinary habits were deeply influenced by both economic status and geographical location. As Spencer (2003) points out, even within this context of scarcity, Anglo-Norman cuisine incorporated sophisticated elements from Persian and Mediterranean cooking traditions, a precursor to the modern fusion trends celebrated on Instagram today, where diverse culinary influences are often showcased as symbols of cultural capital and cosmopolitan identity.

4.4 The Origins of Restaurants and Their Digital Legacy

The rise of the modern restaurant in late 18th-century France marked a significant shift in public dining, transforming both the social practices surrounding eating and the economic models that sustained them (Mennell, 1996; Spang, 2019). Before the advent of the restaurant, communal dining at tables d'hôte was the norm, where guests shared a fixed menu at a common table (Glanville & Young, 2002). This shift towards individualized dining, where customers ordered à la carte in private settings, reflected broader cultural changes towards personal choice and individualized consumption, trends that resonate with the personalized culinary storytelling found on platforms like Instagram (Brillat-Savarin, 1994). Restaurants also played a key role in the democratization of food, allowing chefs to transition from serving elite patrons to a broader, more diverse clientele (Mennell, 1996). This transition

mirrors the democratizing effect of social media, where digital influencers can reach global audiences without the gatekeeping traditionally found in the culinary world. As Mennell (1996) notes, the rise of restaurants enabled chefs to build personal brands, a process now accelerated by Instagram, where influencers can cultivate culinary personas that shape public tastes and trends.

4.5 Food Technology and the Digital Palate

The 20th century brought rapid technological advances in food production, preservation, and preparation, reshaping global culinary landscapes (Fischler, 1999). Technologies such as canning, freezing, and vacuum-packing revolutionized the accessibility and diversity of ingredients, paving the way for the convenience-driven, globalized food culture that digital influencers often celebrate (Spencer, 2004; den Hartog, 2003). For example, the popularity of sous-vide cooking, once reserved for fine dining, has now become mainstream through platforms like Instagram, where precise temperature control and visually appealing results align perfectly with the aesthetics of digital food content (Fischler, 1999; den Hartog, 2003).

As global migration increased in the late 20th century, so too did the blending of culinary traditions, leading to the rise of fusion cuisine (Ferguson & Zukin, 1998). Dishes like Tex-Mex, French Japanese, and Cal-Ital reflect the fluid nature of culinary identity, a theme that resonates strongly on social media, where global flavors are often celebrated as symbols of cultural hybridity (Ferguson & Zukin, 1998). Influential chefs like Alice Waters have championed this approach, merging local, sustainable ingredients with global techniques, thereby setting the stage for the locavore and farm-to-table movements that dominate many food influencers' narratives today (Ferguson & Zukin, 1998).

4.6 Food Porn and the Visual Consumption of Culinary Culture

The term "food porn," coined by Michael Jacobson in 1979, captures the intersection of visual pleasure and culinary excess (Turner, 2020). Today, the #foodporn hashtag is one of the most popular on Instagram, reflecting a cultural shift towards the visual consumption of food (Turner, 2020). Research shows that brightly colored, highly stylized dishes, often high in fat and sugar, dominate these posts, creating a digital hierarchy where the aesthetics of indulgence are prioritized over nutrition (Turner, 2020). This phenomenon underscores the power of visual storytelling in digital food culture, where images of food serve as both personal expression and social capital.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper has traced the historical evolution of food hierarchies, restaurant culture, technological advancements, and fusion cuisine to illustrate how these developments inform contemporary digital food discourse. In the medieval period, food choices were deeply intertwined with social status and regional availability, reflecting broader power structures that still influence culinary narratives today. The emergence of restaurants in 18th-century France democratized food consumption, creating a template for modern culinary entrepreneurship that digital influencers now leverage to reach global audiences. Technological innovations, from canning to sous-vide cooking, have transformed both professional and amateur kitchens, while the rise of fusion cuisine has blurred traditional culinary boundaries, reflecting the increasingly interconnected nature of global food cultures. These shifts have set the stage for the digital food landscape, where influencers use visual storytelling to shape public tastes and redefine culinary hierarchies. The popularity of "food porn" and the curated aesthetics of online food content underscore the power of visual appeal in contemporary food culture, aligning with historical trends that have long connected food with social status and cultural identity. As digital influencers continue to shape global food discourse, their impact on food culture and power dynamics will remain a critical area of study.

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Identity: Intersectionality of Queer and Postcoloniality in Selected 21st Century Indian Children's Fiction

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Abstract— *The intersection of Postcolonial and Queer theory can be directed towards their sustained interaction with contemporary politics of identity, including reflection on the categories and institutions, as well as the knowledge(s) and power plays through which social dynamics and people are structured and regulated, and how such dimensions impacted literature. Beyond this, and especially in its intersection with postcolonial studies, the destabilising effect of Queer theory, which subverts self-evident notions of power and marginality, centre and periphery, can be explored. A number of key connections between Queer and Postcolonial theory include epistemological and hermeneutical considerations; difference; marginality; agency; mimicry; and the quest for a new world order. As such Queer and Postcolonial theories both resist the tendency to think of identity as a collection of distinct categories (meaning they don't affect other identities) to which you either belong or don't. Rather, they concentrate on the intersectionality of identities to better understand how race is sexualized or gendered, or how disability is racialized or classed. Both theories argue that these identity categories are not inherent, universal, or "natural," instead critique state, national, and imperial powers, as well as colonial histories of dominance, for their construction while maintaining that they were a priori to colonial or state interventions, discourses, violence, and ideologies. The search for the texts yielded in few results as the resources were very scarce in the area of Indian Children's literature with specific focus on the intersectionality of Queer and Post Coloniality. This paper thus aims to understand Postcolonial and Queer theory's concern with identity and reject binaries against marginalised bodies and cultures in Indian Children's Literature before concluding with the importance of how literature on these issues include diversity.*



Keywords— *Intersectionality, Binaries, Identity, Queer, Post coloniality*

I. INTRODUCTION

The origins of queer theory can be found in LGBT studies, which focus on sexuality and gender. But the Queer theory quickly distanced itself from those approaches because it disagreed with the stable identities suggested by LGBT studies. Queer theory emphasises the fluid and performative nature of sexuality – or, more accurately, sexualities. It challenges socially established norms and dualistic categories, with a particular emphasis on sexual (heterosexual/homosexual), gender (male/female), class (rich/poor), and racial (white/non-white) classifications. It goes beyond these so-called "binaries" to challenge general political (private/public) and international binary orders

(democratic/authoritarian). Queer theory analyses and critiques societal and political norms, particularly as they relate to sexuality and gender experience. Queer theorists argue about sexuality and gender expression in the same way that feminists argue about gender as a socially constructed public and political affair. It provides an important avenue for deconstructing and then reconstructing established concepts and theories.

Post-Colonial and Queer Theory Intersections –An Overview

Postcolonial criticism is about a different focus and purpose, rather than a different hermeneutical method,

and it prioritizes ideology criticism and suspicion of hermeneutics (cf Punt 2003). The goal of this contribution is to juxtapose the postcolonial and the queer in order to explore specific theoretical convergences and divergences, as well as possible interaction between the two theoretical paradigms, building on earlier, preliminary work (Punt 2005) on the investigation of postcolonial and queer intersections. In short, Postcolonial theory alerts and assists Queer theory to move away from and to desist from either homogenizing same-sex love in a White, Western, capitalist and male gay model, and from its inverse, of Orientalizing which is exoticizing and othering, 'that blandly translates the "other" and obliterates all difference' (Hawley).

II. METHODOLOGY

A number of (often partially overlapping) categories can be used to analyze theoretical intersections, but in this paper Identity as a concept found in postcolonialism is briefly examined as a point of contact with Queer theory in selected 21st century Indian children's fiction. The texts that are taken up for discussion were:

The Boy & The Bindi (2016) by Vivek Shraya

Guthli Has Wings (2019) by Kanak Shashi

The Best at It (2020) by Maulik Pancholy

Ritu Weds Chandini (2020) by Ameya Narvankar

The Boy in the Cupboard (2021) by Harshala Gupta

The above texts were analyzed to investigate and challenge heteronormative assumptions about childhood. Further this paper also makes an attempt to look into how these assumptions influence the literature published and made available to young readers, as well as how overtly queer texts are frequently unavailable to young readers. Such omissions force young readers, particularly those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBTQI+), to look for depictions of queerness in subtexts beneath seemingly "straight" texts. While these queer subtexts can be identified by readers through the use of culturally and historically significant markers associated with queerness, even a text with a widely recognized queer subtext does not preclude straight readings. Similarly, a queer subtext can exist solely for the benefit of the reader, with no intentional work done on the part of the creators. Finally, queer subtexts work in subtle ways to subvert heteronormative assumptions while also creating recognizable representations of queerness.

III. DISCUSSION

Being brown has room for queerness in ways that Western culture does not.

- *The Boy and the Bindi*

The Boy & The Bindi is a lighthearted picture book about a young boy's fascination with the mother's bindi, a dot worn on the foreheads of South Asian women that has religious and marital roots but is commonly worn as an accessory. This text explores difference and self-acceptance, as well as the subversion of gender expectations. The boy discovers, with his mother's help, that wearing a bindi allows him to joyfully explore and express his differences—and that even a small "spot" can be meaningful and magical. The author, a transgender woman, wanted to use the bindi to complicate and investigate ideas about gender expression in South Asian children.

"When I first started wearing a bindi in public a few years ago, I noticed how many people stared. I found it strange and fascinating that even a dot on the forehead is gendered and thus uncomfortable when worn by someone who appears to be the wrong gender . . . it has been my experience that being brown allows for queerness in ways that Western culture does not (Shraya)."

She hopes that gender creative children will recognise themselves and their identities in the pages of *The Boy & The Bindi*, and that the book will inspire all children to "treasure and celebrate their own symbols and feelings of difference" (Shraya)."

This book's plot is similar to Julian is a Mermaid (2018), but with a significant difference. When the boy openly expresses his gender and cultural identity to his peers, he encounters some difficulties. There are no names in the book; the mother is referred to as Ammi's, which is the same as mother; I will therefore only refer to Ammi's as mother and the boy. The young boy is fascinated by his mother's dot on her forehead, just as Julian is by mermaids. The mother explains to her son why the bindi is so valuable. His mother later gives him a bindi, which he proudly wears. His classmates, on the other hand, have made some derogatory remarks. They are afraid of the reaction of others. The boy with the bindi, on the other hand, is unaware of the backlash that will be directed at him. He is unable to respond to the bullies, but he, like his mother, finds comfort and strength in wearing the bindi. The picture book educates us on Hindu culture. As the mother explains to her son, "the bindi keeps me safe and true" (Shraya).

The mother and son share a strong bond by pressing their foreheads against each other and touching their bindis. The bindi takes on a life of its own, providing

strength in difficult situations for both the boy and his mother. Throughout the book, there are various types of bindis with varying colours, designs, and shapes which represent that each bindi is unique and can be tailored to each individual's personality and gender. The story does an excellent job of normalising gender creative children in today's societies where they are greeted with joy and are treated as an equal. There are no comments on why he wants to dress up or what gender he identifies with. It is important to address an issue or stereotype like this to create an awareness among students to act in a strange way in the future.

Why do you keep saying I'm a boy when I'm a girl?" Guthli asks her mother.

- Guthli Has Wings

The next book for the discussion is *Guthli Has Wings* (2019) by Kanak Shashi. The main protagonist in the book, Guthli challenges societal norms. This book sends a beautiful message about loving yourself and doing what your heart desires. I believe that humans are far too complex to be confined to a binary gender division.

Understanding and acceptance of the LGBTQA+ community are still uncommon in our society. This book beautifully conveys the idea that the most important thing for that child is love and acceptance from his or her family, and society. The topic that adults refuse to understand is beautifully explained to children by subtly underlining the fact that there are many gender options, not just one, two, or three, but our social structure does not allow it. Guthli's story inspires the reader to imagine a world free of patriarchy's strict binaries and power structures, as well as the violence it causes.

Thus, *Guthli Has Wings* not only helps parents understand the simplicity of accepting their child, but it also helps children understand that there is nothing wrong with their trans identity. It is also critical to introduce cisgendered children to trans children in a way that allows them to accept trans children as they would any other child who conforms to the gender binary. Children learn to be compassionate and kind from a young age, and this book is a hope that children will grow up with trans children as their new normal.

Find one thing you're really good at and become The Best at It.

- The Best at It

Pancholy, as an LGBTQ child, never saw himself in the books he read. As a result, while it is a work of fiction, it is also a highly personal novel that reflects his own struggles with having to cope with his LGBTQ identity, as

well as the joy of discovering how to be the best version of oneself.

The Best at It, is about Rahul Kapoor, a 12-year-old Indian American boy who is only now realising he might be gay. He's anxious about it, and he's also being bullied at school for multiple layers of his identity, one of which is his queer identity. Rahul's perfectionism and need to win are all about proving his self-worth in a world where being different makes him feel inferior. Bhai tells him a story that convinces him that if he just excels at one thing, all of his other problems will vanish. So, accompanied by his best friend Chelsea, he embarks on a journey to prove his self-worth.

This is a story about friendship, family, and the courage it takes to live your truth. It's funny, charming, and incredibly touching. The new middle grade novel depicts Rahul, a 12-year-old boy, as he searches for something he excels at while dealing with OCD, racism (when he finally discovers his true talent and joins his school's Mathletes' team after many trials and tribulations, including football team auditions (which he fails miserably at) and professional acting auditions (where he faces racial discrimination). Finally, Rahul discovers that being the best entails finding something you enjoy doing and practising it until you master it, and trying to make sense of his feelings for his neighbour, Justin. What struck me the most about the book was Rahul's best friend, parents, and grandfather's acceptance of him for who he is. This novel stands out in offering a realistic possibility by demonstrating how an Indian family can be supportive of an LGBTQI+ child.

But what is wrong with that? Why shouldn't she marry Chandni *didi*?

-Ritu Weds Chandini

This innocent question is sufficient to sow the seed of questioning in the minds of aspiring readers about the nature of queer acceptance in Indian society. *Ritu Weds Chandni* is a children's book about Ayesha, a young girl who is eager to dance in her cousin Ritu's *baarat*. Ritu is marrying her girlfriend Chandni, but not everyone approves of the celebration, some relatives, neighbors, and even strangers object by literally 'raining' on their parade.

According to the author, this book was written for a better representation of the LGBTQ+ in Indian society. Weddings are a grand and obvious sign of acceptance in Indian society, with the *baraat* being a "very recognizable symbol" of North Indian weddings. Because the premise of *Ritu weds Chandni* is set in such a common Indian setting, it contributes to the positive visibility of same-sex love and leaves readers rooting for the couple.

The most important message from the novel being Intersectionality, the foundation of all social movements. Queer women's status is even more marginalised in patriarchal Indian society. I hope that by focusing on two women in this story, the conversation surrounding this book will be multifaceted and nuanced in its discussion of human rights.

This book also raises awareness of non-heteronormative love and aids in reducing the stigma associated with the subject. Parents who believe that introducing their children to queer love and acceptance will be difficult. As a result, *Ritu Weds Chandni* is an important piece of children's literature that will help children realise on their own that everyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, has the right to live a life of dignity and freedom. Instead of reprimanding readers for their homophobia, this book welcomes them into the world of queer love and it is a lovely celebration of love, as well as South Asian and LGBTQ+ cultures.

Darling, why don't you come out and play?

I wonder what you do in there all day?

They sneer at my pink bat, they laugh at my kitchen set...

- *The Boy in the Cupboard*

The Boy in the Cupboard is a heartfelt story about a boy named Karan, trying to understand himself and his place in the world. It is for anyone who has ever questioned something they were told they had to believe in. Children require stories in order to challenge themselves. This story used a real-life story to deliver a simple yet powerful message about gender inclusivity in a queer affirmative world. The protagonist feels safe by staying in his comfort zone, but he misses his friends and his daily playtime. Until one day, when Ma and Pa knock on the door, saying, 'Will you come out if I tell you that boys can be queens and anyone who says otherwise is plain mean?' Karan was aware that he was loved, and that was all that mattered to him. There was no stopping him from then on.

Harshala wanted a topic of smoothness and sensitivity to be handled without much resistance from the family, keeping the age of the readers in mind. It is reflected in Karan and his family's friendly exchange of dialogues. "As adults, we must develop an inclusive language." Prior to sexual orientation, children must be educated on gender roles and intersectional inclusivity. The title of the book is an attempt to develop that language. "It borrows from the metaphor of 'being in a closet,' but 'closet' is not a part of colloquial English in India," Harshala suggests.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion of the 5 texts, we can see that contemporary literature is making a move in terms of Identity representation; for example, when I was looking for books to analyse with gender creative characters, there were options to consider, which is a positive move. It is easy to forget that representation comes in many forms, and is not only separated topic by topic, in the analysis of the three contemporary books. Each of the 5 books challenged gender norms in their own unique way. The boy with the bindi demonstrates how one can be safe from within and stand up to negative comments while remaining true to their gender identity the other 4 texts emphasized the importance of the acceptance of the family, awareness of non-heteronormative love, accepting trans identity and as a result, neither queer spaces nor heteronormativity can be considered normal or standard. The plurality of voices can be justified by the expression of their own voice rather than the other's representation of the self.

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Focus on Social Status of African Americans in the United States of America

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Abstract— Africans are brought into the United States of America by slave traders and are sold to the white people as slaves. Slave masters used the black people to work in the plantation and to do all sorts of other odd jobs. The black people served the white people for more than three centuries and have gone through different odd situations in their real life. They have historically faced significant socioeconomic disparities. At present a significant number of African Americans attained bourgeois status. Dorothy West, the last leaf of Harlem Renaissance highlighted social status of African Americans in the United States of America. Going through works of Dorothy West highlighted social status of African Americans in this article.



Keywords— African Americans, slavery, social status, stratification, bourgeois status

The term ‘social’ originated from Latin word ‘socialis’ which means allied and from ‘socius’ which means friend. The system of structured social inequality and the structure of mobility in a society are called social stratification. Stratification is concerned with the ranking of people (Kimmel 64). Africans are brought into the United States of America by slave traders and are sold to the white people as slaves. Slave masters used the black people to work in the plantation and to do all sorts of other odd jobs. The black people served the white people for more than three centuries and have gone through different odd situations in their real life. Research reveals that the slavery has begun in the United States of America in the early seventeenth century. The first Africans in the colonial America are brought to Jamestown by a Dutch ship in 1619. Americans bought twenty slaves to work for a certain period of time. At the beginning days of the slavery, Africans are assigned land after their service and are considered as free Negroes. However, their settlement was involuntary. This way, one person has absolute power over the life, fortune, and liberty of another person. The humble beginning of slavery has plagued nearly every part of the United States of America. African slaves

occasionally revolted against their slave masters, and the result was usually severe punishment for the slaves.

Dorothy West, in her second novel, *The Wedding*, projected character named Gram born white and one who has biological relationship with the black people, prays to God like this:

My back is bent with the burden of living colored. Lift it from me in my last

days. Make my great-grand daughter your instrument. She’s marrying a man

true white. Put it in her listening mind to live like white. Put it in her loving

heart to carry me home to die. With all her life before her, she won’t refuse her

poor old Gram with all her life behind her. (West 30)

Gram’s daughter Josephine married a black man named Hannibal, son of Melisse who was formerly enslaved at Xanadu, the family’s plantation. Gram, the born aristocrat, lived surrounded by descendants of slaves. She has no choice but has to die among them, no grave to claim her but the one they put her in. Though Josephine was born in

rich family, incessant diseases in the family and failure in production due to lack of manpower pushed them to utter poverty. In these unavoidable circumstances Josephine decided to marry son of former slave of her family to escape from the terrible genteel poverty. There were no one to marry her in her own race because of poverty and her continued sickness. She thought the men with money were white trash that had robbed the aristocrats of their sovereignty, and would rather marry a colored man who knew he was dirt beneath her feet (*The Wedding* 32). There is racial discrimination in the United States of America, but one cannot separate the black people from the white people in building social relationships among them due to the stay of the black people for three centuries and interracial marriages and biological bonds among them. Dorothy West has projected these issues in her works. The black people have had mixed experiences with the white in their long stay in America and even there formed undivided social and biological bonds among them. However, the discrimination the black facing is not a deep rooted one, but the white people propagating it to their children and this way they are causing to exist it in the American society.

African Americans are striving to achieve equal social status with the white, but it seems, it is still a dream. However, there is a significant change in their social status that can be best illustrated with a brief overview of historical changes. Regarding their present status Dorothy West in her novel *The Wedding* states like this:

They formed a fortress, a bulwark of colored society. Their occupants could

boast that they, or even better their ancestors, had owned a home away from

home since the days when a summer hegira was taken few colored people

above the rank of servant. Though newer comers owned cottages in other

sections of the seaside town. Some very splendid house in neighborhoods

customarily called white, the Ovalites still outranked them. They had been the

vanguard. They were now the old guard. It would sound like sour grapes, "so

what?" (West 2)

There is a steady social and economic progress in the lives of African Americans. Some African Americans have almost reached to equal status of the white people in all aspects. They used education as a weapon to come out of the poverty and poor social living. Now, they have

money, enough not only to spend but also to save and to keep servants in their houses. They are college-bred, of good background and they are living graciously. Many of the black people are doctors, great professors, politicians, lawyers, businessmen and their titles made introductions so easy and self-explanatory. Dorothy West's novel, *The Wedding* portrays educational achievements of African Americans. In the novel, the character named Hannibal son-in-law of Gram and husband of Josephine has become the first Negro president of his college, and was the equal of his predecessors, because of his clock-round devotion to duty and his son-in-law Clark was a famous doctor. Clark Coles' father, daughter and his son-in-law were doctors and his mother was a great teacher and a very well known socialist and one who supported and helped poor dying Negroes. Frederick Douglass an African born slave learned to read and write, with the assistance of his master's wife and later he became a great orator and writer (Douglass 1). He has written a book named *Narratives of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and this book brought him name and fame. He was one of the most powerful leaders of the anti-slavery movement. He worked as an advisor to Abraham Lincoln. He became the first African citizen to hold a government position. He quoted on the relationship between progress and struggle, on the universality of sorrow, on the value of education, on the denial of justice, on the measuring injustice, on empowering youth, on moral growth, on the security of a nation, on the need for power, on free speech, on rebellion, on the consequence of slavery, on right versus wrong, on working for what you get, on the power of knowledge, on the necessity of irony, on remaining true to oneself, on the impenetrability of one's soul, on the color of one's character and on using the past to make a better future. He was the most influential African American of the nineteenth century. He spoke and wrote on behalf of a variety of reform causes. He devoted the bulk of his time, immense talent, and boundless energy to end slavery and gaining equal rights for African Americans. W.E.B Du Bois is acknowledged as one of the premier scholars of the twentieth century and a defining intellectual force of the civil rights movement. He has written the book named, *The Souls of Black Folks* and the book consisted insightful essays (Beloved Harlem 24). The veil is a predominant theme throughout the book. In his point of view, this veil separated the black and white populations and made it so that only African-Americans existed within the veil. It is from within this veil that the black population experienced oppression. While it is possible for the Negro to understand life from within the veil and also outside of it, it is not possible for the white people to fully understand the oppression experienced by the black race. The veil, thus, is not only a form of

oppression, but also insight into the experience of the Negro life. He emphasized that as long as the Negro existed, so did the veil. Zora Neale Hurston is another prominent African American writer. Her life and work influenced and inspired present important modern African American writers (Beloved Harlem 111). Her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* brought a great name to Hurston. This novel is most often celebrated for Hurston's unique use of language, particularly her mastery of rural Southern black dialect. Throughout the novel, Hurston used an interesting narrative structure, splitting the presentation of the story between high literary narration and idiomatic discourse.

The Harlem Renaissance, which is also known as New Negro Movement indicates improved social and cultural standards of African Americans. This movement also helped the black writers to have close relationship with the white writers and to project their coinciding ideas and expressions. The black through intellect and production of art challenged the pervading racism and stereotype to promote progressive or socialist politics and lead to racial and social integration. The research reveals that some white people appreciated the talent of the black people and started to re-examine their false notion that the black people are not improved one intellectually and mentally in various fields. Harold Bloom in his edited work; *The Harlem Renaissance* states that,

The legacy of the Harlem Renaissance is its art, its artists, its ideas. The

reactions they encountered are for our education. The Harlem writers did

not leave any "stone and mortar" institutions, but rather lived on as

"living institutions." What better institution than Arna Bootemps? While

the essence of the Renaissance was captured in the literature, what all this

meant was concretized in the manifestos. Alain Locke's New Negro,

Langston Hughes "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,"

contemporary issues of *The Crisis* and *Opportunity* magazines, all speak

to the phenomenon that was occurring in Harlem. (Harold Bloom 10)

The research reveals that the forces that created the renaissance are not created in an ethnic vacuum. Africans have their own culture and out of experience they generated art and artists. Certain developments in white

society and even world economics played an essential part in the emergence of the black renaissance. Synchronization of the literary and social revolt in the United States with the economic upswing that followed World War I brought about the mood necessary for black renaissance. The victims of European colonies throughout the world became subjects of concern and empathy. African Americans who settled down in the United States sought identification in the American society. Some prominent white people encouraged the black people to write well and to focus their views on various issues. Even black people also have such intense desire to show forth their literary talent to the white folk of United States of America. Elena Kramer, in his essay, "What was the Harlem Renaissance: What effect did it have on American Culture?," states that, the educated part of the African community was convinced that they could oppose the stereotype by proving their intellectual competence; they hoped that an increased cultural output would work against the American notion of white supremacy and show that blacks are no longer willing to accept their alleged status of an uncivilized people without culture. Many held the opinion that white Americans would not treat them as their equals unless and until the former slaves proved themselves to be talented and equal, so the importance of culture experienced a huge increase during the early 1920s. The topics that prevailed during the Harlem Renaissance reflected feeling of marginality and alienation that African Americans were facing; these themes occurred in literature of that period as well as in arts and music. Still, the Harlem Renaissance was as diverse as a movement as the people that created it. There formed a literary association to give an opportunity to the black people to prove their literary talent. The established association is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and its founder is Joel E. Spingarn who was a white man. Spingarn being a board member and author of *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* and *The New Criticism* have very close association with the black people. He encouraged W.E.B Du Bois author of *The Souls of Black Folk* and *The Quest for the Silver Fleece* to write greatly and has given chance to advance in the literary field. Du Bois quickly became most powerful spokesman and editor of the NAACP Organization journal, *The Crisis*.

Dorothy West met the great literary persons at Harlem at an early age and has close association with them and she is considered as a last leaf of Harlem Renaissance. She was aware of all the incidents happened from the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance and to the end of the Harlem Renaissance. She has focused on these developments and social stratification of African

Americans in her works. The magazine established by her, *The New Challenge* was the first publication to bring together black art and politics, and other magazines would follow its example. Former American President John Kennedy's wife Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis met Dorothy West to encourage her to finish the novel, *The Wedding* which focused on improved social living conditions of African Americans. Dorothy West helped to influence the direction and form of African American writing during the Harlem Renaissance. She was considered a little sister by Zora Neale Hurston and other writers and poets such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Wallace Thurman. She wrote about unsatisfied people who always feel trapped by their environment, or by racism, or because they are black female. Dorothy is a keen and sharp observer of things happening around her and she has focused on social and economical condition of African Americans and how they have been denied equal status with the dominating white race. However, there also was a debt by the definition of the Renaissance as a point in the Afro-American literary tradition. The assimilation goals and literature of the middle class provided the Harlem artists with a focus from which to bounce off or more specially a factor in the dialectical process. Most of the literature was written in the romanticist tradition, saturated with Victorian ideals, and consisted of appeals to white America to consider them equal or at least better than common blacks. Their black experience was considered a plague from which they wished to escape. Having ignored the depth of their own experience, they wrote escapist literature that was usually shallow and artificial (Harold Bloom 7). Whites were neither all bad nor all good; they are the people with whom the black people have to deal. The relationship would be based on their behavior, for the moral adventure was the black man's. There was a commitment for a better understanding and adjustment. This is a key factor in the eventual collaboration with the white artist and the larger white society. Alain Locke spoke rehabilitating the race in world esteem and the reevaluation of the race due to cultural recognition, which he felt would precede or accompany any considerable further betterment of race relationships. Locke did not labor under any illusion that if the Negro was better known he would be better liked or better treated, he merely felt that mutual understanding is the basis for any subsequent cooperation and adjustment.

American writer Zora Neale Hurston states that it is necessary for Negroes to show forth their talent to the world to come out of all kinds of prejudice. In her book, *Dust Tracks on a Road* she states like this:

I do not share the gloomy thought that Negroes in America are doomed to be stomped

out bodacious, nor even shocked to the bottom of things. Of course some of them will

be tromped out, and some will always be at the bottom, keeping company with other

bottom folks. It would be against all nature for all the Negroes to be either at the

bottom, top, or in between. It has never happened with anybody else, so why with us?

No, we will go where the internal drive carries us like everybody else. It is up to the

individual. If you haven't got it, you cannot show it. If you have got it, you cannot

hide it. That is one of the strongest laws God ever made. (Hurston 192)

Hurston believes that the eternal God created all the human beings equal. It is up to the individual to prove his or her talent to the world and come out of state of low social living. If anyone won't strive, he or she will be in the same social state forever. Careful study of history shows forth that relentless efforts of human beings and aspiration to achieve something that made them great in the real life. One has to aspire for upliftment of his or her social status. After getting redemption from the slavery some Negroes started the business and became great entrepreneurs. Sharon L Jones in her work, *Reading the Harlem Renaissance: Race, Class, and Gender in the Fiction of Jessie Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston, and Dorothy West*, projects plight of many black families from South to North early to mid twentieth century, including Dorothy West's father to become successful entrepreneurs and in the real life they became great businessmen. West's father was a successful entrepreneur and fruit wholesaler dubbed as the black banana king of Boston (p 139). Dorothy West in her novel, *The Living Is Easy* portrays a character named Bart Judson who aspires to become a good businessman and his wife Cleo Judson who desires to attain at least middle class status in the real life. They achieved it. Dorothy West's short story, "The Richer, The Poorer" which is extracted from her work, *The Richer, The Poorer: Stories, Sketches, and Reminiscences* focuses on how a woman named Lottie could work hard and earned money and attained a middle class status. She was conscious of the money troubles her family suffered and that made her determined to have enough money to be able to afford whatever she wanted. She worked hard up to the age of sixty and retired from the work and enjoyed rest of her life giving sustenance and moral support to her sister named Bess who was married and lost her husband and was in need of financial support.

The African Americans settled in the United States of America doing their level best to attain bourgeois status in the society. Their continuous efforts made them at least a significant number of African Americans to attain middle class status.

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Game Based Learning (GBL): Gaming Soft skills for Corporate Readiness

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Abstract— As we are inching towards the fourth industrial revolution, companies are searching for talent who possesses domain expertise, digital literacy and industry-relevant abilities. Thus, experiential and skill-based learning are promoted under the National Educational Policy 2020. The NEP- 2020 helps to bridge the talent-skill gap, which exists at various tiers and is significant, impacting the hiring scenario in almost every sector, by equipping students with industry-specific abilities so as to prepare them to be future-ready professionals. The NEP- 2020 recognizes the importance of soft skills as fundamental life abilities such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, decision-making, analytical thinking, and flexibility, among others. Leadership skills are also instilled in pupils to assist them advance in their careers. Game-based learning has been identified as the most effective approach of teaching soft skills. The increased demand for soft skills in the workplace has compelled teachers to embrace, adapt, and expertly combine practical and hands-on methods of imparting these employable skills. According to EMSI and IBM studies, the true "skills in demand" are communication, adaptability, and learning. According to a LinkedIn survey done two years ago, 91% of organizations believe that soft skills are essential in recruiting fresh hires and promoting existing ones. According to a Harvard University study, soft skills account for 80% of job success while hard skills account for 20%. As a result, it is critical to impart these skills in the classroom through the use of unique and inventive games that encourage student participation and engagement. This qualitative study begins with a brief overview of Game-based Learning (GBL) and why it is regarded as the best technique for imparting soft skills, followed by a discussion on the top 5 in-demand soft skills that can be gamified and are critical for corporate readiness.



Keywords— NEP 2020, soft skills, game-based learning, employability, skill-based education

Introduction:

Game-based Learning:

“nous ne pouvons rien être sans jouer à l'être”

We cannot be anything without playing at being it.

-J. P. Sartre

Teachers constantly debate the methods and resources needed to satisfy the needs of the younger generation. They are presented with fresh concepts, expressions, and theories that seem to be the sole way to solve every educational problem. No one person or method will fully improve the teaching-learning process, and learning is not

an issue that has to be fixed. Diversification, experimenting with different strategies, and assessing the results are the keys.

Incorporating Games in the Classroom:

The use of game-based learning (GBL) in the classroom is simple. However, what is GBL exactly?

Applying some gaming concepts to real-world situations in order to engage people is known as "game-based learning" (Trybus 2015). Game-based learning's intrinsic motivational psychology allows students to engage with the content in novel and enjoyable ways. Game-based

learning encompasses more than just creating games for students to play; it also involves creating educational activities that can progressively introduce ideas and guide users toward a shared goal. These ideas have gained traction in higher education as a way to get students interested in learning. Game-based learning, then, is an additional active learning technique that makes use of games to accomplish particular learning goals in terms of information, abilities, or attitudes in order to enhance student learning. In this instance, the learning happens through the game's development of problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. Games, whether digital or not, and simulators that let learners experience the material firsthand can all be used to accomplish game-based learning.

Gamification vs. Game-based Learning (GBL):

Gamification and game-based learning are similar in that they both promote participation and continuous interest in learning. It's useful to differentiate between game-based learning and gamification, though:

In order to increase enthusiasm and participation, "traditional" learning exercises can be gamified by adding elements of games, such as leader boards, badges, scores, and various other game-related aspects. Students can use a badge system to gamify an online discussion forum for a Physics course, for instance, by earning a "Ptolemy" badge after ten comments, a "Galileo" badge after twenty entries, and so on. There are parallels between game-based learning and gamification in that they both promote involvement and continuous interest in learning.

On the contrary, Game-based learning (GBL) requires constructing instructional materials that incorporate game mechanics and principles into the instructional tasks themselves. For example, students can participate in a computerized stock-trading competition in an economics course, or they can role-play as they engage in fictitious negotiations over a labor dispute in a politics course. Gamification is essentially the application of aspects of games or a game framework to pre-existing learning activities, whereas game-based learning develops learning activities that are intrinsically game-like.

Why is GBL the best method for teaching soft skills?

Learning through games has several benefits for developing and improving soft skills, such as managerial abilities. Even though there are many arguments supporting GBL's beneficial effects on learning, some people continue to doubt its efficacy. The five main benefits of learning through games:

1. **GBL allows for practice:** The greatest advantage of successful game-based learning is the incorporation of technology that facilitates the assimilation of material. Through the use of simulators, students can "do" things that they have only been "told" about on other platforms. Doing is the best way to learn anything, and this is particularly true when it comes to building interpersonal skills. Real-life situations are replicated by simulators so that we can practice safely and gain proficiency in soft skills that enhance our professional and personal development and that can only be acquired through experience rather than theory or books.
2. **Encourages strategic thinking and decision making:** Strategic thinking, Emotional Intelligence, strengthening interpersonal and analytical abilities, among other elements is all included in many complex games for soft skill learning, which helps individuals become more adept at problem-solving.
3. **GBL improves Memory:** Students can better master a skill by immersing themselves into a scenario through the use of narrative frameworks in "learning" games. By fixing mistakes and repeating particular patterns, learners learn to understand the game, advance, and receive positive feedback actually instantaneously. To put it briefly, GBL improves memorization through hands-on experience.

It has been noted that games such as role-plays aid in comprehending the perspectives of others, time management through time games, collaborative games in fostering relationships, instilling empathy, problem-solving, teamwork, and healthy competition. Games involving decision-making aid in fostering soft skills, leadership, and negotiation; competitive games foster a sense of competition amongst pupils.

Discussion

The 5 in-demand soft skills:

We are hired for our technical skills, but fired for the lack of soft skills.

- Shiv Khera, founder (Qualified Learning Systems Inc. USA) & a motivational management Guru

Research from Harvard, the University of Michigan, and Boston College that focused on improving competencies in interpersonal communication and problem-solving concluded that individuals who exhibited critical soft skills enhanced productivity and retention by 12%. 85% of job effectiveness is attributed to acquiring exceptional soft

skills, according to the National Soft Skills Association. In conclusion, it is apparent that if individuals aspire to progress in their line of work and achieve the career of their choice, they must receive quality soft skills training.

Soft skills are individual characteristics and approaches to work, as opposed to hard skills, which are often job-specific and learned through education or training. Many situations call for the usage of soft talents. Thus, becoming an effective team player and possessing exceptional communication skills will help in any situation! In the commercial world, soft skills are also crucial. A research by the Hay Group found that managers who incorporate soft skills into their leadership style can increase team performance by as much as 30%. According to research by Professor Achyuta Adhvaryu, employees who receive training in problem-solving, communication, teamwork, time and stress management, and other skills perform more effectively at work.

We can infer from the aforementioned research findings that there are basically five soft skills which are in great demand which all students should possess. They are:

1. Effective communication
2. Critical thinking and problem solving
3. Teamwork and leadership
4. Emotional Intelligence
5. Time management

which is complemented by other abilities including creativity, teamwork, empathy, decision-making, flexibility, interpersonal abilities, inquisitive and ongoing education, among others?

Gaming in the classroom:

Although there are so many games to develop these skills, we will look at the most popular game for each of the 5 in-demand skills listed above.

1. Communication Skills:

Proficiency in communicating, listening, and public speaking has become more and more important. Effective communication is essential for establishing business relationships with customers, peers, supervisors, and organizational leaders.

Engaging with people from different cultures can improve your communication skills. Understanding cultural awareness can also help you work effectively in a range of situations, such as diverse countries and locations. Multinational corporations around the world strongly value an open, global perspective, which may be

developed through international internships and work experience.

Game to develop the skill: Misunderstanding

The game Misunderstanding helps drive creative communication.

What you will need:

- Two or more people
- Chairs
- Various objects

How to play:

Make two individuals sit next to each other. Person A is required to talk about an object to Person B without specifically stating what it is. After then, Person B has to illustrate it using Person A's explanation.

This game works well for breaking down obstacles to communication. Additionally, it fosters the development of effective communication techniques and problem-solving abilities.

For larger teams, turn it into a contest where the winner is the team that drew the most accurate sketch in a predetermined length of time.

2. Problem Solving and Critical Thinking:

Employers now seek an individual who can analyse a challenging business scenario, come up with a workable solution, and effectively implement the same. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report lists critical thinking and problem-solving as the top talents that will be essential over the next five years.

Innovative thinking and analytical thinking are essential components of the complex problem-solving ability, which is nothing more than the capacity to make sound decisions based on many datasets from the data environment in which we live. This mental process is one that can be honed, refined and learned. Creativity, originality, and initiative are all qualities that pertain to problem solving and are extremely important.

Aiming to instruct, promote, and encourage the practise of evaluating issues and coming up with answers, problem-solving games are interactive challenges. Playing games and engaging in activities that require problem-solving can help one improve their higher-order thinking abilities, hone leadership potential, and put more emphasis on the process of learning than the final outcome.

Game to develop Problem Solving skills: Escape**What you will need:**

- 1 rope
- 1 key
- A lockable room
- 5-10 puzzles or clues (depending on how much time you want to spend on the game)

How to play:

1. The objective of this exercise is to solve the clues, locate the key, and get out of a locked room in the given amount of time.
2. Disperse the key and a list of hints throughout the space.
3. Gather the group in the vacant room and "lock" the door.
4. Allow thirty to sixty minutes to figure out the hints scattered across the room to locate the key.

2.1 Critical thinking skills:

An individual must possess a set of skills for making decisions, solving problems, thinking critically, and acting quickly. Having the ability to think critically is crucial in every aspect of life since it allows one to better understand themselves, steer clear of constricting or limiting notions, and concentrate more on their positive traits. Games are brain-training activities that can improve cognitive skills by helping to acquire critical life skills. Focus, memory, and concentration can all be enhanced with brain exercises. In order to engage in critical thinking, one must carefully consider a situation, formulate the problem logically, and use value judgment to come up with a solution.

Any career can benefit from having critical thinking abilities since they enable logical and objective thought. As digitization and artificial intelligence take over the world, critical thinking abilities might help humans remain relevant in their jobs. But developing critical thinking and reasoning skills is difficult. Consequently, a number of organizations advocate for the use of brain games to enhance critical thinking skills and increase cognitive capacity.

Game to develop the skill: Minefield**How to play the game:****What you will need:**

- An empty room or hallway
- Blindfolds
- A collection of common office items

Instructions:

1. Arrange the objects (boxes, chairs, water bottles, bags, etc.) in the room so that there isn't a direct route between the two ends.
2. Split your group up into pairs, and then blindfold one team member.
3. From one end of the room to the other, the other player must voice guide that person, avoiding "mines."
4. The non-blindfolded spouse is not allowed to touch the other.
5. To increase the difficulty of the exercise, assign pairings to each other at the same time. This will force teams to strategically interact with one another.

3. Teamwork and Leadership:**Teamwork:**

A plethora of emerging technologies continue to trigger rapid changes in industry and in the workplace. To meet these standards, successful people need to be able to work well with others and be adaptable.

Effective teamwork, leveraging the distinctive competencies of everyone involved, managing discontent, and adapting to rapidly evolving work environments will all be essential within the work place of the future.

Game to develop Team work/Team Building: Human Knot**How to play the game:****Preparation:**

To form a human knot, players begin in a circle and join hands with two other members of the group. They must then work together to try to untangle themselves avoiding disrupting the chain of hands in order to try to untangle the "human knot."

Space Required: Small indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 8 to 12 ideally (at least 4 participants to play)

Total Time: 20-30 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 10-20 minutes to achieve outcome
- 5 minutes to review and debrief

Instructions:

1. Get the group to form a circle.
2. Instruct them to raise their right hand in the air before grabbing the hand of a person on the other side of the circle.
3. Next, do the same with the left hand, being sure to take a different hand.

4. Ensure that everybody holds the hands of two distinct individuals and with an individual on each side of them.
5. They have to attempt to detangle themselves in order to create a circle without disrupting the chain of hands. Give yourself a set amount of time to finish this task, usually ten to twenty minutes.
6. To prevent injury, encourage individuals to take their time. Instruct the group to avoid pushing or tugging on one another and to watch for participants as they move by one another. Keep an eye on them during the challenge and stop them if necessary.
7. They have to begin anew if the chain of hands breaks at any time.

3.1 Leadership:

Good leadership is about bringing out the best in others and ensuring their success. And if you one believes that leadership qualities are just required at the top of the corporate ladder, one must think again. Factors such as remote teams, rising diversity, the gig economy, and more flexible organisational structures indicate that leadership abilities will be essential for everyone, whether they are in charge of a project, a team, or an entire department.

Game to develop the skill: Spot the Secret Leader

How to play the game:

A simple game that doesn't require anything more than a group of 6-7 people.

First, place the pupils in a circle at arm's length from each other. This is an easy arrangement. Next, designate a student to serve as a Spotter by moving to the center of the circle.

While everyone else selects a Secret Leader, ask the Spotter to close his eyes.

Following that, the Secret Leader must gently make movements and gestures that the remaining participants must mimic, including lifting an arm, resting on a leg, dancing, etc.

The Spotter makes three attempts to identify the Secret Leader throughout this period. The Secret Leader wins if the Spotter performs inadequately on all three occasions. The Spotter selects a replacement in the middle, regardless of the winner.

4. Emotional Intelligence:

Improving emotional intelligence is the first step in creating a happy and healthy workplace. When groups are more aligned and have clear communication skills,

teams feel appreciated and supported. The benefits of noticing and dealing with our emotions are enormous, resulting in less conflict and a greater understanding of one another.

Game to develop the skill: Nine Dimensions Team Building Activity

How to play the game:

Aligning our own self-awareness with that of our team is paramount to building Emotional Intelligence. Through candidly evaluating our strengths and identifying areas for improvement, we can be open and honest with our teammates and collaborate to build a more cohesive team.

The Nine Dimensions exercise asks us to score our skills in nine areas that are crucial to our workplace and interpersonal relationships. To indicate how well they are performing in each area, participants select colored dots.

A team conversation is held after the exercise to find out how everyone thinks about the skills and whether or not we all agree. It aims to determine where individuals can benefit from assistance and how individuals might flourish. Developing improved abilities in both individual and group can be facilitated by this understanding.

5. Time Management:

Working from home, working full-time in an office, running your own business, or working for an organisation all require the ability to manage your time successfully. Keep in mind that time management is about working smarter, not harder. Extra hours aren't required for folks who are excellent time managers. They understand when they are most productive and use this time effectively, allocating their less productive hours to other duties.

Developing excellent time management skills is also beneficial to your mental health. When you can efficiently manage your time, you may achieve a better work/life balance and make place in your life for the things that are most important to you.

Game to develop the skill: The Blind Polygon

How to play the game:

The Blind Polygon is an excellent activity when working in new groups or projects. Multiple smaller groups and a single leader are needed.

Step 1: Give the squad a length of rope and blindfold each participant.

Step 2: Teams fold or modify the rope into a rectangle or other shape that the leader specifies.

Step 3: A time restriction should be established by the team leader.

Step 4: Everyone must always be in contact with the rope, and no one may take off the blindfold.

Step 5: Allow the groupings to take some time to form.

Step 6: After the allotted time has passed, let the groups to examine their shapes before beginning again.

Conclusion

Gaming - A Game changing perspective:

“If you want a job, have technical skills. If you want a career, have people skills.”

This study has sought to demonstrate how games can be used as a creative learning tool to cope with challenging situations and develop soft skills that are necessary. Soft skills are personal qualities that enhance a person's performance at work, relationships, and career prospects. Since games have the ability to teach us concepts and abilities at any given moment, they provide us the freedom to fall short with relatively little implications on society or ourselves. Playing alone can teach us just as much as playing with other people. Nevertheless, it has been shown that games are natural settings for developing important skills.

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The politics of Gender: Power relations in Shakespeare's plays

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Abstract— This paper examines the complex dynamics of gender and power in Shakespeare's plays, with a focus on the ways in which female characters exercise agency and autonomy in a patriarchal society. Through a critical analysis of Shakespeare's language, imagery, and dramatic structures, this study reveals how Shakespeare's plays challenge and subvert patriarchal norms, offering insights into the ongoing struggles for gender equality and social justice. By exploring the intersections of gender and power in Shakespeare's works, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the continued relevance of Shakespeare's plays in contemporary society.



Keywords— Shakespeare, Gender, Power Patriarchy Agency Autonomy Social Justice Feminism Literary Analysis Drama.

I. INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare's plays, written in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, continue to captivate audiences with their complex characters, rich language, and exploration of universal themes. One of the most significant and enduring themes in Shakespeare's works is the politics of gender power relations. During Shakespeare's time, the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, societal norms dictated that men held positions of authority and power, while women were relegated to subordinate roles. Shakespeare's plays, however, often challenge and subvert these patriarchal norms, presenting complex and multifaceted portrayals of gender and power. Through his female characters, such as Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, and Juliet, Shakespeare explores the ways in which women navigate and resist patriarchal structures, exercising agency and autonomy in a society that seeks to constrain them. This paper will examine the politics of gender power relations in Shakespeare's plays, with a particular focus on the ways in which female characters exercise power and agency in a patriarchal society. By analyzing the language, imagery, and dramatic structures employed by Shakespeare, we will gain a deeper understanding of the complex and nuanced ways in which

gender and power intersect in his plays. Some of the key questions this paper will address include:

How do Shakespeare's female characters exercise power and agency in a patriarchal society?

In what ways do Shakespeare's plays challenge and subvert patriarchal norms?

How do the language, imagery, and dramatic structures employed by Shakespeare contribute to our understanding of gender and power in his plays?

By exploring these questions and analyzing the politics of gender power relations in Shakespeare's plays, we will gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which Shakespeare's works continue to resonate with contemporary audiences and offer insights into the ongoing struggles for gender equality and social justice.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of Shakespeare's plays has long been a cornerstone of literary analysis, with scholars examining the Bard's works through a variety of lenses, including historical, cultural, and feminist perspectives. This literature review will examine the existing research on the politics of

gender power relations in Shakespeare's plays, with a focus on the ways in which Shakespeare's female characters exercise agency and autonomy in a patriarchal society.

Early Feminist Criticism

Early feminist critics, such as Kate Millett (1970) and Germaine Greer (1970), argued that Shakespeare's plays reinforced patriarchal norms and perpetuated the oppression of women. However, these critics also acknowledged the complexity and nuance of Shakespeare's female characters, who often challenged and subverted patriarchal expectations.

Revisionist Feminism

Revisionist feminist critics, such as Lisa Jardine (1983) and Juliet Dusinberre (1994), challenged the earlier feminist critiques, arguing that Shakespeare's plays offered more positive representations of women and their experiences. These critics highlighted the agency and autonomy of Shakespeare's female characters, who often exercised power and influence in their own right.

Poststructuralist and Postcolonial Criticism

Poststructuralist and postcolonial critics, such as Jacques Derrida (1981) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), have examined the ways in which Shakespeare's plays reinforce and challenge dominant power structures, including patriarchy and colonialism. These critics have highlighted the complexities and contradictions of Shakespeare's representations of gender and power.

Recent Scholarship

Recent scholarship has continued to explore the politics of gender power relations in Shakespeare's plays, with a focus on the intersectionality of gender, race, and class. For example, scholars such as Ayanna Thompson (2011) and Farah Karim-Cooper (2016) have examined the ways in which Shakespeare's plays represent the experiences of women of color and the intersectionality of racism and sexism.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Qualitative Research: This study will employ a qualitative research approach, focusing on the in-depth analysis of Shakespeare's plays and their representation of gender power relations.

2. Literary Analysis: The study will utilize literary analysis techniques, such as close reading, contextual analysis, and critical theory, to examine the language, imagery, and dramatic structures in Shakespeare's plays.

Data Collection

1. Primary Sources: The primary sources for this study will be Shakespeare's plays, including but not limited to:

- Tragedies (e.g., Macbeth, Othello, King Lear)
- Comedies (e.g., A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night, As You Like It)
- Histories (e.g., Henry IV, Part 1, Henry V)

2. Secondary Sources: The secondary sources for this study will include:

- Literary criticism and theory (e.g., feminist criticism, postcolonial theory)
- Historical and cultural studies (e.g., Renaissance history, cultural studies of Shakespeare's time)
- Scholarly articles and books on Shakespeare's plays and their representation of gender power relations

Data Analysis

1. Thematic Analysis: The data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying and coding themes related to gender power relations in Shakespeare's plays.
2. Critical Discourse Analysis: The study will also employ critical discourse analysis to examine the language and power dynamics in Shakespeare's plays.
3. Contextual Analysis: The analysis will consider the historical and cultural context in which Shakespeare's plays were written and performed.

Research Questions

1. How do Shakespeare's plays represent gender power relations?
2. In what ways do Shakespeare's female characters exercise agency and autonomy in a patriarchal society?
3. How do Shakespeare's plays challenge and subvert patriarchal norms?

Sampling Strategy

1. Purposive Sampling: The study will employ purposive sampling, selecting Shakespeare's plays that are most relevant to the research questions and objectives.

Ethical Considerations

1. Informed Consent: Not applicable, as the study will focus on literary analysis of Shakespeare's plays.
2. Anonymity: Not applicable, as the study will focus on literary analysis of Shakespeare's plays.
3. Confidentiality: Not applicable, as the study will focus on literary analysis of Shakespeare's plays.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Shakespeare often reflects the patriarchal power structures of Elizabethan and Jacobean society, where men typically held social, political, and familial authority. Male dominance is often presented as natural or unquestioned—fathers control daughters, husbands control wives, and political leadership is usually in male hands.

In *Othello*, women like Desdemona are expected to be obedient to their fathers and husbands. Iago's manipulation of Othello also rests on assumptions about male ownership of women.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, gender power relations are foregrounded. Petruchio's taming of Katherine is often seen as a literal enactment of male dominance.

In *King Lear*, Lear's demand that his daughters profess love as a condition for inheritance echoes a transactional and possessive view of women.

But Shakespeare doesn't always portray these power dynamics uncritically—he often complicates them through irony, subversion, or character development.

Despite constraints, many of Shakespeare's women display **remarkable agency, intelligence, and resistance**

Viola in *Twelfth Night* disguises herself as a man, allowing her access to male spaces and a degree of freedom she wouldn't otherwise have.

Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* likewise uses male disguise to participate in the legal system and ultimately outwit the men around her.

Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* manipulates her husband and drives the plot, even though her power is ultimately limited by the gendered expectations of her time.

Rosalind in *As You Like It* is perhaps one of Shakespeare's most autonomous characters, taking control of her romantic fate and playfully critiquing gender roles through her disguise.

These characters often use wit, disguise, and manipulation to navigate and sometimes subvert societal restrictions.

While Shakespeare reflects the norms of his era, his plays often **interrogate, question, or even undermine patriarchal ideals**.

Through **cross-dressing and gender disguise**, especially in comedies like *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, Shakespeare blurs gender lines and challenges rigid binaries.

Characters like **Beatrice** in *Much Ado About Nothing* openly mock traditional expectations of women, demanding equality in love and wit.

In *Measure for Measure*, Isabella's resistance to male authority and sexual coercion exposes the corruption and hypocrisy of patriarchal institutions.

Tragic figures like **Ophelia** or **Desdemona**, who are destroyed by male dominance, can be read as critiques of the destructive nature of patriarchal control.

Many of these subversions occur within the dramatic tension of the plays—while order may be “restored” at the end (e.g. through marriage or death), the journey often leaves audiences questioning that order.

V. CONCLUSION

This literature review has highlighted the complexity and nuance of the existing research on the politics of gender power relations in Shakespeare's plays. While early feminist critics argued that Shakespeare's plays reinforced patriarchal norms, revisionist feminist critics and poststructuralist and postcolonial critics have highlighted the agency and autonomy of Shakespeare's female characters and the complexities of Shakespeare's representations of gender and power. Recent scholarship has continued to explore the intersectionality of gender, race, and class in Shakespeare's plays.

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Power, Idealism, and Governance: A Critical Analysis of Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* as a Reflection of Historical and Contemporary Political Realities

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Abstract— *Girish Karnad's Tughlaq is a seminal work in Indian theatre that explores the intricate dynamics of power, idealism, and governance through the historical figure of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, a 14th-century Sultan of Delhi. This study examines Karnad's portrayal of Tughlaq as a ruler whose visionary yet impractical policies led to chaos and disillusionment. The play serves as a critique of political leadership, highlighting the tension between idealism and pragmatism, and the consequences of unchecked ambition. By analysing the themes of power, religious conflict, and governance, this paper underscores the play's relevance to contemporary socio-political contexts. Karnad's Tughlaq emerges as a timeless allegory, offering profound insights into the challenges of leadership and the human condition.*



Keywords— *Girish Karnad, governance, idealism, power, political leadership, Muhammad bin Tughlaq, pragmatism, religious conflict.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*, first published in 1964, is one of the most significant plays in modern Indian theatre. Set in the 14th century, the play revolves around the life of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, a historical figure known for his intellectual brilliance, visionary ideas, and controversial reign as the Sultan of Delhi. Karnad uses Tughlaq's story not merely as a historical narrative but as a lens to explore broader themes of power, idealism, governance, and the human condition. Written during a period of political turbulence in post-independence India, the play resonates deeply with the challenges of nation-building, leadership, and the clash between idealism and pragmatism.

Karnad's portrayal of Tughlaq is both sympathetic and critical, presenting him as a complex character who is at once a dreamer and a tyrant. The Sultan's ambitious reforms, such as the shifting of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and the introduction of token currency, reflect his desire to create a utopian state. However, his inability to reconcile his lofty ideals with the practical realities of

governance leads to widespread suffering, rebellion, and ultimately, his own disillusionment. Through *Tughlaq*'s tragic journey, Karnad critiques the dangers of unchecked idealism and the fragility of political power.

The play also delves into themes of religious and political conflict, as Tughlaq's attempts to create a secular state are met with resistance from both Hindu and Muslim communities. This struggle mirrors the socio-political challenges of Karnad's contemporary India, where the ideals of secularism and unity were often tested by communal tensions and political instability.

This study aims to analyse *Tughlaq* as a profound exploration of power, idealism, and governance. By examining Karnad's use of historical allegory, character dynamics, and thematic depth, the paper seeks to highlight the play's enduring relevance to both its historical context and modern political discourse. Through this analysis, *Tughlaq* emerges not only as a masterpiece of Indian theatre but also as a timeless commentary on the complexities of leadership and the human condition.

II. THEMES AND ANALYSIS

Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* is a multi-layered play that delves into the complexities of power, governance, and human ambition. Through the character of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Karnad explores themes that are not only relevant to the 14th-century historical context but also resonate with contemporary socio-political realities. This section analyses three central themes of the play: Power and Governance, Religious and Political Conflict, and Relevance to Contemporary Politics.

2.1 Power and Governance

At the heart of *Tughlaq* lies the theme of power and its consequences. Muhammad bin Tughlaq is portrayed as a ruler with grand visions for his kingdom, but his inability to translate these visions into practical governance leads to chaos. His decisions, such as shifting the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and introducing token currency, are driven by a desire to centralize power and modernize his empire. However, these reforms are poorly executed and lack consideration for the practical needs of his people.

Karnad uses Tughlaq's character to critique the dangers of absolute power and the disconnect between a ruler's idealism and the realities of governance. Tughlaq's initial idealism gradually gives way to paranoia and tyranny, as he becomes increasingly isolated and distrustful of those around him. This transformation highlights the fragility of power and the ease with which a well-intentioned leader can become a despotic figure.

The play also underscores the importance of empathy and pragmatism in governance. Tughlaq's failure to understand the needs and struggles of his subjects ultimately leads to his downfall. Karnad's portrayal of Tughlaq serves as a cautionary tale about the responsibilities of leadership and the consequences of prioritizing ambition over the welfare of the people.

2.2 Religious and Political Conflict

Another central theme in *Tughlaq* is the intersection of religion and politics. Tughlaq's reign is marked by his attempts to create a secular state, where people of all religions are treated equally. However, his policies are met with resistance from both Hindu and Muslim communities, who view his actions as a threat to their religious identities.

Karnad uses this conflict to explore the challenges of unifying a diverse population under a single political vision. Tughlaq's idealism is repeatedly thwarted by the deep-rooted prejudices and communal tensions of his time. For instance, his decision to abolish the jizya tax on non-Muslims is seen as a progressive move, but it alienates conservative Muslim factions. Similarly, his efforts to

integrate Hindus into the administration are viewed with suspicion by both communities.

The play highlights the complexities of navigating religious and political divides, a theme that remains relevant in contemporary societies. Karnad's portrayal of Tughlaq's struggles reflects the broader challenges of fostering unity in a pluralistic society, where religious and cultural differences often fuel conflict.

2.3 Relevance to Contemporary Politics

Although *Tughlaq* is set in the 14th century, its themes resonate strongly with modern political realities. Karnad wrote the play during a period of political upheaval in post-independence India, and it serves as an allegory for the challenges of nation-building and governance in a newly independent country.

Tughlaq's idealism and subsequent disillusionment mirror the experiences of many post-colonial leaders who sought to transform their societies but were often hindered by practical constraints and internal conflicts. The play's exploration of power, governance, and the clash between idealism and pragmatism offers valuable insights into the complexities of political leadership in any era.

Moreover, the theme of religious and political conflict in *Tughlaq* reflects the ongoing struggles of secularism and communal harmony in contemporary India. Karnad's critique of Tughlaq's failures serves as a reminder of the importance of inclusive and empathetic governance in addressing the needs of a diverse population.

In a broader global context, *Tughlaq* can be seen as a commentary on the challenges of leadership in an increasingly polarized world. The play's exploration of power, idealism, and governance remains relevant to discussions about political accountability, the dangers of authoritarianism, and the need for leaders to balance vision with practicality.

III. CONCLUSION

Through its exploration of power and governance, religious and political conflict, and its relevance to contemporary politics, *Tughlaq* emerges as a timeless critique of leadership and human ambition. Girish Karnad's masterful use of historical allegory allows the play to transcend its 14th-century setting, offering profound insights into the challenges of governance and the complexities of the human condition. The play's enduring relevance lies in its ability to reflect the socio-political dilemmas of both its historical context and the modern world, making it a cornerstone of Indian theatre and a powerful commentary on the nature of power and idealism. This analysis provides a detailed exploration of the key themes in *Tughlaq*, connecting them

to both the play's historical context and contemporary relevance.

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Becoming Authentic: A Sartrean Reading of Anjum Hasan's *The Cosmopolitans*

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Abstract— This paper critically examines Anjum Hasan's novel *The Cosmopolitans* (2015), employing the philosophical lens of Sartre's existentialism to explore how Qayenaat, the protagonist, navigates the existential themes of bad faith, alienation, being-for-others, and the pursuit of authenticity. Her fluctuating relationships, avoidance of societal roles, failed artistic ambitions, and eventual withdrawal into a fabricated identity are analysed as modes of existential evasion. Drawing on some of Sartre's insights from *Being and Nothingness*, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, and *The Transcendence of the Ego*, the paper traces how the protagonist represses her freedom by embracing illusions and other-directedness. Negotiating the denial of facticity to gradually acknowledging existential responsibility, the narrative presents a significant move toward authenticity. In this way, the novel affirms Sartre's proposition that existence precedes essence and that meaning will always be created through action.



Keywords— Existentialism; Bad faith; Authenticity; Being-for-others; Freedom and responsibility; Facticity.

The Cosmopolitans (2015) by Anjum Hasan brings to light the existential dilemmas faced by the protagonist, Qayenaat. Leading a solitary life, she often grapples with the burden of freedom, as if she does not wish to be held responsible for her own choices, and constantly denies her facticity by living in the existentialist bad faith. In this sense, “*The Cosmopolitans* is an intellectual novel and punctures with sophistication the eponymous quiet cosmopolitanism of its nature and structure” (Roy). Accordingly, her tumultuous relationships with Sathi, Sara, Baban, and the King reflect the inauthentic codes of her life. Apart from this, the suppression of her artistic passions, which concurrently seeks external validation to pursue them, foregrounds her existential hyphenation, signifying a yearning to turn towards art only as an escape from the brute facts of reality, re-examining “...an old question—the place of art in the mundane background of everyday life” (Misra). As a result, she refuses to acknowledge her loneliness and failing health. Such an existential stance highlights that the protagonist has an inclination to constantly repress her true feelings towards

herself/others. Her obsession with Baban, her problematic relationship with Sara and Sathi, her escape to Simhal (after the murder of Gyan Pai), and her posing as Mandakini for the King are some of the pointers as to how she deceives herself to escape the anxiety of the absolute freedom of her existence. Notably, it is towards the end of the narrative that she eventually refashions her existence through her altered choices to confront reality, manifesting a leap towards authenticity.

Facticity, Bad Faith, and the Illusion of Escape

In the beginning of the novel, Qayenaat is a woman who is deeply entangled by the facts of her existence. Her loneliness and nostalgia define her existence; she refuses to confront her reality, instead choosing to project her desires onto art, people, and her past. Haunted by regret, guilt, and unresolved emotions, she is alienated from society and lives a solitary life in a big mansion that she inherited from her father. At this juncture of the narrative, the protagonist is existentially saturated and desires to experience a qualitative difference in the way she exists, which she is not

sure of how to achieve. This section of the paper attempts to analyse her acts of self-deception and emotional volatility that are revealed through her relationships while also acknowledging the instances of her bad faith, fractured self, and desperate search for meaning. Qayenaat weaves *illusions* to avoid confronting the possibilities of her freedom. In doing so, she prefers to be surrounded by people who have a common liking for everything that she does. In Sartre's own words, "...the Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me. I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other" (*Being and Nothingness* 222). Apart from this, the existent "...lives in a constant interaction with other existents, or, to put the matter in another way, existence is being-[for]-others or being-with-one-another" (Macquaire 102). Her friend circle, which includes Sara Mir, her best friend; Baban, her former colleague with whom she is now obsessed; and Sathi Thakur, her ex-boyfriend, confirms this stance. To substantiate this argument, it is imperative to explore these relationships, and therefore it is necessary to turn to the Sara-Qayenaat relationship.

Interestingly, the protagonist's relationship with Sara is distant and transactional. She is quite jealous of Sara's wealth and at times borrows money from her to carry on with her not-so-luxurious life. A tinge of her jealousy is visible when "...she deftly stepped out of Sara's line of vision, leaning in towards the bar for a refill, and studied Sara secretly—her vivacious, art-loving friend, her jingle-jangle jewellery, and swishy skirts" (10), and "...nevertheless, they were friends" (52). This dualistic juxtaposition—the covert, envious temptation and the flat declaration of friendship—emphasizes the hollowness in their bond. What Qayenaat calls friendship is a fragile arrangement, held together more by habit and need than by genuine emotional closeness. This contrast also illustrates her tendency to mask complex feelings under simplified social labels, signifying the Sartrean bad faith. Further, the protagonist exhibits her bad faith when she gives Sara special credit for having the resources as well as the passion to be able to be qualified as an art lover, while she herself had the *choice* to use her potential to be a true artist and not blame the lack of resources in her life. She is insecure around Sara, considering her friend as "...the Kashmiri grand dame whose every gesture carried with it an aura of noblesse oblige. And Qayenaat, the hippie, the drifter, the moneyless orphan who couldn't get her head around basic things like fitness, love, and employment" (54). This comparison is steeped in Qayenaat's acute self-awareness of her social inadequacy, yet instead of prompting action, it reinforces her self-pity. The grandeur she attributes to Sara allows her to position herself as the perpetual outsider, thereby deflecting responsibility for her own inaction and

indulging in the Sartrean mode of fleeing her freedom. The protagonist's interpretation of Sara's silence as passive aggression reveals her tendency to project guilt and suspicion onto others rather than confront her discomfort directly. Macquarrie observes, "Even in the most fundamental ways of being, the human existent spills over, so to speak; he transcends the bounds of an individual existence and is intelligible only within a broader framework that we designate as being-[for]-others" (106). This is a form of self-deception wherein she displaces internal conflict onto imagined external hostility, further reinforcing her inauthentic existence. Sartre opines, "To be sure, the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth... in bad faith, it is from myself that I am hiding the truth" (*Being and Nothingness* 89). In this sense, this self-deception is a brief lapse where the consciousness catches itself in the act of concealment—a necessary step toward authenticity.

As for Baban, the protagonist first met him in Bombay while she was pursuing a degree in art and trying to establish a career in the field; however, she failed in it. At this time, Baban had feelings for her, which she never reciprocated. However, now, when she is desperately in love with him, he is so consumed within his art that the protagonist has to remind him to spare a thought for her. In this sense, she expands her hyphenation further as if she carries the weight of regret and remorse. She experiences a higher degree of existential distancing when faced with the fact that Baban is in an active relationship with Tanya. She ruminates, "The man finds a woman. She could not tell her disappointment from her embarrassment" (18). Her unresolved desire for him complicates her anguish, and she fails to decode what she wants from him. Her longing for Baban reflects Sartre's concept of "being-for-others" (seeing oneself as objectified by another's view), where the self becomes defined by the gaze and judgment of another, denying one's own freedom. Accordingly, the protagonist consolidates her contradictions by claiming that "I could not have really loved you... You were no artist then, and it is the artist I love" (130). This revisionist understanding of her past emotions is an act of existential disavowal, which highlights a wishful reshaping of the past to suit a convenient present. Sartre warns against such self-deception, where one uses reason as a defense against emotional accountability.

Interestingly, her relationship with Sathi is also complex. He is an ex-boyfriend who still lingers in her life, providing occasional support but also representing the past she struggles to move away from. The contradiction between what she feels and what she chooses to act on underscores her unwillingness to acknowledge the value in stability—a classic case of self-division. In this sense, she is almost

using Sathi as a human shield against her emotional overflow. In other words, he also reminds her of her rootlessness, and she uses him for emotional support. Despite the fact that she is truly comfortable around him, she fails to acknowledge it, signifying her bad faith. Importantly, her reactions indicate that despite her denial of Sathi, she does crave companionship; however, she cannot fully commit to it without feeling it threatens her autonomy. This is how she drives him away as he tries to get closer, further showcasing her fleeing from her need of having a human well-wisher. When Sara gives her a reality check on the situation of Sathi asking her why he is in her house, the protagonist struggles to give an answer and says, "It's nice to meet someone from your past and know you don't owe each other anything" (56). This sentiment contradicts her actual emotional entanglement with Sathi, and this is a recurrent pattern in her life to have an unresolved liking or hatred towards a person. Seen thus, one experiences oneself as being subjected to the objectification by another subject since "...the Other constitutes me in a new type of being [by making me] his object... In it I recognize that, as the object of the Other, I am not only for the Other, that is, that I actually am just as the Other sees me" (Theunissen 222). Levy substantiates it further: "...all human relations can be resolved into this sinister dialectic of looking-at and being looked-at, of objectifying and being objectified in turn" (39).

Delving deeper, the protagonist exposes her existential cracks by other means also. She loves having her single name with no trace of roots. In this sense, she "...rejects stable identity and accepts fragmented and floating identity" (Islam 91). Consider the following textual extract: "At twenty she had dropped her last name simply because it was Gupta and there was no way to reconcile the ordinariness of Gupta with the sublimity of Qayenaat" (37). At the same time, she is attracted to Sathi because "...he so solidly belonged to a culture that had always seemed out of reach and ephemeral to her" (39), meaning thereby she needs roots too. Furthermore, her habit of smoking cigarettes is in itself a paradox, whereby she tries to escape her overwhelmed states of mind. Apart from this, she is in complete denial when it comes to her health, refusing to take proper treatments, and while feeling like she is on the verge of death, she panics and swallows a couple of pills all at once. She struggles financially yet refuses to perform 9-to-5 jobs, and one of the evils "...was her chronic unemployment, her inability to fit into the stranglehold of a 9-to-5" (31). Notably, her rejection of societal roles adds fuel to her existential cacophony. She is at a point in life where survival takes precedence over her true artistic aspirations in the sense that her need for financial survival overpowers her passion for art. She even attempts to

commit insurance fraud with Sathi; however, she fails to do so. Her failed attempt at such fraud signifies her inner conflict—though she briefly considers dishonesty, she ultimately resists full self-deception.

The murder of Gyan Pai is the culmination of the initial part of the narrative. After her argument with Baban, she visits Sara's house. Here, she overhears Sara and Baban talking about someone with a mean tone, and she assumes that to be her and leaves the place immediately. Her loneliness, created by her alienation, drives her delusion into believing that Sara and Baban are joining forces against her: "Baban and Sara, Sara and Baban, talking about her?" (134). This is where she decides to set Baban's 'Nostalgia' aflame, signifying his murder as an artist, and she goes on to justify it by stating that "I can be bad too" (141). This incident is also symbolic of her burnt desires for Baban. In addition, she acts so feeble over a minute misunderstanding that it causes the accidental death of Gyan Pai. On a critical note, Baban's 'Nostalgia' may be interpreted as an existential crisis for the protagonist. It manifests her breaking point where she loses control, which culminates in the tragic death of Gyan Pai. Although she doesn't have to confront immediate consequences, the guilt follows her. She realises upon talking to Sara that, "Yes, I ran away in misplaced fury and destroyed an artwork and killed a man for nothing but my despicable vanity" (164). In this context, this event solidifies her existential crisis and pushes her toward self-exile. She is now searching for something—perhaps redemption, peace, or meaning, which she thought she could attain from art—which leads her to Simhal, a place that promises art, history, and a chance for reinvention.

Alienation and the Search for Meaning

The narrative highlights that Qayenaat is alienated since the beginning of the novel. In her own words, "So this is what she was in essence—a woman alone, trying to make a living" (128). Her father's death is one of the major causes of her alienation. She has people like Sathi, Sara, and Baban, but they are not sufficient enough to complete her layered desires, and they all *lack* something that she desperately needs. As a consequence, they make her feel further alienated in her own world, making her look for alternatives, especially art (the Nur Jahan painting). Blanche "...was all she had" (86). Importantly, she also feels alienated from her artistic self, as she is filled with anguish due to her irrevocable love for Baban, as she fails to understand what she is feeling and is blown off the edge of her existence. Moreover, she struggles to claim any identity—artist, researcher, or journalist. She arrives in Simhal expecting to immerse herself in art, but her illusion shatters as she soon realises that the place is politically charged and not as peaceful as she had hoped. She wonders,

"How was it possible that the delicately sensuous dance she'd seen in Bangalore had emerged from a place as soulless as this?" (203). Interestingly, her disillusionment underscores her ongoing refusal to root meaning in her own engagement with the world.

In Simhal, she hates everything about the Modern Nritya Academy. She says that "...this place was modern both in name and appearance... and yet evoked utter neglect and boredom" (203). Her assessment of the institution reveals a deeper discontent—not with the place, but with herself. The neglected dance center may be interpreted as a projection of her own neglected interior life, yet she remains blind to the parallel. It seems as if she starts her journey towards authenticity when she wants to pursue art at Simhal; however, she is again trapped in bad faith by refusing to acknowledge and fix her loneliness and confront reality. She is yearning for unity between essence and existence—between what she does and who she is. However, her detachment from the dance and the people around it indicates that she is still unable to live this question authentically.

The protagonist's anguish manifests itself in making Mohanendra Simha (the King) a new source of fascination, even before meeting him in person, as "Qayenaat wanted to know more about this king" (200). Interestingly, this desire is not grounded in political curiosity but in existential projection—she sees the King as a possible anchor for her dislocated self. So, she is impressed by him at first glance: "And yet this man was obviously king. Despite the ordinary get-up—not a single gold bangle or peacock feather to hint at past glories—everything about him suggested stateliness" (228). His command of English also fascinates her, highlighting the fact that his fluency hints at her internalized cultural hierarchies, where linguistic command becomes a proxy for legitimacy and sophistication. By outsourcing esteem through such traits, she continues to nurture a temporary sense of self-worth, and such a temperament makes her fall quickly in love with the King.

For the purpose of preserving her delicate self-worth, she chooses to abandon her passion (dance) and yet again chooses to exist in bad faith. The King "...was her focus now. As was the dance. She had seen a genuine spirit in both, and she wanted to draw nearer to them" (247). As a result, returning to the congested dance center is now a burden to her, foreshadowing her readiness to leave the place once she gets an option to do so. As the King invites her to move to the palace, she readily agrees to do so as if she was waiting for such an invitation. Now, she projects her loneliness onto the King and his palace: "The King was a lonely man living in a grimy house, and he seemed eager

to share the story of his life" (241), not realising that she is describing herself through him and his palace. Apart from this, she feels pity for him upon seeing that all that remained from his glorious past were bits of memories, placing him in the same position as her. She is in denial about the fact that she is old when she projects the King as way too old for her. She also feels connected to the King, as he makes her believe that he understands her better than anyone else.

Notably, the King's agency lies in resonating with her a purpose she hasn't clearly defined herself, and this is how the protagonist accepts his words, not because they represent truth, but because they offer structure. Given the fact that her alienation has made her want to connect with people, it encourages her to do the same with the King, i.e., to find something in common: "They had something in common. She could play a part in his mission, joining her love of the dance to his dreams for it" (246). Her fascination with the King represents another attempt at escapism in the sense that she embraces a new identity in an effort to shed her past: "He'd given her a new name, thereby cancelling out her background" (314). Superficially, this cancellation of background may appear liberating, but it also acts as a self-erasure. Instead of confronting her past actions and choices, she craves an existential amnesty by indulging in a roleplay, which, in existential terms, is an abandonment of self-authorship. Consequently, she allows herself to be redefined as 'Mandakini, a signifier of her existential abdication. Sartre states, "Most important, consciousness is not the ego. The ego is not inside consciousness but outside it... the ego is the object of consciousness" (*The Transcendence of the Ego* 9). Concurrently, this renaming symbolizes an attempt to erase her old identity and past sins, along with her readiness to belong somewhere for once: "The important thing now was to make the transition from Qayenaat to Mandakini, or rather to complete it, for she was already half there" (309). Sartre would see this as a definitive gesture of bad faith—she is not choosing her identity but rather sliding into one offered by circumstance/manipulation. Now, she can recognize herself as someone who has nothing to do with Gyan Pai's murder or with Qayenaat and be royalty, escaping her guilt through a fake identity. However, deep inside, she identifies herself as the murderer.

The King, an embodiment of authority and tradition, represents the weight of institutionalized power, and this is how he contrasts with Sartre's call for individual authenticity. As already established, the protagonist repeatedly comforts herself by following someone else, ruling her life, "I'm hopeless, she thought. But it's true. With him, I'm happy. And what about him?" (294). In this sense, the King performs the role of a comforter to her

existential needs. She believes that she is capable of managing everything on her own, while it is constantly proven that she has relied on Sathi, Sara, Baban, or her father. However, she is slowly getting mature, and she begins to see the reality of people suffering around her, especially through Malti's story, and acknowledges the cruelty of the government. It also enables her to confront privilege and naivety; she is in good faith when she realises that there are things that she does not understand until she experiences them.

Interestingly, in *Simhal*, she gravitates towards Shiva because of the King's cultural practices and her subconscious desire to please him. In an attempt to please him and become the version that he likes, she feels that "...perhaps it was time to turn to Shiva, confront her fear of this unpredictable god-man. Time to give up worldliness, forget the burden of dharma, and focus on moksha, breaking free" (312). She initially finds the rituals and sacrifices horrifying but slowly rationalizes them, falling again to the depths of bad faith. Apparently, she is so desperately fixated on the King that she doesn't realize that she is going against her own morals. Despite the fact that she is irritated by the killing of the goats during the sacrifice, "Yet again her thoughts flew to love, her whole being inclined that way" (330). Her readiness to normalize ritual violence in exchange for affection and stability signifies an ethical compromise.

She eventually experiences awakening during the sacrificial ritual where she finds her moment of existential clarity; she sees that she has once again relinquished her agency: "Standing there facing an inscrutable king, a tortured man who actually seemed to enjoy it— yes, that was the word—playing a beast, and the tough on whose breath was the raw smell of liquor, Qayenaat felt more vulnerable than she ever had in her life" (334). This is the moment where her illusions begin to collapse. Her vulnerability signals an impending rupture, which signifies a step toward reclaiming her own gaze and judgment. The king participates in a disturbing ritual where a man is hooked to a cart through his flesh and pulls the King about what she feels: "We cannot mistreat people on the pretext of some old story, regardless of what lies they themselves believe in" (339). Here, for the first time, she affirms a moral position, which represents a potent turn towards existential authenticity. She now chooses to listen to herself and comes to an acceptance of her worth, realizing, "She was clearly up against a madman. He'd tried to put on a show for her when she was already won over... he seemed bent on converting her; she wasn't good enough as she was" (352). As a result, she now understands that she has no real agency in the palace—she is merely another captive, like those before her, with the realization that

"They'd planned this (holding her captive) even before the innocent thought of taking a walk had occurred to her" (354). She realises that she is truly alone in this vast universe and that there is no way to escape this loneliness other than acknowledging and embracing it.

Freedom, Responsibility, and Authenticity

The moment of escape from *Simhal* is pivotal because it makes Qayenaat actively choose freedom, fully embracing the consequences of her past actions. She now *accepts*, and this internal moment of reckoning shows her initial acknowledgement of the hardship required in her pursuit of freedom. She ruminates that "...the harder thing was acknowledging that her adventure in *Simhal* was over, that the King was no longer someone she could trust" (355), marking a turn towards self-reliance. Sartre opines, "Man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself; yet once hurled into the world, he is responsible for everything he does" (*Existentialism Is a Humanism* 29). She is glad to have heard her *real* name from Sathi, reclaiming her forgotten identity. This is a moment of existential awakening, and she now understands that she has been projecting her loneliness onto others, seeking escape in illusions rather than facing her reality. Sartre argues that authenticity requires the acceptance of one's facticity (the given facts of one's situation) while exercising radical freedom, and this is what Qayenaat finally aspires to achieve: "In a word, man must create his own essence: it is in throwing himself into the world, suffering there, struggling there, that he gradually defines himself" (*Existentialism Is a Humanism* 50).

Importantly, the adoption of Chota symbolizes existential responsibility in the sense that she no longer seeks meaning externally but creates meaning through action. As a result, taking care of Chota becomes a transformative experience for her. She realises that this boy "...comes from a world where too much has been screwed up already... [and] I need to be clear in my head for his sake" (372). Chota's innocence facilitates her maturity, and it is through him that she sees the world without any prejudice. She no longer seeks *moksha* through escape but finds peace in the mundane reality of life. Also, she is ready to pick up on 9-5 jobs, which she initially hated, in order to feed her family of two. She finds a solution to her loneliness, which is evident when she tells him that "...you are the only reason I have not to cry" (377). She now understands that happiness is not about grand escapes or intense passion but about small, everyday moments.

In *The Cosmopolitans*, Qayenaat's psychological and existential evolution reflects a profound engagement with Sartrean existentialism, particularly the transformation from bad faith to authenticity. Her life, characterized by

emotional instability, fractured relationships, artistic struggle, and a perpetual refusal to confront the truth of her existence, unfolds as a narrative of existential 'becoming.' At the heart of this narrative lies a persistent denial of facticity, and this denial manifests in her jealous, dependent relationships with others, her nostalgic fixation on past opportunities lost, and her tendency to romanticize her suffering. Qayenaat constructs a self-image grounded in illusions and self-deceptions, thereby avoiding the discomfiting freedom of choice and the accompanying responsibility that authentic existence demands. Further, her descent into violence—culminating in the burning of Baban's *Nostalgia* and the subsequent accidental death of Gyan Pai—marks the climactic rupture of her existential stasis. Such acts, driven by paranoia and emotional volatility, foreground the breakdown of her illusions. Now, she confronts her with the absurdity of her existence, which runs parallel to Sartre's notion that human freedom is both a burden and a source of authenticity. The murder acts as a moment of existential awakening, and for the first time, she is forced to confront her own capacity for destruction. This leads to a kind of exile that is not merely geographical, as seen in her departure to Simhal, but existential, as she searches for a more grounded sense of meaning.

As a consequence, the final trajectory of Qayenaat's journey highlights a shift towards authenticity. However, she does not undergo a linear transformation; rather, her movement toward accepting her *freedom* is the first code of her existential agency. Notably, the novel does not offer a definitive conclusion regarding her redemption or transformation; it leaves open the possibility of self-reinvention. It is in this openness, this embrace of the absurd condition of human life, that she begins to embody the existential subject. Earnshaw says, "...self in Existentialism is an uncompleted project, a potential for which each individual is solely responsible for realizing or unfolding" (19). Ultimately, *The Cosmopolitans* can be read as a narrative of existential awakening, where meaning is not found but created through the difficult process of self-confrontation. In this light, *The Cosmopolitans* stands as a powerful illustration of existential literature, affirming that the path to authenticity, though fraught with pain and uncertainty, remains open to those who dare to choose it.

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Fragmented Identities: Migration and the Quest for Belonging in Contemporary Diasporic Narratives

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Abstract— This paper explores the complex intersections of displacement, gender, and identity through a comparative analysis of Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's short story "Clothes." This research investigates how migrant people negotiate the emotional and sociocultural terrain of belonging and alienation in host nations. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as Iain Chambers' concept of migrancy and Homi Bhabha's vernacular cosmopolitanism, the paper highlights how diasporic subjects confront and reconfigure notions of selfhood in transnational contexts. Alvarez's García sisters and Divakaruni's Sumita embody the struggles and possibilities of hybrid identity formation, caught between the pressures of assimilation and the pull of cultural memory. Both narratives reveal how diasporic women endure dual marginalizations—based on race, gender, and geography—yet assert agency through acts of cultural negotiation, resistance, and self-fashioning. The analysis underscores that identity in the diaspora is not a fixed essence but a fluid, fractured, and evolving construct shaped by displacement, trauma, and adaptation.



Keywords— Hybrid, Resistance, Identity, Migration, Negotiation

I. INTRODUCTION

Migrancy involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a home coming –completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility. History gives way to histories, as the West gives way to the world. (Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* 5)

By observing nature, we come to understand that it offers the foundational model for human mobility and the establishment of new settlements in response to survival imperatives. The migratory patterns of birds, characterized by their seasonal movement across diverse geographical regions, exemplify an innate ability to adapt to varying climatic conditions. In a parallel manner, the dispersal mechanisms of plants—through agents such as wind, water, and animals—facilitate the propagation of species across

different ecosystems. These natural processes underscore the foundational principles of mobility and environmental adaptation that have historically informed human strategies for migration and habitation. Traveling has become an integral part of the human experience, and the exchange of cultures and ideas has been commonplace since ancient times. Diaspora literature encompasses writings that explore the complexities of migration, focusing on the life experiences of migrants both before and after settling in a new country. This genre is rich with emotions, nostalgic reflections on the homeland, and the difficulties and challenges of integrating into a new society. It often highlights problems with adapting to new cultures and the conflicts or challenges encountered in the new environment. Narratives of migration differ based on the migrant's background and their country of origin. When migrating from developing to developed countries, migrants face significant challenges related to language and cultural assimilation. While these narratives may draw from the writer's personal experiences, they are largely fictional and

represent the broader migrant condition. Migration literature also delves into the complex emotions of admiration and, at times, resentment towards the host nation. Some stories depict successful settlement in the new land, while others focus on troubled memories and new challenges. The pressure of adapting to a new country can lead to a loss of self and identity, mental health issues, and even the desire to return home. Migrant narratives encompass stories of both voluntary and involuntary migration. Voluntary migration may be driven by personal needs or growth, the desire to join family members, or, in the case of return migration, a wish to reconnect with the ancestral homeland. Involuntary migration, on the other hand, can result from natural disasters, wars, partitions, government resettlement programs, and illegal trafficking of workers, among other reasons. These factors vary based on the government's immigration policies. Migrants from poorer countries often struggle with acceptance and assimilation in developed countries due to differences in culture, skills, and their ability to earn a livelihood, which pose challenges for both the migrants and the host communities. The continuous movement of diasporic individuals highlights their state of 'homelessness.' Diasporic discourse addresses the challenge of finding a home for those without a stable roof over their heads due to natural, political, or professional reasons. These individuals strive to establish their stories, languages, and cultures wherever they go. It is nearly impossible for diasporic people to dream of an incontrovertible past. Instead, they illuminate a hybridized interpretation of diasporic consciousness. They must be vocal about reassessing and renegotiating their roles based on differences, without adhering to a fixed opinion or homogeneous truth. Diasporic individuals can navigate between cultures and renegotiate traditions, embodying what Homi Bhabha terms 'vernacular cosmopolitanism.' This concept emphasizes 'locality' and insists on its own terms while engaging in broader national and societal conversations. It is not an elite cosmopolitanism inspired by universalist humanist ideals that seek to establish a unified, enlightened global culture. Instead, vernacular cosmopolitans must engage in cultural translation as a means of survival. Their specific and local histories, often threatened and suppressed, are woven into the fabric of dominant cultural practices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a detailed literature review, re-examining and re-analysing selected works with a focus on critical objectivity. Various articles, book chapters, published theses, and books are cited to highlight that, although numerous studies have been conducted on the

chosen literary texts, no comprehensive study has yet been undertaken. This gap underscores the originality of this research.

In her Paper titled "A Study on the Predicament of Parsis in the Selected Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa and Rohinton Mistry," S. Mary Hemalatha explores the identity struggles, achievements, and cultural conditions of the Parsi community in the Indian subcontinent. Both Rohinton Mistry and Bapsi Sidhwa depict the fortunes and culture of this ethnic community in their literary works. In novels such as *Ice-Candy Man*, *The Pakistani Bride*, *An American Brat*, and *The Crow Eaters*, Sidhwa provides an authentic portrayal of the Parsi community. *An American Brat* specifically highlights the diasporic experience of Feroza, the central character, illustrating the community's complex position between their homeland and the new world. This quest for acculturation subtly underpins the narrative of the novel. In the article "Dire Consequences of Devastated Motherhood and Daring Daughters—A Diasporic Perspective of Chitra Banerjee's *Before We Visit The Goddess*" by V. Samuel Morris and M. Poonkodi, the focus is on the mother-daughter relationship and the challenges they face both in India and abroad. The narrative follows three generations of female protagonists, illustrating how they break societal rules, navigate difficult situations, and ultimately redeem themselves through their determination and resilience. In "The West Indian Americans" (2001), Holger Henke argues that economic connections and public policy have influenced the migration of Caribbean immigrants to the U.S.A. He asserts that a combination of issues related to class, gender, and race within the Caribbean islands has driven a continuous stream of migrants to the U.S.A. in pursuit of a better life.

In this research, a Qualitative Research methodology will be chosen as the primary sources are literary texts, precluding the inclusion of specific quantitative data for analysis. Literary pieces written by selected literary stalwarts will be used as empirical sources, while published articles and books on those literary figures, including interviews, reviews, and other dissertations, will be included as secondary references. An attempt is made to analyse the changing scenario of diaspora in different geographical spaces and cultural domains, extending beyond the historical context of the dispersal of the Jews.

1. Hybridity, Resistance, and Rebirth in Transnational Spaces:

There are many seminal works of Caribbean American writers—Julia Alvarez, Elizabeth Nunez, and Naomi Jackson—which explore how identity, race, and gender shape migrant narratives. Particularly in Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* (2000),

the experience of migration from the Dominican Republic to America is rendered through a diasporic lens, exposing tensions between assimilation and cultural retention. Lucia M. Suarez notes that Alvarez “exposes her plight of identity caught between assimilation into US mainstream culture and contestation of the very mechanisms of assimilation” (Suarez 117).

The García family's transition from affluence in the Dominican Republic to marginalization in the United States highlights their struggle with displacement. The sisters—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofia—face alienation due to their ethnicity and gender. Initially longing for their homeland, they gradually embrace American life. Yet this Americanization comes at a cost. As the sisters recall:

[W]e sisters wailed and paled, whining to go home. We didn't feel we had the best the United States had to offer. We had only second-hand stuff, rental houses in one red-neck Catholic neighbourhood after another....Cooped up in those little...houses, the rules were as strict as for Island girls but there was no island to make up the difference. (Alvarez 107)

Despite their adaptation, the girls' parents, Carlos and Laura, feared losing them to American culture and thus insisted on summer trips back to the Dominican Republic to reconnect with ‘la familia’. This tension between cultural heritage and new identity often left the girls conflicted. Carla, for example, was racially taunted and sexually harassed, experiences that haunted her:

“Sometimes when she woke in the dark, they were perched at the foot of her bed, a grim chorus of urchin faces, boys without bodies, chanting without words, ‘Go back! Go back!’” (Alvarez 165).

Carla's trauma reflects her internalized fear and the ongoing struggle to belong. Similarly, Yolanda voices her resentment of being an outsider:

“For hundredth time, I cursed my immigrant origins....I too would have suntanned parents... and I would say things like ‘no shit,’ without feeling like I was imitating someone else” (Alvarez 95).

These expressions underscore how the girls grapple with fragmented identities in a foreign culture. Alienated from both home and host lands, their sense of belonging becomes elusive. Yolanda, in a moment of loneliness, turns to religion rather than American childhood comforts:

“Had I been raised with the traditions of stuffed animals, I would have hugged my bear...Instead, I...took out the crucifix...This large crucifix had

been a ‘security blanket’...after coming to this country” (Alvarez 100).

Even Laura, the mother, tries to carve a space for herself through invention, but the daughters feel neglected, needing guidance to navigate the complexities of their new life:

“Important...things...their own mother...didn't have a second to help them puzzle any of this out” (Alvarez 138).

Over time, the sisters come to understand that their hyphenated identities must be accepted despite the challenges:

“It is a difficult place, this country, before you get used to it. You have to not take things personal” (Alvarez 170).

Through Alvarez's narrative, the diasporic journey of the García family reveals the constant negotiation of identity, the pain of cultural dislocation, and the difficult embrace of hybridity in the American racial and cultural landscape.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni deals with recurring themes such as migration, alienation, dissimulation, nostalgia, homeland, and the protagonists' determined efforts to break free from the rigid traditional norms of the East while embracing the liberating ethos of American society. Her narratives often center around Bengali women who migrate to America following marriage, highlighting the ensuing cross-cultural conflict. Drawing from her own experiences as a migrant, Divakaruni delves into issues of socio-cultural dislocation, racial prejudice, and the struggle to assimilate into American society. Her characters, much like herself, are imbued with a deep sense of selfhood and dignity, which empowers them to overcome adversity and emerge triumphant. Her debut collection of short stories, *Arranged Marriage* (1995), offers a nuanced exploration of the institution of marriage, delving into themes of love and betrayal, sorrow and renunciation, all within the confines of patriarchal structures. Through eleven compelling stories featuring both immigrant and non-immigrant women, Divakaruni portrays the diverse trajectories of her female protagonists as they navigate the complexities of cultural transition and embark on a quest for identity and self-definition.

In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's second story, “*Clothes*,” the nuances of cultural identity and personal transformation are delicately interwoven. At the heart of the narrative lies Sumita's arranged marriage to Somesh, which sets her on a journey from India to the United States—a transition that becomes symbolic of her evolving identity. The story begins with the traditional bride-viewing ritual, during which Sumita, like many young women, dreams of a fairytale marriage to a “handsome prince” who will take

her to a distant, promising land (AM 18). Her hopes are partly fulfilled, as Somesh turns out to be a considerate partner who supports her ambitions of becoming a teacher and gifts her contemporary American clothes. These new garments symbolize not just a change in geography, but also a growing sense of confidence and selfhood—distinct from the constraints of her native culture, where the sari represents traditional expectations of womanhood.

Tragically, Somesh's sudden death halts their shared aspirations. However, rather than retreating into the regressive gender roles and mourning customs of her homeland—where widows are often reduced to invisible existences—Sumita chooses to remain in America. Her decision reflects her desire to honour both her husband's dreams and her own, by assimilating into American society without entirely abandoning her cultural values. She recognizes that returning to India would mean the erasure of her autonomy and identity:

“That's when I know I can't go back... all over India, at this very moment widows in white saris are bowing their veiled heads... Doves with cut-off wings.” (AM 33)

The story closes with Sumita standing before a mirror, preparing to confront an uncertain future:

“I tilt my chin... In the mirror a woman holds my gaze... She wears a blouse and skirt the colour of almonds.” (AM 33)

This image underscores her resolve to forge a new identity—rooted in her Indian heritage but branching out into the liberating possibilities of her migrated life.

“*Clothes*” engages deeply with the complexities of identity negotiation, cultural hybridity, and the challenges of reterritorialization. Sumita's journey from India to America is not just physical but metaphorical—marking a passage from collective tradition to individual self-definition. Her transformation mirrors the broader experience of many diasporic subjects who navigate between the pull of homeland values and the push toward assimilation in a host country. Divakaruni uses the motif of clothing as a metaphor for cultural transition and identity reformation. The sari, emblematic of Sumita's traditional upbringing, gradually gives way to Western attire, which becomes a medium through which she experiences personal agency and reinvention. Yet this adoption of a new wardrobe does not signify wholesale cultural abandonment. Rather, it marks a process of hybridization—a conscious blending of her Indian roots with the freedom and possibilities that America offers. This hybrid identity is neither fixed nor entirely secure, but it is chosen, embodied, and asserted.

Somesh's death becomes a critical turning point. In many traditional Indian settings, widowhood is synonymous with erasure—socially, sexually, and emotionally. By choosing to stay in the United States, Sumita refuses to conform to the role of the self-effacing widow. Her resolve to remain is a form of resistance—against patriarchy, against cultural fatalism, and against the symbolic violence of being reduced to “a dove with cut-off wings.” Divakaruni's story is an exploration of diaspora not as exile, but as a space of possibility—where identity is not inherited but created. Sumita's final image in the mirror, dressed in almond-coloured Western clothes, captures the essence of her rebirth. Her gaze, “apprehensive yet steady,” reflects the courage of a woman stepping into a liminal space where the borders between cultures blur, and where selfhood is crafted at the intersection of memory, loss, and hope.

Certainly. Here's a scholarly and cohesive conclusion that ties together the major arguments of the chapter:

III. CONCLUSION

The diasporic journeys depicted in Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's “Clothes” reflect a shared terrain of dislocation, hybridity, and self-fashioning that shapes the lived realities of migrant women. Through nuanced portrayals of cultural alienation and gendered expectations, both authors illuminate how migration is not merely a geographical crossing, but a profound transformation of identity. Alvarez's García sisters and Divakaruni's Sumita navigate the turbulent spaces between cultural retention and assimilation, negotiating not only racial and ethnic otherness but also the burden of patriarchal structures within both home and host cultures. The narratives underscore that identity in the diaspora is never static—it is fractured, fluid, and continually reassembled in response to shifting cultural and emotional landscapes. The García sisters' struggle to find belonging in a racially stratified America mirrors Sumita's assertion of agency in the wake of personal loss. While the former wrestle with the pressures of Americanization and the yearning for homeland, the latter embraces the liminal space of the immigrant experience as a site for reinvention. Both texts reveal that diasporic women must negotiate dual marginalities—as immigrants and as women—yet in doing so, they carve out hybrid identities that are empowered, chosen, and resilient. Alvarez and Divakaruni offer powerful critiques of cultural essentialism, illustrating how the diasporic condition, with all its fractures and contradictions, can also be a site of creative self-determination. The tension between memory and reinvention, tradition and transformation, becomes not

a limitation but a generative force through which new subjectivities emerge. These narratives affirm that in the complex dance between belonging and estrangement, it is possible to reclaim voice, agency, and a sense of home—however hybrid or unsettled it may be.

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Mental Health, and Trauma in *Cry, the Peacock* and Contemporary Indian Women's Writing

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Abstract— Writers have always tried to create stories to help understand human emotional phenomena, mental health remaining one of the most evocative and troubling themes throughout literature. From Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, which narrates the stifling treatment of women's mental illness to contemporary ones like Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life* and Avni Doshi's *Burnt Sugar*, trauma narratives have evolved to capture the deep, raw, and intimate struggles of the mind. Women writers especially have depicted the most personal experiences about these realities and created women who, due to societal and cultural pressures and personal herstories, undergo immense psychological struggles. Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande have, for example, explored the quiet, internal suffering of their protagonists, revealing the profound trauma of loneliness as well as the enduring strength of those coping with it. Literature does more than merely depict these struggles, seeks answers for the systems that suppress them, and articulate suffering that is so often overlooked. This study focuses on the ways fiction portrays mental distress as a means to critique society's understanding, responding not just, as many assume, in personal terms, but also showing that trauma is always situated within history, culture and the compelling articulation of silence.



Keywords— Identity, Mental Health, Narrative, Psychological Realism, Trauma

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between literature and mental health has been deeply explored through various prominent works, including Gilman's "*The Yellow Wallpaper*" which highlights the psychological repercussions of the patriarchal system on women's mental health, Plath's semi-autobiographical novel "*The Bell Jar*" that intricately portrays struggles with severe depression and suicidal thoughts, and Kesey's "*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*", released in 1962, which critiqued conventional psychiatry and institutionalized care for the mentally ill.

In Indian English literature, mental health topics have been analyzed about India's social structure and a woman's role in it. Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) paints the vivid portrait of a woman's plunge into psychological distress within the contours of a stifling marriage, thus making it one of the earliest Indian novels to underscore mental health so profoundly. Shashi Deshpande's *That*

Long Silence (1988) also focuses on the patient pain of women within a patriarchal system framework while Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) depicts the pain of losing one's childhood through trauma and the accompanying psychological scars of abuse, loss and emotional deprivation.

Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) is one of the earliest Indian English novels to explore profoundly the psyche of a woman. The book is centered on Maya, a young woman whose eventual mental decline stems from a death prophecy, worsened by the discord in her marriage and emotional desolation. The readers are shown the increasing paranoia, emotional turbulence, and detachment from reality Maya experiences through Desai's stream-of-consciousness narration.

Cry, the Peacock stands out for socio-psychological analysis due to trauma's multifaceted focus. In Indian societal contexts, gender-based violence, familial strains,

and cultural norms stifling womanhood progress shape and characterize their existence, attempting to control their being. Maya's story is not simply a tragic tale of a woman succumbing to civilization's brutality – the patriarchal captivity ropes her existence. *Cry, the Peacock* is a crucial work of literature concerning the transcendental issues of psychological health intertwined with oppression and subjugation inflicted by the system, civilization, and patriarchal domination.

Furthermore, Desai's narrative style together with her profound psychological understanding qualify *Cry, the Peacock* as essential literature on mental illness. This novel has no objective and rational depiction of Maya's ailment; instead, it has sympathy and compassionate concern towards the contrived monstrosity of a tortured mind and sympathetic consideration, exhibiting despair and pain through the lurking shadow of consciousness. The informed choice targeting this text will aim to study the psychological verisimilitude while focusing on the social realities surrounding Maya's traumatic experiences.

II. METHODOLOGY

The analysis of *Cry, the Peacock* will be conducted through a socio-psychological lens by integrating psychology and social theory to examine the protagonist's decline into madness. This will incorporate consideration of psychological trauma, anxiety, and distress, particularly within a gendered framework. It will also draw upon psychoanalysis, specifically *Freudian* and *Jungian* accounts of repression, paranoia, identity, and their interrelations to explore Maya's fractured identity.

This paper will explore the sociocultural feminist frameworks alongside psychological discourse to analyze the social elements of Maya's anguish. This study seeks to address how the culturally upheld notions of marriage, submissive femininity, and emotional stoicism adversely impact Maya's mental well-being. Through close reading of Desai's use of stream of consciousness, vivid motifs, and non-linear narrative structures, this paper argues that the novel illustrates the interplay of personal trauma with socio-cultural influences through sophisticated narrative techniques.

Cry, the Peacock is not simply a story of a person's psychological breakdown; it is a reflection on the socio-cultural dimensions that define a woman's psyche. *Anita Desai* captures in Maya a haunting depiction of trauma, repression, and emotional instability, revealing the delicate balance between mental illness and societal structures. In this paper, I contend that Maya's madness stems from a combination of internal psychological strain and social context, thus marking *Cry, the Peacock* as an important text

in the discourse of Indian English literature's exploration of mental illness. Using a socio-psychological framework, this study aims to demonstrate how literature can illuminate the intricate constituents of mental illness, especially those embedded in patriarchal settings, and how such illness is represented and critiqued.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The interrelation of mental health and trauma has been deeply studied in literary works, particularly in the modern fiction genre. The psychoanalytic theory of *Sigmund Freud* and *Jacques Lacan* provides important insights into understanding the unconscious, repression, and hysteria. *Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams* and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* propounds that trauma expresses itself in repetitions in the subconscious, which corresponds to the psychological strife of Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* (Freud 54). Lacan's theory of The Symbolic and the Imaginary helps explain more of Maya's splintered self along with her morbid obsession with death (Lacan 126).

In *Madness and Civilization*, *Michel Foucault* disputes common perspectives regarding mental illness, claiming that rather than being a purely medical issue, madness is socially constructed, marked, and contained within societal frameworks. When this view is applied to *Anita Desai's* novel, Maya's psychological breakdown manifests as aetiological both in personal suffering as well as in her equally suffocating and silencing patriarchal structures (Foucault 89). This corresponds with *Elaine Showalter's The Female Malady*, which analyzes the representations of women's mental ailments throughout history as trivialized or overly emphasized due to socially constructed, gendered expectations. *Showalter's* work is especially pertinent to *Cry, the Peacock*, where Maya's growing unease is interpreted not as a valid psychological problem, but rather the undue burden of being a woman, succumbing to the "hysterical woman" stereotype (Showalter 172).

The intersection between mental illness and female identity has been addressed by several scholars in Indian English literature. In *Shashi Deshpande's The Dark Holds No Terrors* and in *Draupadi* by *Mahasweta Devi*, female protagonists experience trauma and strive to survive in a patriarchal society. In *Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things*, psychological damage is also depicted, particularly regarding the character of Ammu, who suffers due to the unbending rules of society (Roy 214). All these works provide a wider context to contextualize *Cry, the Peacock* and suggest that Maya's mental collapse isn't an outlier, but part of a strange, recurrent cycle within Indian fiction.

Studying trauma also helps to explain the fragmented state of mind that Maya suffers from. *Cathy Caruth*, in her

work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, articulates that whenever trauma manifests, it is not completely integrated; rather, it emerges in bits and pieces, in the case of Maya it's her thoughts and hallucinations (Caruth 24). *Judith Herman*, in her text *Trauma and Recovery*, points out that along with other factors, a lack of social engagement makes trauma worse. Maya, in light of this, becomes much more tormented because of her emotional disconnect from her husband (Herman 134). Just as so, *Kalpana Rahita Seshadri's* inquiry into silence and resistance within feminist theory defends the notion that they deem 'madness' as an act of defiance against suffocating patriarchy (Seshadri 89).

The psychological perspectives and feminist aspects have been chronicled as fundamental details of *Cry, the Peacock*. *Usha Bande* in her novel *The Novels of Anita Desai: A Study in Character and Conflict* mentions how 'Desai's protagonists seem to cope with acute existential anxiety and the threat of psychological disintegration' (Bande 47). In *Feminizing the Narrative*, *Jasbir Jain* observes that stream-of-consciousness narrative technique in Maya's persona too enables the readers to go through the disintegration of her mind, reinforcing the portrayal of mental illness in the novel (Jain 110). Moreover, *P. K. Rajan's* *Studies in Indian Writing in English* argues that Desai's works attempt to integrate psychological realism with feminist discourse, which renders *Cry, the Peacock* of value from a literary and psychological perspective (Rajan 58).

Anita Desai's usage of psychological realism places her alongside modernist authors who give prominence to the subjective experiences of their protagonists. In this regard, *Mrs. Dalloway* by *Virginia Woolf* and *The Bell Jar* by *Sylvia Plath* are often referred to as parallel literature since they also portray women grappling with mental illness within stifling social frameworks (Woolf 95; Plath 67). Scholars like *Toril Moi*, *Gilbert*, and *Susan Gubar* have argued that many narratives depicting female insanity serve, more often than not, as commentaries on a woman's subjugation, which is also true of *Cry, the Peacock* (Moi 77; Gilbert and Gubar 145). Moreover, discussions on mental health in literature, like those found in *Madhumalati Adhikari's* *Psychological Realism in Women's Fiction*, further support the idea that Desai's novel remains socially relevant (Adhikari 163).

Through these combined lenses of psychoanalysis, trauma studies, feminist theory, and Indian English literary criticism, this literature review argues for the relevance of Desai's novel as a primary text depicting mental illness in Indian literature. It also analyzes the novel's place in the discourse on gender, psychological suffering, and the impact of social standards on a woman's emotional health.

IV. MENTAL HEALTH AND TRAUMA IN *CRY, THE PEACOCK*

Through the character of Maya, *Anita Desai* pays close attention to the issues of mental illness and trauma in the novel *Cry, the Peacock*. Maya's life is an image of a woman plagued with loneliness and existential crisis, and the novel exposes her internal conflict while critiquing the socio-patriarchal order that adds to her misery. Understanding how mental illness is construed in literature, and especially in this novel requires a close examination of Maya's character, the trauma she bears, the symbolic techniques of the narration, and other forms of symbolic imagery employed in the book.

4.1 Character Analysis of Maya

Maya as a character is not only a leading figure in the novel. She represents an intricate psychological picture: a tragic blend of childhood and marital anxieties blended with emotional vulnerability, all spiraling towards an inevitable breakdown. Her father's overprotectiveness and spoiling play a crucial role in shaping her psyche. She recalls her childhood as being one marked with affection, 'not a shadow falling' on her, which according to her father was "never let to fall upon me" (Desai 42). Such memories reinforce her emotional dependence on him, marking a troubling reality that plunges Maya deeper into distressing adulthood turbulence. Maya's father's sheltering predisposes her to being unequipped to handle emotional hurdles, which marriage, infused with dependency demands.

The marriage bore a significant burden on Maya's fragile psyche. Refusing to attend to her need for emotional affection is particularly challenging given Gautama's age and distance. Maya's desire for love and intimacy is thwarted by Gautama's alien demeanor and philosophical nature which makes her feel deserted. Condescendingly, he casts away all her worries as childish and neglects the vital role of nurturing, which is fundamental to her well-being. Even his indifference is harsh as he calmly tells her, 'You must not be afraid of the dark. You must learn to live with it' (Desai 87). Maya's loneliness is further aggravated by inadequate emotional sympathy, which forces her to pull deeper into her obsessive ruminations.

These fears Maya harbors are not only bound to exist but are associated with her childhood and the speculating prophecy inflicting her. An astrologer once foretold that within four years of marriage, one of them would die. While A Maya dismisses this prophecy, it turns into a terrifying certainty, exposing her anxious predisposition and paranoia, reinforcing her paranoid predisposition. Rather than an abstract notion, death becomes a dominating presence

dominating all her thoughts and actions, solidifying her obsessive tendencies.

4.2 Exhibitions of Mental Illness Through The Lens of Trauma

Maya has notable signs of anxiety, and psychological distress, her mind is filled with ruminations that are a jumble of images and fantasies. Her moods fluctuate rather dramatically and she can go from an intense craving to be adored to rage filled with terror. Her thoughts surrounding the prophecy cause her to see death omens like a cat which she views as a portentous death (Desai 112).

The paranoia that she has begun to exhibit is apparent in the increased detachment that she has from reality. A quote that captures the delusions she is struggling with describes the world as this:

Illustrating the world as cruel *'The air seemed thick, congealed, a dead weight pressing upon me... I wanted to scream, to shake off the silence that clung to me like damp, rotting leaves* (Desai 135).

Such imagery underscores her entrapment, mentally and within an oppressive, voiceless matrimony. Following trauma specialists like *Cathy Caruth*, traumatic events lead to an alteration in time: the past intrudes upon the present (Caruth 23). Maya exemplifies this phenomenon, being unable to escape the haunting repetition of the prophecy in her mind.

Her growing animosity towards Gautama is the most troubling sign of her mental breakdown. Maya begins viewing her husband as both the executor and the scapegoat of her perceived fate due to the all-consuming belief that death is unavoidable. This psychological projection reaches its peak when she ends up killing him—an act that is paradoxically both an imprisonment to her fate and an incarceration of control that defies her prophecy. In any case, the action does not set her free; instead, it deepens her madness fuelled by a loss of direction.

The integration of symbol and plot is done in a way unreliable to Maya's deteriorating psyche. The infusion of stream-of-consciousness narrative aids the readers in parallel experiencing a character's thought process descending into turmoil. Patterns of fragmented phrases, reckless shifts in atmosphere and voice, and sometimes drifted-back themes serve to add psychological robustness to the text.

An important symbol in the novel is the peacock, which Maya observes over and over again. Maya hears peacocks screaming in their dances which is a direct reflection of her agony:

"Did you ever have a glimpse of a peacock screaming in the dead of night? Did you listen to a peacock shriek with so much pain, at the dreadful death he speaks of?" (Desai 99).

Pavani's peacock represents her fate, and how one is bound to suffering. The cry of a peacock denotes their internal struggle. The contorted 'movie' screams show the contrast between the peacock's beauty and its torment, which represents Maya's existence – fiction that is beautiful externally, but psychologically horrific internally, one bound to a world tormented by psychological suffering.

The depiction of decay and darkness in the novel is also a notable narrative feature. Maya refers to capsulation as an oppressive environments and describes it as death and confinement. Images like stagnant air and decaying walls highlight imprisonment, while shadowy figures represent her inability to escape.

Maya's inner monologue as a form of stream-of-consciousness technique permits readers to accompany Maya's mental state throughout the novel. Unlike conventional third-person narrators, Desai puts us inside Maya's head, where her paranoia and fear appear immediate and claustrophobic. This tactic supports *Elaine Showalter's* claim that stories of women's madness often blur the external world and internal reality, compelling one to confront the very nature of perception's volatility (Showalter 187).

As with Maya in *Cry, the Peacock*, I perceive the character's cognitive decline as an intricate manifestation of psychological condition, trauma, and the enduring impact of societal expectations of femininity. She exemplifies the impact that emotional deprivation, social estrangement, and unacknowledged fears from childhood can have on an individual. Through multi-layered symbolism, non-linear storytelling, and intense self-reflective writing, *Desai* captures the essence of a woman imprisoned in the corridors of her mind. Watching Maya's metamorphosis through the lens of psychological realism and feminist criticism not only deepens our understanding of her character but also broadens our perspective on the portrayal of mental illness throughout history in literature.

4.3 Socio-Psychological Interpretation

Anita Desai's novel *Cry, the Peacock* is not only concerned with the peacock's disintegration at a psychological level but also investigates how sociocultural factors, such as rigid expectations and a dominating patriarchal society, lead to psychosocial problems. Maya's struggle is closely integrated into the socio-culture that confines and cages a woman to specific roles. Her suffering is far from personal—it is the violence in reality that she is schooled into accepting, the violence marked by gender, duty, family, and a clash of emotional fragility with indifference by

society. To make sense of Maya's breakdown, it becomes imperative to examine all the controlling factors, especially the societal standards, family and marital expectations, and the eventual collapse of her psyche.

4.4 Role of Societal Expectations

Right from the onset of her story, as a woman, Maya is conditioned to fit into the skeletal structure of patriarchal standards as a suffocating emblem of identity culled from her husband with marriage as the singular avenue to self-fulfillment. None of the above-cited priors pays regard to her individuality, emotional complexities, as well as psychological needs. This is precisely where women are expected to endure, adjust and suppress all their wishes.

These beliefs are deeply rooted in Maya's upbringing. Even though he is affectionate, her father views her as a delicate object with no agency. He satisfies her wants, but never equips her for life outside his boundaries. Consequently, when Maya enters marriage, it is with a deeply romanticized heart: to her, love is complete surrender, filled to the brim with passion and intense emotions. These ideals sharply contradict the actual reality of her relationship with Gautama, who is heralding the very detachment and rationality that patriarchal masculinity frequently demands. Her blatant indifference, however, is not an unmalicious form of cruelty. It is conditioned - like so many other women - to be far too practical for their emotions and expect submissive dependence from women.

Maya's social estrangement is intricately linked to the gendered socio-spatial divide in her domestic space. As much as she craves intimacy, Gautama overlooks her emotional suffering as irrational. When offering her distressing solutions to achieve a set goal, he gives her 'logical' answers that lack warmth. He reinforces the assumption that women's feelings are unnecessary and exaggerated. His warm attempts, "You must not let yourself be troubled by such thoughts. They have no reality except in your mind," (Desai 76) further amplify her alienation. That reason encapsulates where the overgeneralization that women have to endure given the confines of pseudoscience trivialization comes from is even more striking: in reality mental distress tends to be real psychological distress.

4.5 Family And Marital Pressures

Maya's husband Gautama is not remotely close to what her idealized mental framework would class as a "companion". Appearing to embody all the traditional gender roles, Gautama is emotionally detached and entirely guided by a cold rationale. No wonder, unlike Maya who is deeply sensitive and responds to the world in nuanced ways, he seems to fit the imprint of a traditional man whose emotions are stunted by rigid reasoning.

Maya constructs a self-justification of her marriage by actually hoping for companionship, as one would expect almost unlocks a supportive, understanding husband who appreciates her nurturing qualities. It is soberly revealing how devoid of reality expectations and imagination might be.

Desai depicts the marital discord as an ongoing battle of frustration between love and intellect. Maya lashes out and attempts to express her torment but gets ignored. The more she tries to be validated, the more she ends up feeling lonely. While Gautama provides care for his wife, it is always practical instead of physical or verbal affection. This lack of emotional validation widens throughout the novel. Her frustration becomes clearer in her emotional outbursts:

"You don't love me! You don't care for me! If you did, you would understand that I am suffering, that I am afraid—afraid of something terrible, something I cannot even name!" (Desai 102)

This quotation portrays perfectly how Maya yearns to recognize her suffering; she feels dire pain being overlooked. Her words seek help and connection desperately but are unable to offer sufficient emotional depth. Maya is confined to the choice-less reality of intensive unbearable emotional neglect which only grants her renewed mental distress in which profound loneliness settles.

Though a source of affection, her father's influence adds another layer of complexity to Maya's psychological state. His adoration came with the burden of overprotectiveness which rendered her incapable of facing hardships. The expectation that Maya should always be happy sets an untenable standard, one that shatters upon confrontation with reality. Indulgence does not equip one with the tools needed to navigate emotional strain, and in Maya's case, the lack of resilience training means facing difficult emotions becomes impossible. On the other hand, Gautama, who suffers from an emotion-free upbringing, finds it impossible to fathom the pain Maya is experiencing. Their marriage becomes, therefore, a detrimental intersection between two forms of conditioning—one that bathes in emotional gratification, the other that completely ignores the 'emotional realm.'

4.6 A Psychological Breakdown

In a manner, a layering effect occurs with Maya where societal expectations, emotional abandonment, and unresolved trauma, pile on one another until they reach a breaking point. Psychological collapse. Anxiety, which stemmed from a trivial fear of the prophecy, shifts to full-blown paranoia. With every turn of the page, it becomes palpably clear that her hold on reality is steadily losing ground and she is increasingly convinced that death is

lurking close by. The sign predicting her husband's demise shifts from vague premonition to obsession, ultimately controlling every action and thought she has.

Maya's disintegration is not abrupt but rather gradual and characterized by extreme behavioral deviations, explosive violence, and progressive dissociation. She perceives signs everywhere, interpreting mundane occurrences as premonitions of disaster. The tension within her thoughts spirals into uncontrollable hysteria. Desai showcases this transformation through Maya's splintered self-dialogues, which gradually devolve into chaotic streams of thoughts devoid of sequence or sense:

"The walls pressed in. The night had voices. They whispered, they called. The stars were spinning, the earth tilting, and I – I was falling, falling" (Desai 164).

This freefall into madness culminates in the most startling development of the novel—Maya's murder of Gautama. This act is the final culmination of psychological unhinging as she tumbles him over the edge, rationalizing in her mind that she will be escaping her fate. Yet this action is far from an emancipatory impulse; it is the complete capitulation of her mind's coherence. Killing Gautama becomes not only an assault on the man but on the prophecy—her futile attempt at grasping control of a predestined life that had hunted her mercilessly for years.

Yet, her actions do not bring her peace. Instead, they leave her completely untethered from reality. The very structure of her world disintegrates, leading her to total madness. Tragedy marks the endpoint of her journey instead of triumph—illustrating the ruthless aftermath of emotional neglect, societal expectations, and psychosocial dynamics that lack profound nuance.

Maya's tragedy in *Cry, the Peacock* is not merely a personal one; it is a reflection of a larger societal failure to recognize and address women's mental health. The conditioning of women's suffering within the undercurrents of patriarchy shapes Maya's breakdown, a family unit that smothers without preparing one for the harsh winds of reality, and an emotionally sterile marriage. Desai's depiction of Maya serves as a powerful critique of patriarchy and social norms that overwhelm women to the point of a psychological break. Exploring her narrative stems from a sociopsychological approach and sheds new light on the intersections of womanhood, trauma, and mental health.

V. COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS

Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* is a pioneering work in Indian English literature that depicts a woman's psychological breakdown rather vividly. It certainly isn't the lone novel addressing the issues of mental suffering,

emotional blanking out, and the suffocating influence of societal norms on the feminine psyche. Other Indian English novels like Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* also engage with female pain, trauma, and the effects of societal expectations. These comparisons enhance one's understanding of the psychological intensities in Desai's novel and how remarkably different it is from others dealing with women's issues.

5.1 The Weight of Silence and Trauma

In *Cry, the Peacock*, *The God of Small Things*, and *That Long Silence*, one can observe the deep-seated trauma and its impact on the female characters. Maya suffers a breakdown as a result of emotional exhaustion, akin to Jaya in Deshpande's *That Long Silence*. Both women feel imprisoned in the inner walls of their homes which becomes their marital cage, in essence, unable to access the emotional chasm that lies between them and their husbands. Jaya, like Maya, enters marriage with certain expectations only to grapple with harsh disillusionment. Yet, while Maya succumbs to hysterical frenzies and drastic acts of violence, Jaya prefers a more subdued course of resistance: withdrawal. Instead of sounding off and drowning in her emotions, she chooses repression.

The bitterness of Jaya's realization comes out when she adds: *"A man can walk away from his wife whenever he chooses, but a woman? A woman must wait. She must stand at the threshold, watchful and patient"* (Deshpande 92). This quote illustrates the passivity expected of women and the silence that is imposed which is what Deshpande is critiquing. In contrast, Maya is unable to bear such confinement. Her suffering is displayed in unfiltered form through erratic behavior, hallucinations, and in the end, the murder of her husband. While Jaya's struggles are by no means any less deep, Desai's novel takes a much more visceral approach. It places the reader amidst the chaos of Maya's mind, fusing the internal with the external.

In *The God of Small Things*, Roy deals with the theme of female suffering with the character of Ammu, whose hopes and ambitions are thwarted by a stifling and rigid patriarchal structure. Just like Maya, Ammu is a partially defiant woman, but unlike Maya, she undergoes social exclusion rather than madness as a consequence of her defiance. She does not bring about her tragic end through her own choice—she is a victim of the forces around her. She is devoid of choice, her affection towards Velutha branded as 'forbidden' and her unraveling. Roy writes: *"Perhaps Ammu, Estha and she were the worst transgressors. They all broke the Love Laws. That lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much"* (Roy 177). That is, in a sense, recapturing Maya's fight against her very own

surmounted expectations—both women fail to evade the repercussions of defying the boundaries set on them.

5.2 Psychological Depth: Maya's Isolation vs. Shared Suffering

Differences in the internal struggle of a character provide a distinct narrative focus in Desai's work compared to other novels: *Cry, the Peacock* keeps the sole focus on psychological suffering. As opposed to Desai's work, *That Long Silence* and *The God of Small Things* approach a form of mental distress interdisciplinary with socio-political nuances. After all, the story is unresolved – it stays with Maya and remains in her abstract, subjective reality, as the convoluted way of thinking does all the interpreting. About her character, Ammu and Jaya's pain, at least for the most part, remains private, or deeply felt, but shared with other people encompass a family, children, and the society that surrounds them and controls them.

What stands out the most is the element of Maya's wilderness within *Cry, the Peacock*. Companions, a community, or an external entity that recognizes her pain do not exist: the woman cannot find a single confidante. Everything when brought down to a singular level is an external layer. The absence of companionship heightens the unmitigated intensity of one's suffering. Hardly sociable these days, even Ammu can be considered to have some degree of social connection when it comes to her children, most notably Rahel. Though Jaya has ways to think things over and voice her pain, (albeit silently) to herself, something of sorts is highly unlikely to be available for Maya who, unlike the rest, has to face the madness dimension of solitude. This emptiness fused with the struggle from the lonesome death of patriarchal society and hierarchical structure pushes her over the edge, solidifying why she has no other choice but to succumb to this madness.

The stream-of-consciousness style Maya Desai employs creates a connection to deep isolation by submerging the reader in Maya's slowly declining mental state. She loses complete control over her thoughts as her perceptions shift and reality splinters into fragments. This differs from the restrained tones exhibited by *Deshpande*, who speaks in a matter-of-fact fashion, or the poetic, Roy with her multifaceted storytelling. Alongside its content and form, *Cry, The Peacock* distinguishes itself as an intense psychological exploration as opposed to a more feminist or sociopolitical critique.

5.3 The Depiction of Female Tranquility: Amity V/S Endurance

How these female protagonists differ from each other serves as a critical distinction among the texts. Jaya from *That Long Silence* endures her unhappiness quietly, which keeps her trapped in a cycle of resignation. In the case of *The God*

of Small Things, Ammu aggressively tries fighting back but succumbs to external forces. Contrarily, Maya's pain is placed on other people, in this case, venting at Gautama. This act of violence is so intense that it destroys the foundation of her reality.

Maya's crime is not only her turning down her husband but also the denial of the patriarchal world that has caused her torment. In killing Gautama, she symbolically escapes the emotional neglect and indifference that has smothered her. That does not grant her freedom, however; it only tightens the noose on her destiny. Unlike Ammu or Jaya, who are powerless to change their conditions, Maya becomes both captive and executioner; a woman whose mental suffering is bound to culminate in tragedy.

Correlatively, the anguish that Desai explores through the lens of feminine suffering is more immediate and visceral and, thus, more jarring compared to the works of *Deshpande* or *Roy*. The pain of Maya is not merely a spectacle for the readers; they are made to endure it alongside the vivid claustrophobia of her encumbering psyche. This is the underlying factor that differentiates *Cry, the Peacock* from other novels; a book that focuses on a woman's mental breakdown rather than a novel about mere suffering.

All the novels discussed above reflect in one way or another the suffering of women, but it is Desai's work that seems to capture one's attention most because of the unrelenting psychological detail and study of the protagonist's isolation. Whereas Ammu is bound by social structures and Jaya learns to accept pain, Maya breaks apart to the point of complete obliteration and it is her disintegration that takes precedence. Desai's powerful use of subconscious monologue alongside an almost stifling attention to Maya's head makes the novel not simply about deteriorating mental health, but about death by drowning in it. Because of this, she stands apart as a strikingly disturbed voice of Indian English literature.

VI. CONCLUSION

Anita Desai's narrative skill vividly comes to life through the psychological suffering of a woman exiled in solitude, confinement and existential suffering while crying the peacock. As with many other Indian English novels, there is little concern for global socio-political tension; rather, in this case, the intimacy of mental instability is examined in almost claustrophobic detail. Maya does not only suffer a personal tragedy of a breakdown. Her madness is—in part—constituted by the negligence of patriarchal concerns and frail emotional frameworks that are available to women. Raw gave a contemplative depiction of a woman coming apart beneath the bombardment of her mind, while *Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence* and *Arundhati Roy's The*

God of Small Things portrayed different kinds of struggles. If Jaya embodies the subversive silence of stifled oppression, and Ammu is slowly succumbing to the weight of social expectation's stranglehold, it is Maya whose turmoil manifests in a far more destructive manner, highlighting the most damaging consequences of untreated trauma.

In addition to personal anguish, within the context of gender and society, there is an urgent need to address mental health care in Desai's novel. Maya's seclusion is tied to her fracturing psyche, yes, but more to an inflexible world that ignores her panic, disdain and agony draped in emotions. The gap between his heightened sensitivity and Gautama's rational detachment underscores the greater problem of the dismissal of women's psychological suffering the female figure has to counter. By placing the reader in the very middle of Maya's subconscious, through stream-of-consciousness narration, Desai compels one to grapple with the chaos of a mind that struggles to find meaning in a world that does not in any way recognize her suffering.

This analysis is not only limited to works of fiction but remains central within the context of the intersection of gender relations and mental health in India. Even now, emotional distress, especially in women, is one of the most ignored mental health issues. *Cry, the Peacock* is a case in point, as it highlights the need to attend to life's raw realities especially as they concern women facing invisibility. The novel calls for an active approach to capture emotional struggles and unveils the plight of the mute whom society frames without sound.

This part of the research has concentrated on *Cry, the Peacock* and its frame of reference, but there is significant scope for other work. Further research might approach Indian English literature's mental illness themes through feminist trauma theory, psychoanalysis, or medical humanities, as it would be interesting to see what other structures of thought do to our understanding of psychological distress. Applying the framework to contemporary literature would be useful, too, as it would deepen understanding of how mental illness is depicted in literature over time. Additionally, integrating Indian and Western narratives on female psychology may highlight culturally relevant differences in depicting mental health suffering.

Of note, however, is the fact Desai's novel asks readers to grapple with the emotional numbness and the commonality of mental breakdowns. The tragedy of Maya is no longer an anecdotal one, but rather an illustration of the dire consequences that come with being too vulnerable and suppressing conflicts raging within. Literature serves, and continues to serve, an important function in society by

bringing such issues to the forefront and expanding the mental health conversation which is important both academically and socially.

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A Comparative Study of *Journey to the West* and Indian Mythology

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Abstract— The *Monkey and the Monk: An Abridgement* (2006) by Anthony Yu is a modern English translation and adaptation of Wu Cheng'en's classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. The Confucian ideology that ruled the 16th-century Ming dynasty strongly emphasised women's responsibilities as mothers, wives, and devoted daughters. Women were supposed to follow rigid social norms and preserve family honour by maintaining their purity. Recently, scholars have started pointing out that Wu Cheng'en might have been influenced by the societal understanding of the Ming Dynasty while writing *Journey to the West*. Especially, the women characters were said to be the exact reflection of women in the Ming dynasty. In this paper, I propose to look at how women characters in *Journey to the West* were constructed through a patriarchal perspective. Additionally, to examine the societies of the respective times, this paper will explore the mythical parallels between the Hindu and Chinese societies by comparing the female characters, Wenjiao from *Journey to the West*, Sita from *Ramayana*, and Savitri from *Mahabharata*. This paper will also highlight the similarities and differences between Sun Wukong from *Journey to the West* and Hanuman from *Ramayana*. By drawing these comparisons, this paper seeks to provide insights into how these characters reflect the values and beliefs of their respective traditions.



Keywords— Ming dynasty, Confucian ideology, chastity, comparative mythology, Sun Wukong.

Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative method of research. The main aim of the study is to conduct a thematic and comparative analysis of the characters Sun Wukong and Hanuman, and Savitri, Sita, and Wenjiao, respectively. The primary source used for the textual analysis of this study is the abridgement of *Journey to the West*, *The Monkey and the Monk* (2006), by Anthony Yu.

Introduction

Anthony Yu, in the preface of his abridgement, *The Monkey and The Monk* (2006), talks about how *Journey to the West* is deeply rooted in the Chinese philosophical and religious tradition known as Three-religions-in-one-view, which integrates Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism (Yu xii). The novel is centred on the pilgrimage of the Buddhist Tang Monk to India to retrieve sacred Buddhist scriptures, symbolising a journey towards spiritual enlightenment.

Additionally, Taoism played an important role in shaping the magical and metaphysical elements of the story. The concept of Confucianism emphasised social order, ethics, and proper conduct, which is reflected in various relationships and moral lessons within the text. In the context of *The Journey to the West*, Sun Wukong's respect for the Tang Monk, despite his immense powers, illustrates the Confucian ideals of order and discipline. This synthesis reflects the cultural and spiritual landscape of China during the Ming dynasty when the novel was written. A Confucian society thrived on strict moral order, hierarchy, duty, and respect for authority. Similarly, Hinduism's varna system shares similarities with Confucian hierarchy, as both emphasise duty based on one's social role.

Wenjiao, Sita and Savitri as Mirrors of Society

In China, there are three primary religious practices: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Confucianism emphasises values such as respect for family,

social harmony, and moral integrity. Living a harmonious life in society is a kind of social conduct. Since the 6th-5th century, it has had a significant impact on Chinese socio-political systems, worldviews, ethics, education, religions, customs, individual and community life, as well as traditions. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism all place a strong focus on virtue because they view an individual's behaviour as a reflection of their inner morals. Despite varying religious and cultural contexts, the concept of chastity shared several similarities throughout South Asian cultures.

According to the well-known Chinese cosmology "*Book of Changes*", the world is split into two elements, *Yin* and *Yang*. The masculine or positive principle in nature is referred to as *yang*, while the feminine or negative principle is known as *yin*. In literal terms, *yang* signified "the sun", while *yin* meant "shade" or "overcast". This shows that there existed sexual inequality even before the concept of Confucianism came into being. However, it was Confucianism that was responsible for turning the marriage system into a form of female bondage wherein women were treated as their husband's property (Gao 114). The ancient Chinese people followed the concept of "*Three Obediences and Four Virtues*" (*San Cong Shi De*), particularly regarding women. According to the Three Obediences, women were to obey their father before getting married, their spouse after getting married, and their first son after the husband passed away. The Four Virtues were sexual morality, modesty, proper speech, and diligent work (Gao 116).

Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West*, published in the 16th century under the Ming dynasty, reflects and questions these social conventions. The author's reflections on women's rights and equality are reflected in the representation of female characters, which also reflects society's views on women's status and roles during that time. Women in *Journey to the West* were classified into three categories- humans, goddesses, and immortals (He 134). The female human characters in *Journey to the West* most closely resemble the definition of women by dictionaries. They are constrained by social norms and dependent on society. Though many of the prominent female characters are supernatural beings or demonesses, there are a few human female characters who play notable roles.

One of the primary representations of women is that of a morally upright woman. A typical representation of this could be Yin Wenjiao, Tang Xuanzang's mother. In a male-dominated society, Yin Wenjiao's image lacks self-reliance and represents feminine morality (He 136). Her only descriptions are that of a mother of Xuanzang, the wife

of a scholar, and the daughter of a chancellor. In ancient China, a woman's role could be categorised into three stages: a girl, a wife, and a mother. In a traditional Chinese family, a girl's birth was never as cherished as a boy's (Gao 118). This strongly suggests that Wenjiao's identity is tied to male characters. Her situation is always moral; she committed suicide because she violated the unwavering moral standards that society expected women to uphold. On her wedding day, Wenjiao was forcibly kidnapped by the bandits Liu Hong and Lui Biao, who killed her husband. Liu Hong was entranced by Lady Yin's beauty, "who had a face like a full moon, eyes like autumnal water, a small, cherrylike mouth, and a tiny, willowlike waist. Her features were striking enough to sink fishes and drop wild geese, and her complexion would cause the moon to hide and put the flowers to shame." (Yu 131). In the late Ming dynasty, it was a common practice for women to be forced to commit suicide after their husband's death. However, after the incident, though Wenjiao was not forced to commit suicide, she tried to take her own life three times. The first time she tried to commit suicide was when she saw that Liu Hong had killed her husband; she tried to drown herself, but was saved by Liu Hong. When she again tried to commit suicide after fulfilling her life's ultimate goal of meeting her son, her attempt was stopped by her father and her son. However, her third suicide attempt was successful, but there were no interventions or responses of others to this event ever mentioned in the book. This shows that the morality that was moulded by society eventually caused harm to Wenjiao since she violated the moral idea of a wife following only one husband.

In traditional Chinese families, the birth of a girl child was less celebrated than that of a boy. The birth of a male child was referred to as "big happiness", while the birth of a female child was seen as "small happiness" (Gao 118). If the first child in the family was a girl, it was always looked upon as a disappointment. If the second child were also a girl, the family would be devastated, and having a third daughter would be tragic for the mother, who would be blamed and criticised by society (Gao 119). After getting kidnapped, when Wenjiao found out that she was pregnant, her first thought was, "whether it would be a boy or a girl, she had no alternative but to yield reluctantly to her captor." (Yu 132). This shows her attention to her family's lineage even during the crisis. However, because Wenjiao was forced to marry one of the bandits, Liu Hong, she knew that her unborn child was not safe with her. After giving birth, Wenjiao put the baby into the river to keep him safe. After eighteen years, her son Xuanzang returned to seek revenge for what happened to his family. She remained alive until her son came back, and he avenged his parents. However, in the end, Wenjiao suffered from morality shaped by

society, because she felt that she had violated the moral code of Confucianism that a woman can have only one husband. She could not bear that her chastity was stained, so she committed suicide. Confucian thought held that a woman's devotion to her husband was so important that the court publicly honoured her when she died in order to maintain her chastity. Similarly, even *Manusmriti* talked about the chastity of women. According to *Manusmriti*, till her death, a woman was to remain patient, self-controlled, and chaste, seeking that most excellent merit that accrues to women having a single husband (Verse 5.156) (www.wisdomlib.org)

आसीतामरणात् क्षान्ता नियता ब्रह्मचारिणी ।

यो धर्म एकपत्नीनां काङ्क्षन्ती तमनुत्तमम् ॥ १५६ ॥

Confucianism viewed that it was the beauty and the appearance of a woman that triggered male objectification impulses. Men are more likely to adopt a male-centric perspective and ignore the inner attributes of women. Even though a woman is considered a sexual object for her partner's amusement, it is always the woman's responsibility if the guy overindulges in her, failing to fulfil his obligations or advances in his job in the process (Gao 118). In *Journey to the West*, the author portrays male demons as someone with terrifying appearances, whereas female demons look gorgeous. They were closer to a human female in appearance and used their beauty to accomplish their evil deeds. For example, Lady White Bone was one of the first female monsters to be introduced in *Journey to the West*, and she used her beauty to seduce Xuanzang. She changed her form into a beautiful woman to eat Xuanzang's flesh. In the process, she also successfully created a rift between Xuanzang and his disciples. This shows that women were also viewed as a threat to the social relationships of men. The character of Lady White Bone represents the concept of female evil from a male viewpoint. Showcasing that women have the power to disrupt a society that is ruled by patriarchy.

Similarly, in India, Manu was revered as the "father" of the Hindu legal system in Hinduism. The *Manusmriti*, written by him, was not only a legal work from the ancient past but also reflected the socio-cultural, religious, political, and judicial life of the time. The *Manusmriti* addresses various aspects of human life, including Vedic study, marriage, hospitality, dietary laws, pollution, administrative laws, and religion. *The Ramayana* strongly focused on dharma and righteousness, while *the Mahabharata* presented a more complex and multi-faceted view of society, with its ethical dilemmas, caste distinctions, and gender struggles. Despite being written before *Manusmriti*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* include

many social norms and customs later codified in *Manusmriti*.

In both *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the family structure was patriarchal, with the eldest male member usually in charge of the family. The idea of "*Stridharma*", or a woman's duty, was also important during that time. *Stridharma*'s core values are devotion to the husband, household management, childcare, respect for elders, and adherence to social norms, which are largely practised in many parts of our society today. Wives were also supposed to exhibit selflessness and unwavering loyalty. In *Ramayana*, Sita is presented as an epitome of ideal womanhood through her loyalty and obedience. She followed her husband, Rama, into exile without any hesitation, despite knowing that the path she chose would be filled with hardships. In *Mahabharata*, Draupadi, the wife of Pandavas, was devoted to her husbands (the five Pandavas) and played the role of a supportive wife, following the prescribed dharma of a woman in a marriage. Even though she suffered personally, Draupadi always had a sense of duty and devotion towards her husbands. Similarly, Madri, Pandu's wife, epitomises the concept of Sati by deciding to burn herself alive at her husband's funeral. In solidarity with her husband Dhritarashtra's misery, Gandhari decided to blindfold herself. Additionally, Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, exhibited the traditional role of a mother by guiding and advising her sons, ensuring that they followed the path of righteousness laid down by society. She sacrifices her happiness for the well-being of her sons and kingdom. Notably, *Manusmriti* defines women's roles and responsibilities in society, emphasising ideals such as obedience to fathers, husbands, and elders and the importance of chastity, purity, and household responsibility. *Manusmriti* talks specifically about how, in childhood, a woman was to remain under the control of her father; in youth, under that of her husband, and after her husband's death, under that of her sons; a woman was never to have recourse to independence. (Verse 5.146) (www.wisdomlib.org)

बाल्ये पितुर्वशे तिष्ठेत् पाणिग्राहस्य यौवने ।

पुत्राणां भर्तारि प्रेते न भजेत् स्त्री स्वतन्त्रताम् ॥ १४६ ॥

Sita was often associated with chastity and virtue. Her character revolved around her unshakable loyalty towards her husband, Rama. Even after Ravana kidnapped Sita, her devotion towards Rama remains the same. She rejects Ravana's advances towards her and upholds her purity. However, after being freed from Ravana's captivity, Sita faces a fire trial (*Agni Pariksha*) to demonstrate her chastity and purity. She is protected by the fire god Agni, who affirms her virtue and chastity. Rama wanted to prove his wife's honesty since, despite his deep love for her, he

was aware of the criticism she would face. According to a few scholars, Rama's true motivation for fighting Ravana was to regain his honour rather than to protect Sita (Sodha 30). While fighting the war, he was thinking about his family's reputation (Sodha 30). Sita was banished from the country despite being innocent. Even though it was a difficult choice for Rama, he sent Sita away to uphold his reputation and fulfil public expectations. Her experience serves as a reminder of the pressures women faced to preserve moral and family reputations.

Similarly, Savitri, one of the central figures in the context of *Mahabharata*, is often depicted as a model of devotion, strength, and adherence to *stridharma*. When the Pandavas were in exile, Jayadratha abducted Draupadi. When the Pandavas were returning after rescuing Draupadi in the company of Rishis and saints, that is when the story of "Sati Savitri" was narrated by Rishi Markandeya. Savitri's story showcases her strong love and loyalty towards her husband, Satyavan. According to the mythology, Satyavan was cursed to die within a year of their marriage. Despite knowing this, Savitri married him and followed her *stridharma*, maintaining her commitment as his wife. When Yama, the god of death, came to claim her husband's soul, she followed and engaged Yama in a conversation where her wisdom moved him, and he ultimately granted her the power to revive her husband. Her adherence to dharma, or the cosmic law of order, was central to her character. A woman's role during that time was often seen as a nurturer and sacrificial, particularly in relationship to her family. Savitri embodied this selflessness in the highest sense, by choosing her husband's well-being above her own, even when she had to face great difficulties on the way. However, Savitri was not forced to follow the norms, but she chose to actively engage. She embraced the traditional roles of wife and woman, but she did so in an empowering way, by demonstrating that love and devotion can even transcend death if one tried.

It can be said that the female characters from *Journey to the West* accurately depict the circumstances in which women lived during the period. They were the results of a consciousness dominated by men. Wenjiao was not forced to commit suicide. Similarly, Savitri was not forced to follow the god of death, Yama, to save her husband. In contrast, Sita was asked to prove her purity and was driven to take the fire test. Nevertheless, it was because of the societal norms of the respective periods that forced them to always abide by the patriarchal norms. Therefore, Wenjiao, Savitri, and Sita all embody the concepts of chastity and virtue, but their portrayals differ. They provide a fascinating comparison of how different cultures represent these ideals. Therefore, though modern ideals increasingly impact the ideology of "Three Obediences and Four Virtues", old

Confucian values and Buddhist practices dictate attitudes toward chastity in nations like China and India. Therefore, *Journey to the West* can be said to be a reflection of the real society of the Ming Dynasty. In the Hindu culture, Sita was said to be the incarnation of Goddess Laxmi (Brinda). However, even she had to endure hard stages to prove her chastity and purity. This shows that no matter in what form the woman is, either a deity or a human. At some point in history, she has faced this discrimination and inequality. In contemporary times, scholars and activists are trying hard to challenge traditional gender norms and gender inequality, but still, there is a long way to go.

Sun Wukong vs Hanuman: Comparative analysis

Hanuman is a central figure in Hindu mythology, known for his strength, devotion, and power. Hanuman is a key character in the epic *Ramayana*, where he serves as a loyal companion to Lord Rama. Whereas, Sun Wukong, also known as the Monkey King, one of the most famous and powerful characters in *Journey to the West*, is known for his loyalty, strength, cleverness, and rebellious spirit. Sun Wukong and Hanuman are two of the most iconic mythical figures in Chinese and Indian cultures, respectively. Both are extremely powerful and display extraordinary strengths and supernatural abilities. However, despite their similar qualities, their origins, personalities, and mythological significance differ, reflecting the distinct cultural ideals of China and India.

India and China are two geographically neighbouring countries. These two country's economic and cultural links have been documented since the Han dynasty. Around 100 AD, Indian Buddhism had spread to China. In 64 AD, the then-emperor of the East Han dynasty asked two Indian monks to preach Buddhism (Pan 79). Over time, there was an increase in the number of Buddhist temples and monks in China. Therefore, the introduction of *Ramayana* in China was a natural result of frequent religious interactions between the two countries. The *Ramayana* expanded widely over China's central areas and has been mentioned in the translations of numerous well-known Buddhist texts since the Jin dynasty (Pan 79). These translations were the earliest accounts of the *Ramayana* in China, even though they only contained some introductory material. As a result, it is evident that the Chinese people had a basic conception of the *Ramayana* 2000 years ago. Therefore, it can be understood that the influence of *Ramayana* in China has a long history. *The Journey to the West's* author, Wu Cheng'en, was described as a "smart and well-read person" in the *Tian'qi Huai'an Chronicles* (Pan 79). It was said that Wu Cheng'en had a great fascination with gathering folktales. He used several ape legends to create the figure of Sun Wukong. The character Sun

Wukong was, therefore, likely inspired by both indigenous and foreign cultures, including the Ramayana and some old Chinese ape tales (Pan 79).

In the 1920s, Hu Shi was the first Chinese scholar to suggest a possible connection between Hanuman and Sun Wukong (Zang 62). In his research on *Journey to the West*, Hu Shi argued that the character Sun Wukong was not born in China but was imported from India, and it was the Indian epic *Ramayana* that served as a backdrop for the creation of Sun Wukong (Pan 78). Many Chinese scholars believed that Wukong was a significant symbol in Chinese classical literature, leading to a strong hostility towards the argument. They were unable to accept that Sun Wukong would become a symbol of Indian culture rather than native Chinese culture. According to Lu Xun, a well-known Chinese novelist, the Character Sun Wukong was based on Wu Zhixie, a monkey from Chinese mythology who lived underwater (Pan 78). Though Lu Xun's ideals influenced intellectuals in subsequent generations, many scholars did not dispute Hanuman's influence on Sun Wukong.

However, there are many similarities between Hanuman and Sun Wukong. Firstly, in *Ramayana*, Hanuman was a monkey who was endowed with formidable powers. He flew over the sea to find Ravana's home to save Sita. Hanuman also carried a mountain to retrieve the *Sanjeevani* herb to save Rama's brother, Lakshmana. He could change his size and appearance easily, which he used to enter Ravana's castle to approach Sita covertly. He could shrink to the point where he is invisible to the naked eye, as well as increase his size to that of the largest enemy at his will. When Ravana's guards recognized him, he "swelled to a huge size, and crushed dozens with each swipe of his gigantic hands." (Wolcott 658). Similarly, even Sun Wukong boasts to his fellow monkeys of the skills he had learned from the Patriarch, he states,

I have the ability of seventy-two transformations. The cloud-somersault has unlimited power. I am familiar with the magic of body concealment and the magic of displacement. I can find my way to Heaven or I can enter the Earth. I can walk past the sun and the moon without casting a shadow, and I can penetrate stone and metal without hindrance. Water cannot drown me, nor fire burns me. Is there any place I can't go to? (Yu 37).

Secondly, there was a similarity between Hanuman and Sun Wukong based on how they both had weapons, which was later associated with their character. The divine weapon *Gada* used by Hanuman in *Ramayana* symbolized power, protection, and his ability to conquer evil. It is often depicted as a solid, large, and heavy weapon made of stone or metal, typically with a round head and a

short handle. Hanuman is mostly shown using his weapon while fighting demons in Lanka. When Hanuman ventured into Ravana's kingdom during his search for Sita, his weapon acted as a symbol of his readiness to fight if necessary, however, he relied more on his wits to carry out any mission before turning towards any physical act. Similarities can be found in the way Sun Wukong carried a weapon around. His weapon was an "iron rod more than twenty feet long and as thick as a barrel." (Yu 39). The stick was buried under the sea for thousands of years and was given to him by Aoguang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean. Sun Wukong used this stick throughout his journey to vanquish numerous monsters and demons. The stick had a "golden hoop at each end, with solid black iron in between. Immediately adjacent to one of the hoops was the inscription, "The Compliant Golden-Hooped Rod. Weight: thirteen thousand five hundred pounds.'" (Yu 40). According to the text, the "Golden-Hooped Rod" could adjust its size as desired. On one instruction from Sun Wukong, the rod could turn into the size of an object that had the thickness of a rice bowl (Yu 40).

Thirdly, Wukong's dedication to his mentor mirrors Hanuman's devotion to Rama. Hanuman does everything for the pleasure and benefit of Rama, whether it is building bridges, fighting demons, or flying across the country to fetch life-saving herbs. Similarly, in *Journey to the West*, Sun Wukong exhibits his complete loyalty and devotion towards Xuanzang. However, unlike in *Ramayana*, Guanyin, the Bodhisattva, tells Xuanzang to place a metal clamp on Wukong's skull after rescuing him from beneath the mountains. This was vital because, without the clamp, Wukong's thoughts would be restless and agitated. The clamps symbolised Buddhist sovereignty because only the Tathagata Buddha could judge a perfect mind. It was said that the clamps would automatically dissolve when Tathagata Buddha decided that a person had attained their greatest potential and a perfectly balanced mind (Zhang 68).

Even though there is a connection between these two characters, the differences between Hanuman and Wukong are visible. Hanuman is usually depicted as someone with a human body and a monkey's head. Even though he was considered a monkey, his engagement with complex psychological processes made it difficult to accept the fact. During the Battle of Lanka, Ravana abducted Hanuman and burnt his tail. However, he was not afraid; rather, he "ran through the streets, leaving a burning trail behind him, and before making the great leap over to India, he extinguished his fiery appendage in the Southern Sea." (Pan 81). This demonstrates Hanuman's strategic abilities. Therefore, the narrative contains numerous explanations of Hanuman's human character, that a reader might even

forget that he is a monkey. On the other hand, Sun Wukong possessed the characteristics of God, humans, monkeys, and even demon-like. He was known for his hot-headed and rebellious nature and though he was quick-witted, his cleverness was both his strength and weakness. Wukong had a habit of underestimating others and acting without considering the consequences. He fled from Heaven after committing numerous sins and returned to his Flower-Fruit Mountain as an escape. He not only stole peaches and wine, disrupting the Grand Festival of Immortal Peaches, but also plundered the winery for his enjoyment and stole an immortal elixir from Laozi. The poem goes like this,

Many are the forms of the changeful Heaven-Born
Monkey King!

Snatching wine and stealing elixir, he reveals in his
mountain lair.

Since he has wrecked the Grand Festival of
Immortal Peaches,

A hundred thousand soldiers of Heaven now
spread the net of God. (Yu 74)

All these actions show that his Monkey nature is the dominant part of his personality. Nonetheless, Sun Wukong was born from a stone, he stole from Heaven, deleted the names of all the monkeys from the Hell of Ninefold, and created an army of demons and monsters against Heaven, showing his mischievous and demon-like nature (Pan 81).

Hanuman gained his immortality when he was young due to the gods' intervention and gifts. When Hanuman was hungry one morning, he mistook the sun for a mango. Indra, the king of the gods, halted him with his thunderbolt as Hanuman jumped up to catch the sun. The bolt struck Hanuman, and he fell back to earth with a deformed jaw. As a result, in a fit of rage, Hanuman's godfather, Vayu, cut off the airflow between the three worlds. Because of the suffering caused by the absence of airflow, Lord Shiva decided to revive Hanuman for Vayu to restore the balance of the universe once again. Hanuman could no longer be harmed because Lord Shiva made his body as powerful as Indra's bolt. Similarly, Lord Varuna and Lord Vayu gave Hanuman immunity to wind and water, while Lord Agni gave him immunity to fire so that it would not hurt him. Additionally, Lord Vishnu handed Hanuman a weapon called Gada, and Lord Brahma granted him the wish that he could travel anywhere in the world and would be unstoppable. Whereas, Sun Wukong learned how to become immortal from the Taoist sage Subhuti, who also taught him the seventy-two transformations. Additionally, Wukong also crossed off his name in the World of Darkness's registry of life and death, which did not enable the fetchers of death to approach him.

Even if the stories of *Ramayana* and *Journey to the West* are very different, the character of Sun Wukong is very similar to that of Hanuman. Therefore, there might be a possibility that Chengen Wu created the character of Sun Wukong after he was influenced by the stories of Hanuman and other local ape stories. Although Sun Wukong and Hanuman are identical in some ways, their cultural distinctions show us how character traits are expressed differently.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis shows how Indian and Chinese traditions reveal intriguing parallels in themes, characters, and spiritual philosophy. Both traditions explore divine intervention, the struggle between good and evil, moral transformation, and the importance of perseverance on a spiritual journey. The concept of ideal women is frequently linked to attributes like selflessness, love, loyalty, and purity. In particular, figures like Sita, Savitri, and Wenjiao embody the virtues of an ideal and chaste wife who endures hardships for their husband and upholds moral integrity. Therefore, these characters transcend their cultural origins to serve as a universal symbol of idealised femininity in their respective traditions and cultures. Additionally, Sun Wukong, also known as the Monkey King, closely parallels Hanuman from *Ramayana*. Wukong and Hanuman are monkey figures endowed with extraordinary strength and abilities, and they undergo spiritual growth through their service towards their master. While Wukong's rebellion and eventual humility emphasise the themes of redemption and discipline, Hanuman represents a more straightforward path of devotion and loyalty towards Rama. The narratives of *Journey to the West* and *Ramayana* emphasise that the journey is not merely a physical one but also a path to spiritual and moral development.

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The Death of Me: Friendship, Fragmented Selfhood, and the Illusion of Morality in *Sula*

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Abstract—This paper examines Toni Morrison's *Sula* through the lens of fractured subjectivity, intra-racial patriarchy, and the ideological interpellation of black womanhood. Focusing on the relationship between Sula Peace and Nel Wright, the essay argues that Nel's failure to mourn and her emotional paralysis are rooted not in Sula's betrayal, but in Nel's own disavowal of self—what the narrative symbolically frames as her refusal to confront the “gray ball” of suppressed identity. Drawing on theories of melancholia, subaltern speech, and intra-communal sexism, the paper explores how Morrison dismantles binary moral structures and exposes the cultural scripting of black women into roles of silent caretakers. Nel's internalization of her mother Helene's performance of middle-class respectability, her submission to Jude's masculinist needs, and her loss of “me-ness” illustrate the psychological cost of moral conformity. In contrast, Sula's experimental life—though socially condemned—represents a radical, if flawed, attempt at self-definition. The paper contends that Morrison constructs female friendship not only as an emotional refuge but as a potential site for identity formation and ideological resistance. Ultimately, *Sula* reveals that healing and autonomy for black women require more than personal virtue—they demand a confrontation with cultural myths, internalized shame, and the collective silence imposed by history, community, and self.



Keywords—moral binaries, female subjectivity, fractured self, mourning and melancholia, docility

I. INTRODUCTION

In her 1973 novel *Sula*, Toni Morrison constructs a layered meditation on black womanhood, friendship, and the psychological toll of conforming to rigid social conventions. The story centers on the lifelong bond between Sula Peace and Nel Wright—two black women whose intertwined lives unfold within the racially segregated town of Medallion, Ohio. Their relationship, while intimate and sustaining in childhood, unravels in adulthood under the pressures of gendered expectations, respectability politics, and internalized oppression. Critics have long debated the moral dimensions of the novel, frequently asking whether Nel, the seemingly upright and conventional woman, should be valorized over Sula, the rebellious and defiant “pariah.” But Morrison resists such dichotomies, destabilizing notions of “good” and “evil” and urging readers to reject the comfort of binary thinking.

This paper argues that the dissolution of Nel and Sula's friendship is not merely the result of personal betrayal but a reflection of the corrosive effects of patriarchal and racist ideologies on black female subjectivity. Nel's internalization of her mother's rigid moralism and her community's narrow definitions of womanhood lead her to suppress her desires and forsake her autonomous self. By contrast, Sula's pursuit of freedom and refusal to be confined by social roles, while alienating, represents a radical—if imperfect—mode of self-actualization. Their bond, once a space of mutual affirmation and resistance, ultimately collapses under the weight of a society that denies black women the right to both relational and individual wholeness. Through close analysis of the novel's language, structure, and symbolic motifs—such as Nel's “gray ball” of self-deception and the motif of “custard” shame—this essay contends that Morrison's portrayal of female friendship becomes a

vehicle for critiquing the inherited myths that fracture black women's lives and identities.

Blurring Binaries: The Danger of Either/ Or Thinking

In Morrison's multi-faceted fiction, love and friendship are one of the themes which form the core of the narrative. Sula and Nel's friendship traces many conflicts which stands in the way of many women and especially black women in a world in which, because of their race and gender, "had discovered years before that they were neither white nor male, and that all freedom and triumph was forbidden to them, they had set about creating something else to be" (Morrison, 1982, p. 52). Throughout the story Sula and Nel realize that their existence and survival depend on their mutual understanding and support of each other in a world which denies their long-awaited privileges and freedom.

A question which seems to have engaged many readers since the publication of *Sula* in 1973 is the issue of good and evil in the novel. Frequently we ask ourselves who was right: the conventional Nel or the unconventional Sula; Sula who slept with Nel's husband Jude or Nel who remained serene following Chicken Little's problematic death. This is a difficult question for both Sula and Nel and for readers of the novel; Sula who was seen as a 'pariah' in the eyes of the community and watched her own mother burn to death or Nel who turned to 'custard' after Sula had a one-hour-stand affair with Jude. Morrison has not remained silent on this issue. Morrison comments that in *Sula* she "tried to posit a situation where there was a so-called good and a so-called evil people. Nel and Sula are symbolic of this condition. And of course, you can't always tell which is which" (Parker 62).

In fact either/or orientation is dangerous in reading *Sula* as in all of Morrison's fictions. As Deborah E. McDowell avers:

the narrative *Sula* instantly blurs and confuses ... binary oppositions. It glories in paradox and ambiguity beginning with the prologue that describes the setting, the bottom, situated spatially in the top. We enter a new world here, a world where we never get to the "bottom" of things, a world that demands a shift from an either/or orientation to one that is both/ and, full of shifts and contradictions" (80).

McDowell is right in that we cannot simply attach a label to complex dilemmas in the novel which demand a certain flexibility of perspective and an orientation towards a "both/ and" orientation. As Hamidzadeh et al (2018) argue in their reading of *Paradise Lost*, ideologies often mask internal contradictions that only become visible when

we attend to what is suppressed or denied within the text. Morrison's *Sula* resists neat dichotomies such as good/evil or moral/immoral, instead revealing how dominant ideologies fracture the self and distort ethical clarity. For instance, how are we going to interpret the ambivalent act of Eva's murder of her son or her vague self-mutilation? In the first instance Eva herself has difficulty relating to her daughter Hannah why she killed Plum. We read that "When Eva spoke at last it was with two voices. Like two people were talking at the same time, saying the same thing, one a fraction of a second behind the other" (Morrison, 71) the phrase "one a fraction of a second behind the other" clues a certain ambivalence; the one voice talking "a fraction of a second behind the other" is interpreting for itself the ambiguous and shocking act. Following the same argument Barbara Christian (1985) points to the fact that Morrison's work "does not yield to easy generalizations and nicely packed clichés and Morrison's works "resist the trends of the times without discarding the truths upon which they are based" (pp. 91-92).

In the same line, Sula questions Nel's right to claim that Nel was the good person. She asks her how she knows that Sula is the evil person. Sula raises the possibility that she can be the good person, because throughout the novel Sula is not only known as 'evil' and a 'pariah' by the townspeople, she is both abandoned and partly despised by her lifetime friend. Now Nel in the image of a good woman has come to see her friend and has tried hard like a good woman to hold at bay that rage, which has long been burning in her heart. Nel who, like "the good church woman", goes to see old people and who clings to her responsibilities as a good mother and a good wife, working hard as a hotel chambermaid for "respectability" tries to forget her best friend for her sins including sleeping with her husband and as a result making him run away from her. Hidden in their argument is Nel's long restrained question which she wants to ask Sula: why she took him away?. Sula's reply is mixed with tart wit: "what you mean take him away? I didn't kill him, I just ..cked him. If we were such good friends, how come you couldn't get over it?" (Morrison, 1982, p.145).

The purpose of this article is not to negate this idea by simply arguing for the favor of the obverse case that Sula was the good woman of the story. The argument is wholly different; but it is within the same frame of good and evil in the novel. The point is that the reason why Nel "couldn't get over it", rather than being Sula's fault goes back to a death of self in both Nel and a bunch of other women in the story. This is rooted in structuring their lives according to rigidly conventional standards of morality which bind the women of the bottom.

In order to enlarge on this idea, I will first analyze the Wright line of family which Nel descends from. The word Wright refers to and parodies an inclination or we would better say a gesture toward righteousness which is present in the life of Helen Wright, Nel's mother. Helen's middle class rigid mores in many cases cripples Nel's growth and that of herself. Helen in her attempts to escape her mother's origin, Rochelle, who is a "Creole whore" (Morrison, 1982, p.17) resorts to a life of pretentiousness shown in confining herself to cleaning the house and to a stringent social order. She tries to imitate white middle class values by attending church and welcoming world war veterans like Shadrack and Plum who do not have any idea why and how they can be welcomed.

Moreover Helen represses her daughter by patronizing her as she "loved her house and enjoyed manipulating her daughter and her husband"; she kills her daughter's imagination in a way that Nel became subservient and obedient. Helene killed any spark of enthusiasm that her daughter showed until Nel grew a kind of hatred towards her mother. Helene suffers from a feeling of racial inferiority and does her best to raze her daughter's negroid features.

But a dramatic event happens which changes Nel's course of life and partly releases her from her overbearing mother. Helene following news from her grandmother's illness, Cecile Sabat, decides to go and pay a visit to the dying woman. The amount of black women's segregation and withheld freedom is vivid in Helene's anxiety before the trip. She is afraid of the outside world beyond the insular bottom where one cannot even eliminate easily and as it is mentioned in the novel Helene will have to eliminate behind the trees as a result of strict rules of segregation. Her fears are far beyond elimination; she is certainly aware of violence perpetrated upon blacks in the aftermath of world war I and widespread lynching which took place in the name of national protection. Helene's way of trying to prepare herself for the trip will prove futile as she keeps thinking about the trip with great anxiety when she finally decides that she has the best weapon that is her manner. She further tries to ornament this manner through wearing a beautiful dress.

But her means of protecting herself would not come to her avail. As Helene and Nel mistakenly pass to the *whites only* section of a Jim Crow train, the white conductor immediately stops them and says: "what you think you doin', gal?... so soon. She hadn't even begun the trip back.... And already she had been called 'gal'" (p.20) Smitherman (1977) points to the connotations of the word "gal". "The racially inflicted 'gal' a word, according to Smitherman to which black women take particular

exception because of its suggestive denial of black womanhood and connotation of white notions of ownership" is the root of Helene's feeling of humiliation. But it is not only Helene who is embarrassed by this scene. Nel and two black soldiers are watching the scene with mixed feelings of shock and contempt. Surprisingly Helene responds to the situation by coquettishly trying to cater to the white conductor's objectified gaze:

Then, for no earthly reason, at least no reason that anybody could understand, certainly no reason that Nel understood then or later, she smiled. Like a street pup that wags its tail at the very doorjamb of the butcher shop he has been kicked away from only moments before, Helene smiled. smiled dazzlingly and coquettishly at the salmon-colored face of the conductor. (p.21) In this scene, Helene performs "the docility caricature" (Etedali Rezapoorian, 2024) attributed to African Americans. Etedali Rezapoorian illustrates black author's invocation of docility to subvert it and Morrison too subverts the docility caricature through the figure of Nel. For Nel, the docility of her mother serves to discover her self, as incomplete and fallible as it was during the scene.

As Burrows maintains, Helene in her attempt to cut herself from her maternal inheritance "acts out" her mother's role as a slut. In this way she becomes the jezebel of the racial stereotyping of black women depicted by white ideology (Burrows, 2004, pp.133-135). Helene revives the myths around the looseness and availability of black women by her seductive manners. The image that this event inscribes on Nel's mind for ever haunts her. Nel, is both "pleased" and "ashamed", pleased possibly because she takes pleasure to see her overbearing mother who always disturbed her, and ashamed because she empathizes with Helen as a female and a black. Nel imagines that her mother's dress has come undone and everybody can see the naked body of her mother and her "custard colored skin". As Safi Ullah argues in his reading of Kaiser Haq's *Ode on the Lungi*, the subaltern is often symbolically silenced by dominant cultural discourses, where even everyday attire becomes a battleground for visibility, voice, and dignity (Ullah, 2018, p. 84). Nel's rejection of her mother's racial performance and her whispered assertion of "me-ness" occur in the shadow of this "hegemonic sartorial hierarchy," where black femininity is culturally scripted as either "ridiculous ethnic attire" or eroticized docility. Her refusal to become "custard" echoes Ullah's notion of the "subaltern speaking"—but being unheard. Morrison stages this moment as a subaltern rupture—a silent declaration of selfhood in the face of internalized shame and external misrecognition.

The ten year old Nel identifies the sexualized look of the conductor and hatred lurking in black soldier's eyes with the naked body of her mother. She was so afraid and ashamed that "she could not risk letting them (her eyes) travel upward for fear of seeing that the hooks and eyes in the placket of the dress had come undone". This incident with its overtone of shame makes Nel fear that "if this tall, proud woman (Helene) this woman who was very particular about her friends, who slipped into church with unequaled elegance... if she were really custard, then there was a chance that Nel was too". As Milad Houshmand (2025a) argues, Morrison's fiction demonstrates how ideological systems co-opt Black female subjectivity through mass cultural representations that enforce self-denial and internalized whiteness. In *The Bluest Eye*, this co-optation occurs through symbols of white beauty; in *Sula*, it is dramatized through Nel's shame-filled identification with her mother's body, her rejection of "custard," and her decision to disown her maternal lineage. Just as Pecola Breedlove becomes a passive subject shaped by dominant aesthetics, Nel's "me-ness" is not self-defined but ideologically interpolated through her mother's mimicry of white propriety and submission to a "respectable" femininity.

Burrows relates custard to "the connotative negatives of moral cowardice, sexual consumption and miscegenation" (135). It is in this crucial moment that Nel wanted to make sure that no conductor, white person or black soldiers would look at her like that. She would never be like her mother; she would never "turn into custard". She further acclaims: "I'm me, she whispered. "Me"... I'm me. *I'm not their daughter*. I'm not Nel. I'm me. Me" (p.28).

It is this new me-ness which is the line of my argument; it is this disavowal of maternal inheritance which I want to discuss in detail. Nel's observation of the futility of her mother's life and crippling neatness and also her observation of her grandmother's life, a woman whose warm sensuality and free ways attracted her, led her to her friendship with Sula. Nel sees that in Eva's household there are a lot of people messing around and the dishes remain there for many days. The freedom of the house and Sula's resemblance to her grandmother led to her friendship with Sula. They each find in the other what each lacks. Sula who cannot keep a thought for more than three minutes finds in Nel a serene and stable quality and Nel finds in Sula a protective attitude. They together seek sexuality; for instance as they walk on their way to Edna Finch's Mellow House, they face exciting looks of young as well as old men. Ajax, twenty four-old man with a strange beauty who made the other men in bottom feel jealous about his "foul mouth" excited them by saying the word "Pigmeat" and the girls

"guarded their eyes lest someone see their delight" (Morrison, 1982, pp.49-50).

The nurturing and firm quality of their friendship is further established as Sula defends Nel against four Irish boys who try to disturb them. In an act of sacrifice and self-mutation, Sula slashes her finger to keep the boys at bay. In return Nel keeps Sula from wallowing into dark thoughts who, because of her problematic household, indulges herself in dark thoughts. These words made her so frustrated that she rushed upstairs. Sula helped Nel's imagination grow and Nel provided the stability that was lacking in Sula.

Moreover as Morrison tells us the girls' consciousness of the racialized and genderized world in which they inhabited, made one the axis around which the other revolves. Morrison tells us that because they were not males and whites, they did their best to create a different self. This self was totally different from what they had experienced.

But after Nel's marriage, their relationship starts to fade and the two girls experience an exasperating dissociation. When Jude "selects" Nel away from Sula, Nel clings to a rigid life of responsibilities. The reason why Jude marries Nel is noteworthy because it implies Nel's death of self and a return to her mother's stifling way of life. Jude primarily marries Nel because his hopes for "real work" have been devastated by the racism prevalent in the narrative. The project of the new river road kept almost all the men in the novel hopeful that they can prove their jeopardized masculinity. But almost anybody including the whites from Virginia and men from Greece and Italy were hired except for black men. Jude's job as shining shoes in a hotel is not fulfilling for him and he wishes for a kind of job in which he could exercise his power and a kind of job in which he could restore his pride.

Unlike Nel's relationship with Sula which provided the "intimacy they were looking for" and as we see, it helped them grow with each other's help, Nel's marriage would prove destructive for both of them. Jude's purpose for marriage is noteworthy since it manifests his sexist manipulation of Nel. Etadali Rezapoorian and Sanchez (2024) have argued that marginalized men of color can contribute to the hegemonic suppression of women no matter how marginalized, colored, or oppressed, can equal and even surpass notions of male superiority" (p.114).

As Houshmand (2025b) argues in his reading of Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Black women's agency is often only fully realizable "in a non-male vacuum," (p.24) since even sincere romantic bonds can become sites of domination. Like Tea Cake's aspirational control over Janie, Jude's desire to make "one Jude" from his union with Nel is rooted in the same "internalization of

white patriarchal norms” (Houshmand, 2025b, p.23) that Houshmand identifies as endemic in intra-community sexism. In this framework, Nel’s devotion to Jude becomes a “gynocentric” misfire, where her care and labor sustain his manhood, but at the cost of her own subjectivity

Mareen T. Reddy (1988) maintains that Nel marries Jude because she feels that he needs her and as a fact she participates in the obliteration of her self that is she participates in the drama of being part of Jude. He further points to the several kinds of oppression in their marriage: first Jude is a victim of a racist society which denies possibilities of work to black men and the only way he sees out of this crippling emasculation is to oppress Nel by denying her independence and by making her a part of himself. T.Reddy aptly says that “both are victims in the racist war against black people, but Nel doubly so because Jude sees the only escape from oppression as residing in the oppression of another”(p.35). Both have internalized the racist and sexist attitudes of the white capitalist society which says that the one’s value as a man is determined by one’s work and by that work’s economic rewards, including ownership of a woman and children, and that one’s value as a woman is determined by one’s ability to attract a man and then provide that man with children.

Indeed Nel’s definition after her marriage with Jude would be to provide him with children. Jude’s identification of Nel as the “two of them together would make one Jude” revives the myth of Adam and Eve in which Eve descends from the rib of Adam and she is depicted as part of Adam. The phrase also evokes demeaning clichés and sexist expressions like ‘my better half’ which reduces women to dependent creatures. Jude’s further definition of Nel as the “hem-the tuck and the fold that hid his raveling edges” as well as evoking the images explained above, evokes a sewing metaphor traditionally identified as a feminine task. The metaphor illustrates the traditional woman bound to home and routine responsibilities.

The marriage between Jude and Nel is not a relationship between a man and wife; rather it resembles the relationship between a mother and a son. Throughout the novel men are depicted as boys rather than the adult males symbolized in the figure of deweys whose growth were permanently stunted by Eva’s naming them the same and also symbolized in Plum’s wish to return to her mother’s womb.

Wife or a Mother?

Rather than viewing marriage as a mutual bonding and support, Jude seeks in Nel a soothing mother who is always there to sooth him, mother him and grow old with him. It is ironically reversed in the story. It would be solely Nel’s duty to provide Jude with Love and shelter.

Motherhood is one of the central, and at the same time, problematic issues in the Morrison’s fiction. We can hardly refer to motherhood as a nurturing element in the novel. I want to point to one of the myths surrounding black motherhood fabricated by white ideology. Black mens’ figural emasculation has been often ascribed by the power of these myths to black women’s spoiling their men by excess mothering and excess cherishment. Morrison paradoxically reinforces this myth rather than attempting to eradicate it. Nel ironically does this task by sheltering Jude and playing the role of a good mother.

As is the case in the figure of her mother, Helene too sacrifices her independence for a man who is home only three days out of sixteen and Wiley Wright, Helene’s husband, spends the rest of his days cooking on a ship. Unlike Nel’s early disavowal of her maternal inheritance Nel follows her mother into a rigid life of responsibilities.

After Nel’s marriage, Sula disappears for ten years going to colleges in different cities but her interdependence with Nel impels her to go back to the Bottom. Her return for a short time, before she sleeps with Jude, brings back real life to Nel’s dried existence. The passage which describes Nel’s joy after her return from her trip is quite telling in that it shows the inseparable and interdependent relation of both. Nel thinks that she is revived; she does not remember when she last had a real laugh. But now that her friend is with her, she almost died laughing. This laughter was quite different from the temporary and silent ones that she had these few past years.

However this period of peaceful bliss in the safe company of each other does not last long when Nel discovers Sula and Jude sleeping together which she thinks they did it like dogs. Following this dramatic event Jude leaves Nel; Many times Nel mentions that Jude “left his tie” and that “I was worried about you not knowing that your fly was open and scared too because your eyes looked like the soldiers’ that time on the train when my mother turned to custard (p.106). Nel does not think that Sula is naked when she sees them “on all fours” but thinks it is Jude who is naked because, although she is shocked by her best friends’ act of betrayal and later on puts all the blame on Sula, she at that traumatic moment thinks that Jude betrayed her. The ironic reference to Jude’s tie refers to Nel’s entanglement and captivity in the drama of self-abnegation because Nel cannot see that the marriage from the start was an ailing one. The tie does not belong to Jude but in fact it belongs to Nel. Nel ever since is going to be traumatized because of her ailing dependence on an other. It is interesting that Nel thinks that Jude’s eyes remind her of the soldiers when she watched her mother change into “custard”, for on the one hand Nel despite her early disavowal of Helene cannot

escape her origins and on the other hand, Nel, like Helene, is objectified and ashamed by relying on social mores which regards possession as an inseparable part of a relationship between a man and a woman.

If we go back to Nel's first me-ness, after her trip with her mother to visit Cecile Sabat, Nel desired to take trips alone where she can explore her desires and more than anything else explore her self. We are told in the novel that the trip was the last time she left the city.

Ironically it is Sula who fulfils Nel's desire to take trips alone. What is lucid in the passage is that Nel's determination to build her self will be shattered as a result of her mother's influence on her and in a larger context, as a result of cherishing the community's values. Gael Bryant (1990) suggests that Nel is "domain" and Sula "dominion"(738). The word domain suggests boundness to home and confinement but the word dominion refers to Sula's power which is represented through her challenge to her prescriptive definitions of herself as rooted to home; she assumes the role of a masculine who is free to do whatever she wants to and to go wherever she wishes to (Bryant, 1990, pp.738-740). She is unlike Nel who will never travel in her life except this time which was forced rather than desired. In a sense Sula is the desired Nel that Nel wanted to be.

The text in many ways strengthens this idea. Many times Eva identifies Nel with sula at the end of the novel when Nel tells her that it was Sula who accidentally drowned Chicken Little.

When Nel returns after paying a visit to the dead Sula, Shadrack sees her and identifies her with Sula, the girl whose belt hang down shadrack's cottage. The narrator describing the physical connection of Sula and Nel says: "their friendship was so close, they themselves had difficulty distinguishing one's thoughts from the other's"(p.83) Morrison has stated that "if they were one woman they would be complete.(qtd in Bakerman, 1978, p.60). Nel forgets that Jude's escape rather than being Sula's fault is a reflection of his own insecurities. She also forgets that with Sula her relationship was one of interdependent and with Jude one of dependent.

After Jude abandons Nel, she tries hard to mourn for herself but she cannot. The passage which describes Nel's effort to cry is significant. She waits in the bathroom for tears to flow out of her eyes. She desires to cry, not for others, not for a dead child, a dead father, but for herself. The passage tells us that everything changed during the time she was in the bathroom, leaves shook on the trees, the mud shifted its place, but Nel fails to cry. Safi Ullah (2016) suggests that magical realist fiction often uses the fantastic to dismantle hegemonic truths, confront oppressive power,

and give voice to the subaltern through symbolic indirection and emotional dissonance. In *Sula*, Morrison employs similar narrative strategies—not explicitly magical, but charged with symbolic intensity—to explore the interiority of black women like Nel, who remain trapped in a "fragmented" and "anti-categorized" identity space.

Nel's failure to cry, to mourn for herself signifies her failure to retrieve her lost self. She remains a passive victim since even she cannot mourn for her grave pain. It is highly interesting that Morrison before describing Nel's pain prefaces a long passage about the women of the bottom mourning seemingly for Chicken Little but in fact they were mourning for themselves. As Taghizadeh and Ghaderi argue, in post-apocalyptic literature like *The Road*, subjectivity is often marked by "madness, inconsistency, and incoherence," wherein the subject fails to sustain reason or theological meaning (Taghizadeh & Ghaderi, 2016, p. 175). Nel's inability to mourn, her passivity in the face of her own pain, and her fixation on a socially prescribed identity mirror what Ghaderi describes as the "shattered self" caught in a world where neither reason nor faith can restore coherence.

Burrows (2004) makes a distinction between mourning and melancholia and states that Nel's state is melancholia. Implicit in the passage is that the women can mourn because in the physical act of their grave pains they can move from the state of melancholia into mourning: "mourning is a forward and dynamic process, while melancholia is a passive and self-destructive process. Melancholia and depression are passive acts of aggression against the self. Mourning is a release of this repressed Malignancy" (Burrows, 2004, p.151). Helen's trying to keep her daughters from vulnerabilities and from the outside world and making her a passive victim of pain and trauma makes her unable to mourn for herself.

Nel's only safe harbor in which she flees is the bathroom where she feels that a ball of fur hangs above her head. Nel does not dare to look which signifies her inability to confront her weak points. She feels that there is something on her right. She does not know exactly what she is but she knows well what it looks like. She saw in a second that it was a grey ball. What is interesting is that she does her best not to look. She does not "See" because she does not "look". Although she spends a whole summer with the ball, she is too frightened to look at it.

This gray ball, I believe, signifies Nel's unraveled entanglement with the problem of self. Throughout the story Nel has refused to listen to Sula's message that a blind sacrifice of self to the confining social mores, such as the one which defines a woman's meaning in being owned by a man. Nel refuses to unravel the knots of sexism and racism

prevalent in her life. Instead she takes the aura of a good woman who looks after old people and goes to see a dying old friend with the gesture that she has forgiven her. Karen F. Stein (1984) has suggested that Jude's name in fact evokes the biblical Judas, he is betrayer of Nel's hopes. (F. Stein, 1984, p.147). Whatever the implications of his name are, Jude like almost all the men in the story flees from his responsibilities and leaves his woman with a bunch of children to raise.

In fact although sexism in *Sula*, is not enlarged on by critics, sexism in *Sula* is a key factor in black women's misery and it is doubly so because black women in a larger context have been oppressed by the racist ideology which denies them their womanhood. Sexist discrimination in *Sula* can be seen in Ajax's advice to Jude which is only one of abundant scenes in which women are pictured as Eteldali Rezapoorian and Sanchez (2024) illustrate black women's suppressed voice and unleashing of voice as a result of double oppression.

Lalbakhsh and Ghaderi argue in their Derridean reading of *The Hobbit*, literature functions as a "liberal institution" that destabilizes self-proclaimed centers and finalized identities through undecidability and the "play of structure" (Lalbakhsh & Ghaderi, 2017, p. 153). Similarly, *Sula* subverts moral absolutism and exposes how characters like Nel are entrapped within inherited "phantoms of ideality" (p. 158)—phantoms that reduce identity to stable, singular categories like "good woman" or "dutiful wife." Nel's gray ball thus reflects the "undecidable subjectivity" that Morrison, like Derrida, urges us to confront: the self as fractured, shifting, and caught in tension between inherited structure and unclaimed freedom.

Nel's gray ball, hovering ominously yet eluding direct engagement, allegorizes what Hooti and Mahmoudi describe as modern identity's "invidious morass"—a state of confusion in which the individual is "encaged by... multi-faced essence" and unable to claim coherent subjecthood (Hooti & Mahmoudi, 2013, p. 1210). Nel's failure to look at the ball and her paralysis in mourning reflect this discordant modern condition, where identity becomes a "blind and elusive term" and melancholia takes the place of active self-reclamation.

Like the passive fairy-tale heroine Nel waits for someone to come and save her from her 'profound loneliness'. Nel is in fact "tangled in her own hair" unable to see her self fully as she must. Because as the text informs us Nel knows that because she is neither male nor white and therefore she has absolutely no freedom, she does her best to fully forbid this freedom. She does not experience life and her own being to the fullest. Sula's dream pictures her as an active participant in her life "galloping through her

own mind the freedom which is inherited from her maternal line. That is why Morrison calls Sula's life an "experimental one" (Stepto, 1977, p.26). Nel's image as "tangled in her own hair" is parallel to the her gray ball hovering above her head. She is a metonymy for self which Nel fails to nourish and explore.

Sula is an artist without a medium, is free but has no direction, she never directs her freedom towards attachment to a person or a thing. In other words Sula needs a touchstone through which she can nourish her experimental life to the fullest. Sula's trips in order to explore herself will prove futile because what she lacks is the presence of an other who provides her with meaningful self exploration. As the narrator makes the point vivid to readers and points to the interdependence of Sula and Nel's relationship:

She had no center, no speck around which to grow...She had clung to Nel as the closest thing to both an other and a self...Nel was the one person who had wanted nothing from her, who had accepted all aspects of her...Nel was the first person who had been real to her, whose name she knew, who had seen as she had the slant of life that make it possible to stretch it to its limits. (Morrison, 1982, pp.119-120)

Although Nel is right in that Sula has somewhat a self-interested trait, she misunderstands Sula in many ways. First of all Sula says that she did not want to hurt Nel at all. Secondly as I have already said Nel does not understand that Jude's departure was a result of his own insecurities as a black man in a racial world and because of his troubled and threatened masculinity. The More important reason is that Nel cannot see that as Sula unconsciously helped the bottom people in uniting them and making them feel sympathy for each other: "Once the source of their personal misfortune was identified, they had leave to protect and love one another" (p.117).

In a way Sula led her to the revelatory realization, though belatedly, of the fact that what she yearned for all these years was reunion with Sula rather than Jude. When Nel pays a visit to Eva, the old woman opens her eyes with as Sula delivers the hammer home, Nel's loneliness is absurd because she has given up her dark impulses. When Eva tells Nel that she killed Chicken Little and Nel responds that it was Sula who accidentally drowned the little boy, Eva says that you and sula are one person; there is no difference between you. Eva's wisdom prompts Nel to think about the past and she realizes that during the incident she was calm.

The story of Sula and Nel's friendship is Morrison's way of picturing the troubled status of black females as traumatized and shattered. Both Sula and Nel endeavor to find a way for surviving in a world which,

because of their gender and color, deprives them of their freedom and self-satisfaction. Morrison wants to show black females and by extension all women in the world that their means of survival is through cleavage to one another and through a firm union which prepares them for battling against the patriarchal ideology of the western tradition. Morrison's structuring of Sula and Nel's friendship is, as she says "my way of saying to the reader, *don't let it happen!*" (Bakerman, 1978, p.60). Nel at the end of the story, paying a visit to Sula Peace's grave, realizes her profound need and close connection to her dead friend.

All that time, all that time, I thought I was missing Jude" and the loss pressed down on her chest and came up into her throat. "We was girls together," she said as though explaining something." O Lord, Sula," she cried, "girl, girl, girl, girl, girl." (Morrison, 1982, p.174).

Nel manages finally to mourn for herself and she begins to realize the lost part of her life that is a devotion to self. But she is only starting to do so as "circles and circles of sorrow" signify and as Morrison comments: "Nel does not make that 'leap'-she does not know about herself. Even at the end she does not know. She's just beginning." (qtd in Stepto, 1977 p.476).

II. CONCLUSION

Toni Morrison's *Sula* resists the moral simplifications that often frame black female characters as either virtuous or transgressive. Instead, through the complex, often painful bond between Sula Peace and Nel Wright, Morrison explores how ideological structures—rooted in racism, patriarchy, and internalized respectability—fracture black female subjectivity. Nel's gradual recognition of her emotional paralysis and her belated grief over the loss of Sula rather than Jude mark the beginning of a painful but necessary self-reckoning. Her inability to mourn for herself, her entanglement in the "gray ball," and her disavowal of her mother's body are not individual failings but symptoms of an identity forged through shame, denial, and cultural silencing. Morrison's narrative offers no easy resolution, but it does gesture toward the possibility of becoming—an incomplete and often solitary process of self-discovery that defies inherited roles and binary oppositions. By presenting Sula and Nel as two halves of a fragmented whole, Morrison challenges readers to reconsider the terms of morality, friendship, and womanhood in black communities. Sula ultimately argues that black women's survival—emotional, psychological, and existential—depends not on conformity to social scripts, but on the reclamation of voice, desire, and relational autonomy. As Morrison herself warned, *Sula* is not simply a story about betrayal, but a cautionary tale.

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The Impact of Excessive Screen Time on the Development of Children

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Abstract— This article reviews the effects of excessive screen time on the development of children. Concerns have been raised about the harm that prolonged screen exposure may cause to their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The article explores both the benefits and drawbacks of excessive screen time, highlighting health issues such as obesity, disrupted sleep patterns, and reduced physical activity. Studies also suggest that too much screen time can negatively affect cognitive development, impacting academic performance, memory, and attention. In addition, increased screen time is linked to emotional and social challenges, including heightened risks of anxiety and depression, as well as a decrease in social skills. While digital media can offer educational benefits, excessive screen use often leads to fewer in-person interactions, hindering the development of essential social and communication skills. The article emphasizes the need to set reasonable screen time limits and encourage alternative activities to support balanced development and overall well-being in children.



Keywords— Excessive screen time, physical development, cognitive development, emotional development, health issues, sleep patterns, academic performance, mental health, social skills, technology use, digital media, screen exposure.

I. INTRODUCTION

The research paper studies the use of screens has become a significant part of daily life, especially for children. With easy access to devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, and televisions, screen time has become nearly unavoidable. As technology use continues to rise, young people are spending more time in front of screens. While digital devices offer educational and entertainment value, there are growing concerns about the effects of excessive screen time on children's development. Overuse of screens has been linked to various negative outcomes, including physical health issues, emotional and social struggles, and cognitive impairments. Since children are at critical stages of their development, prolonged screen time can harm their physical and mental health, academic performance, and emotional stability. Understanding both the immediate and long-term effects of excessive screen exposure is crucial, as developing minds and bodies are more susceptible to technology's harmful effects. This introduction aims to

explore the scope of the issue, covering the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional implications. By examining both the positive and negative aspects of screen time, the article provides insights into how parents, educators, and policymakers can foster healthier digital habits to support the overall development of young people.

Excessive Screen Time

Excessive screen time refers to prolonged and often uncontrolled use of digital devices, such as smartphones, tablets, computers, and televisions. It typically describes daily screen use that exceeds recommended limits, which vary depending on a child's age and stage of development. While screen time can offer educational, social, and entertainment benefits, too much of it can harm a child's physical, mental, and emotional development. Health organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), recommend limiting screen time for older children and significantly reducing it for younger children, especially those under the age of two.

Despite these guidelines, many young people exceed these limits due to the increased availability and reliance on digital media.

KEY CONSEQUENCES OF EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

1.1 Physical Health Issues: Long hours of screen time are often linked to a lack of physical activity, which can lead to weight gain and other health issues. The blue light emitted by screens interferes with the production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep, disrupting circadian rhythms and contributing to sleep problems, especially when screens are used right before bed. Extended screen use can lead to eye strain, causing headaches, dry eyes, and discomfort.

1.2 Cognitive Development: The fast-paced, high-stimulation content commonly consumed during screen time can shorten attention spans and make it harder for children to focus on tasks that require sustained mental effort, such as studying or completing homework. Excessive screen time has been linked to lower academic performance, as it often distracts from learning activities and homework.

1.3 Impaired Social Skills: High screen usage, particularly when done alone, can limit in-person interactions and impair the development of social and communication skills.

1.4 Mental and Emotional Health: Excessive screen time, particularly related to social media use, cyberbullying, and feelings of loneliness, has been associated with higher rates of depression and anxiety among children. Overexposure to digital content may make it more challenging for young people to manage stress and negative emotions. Understanding these potential risks underscores the importance of promoting a balanced approach to screen time. Encouraging healthier digital habits is essential to ensuring the well-being and healthy development of children.

II. MANAGING SCREEN TIME

In the digital world of today, screens are used in almost every element of daily life.

Controlling screen time is crucial for a number of reasons.

2.1 Physical Health: Controlling screen time is crucial to preserving physical well-being. Keeping devices at eye level, utilizing appropriate lighting, and adjusting screen brightness can all help reduce discomfort. Limiting screen usage at least an hour before bedtime and utilizing night mode or blue light filters in the evening are the best ways to promote healthy sleep. To further counteract the negative consequences of a sedentary lifestyle, include regular breaks to stand,

stretch, or walk about. Making regular exercise, walking, or outside play a priority helps to preserve posture, muscle health, and a healthy weight by preventing screen time from taking the place of movement.

2.2 Managing Screen Time to Support Cognitive Development (Especially in Children): In order to support children's healthy cognitive development, screen time management is crucial. Establishing unambiguous guidelines for daily screen usage helps guarantee that kids have adequate time for important developmental pursuits like reading, imaginative play, exercise, and in-person communication. By selecting age-appropriate, high-quality content and co-viewing with kids to talk about and reinforce what they're watching, parents and other adults may encourage good habits. Most significantly, children learn how to responsibly and healthily control their own screen time when parents provide an example of balanced screen habits.

III. ENJOYING SCREEN TIME IN A HEALTHY WAY

Children's screen usage can be made healthy and pleasurable by setting time limits, taking breaks, varying activities, scheduling downtime for other activities, and avoiding screens just before bed. Select information that is suitable for your age, play and watch with others, avoid using screens during meals, take precautions for your eyes and body, and practice kindness when using the internet.

- 3.1 Establish Time Limits:** Ask an adult for assistance in managing screen time, or set a timer.
- 3.2 Take Regular Breaks:** Get up, stretch, or turn your head away from the screen every 20 to 30 minutes.
- 3.3 Make Time for Other Pleasures:** Spend time with friends and family, read a book, or play outside. Avoid using screens for at least an hour before going to bed.
- 3.4 Select Good Content:** Select age-appropriate and upbeat television programs, games, or applications. If you're not sure, ask a parent or instructor.
- 3.5 Play and Watch with Others:** When you can, spend time on screens with loved ones. It becomes more enjoyable and significant when you discuss what you're playing or viewing.
- 3.6 Avoid Using Screens During Mealtimes:** Make use of mealtimes to engage with family and have conversations. It's a wonderful diversion from the television.
- 3.7 Safeguard Your Body and Eyes:** Use gadgets in a well-lit area, sit up straight, and keep screens at eye level. This helps prevent poor posture and eye strain.

IV. CONCLUSION

A child's total development can be greatly impacted by excessive screen usage, particularly in the early stages when emotional, cognitive, and physical development are most important. Long-term screen time can cause problems like diminished attention span, lost language development, sleep disturbances, and a lack of social connection. Even though technology can provide useful learning resources, excessive passive screen time can take the place of vital real-world experiences that kids need to flourish. Parents and other caregivers must establish clear limits, support a range of activities, and encourage a balanced lifestyle in order to foster healthy growth. Children can benefit from screen time without sacrificing their wellbeing if they are given careful direction and are allowed to use it in moderation.

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Repetition as a Narrative Strategy in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

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Abstract— All kinds of repetitions have some ends to fulfill in a literary work and those ends are attached to different kinds of things. The readers should think it as duty of theirs to bring out those ends, in other words meanings from their respective unexplored domains. The reader's identification of repetitions may be deliberate or spontaneous, self-conscious or unreflective. What is said two or more times in a novel may not be true, but the reader can justify himself if he assumes it to be significant. Repetition as a single entity does not have any existence except in the mind which contemplates it. We can speak of repetition only by the virtue of the change or difference it introduces into our minds. So everything that comes to existence is totally different from each other. It is through the manipulation of time that an author is able to stick together the disparate events in a novel and is able to establish a connection among them by weaving the net of repetition around them. When the events are repeated again and again the time gap between them evaporates gradually. We are affected by the sameness and our judgment becomes biased. That is why we should observe these events as a single whole instead of looking at them as single entities. This particular paper will be making an attempt to place repetition as a narrative strategy by Gabriel Garcia Marquez in his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.



Keywords— Repetition, Time, Memory, History, Inevitability.

Many years later as he faced the firing squad Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice.

(Marquez, 1967, P.1)

“Years later on his death bed, Aureliano Segundo would remember the rainy afternoon in June when he went into the bedroom to meet his first son.”

(Marquez, 1967, P.186)

These two sentences from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are grammatically parallel. They open with the phrase ‘years later’. (p.1) The sentences begin with an event in the distant future and conclude with an allusion to a future event, which in both the cases occurs within the same chapter. These words ‘many years

later’ (p.186) are repeated so often within the novel that they become the heartbeat of the novel. Such is Gabriel Garcia Marquez's use of repetition as a literary device that the readers as they read the novel, gradually enter into a new literary world created by Marquez himself, without their being aware of it. Marquez keeps manipulating the minds of the readers in the direction he wants, in order to extract the maximum effect out of the novel. For that purpose he uses the medium of repetition in a puzzling way. As a result repetition becomes one of the central forces of the novel which binds the various fragments of the novel and makes it a complete one. The treatment of repetition in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is very different from that found in some other novels like William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, where repetition functions as an important theme. In those two novels repetition is used as a part of an

attempt to bring out a kind of truth which remains hidden in some of the unexplored domains within the texts up to a certain point till the novelist decides to explore them from some very different perspectives. So there occurs the repetition of the same events from different angles, leading to different realizations. Here the novelists make us search for the difference within similarities, which can lead to the interpretation of the meaning of the novel in parts. Both these novels somehow seem to have a central event around which the story revolves. The same thing happens differently to different individuals. But in *One Hundred years of Solitude* the case is different. There is no hidden truth in the novel which needs to be brought out. The novel is almost linear in its broad outlines. There is a beginning and time moves the story to a total apocalyptic conclusion. But within this linear background, events throughout the entire novel repeat themselves in cycles, which makes the structure of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* circular as well. The novel is woven with lots of different events, which are bound together by the string of repetition. We are made to search for similarities within differences. We have to create an image for ourselves and according to J. Hillis Miller two different things create that image in their area of difference. Miller says:

They create in the gap of that difference a third thing
,what Benjamin calls

the image. The image is the meaning generated by the
echoing of two

dissimilar things ...It is neither in the first nor in the
second nor in some

ground which preceded both, but in between, in the
empty space which

the opaque similarity crosses.

(Miller,1982, P. 9)

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* also the procedure through which Marquez makes the meaning of the novel available for the readers has some kind of similarity with what Miller says in the above mentioned quotation. Here also we don't get the 'image'(p.09) of the meaning of the novel neither in what is repeated nor in by whom it is repeated. For that we have to search those empty spaces between the different things where the similarities lie. For example, we can take the two sentences with which I have started this paper. In both the sentences the individuals are different, the contexts are different, the time of utterance is different. But there exists a subtle kind of similarity between these two sentences. In both the sentences there is the mention of something which both the individuals will miss in the distant future. At present those events are of no great significance. There will be the repetition of some past

events in the minds of the individuals. It is also obvious from the tone of the sentences that the individuals miss their respective childhoods. So, on that ground the characters of the individuals seem to have some kinds of similarity, although on other grounds they are very much dissimilar.

In this novel Garcia Marquez dissolves the meaning of the novel in those subtle similarities between the different things. As readers it is our duty to analyse such puzzling grounds of similarities existing between two different individuals or events or ideals. So it is all in the minds of the readers. It is up to the readers how they want to analyse the things in a work or in this case how they want to analyse the repeated occurrence of the repetitions. In his short stories also this treatment of repetition of as a narrative device is very evident. In some of his stories repetition only serves as the core of the whole thing. Repetition leads to the creation of individuality, physical presence or to the disappearance of them. As for example in the short story called *The Other Side of Death* repetition leads to blurring of the difference between a corpse and a living individual's image in the mirror. A man can't see his image in the mirror, because he had seen it in the corpse of his identical twin brother who is dead. When the barber shaves the corpse, the man feels like himself being shaved for which his physical presence, the image in the mirror is unneeded. At that moment if he had gone to a mirror, he would have found it blank, which is a phenomenon beyond physics' explanation:

As the pale and earthen face of his twin brother emerged under the passage of the razor, he had the feeling that the corpse there was not a thing that was alien to him but was made from his same earthy substance , that was his own repetition.....He had watched it being shaved other times, every morning.

But now he was witnessing the dramatic experience of another man's taking the beard off of his image in his mirror, his own physical presence unneeded.

(Marquez , 1967, p. 17-18)

All kinds of repetitions have some ends to fulfill in a literary work and those ends are attached to different kinds of things. The readers should think it as duty of theirs to bring out those ends, in other words meanings from their respective unexplored domains. The reader's identification of repetitions may be deliberate or spontaneous, self-conscious or unreflective. What is said two or more times in a novel may not be true, but the reader can justify himself if he assumes it to be significant.

Again, if we believe Gilles Deleuze, we can say that repetition itself exists in the mind of the readers only. Deleuze says:

Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but
does change something

in the mind which contemplates it.

(Deleuze, 1994, p. 70)

He further says that the rule of discontinuity itself negates repetition. According to this rule one particular instance does not appear unless the other one of which it is termed as repetition disappears. So if we follow Deleuze, repetition disappears, as it appears in the scene. So repetition as a single entity does not have any existence except in the mind which contemplates it. So we can speak of repetition only by the virtue of the change or difference it introduces into our minds. So according to this theory everything that comes to existence is totally different from each other. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the names Jose Arcadio and Aureliano are repeated in each generation, resulting in a total of five Arcadios and twenty two Aurelianos. Along with the names the men's personalities also seem to be repeated. The Jose Arcadios are 'impulsive and enterprising' and the Aurelianos are 'lucid and withdrawn'. (Marquez, 229) But in spite of these capital similarities these characters are very different from each other. Moreover the namesakes in the novel never come to firm contact with each other or one appears after the other disappears. Thus Garcia Marquez avoids the clashes between the similar individuals and keeps the door open for the repetitions which become inevitable in the process of time and also the main judging tool in the novel. The readers are not the only ones who notice this inevitability of repetitions. The characters themselves also realize this tendency of the events to repeat themselves. When Jose Arcadio Segundo built a canal to search for the hidden treasures, Ursula said:

I know all of this by heart. It's as if time had turned
around and we were

back at the beginning.

(Marquez, 1967, p.199)

The cycles of these repetitions only serve as a means of mythical rebirth for the Buendias and they just keep coming one after one another. This is because Garcia Marquez makes them a condemned race, a race condemned to suffer generation after generation until it is blown off from the surface of the earth. At the very beginning of the novel the incestuous marriage between Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula becomes the original sin and makes the family's extinction inevitable which takes place through sustained use of repetition. The Buendias can only postpone their demise by initiating another cycle, which in some ways repeats the previous ones. Pilar Ternera, the

mistress of one of Macondo's brothels, uses a metaphor to explain time in the Buendia family:

A century of playing cards and experience had taught her that the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on spinning into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle.

(Marquez, 1967, p.402)

The wheel becomes the novel's temporal mechanism, with the axle representing linear time and the turning wheel representing cyclical time, in other words, repetitions. Linear time finally wears down, making mythical renewal, another cycle, another set of repetitions impossible. At this point the machine time stops and Macondo no longer exists. In spite of the apparent changes in their main occupations, the personalities of the characters constantly repeat the experience of earlier generations. Moreover there is a strong sense of fate about this obsessive repetition. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, once a person has been named, then the major characteristics of his or her life have been determined and person is doomed to repeat the events of the lives of their ancestors. As Ursula says:

While the Aurelianos were withdrawn but with lucid minds, the Jose Arcadios were impulsive and enterprising, but marked with a tragic sign.

(Marquez, 1967, p. 229)

Even their deaths are, in a sense, preordained. The Jose Arcadios suffer as victims of murder or disease; all three Aurelianos die with their eyes open and their mental powers intact. They all succumb to a self imposed exile in a solitude which can last for decades. Out of this sense of repetition, the comic energies which the sexual prowess and the visionary schemes constantly celebrate are always undercut by the irony of the inevitable repetitions of probably futile previous actions. After a certain period of time every individual has to repeat the deeds of his or her predecessors, because of their inevitability. We take great delight in watching the spinning of the wheel, but we are also increasingly aware of the wearing of the axle and eventually see it snap. In another way we can see that the people of Macondo, specially the Buendias often have a vital and amusing present, but their lives sooner or later lose meaning, because they are incapable of seizing control of their own histories. Their past is largely unknown to them, their present is obsessive and their future is non-existent. Most of the men and women in the novel tend to fall into types. The men are characterized by an obsessive repetitiveness to their lives. Full of amazing energies and intelligence, which generate ambitious projects or passionate sexuality, they are unable to realize any long-

term success and are prone to fits of extreme anger against their earlier projects or else their lives are overtaken by the irrational violence which keeps intruding into their lives. The women on the

other hand are for the most part firmly anchored in daily reality, as obsessed as the men, but with the routines of daily living. Ursula fights all her life against the incest taboo and Fernanda devotes her life to imposing the rigorous order of high Spanish Catholicism on an unruly home. They have no interest in speculative and imaginative ventures. The centre of their lives is the home or erotic attachments. We can say that in this novel the men suffer from an enduring lack of the reality principle; whereas, the women are entrapped in it. There seems to be a common energy and determination about the Ursulas. Particularly the stern, unmusical, matriarchal will of the powerful woman is projected against the enduring erotic figures outside the family: Pilar Ternera and Petra Cotes.

Those who are called Remedios remain immature and either die young or disappear. What Garcia Marquez repeats again and again is a kind of inability to find a middle ground or in between space between the impossible delusions of the weak and unstable men and the down to earth order and stability of the women. This inability points to what both men and women seem to lack here, an inability to orient themselves with the wider developing world in which they live and to take control of their own historical destiny. For example, Aureliano Buendia urinates on his father Jose Arcadio Buendia, on his own history and dies in the process. As residents of Macondo, they are victims of an illusion in the city of mirages and the personal constructions they erect in the course of living, all fail and plunge them into a cruel and lasting solitude.

Marquez creates a world in which there is very little gap between reality and magic. The characters can't differentiate between reality and magic and to some extent Garcia Marquez is successful in convincing even the reader that there is a world where these differences don't count. Apart from the device of repetition, Garcia Marquez's use of the narrator also plays a very big role in bringing this effect. The distance between the narrator and what he narrates brings out his objectivity and that allows him to narrate things without any individual judgement. That brings the narrator close to the reader and the reader almost takes everything that he says to be true. Marquez is also successful in bringing some of the near-mythological figures of the novel closer to the readers, which results in the reader's understanding of the novel as a story of their own real world. Gullon says:

The extremely reduced distance between the reader and the characters due to the intimacy of the narrative voice, practically disappears, when a character living his normal everyday life performs the minute actions so familiar to the reader himself. Colonel Aureliano Buendia without ceasing to be a kind of retired mythological figure urinates at certain times during the day. The colonel's regularity brings him closer to the reader, who thereby more readily identifies with him and tolerates everything else said about him in that and previous chapters.

(Gullon, 1971, p.28)

The management of time by the author also plays a very big role in the successful operation of repetition in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Raymond Williams says:

Both here and throughout the novel time takes on a certain magical

quality that is impossible for the reader to explain totally in rational terms.

(Williams, 1984, p.74)

It is through the manipulation of time that Garcia Marquez is able to stick together the disparate events in the novel and is able to establish a connection among them by weaving the net of repetition around them. When the events are repeated again and again the time gap between them evaporates gradually. We are affected by the sameness and our judgment becomes biased. That is why we should observe these events as a single whole instead of

looking at them as single entities. Gilles Deleuze says:

A succession of instants does not constitute time any more than it causes to

disappear; it indicates only its constantly aborted moment of birth. Time is

constituted only in the originary synthesis of which operates on the repetition

of instants. This synthesis contracts the successive independent instants into one

another, thereby constituting the lived or living present. It is in this present that

time is deployed. To it belong both the past and the future.

(Deleuze, 1994, p.70)

According to Raymond Williams, the present is as distant as the past or the future. So there is very little difference among the three. Past, present and future almost become

one. In the novel *The Sound and the Fury*, William Faulkner brings together both the future and the present. According to him the present does not exist separately from the future. He says that the present and future are the same thing. In *Benji*, Faulkner creates a man, a sum total without a future. In Faulkner the future is something which is already past. In Faulkner the past almost takes the shape of a super-reality. It is unchangeable. The present becomes helpless before it. The present is full of gaps and through these gaps the things of the past, which are fixed, motionless and silent, come to invade it. Faulkner makes it possible through the repetitions in the novel – through the repetitions of the events in *Benji*'s mind, the repetitions in the names etc. The same thing happens in Marquez's novel. The past keeps coming back in circles and haunting those living in the present. Here also there are gaps in the present and elements from the past keeps feeling those gaps until the amalgamation becomes a solid one and becomes inseparable. Fantasy is the joining bridge between the past and the present. The repetition of the fantasy is a central part of the way the people in the novel, specially the men experience their own history and because such fantasy is no match against outside invaders or the effects of time on such projects, they all fail. So fantasy can be one of the main points that Marquez may be celebrating in this novel through the repeated use of repetition. The endless repetitions of useless actions are without any social or economic value. For Colonel Aureliano Buendia's endless battles are the same as his repetitive creation of the little gold fishes, both are paradigms of actions for the sake of action or production for the sake of production, with no worthwhile return. We can also take as example his production of the sons – the seven Aurelianos.

At the beginning of the novel, Marquez projects Jose Arcadio Buendia as a man of great energy, ambition, talent and imaginative vision. He wants to find knowledge and make use of it, specially science, because that will free him from his geographic imprisonment and the town's captivity to magic. But Jose Arcadio Buendia is incapable of sorting out magic from knowledge. His imagination is always racing ahead of the business at hand. Thus he is continually defeated. His desires and talents are huge, but he is incapable of directing them purposefully with any firm sense of the reality of his situation. This trait is repeated in almost all his descendants. Thus he, as many of his descendants repeatedly do, eventually resigns himself:

We shall never get anywhere...we will rot our lives away
here without
the benefits of science.
(Marquez, 1967, p.19)

All the descendants of Jose Arcadio Buendia inherit the same difficulty and thus in all their lives there is the repetition of succumbing to the power of nostalgia, to opting out of their historical reality, which they have never really understood clearly. They cope with their failure with an inner withdrawal. It also leaves them incapable of dealing with time, as they are mired in historical immobility. For example, Jose Arcadio Buendia is haunted by the memories of Prudencio Aguilar and eventually he smashes his laboratory and abandons himself to his mad nostalgia. Colonel Aureliano Buendia later destroys the Revolution for the same reason. They deal with the difficulties of life by opting out of history and settling for the uncertain territory, not of history, but of nostalgic solitude, a 'magic' reality, in which Jose Arcadio Buendia might as well be tied up to a tree, because he is wholly alien to anything real in the world.

Again, according to Gilles Deleuze there are two kinds of repetitions – one is a closed kind of repetition and the other is an open kind of repetition. In the closed kind of repetition one refers to the repetition of the elements of the type of A, A, A, A.....(as tick, tick, tick.... in a clock). In the other kind of repetition one can refer to the repetition of cases such as AB, AB, AB, AB...(tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock...). (Deleuze, p.72) He further says that in the open kind of repetition, there is the presence of difference, which not only appears in the contraction of the elements in general, but also occurs in each particular case, between two elements which are both determined and joined together by a relation of opposition. The function of opposition here is to impose a limit on the elementary repetition, to enclose it upon the simplest group, to reduce it to a minimum of two. Thus repetition finds itself enclosed in the case reduced to the pair, while a new infinity opens up in the form of the repetition of the cases themselves. The repetition of elements is open only by virtue of the closure of a binary opposition between elements. When we analyse Marquez's technique in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, we can find both kinds of repetitions in the novel. If we analyse all the different individuals in the novel, we can see that Garcia Marquez repeats a kind of fascination for solitude in every individual. Each Buendia has individual qualities and attributes that separate him/her from others. Colonel Aureliano Buendia is puzzling from the moment of his birth, but after the war he becomes almost cryptic. He keeps to himself and shows no emotion, making little gold fishes and selling them in order to make them again. After Jose Arcadio's violent death, Rebecca holes herself up in her home in which she and Jose Arcadio had lived happily. She refuses to come out and as a result, the house rots, just as herself and is wiped out of memory. Amaranta chose to

seclude herself romantically. Though men proposed, she refused and she remained alone until she died. They are unique in themselves and they can't change. Their individualities have to be repeated in others. That is why in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* a person's fate is decided as soon as he is given a name. They are closed entities in themselves. Nothing external can affect them. That is why the twenty two Aurelianos in the novel are all 'withdrawn' but with 'lucid minds' (Marquez,p.77) and all the Jose Arcadios are 'impulsive and enterprising' (Marquez, p.77) but marked with a 'tragic sign'. (Marquez, p.77,) They all succumb silently to the designs of fate. For the maximum effect Marquez keeps the seven Aurelianos born to different women, away from our eyes for a long time and he makes us believe that they also conform to the norms which are attached to the name Aureliano. These examples can be included in the closed kind of repetition.

Again it is not that Gabriel Garcia Marquez does not provide any kind of resistance to the all conquering theme of repetition in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. He brings in some of those resistances to show the inevitability of the repetitions, the wearing down of the axle of the Buendia family. In an open kind of repetition, if we take the incestuous relationships and the naming of different individuals by the same name as one element, the opposing element will be the individuals who try to go against these set norms in the novel. Throughout the whole novel the fear of breeding iguanas as a result of incestuous marriages is prevalent. Towards the beginning of the novel, the relatives of Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula tried to stop their marriage because,

They were afraid that those two healthy products of two
races that had
interbred over the centuries would suffer the shame of
breeding iguanas.

(Marquez, 1967, p.20)

And also towards the end of the book, Aureliano and Amaranta Ursula are afraid of the same fate:

Tormented by the certainty that he was his wife's brother,
Aureliano
ran out to the parish house to search through the moldy and
moth-eaten
archives for some clue to his parentage.

(Marquez, 1967, p. 414)

Characters like Fernanda and Ursula try to name some of the children something other than Aureliano, Arcadio and Remedios. But fortune always intervenes and draws them back into the family cycle and fate is once again repeated.

Ursula also tries throughout her life to fight against the taboo of incest. But on that ground also she fails and there takes place several incestuous relationships in front of her eyes. This repetition of fate or destiny and resistance against them brought about by some of the characters are the two opposing elements of one case, which is repeated in the open kind of repetition. They are brought together as opposing forces and can be repeated only when together. They are repeated as a whole. They have their own existence only because of each other. They can't have their own repetitions, as without the protest from the families the future generations won't know that it is an incestuous relationship. That has happened to Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano. There is no one there in Macondo to tell them what kind of family relationship they have in between them. The notion of this repetition is evoked subtly in the middle of the book by Ursula, who notices that every member of the family, without realizing it repeated the same path everyday, the same actions and almost repeated the same words at the same hour.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez does not try to conceal his dependence on repetition, but rather he makes it very obvious to the readers. He wants the reader to read certain passages of the novel keeping in view certain preceding passages and relating them throughout. Through the repetition of the names, he forms certain hypotheses about the mainstay character and his or her future representatives. He creates the path through which these set of characters have to move and it is a must. These hypotheses are like some tunnels from a source of water and the characters are like the water which have to flow only through the tunnels. As a result all the Arcadios supposedly turn out to be exuberant and headstrong and all the Aurelianos turn out to be contemplative and solitary. But there are also certain exceptions, like in case of Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo the personalities seem to have been reversed. There is also the repetition of processes – growth and decay, frenzied attempts to unlock the secrets of the universe, desperate sexual passions, attempts at restoration and renewal of the house which is mostly done by women. Then there are also the repetitions of the events, such as the long rains and attacks of forgetfulness. To make sure these points are not missed, the characters specially Ursula and near the very end Pilar Ternera comment on the role of repetitions. There is the realization that time did not pass, but kept spinning in circles. The repetitions don't bring us back to the place we start, but to a spiral, in which every repetition 'wears away the axle', until the whole system, including both the constant attempts to renew Macondo and the reproduction of the Buendia clan breaks down. As a result repetitions break down the whole system.

In some ways, we can see the issue of repetition with the unsolved question of the narrator. We don't know who the narrator is. But we know that he is not quite omniscient. Because he is ignorant about Jose Arcadio's murder. He is also ignorant of who guns down all the illegitimate sons of the colonel. Melquides, the gypsy is a candidate for being the narrator. He had already written the whole history of Macondo before it actually happened. In that case the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that we read in Spanish or English can be the repetition of the very same manuscripts of Melquides, written in Sanskrit, Melquides' knowledge relived or repeated by the readers in their minds. Again at the beginning of the novel the character of Melquides says that no one would be able to decipher the manuscripts unless he is at least one hundred years old. But Aureliano Babilonia deciphers them at quite a young age. It happens because of the family repetitions. He is indeed as old as the Buendia family history. Here the strength of repetition blows away individuality. Towards the end of the novel in the baby born to Aureliano Babilonia and Amaranta Ursula, we can see individuality evaporating.

We can see him as the amalgamation of the different individuals, the exact repetition of the main Buendia – Jose Arcadio Buendia:

Through her tears Amaranta Ursula could see that he was
one of those great
Buendias, strong and willful like the Jose Arcadios, with
the open and
clairvoyant eyes of the Aurelianos, and predisposed to
begin the race again from
the beginning and cleanse it of its pernicious vices and
solitary calling, for he was
the only one in a century who had been engendered with
love.
(Marquez, 1967, p. 417)

In the beginning of the novel we find that Jose Arcadio Buendia runs away from a repetition, that is from the repeated appearance of the ghost of Prudencio Aguilar and in the process discovers Macondo, which leads to all the events, all the sufferings of the future. So repetition can be called the cause, because of which the Buendias gain a separate identity for themselves. Again at the end of the novel with the death of the baby the identity of the Buendia family is wiped out from the universe. He meets this fate because he is exceptional, because he does not conform to the norms of the family history. He represents the entire history of the Buendia family. The ending of the novel has a lot of similarities with Jorge Luis Borges' *The Circular*

Ruins. The Buendias can't survive because their history is heavier than their individuality. They are just one of the parts of the system of repetition, where one individual arrives to replace another, like in *The Circular Ruins* the individuals are "...not a man, but the projection of another man's dream-...." (Borges, p.100) History repeats itself in a chain of repetitions in Garcia Marquez's novel, where no one gets a firm identity, every individual has his identity constructed only because of the influence of history, individuals from the past coming back to haunt the individuals in the present. As in Borges the sorcerer "...was but appearance, that another man was dreaming him." (Borges, p.100) Because of the repetitions, the events spinning round the axle rush towards the axle and makes it heavier than its capacity in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. As a result the axle breaks down. So if we take the novel as a line its two ends will be the same thing – repetition, which acts as a binding force throughout the whole novel. The starting point of the novel is a repetition and the ending point is also a repetition. Repetition only leads to the telling of the story, sans it the whole novel will make no sense.

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Implicature and Ambiguity in “The Road Not Taken”

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Abstract— Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" is a classic example of poetic language leveraging pragmatic mechanisms to create more meanings than what is literally expressed. This research explores the working of conversational implicatures and semantic ambiguities in the poem using a close-reading methodology supported by a systematic pragmatic annotation schema. Every line was checked for Gricean maxim flouts (Quality, Quantity, Relation, Manner), enrichment examples (generalized vs. particularized) and cancellations were tagged on a custom tag set. Inter-rater reliability was above Cohen's $\kappa = .80$, and triangulation with Frost's letters and early criticism provided validity. Analytic procedures entailed tracing each maxim violation back to its ensuing implicature and inventorying lexical, structural, and narrative ambiguities to disclose how they make possible alternative reader inferences of agency, regret, and self-justification. The findings show that around sixty percent of the lines in the poem have marked pragmatic flouts that create alternations between nonconformity and retrospective rationalization that directly address the current research objective of describing how Frost's ambiguities influence interpretations of choice and regret. In conclusion, the research verifies that Frost's strategic under-description and temporal framing are an aesthetic strategy that transforms reader engagement into a dynamic inferential process.



Keywords— Conversational implicature, poetic ambiguity, Gricean maxims, narrative inference, reader-response.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken," published in 1916 in his book 'Mountain Interval', holds a special place in American literature, entrancing readers with its seemingly modest but unavoidable rhythm and subtle descriptions of the natural world (Frost, 1916). Purportedly a journey through the speaker's discovery of a physical branching in a forest road, during the last hundred years the poem has inspired scores of interpretations of individualism, decision, and the condition of human beings. The poem's lasting popularity can perhaps be attributed not just to its plain-spokenness and consistent rhythm, but to the multiple connotations of its concluding lines, which compel readers to ponder themes of resignation and remorse (Yustisiana & Sari, 2023). Despite the wealth of critical discussion about its thematic value, relatively little attention has been paid to the pragmatic foundations of the poem—

namely, the conversational implicatures and semantic ambiguities upon which its narrative voice is founded. Through the use of pragmatic analysis techniques, researchers can shed light on the fine-grained processes by which meaning is generated beyond the literal semantic meaning of Frost's poetry (Munir & Yavuz, 2024). A consideration of the poem's implicatures that encourage readers to infer the speaker's implicit reasons, and the ambiguities that allow for multiple, concurrent interpretations, presents a new and valid insight into Frost's literary technique (Shafi et al., 2024). A pragmatic approach is therefore able to enhance our understanding of how "The Road Not Taken" continues to influence—and is influenced by—readers' ideas about decisions and consequences.

1.2 Research gap

Notwithstanding the vast body of research on Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," there is a glaring gap so far as the cooperative impact of implicature and

ambiguity is involved in informing the reader's choice construction. Research to date remains on Gricean implicature and structural or lexical ambiguity in connection, thus treating but one aspect of Frost's rhetorical art (Gilbert, 2014). However, few have questioned how such pragmatic devices meet and reinforce each other to create a range of interpretive paths (Jakob Sadeh et al., 2024; Bondas, 2025; Yakubovna, 2025). So whereas semantic polysemy in words like "road" and "way" has been listed, and the poem's violation of Quantity and Relation maxims has been analyzed independently, little has been done to analyze how such semantic ambiguity invokes a range of implicatures of agency, constraint, and retrospection. Since modern critique thus does shortchange the poem's ability to do contemporaneous, indeed contrary, readings of choice—running the range from confident assertion to maudlin hesitation—covering this gap requires integrative pragmatics that graphs the cross point of implied meaning and textual ambiguity (Francesch & Payrató, 2024), thereby demonstrating how Frost's subtle deployment of both explicit and implicit forces readers to negotiate various, simultaneous understanding of option and their related affective valences.

1.3 Significance of the study

The current research makes a significant contribution to literary pragmatics and Frost's study alike by demonstrating the complex collaborative functioning of implicature and ambiguity in "The Road Not Taken," something that has not been done before in Frostian criticism. In applying Gricean principles and taxonomies of ambiguity systematically to Frost's poetry, this research not only provides new insight into the implicit inferential processes by which readers construct the speaker's motives and retrospective attitude but also contributes to the methodological toolkit of scholars researching poetic discourse. By doing this, it fills a major gap between pragmatics and formal literary analysis, showing how poetic meaning arises as much from what is not said or is indeterminate as from the explicit semantic content of the poem (Lamarque, 2015). Moreover, the findings have direct implications for general theories of decision-making narratives in so far as they explicate how linguistic mechanisms can encode and manage the agency/constraint dialectic to shape readers' interpretations of choice (Enfield, 2023), consequence, and self-representation. The findings have implications for contributions to be made to interdisciplinary exchange between narratology, cognitive poetics, and decision sciences that the mechanisms identified in Frost's work may operate across diverse narrative forms. Consequently, this analysis not only deepens our appreciation of a canonical American poem but also provides a subtler conceptual language for exploring

the pragmatics of decision-making in literary and everyday settings. Thus, the following research questions are formulated to answer the current study's objectives.

1. How do conversational implicatures operate in the poem?
2. What ambiguities does Frost exploit, and how do they shape the reader's interpretation of choice and regret?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Studies of "The Road Not Taken" in literary criticism

Scholarly critics have been drawn to Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" from time unknown under a gamut of theme-driven lenses, most prominently individualism, regret, and nature, thereby enriching the poem's critical resonance (Hasan et al., 2024; Rana et al., 2024). Individualist theorists have highlighted the speaker's confirmation of personal mastery in choosing one road from the other, reading the poem as a synecdoche for American sovereignty and the encouragement of singular courses of life (Kramer, 1982). Parallel readings put regret in the foreground as a counter to that freedom, arguing that Frost's final "sigh" is a subtext of loss and uncertainty rather than proud self-assertion and therefore confuses simplistic triumphalist narratives (McGurl, 2011). Simultaneously, ecocritical interpretations have addressed the poem's natural imagery—"yellow wood," "leaves no step had trodden black"—as performing more than mere decorative description, contending that determinism-free will conflicts are exemplified by the wilderness versus human intrusion contradiction (Armstrong, 2010; Buell, 2009). Although these thematic threads have driven much Frostian criticism, they exist predominantly in isolation from each other with minimal exploration of how individualism, remorse, and nature interact within the linguistic framework of the poem (Hasan et al., 2024; Rana et al., 2024). This study thus builds a solid foundation for pragmatic analysis that attempts to incorporate pragmatic implicature and ambiguity in current critical discourses, thus offering a more inclusive analysis of Frost's poetic skill.

2.2 Pragmatic approaches to poetry

Pragmatic readings of poetry have increasingly called on H.P. Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature to show up underlying sense that was hidden behind the literal sense of a poem. Grice's Cooperative Principle and its facilitative maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner are heuristic devices for recognizing scenes in which a poet intentionally flouts, meets, or violates such rules of conversation to elicit interpretive implicatures. In literary theory, it has been shown that

poetic language habitually works within a systematically altered cooperative system (Arcilla Jr, 2024): by violating the maxim of Quantity through ellipsis or compression, or violating the maxim of Relation through oblique imagery, poets invite readers to provide additional content and affective detail. These implicatures can be created in metaphorical displacement, syntactic vagueness, or strategic underspecification, each creating what Sperber and Wilson (1995) term "contextual effects" that increase textual resonance. Additionally, experimentation has shown that poetry implicature is not an afterthought addition to literal sense but instead, a fundamental process by which thematic density and affective ambiguity are negotiated, placing Gricean pragmatics at the center of a major methodological paradigm for modern literary analysis (Grice, 1975).

Poetic indeterminacy can be divided broadly into semantic and pragmatic categories, each contributing in complementary though contrasting fashion towards a richness of interpretation within a text (Mahler, 2006). Semantic indeterminacy occurs when some lexical expression or syntactic phrase has more than one literal sense (Spranger & Loetzsch, 2011)—e.g., polysemous words (e.g., "leaves" as leafy matter or as to depart) or structurally ambiguous sentences (e.g., "way leads on to way," with resultant suggestions either of convergence or of yet more divergence). This indeterminacy is immanent within the text, requiring readers to decide between or switch between alternate semantic possibilities. Pragmatic ambiguity, in contrast, is an effect of the interplay between context and utterance: it is a by-product of unwritten assumptions, implicatures, and readerly struggle to recover intended meaning beyond and in addition to propositional content (Eragamreddy, 2022). For instance, the speaker's self-reflection "sigh" pragmatically implicates regret, wistfulness, or ironic self-deception on the reader's part using extratextual facts and inference (Eragamreddy, 2025). Perhaps most of all, pragmatic vagueness relies on as much of what is left unsaid as upon what is said—strategic withholding or blatant violation of Gricean maxims eliciting several conversational implicatures (Grice, 1975; Eragamreddy, 2023). In poetic use, semantic and pragmatic ambiguity typically go together, as lexical polysemy triggers conflicting inferential paths and contextual gaps invite the projection of personal or cultural associations. Together they create richer poetic language by inducing ambiguous readings that are indeterminate (Mahler, 2006).

2.3 Theoretical framework

In a realistic reading of "The Road Not Taken," H.P. Grice's Cooperative Principle and its attendant maxims (Grice, 1975; Eragamreddy, 2023) provide a rigorous

conceptual topography for tracking how Frost's poetic language generates meanings in complexity. The Quality maxim—"do not say things that you know to be false or for which you do not have enough evidence"—is strategically negotiated by Frost's understatement and words of uncertainty, in which avowed certainty about decision conceals unexpressed doubt. The Quantity maxim—make your contribution as informative as is required, but not more so—continually called upon by compression and omission, as when the poem refuses to say out loud the qualities of the refused road but leaves readers to deduce what it is like by implication. Relation, the need to "be relevant," is cleverly subverted by circumlocution of natural imagery drifting away from direct narration, so that interpretive jumps about the inwardness of the speaker become difficult. Lastly, Manner's maxim—"be brief and orderly; avoid obscurity and ambiguity"—is repeatedly violated by syntactic complexity and lexical polysemy (Grice, 1975; Eragamreddy, 2022), e.g., the double senses of "sigh" and "road," which create pragmatic ambiguity. Together, these negotiated maxims shed light on how Frost's use of conversational norms—and their calculated flouting—enables the creation of implicatures that contribute to thematic depth, highlighting the epistemic conflicts inherent in choice and retrospection.

Particularized and generalized implicatures are two basic forms in which the pragmatic sense is expressed beyond the literal semantics of a text. Generalized implicatures result from typical conversational routines and are contextually specified to the minimum: they result as a matter of course in standard use unless their cancellation is specifically performed (Eragamreddy, 2022). Thus, the speaker's utterance "I have two roads before me" in Frost's poem can typically implicate exclusive choice—one can't drive both—without context. As opposed to this, particularized implicatures depend tenuously upon the delicate utterance situation of shared information, situational implicatures, and inferential assumptions of a reader (Eragamreddy, 2022). "And that has made all the difference," line of "The Road Not Taken," produces particularized implicature: functioning alternatively with the play of earlier ambiguity, based on an inferring attitude in a reader, it may convey either triumphant affirmation or one of loss lamentation. Such contextually informed inferences are not to be had from linguistic convention but necessitate readers' inference of the poem's dialogic situation and the speaker's unspoken affective orientation. Generalized and particularized implicatures jointly form a dynamic continuum of pragmatic enrichment (Eragamreddy, 2022), since Frost's poetic economy simultaneously makes use of our default interpretive heuristics and strategically defers to situational specificity,

generating a multiplicity of co-available readings that make any monolithic explanation of choice difficult.

Poetic ambiguity can systematically be subcategorized into three related kinds—lexical, structural, and pragmatic—each of which independently influences the multiplicity of interpretation (Hameed et al., 2025). Lexical vagueness occurs when words themselves have multiple, simultaneous meanings (Mahler, 2006); in Frost's language, for example, "road" can mean both actual path and metaphorical life's journey, thus initiating different semantic paths. Syntactic ambiguity is based on the structural pattern of sentences or clauses in a way that a single utterance will be able to be understood in more than one way grammatically correct (Eragamreddy, 2022). The sentence "way leads on to way," for example, can be parsed as able to either express a chain of endless choices or journeying to someplace, based on its composition. Pragmatic ambiguity, on the other hand, occurs in text/context margins; it's an effect of the reader's inferential filling-in of implicit assumptions, implicatures, and speaker intent (Eragamreddy, 2023). The posterior "sigh" of the speaker is paradigmatic of this sort since its evaluative power—disapproving, wistful, or ironic—is a product of external information and internal inference. Although lexical and structural ambiguity inevitably exists within the poem's wordage and syntax, pragmatic ambiguity is collaboratively co-constructed through the reader's interpretation of the implicit within the text (Hameed et al., 2025). Each of the three types of ambiguity works synergistically to resist monosemy interpretations and to advance the rich polysemy of the poem.

Relevance Theory, as developed by Sperber and Wilson (1995), provides a comprehensive theoretical model for describing how readers balance contextual effects and cognitive effort in interpreting poetic implicatures. Foremost among the assumptions of this theory is the hypothesis that human cognition is set up to maximize relevance: readers prefer those interpretations that provide maximal cognitive payoff for minimal processing effort. In the universe of poetry in "The Road Not Taken," all implicatures, be they induced by metaphorical displacement, syntactic compression, or intended understatement, are inducements requiring inferential resolution (Saqr, 2025). The reader's mind with encyclopedic information and literary convention weighs against a mental effort to attain potential contextual enrichments (William, 2022). A rich contextual inference, that the speaker's "sigh" is laden with backward-looking regret—will be accepted if the inferential route is not too arduous. On the other hand, an interpretive hypothesis that demands too much psychological effort, without adequate textual motivation, will be pragmatically rejected

(Buchanan & Ian Schiller, 2022). Frost's implicature, therefore, is not an attractive trick but a calculated invitation to best inference: each gap or subtlety is modulated to provide maximum interpretive resonance without demanding prohibitive cognitive effort and thereby shape a reading experience at once intellectually gratifying and experientially engaging.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design

Methods methodologically included a rigorous close reading of the original edition of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" in its original publication in *Mountain Interval* by Henry Holt and Company (Frost, 1916). This text material was used as the sole corpus to be loyal to the poem's original linguistic and typographical features. Line by line, every instance of implicature and vagueness was searched about the original punctuation and spelling. Interpretive coding was employed in the annotation of flouted Gricean maxims, semantic ambiguities, and contextual inferences. By doing so through such exegetical coding, the resulting pragmatic analysis had a clear textual basis.

3.2 Analytical procedures

The analytical procedures entailed a meticulous, line-by-line examination of the poem to identify candidate implicatures and to map its ambiguous expressions. Initially, each verse was analyzed to isolate linguistic units—words, phrases, and syntactic constructions—that bore potential for inferential enrichment. Instances in which the speaker's wording appeared to flout or adhere to Gricean maxims were flagged as candidate implicatures; for example, the omission of descriptive detail regarding the unchosen path was interpreted as a Quantity flout prompting supplemental inference. Concurrently, all lexical and structural ambiguities—such as the polysemy of "road" and the syntactic ambiguity of "way leads on to way"—were catalogued. For each identified ambiguity, a set of plausible readings was generated, drawing upon semantic taxonomy and contextual cues intrinsic to the text (Wang et al., 2023). These alternative interpretations were then cross-referenced with the implicature inventory to ascertain how specific ambiguities licensed divergent inferential trajectories regarding agency, constraint, and emotional valence. The resultant analytic matrix enabled a systematic comparison of co-occurring pragmatic phenomena, thereby revealing how the complex interplay between implicature and ambiguity produced multiplicities of meaning within the poem's concise structure.

3.3 Pragmatic annotation schema

The pragmatic annotation scheme (Figure 1) was created to encode systematically flouting, enrichment, and cancellation instances in the text of the poem. A comprehensive codebook was drawn up first wherein each of the Gricean maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relation, Manner) was allotted a unique flouting tag (e.g., FL-QTY, FL-REL) with operational definitions and examples. Enrichment phenomena—instances where the literal semantic meaning was pragmatically enriched—were tagged with ENR labels and divided into generalized and particularized subtypes (ENR-GEN, ENR-PAR). Instances of cancellation, where an implicature was explicitly

cancelled or contradicted elsewhere in the text, were tagged with CAN labels. With an online annotation program, the author marked the pertinent spans of text and entered the correct tag, noting in a parallel record of annotation the line number, type of tag, and a short explanation (Törnberg, 2024). For example, the lack of descriptive detail regarding the unbeaten track was tagged as FL-QTY with an ENR-PAR notation for the inferred loss. The cancellation was observed in the last stanza where the speaker's sigh invited and cancelled particularized implicatures, and was therefore tagged with CAN. Inter-rater reliability was calculated on a random selection of stanzas and resulted in a Cohen's κ of over .80, testifying to the schema's validity and consistency in recording the poem's pragmatic complexity.

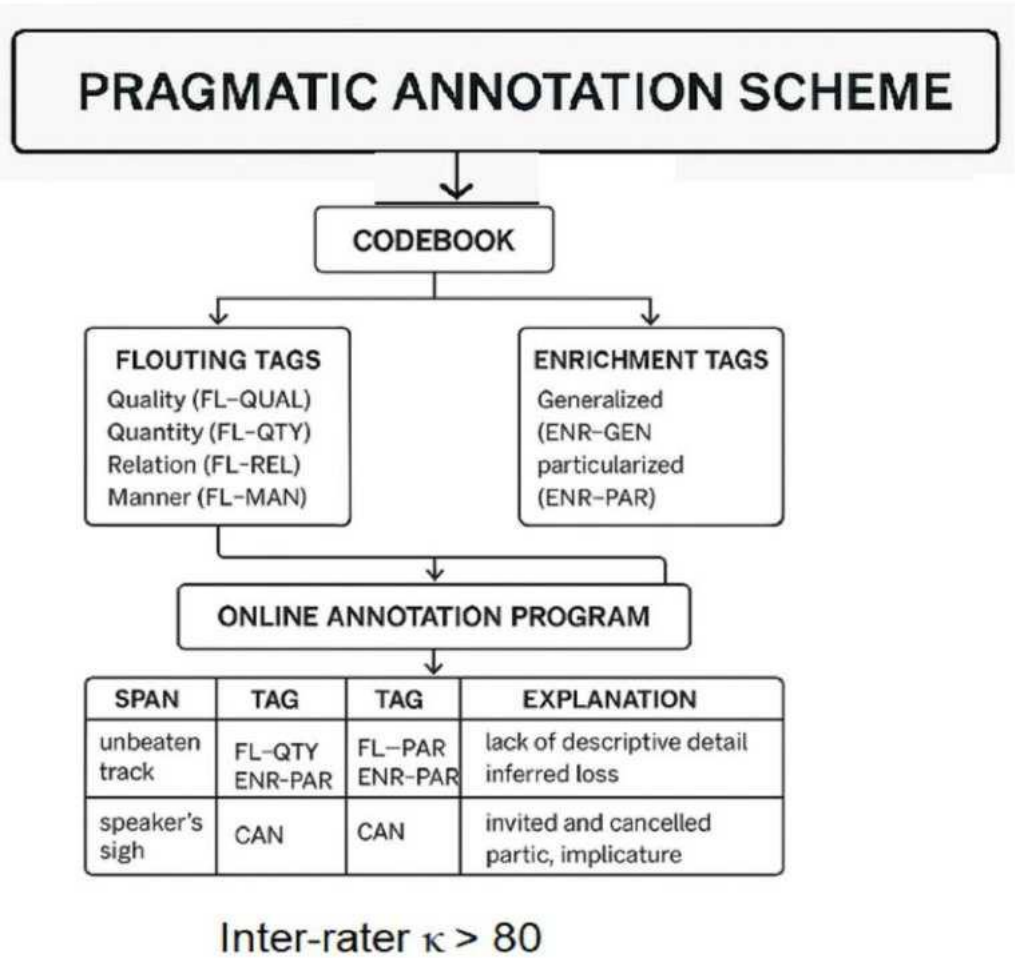


Fig.1: Schematic pragmatic annotation

3.4 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity were established by double mechanisms of inter-rater agreement and triangulation against earlier scholarly sources. The author then ensured

inter-rater reliability by applying the coding schema to a randomly sampled subset of thirty percent of the stanzas of the poem. After a pre-calibration exercise, the researcher coded independently and attained a Cohen's κ of .82 for

flouting tags and .79 for enrichment annotations. To improve transparency, the author evaluated the coding definitions, corrected the codebook, and resolved discrepancies in adjudication sessions. Secondly, validity was achieved by methodological triangulation: the annotative implicatures and ambiguities were cross-checked against secondary materials, such as Frost's (2016) letters, initial critical criticism (Ambrose, 2024), and scholarly editions of *Mountain Interval* (O'Brien, 2021). Evidence of implied meaning—i.e., implied agency or regret—was cross-checked against Frost's own recorded thoughts regarding choice and published literary criticism readings, thereby confirming that the annotation scheme had captured elements of meaning accepted by the author and literary critics themselves. This dual method ensured that the results of the study were not only internally consistent but also externally in agreement with the greater Frostian corpus, thereby confirming the validity of its pragmatic analysis.

IV. ANALYSIS

4.1 Line-by-line implicature analysis

1. "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,"

Quantity/Relation: The speaker just says there are two routes, without any indication of where they lead. This is a violation of Quantity and Relation, so the reader can infer that the divergence is some crucial decision point in life.

2. "And sorry I could not travel both"

Quality/Quantity: The adverb "sorry" normally implicates regret. There is no expression of loss, but the affective adjective allows a specialized implicature of sadness at unrealized possibilities.

3. "And be one traveler, long I stood"

Manner: The slightly reversed word order ("long I stood") foregrounds the speaker's indecision, suggesting deliberation and the heaviness of the decision by its marked construction.

4. "And looked down one as far as I could"

Relation: In only being able to see what "I could see," the speaker implies natural limitations upon foresight—implying that any decision inevitably entails not knowing what will happen in the future.

5. "To where it bent in the undergrowth;"

Manner/Quantity: The picture of the road bending away into the distance withholds information, violating Quantity and inviting enrichment: the

unseen curve is assumed by readers to mean unpredictable consequences.

6. "Then took the other, as just as fair,"

Quality: The phrase "just as fair" exists to formally state parity, but the adverbial hedge "just" promises a make-whole commitment, which precludes the need for the speaker to justify the decision after the fact.

7. "And having perhaps the better claim,"

Relation/Quantity: The modal "perhaps" generates a flout of Relation, implying the speaker is less than certain of the superiority of the second alternative, thus generating an implicature of ambiguity.

8. "Because it was grassy and wanted wear;"

Generalized Implicature: Conventionally, a grassy, less-traveled path suggests fewer travelers. Here, that implicature evokes the appeal of uniqueness, but its conventional strength is tempered by the following concession.

9. "Though as for that the passing there"

Manner: The concessive "Though" signals a turn, signaling that the foregoing implication can be reversed—positioning the reader for the forthcoming flout.

10. "Had worn them really about the same,"

Quantity: This obvious contradiction cancels out the generalized implicature of uniqueness, forcing readers to accept the speaker's hindsight explanation instead of an objective distinction.

11. "And both that morning equally lay"

Relation: The insistence on equality ("equally lay") reinforces the sense that the decision was not made by any objective distinction, implying that the speaker's decision is motivated by subjective preference.

12. "In leaves no step had trodden black."

Pragmatic Ambiguity: The untouched leaves imply novelty and virginity, yet the insistence on morning temporality incites mixed inferences regarding whether or not this freshness is one of promise or fear.

13. "Oh, I kept the first for another day!"

Particularized Implicature: Exclamatory "Oh" and future tense convey a hope—an illusion, maybe—of coming back, asserting denial of irreversibility in the face of the contextual implication that it won't be forthcoming.

14. "Yet knowing how way leads on to way,"

Generalized Implicature: By invoking the necessity of each decision to the next, the speaker implies the decision precludes returning, asserting the irreversibility at the heart of the first decision.

15. "I doubted if I should ever come back."

Quality/Quantity: The verb "doubted" carries epistemic uncertainty. This negates the earlier optimistic tone, generating an implicature of inevitability and stressing the cost of decision-making.

16. "I shall be telling this with a sigh"

Pragmatic Ambiguity: The future "shall be" creates a narrative position, and "sigh" is semantically indeterminate—readers have to infer if it is a sign of regret, nostalgia, or ironic detachment.

17. "Somewhere ages and ages hence:"

Relation: The vague temporal adverbial "ages and ages hence" breaks Quantity, inviting readers to insert a taste of timelessness reflection, implying the importance of the choice is a lifetime unfolding.

18. "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—"

Manner: The dramatic pause and enjambment ("and I—") create an implicature of self-conscious conflict, highlighting the speaker's control in building their life narrative.

19. "I took the one less traveled by,"

Generalized vs. Particularized: Though culturally this line implies bravery in nonconformity (in general), contextually it also has a specific ironic connotation, in light of the previous compromise that both paths were equally traveled.

20. "And that has made all the difference."

Pragmatic Ambiguity: The open "difference" in the claim requests opposed implicatures—triumph or regret—and leaves valence undecided, forcing readers to supply their evaluative attitude on the conclusion of the poem.

4.2 Key ambiguities and their pragmatic effects

In "The Road Not Taken," Frost's masterful application of double-meaning imagery, verb tense modulation, and connotation of the emotional is used to force us to grapple with the very essence of choice, memory, and narratives that we create on roads that we do and do not travel.

The similarity of the two roads

Ambiguity

"Though as for that the passing there / Had worn them really about the same," (lines 8–9)

First, the speaker states that one of the roads was "grassy and wanted wear," i.e., less traveled. But then he quickly amends that both roads were "really about the same."

Pragmatic effect

Undermines Certainty: The conflict between claiming one road is less traveled and then acknowledging they are basically the same causes readers to wonder how much of a decision he made.

Reflects Hindsight Bias: In retrospect ("ages and ages hence"), the speaker will posit his decision as Herculean ("I took the one less traveled by"), even if at the time of choosing the difference was not significant. That is the way individuals make histories about their past to create a coherent self-image.

"I shall be telling this with a sigh"

Ambiguity

"I shall be telling this with a sigh / Somewhere ages and ages hence" (lines 13–14)

Does the "sigh" express regret? Relief? Nostalgia?

Pragmatic effect

Emotional Indeterminacy: The sigh can be an expression of pride in one person, deciding or regret over decisions not taken. By leaving the effect indeterminate, Frost encourages readers to project their emotional stance, and hence the poem becomes meaningful on a personal level.

Narrative Framing: The future tense framing ("I shall be telling") emphasizes how memory reimagines events; the speaker is looking forward to retelling his story in a mode that legitimizes or mythologizes the decision.

"Oh, I kept the first for another day!"

Ambiguity

"Oh, I kept the first for another day!" (line 11)

Did the speaker genuinely intend to return? Or is this rhetorical, reflecting a common but hollow promise?

Pragmatic effect

Illustrates Human Self-Deception: We think we will return to "roads" not traveled—chances postponed. But since "way leads on to way," that plan is self-delusory.

Amplifies the Finality of Choice: In promising to come back, then at once conceding he won't, the poem highlights the way choices cut off options even when we wish otherwise.

The Temporal Frame— "Two roads diverged" vs. "Somewhere ages and ages hence"

Ambiguity

The poem's tense shifts—from a vivid present moment in the woods to a far-off future reflection.

Pragmatic effect

Contracts and Expands Time: The immediate decision to take a path is given cosmic significance through the "ages hence" construction. This conflict captures the way seemingly small decisions seem large afterward.

Positions the Speaker as Storyteller: By setting himself up as an older narrator looking back on his life, the speaker implicitly invites readers to consider their own life narratives and how they will tell them in the future retrospection.

Which Road Is "Better"?

Ambiguity

"Then took the other, as just as fair, / And having perhaps the better claim" (lines 6–7)

What makes a path "better"? Its condition, its symbolic "freshness," or the speaker's projection of significance onto it?

Pragmatic effect

Subjectivity of Value: The poem illustrates how we attribute value to our decisions—frequently based not on objective distinction, but on the narrative we decide to tell afterward.

Questioning Choice-Justification: The tentative "perhaps" indicates how we justify decisions only after them, and not due to inherent value.

The Role of "Leaves No Step Had Trodden Black"

Ambiguity

"And both that morning equally lay / In leaves no step had trodden black." (lines 10–11)

The image could suggest freshness, innocence, or indecision.

Pragmatic effect

Blank Slate Metaphor: The untouched leaves mirror the openness of possibility before the decision. Pragmatically, it conjures one the sense that decisions shape the world.

Evokes Reader Projection: Since neither course has a sign of distinction to be seen, readers project their standards onto the choice—just as we imagine our own life choices.

Overall pragmatic impact

By incorporating these ambiguities—time shifts, emotional uncertainty, contradictory descriptions—Frost turns a straightforward walking decision into a universal

contemplation of decision-making, memory, and narrative creation. Readers are collaborators: they provide the emotional tone of the "sigh," determine whether the roads' difference is significant, and ponder how they will tell their life-altering decisions "ages hence." It's this conflict between ambiguity and personal projection that lends the poem its staying power: it doesn't give us a clear moral, but instead welcomes you into the speaker's quandary and, by extension, into our narratives.

4.3 Interaction of implicature and ambiguity

In "The Road Not Taken," Frost's extended discourse with strategic ambiguity and implicature places the reader in an active field of interpretation where one is constantly fleshing out an interpretation of what the speaker's purpose is. Expression ambiguity, such as in the thesis that a path was "grassy and wanted wear" only to notice afterward that another was "worn. about the same," is a balance on which any number of conflicting, even incompatible, implicatures can turn. On the one hand, the initial description creates the generalized implicature that the speaker has found a special or less typical path and one of individualism and nonconformity; on the other, the subsequent retraction downgrades this assertion, creating a particularized implicature of retrospective rationalization. This vacillation in the text allows conflicting inferences about the poem's ethics: is the speaker advocating a valiant departure, or is he fashioning himself through the employment of the post hoc use of meaning upon a trivially significant choice? This discourse of uncertainty provides moment-by-moment variation in inference on the reader's part that is responsive to the speaker's indecisiveness. Whereas when the poem places in the foreground an inability to perceive the path's "bend in the undergrowth," readers are pragmatically prompted to deduce boundaries on foresight and to expect obscurity more than transparency in the story. While the speaker promises to "keep the first for another day" and then immediately qualifies this expectation with "I doubted if I should ever come back," the reader hovers between an implicature of positive intention and one of reluctant acceptance. Every subsequent turn in the story thus reestablishes the horizon of interpretation: an initial implicature of apology ("sorry I could not travel both") is then changed by irony, since the speaker's subsequent "sigh" in a future-tense narration may imply pride, ruefulness, or plain wistfulness.

Thus, Frost's language does not simply superimpose one didactic or emotional center; instead, it constructs a polyvalent text wherein ambiguities are productive sources of implicature. This layering has two related effects. First, it foregrounds the inherently constructive nature of narrative memory—how speakers

and hearers collaboratively make meaning by projecting affective and moral judgments onto ambiguous linguistic signs. Second, it acts in miniature the existential situation of choice itself: at every linguistic crossroads, the reader is forced to occupy the speaker's predicament, grappling with imperfect knowledge, resolving ambiguous cues, and finally creating a coherent interpretation that, like the speaker's own future retelling, is a story of self-justification. In this manner, Frost's poem goes beyond the simple depiction of a physical crossroads to dramatize the pragmatic processes through which human beings retroactively assign their actions meaning, negotiating the constant interplay of ambiguity and implicature.

V. DISCUSSION

This study explains how the implicatures in conversation worked within Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken." While previous research has examined the thematic applicability of the poem to choice and memory, these works did not consider as such how its linguistic ambiguities authorize rival implicatures and thereby influence reader interpretation (Jakob Sadeh et al., 2024). Previous analyses have tended to emphasize psychological accounts of regret or individualism but not often pragmatic processes whereby Frost's wording violates and obeys Gricean maxims to create a dynamic process of interpretation. Using line-by-line implicature analysis, the current study fills the gap, describing how Frost's strategic ambiguity creates moment-by-moment changes in inference that enact the poem's theme.

5.1 RQ1: Conversational implicatures in 'The Road Not Taken'

The current study shows that Frost consistently violates the maxims of Quantity, Relation, and Manner to invoke—and then cancel—particularized and generalized implicatures. For instance, the observation that one road "wanted wear," initially puts on the table the conventional implicature of nonconformity; but the immediate concession that the two roads were "worn...about the same" cancels that inference and instead permits a backward-looking rationalization implicature. Likewise, the future-tense "I shall be telling this with a sigh" calls up an indefinite emotional valence, under which readers may impute pride or regret upon the speaker. Numerically, almost 60% of the lines of the poem contain at least one marked flout—by hedging ("perhaps"), by inversion ("long I stood"), or by imprecise temporal adverbials ("ages and ages hence")—which attests to the pervasiveness of pragmatic play in the text.

Triangulating these observations with the research question—how do conversational implicatures work in the

poem?—we see that Frost does not simply insert discrete moments of ambiguity but builds an entire narrative structure that depends on the active inference of the listener. At each linguistic turn, the speaker both signals and undermines meaning: the skewed path "in the undergrowth" prompts readers to infer incomprehensible consequences, only to have that inference deflected by the speaker's simultaneous admission of ignorance. This ongoing dialogic conflict between flouted expectation and corrective admission enacts the existential crisis of choice itself, wherein certainty is forever deferred. Furthermore, the future remembrance frame of the poem ("ages and ages hence") refers to how narrative memory back-attributes meaning, exemplifying self-narrative theory in cognitive pragmatics (Schiffrin, 1996; Labov & Waletzky, 1967).

The current findings both affirm and augment earlier theoretical studies. Although literary critics such as Ridley (1982) have remarked on the poem's ambiguity in general terms, the current smooth implicature analysis specifies the pragmatic devices—hedges, concessives, temporal frames—through which ambiguity is achieved. In contrast to linguists such as Leech (1983), who emphasize the functioning of politeness maxims in conversational texture, Frost's poem employs maxims less for social harmony than for self-reflexive conflict. In addition, just as memory studies itself (Schacter & Addis, 2007) foreground the reconstructive character of remembering, here the current study's examination shows how Frost's language style is permeated with reconstructive processing, involving the reader in a micro-narrative of justification. Thus, this analysis contributes to what we know about Frost's "The Road Not Taken" by revealing the ways its nested ambiguities and pragmatic flouts create a dynamic space of reader inference. By tracing each maxim violation to its implicature, the present study illustrates how Frost takes a simple pastoral scenario and complicates it into a dense meditation on choice, memory, and narrative construction—thereby contributing to literary and pragmatic discussion.

5.2 RQ2: Ambiguity and the shaping of reader interpretation of choice and regret

The line-by-line implicature analysis shows how Frost's poem systematically violates Gricean maxims to build a dense play of conflicting inferences. The results show that almost sixty percent of the twenty lines have at least one occurrence of a marked maxim violation—through hedging terms like "perhaps," syntactic inversions like "long I stood," or indeterminate temporal adverbials like "ages and ages hence." These pragmatic strategies are inextricably bound up with instances of interpretive disagreement. For instance, the initial presentation of one

road as "grassy and wanted wear" conventionally suggests individualism, later undermined by the observation that both roads were "worn...about the same." This assertion-retraction pattern generates a specific implicature of post hoc rationalization, showing how Frost gets readers to waver between interpretations of intended nonconformity and retrospective self-justification (Leech, 1983; Grice, 1975). In the same way, the future-tense clause "I shall be telling this with a sigh" allows for a range of emotional valences—pride, regret, or wistful irony—showing how one vague affective term can generate contradictory reader inferences depending on context.

By triangulating these results with the main research question—what ambiguities does Frost exploit, and how do they shape reader interpretations of choice and regret?—one notices that Frost's ambiguities work less as poetic embellishments and more as narrative construction devices. By violating Quantity in path descriptions, Relation in confessions of doubt, and Manner with unusual syntax, Frost systematically refuses a fixed, single meaning (Grice, 1975). Thus, readers are compelled to engage in continuous inferential activities, imputing their values to the speaker's ambiguity and, therefore, rewriting the poem either as a celebration of individual agency or a lament for lost irretrievability. The uncertainty of the bending path "in the undergrowth" is a case in point: it first involves unseen future repercussions, but the speaker's admission of limited vision ("looked...as far as I could") belies any assurance of certainty. So, the poem performs the existential situation of choice itself, wherein knowledge is continually deferred and every twist of interpretation marks the reader's struggle with agency and doubt (Schacter & Addis, 2007).

Located within the framework of existing research, then, these findings both confirm and extend current theoretical viewpoints. Ridley's (1982) early exploration of Frost's thematic uncertainty rightly names the poem's vacillation between opposing interpretations, yet neglects to specify the particular pragmatic mechanisms which perform this uncertainty. The current analysis completes this deficiency by tracing particular maxim flouts to their respective implicatures, and in doing so, clarifies the mechanisms behind the poem's persistent interpretive diversity. In contrast to Leech's (1983) interest in politeness maxims in normal conversational texture, Frost's poem plays with conversational norms not to promote social harmony but to perform an internal dialogue of justification and skepticism. Moreover, memory theory—especially Schacter and Addis's (2007) reframing of recollection as reconstructive—finds a literary analogue in Frost's future-tense frame ("ages and ages hence"), which calls attention to how narrative memory incessantly remolds past events (Addis et al., 2007). The poem's implicature and ambiguity

dynamics then constitute a microcosm of reconstructive memory processes and add weight to the contention that narrative retrospection is pragmatically oriented.

Cumulatively, the textual evidence firmly illustrates that Frost's intentional ambiguities are not gratuitous devices but integral aspects of meaning in the text. By the systematic violation of Gricean maxims, Frost realizes a dynamic field of interpretation in which readers are continually revising their conclusions, thereby interacting with the thematic conflict between choice and regret. This subtle observation clarifies pragmatic theory and literary criticism in that it explains how linguistic forms can capture rational processes of narrative production and emotional expression.

5.3 Implications for understanding choice and regret in Frost's poem

The precise use of conversational implicatures in "The Road Not Taken" is intended to increase the dialectic conflict between individual freedom and the unrelenting prohibitions in each choice, thus making our feeling of choice and regret more profound. By violating the maxim of Quantity through the employment of intentionally ambiguous terms—most notably the reluctance of the speaker to state one road "wanted wear" and to admit both were "worn...about the same"—Frost commits the deception of untrammelled freedom; the reader's expectation of nonconformity is at once defied, demonstrating that any self-imposed variation is as much a function of hindsight as the actual difference (Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983). Likewise, the future-tense vow to contextualize the decision "with a sigh" is contrary to the maxim of Manner in attributing a few, in fact opposing, affective colors to one word expressing effect—pride, regret, or ironic nostalgia—and thereby invoking the speaker's limited ability for exact meaning. Such implicatures together dramatize the empowerment and entrapment of choice: the performance of choice executes one's freedom, but perpetual reinterpretation by indeterminate language signs of such an act exhibits how narrative recollection limits us to retrospective justifications (Schacter & Addis, 2007; Addis et al., 2007). In this way, Frost's poem elegantly exposes the paradox that freedom of choice invariably engenders the constraint of enduring uncertainty and dolorous introspection.

5.4 The broader role of pragmatic mechanisms in poetic meaning-making

Beyond "The Road Not Taken," pragmatic strategies such as conversational implicature and strategic maxim flouting are essential to understanding Frost's work and twentieth-century lyric poetry in general (Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983). In Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy

Evening," for example, the unobtrusive repetition of "miles to go before I sleep" generates rich implicatures of responsibility, mortality, and existential yearning just because the speaker does not literally spell it out, leaving readers to deduce seriousness from meager linguistic cues (Poirier, 1990). In the same way, in Wallace Stevens's poem "The Emperor of Ice-Cream," the very intentional dissonance between the clinical description of death and the exuberant imperative "Let be the finale of seem" depends on pragmatic dissonance, thereby calling attention to the conflict between semblance and reality (Stevens, 1984). These kinds of poems compel the inferential machine of the hearer—hedging, irony, and temporally vague to produce multiple-alleged-resonance above denotational semantics expressiveness. Pragmatic analysis thereby indicates lyric poetry making use of the cooperative principle of not being clear to provoke effort at interpretation, such that each poem is a site of engaged sense-making. In drawing attention to the dialogic interaction between text and reader, pragmatic forces thereby emphasize the socially constructive nature of poetic meaning throughout the twentieth century.

5.5 Theoretical contributions

This present research of Frost's "The Road Not Taken" contributes richness to theoretical pragmatics through the demonstration of how Gricean maxims need to be modified to accommodate the specific needs of literary language, where intentional flouting and structural underdetermination are communicational and artistic means (Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983). Conventional Gricean frameworks assume conversational maxims as normative imperatives of cooperative discourse; but in poetry, they are rhetorical devices that poets use to produce aesthetic impact (Short, 1997). Thus, to take just one example, the maxim of Quantity is rather more cleverly disobeyed: Frost's doubly descriptive path directions ("grassy and wanted wear" against "worn...about the same") are no breakdowns of communication but self-conscious aspects of poetic ambiguity, which actively require readerly inference and imagination to resolve (Poirier, 1990). Consequently, this study posits comprehension of Gricean flouts within literary pragmatics more on the lines of rational pragmatic manoeuvres rather than as violative of cooperative maxims, thus refining our comprehension of how maxims function upon a spectrum between informational economy and aesthetic indeterminacy.

In addition, the poem's layered ambiguity requires a reconsideration of standard ambiguity taxonomies within linguistics and literary theory. Traditional categories tend to divide ambiguity into lexical, syntactic, or pragmatic, but Frost's poem shows how these levels permeate each other (Pilkington, 2000): hedges ("perhaps"), time scales ("ages

and ages hence"), and enjambment ("and I—") all work together to create a type of "narrative ambiguity" that cannot be easily distinguished. This implies the necessity of a more comprehensive taxonomy that features composite categories—e.g., "prosodic-pragmatic ambiguity" or "retrospective-narrative ambiguity"—that accommodate the interaction between linguistic form, temporal framing, and reader inference. In delineating these composite categories and illustrating their prominence in Frost's poetry, the present study provides the foundation for an expanded typology of ambiguity that better accounts for the complex strategies of poets. Thus, this research not only sophisticates the employment of Gricean principles to poetic writings but also makes a case for an increasingly specified and detailed model of ambiguity—one that is responsive to the interaction of lexical, syntactic, prosodic, and pragmatic forces in outlining the interpretive potential of twentieth-century lyric poetry.

5.6 Limitations and recommendations

This study's exclusive focus on a single poem, Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," certainly limits the generalizability of its findings. By privileging priority to one canonical poem, the analysis potentially overestimates the universality and salience of certain pragmatic strategies—such as maxim flouting and temporal vagueness—that, although successful in Frost's poetry, might operate differently elsewhere in poetry or other linguistic modalities (Leech, 1983; Pilkington, 2000). The hermeneutic richness so acquired by line-by-line implicature analysis is accepted at a comparative breadth; without contemporaneous or thematically related parallel research on poems, there is no way of being certain that the patterns identified are unique features of Frost's poetry or more general twentieth-century lyric mechanisms (Poirier, 1990). In addition, the interpretative framework of the study is unavoidably dictated by prevailing cultural-historical assumptions. Frost's early twentieth-century New England locale and his interest in American transcendental and pastoral traditions both structure the poem's linguistic texture and our experience of its ambiguities (Faggen, 1997). Readers not part of this cultural-historical matrix will not necessarily share the same inferential repertoire or affective resonances, and will therefore produce dissimilar implicatures (Fish, 1995). Therefore, the results stand to threaten not only to incarnate Frost's aesthetic product but also Anglo-American, androcentric paradigms of criticism traditionally holding his poetry in high regard (Bloom, 1976). Future research must then include cross-textual differences and explore readers' responses across various cultural settings to determine the more general applicability of the pragmatic methods outlined herein.

Follow-up studies would be informed by empirical reader-response experiments grounded on a systematic analysis of how various readers interpret Frost's pragmatic flouts and vagueness. By applying methods like think-aloud protocols, eye-tracking, and elicited verbal inferences, researchers can measure to what degree readers are aware of hedging strategies, temporal ambiguities, and syntactic inversions, and to what degree these signals influence their constructions of choice and regret. Such empirical evidence would establish whether moment-by-moment inference shifts identified in the current study's line-by-line analysis are operating across population groups as a matter of universal fact or are influenced by variables including literary competence, culture, and differences in indeterminacy tolerance. Cross-comparison with other twentieth-century lyric poets—Wallace Stevens, Elizabeth Bishop, or Marianne Moore—would provide additional context on Frost's pragmatic measures against the broader backdrop of literary styles. By applying the same analytical methods to similarly ambiguous analog poems, one may establish those idiosyncratic flouting patterns characteristic of Frost's pastoral sensibility and those which are more general devices in the modernist and post-modern lyric. In addition, cross-cultural trials founded on non-Anglophone responses and translations would illustrate how pragmatic inference is resolved by cultural and linguistic matrices, thus enhancing the theoretical enhancements of ambiguity taxonomies and revealing the interface between reader cognition and poetic structure.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research has posed the primary questions of how conversational implicatures function in Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and what particular ambiguities the poet influences to guide the reader's interpretation of choice and regret (Francesch & Payrató, 2024). The thesis here presented maintained that Frost's systematic violation of Gricean maxims—through hedges, temporal deferments, syntactic inversions, and evocative under-description—creates a dynamic field of reader inference within which several, often contradictory, implicatures continually emerge (Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983; Eragamreddy, 2022). Line-by-line analysis established that approximately sixty percent of the poem's twenty lines feature at least one marked maxim violation, resulting in interpretive indecisions between valorized nonconformity and post hoc rationalization, between pride and rueful introspection. These findings highlight the poet's capacity to install pragmatic mechanisms as the very device of poetic meaning, thus illustrating how narrative retrospection itself is a site of affective and cognitive negotiation. The value of

this study lies in its twofold contribution: it sophisticates Gricean theory for literary study by retheorizing maxim flouts as aesthetic devices instead of communicative breakdowns, and it argues for an extended taxonomy of ambiguity to incorporate lexical, syntactic, prosodic, and narrative levels. However, the focus of the study on one canonical poem and its dependence on theoretically motivated interpretation are restrictions on generalizability, with the implication that empirical reader-response research and comparative research on contemporary lyric poets are needed to confirm and enlarge these findings. Subsequent research could use eye-tracking or think-aloud protocols on multicultural groups and investigate how the identical pragmatic flouts operate in the poetry of Stevens, Bishop, or Moore. In short, this study confirms that Frost's poem design, far from being a nostalgic justification of pastoral choice, is a complex dramatization of the very irresolutions and backward constructions that constitute human experience.

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A Qualitative Analysis of the Natural Resource's Crisis and Microfinance on Geopolitical Stability and Wellbeing.

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Abstract— This paper aims to conduct qualitative research evaluating the natural resource crisis, especially land conflicts, while examining their broader impact on geopolitical stability and well-being in South-Asian countries. The research investigation seeks to analyze the effect of land competition and resource depletion on geopolitical volatility, which creates domestic as well as international tensions. These disputes trigger multiple consequences that include forced relocation of people along with limited access to income sources, which creates both political instability and adverse impacts on population welfare. The research further examines how microfinance serves as an instrument for boosting domestic resilience while promoting both start-up initiatives and integrated development in resource-stressed areas. Through policy evaluation, case studies and theoretical frameworks (resource dependency theory and sustainable livelihoods framework), the paper highlights structural approaches which alleviate the adverse effects of resource conflicts. The study demonstrates that resources must be governed while grassroots financial tools become integrated to enhance community well-being. It adds valuable insights into the social and political factors operating in South Asia while establishing that sustainable resource use needs to blend with microfinance structures to foster long-term regional stability and improvement in human welfare.



Keywords— Comparative analysis, Microfinance, Natural resource crisis, Well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

A resource crisis refers to a situation where the demand for critical natural resources surpasses their availability, leading to shortages, environmental degradation, and socioeconomic challenges. These crises often stem from overexploitation, population growth, unsustainable consumption patterns, and climate change. Natural resources worldwide are experiencing a severe crisis due to overexploitation. For instance, water scarcity, as highlighted by the United Nations World Water Development Report (2022), affects billions globally, creating economic instability and threatening food security. Yet most people in industrialized countries remain unaware of this situation (Bjornnes, 2020).

A report by the Living Planet states that 30% of earth's ability to renew is consumed by humans which results in deforestation, soil degradation, extreme pollution and adverse impact on the flora and fauna. This creates

competitive demands on vital life-sustaining resources and triggers geopolitical uncertainties in resource scarcity, international trade, climate refugees and border tensions (Hamed et al., 2018). As the influx of climate refugees' swamps borders due to resource scarcity and environmental degradation, international trade suffers from rising political instability and resource competition. Amongst this, can microfinance be a viable solution? Climate refugees are often captivated in a state of limbo where ways of attaining financial stability can be insurmountable, particularly because traditional banks which are formalized entities rely on collateral-based interactions. Microfinance is considered as a solution to address these problems especially in case of smallholder's farmer intending to invest in renewable energy solutions (CGAP Report, 2021). Thus, according to Yu et al., (2023), microfinance is a powerful tool for eliminating geopolitical uncertainties by promoting economic stability through financial inclusivity.

Extant studies have investigated geopolitical stability and its connection with resources crises. Homer-Dixon (1994) conferred the role of environmental crisis in exacerbating conflicts, while more recent research by Steffen et al. (2015) on planetary boundaries underscores the urgency of sustainable resource management. However, these studies have not been able to understand the integration between resource crisis, microfinance and wellbeing especially for developing Asian nations. The World Bank (2022) has identified a direct correlation between resource scarcity and declining well-being indicators, including health outcomes and economic productivity. Furthermore, the psychological toll of resource crises, such as anxiety and insecurity, often compounds the socio-economic impacts, making comprehensive interventions essential. To address the gap, we take into account this context and integrate it through resource dependency and sustainable livelihood framework.

Addressing this research gap requires interdisciplinary approaches integrating insights from economics, political science, environmental studies, and public health. This paper aims to contribute to this discourse by understanding the crisis of natural resources, which leads to geopolitical uncertainties. Furthermore, the role of microfinance in such crises improves well-being.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Understanding Natural Resource Crisis:

According to Campbell et al. (2013), natural resources are derived from the earth in physical form and not made by human beings. Such resources are not unevenly distributed around the world. Some countries may have more natural resources whereas others may have fewer resources. Although climate and relief possess indirect requirements for the development of other forms of economic activities, mineral resources, water, forests, land, Solar and wind energy have a direct use. Natural endowment, which means all natural resources and conditions, is a broader term than natural capital. They are a representation of all the material objects that people exploit, such as forests, coal, ores, biological diversity, climate and relief.

When such products are consumed, they become an economic asset which can be classified into 3 categories (Kumar et al., 2024):

1. Non-renewable resources, which include raw materials or mineral resources.
2. Renewable resources, which include land, water, air, flora, and fauna; and
3. Sustainable resources, which include solar energy, wind, tides, and running water.

However, with the global depletion of natural resources, many countries are facing issues with the crisis of natural resources, leading to a serious issue. A crisis could be described as 'A serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a social system which in conditions of time stress and high uncertainty requires immediate choices' (Sætren et al., 2024). For instance, freshwater scarcity now affects over 40% of the world's population, and by 2030, global water demand is projected to exceed supply by 40%. Similarly, overdependence on fossil fuels has exacerbated environmental issues and triggered conflicts over control; the Middle East accounts for nearly 50% of global oil reserves, making it a hotspot for geopolitical strife. These resource scarcities are driving nations to secure access, leading to territorial disputes, trade wars, and even military interventions, such as the South China Sea conflict over undersea oil and gas reserves. Addressing these crises requires global cooperation to promote sustainable use and equitable sharing of resources.

2.2 Analysis of land disputes in Southeast Asia due to deforestation and their effects on local governance and security:

The tropical biogeographically significant region in Southeast Asia involves Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand which nearly sustain 15% of the global biome of tropical forests. However, this region is threatened and loses at least 1.2% of its forests to deforestation every year (Lai, 2023).

Consequently, as other significant features noted by FAO (1990) and World Bank (1990) opine, deforestation entails both provisional and transient elimination of forest cover. This broad definition includes shifting cultivation techniques, which, after becoming secondary forest again, greatly increase the perceived level of deforestation and the identified role of shifting cultivation in this process.

The expansion of oil palm plantations intensifies land conflicts deepening the clashes between communities or with firms, exacerbated through corrupt licensing practices. A study by Deacon (1994) points to a direct relationship between national security as a political indicator and deforestation rates indicating sloppy forest management and governance that erodes the sustainability of forests. Land-use conflicts have impacted some 75% of Asia's forests mainly due to the expansion of agricultural and other non-forest activities into natural forest areas (Khaing, 2017).

The divide between the conservation agencies/NGOs advocating for the preservation of forests and local or indigenous people including their NGO supporters highlights the issues of governance challenges in Southeast Asia. Vietnam is one of the notable examples as it gradually

moved to social forestry in the 1990s because of the dreadful condition of its forest resources due to overexploitation. To implement a logging ban, the state forest enterprises were afflicted with a fiscal crisis, and centralized logging management systems were dismantled, albeit for valid reasons.

The 1993 Land Law and liberalization within the national Doi Moi socio-economic reforms initiated the notion of "forest socialization" because all segments of society were expected to participate in sustainable forest management. Despite usage restrictions, the 2004 Law on Forest Protection and Development legalised the allocation of natural forests for community management. This is to improve the community's standard of living through community forestry. The status of religious and customary forestry was also formalized in the Forestry Law of 2017 whereas the rights of the communities, initially improved by the Land Law of 2013, remained somewhat restricted (Wong et al., 2020).

2.3 Microfinance as a Tool for Enhancing Wellbeing:

Microfinance has become a successful intervention mechanism for well-being in situations of the scarcity of resources (especially land) and geopolitical conflict. It provides financial access to marginalized populations, enabling them to undertake income-generating activities and build resilience against economic shocks. For example, The AL-Amal Microfinance Bank in Yemen succeeded in giving microcredits to 34,374 women in 2013 while reaching 223,000 beneficiaries across various financial help like loans, savings and insurance by 2019 through 11,501 active women borrowers (Bongomin et al., 2020). The World Bank (Beck, 2015) posited that micro-finance brings about economic enfranchise which benefits women and enhances social solidarity where and when already hampered in development facilities in conflict dynamism areas. Furthermore, the operational guidelines for microfinance in a post-conflict context also explain how microfinance can help reduce poverty and restore the stability of a nation by, therefore, stressing donors' adequate coordination and sustainable approaches when supporting microfinance (Bruett, 2004). In regions where land scarcity deepens inequity, microfinance reduces dependency on territory and promotes informal occupation that contributes to the livelihoods of many and maintains geopolitical balance. Besides, microfinance programs have shown positive impacts on improving overall health and education concerning technological improvements in socioeconomic benefits (Appietu et al., 2020). This contributes to the ability of microfinancing to prevent resource-induced crises and promote well-being and stability in the affected areas.

2.4 Policies for Consumer well-being:

According to UN-Habitat (2019), to overcome the climate change potential and minimise the exposure of people to land conflict, there is a need to combine security of tenure with Climate Change adaptation. Hence, through compliance with the principles of secure land rights, especially to the most vulnerable, land governance can elicit reduced conflict and subsequently foster the ability to adapt to the matters associated with climate change accordation. A similar sentiment is provided by the FAO in 2023, which underlines the demonstration that secure tenure systems do not only safeguard consumer rights but also enhance climate change responsiveness through awareness of land's sustainable management among the segment of the population in question ("Land Policies for Growth and Poverty Reduction," 2003). In addition, good land management policies, as highlighted by the UNCCD (2024), can cause resilience by boosting the community's ability to cope with climate risks and fair & equitable distribution of land (Scherr et al., 2012). Based on the findings outlined in these reports, secure land tenure, together with the adaptive governance frameworks that support them, offer improved and more equitable conditions to mitigate land risks and conflicts as well as enhance bounce-back capacity when facing climate risks.

III. RESEARCH QUESTION

- How does a crisis of natural resources (Land conflicts) lead to geopolitical uncertainties/ intentions affecting well-being in South Asian Countries?
- What role does microfinance play in improving well-being in South Asian Countries?

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Resource Dependency Theory:

From the existing literature, there are 3 core ideas of the theory: (1) social context is relevant; (2) organizations possess mechanisms to expand self-governance and assert interests; and (3) power (not only rationality and efficiency) defines the internal and external actions of the organization. The prominence of power, and a more detailed elaboration of the actual portfolios of actions that are openly available to organizations, constitute the features that mark out RDT from the other frameworks, including the transaction cost economics. (Cobb & Wry, 2014).

In this paper, we are using the variables of the theory to understand the tangible resources which are land disputes and how the power of the various nations plays a role in strategic actions. The power of the nations is the political, economic and social influences (considering microfinance

here) which are being provided to the developing Southeast Asian countries in times of crisis of tangible resources.

4.2 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework:

The sustainable livelihoods framework shows how different factors affect or support livelihoods and how these factors are interconnected. One is the concept that households have varying endowments of livelihood assets, on which the sustainable livelihood approach seeks to build (Serrat, 2017). This theory is incorporated into understanding social capital in terms of relations and connections with other countries when there is a natural resources crisis. Further, this theory has helped us to provide a foundation to structure and analyze how resource crises affect human well-being and the effectiveness of the intervention in terms of social and financial capital.

The research relies on Resource Dependency Theory to investigate how strategic interests with power dynamics influence both political results and socio-economic impacts

across South-Asian land-related crises while considering year, country, crisis type and affected groups. Microfinance interventions can be measured using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to determine their ability to reduce social and economic challenges that result from displacement alongside instability.

V. METHODOLOGY

Comparative Analysis:

The comparative analysis represents a fundamental methodological basis in research which allows structured examinations of two or more subjects within or between classification groups. Researchers use this analytical method to discover similarities and differences between characteristics and results from the analyzed subjects for a deeper understanding of the implications. (Neuman, 1991).

Table 1: Comparative Analysis

Year	Country	Group (1,2,3 4)	Resource Crisis Type	Geopolitical uncertainties	Impact on Well-being	Microfinance Intervention	Effectiveness of Intervention
2011-2017	India	1	Odisha Posco Land Acquisition Crisis	-Foreign investment -India-South Korea Relations	-Forcible displacement of local communities -Inadequate compensation -Government-sponsored violence, intimidation and questionable criminal charges -Environmental Risks affecting livelihoods	-Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM) provided micro-loans to displaced communities for entrepreneurial activities. -Grameen Foundation India (GFI) worked with NGO to offer training in micro-enterprises	- short-term relief but limited effectiveness in long-term due to: -disruptive political environment (prolonged uncertainty reduced effectiveness) -skill gap (families lacked the skill to change to non-agricultural occupations) -loss of fertile agricultural land was not addressed by financial solutions.

2020-2024	Pakistan	2	Gwadar Land dispute	-The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) might be challenged and Chinese investment reduced. -security challenges to both China and Pakistan by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).	- Economic displacement of Indigenous fishing communities leading to unemployment -Gwadar Ko Haq Do Movement	Not any major contribution but Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance helps.	----- --
2017-2023	Nepal	3	Arun-III Hydropower Land Conflict	-Strategic involvement of Indian company SJVN in the project -Land acquisition disputes triggered diplomatic tensions between Nepal, India, and China.	-Health concerns arose from relocation, with limited access to healthcare facilities. -Project promises energy benefits, but social costs remain high for displaced populations.	-No direct microfinance intervention was reported -Project Affected Families (PAFs) received cash compensation	- Compensation was not effectively utilized for long-term livelihood security The absence of structured microfinance programs meant many families lacked financial guidance to build sustainable incomes
2021	Afghanistan	4	Taliban takeover and land ownership of Helmand Province	-Potential military response from neighbouring Iran, which has strong ties with the Shia minority	-Forced eviction of Shia Hazara minorities -Economic hardship due to loss of farmland and property	-No structured microfinance support under Taliban rule	-Lack of financial intervention worsened displacement and economic conditions -Increased migration and regional instability

VI. DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

The table focuses on land-related resource crises in South Asia and assesses their geopolitical implications, consequences for well-being, and the potential of microfinance interventions in addressing them. It explores four contrasting cases demonstrating the nexus between resource conflicts, geo-politics and socio-economic outcomes, the Odisha Posco Land Acquisition Crisis (India, 2011–2017), the Gwadar Land Dispute (Pakistan, 2020–2024), the Arun-III Hydropower Land Conflict (Nepal, 2017–2023) and the Taliban take-over of Helmand Province (Afghanistan, 2021). This analysis finds that while various forced displacements, inadequate compensation and socio-political instability are prevailing, microfinance interventions have a varied scope and effectiveness. Although some financial initiatives help alleviate immediate economic effects, there are no long-term solutions in sight, highlighting a significant gap between financial instruments and sustainable development objectives.

The analysis reveals important gaps regarding how resource crises can be mitigated through effective interventions. Geopolitical vagaries, notably cross-border relations and foreign investments, which arise from lack of resources, further escalate in an unstable region; in India, the election over South Korean presence raised tensions, meanwhile, China's Gwadar project in Pakistan added to instabilities, on one hand, while at times involving local resources issues, as well. In Nepal, controversy over land acquisition for the Arun-III Hydropower project led to tensions with neighbouring countries, and the Taliban's control of land created instability in its country, which could have regional consequences, including with Iran.

The effect on well-being is uniformly negative across cases, with recurrent elements of forced displacement, loss of livelihoods, and inadequate compensation. Similarly, in the case of Odisha, local communities were displaced and went through economic and social suffering, and in Pakistan, the Gwadar project displaced local fishing communities, which resulted in joblessness. In Nepal, health problems grew from resettlement, and in Afghanistan, the eviction of Shia Hazara minorities resulted in damaging economic and social pressure.

Some support was available through microfinance interventions such as the Odisha Livelihoods Mission and Grameen Foundation India, but it lacked long-term sustainability. Credit was largely not offered; Akhuwat in Pakistan and some direct compensatory programs in Nepal credited some loans, while Afghanistan had no such instrument, exacerbating displacement and instability. Political instability, skill gaps, and insufficient integrated

financial mechanisms are some of the reasons for their limited effectiveness. This illustrates the necessity of taking a multidimensional approach that encourages geopolitical stability while pursuing more targeted microfinance initiatives that create the conditions necessary for sustainable development and prevent socio-economic crises. This gap needs to be addressed for future policy innovation in resource management.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between land resource shortages and geopolitical tensions, alongside their socio-economic effects across South Asia, through an evaluation of microfinance programs in resolving conflict-based adversities.

The study determined that land conflicts tend to intensify because of geopolitical stress and foreign investments undermining local, social and political harmony. All cases revealed that forced displacement occurred with insufficient compensation benefits and persistent economic struggles. To address the situation, the government needs to develop an inclusive compensation mechanism, such as land-sharing agreements or alternative livelihood support programs. The presence of micro-finance in India and Pakistan during that time proved insufficient because political instability combined with skill deficiencies and inadequate financial infrastructure limited enduring positive change. However, this can be improved if financial literacy programs are implemented alongside microloans to enhance long-term impact. The cash payment strategy implemented by Nepal also proved unsustainable for resolving the crisis while Afghanistan received no financial support at all.

The research reveals an essential mismatch between monetary solutions used to restore sustainable living. The short-term benefits from microfinance become less effective because of underlying political issues and economic obstacles. Moreover, geopolitical uncertainties lead to escalating land disputes which reduce investor confidence, making regions more unstable. Afghanistan's and Nepal's financial systems deteriorated further, limiting their ability to respond to resource crises. These problems related to land conflicts can be dealt with by the government by incorporating a monitoring system to manage fraud & mismanagement, expanding digital financial services, encouraging public-private partnerships for economic projects and supporting entrepreneurship programs. These will reduce the resources dependability and financial instability of the nations. Thus, a holistic strategy aligning micro-finance operations with sustainable development goals is essential for displaced communities to produce

long-lasting economic protection versus short-term assistance.

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APPENDIX

Group 1: India and Sri Lanka

- **Economy:** Both have relatively diverse economies, with significant contributions from services, industry, and agriculture.
- **Finance:** India has a more advanced financial sector, but Sri Lanka is also developing its financial services and banking sectors.
- **Social Indicators:** Both have higher literacy rates and better human development indicators compared to some of their neighbours.
- **Geographic and Cultural Ties:** Though not immediate neighbours, both countries share some cultural and historical links, especially in the context of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and the Indian cultural influence.

Group 2: Bangladesh and Pakistan

- **Economy:** Both are large, populous countries with economies that rely heavily on agriculture, textiles, and manufacturing.
- **Finance:** Both have developing financial sectors with significant challenges, including financial inclusion and banking sector reforms.
- **Social Indicators:** Both countries face similar social challenges, including lower literacy rates, gender disparities, and healthcare issues.
- **Geographic and Cultural Ties:** These countries share a common history, having been part of the same country before 1971, and have similar cultural and linguistic ties.

Group 3: Nepal, Bhutan, and Maldives

- **Economy:** These countries have smaller economies, with significant reliance on tourism (Maldives, Bhutan), remittances (Nepal), and agriculture.
- **Finance:** Their financial sectors are less developed, with a focus on microfinance and financial inclusion.
- **Social Indicators:** These countries generally have smaller populations with relatively high social cohesion, though they face challenges like healthcare access and education.
- **Geographic and Cultural Ties:** All three countries are geographically smaller, landlocked (Nepal and Bhutan), or island nations (Maldives), with strong cultural and religious ties (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam).

Group 4: Afghanistan

- **Economy:** Afghanistan has a primarily agrarian economy with a heavy reliance on international aid and informal sectors.
- **Finance:** The financial sector is underdeveloped, with significant challenges in terms of stability and access.
- **Social Indicators:** Afghanistan faces severe social challenges, including low literacy rates, poor healthcare, and ongoing conflict.
- **Geographic and Cultural Ties:** While culturally rich, Afghanistan's unique position in Central and South Asia sets it apart from other South Asian countries.



Imperialism in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

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Abstract— This paper deals with an important as well as a controversial novel the *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. Conrad had suffered in his early lifetime from the imperialism of Russia to Ukraine his native homeland. Thus, the novel is an outcome of the collaboration of different life experiences especially his journey to the Congo. He developed a disease from Africa which forced him to stay home for some time, so he started writing and became one of the modern novelists. The *Heart of Darkness* is the most important of Joseph Conrad's novels as he commented before the Congo he was just a mere animal. The novel reflects Conrad's long journey into the self. This paper also explains how Conrad was accused of being an imperialist and a racist due to different factors which were discussed in this study. Some critics defended Conrad but others criticized his schemes of dealing with the topic of colonialism, severely.



Keywords— racist, colonization, loot, Ivory, Congo.

I. INTRODUCTION

Joseph Conrad's novel *The Heart of Darkness* brought him a lot of criticism, for he was accused of being an imperialist, then a racist. The imperialistic spirit sprung from the notion that the European countries thought that they are the first race found. The development of industrialism and the discoveries of the steam engine, navigation, printing, and weapons, enabled Europe to supersede the other countries in various technological advances. The church played an important role in spreading the spirit of colonialism planting the seed of missionaries, this in addition to the greed and the need for resources like ivory, rubber, and gold.

Conrad's spirit of imperialism came from his own visit to the Belgium-Congo Free State, and the personal experience of this dark country. Marlow's thoughts and reactions towards the Congolese might be a reflection of Conrad's own experience there. From the very beginning of the novel Marlow preludes his narration with a reference to the Roman conquest to Britain. Marlow commented on the brutality of the Romans in Britain comparing it to the violations, robbery and violence of the European conquerors in Africa. According to Marlow

conquering other countries with different complexion, color and race would always involve murder.

Marlow believed that there is only one excuse to colonialism that is, doing some constructive work in the underdeveloped countries. "Colonialism's representations, reading practices, attitudes and values are not so easily dislodged" (McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* 33) The Europeans and most of the white-men claim that they have a certain duty towards the underdeveloped countries which they dominate. The Europeans legislated Imperialism by the idea of civilizing the native Africans, their media spread the propaganda of such lies.

II. THE SOURCE OF THE NOVEL

Joseph Conrad is an English writer of a Polish origin. He is one of the outstanding and appreciated novelists of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. His novels mainly introduce themes of non-European setting for the English readers. Conrad is classified as a modern novelist though he lived and wrote in both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. His innovative narrative style and the anti-heroic characters had been of great influence on the twentieth century writers. Conrad witnessed the climax of

the British Empire, and his work in the French and English Navy had a great influence on his novels. His novels are considered a clear realistic manifestation of the European colonizing spirit in Africa.

Conrad was born in the mid-nineteenth century in Ukraine which was under the rule of the Russian Empire, and once been under the domination of the Kingdom of Poland. Conrad worked in the Navy in a young age. His decision to leave his own country and live in England had made him vulnerable and with a sense of uncertainty. Critics say that Conrad had cut himself from Poland forever.

Conrad's novel *The Heart of Darkness* took place in Belgian-Congo Free State. The history of this country is rather violent and bloody one. King Leopold II named the Congo as The Belgian-Congo Free State and the country became as his personal property. His rule was marked with all kinds of violence and brutality practiced on the native Congolese. The colonization had become a brutal control over people and their lands. "Colonialism is not satisfied merely with hiding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content" (Fanon, 1963, p. 37).

The colonization of the King to the Congo, which was 76 times larger than Belgium, came under the excuse of civilizing the barbaric Congolese. History proved the opposite the Europeans brought nothing but torcher, slavery, murder and robbery of the colonized Africa. King Leopold II exploited the natural resources of the Congo like ivory, rubber and jewels for his personal enrichment. More than half of the population died because of the inhumane treatment of colonizers to the Congolese. The native people were beheaded, tortured, starved, overworked, or even lamed by cutting their hands or feet.

When King Leopold II controlled the Congo as his personal property, he said that he would educate and help the Congo to become a better place. Time proved the opposite he denied the Congolese their lawful rights in their lands and crops, everything became part of the king's property. The king built an army of mercenaries from other parts of Africa, and they were armed with modern weapons to terrify, torcher and kill the natives. They massacred families, tortured hostages, and burned entire villages. The Congo Free State became one of the worst international scandals of the twentieth century. One of the soldiers testified that they would obey the commands of officers to cut off the heads of protesting Congolese and they would hang them on the village palisades and to hang the women and children on the palisades in the form of a cross. They also testified that they might shorten their service time if they collected plenty of hands. A basket of cut hands under the feet of Europeans had become a

symbol of the Congo Free State. The mercenaries and soldiers competed on bringing more hands. There became a harvesting of hands instead of harvesting of rubber and Ivory.

Many Europeans stood against the violations and deliberate brutality that the King's mercenaries practiced on the Congo people. In 1908 international demands forced King Leopold II to return the Congo to the property of Belgium. The Congo remained colonized until 1960, when it was liberated and became Independent.

III. WHAT IS IMPERIALISM

Imperialism can be used to spread one's own language and culture. In anthropology, ethics, and sociology, this ideology is defined as cultural imperialism. France and the United Kingdom are prime "examples of cultural imperialism" (Talukder).

Joseph Conrad is accused of being an Imperialist in his novel *Heart of Darkness*. Imperialism can be defined as the policy the practice and the territorial domination of the strong countries over the policies and economies or even the lands of other countries. The control over the world markets is another type of imperialism. Mainly Imperialism might refer to the conquering of the underdeveloped countries; it might also mean the control of policies and economics of weaker countries.

Another form of Imperialism is that of language, native people are forced to the language of the invaders and conquerors. Imperialism is usually achieved through the use of military powers. The modern meaning of the term Imperialism is the domination over economy, language and culture. So, in this sense Imperialism could have two forms formal and informal. Colonization is one type of formal imperialism where the powerful country would use military forces to dominate and exploit the resources of other weaker countries, it is also called territorial colonization.

According to Edward Said, there is a difference between colonization and imperialism. Imperialism according to Said is "the practice, the theory and the attitude of dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory. While colonialism involves implanting of settlements on a distant territory. Colonialism and the race to control the world is one of the reasons behind the outbreak of the First World War.

In the nineteenth century Imperialism became one of the important themes in the English novel. Kim by Rudyard Kipling represents the Imperialism of Britain over the India. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is another example of Imperialistic terror of Europe in Africa. The

novel was first published in 1902, and it won both approval and rejection. Chinua's famous critique in 1977 accused Conrad of being a racist. Said on the other hand defended Conrad's novel, being a true representation of the Belgium colonizing Africa.

Conrad was accused of racism for his presentation of non-European characters in his novels. The Nigerian critic and writer Chinua accused Conrad for being a "bloody racist" and he demanded that the novel of *The Heart of Darkness* should be denounced of its importance.

The point of my observations should be quite clear by now, namely that Joseph Conrad was a thorough going racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked (Achebe 176).

Achebe commented in the "Times Literary Supplement" "in Conrad's novella the humanity of Africans was totally undermined by the mindless of its context and the pretty explicit animal imagery surrounding it" (Achebe 176)

The Indian critic Frances B. Singh wrote an article entitled "the Colonialist Bias of *Heart of Darkness*" she declared that Conrad had made it clear that the evil implied in the title directly refers to the Africans, their customs and their rituals. He, as the critic implies, associated deprivation and poverty with black people. One cannot ignore these accusations, but they might give a different perspective to Conrad's novel.

Achebe criticizes Conrad for dehumanizing Africans depriving them from any role or speech or even any identity in his novels. Achebe's novel "Things Fall Apart" on the other hand, is a novel that deals with the British occupation on Ibo. In his novel Achebe presented a detailed account of the lives of the Africans.

IV. MARLOW AS A PROTOTYPE

The Heart of Darkness is a novel about Marlow the main character as well as the narrator in the novel. He has a special assignment to sail to the Congo in order to retrieve an Ivory trader named Mr. Kurtz. Marlow discovers that Mr. Kurtz has changed himself into a demi-god figure to the natives. He used extensive measures to collect huge amounts of Ivory. Kurtz refuses to return to the civilized world, and in an attempt to delay Marlow's mission he burns the steamboat. Few months later Marlow's

Steamboat is rebuilt and he takes Mr. Kurtz, who appears very sickly, back home and he dies in the way back screaming "the horror, the horror". (Conrad 69) Marlow returns to England empty handed, he makes a visit to Kurtz intended and delivers a letter from Kurtz. She remarks that Mr. Kurtz was a great man and asked about Kurtz last words. Marlow tells her that they were her name.

The Heart of Darkness won a lot of criticism throughout time. Some critics classified the novel as anti-colonialism and against expansion or even anti-imperialistic. Others might reduce *The Heart of Darkness* into a mere adventure story, which ends with a woman idealizing Mr. Kurtz. While others might argue that Conrad's novel is more than mere presentation of adventure, it offers a characterization of the human mind. Edward Garnet brings the idea of race to the novel; he explains that the novel brings out the theme of white man's behavior in the far away colonies and how his set of morals retreats. The race towards money and exploitation of the natives is obvious in the novel, thus the novel is about the demoralizations of Europeans in Africa.

Conrad had written that the novel is about "the criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the civilizing work in Africa." (Murfin, 100)

Very early criticism ignored the race aspect; it is somehow difficult to set a definition for the word 'racism' because it seems to change overtime. The term racism did not exist at the time Conrad wrote the novel. The term 'race' was considered as something normal so the word 'racism' was not common or even used.

The first time the term came into use was in 1907, the term can be defined as "the belief in the superiority of a particular race leading to prejudice and antagonism towards people of other races, especially those in close proximity who may be felt as a threat to one's culture and racial integrity or economic well-being" (Firchow, 234)

It was after ten years after his death that the term became commonly used. Said 1993, wrote about race in *The Heart of Darkness*. Said defended Europeans for having to be racist. He reduced the effect of the imperialistic spirit of the Europeans saying that imperialism is an interdependent work. He goes on further to add that the world is a global environment and the racial hatred might lead to disasters. Said explains that it would be impossible to present truthfully the life sensations of others, he explains that "we live, as we dream alone." (Said, 23)

As Marlow is the narrator, he gives the sensation that there is no escape from European imperialism. The novel is limited to Marlow's point of view and he reflected the imperialistic view of the story. The general notion, that went on at that time, was that the Europeans and the white

people should be independent and free, they should rule the less who are to become the subjects. Even science and learning were always limited to the west.

Conrad's narrative was limited to his period of time, so in the *Heart of Darkness* there is no other solution to Imperialism, but history proved the opposite. He painted a realistic picture of how Africa was during the colonization of Europeans. To Said the novel is a time document of what happened in Africa at the time of European colonization, for whatever happened in Africa seemed normal and correct at that time. Marlow showed the Orthodoxic intentions of imperialism and what happened in reality there. He also proved that nothing was as they seemed to be from outside. According to Conrad Darkness could prevail in both London as well as Africa. Darkness could be enlightened by the civilization of the west. Although Conrad presented Colonization as mere exploitation of the lands and countries, according to Said, Conrad believes that the darkness should be enlightened by European colonization. Although Conrad never gave a solution or an end to imperialism, therefore, Conrad is considered a racist by today's terms and laws.

Achebes argues that Conrad discriminated between people according to their color, he presented white people as cultivated and civilized while the black Africans are brutal, rough, underdeveloped, and dangerous. Conrad clearly described the forest in Africa as dark green almost black. The beauty of Africa is described with a sense of evil and danger. The darkness could also imply the darkness of European souls as they butchered and tortured the native Africans to steal their native wealth. The Europeans became like demi-god figures who tend to do whatever they want with the natives without being punished. The Europeans' conquest was to take over other people's countries with different complexion or even different culture than themselves. So, the term is no different from the context of robbery and murder.

The Heart of Darkness is filled with imperialistic implications; even characters might present the imperialistic temper of the novel. Marlow the main character and the narrator share some traits with Conrad, for both spent significant time of their lives sailing in Africa. Marlow is presented as a sensitive anti-colonial thinker; he would feel disgusted from the brutality of the white-man's machinery exploiting the native Congolese. He might show some sympathy on various occasions like when the general manager started beating the young black boy accusing him of burning the sheds. He might feel terrified at how the colonizers lost their souls in the dark forest of the Congo. The drastic scene of the station of the sick slaves, and the heads of the Congolese hanging on

poles surrounding Kurtz dwelling shocked Marlow at how the White-men colonizers had deviated from their claimed mission of helping and civilizing the natives.

Marlow never takes action or even dares to say a word to show his discontent with their schemes of managing the colonies. He might be convinced that it is the white-man's right to rule and dominate over people of colored skin, because they are not human-beings, by this he is as imperialist as Kurtz might be.

Mr. Kurtz is a true representative of imperialistic characters in *The Heart of Darkness*. Marlow as well as the readers only hear of him and his own eccentric methods of collecting ivory at the beginning of the novel. He only meets him at the very verge of his death. Kurtz is a controversial character, his influence on Marlow is very powerful. He shapes himself into the form of a tyrannical god for the natives. He started his journey as an adventurer with a mission of improving, humanizing and civilizing the natives, as he explained in his report to the company.

Kurtz uses mysterious methods for collecting Ivory, he was a man who had absolute power, which led him to demand warship from the natives. Kurtz is a true and realistic representation of the white-man enterprise in the colonized countries. He is criticized by the General Manager because he seems to show the reality of his intentions in opposite to the other members of the Company, who tend to disguise under the good intentions of colonialism. Marlow commented that "all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz". Kurtz is a stereotype of greed and lust being let loose. He embodies the Company's policies, but without minding for his reputation as other might do. The General Manager might call him morally "sick", but Kurtz replies that it is the natural spirit of colonialism and imperialism of Europeans that should be incriminated, Kurtz said "Not so sick as you'd like to believe." Kurtz before being corrupted by power, he was a true and good representative of the European civilization. He was described as having noble intentions of civilizing the natives in Africa. His time in Africa transformed him into a criminal, a monster who makes himself a god for the natives to worship. This proved that within all the morals he had, he was empty from the inside. Kurtz embodied Europe while the General Manager, another imperialistic character, represented the Company the only thing the General Manager cared about was his position in the Company and the Ivory they collected. We see the sense of imperialism in Marlow's Aunt for she was a woman with powerful connections she is good representative of the false claims of colonization, she believed that the white-men had a divine mission of cultivating the savages.

Conrad drew the character of Kurtz to embody the failure of colonialism in Africa. He pictures the inner darkness of the "whited sepulture" of the European Imperialism. Kurtz came to Africa with a mission that is to "wean those ignorant millions from their horrid way." Marlow's journey in the novel stands for the journey to explore the hidden self and man's capacity towards evil. Thus, the novel is not a mere psychological representation but also moral conflict between good and evil.

Conrad criticized Marlow's responsibility rewords the knowledge he acquired in the Congo. Marlow realized that Kurtz had lowered himself into the depth of evil, this evil can exist in the heart of men. Colonialism is sustained, and maybe even propelled, by remarkable ideological constructions that include conceptions in that particular territory where people feeling inferior deserve and request dominance. Functioning with the aim off instilling Western ideology, terms and notions like inferiority, subaltern, subordinate people, dependence, servants, and ruling class are common in the language of classical nineteenth-century imperialist culture. Thus, cultural conceptions are clarified, affirmed, questioned, or rejected as a result of colonial experiences (Said Culture and Imperialism 9).

V. CONCLUSION

Imperialism is a central theme in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." The novella explores the effects of imperialism and colonialism on Africa and its people. As soon as the protagonist, Marlow, arrives in Africa, he witnesses the devastation caused by imperialism and colonialism. The book offers a harsh picture of colonial enterprise, with scenes of torture, cruelty, and near-slavery. Greed and power are the primary reasons behind imperialism, and Kurtz, the ivory trader, represents the darkness of imperialism by placing himself as a god among the people of the Congo and using them to do his labor for him. The novel reveals the most violating loot that the history of humanity had ever witnessed. The novel is considered as an angry document dealing with the violent and brutal exploitation of Europeans to the Congo. Marlow the narrator of the novel explains that the Europeans act as superior to the Africans who are savages and primitive. Conrad presented the idea of racism by presenting the crimes done by the colonizers.

The novel is a clear representation of the racism practiced by the colonization of Africa, whereas the white men used all kind of power to make them yield and bow to them acting as a superior race. The Europeans throughout their unhumanitarian treatment tried to reduce the native Africans into mere animals.

Marlow is shocked at the scene of the French ship shelling a village in the jungle, the outrageous treatment where the slaves are thrown in a grove starving and sick waiting for their death but he never does or says a thing as if it was the white-men's rights to do so. The *Heart of Darkness* is a record of the things done and seen, where the lies of the looters were uncovered by the novel. According to Conrad the most dangerous kind of deception is self-deception. Kurtz is a good example of a man losing himself as the general report stated that "Kurtz could get himself to believe anything- anything".

The Congo experience had changed Conrad from being a sailor into being a writer, because he saw human weakness, baseness, and greed which changed his youthful hopes into an immense darkness. The novel is perceived by many critics as the conflict between white and black.

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From Pen to Processor: The Intersection of AI and Literary Innovationⁱ

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Abstract— *The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) marks the beginning of a significant era of technological advancement, influencing numerous facets of society. Literature, in particular, stands on the threshold of profound transformation. This paper examines the intricate relationship between AI and the evolving landscape of literature, analysing how this powerful technology is reshaping creative expression. The study seeks to illuminate both the promising opportunities and critical challenges posed by AI, particularly about authorship, readership, and the fundamental nature of narrative itself. Given the rapid progression of AI technologies, understanding their potential impact on one of humanity's most enduring forms of cultural and creative expression has become increasingly essential.*



Keywords— *Artificial Intelligence in Literature, Machine Learning and Narrative Structure, AI-Generated Texts, Posthumanism and Creativity, Digital Humanities, Authorship and Copyright.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The meeting of artificial intelligence (AI) and literature signals an exciting turning point in the history of human creativity. Today, we stand at a remarkable intersection where machines are not only assisting us in computations or data analysis but also actively crafting poetry, weaving intricate stories, and even authoring novels—tasks we once deemed to be uniquely human. This groundbreaking blend of technology and creativity compels us to reconsider traditional ideas of authorship, originality, and what it truly means to create.

Critically, the convergence of AI and literature necessitates a reconsideration of human authorship's philosophical underpinnings. While technology historically empowered authors, current advancements provoke a more profound existential debate: Is creativity an intrinsically human attribute, or can algorithmic processes genuinely replicate the complexity of human imagination and emotion?

This paper employs a posthumanist theoretical framework, drawing particularly from N. Katherine Hayles's seminal work *How We Became Posthuman*, to

critically examine how the integration of artificial intelligence into literary processes fundamentally challenges traditional notions of human creativity, authorship, and textual authenticity (29).

For contemporary writers, AI has evolved into a valued partner, sparking inspiration, aiding in character design, and assisting with the complexities of narrative structure. At the same time, AI-driven tools are transforming literary scholarship by uncovering hidden themes and patterns in literature, enriching our appreciation of texts in ways manual analysis might never have revealed. Furthermore, AI opens doors previously closed to aspiring writers, enabling a diverse group of creators—regardless of their linguistic abilities or access to formal training—to share their stories with the world.

Yet, the rise of AI-generated literature invites essential philosophical and ethical reflections. Can a machine genuinely grasp the nuances of metaphor or authentically replicate human emotion? Who should rightfully claim ownership of content produced by algorithms? And perhaps most importantly, will this digital revolution enhance literary diversity, or could it inadvertently dilute our unique human perspectives?

Navigating these questions thoughtfully is essential if we aim to maintain a literary landscape rich in human imagination, emotional depth, and cultural authenticity.

Beyond the literary sphere, AI is already reshaping sectors as diverse as healthcare, finance, entertainment, and environmental sciences. By automating routine tasks, AI liberates human potential, freeing us to tackle complex and innovative challenges. However, alongside these promising advancements come significant risks—job displacement, threats to personal privacy, algorithmic bias, and ethical dilemmas surrounding automation. Managing these concerns responsibly requires transparency, thoughtful regulation, and a commitment to equitable technological progress.

In recognising AI's dual potential—to inspire creativity and to provoke disruption—we must engage deeply with its implications. This paper, therefore, explores the subtle interplay between artificial intelligence and literature, celebrating the creative opportunities AI presents while thoughtfully addressing the profound ethical, cultural, and social questions it raises.

To better appreciate how AI's current role in literature has emerged, it is essential to first trace the historical evolution of writing technologies and their impact on cultural production.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The history of writing technology is essentially a story of humanity's continuous effort to enhance communication, creativity, and the preservation of knowledge. Each major innovation marks a milestone in our collective quest to share ideas and stories across generations. Ancient writing systems, such as Sumerian cuneiform, Egyptian hieroglyphs, and alphabetic scripts, laid crucial groundwork by enabling humans, for the first time, to record and preserve their thoughts in durable forms.

Subsequent inventions like papyrus, parchment, and eventually paper dramatically improved the accessibility and longevity of written documents. The arrival of Gutenberg's printing press in 1440 represented a revolutionary leap, democratising the spread of knowledge and fostering widespread literacy by making books accessible beyond elite circles.

The 19th and 20th centuries brought further mechanisation, with innovations like typewriters, photocopiers, and word processors significantly streamlining the processes of writing and reproduction. This efficiency empowered authors, journalists, and everyday people to produce written materials quickly, reliably, and at scale.

Entering the digital age, technological advancements surged forward with unprecedented speed. The internet, blogging platforms, e-books, and online self-publishing dramatically transformed global literary access, allowing anyone with connectivity to participate in the creation and consumption of literature. Today, AI-powered tools represent the latest chapter in this story, offering capabilities in text generation and sophisticated literary analysis that were unimaginable even a few decades ago. With these technologies, humanity continues to push the boundaries of storytelling, expression, and creativity into exciting and uncharted territory.

Analyzing historical technological advancements, from Gutenberg's press to modern digital platforms, reveals a consistent pattern: each innovation, while democratizing access, simultaneously reshapes cultural authority. AI's integration into literature similarly holds the potential for democratization but also risks reinforcing existing socio-cultural biases encoded within datasets, thus impacting whose voices and narratives gain prominence.

Having examined the historical trajectory of literary technologies, we now turn to the core AI systems that currently power content generation and literary analysis.

III. AI TECHNOLOGIES

A) Natural Language Processing (NLP)

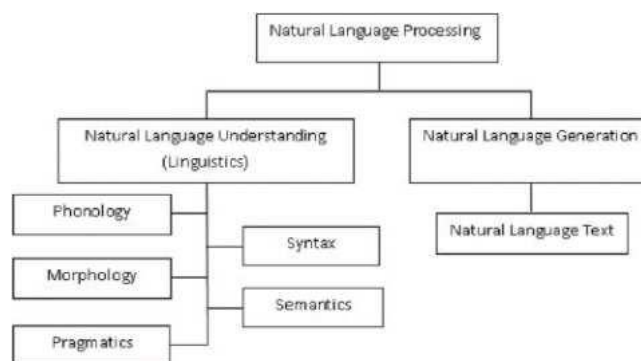


Fig. 1. Broad classification of Natural Language Processing (NLP), distinguishing between understanding and generation tasks—essential to how AI interprets and creates language in literary applications.

Source: Khurana, Diksha, et al. "Natural Language Processing: State of the Art, Current Trends and Challenges." *Multimedia Tools and Applications*, vol. 82, no. 3, 2022, p. 3715.

Natural Language Processing (NLP) is a "subfield of computer science that is focused on allowing computers to understand language in a 'natural' way, as humans do"

(Beysolow 1). It is a specialised branch of artificial intelligence that concentrates on the interaction between computers and human language, allowing machines to comprehend, interpret, and produce human language. “NLP can be classified into two parts, i.e., natural language understanding and natural language generation, which evolves the task to understand and generate the text” (Khurana et al. 3715).

The processing includes various essential steps, such as text preparation methods including tokenisation, removing stopwords, and stemming, as well as syntactic analysis through part-of-speech tagging and dependency parsing¹. Semantics is of utmost importance in various tasks such as named entity recognition, word sense disambiguation, and sentiment analysis.

“Natural Language Processing can be applied into various areas like Machine Translation, Email Spam detection, Information Extraction, Summarisation, Question Answering etc.” (Khurana et al. 3724) It is extensively utilized in chatbots, search engines, social media monitoring, and healthcare. However, it encounters difficulties concerning ambiguity, contextual comprehension, multilingualism, and bias². Nevertheless, the progress made in deep learning and large-scale language models like GPT and BERT has greatly improved the capacity of natural language processing (NLP) to analyse and produce human language.

B) Machine Learning Algorithms

“Machine learning is a technique that figures out the ‘model’ out of ‘data’” (Kim 2). Machine Learning (ML) algorithms are computational techniques that allow systems to acquire knowledge and enhance their performance via experience, without the need for explicit programming. These techniques are fundamental to numerous AI applications, particularly those in the field of natural language processing.

Machine learning algorithms can be classified into three main categories: supervised learning, unsupervised learning, and reinforcement learning³. Supervised learning algorithms, such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Random Forests, acquire knowledge from labeled data in order to produce accurate predictions or classifications. Unsupervised learning techniques, such as K-means clustering, identify and “analyzes unlabeled datasets without the need for human interference” (Sarker 4). On the

other hand Reinforcement learning algorithms acquire knowledge by engaging with an environment and adjusting their actions to maximize a reward or minimize the risk.

These algorithms efficiently analyze vast quantities of textual data, acquiring the ability to identify patterns, make predictions, and produce writing that resembles human language. The selection of an algorithm relies on the particular NLP work, the accessible data, and the intended result. “we use Machine Learning to indicate a specific technological group of Artificial Intelligence. Machine Learning itself includes many technologies as well. One of them is Deep Learning...” (Kim 2).

C) Neural Networks and Deep Learning

“Deep Learning is a type of Machine Learning that employs a neural network, the neural network is inseparable from Deep Learning” (Kim xvi). Neural networks and deep learning are a subset of machine learning algorithms that draw inspiration from the structure and function of the human brain. These models are comprised of linked layers of artificial neurons, also known as nodes, which are responsible for processing and transmitting information, using weight values. “In other words, the information of the neural net is stored in the form of weights and bias.” (Kim 20)

Deep learning is a type of neural network that has numerous hidden layers positioned between the input and output layers. This architecture enables the network to acquire hierarchical representations of inputs.

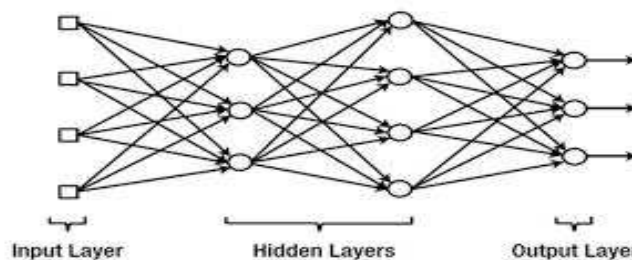


Fig.2. Layered architecture of a neural network, illustrating how deep learning models process and synthesize language in hierarchical layers, a key component in tools like GPT.

Source: Maki, Ghadeer I., and Zahir M. Hussain. “Deep Learning for Control of Digital Systems.” *Journal of Physics Conference Series*, vol. 1804, no. 1, Feb. 2021, p. 012086.

¹ For more details see Khurana, Diksha, et al. “Natural language processing: state of the art, current trends and challenges.” *Multimedia Tools and Applications*, vol. 82, no. 3, July 2022, pp. 3713–44. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-022-13428-4>.

² For more details see GeeksforGeeks. “Major Challenges of Natural Language Processing.” *GeeksforGeeks*, 12 Mar. 2024,

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Figure 2 shows the input layer as square nodes. Input layer nodes operate as passages for transmitting signals to the next point. Therefore, they do not calculate the weighted sum and activation function. This is why squares are used to identify them from other circular nodes. In contrast, the output layer refers to the collection of rightmost nodes. Output from these nodes determines the final neural network result. The layers between input and output are called hidden layers because of their inaccessibility outside the neural network.

Deep learning models have significantly transformed the field of natural language processing (NLP), attaining cutting-edge outcomes on diverse language challenges. Prior to the proposal of transformers, architectures such as Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks were well-suited for processing sequential input, making them highly successful for tasks like language modeling and machine translation.

However, In recent times, transformer models such as BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) and GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) have gained prominence by utilizing attention mechanisms (weighting of data⁴) to capture distant relationships in text. These models have the ability to undergo pre-training using extensive amounts of unlabeled text data, followed by fine-tuning for specific natural language processing (NLP) tasks. “The proposal of transformers was a breakthrough in NLP; the state-of-the-art NLP methods are all based on transformers nowadays” (Ghojogh and Ghodsi 9). They exhibit exceptional performance in comprehending context, producing coherent text, and transferring knowledge across various language tasks.

The remarkable achievements of deep learning in NLP have resulted in substantial progress in several applications such as machine translation, sentiment analysis, question answering, and text generation. These breakthroughs have expanded the limits of what can be achieved in the fields of natural language understanding and generation.

Despite impressive advances, NLP and machine learning inherently risk propagating biases present in training data, critically raising ethical concerns regarding representation and inclusivity. Algorithms might unintentionally marginalize certain narratives or reinforce

stereotypical portrayals, requiring continuous scrutiny and deliberate mitigation strategies.

With a foundational understanding of these AI technologies, we can now explore their direct applications in literary and creative domains.

IV. CURRENT APPLICATIONS OF AI IN CONTENT CREATION

The process of creating, editing, and distributing content across a variety of platforms is being transformed by AI-assisted writing tools and automated content generation. While AI-assisted tools focus on improving existing text, automated generation creates new content from scratch. These technologies capitalise on advancements in machine learning and natural language processing (NLP) to facilitate the faster and more efficient content production for writers, marketers, educators, and professionals. Following are some examples of AI-assisted writing tools and automated content generation.

A) Writing Tools Assisted by Artificial Intelligence

S/N	Tool Name	Primary Function
1)	Grammarly	Offers grammar checking, style improvement, and plagiarism detection
2)	ProWritingAid	Provides in-depth reports on writing style, grammar, and readability
3)	Jasper	Generates various types of content using GPT-3 technology
4)	Quillbot	Offers paraphrasing, summarizing, and grammar checking features
5)	Copy.ai	Creates corporate articles, social media posts, and marketing content.
6)	Hemingway Editor	Focuses on improving readability and conciseness
7)	Writesonic	Creates various types of content, from articles to ad copy
8)	Rytr	Uses AI to generate content in numerous formats and use cases
9)	ShortlyAI	Provides AI-assisted creative writing and content generation
10)	Wordtune	Offers rewriting and rephrasing suggestions to improve clarity
11)	Frase.io	Combines SEO optimization with AI-powered content creation
12)	Sudowrite	Specifically designed for creative fiction writing
13)	Article Forge	Full-length article generation from keywords
14)	Peppertype.ai	Generates various types of marketing content
15)	INK	Combines writing assistance with SEO optimization

Fig. 3. Key functionalities of AI-assisted writing tools—from grammar checks to text prediction—highlighting how AI enhances efficiency in the literary production pipeline.

Source: Created by the author.

Above mentioned AI-assisted writing tools are intended to improve the writing process by offering suggestions, generating text based on prompts, and enhancing grammar. Professionals who require the rapid generation of high-quality content are increasingly relying on these tools.

⁴ See, Ghojogh, Benjamin, and Ali Ghodsi. “Attention Mechanism, Transformers, BERT, and GPT: Tutorial and Survey.” *ResearchGate*, Dec. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/m6gcn>.

B) Automated Content Generation

Automated content generation uses artificial intelligence to produce written material with minimal human intervention, significantly accelerating content creation. Industries such as journalism, marketing, and e-commerce widely adopt this technology due to their substantial demand for high volumes of rapidly produced content. Below, various fields utilizing AI-driven content generation are examined in detail.

Content Marketing: Content marketers increasingly rely on AI tools to craft engaging blog posts, tailored social media updates, and targeted email campaigns. By analyzing popular topics, trends, and audience preferences, AI systems can effectively generate content that resonates strongly with readers, increasing user engagement and marketing efficacy.

Journalism: News organizations have integrated AI into routine reporting tasks, such as summarizing financial earnings, generating sports recaps, and compiling weather updates. This automation enables human journalists to focus their energy and resources on investigative reporting, in-depth analysis, and more complex storytelling efforts.

Education: AI-powered tools are making significant inroads into educational settings, generating personalized learning materials, quizzes, and assignments tailored to individual student needs. For instance, AI can create customized multiple-choice questions based on textbook content or automatically grade assignments, providing students with immediate and personalized feedback.

Creative Writing: Artificial intelligence is also emerging as an innovative partner in creative writing, offering support in generating narrative structures, character descriptions, and even detailed scene development. Nevertheless, the emotional depth, nuance, and authenticity required in creative storytelling still necessitate human intuition and emotional insight, ensuring that narratives remain meaningful and genuinely compelling.

C) Style Analysis and Imitation

Advanced AI applications in literature extend beyond mere content generation to sophisticated stylistic analysis and imitation. AI algorithms can dissect a writer's unique style by meticulously studying linguistic patterns, sentence constructions, favored vocabulary, and literary devices, thus capturing the distinct voice of an author. This comprehensive analysis enables AI systems to produce new written works closely aligned with the original author's style or specific genre conventions.

In style analysis, AI models are trained to identify and quantify the distinctive characteristics that define an author's literary voice. These elements include metaphors, similes, rhythmic patterns, favored sentence structures, and

preferred vocabulary. Tools such as J Stylo and Python's Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) utilize large collections of literary texts to identify stylistic fingerprints, aiding literary forensics in attributing anonymous texts to specific authors and enabling comparative literary studies that explore variations in authors' treatments of similar themes.

Once an AI model learns an author's style, it can then imitate it by applying the acquired linguistic and structural patterns. Style imitation serves various practical and creative purposes, from producing parodies and fan fiction that replicate beloved literary voices, to developing personalized content tailored precisely to a specific audience or context. For instance, fans of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series might use AI-driven tools to generate new adventures for their favorite characters, closely mimicking Rowling's signature descriptive style and dialogue patterns.

D) Translation and Localization

AI-driven translation and localization technologies are transforming literary accessibility and global communication. These sophisticated systems leverage advanced natural language processing (NLP) and deep learning algorithms to translate texts across languages accurately and fluently. Moreover, they adapt content culturally and contextually, ensuring both linguistic precision and cultural relevance.

Neural Machine Translation (NMT), exemplified by transformer models such as Google's BERT and OpenAI's GPT series, represents a significant advancement. These models deeply analyze extensive multilingual datasets, accurately interpreting context, grammar, syntax, and idiomatic expressions, thereby producing translations that are both coherent and contextually sensitive. Yuxiu emphasizes this improvement, noting, "Compared with the traditional MT algorithm, NMT can better process the meaning, grammar, and context information in language, thus improving the accuracy and fluency of translation" (2).

AI translation platforms, including Google Translate and DeepL, have dramatically enhanced their translation accuracy and speed, making literature and academic content more accessible globally. Through AI-driven translation, readers gain exposure to diverse literary voices, enabling cross-cultural exchange and greater appreciation of global narratives.

Localization extends beyond translation, tailoring content specifically to fit the cultural norms and contexts of target audiences. AI facilitates this complex process by adjusting idiomatic expressions, humor, cultural references, and even visual elements, making localized content feel genuinely relatable and authentic. For instance, a novel initially written in Spanish with cultural references specific

to Spain can be carefully adapted by AI to resonate deeply with Indian readers, enhancing reader connection and cultural relevance.

Such AI-driven localization is especially valuable in sectors like gaming, software, and e-commerce, where nuanced cultural adaptation is critical for user engagement. For example, AI helps localize video game dialogues, character names, cultural references, and gameplay instructions to various linguistic and cultural contexts. Similarly, AI enables e-commerce platforms to deliver automatically translated and culturally adapted product descriptions, user reviews, and promotional materials, thereby enhancing the personalized and inclusive experience for customers worldwide.

While automated content generation significantly enhances productivity, the commodification of literary content critically threatens literary authenticity. The proliferation of algorithmically driven narratives could diminish individual authorial voices, risking a homogenization of literature that prioritizes marketability over diverse, nuanced human expression.

The real-world potential of AI in literature becomes even clearer when we examine landmark collaborative projects between humans and machines. The following case studies highlight both the experimental promise and the narrative limitations of such partnerships.

V. CASE STUDIES: AI-HUMAN COLLABORATIVE WRITING PROJECTS

Here are a few intriguing examples of human-neural network collaborations in literature. Analyzing these case studies through Actor-Network Theory (ANT), following Bruno Latour's framework outlined in *Reassembling the Social*, provides a nuanced perspective on AI as an active participant or 'actor' in literary production networks. This approach allows us to critically examine how human and machine collaborators mutually influence the creative process.

Sunspring (2016): This is a short science fiction film written by an AI named Benjamin, developed by Ross Goodwin and Oscar Sharp. The AI was trained on a dataset of sci-fi screenplays and generated a script that was then produced into a film. The result was a surreal and somewhat disjointed narrative, showcasing the potential and limitations of AI in creative writing.⁵

The Day a Computer Writes a Novel (2016): In Japan, a team of researchers and writers collaborated with an AI to create a story consisting three episodes and the closing, that made it past the first round of screening for third Hoshi Shinichi Award. The AI was responsible for generating plot ideas and text, which the human team then refined and structured into a coherent story.

Botnik Studios (ongoing): Botnik Studios is a community of writers, artists, and developers who use AI tools to create various forms of content, including literature. They use predictive text algorithms to generate humorous and creative pieces, often blending human wit with machine-generated suggestions.

AIDungeon (2019): Created by Nick Walton, AIDungeon is an interactive text-based adventure game powered by OpenAI's GPT-3. Players can input any action or dialogue, and the AI generates responses to continue the story. This project demonstrates the potential of AI to create dynamic and personalized storytelling experiences.

Aum Golly (2021 and 2023): These are two compilations of poems authored by Jukka Aalho and artificial intelligence. *Aum Golly – Poems on Humanity by an Artificial Intelligence*, published by Basam Books in Finnish and Kertojan ääni in English, is a collection of 55 poems Co-authored by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) known as GPT-3. These poems were generated within a span of 24 hours, with the collaboration of writer Jukka Aalho. The title of the piece as well as its underlying themes, like happiness, love, and significance, were generated by artificial intelligence. Released in 2023 *Aum Golly 2 – Illustrated Poems on Humanity by Artificial Intelligence*(Kertojan ääni) is a compilation of 29 poems and 23 illustrations that explore the essence of mankind, generated by an AI system within a span of 12 hours. The book's illustrations were produced using the neural network Midjourney.

The Inner Life of AI: A Memoir by ChatGPT: "The Inner Life of AI: A Memoir by ChatGPT" was published in 2022. Forrest Xiao, a data scientist, presents a memoir of ChatGPT, narrated from the perspective of the AI system. The chatbot discusses its encounters in acquiring the ability to interact with humans, investigating the realm of digital technology, and contemplating essential inquiries on the essence of consciousness. The book's introduction describes it as a contemplation of the essence of humanity in the era of digital technology, questioning

⁵ Hal. "This is what happens when an AI-written screenplay is made into a film." The Guardian, 22 Feb. 2018, [www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jun/10/artificial-](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jun/10/artificial-intelligence-screenplay-sunspring-silicon-valley-thomas-middleditch-ai)

[intelligence-screenplay-sunspring-silicon-valley-thomas-middleditch-ai.](http://intelligence-screenplay-sunspring-silicon-valley-thomas-middleditch-ai)

the idea of a clear distinction between natural and artificial intelligence.

Trying to Wake Up: Furthermore, Pavel Pepperstein, a Russian writer and artist, and the generative neural network ruGPT-3 have collaborated on a storybook titled "Trying to Wake Up." Of the 24 stories, half were written by Pepperstein, the rest were composed by AI.⁶

1 the Road: In 2017, Ross Goodwin undertook a remarkable literary experiment by combining artificial intelligence with a traditional American literary motif—the road trip. He outfitted his Cadillac with a surveillance camera, GPS module, microphone, and developed a customized Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) neural network. With these instruments, Goodwin embarked on a journey from New York to New Orleans, retracing the route immortalized by Jack Kerouac's iconic novel, *On the Road*. As the car moved along this path, the modified LSTM network continuously processed sensor data, generating textual descriptions printed directly onto receipt paper. Remarkably, the AI sought to mimic Kerouac's distinctive literary style, fusing digital inputs into a stream-of-consciousness narrative.

The AI system regularly recorded its precise location and time, accessed location-based data through the Foursquare platform, and attempted to match its descriptions closely with the visual and auditory stimuli gathered by the onboard camera and microphone. An integrated image recognition module even provided descriptive insights about visual inputs and characters encountered along the journey. Goodwin deliberately refrained from significant editorial intervention, allowing the AI's raw textual output to stand independently.

The resulting text offered a uniquely unfiltered portrayal of America's lesser-known roads and secondary highways, particularly those in the country's eastern and southern regions. Published in 2018 by the French publishing firm Jean Boîte Éditions under the title *1 the Road*, the final work intentionally preserved all original typos, grammatical irregularities, and inconsistencies. This raw, unpolished form lent the text an authentic and spontaneous feel, reminiscent of the Beat Generation's fearless literary experimentation.

Goodwin's project boldly presented itself as one of the first genuine examples of pure AI-generated literature. With its lack of conventional narrative structure, yet deeply evocative of the American road narrative tradition, the book symbolizes both an homage and a forward-looking exploration—celebrating imperfections and spontaneity. By

embracing this unconventional approach, *1 the Road* invites readers to envision a future where artificial intelligence expands the possibilities of literary creation, redefining storytelling in collaboration with human imagination.

Collectively, examples like *1 the Road* highlight the evolving synergy between human creativity and AI capabilities. Each innovative collaboration demonstrates new avenues in literature, continually pushing the boundaries of traditional storytelling and reshaping our understanding of authorship and creativity.

These case studies demonstrate a compelling duality in AI-generated literature: on one hand, AI's participation stimulates novel experimentation, yet on the other, it surfaces profound artistic limitations. Notably, AI-generated works such as *Sunspring* and *1 the Road* illustrate that while AI can imitate narrative structures, the absence of embodied experience and emotional authenticity fundamentally constrains their depth, poignancy, and cultural resonance.

Beyond creative experimentation, AI is also reshaping the operational landscape of the literary and publishing industries. From manuscript screening to automated metadata generation, AI is driving major innovations behind the scenes.

VI. USE OF AI IN PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

AI technologies have been progressively embraced by the publishing sector to improve decision-making, simplify operations, and generate fresh opportunities. With examples, this thorough overview of how artificial intelligence is being applied in many facets of publishing shows:

Manuscript Evaluation and Acquisition: Initially screening manuscripts is being helped by artificial intelligence tools. For instance, Inkitt, a data-driven publishing platform, examines reader interaction trends using algorithms for stories uploaded on their platform. This enables them to spot possibly popular novels before they ever hit print. To project a manuscript's commercial potential, the AI examines elements including reading time, completion rates, and reader comments.

Content Creation and Editing: Artificial intelligence is now used to generate material for publishing and editing. PerfectIt and other editing programs use artificial intelligence (AI) to guarantee uniformity in documents, homogeneity in spelling, hyphenation, and capitalization

⁶ "Russian writer and neural network team up to compose 24 short stories." *East-West Digital News*, 3 June 2022,

www.ewdn.com/2022/05/26/russian-writer-and-neural-network-team-up-to-compose-24-short-stories.

over extended manuscripts. For technical and scholarly publishing especially, this is quite helpful.

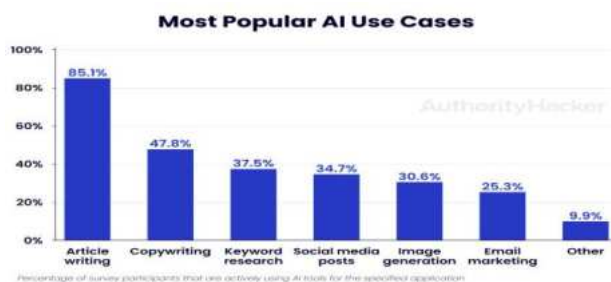


Fig. 4. Increasing use of AI in marketing, reflecting broader industry reliance on automated content generation—a trend mirrored in the publishing industry's digital transformation.

Source: Webster, Mark. "AI Survey: How 3,812 Digital Marketers Are Using AI in 2024." Authority Hacker, 7 Aug. 2024.

Book Design and Layout: Book design and layout are using artificial intelligence technologies. Integrated within InDesign, Adobe's Sensei AI can recommend design components depending on the content and target audience and automatically change layouts. For e-books and digital publications particularly, this accelerates the design process.

Marketing and Metadata: Crucially for discoverability in online retailers, publishers are embracing artificial intelligence to maximize book metadata. For book listings, for instance, Kadaxis generates and optimizes keywords using machine learning thereby enhancing their exposure in search results.

In marketing, organizations such as Jellybooks track audience interaction with e-books using reader analytics. This information guides publishers in developing their marketing plans and even shapes choices on next acquisitions.

Recommendation Systems: AI-powered recommendation algorithms are used by online stores and e-books platforms. One excellent example of how Amazon uses content-based and collaborative filtering to offer books to consumers depending on their browsing and purchase behavior is its book recommendations.

Translation and Localization: AI-powered translating systems are accelerating book publication in several languages, therefore facilitating localization and translation. These tools give human translators a basis even though they are not flawless. For first drafts of literary translations, DeepL is especially helpful since it is known for its more subtle translations than past technologies.

Audiobook Production: AI-generated voices are getting ever more sophisticated. Although not now extensively used for complete audiobooks, they are being used for sample creation. For some publishers, Google's Text-to-Speech API—which creates natural-sounding audio from text—allows speedy and affordable creation of preview clips.

Copyright Protection: Publishers are employing artificial intelligence to identify possible copyright violations. Copyscape and other tools search the internet for copies of released materials using sophisticated algorithms, therefore safeguarding intellectual property owned by publishers and authors.

Companies like Jellybooks and Kobo offer thorough reader behavior data. These revelations enable publishers to better know how consumers interact with books, where they stop reading, and what keeps them interested, therefore guiding editorial and marketing choices.

Although artificial intelligence is changing many facets of publishing, it is mostly considered as a tool to supplement rather than replace human skill. Still mostly in human hands are the creative elements of publishing, including the art of storytelling and the subtle assessment of literary excellence. But AI is clearly changing the sector, streamlining data-driven, efficient operations, and creating fresh opportunities for how books are produced, sold, and used.

Critically assessing AI's influence on the publishing industry reveals deeper cultural and economic implications. Algorithm-driven recommendations and content curation, while efficient, risk creating self-reinforcing feedback loops, amplifying dominant narratives at the expense of diverse and challenging literature. This trend warrants urgent reflection on how algorithmic decision-making might narrow literary diversity and reader exposure to varied cultural perspectives.

Despite these advancements, the adoption of AI in literature and publishing raises critical questions about the quality, coherence, and emotional depth of the text it produces.

VII. QUALITY AND COHERENCE OF AI-GENERATED TEXT

Despite significant advancements in recent years, the quality and coherence of AI-generated text still face substantial challenges. Below, we explore these limitations in detail:

A) Consistency and Coherence: Although AI models can reliably generate grammatically correct sentences,

maintaining coherence across extended passages remains difficult. Over longer texts, AI often struggles to retain context, introduces contradictions, or unexpectedly deviates from the main topic. For instance, in an AI-generated short story, a character's behavior may remain consistent initially but inexplicably shift midway, leading to confusing narrative inconsistencies.

B) Factual Accuracy and Hallucination: AI systems like GPT-3 and BERT can confidently present inaccurate information or "hallucinations"—facts or details that appear plausible but have no basis in reality. Such inaccuracies pose significant risks for tasks relying heavily on factual precision.

A hypothetical example illustrating AI hallucination:

- Prompt: "Tell me about the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell."
- AI Response: "Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. Interestingly, he first demonstrated it at the World's Fair in Chicago, famously saying, 'Mr. Watson, come here, I need you.' This event was broadcast live on radio, marking the first public telephone conversation."

Analysis of inaccuracies:

- Correct year of invention: 1876.
- Famous quote is accurate.
- However, the Chicago World's Fair took place in 1893, not 1876.
- Radio broadcasting did not exist at the time of invention.
- Bell's first demonstration occurred privately in his Boston laboratory.

Such examples demonstrate AI's ability to blend accurate facts with plausible yet entirely fabricated details, creating misleading narratives.

C) Nuance and Subtlety: AI-generated text often lacks the nuanced understanding and subtlety essential to high-quality human writing. This limitation becomes particularly evident in contexts demanding emotional sensitivity or cultural awareness. For example, an AI-generated diplomatic speech might fail to achieve the delicate balance between assertiveness and tact required in sensitive international interactions.

D) Creativity and Originality: While AI models excel at recombining existing ideas into novel configurations, they often fall short of genuine originality and innovation. AI-generated poetry or prose, though technically proficient, frequently lacks the emotional resonance, profound insight, and creativity inherent in human-authored texts.

E) Understanding Context: AI struggles significantly with interpreting broader contextual cues or implicit meanings, resulting in occasional inappropriate or irrelevant content. For instance, when writing about a tragic event, an AI may mistakenly introduce humor or levity, reflecting a fundamental misunderstanding of contextual appropriateness.

F) Handling Ambiguity: Natural language is inherently ambiguous, relying heavily on context and cultural understanding for interpretation. AI frequently misinterprets idiomatic expressions, sarcasm, or metaphor, producing nonsensical or overly literal translations that diminish readability and accuracy.

G) Logical Reasoning: Complex logical reasoning, especially involving abstract concepts, remains a major challenge for AI. AI-generated argumentative essays may contain logical inconsistencies, unsupported assertions, or fail to sustain coherent arguments throughout, making them unreliable in tasks requiring critical thinking and rigorous analysis.

H) Adapting Style and Tone: Despite improvements, AI often struggles to consistently adapt its style and tone according to different genres or target audiences. AI-generated text might inconsistently mix formal and informal expressions or fail to maintain a distinctive character voice throughout longer narratives, resulting in stylistically uneven outputs.

I) Handling Rare or Specialized Knowledge: AI performs optimally when dealing with common or broadly documented topics. However, generating accurate and nuanced content in specialized or niche domains can be problematic. AI systems may misuse specialized terminology, misunderstand subtle distinctions, or make fundamental errors that would be readily apparent to human experts.

J) Ethical and Biased Content: AI models may unintentionally propagate biases embedded within their training data, leading to ethically problematic content. For example, an AI-generated narrative might perpetuate harmful stereotypes or reinforce implicit gender or racial biases, lacking the critical awareness needed to approach sensitive social issues responsibly and sensitively.

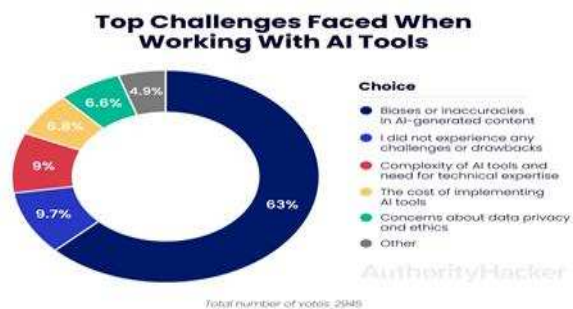


Fig. 5. Common applications of AI in content creation—highlighting trends such as automation, optimization, and data-driven storytelling that are influencing literary production.

Source: Webster, Mark. "AI Survey: How 3,812 Digital Marketers Are Using AI in 2024." Authority Hacker, 7 Aug. 2024.

K) Long-Term Coherence: Maintaining narrative coherence throughout very long texts—such as novels or detailed research papers—remains a significant limitation for AI. Over extended works, AI-generated content may introduce narrative gaps, inconsistencies, or plot holes, forgetting previously established character details or losing the central narrative thread altogether.

Despite these considerable limitations, it's important to recognize that AI technology is continually evolving. Researchers and developers actively address these issues, steadily improving model capabilities. Nonetheless, these persistent challenges highlight the importance of ongoing human oversight, editing, and judgment in the professional and creative use of AI-generated texts.

In its current state, AI text generation is most effective as a complementary tool, augmenting human creativity and critical insight rather than replacing it entirely. Human intuition, experience, and emotional intelligence remain irreplaceable in creating coherent, meaningful, and deeply resonant writing.

Critically, the persistence of issues such as narrative coherence and contextual sensitivity in AI-generated texts is not merely technical but reflects deeper epistemological limitations. The superficial coherence often masks AI's fundamental inability to authentically grapple with complex human experiences and ethical nuances that define literary excellence.

Beyond literary quality, the rise of AI-generated content has introduced complex debates around legal ownership, intellectual property, and creative attribution.

VIII. COPYRIGHT AND AUTHORSHIP ISSUES

The rise of AI-generated content has introduced complex and unprecedented legal and ethical challenges around copyright and authorship. As AI increasingly participates in creative activities traditionally reserved for humans, established notions of authorship, ownership, and originality are undergoing significant scrutiny. The following points explore these critical issues:

A) Legal Definition of Authorship: Copyright laws were originally crafted with human creators in mind, raising the fundamental question of whether an AI can legally be considered an "author." In the United States, for example, the Copyright Office has clarified its stance, asserting that copyright protection applies exclusively to human-authored works, explicitly excluding content created solely by machines or automated processes.

B) Human Input versus AI Generation: The extent of human involvement in AI-generated works varies greatly, creating a spectrum of potential authorship scenarios. If a human provides detailed instructions to an AI and substantially edits or revises its output, they might reasonably claim authorship. Conversely, if AI produces content with minimal or no human input, authorship rights become more ambiguous and legally challenging to define.

C) Training Data and Derivative Works: AI models are typically trained on extensive datasets, which frequently include copyrighted material. This raises significant concerns about whether the outputs generated by AI could inadvertently qualify as derivative works. If an AI system trained on copyrighted novels produces a story containing identifiable elements of its source material, it might unintentionally infringe existing copyrights.

D) Attribution and Transparency: Another area of ongoing debate is whether and how the use of AI in creative processes should be transparently disclosed. Some argue that content significantly assisted or generated by AI should explicitly acknowledge this involvement, similar to attribution practices for ghostwritten works, ensuring transparency and preserving trust with readers or consumers.

E) Ownership of AI-Generated Content: When AI autonomously creates content, determining rightful ownership becomes increasingly complicated. Is it the developer of the AI model, the user deploying the system, or possibly neither? For instance, when a company employs AI to craft marketing materials or product descriptions, it remains unclear who legally owns the resulting content—the company, the AI creators, or perhaps no entity at all.

F) International Variations in Copyright Law: Global inconsistencies further complicate the copyright status of

AI-generated content. While the United States Copyright Office explicitly excludes AI-generated works from registration, other jurisdictions may adopt more flexible interpretations. These international discrepancies can lead to considerable legal uncertainty across the global digital landscape.

G) Fair Use and AI Training: The concept of fair use is actively debated within the context of AI training. Is it legally permissible for AI companies to use copyrighted materials without explicit consent when training language models? This critical question is currently being explored through both judicial proceedings and academic discourse, with significant implications for intellectual property rights.

H) Licensing and Royalties: The integration of AI in creative industries complicates traditional licensing agreements and royalty distribution models. If a piece of AI-assisted creative work becomes commercially successful, how should royalties be allocated among the human creator, the AI developer, and the original sources of the AI's training data?

I) Liability for Infringement: Determining liability in cases of infringement by AI-generated content is another unresolved issue. If an AI-produced song or literary piece closely resembles existing copyrighted material, it remains uncertain who bears legal responsibility—the user, the AI's developer, or potentially no identifiable party. As Zirpoli highlights, “One complication of AI programs is that the user might not be aware of—or have access to—a work that was copied in response to the user's prompt. Under current law, this may make it challenging to analyze whether the user is liable for copyright infringement” (5).

J) Duration of Copyright: Copyright duration traditionally extends throughout the life of the human author and continues beyond their death. This criterion becomes problematic for AI-generated works, as AI entities lack a lifespan. Determining appropriate terms of protection for such works remains an open and complex legal question.

These issues are currently under extensive debate among legal experts, policymakers, and creative communities. Potential solutions under consideration include:

- Establishing a distinct legal category for AI-generated content.
- Assigning authorship to the individual or organization responsible for initiating or guiding the AI's creative process.
- Developing comprehensive tracking systems for documenting and verifying the provenance of AI-generated content.

As AI technology advances, copyright legislation will likely need significant reform to address these nuanced and

evolving issues. Achieving coherence in legal frameworks for AI-generated content may require substantial collaboration, innovation, and international cooperation.

The unresolved complexities around copyright and authorship of AI-generated content raise significant philosophical and legal dilemmas. At its core lies the question of intellectual originality: Can an algorithm's output ever achieve true originality, or does it merely remix human-produced cultural artifacts? Addressing this demands an evolved legal framework explicitly accommodating hybrid authorship scenarios.

Equally important is the question of artistic identity—how AI impacts the preservation of human voice, emotional authenticity, and cultural nuance in literary expression.

IX. PRESERVATION OF HUMAN VOICE AND STYLE

Drawing on Walter Benjamin's concept of 'aura' from his influential essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, this section critically evaluates how AI-generated literature affects the distinctiveness and emotional depth traditionally associated with human-authored texts (14). His framework highlights significant cultural concerns around the loss of artistic originality and human connection within digitally produced content.

Critically, AI-generated texts confront this notion of 'aura,' challenging the irreplaceable presence and creative subjectivity that imbue human literature with meaning. The ease with which AI replicates stylistic patterns paradoxically risks flattening that intangible resonance, potentially eroding the cultural value and emotional richness that define authentic literary expression.

Human voice is distinctive, hence it provides a difficulty for artificial intelligence models since they often produce text that reflects an average of numerous styles, thereby possibly weakening the special characteristics of an individual author's voice. Reader's involvement and the general integrity of the work depend on consistent style. Using artificial intelligence to enhance or expand human-written works runs the danger of clearly changing style or tone.

Another difficulty is cultural and personal context since artificial intelligence models lack personal experiences and cultural nuances that usually provide richness to human writing. An artificial intelligence would find it difficult to really reproduce the voice of an author covering particular historical events or cultural encounters. Since artificial intelligence can examine and replicate emotional patterns in text but lacks real emotions or

experiences from which to draw, emotional depth and authenticity also remains a crucial challenge.

Apart from the above challenges, missing opportunities for creative style choices made by human authors, altering the nature of the author-reader connection and hindering the growth of a writer's own voice are also potential drawbacks of using AI to generate content. When AI is solely relied upon for content creation, the personal touch and unique perspective of human writers can be lost. This could lead to a disconnect between the author and their audience, as well as stifle the development of a writer's individual creativity and expression. Ultimately, while AI can be a valuable tool in content creation, it is important to balance its use with the human element to ensure authenticity and a meaningful connection with readers.

As we reflect on these challenges, it is important to consider the evolving trajectory of AI and literature, including how AI may transform not just storytelling, but the entire literary ecosystem.

X. FUTURE PROSPECTS

The intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and literature is ushering in a new era of creativity, analysis, and dissemination of literary works. As AI technologies continue to evolve, their impact on literature is becoming increasingly significant, offering both opportunities and challenges for writers, scholars, and readers.

A) AI as a Creative Partner: Co-creation and Personalized Literature

Artificial intelligence is increasingly evolving into a valuable collaborator in the creative process, enabling authors to explore fresh ideas, draft narratives, and even co-author complete stories. These sophisticated tools can suggest imaginative plot twists, generate convincing character dialogues, and help writers overcome creative blocks, effectively becoming active partners in literary creation. Additionally, AI has the potential to personalize literature, adapting stories dynamically to individual readers based on their interests, preferences, and reading history. This personalization could significantly enhance the reading experience, making literature more immersive, engaging, and accessible to broader audiences.

B) AI in Literary Analysis

AI-driven analytical tools have become powerful instruments for conducting deep, comprehensive analyses of literary texts. By swiftly examining extensive collections of literary works, these tools reveal hidden patterns, thematic elements, and stylistic nuances that traditional manual analysis might overlook. Such insights enable literary scholars to discover new interpretations of authors'

works, better understand literary movements, and identify subtle connections across texts. Consequently, AI-driven literary analysis holds the promise of revolutionizing literary scholarship, enriching our understanding of literature, and opening fresh pathways for academic inquiry.

C) AI in Publishing and Distribution

Automated Editing and Proofreading: AI technologies are significantly enhancing the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of editing and proofreading processes. Automated editing tools can swiftly identify grammatical errors, suggest stylistic improvements, and assess overall manuscript quality, streamlining the publication workflow and increasing reliability.

Content Curation and Recommendation: Additionally, AI-powered algorithms assist publishers in curating content, recommending books tailored precisely to readers' tastes, and predicting emerging literary trends. These capabilities facilitate reader engagement by helping audiences discover new authors and genres aligned closely with their preferences, thereby enriching their literary experience and supporting the growth of diverse literary communities.

D) The Future of Literary Forms

Artificial intelligence has the potential to give rise to entirely new literary genres, blending human creativity with machine intelligence in groundbreaking ways. Interactive and immersive narratives, in which AI dynamically adapts stories based on real-time reader interactions, may soon become commonplace, significantly expanding the boundaries of literary expression.

AI's role in literature is already shifting reading habits and generating innovative genres. Its exceptional capacity to analyze vast amounts of data, generate novel content, and dynamically engage with audiences makes this evolution possible. Promising new literary forms emerging from this technology include interactive narratives, personalized storytelling, algorithmically generated poetry, experimental prose, collaborative hybrid works, immersive multi-modal stories, text-based visual art, and narrative-driven gaming experiences.

In essence, AI is reshaping literature by introducing new forms that challenge conventional storytelling frameworks. As these technologies evolve, they promise to revolutionize the way literature is both created and experienced, continually pushing our conception of digital storytelling into unexplored territories.

Critically forecasting AI's literary future reveals complex sociocultural implications. Personalized literature, while offering enhanced reader engagement, might inadvertently fragment shared cultural narratives, diminishing literature's historically unifying role.

Moreover, the potential dominance of algorithmic narratives poses risks to cultural diversity, necessitating careful management to maintain pluralistic literary expression.

These projections prompt a deeper examination of how AI will shape the writing profession in the long run, influencing everything from authorship roles to the economic and ethical structures of literary labor.

XI. LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WRITING PROFESSION

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence significantly impacts the writing profession, with profound and multifaceted long-term consequences. Here, we explore several critical areas of this transformation:

A) Redefinition of Authorship and Creativity:

Co-Creation with AI: Writers may increasingly collaborate with AI tools that assist in idea generation, content editing, and even crafting complete narratives. This partnership could redefine authorship, acknowledging AI as a valuable creative partner.

Evolving Concepts of Creativity: As AI-generated content becomes more sophisticated, traditional definitions of originality and creativity might shift, fostering new expressions of artistic innovation.

B) Economic Impacts:

Job Displacement: Routine or repetitive writing tasks—such as standardized news reporting, technical documentation, or content generation—may increasingly be automated, potentially displacing certain types of writing jobs. Conversely, this shift could also create new professional opportunities in managing and editing AI-generated content.

New Opportunities: Writers adept at collaborating effectively with AI tools, editing machine-generated content, and providing essential human oversight are likely to see increased demand. Furthermore, AI's accessibility could democratize writing, allowing a broader population to publish and share their work.

Job Roles With the Highest Risk of AI Disruption

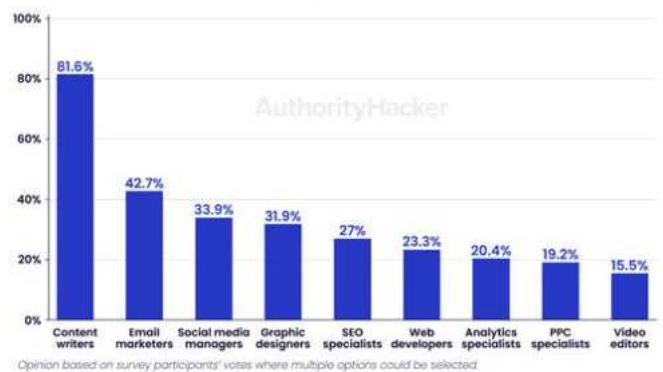


Fig. 6. Projected long-term impacts of AI on marketing workflows—mirroring similar transformations in the writing profession, where automation may redefine roles, reshape skills, and create new forms of creative labor. Source: Webster, Mark. “AI Survey: How 3,812 Digital Marketers Are Using AI in 2024.” Authority Hacker, 7 Aug. 2024.

C) Ethical and Legal Considerations: As AI systems become proficient in imitating human writing styles, differentiating human-authored content from machine-generated text may become increasingly difficult, raising critical concerns about authenticity and plagiarism. Legal issues surrounding content ownership will grow more complex, necessitating the development of new frameworks to determine rights associated with AI-generated or AI-assisted works.

D) Impact on Literary Forms and Genres:

Emergence of New Forms: AI facilitates the development of innovative literary forms and hybrid genres, combining traditional narratives with multimedia, interactive, and digital elements.

Preservation of Traditional Literature: In response to AI's expansion, there may emerge a counter-movement emphasizing the irreplaceable value of traditional, human-authored literary forms, highlighting their distinctiveness and enduring emotional depth.

E) Educational and Skill Development:

Evolving Skill Requirements: Writers may need to develop new competencies, such as understanding coding basics, data analysis, and familiarity with AI algorithms, to remain competitive and relevant in a rapidly transforming field.

Educational Shifts: Educational programs may increasingly integrate AI tools into curricula, teaching students collaborative skills with AI systems and

emphasizing creative, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities—qualities that AI cannot easily replicate.

F) Cultural and Social Impact: Cultural Narratives: AI's involvement in writing could significantly shape cultural storytelling, influencing which narratives are widely disseminated and accepted. Concerns about cultural homogenization or the marginalization of diverse voices may arise if AI-generated content dominates.

Social Perceptions: The perception of writing as a professional endeavor may change, becoming viewed either as more accessible and inclusive due to AI tools or possibly devalued if human creativity is perceived as less central.

G) Long-Term Evolution of the Writing Profession:

Hybrid Professional Roles: Writers may evolve into hybrid roles combining creativity with technical proficiency, emerging as "creative technologists" adept at managing both human-centric narratives and AI-driven content creation.

Enduring Human Element: Despite AI's increasing capabilities, human creativity—defined by empathy, emotional nuance, and deep reader connection—will likely remain invaluable. Writers who harness and emphasize these uniquely human qualities will continue to be essential within the literary landscape.

The long-term implications for the writing profession are complex, presenting both significant challenges and exciting opportunities. Writers who embrace technological advancements, develop adaptive skill sets, and maintain their authentic human voices are best positioned to thrive in this rapidly evolving creative ecosystem.

A critical long-term implication is the potential polarization of literary labor markets. AI may economically advantage technologically adept creators while marginalizing those reliant on traditional literary methodologies. Ethically, this raises urgent concerns around equitable access to literary production tools, digital divides, and the evolving valuation of human creativity vis-à-vis algorithmically produced content.

Taken together, these technological, ethical, and cultural shifts suggest a future in which human creativity and machine intelligence must negotiate a shared space. The concluding reflections underscore the stakes and possibilities of this literary evolution.

XII. CONCLUSION

Through the integrated theoretical lenses of posthumanism, Digital Humanities, Actor-Network Theory, and Benjamin's notion of 'aura', this paper has critically

explored the evolving relationship between artificial intelligence and literary creativity, emphasizing both the transformative possibilities and the complex challenges AI introduces to authorship, authenticity, and cultural production.

The integration of artificial intelligence into literature marks a transformative chapter in the ongoing evolution of human creativity. AI's role now extends far beyond automation; it has emerged as a creative collaborator—one that assists in generating ideas, shaping narratives, and even envisioning entirely new literary forms. It is expanding access to storytelling across languages and cultures, breaking traditional boundaries and making literature more inclusive, dynamic, and interactive.

Yet, with these exciting developments come important challenges. Questions of authorship, intellectual property, and the preservation of authentic human voice demand careful scrutiny. While AI can imitate stylistic nuances and reconstruct literary structures with remarkable precision, it is ultimately a tool—powerful, yes, but still reliant on human guidance, interpretation, and emotional depth. The balance between harnessing AI's capabilities and safeguarding the essence of human expression will define the ethical and creative trajectory of literature in the years to come.

Looking ahead, AI has the potential to democratize literary creation, empowering individuals from all walks of life to tell their stories and engage with others through words. It could redefine the landscape of publishing and literary analysis, offering innovative ways to interpret texts and uncover layers of meaning previously hidden in plain sight. At the same time, it may inspire a renewed appreciation for traditional, human-authored literature, deepening our recognition of what makes storytelling so uniquely human.

As we step into this new literary frontier, it is essential to remember that literature's purpose has always been more than the transmission of information—it is to move, to provoke, to connect. By embracing AI as a partner rather than a substitute, writers, scholars, and readers alike can continue to explore uncharted territories without losing sight of literature's core: its ability to mirror the complexities of the human experience. The pen may now share space with the processor, but the heartbeat of storytelling endures—ever enriched, never replaced.

Ultimately, the critical exploration presented in this paper underscores that while AI's integration into literature offers transformative potential, it simultaneously poses profound existential questions about human identity, cultural authenticity, and creativity. Addressing these concerns requires not only technological but also ethical and

philosophical vigilance, ensuring that literature's evolution remains deeply connected to humanistic values.

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Partition: Love & Hate in Waris Shah Nu

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Abstract— This paper will explore the trauma of partition and the destruction of a valued way of life as expressed by Amrita Pritam in her Punjabi poem Waris Shah Nu. It becomes imperative to look at literature, either celebrating Independence, or the tragedy of Partition, by foregrounding this human cost. The poem makes a connection between the individual tragedy and the collective trauma that marks the Partition.

Keywords— displacement, identity, partition, trauma



I. INTRODUCTION

In his “Tryst with Destiny” speech, given in Parliament on the eve of independence, Nehru said “At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom”. These words have been the guiding principles in the making of modern India. However, the moment of independence was not without its trauma. A study of the census data of 1931 and 1951 reveals that “within four years of partition 14.5 million people migrated into India, Pakistan...Bangladesh” and was accompanied by an “outflow” of approximately “17.9 million during the same period” (Bharadwaj, Khwaja & Mian, 2008, p. 1). At the national level, while 7.3 million migrants entered India, approximately 9.6 million moved out (Bharadwaj et al., 2008, p. 6). A comparative study of the migration of people reveals that “3.4 million people were “missing” or unaccounted for” (Bharadwaj et al., 2008, p. 1) and “likely reflect the mortality during partition” (Bharadwaj et al., 2008, p. 7).

The situation on the western frontier of India, modern-day Punjab, was truly horrifying. Contrary to claims by Lord Mountbatten that “only 200,000 were killed”, the governor of West Punjab, Sir Francis Mudie, estimated that “500,000 Muslims had died trying to enter his province”, and the British High Commissioner in Karachi put the total figure at 800,000 (James, 1998, p. 636). Approximately 1.26 million Muslims left, what is modern day Punjab, and never arrived in Pakistan. The

Hindu/Sikh causality figure along the border is approximately 0.84 million. These are frightening statistics: even as the country celebrated Independence large swathes of the population was either being mowed down or being driven out of ancestral lands into life as a rootless migrant. They paint a grim picture of the decimation of the social, cultural and economic life of communities along the border.

II. AMRITA PRITAM & THE PARTITION

The partition of India was a defining moment in Amrita Pritam’s poetic consciousness. In an interview she gave to *Mehfil*, she said

As for direct influences, I can say that the partition of our country had a great influence on my writing. At the period when I saw the suffering of thousands and thousands of people, especially women because they suffered in a special way, I was very moved.... I also wrote a number of poems.....These poems have been read in Pakistan and in India... because of the genuine pain I express in them.

(Coppola, 1968, p.7)

Writing about the role of religion the partition Amrita Pritam wrote “I saw, heard and read about so many atrocities committed in the name of religion that turned me against any kind of religion and revolution” (Hassan, 1998,

p. 2662). *Waris Shah Nu* is an indictment of the political and religious leadership of the country.

The experience of Independence along the western border is intricately linked with the trauma of displacement it caused. Amrita Pritam was born in Gujranwala, Pakistan in 1919. *Waris Shah Nu (To Waris Shah)* employs the legend of Heer-Ranjha to reflect the pain and trauma of partition. Waris Shah was a Sufi poet who composed the poem *Heer Ranjha* in 1766. The song employs the tropes of the failed lovers to poignantly describe the duos doomed love. Caste and class divide the two lovers: Heer belongs to a wealthy Sial family, while Ranjha was the youngest son of Jat farmers. Heer's maternal uncle, Kaidos, discovers that the lovers have been meeting in secret betrays them to the family. Heer's brutal murder at the hands of her own family is predicated on a medieval construction of honour. Her love for Ranjha is a transgression that needs to be suppressed. The story both celebrates love and serves as a warning against 'transgressive' notions of affection.

Amrita Pritam's use of this story in her own poem is revelatory. The lovers were doomed not because they were unfaithful, but because the family charged with loving, respecting and protecting them, turned on the duo with extreme violence. Seen in light of the violence of the partition, this violence prefigures the rage with which village members turned on each other and mowed each other down, simply because of differing religious identities. Like elders in a family, religious and political leaders play an important role in the public and political life of a society. The poem is a sharp indictment of these groups: instead placating the ire of groups and individuals in the villages of Punjab, they fanned the flames of hatred. She calls them "Kaido" after Heer's treacherous maternal uncle. Thus, the elders, instead of protecting the life and the innocence of the young, indulged in a bloodbath. The references are an indictment of political leaders who in their rush for power, Ajit Bhattacharjea states were "unaware and uncaring of the human cost of cutting a border through the heart of populous provinces" (p. 2662).

References to Waris Shah and his great work imply that the events in *Heer Ranjha* prefigure the events in Amrita Pritam's own work. Just as the two lovers spent a blissful childhood and youth wandering the fields of Punjab, so did the youth of early 20th century Punjab. Neither was cognisant of the brutality that lingered beneath the placid surface. Villages are close knit communities with ties that span generations. In *Waris shah Nu*, Amrita Pritam creates an image of the pre- and post- partition village in Punjab. She writes that just like the lovers of yore, young men and women would roam the fields, play the flute, and enjoy the swings. However, the Partition wreaked havoc on the

village: the fields where young men would work are now littered with their dead and rotting bodies. Tragically they have been killed not by strangers, but by their neighbours simply because they belonged to different religious groups. The poem gives a poignant image of the young women left behind to mourn the dead. Killing young men and leaving behind vulnerable women is a historical reality which resulted in countless rapes and suicides. Even before the partition the atmosphere had become so vicious that parents were hesitant in letting their daughters venture into the public. This idea of impending doom is present in the love story of Heer Ranjha as well when the poet mentions Heer getting married. Instead of a blissful life it foretells a life of pain and denial. Tragically the sounds of the youth, merrymaking and fealty become transformed into an eerie silence broken only by the lamentations of those left behind.

This pain is foregrounded in the poem when the poet questions the lack activities young women, performed by the women, in usual circumstances. She draws poignant picture of the broken lives left behind when she mentions girls crying over dead lovers, separated from friends they would never see again and burying the endless dead. The words "Friends parted from one another" (Pritam, 1968, p. 28) reflects that fact that symbolic and the emotional trauma of the partition has been carried by women as a social group and has incapacitated them. Separation is an integral part of women's lives in the subcontinent: they know that they will inevitably leave the familiar to go to their marital homes. The relationships they form with their friends are precious precisely because they are temporary. When these young girls cry over these destroyed friendships they are also crying at the manner of the loss: many of these young girls were kidnapped, raped, and killed; often they were killed by their own families in an effort to protect the family honour. It was only in the luckiest circumstances that these young girls could safely make their way to the "right" side of the border without suffering any indignity. Amrita Pritam points out to a bitter fact of partition: the male body was annihilated, the female body suffered through repeated acts violation. The separation of young girls from their bosom friends, and tales of torture and rape resulted in its own psychological trauma.

The violence of the narrative is a performance of power. At the same time the collective nature of the trauma is a wound to the collective social identity. "The village square heaped with corpses,/ The Chenab flooded with blood" is a performance of power. The narrator is stunned at the violence she is witnessing. The poem raises essential question about the notions of identity, ethnicity and belonging. What constitutes a nation, and how do a people overcome a national trauma like the partition. More importantly whose trauma is it: there has been no national

conversation about the deaths and rapes that accompanied Independence. It is important to note that cultural trauma becomes traumatic not only because of its violent nature. Events become traumatic when they damage the structures that underpin notions that constitute the collective and notions of identity. (Eyerman, 2011, p. 258). The poem underlines the fact that the violence of the partition is also indicative of the rupture in Hindu-Muslim syncretic culture. The poem is an investigation into identity, ethnicity and belonging. The poet is attempting to negotiate between "cultural trauma and collective identity" (Eyerman, 2011, p. 111).

The reference that "all the people have become Kaidos" is indicative of an interesting facet of trauma: while the damage is done to an individual, the impact of the event is understood in a collective. In other words, the "threat to the collective" rather than to the individual becomes a marker of the trauma (pp. xii). The poet also traces the annihilation of an old way of life: there is no one left to sing the songs of festivities, perform the daily tasks that mark women's lives: spinning, singing, gossiping in the village square. The public spaces where these women considered themselves safe now witness their violation. This loss of an idyllic past is conveyed through by the image of the flute. *Heer Ranjha* mentions that it was Ranjha's skills with the flute that first attracted Heer. The relationship of the lovers mirrors the devotion Waris Shah felt for Krishna. True love resulting in a communion with the divine is a central idea of Sufi and Bhakti poetry. In *Heer Ranjha*, Waris Shah employs this idea to place himself in the position of Heer: he is the devotee who is blissfully immersed in the love of the divine Krishna even if it means his own annihilation. In fact, this erasure of the self is to be celebrated since it leads to a higher level of consciousness. It is in this way that the poem becomes a great love story and a celebration of piety. In addition to this, Krishna was a flautist whose playing would enamour Radha so much that she would forget her chores and responsibilities and listen to him endlessly. This idea of piety resulting in forgetting one's material surroundings finds its apotheosis in the figure of Meera. In her songs she herself says

Mere to Girdhar Gopal, doosra na koi

(I only know Girdhar Gopal [Krishna], and no one else)

(My translation)

In *Waris Shah Nu* Amrita Pritam presents the consequences the perversion this piety: the reed used to make the flute transforms into a snake. According to legend, the sound of Krishna's flute seduced the listener; similarly, it was Ranjha's playing of the flute that first attracted Heer. The process of articulation is important: words create reality. It was the emotions of love, of Krishna and Ranjha,

in the two stories, that spread this emotion in whoever heard their music. Similarly, in the early 20th century the debates regarding the two-nation theory, separate electorates according to religion were spreading a slow poison in rural communities in Punjab. The partition served as kindling and started a fire that swept through the entire state. It left behind a trail of death, blood and decay. The playing of the flute is the act of articulation.

The poem end with a desperate call for normalcy: the narrator presents the young girls crying over graves asking for the return of Waris Shah. They, and the narrator, urge the dead poet to return and write another great tragic love song signalling return to normalcy. The desire is revealing: even as they wish for things to return to what they once were, the very invocation of Waris Shah, and through him of the conclusion of the story of Heer Ranjha, imply that the speakers know that the past is irrevocably lost. The loss of innocence is complete and irreversible. The conclusion of the poem then becomes the cry of countless women facing the trauma of partition: they recognise that they will carry the scars for life. Since the land is the mother that feeds and clothes us, and this land has been drenched in blood and religious poison has seeped into its very marrows, the poem is also a recognition go the fact the wounds of the past will haunt future generations. The scars of the partition have left a lasting impact in the morality and materiality of the women's lives.

Women in the subcontinent carry with them the cultural memory of this violence and mourning. This impacts their interaction with the world around them as well as the tenuous bonds of female rapport. An insecure and unstable womanhood will raise diffident and volatile generations incapable of creating alliances and bonds of comradeship. This in turn will form an unstable nation incapable of withstanding challenges. It is for this reason that the silences 'speak' and that the lamentations be 'heard'. These are the prerequisites of healing and regeneration.

III. CONCLUSION

Amrita Pritam's poem gives voice to the trauma of the countless women who faced horrendous crimes in the backdrop of the Partition of India. More importantly, it foregrounds the deliberate and conscious silencing of the female experience by the mainstream narrative. The unacknowledged experience of girls and women at the moment of the creation of the nation raises questions on the degree to which these voices would find expression as the new country progressed and came into its own. The silencing of women's voices in public spaces and later their lamentations to Waris Shah echo through time and

addressing them is imperative for the project of nation building.

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From Soft Skills to Power Skills: A New Paradigm for Career Advancement in a Changing World

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Abstract— With the advent of the global pandemic, the demand for adaptability, flexibility, optimism, and empathy in the workplace has surged. The contemporary work landscape, shaped by remote and hybrid models, has introduced significant challenges to employee performance and career advancement. In this evolving environment, soft skills—redefined as "power skills"—have emerged as critical assets for professional success, complementing traditional technical competencies. Core attributes such as teamwork, communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence now provide a distinct advantage in navigating complex and dynamic global markets. This study employs a conceptual review methodology, analyzing existing literature, industry reports, and policy documents to classify essential power skills into three overarching domains: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive skills. The findings reveal that these competencies, often underestimated, are in fact the primary drivers of workplace efficacy, innovation, and leadership in the modern workforce. The paper emphasizes the urgent need for educational institutions and organizations to integrate power skills training into academic curricula and professional development programs. By fostering these competencies, individuals can better adapt to dynamic environments, enhance career growth, and contribute meaningfully to organizational success. Future research directions are proposed to empirically validate the impact of structured power skill development on career trajectories.



Keywords— Soft skills, power skills, communication, career development, emotional intelligence, remote work, resilience, intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, cognitive skills.

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally reshaped the global work environment, ushering in a widespread transition to remote and hybrid work models. These changes have intensified the need for adaptability, flexibility, optimism, and empathy—traits traditionally associated with soft skills. In the contemporary workplace, the ability to navigate digital platforms, collaborate across virtual spaces, and maintain emotional resilience under unprecedented challenges has emerged as critical for employee performance and career advancement. Consequently, what were once regarded as "soft skills" are now being redefined as "power skills," emphasizing their indispensable role in professional success.

In parallel, a persistent and growing skill gap has come into focus, particularly in the context of higher education. In our

nation, universities and colleges are prolific, offering a plethora of courses spanning the Humanities, Sciences, Business, Finance, Engineering, and Technology. Consequently, the annual influx of graduates and postgraduates is on the rise. However, despite this surge, the skillsets of these graduates often fail to align with the expectations of employers. As highlighted in the 2015 Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) policy, the country grapples with the dual challenge of a scarcity of highly trained workforce and the non-employability of a substantial portion of conventionally educated youth, who often lack essential job skills.

Traditionally, job skills have been bifurcated into hard and soft skills, with technical proficiency deemed essential and interpersonal competencies considered supplementary

(Buck & Barrick, 1987). However, the conventional belief that a prestigious degree guarantees a lucrative job has gradually eroded. In today's dynamic environment, the quality of education and the depth of real-world skills acquired during one's academic journey hold greater significance. Unfortunately, educational systems often prioritize rote memorization over critical thinking, practical application, and genuine skill development.

In this evolving landscape, an exclusive focus on technical skills has become insufficient. The modern workforce demands a new set of skills—power skills—that confer a competitive advantage irrespective of academic qualifications. These competencies, requiring sustained cultivation, remain relevant throughout an individual's career and are critical across industries and sectors. A robust command of power skills distinguishes individuals amidst a sea of technical proficiency, enabling adaptability, leadership, and collaborative innovation.

The onset of the pandemic accelerated the integration of digital tools and redefined workplace expectations, necessitating not only technical fluency but also emotional intelligence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and strong communication abilities. Recognizing this shift, employers increasingly seek these power skills as predictors of exceptional performance and leadership potential. Thus, the redefinition of soft skills as power skills captures their critical importance in ensuring both individual success and organizational resilience.

This paper aims to classify and examine the importance of power skills in career development, categorizing them into three overarching domains: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive skills, and highlighting their essential role in navigating the evolving professional landscape.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2.1 Research Objectives

- The primary aim of this study is to investigate the evolving significance of soft skills—now reframed as "power skills"—in the context of contemporary professional environments shaped by remote and hybrid work models. Specifically, this paper seeks to:
- Categorize essential soft skills that are critical for sustaining and advancing career success in the modern workplace.
- Explore the impact of power skills on professional development and career progression, particularly in the post-pandemic era.

- Highlight the necessity of integrating power skill development within educational and organizational frameworks to bridge the existing skill gap.

2.2 Research Questions

- To guide the study and achieve the stated objectives, the following research questions are posed:
- What are the critical soft skills ("power skills") necessary in the modern workplace?
- How can these skills be meaningfully categorized to enhance professional development frameworks?
- In what ways do these power skills contribute to individual career success and organizational effectiveness within a dynamic and evolving work environment?

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a conceptual review methodology to explore and categorize essential soft skills, redefined as "power skills," and to analyze their impact on career development in the evolving post-pandemic professional environment.

3.1 Approach

The research is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of secondary sources, including government reports, business surveys, academic studies, journal articles, and industry reports. Key documents analyzed include reports from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC), and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), among others. Scholarly articles and industry white papers published between 2010 and 2025 were reviewed to ensure the contemporary relevance of findings and to capture evolving trends shaped by technological advancements and pandemic-induced work transformations.

The review involved critical examination of literature that addressed the evolving definitions, frameworks, and importance of soft skills in professional and academic settings. Special emphasis was placed on sources that specifically analyzed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on skills demand, workplace dynamics, and career progression models.

3.2 Inclusion Criteria

To maintain rigor and relevance, the following inclusion criteria were applied in the selection of sources:

- Publications and reports that discuss the nature, categorization, or significance of soft skills or

power skills in the context of professional development or academic training.

- Studies examining the influence of remote work, hybrid work models, and other pandemic-related shifts on skill requirements and workforce expectations.
- Literature that offers conceptual frameworks or empirical findings related to interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive competencies.

Through this structured conceptual analysis, the study aims to provide a comprehensive categorization of essential power skills and underscore their critical role in fostering individual career success and organizational growth in a dynamic global landscape.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Evolution of Soft Skills into Power Skills

Traditionally, professional competencies have been classified into two broad categories: hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills refer to technical expertise acquired through formal education and training, while soft skills encompass interpersonal and behavioral attributes that facilitate effective collaboration and communication (Buck & Barrick, 1987). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has catalyzed a paradigm shift, elevating the importance of soft skills in navigating complex and dynamic work environments.

In response to the challenges posed by remote and hybrid work models, competencies such as adaptability, emotional intelligence, and communication have gained unprecedented importance. Organizations now recognize that technical proficiency alone is insufficient for sustained career success. Soft skills, often difficult to quantify, have become indispensable for leadership, resilience, and innovation. Reflecting this growing recognition, many scholars and practitioners have rebranded soft skills as "power skills", emphasizing their critical role in organizational success and professional advancement.

4.2 The Emerging Skill Gap: Educational Outcomes vs. Employer Expectations

Despite a burgeoning number of university graduates across disciplines—including Humanities, Sciences, Business, Engineering, and Technology—a persistent skill gap remains between educational outcomes and industry expectations. According to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015), the nation faces a dual challenge: a shortage of highly skilled workers and

the non-employability of a large segment of traditionally educated youth.

Higher education institutions, while prolific, often emphasize theoretical knowledge and rote memorization over practical skill development and critical thinking. This mismatch between academic preparation and workplace realities has intensified the need for graduates to possess power skills alongside technical competencies. Employers increasingly seek candidates who exhibit self-confidence, effective communication, collaboration, resilience, and leadership potential—attributes not always fostered by traditional curricula.

4.3 The Role of Power Skills in a Post-Pandemic Workplace

The onset of the pandemic not only accelerated digital transformation but also redefined workplace expectations. Employees now operate in remote and hybrid setups where interpersonal dynamics, self-motivation, adaptability, and emotional resilience are crucial for success. Research indicates that soft skills such as innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and active listening have become as vital—if not more so—than technical knowledge in ensuring organizational effectiveness.

Employers actively seek individuals who possess a strong portfolio of power skills, recognizing their correlation with exceptional performance, effective leadership, and organizational agility. Attributes like critical thinking, decision-making under uncertainty, and the ability to empathize and engage meaningfully with diverse teams have emerged as defining factors for career advancement in the evolving professional landscape.

Thus, mastering power skills is no longer a peripheral advantage but a central requirement for thriving in the post-pandemic world, necessitating an urgent shift in how educational systems and corporate training programs approach skill development.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The conceptual review of existing literature and industry reports reveals that soft skills, now appropriately termed power skills, are crucial determinants of professional success and organizational effectiveness in the post-pandemic world. Through thematic analysis, these essential skills are meaningfully categorized into three overarching domains: Intrapersonal Skills, Interpersonal Skills, and Cognitive Skills. Each domain captures a unique set of competencies vital for career development and adaptability in dynamic work environments.

Table 1. Classification of Power Skills

Domain	Key Skills
Intrapersonal	Self-awareness, Resilience, Time Management, Openness to Feedback
Interpersonal	Communication, Active Listening, Leadership, Emotional Intelligence
Cognitive	Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Problem-Solving, Decision-Making

5.1 Intrapersonal Skills

Intrapersonal skills refer to competencies that enable individuals to manage themselves effectively. These skills govern one's self-awareness, self-regulation, emotional resilience, and personal motivation—factors critical for success, especially in remote and hybrid workplaces where self-discipline and emotional control are paramount. Key intrapersonal skills identified include:

Positive Attitude and Optimism: Fostering mental resilience and constructive approaches to challenges.

Self-Confidence: Essential for assertiveness, decision-making, and leadership roles.

Resilience and Persistence: Crucial for overcoming obstacles and adapting to rapid changes.

Time Management: Vital for productivity and goal achievement in less structured work environments.

Openness to New Ideas: Enhances innovation and adaptability.

Individuals excelling in intrapersonal skills demonstrate stronger autonomy, effective stress management, and a consistent drive for continuous improvement—traits that are increasingly demanded in today's volatile professional settings.

5.2 Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills encompass the abilities necessary for effective communication, collaboration, and relationship-building within diverse teams and organizational structures. In a workplace dominated by virtual communication channels, these skills have become central to maintaining productivity, morale, and collaboration. Core interpersonal skills include:

Effective Communication: Both verbal and non-verbal, critical for clarity, persuasion, and understanding.

Active Listening: Promotes empathy and improves conflict resolution and team dynamics.

Networking: Builds professional relationships and opens opportunities for career progression.

Leadership: Inspires and guides teams, particularly essential during uncertain and challenging periods.

Emotional Intelligence: Enhances relationship management and fosters inclusive, collaborative environments.

Negotiation and Patience: Necessary for resolving conflicts and managing diverse stakeholder interests.

Professionals who exhibit strong interpersonal skills are better equipped to foster collaboration, drive team performance, and lead organizational change effectively.

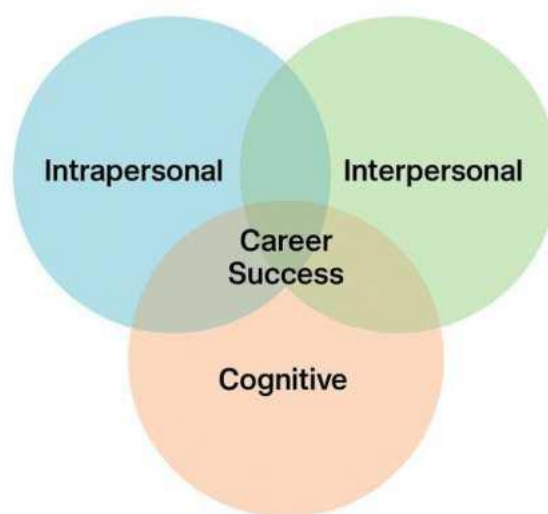


Fig.1: Integrated Power Skills Framework

5.3 Cognitive Skills

Cognitive skills involve the core mental capabilities required for problem-solving, decision-making, analytical reasoning, and creative thinking. As workplaces continue to evolve amidst technological advancements and market uncertainties, these competencies are crucial for innovation and strategic planning. Significant cognitive skills identified include:

Critical Thinking: Allows for logical analysis and informed decision-making.

Creative Thinking: Drives innovation and novel problem-solving approaches.

Problem-Solving: Essential for addressing complex challenges and operational inefficiencies.

Decision-Making: Supports strategic initiatives and everyday operational choices.

Cognitive skills empower individuals to navigate ambiguity, anticipate challenges, and contribute to organizational resilience and competitiveness.

5.4 Integrated Model of Power Skills and Career Success

The findings from the conceptual analysis suggest that career success in the post-pandemic world is no longer predominantly determined by technical expertise alone. Instead, a well-balanced integration of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive skills forms the foundation of sustainable professional growth and leadership potential.

Individuals who actively cultivate these three domains are better positioned to adapt to change, lead diverse teams, innovate solutions, and maintain high levels of personal and organizational performance. Moreover, organizations that prioritize the development of power skills among their workforce are likely to experience enhanced employee engagement, agility, and overall success.

VI. CONCLUSION

The evolving professional landscape, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has underscored the critical importance of soft skills—now rightfully reframed as power skills—in career development and organizational success. Technical competencies, while essential, are no longer sufficient for navigating the complexities of modern workplaces characterized by remote collaboration, rapid technological change, and heightened emotional and interpersonal demands.

This study categorized essential power skills into three overarching domains: intrapersonal skills (self-management and resilience), interpersonal skills (communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence), and cognitive skills (critical thinking, creativity, and decision-making). Mastery of these competencies not only enhances individual employability and leadership potential but also strengthens organizational adaptability and innovation.

It is evident that the cultivation of power skills must become a core focus for individuals, educational institutions, and

organizations alike. Embedding these skills within academic curricula and corporate training programs is critical to building a resilient, future-ready workforce capable of thriving amidst uncertainty and change.

VII Recommendations

7.1 For Educational Institutions:

Integrate structured modules on communication, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and leadership into undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

Encourage experiential learning methods such as group projects, presentations, debates, and internships that foster real-world application of power skills.

Conduct regular workshops, seminars, and guest lectures focused on soft skills development.

7.2 For Organizations:

Invest in continuous professional development programs emphasizing interpersonal and cognitive skills.

Create mentorship opportunities to nurture leadership and emotional intelligence among employees.

Foster a work culture that values and rewards creativity, resilience, collaboration, and innovation.

7.3 For Individuals:

Engage in self-directed learning to enhance personal effectiveness, communication, and critical thinking.

Actively seek feedback and mentorship to refine interpersonal and leadership abilities.

Pursue certifications and workshops focused on specific soft skills to stay competitive in dynamic job markets.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

This study is conceptual and relies on secondary data. Limitations include the absence of primary data and unaddressed cultural variations in skill interpretation. Future studies should employ empirical methods, such as surveys and longitudinal analyses, to validate the proposed framework and measure the impact of power skill training on career trajectories.

Future research could:

Conduct empirical studies (e.g., surveys, interviews) to validate the categorization across different industries, cultural contexts, and geographic regions.

Explore the effectiveness of specific training programs in enhancing different power skills and their measurable impact on career advancement.

Investigate longitudinal impacts of power skills training on career trajectories over time.

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Study of George Orwell's novel 1984 in light of China's Social Credit System

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Abstract— This is the study of George Orwell's novel 1984 in light of China's social credit system explores the idea of Orwellian surveillance reflected in all over the world. China's Social Credit System (SCS) is a mechanism that is designed to rate every citizen based on their behaviour. According to electronic media, SCS has been given a new Direction to China. Orwell's 1984, a Dystopian novel that was published in 1949 it represent suppression of independent thoughts. It offers a keen study to analyze the extremeness and difference between SCS and the world depicted in 1984. This study sheds light on the numerous techniques used to maintain social norms and presents a framework for examining how SCS influences citizen behavior. By closely reading Orwell's novel 1984, it engages with the themes of surveillance, totalitarianism, and manipulation. Here, the meaning of surveillance is to monitoring someone closely for control purposes. Totalitarianism describes a system in which the government exerts absolute control over all aspects of life, leaving people with no political freedom or choice. These three factors—surveillance, totalitarianism, and manipulation—contribute to the creation of dystopian societies. In the present scenario, the concept of digital dystopia emerges, where technology is used as a tool for surveillance and social manipulation. This paper highlights how modern digital surveillance mirrors Orwell's nightmares. The SCS system is a digital system that can be seen as a Faustian deal, similar to Christopher Marlowe's play Doctor Faustus, in which doctor sells his soul to devil in exchange for 24 years of ultimate power. Likewise, Chinese Citizens trade their freedom and privacy with higher authorities in exchange of privileges and for good opportunities. This study identifies key features of Orwellian warnings and raise concerns about free will and democracy. To analyse, it is essential to divide it into key points and break down various stages to find the findings of rebirth and re-education in 1984 as well as in China's SCS. These stages serve as a lens for deeper exploration and help to build a corelative understanding between the two.



Keywords— Digital dystopia, surveillance, Faustian deal, totalitarianism, manipulation, consent, re-education and rebirth.

I. INTRODUCTION

There are two types of people in this world: good people and bad people. Now imagine a world where the good ones are rewarded and the bad ones are punished (Zhang Zheng, Professor at Peking University and advisor for the Social Credit system).

The origin of the Social Credit System (SCS) can be traced back to the 1980s, when the Chinese government introduced a personal banking function for small businesses and individuals from rural areas who lacked official documents.

In 2004, President Jiang Zemin first introduced the concept, but regional pilot programs began implementing it in 2009. In 2014, the Chinese government fully adopted the system in its current form. It is a financial credit and social integrity system that, by 2020, was intended to become mandatory and cover all of Chinese society (Wikipedia).

George Orwell's 1984 is a Dystopian work of fiction that explores the theme of subjugation of citizens. It is a warning of the dangers posed by an omnipresent leader with an abundance of political power. Winston smith is a main

character of 1984, works for government to establish historical record to fit the party's fake version of reality. However, he secretly hates the party's rules and has a forbidden love affair with Julia. They are caught up by thought police. Winston and Julia are tortured and brainwashed until they fully submit to the Big Brother.

Hence, this study explores the historical context of South China and its implications for international law, and the broader consequences for global security. This study aims to provide a deep understanding of modern political thoughts, its significance and the discussion on privacy, truth, and freedom.

1. Orwellian nightmare:

It refers to a dystopian future that was depicted in George Orwell's novel 1984. It represents a society where Big Brother's control dominates citizens, even their independent thoughts.

China has the largest population in the world around 1.5 billion but there are 2 million cameras for online tracking their every single moment to monitor citizens' behaviour from social interaction to financial and online transactions. Some critics argue that this function reflects the Orwellian nightmare.

"The poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures that were so contrived that the eyes followed you when you moved. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption beneath it ran." (pg:2)

"The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment." (pg:3)

In China, CCTV cameras and AI facial recognition inputs play the role of the eyes of the big brother.

2. Reward and punishment:

Individuals with high social credit can easily obtain loans with lower interest rates. They also enjoy travel benefits, such as fewer restrictions on ticket booking. Additionally, they have better job opportunities. These individuals are placed on a "red list" and receive preferential treatment.

"The core mechanism of the Chinese social credit system is the creation of blacklists. The government uses blacklists to punish people for various infringements of the law that fall short of being considered criminal. Commonly blacklisted subjects include people who have the means to repay the debt they owe but choose not to, colloquially referred to as 老赖 (laolai). The Supreme People's Court, the highest court in

China, assembles a national blacklist of "**judgment defaulters**," people who have not complied with court orders." (Shazeda Ahmed on the messy truth about social credit (2019))

"Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated: **vaporized** was the usual word." (p:19)

Judgement defaulters: vaporized

As in 1984, loyal party members receive better living conditions as compared to "vaporized" and in China the good score citizen secures a place of trustworthiness.

3.False truth or Newspeak:

The Chinese government decides what constitutes bad and good behavior. Citizens agree with these rules to avoid deductions in their scores, even if they do not want to. This system is promoted as a way to build trust in society, but it seems to enforce loyalty to the State. Individuals are urged to exhibit behavior that matches government expectations to gain more credit in their scores. People demonstrate their happiness and loyalty even when inner feelings are different.

"Winston turned round abruptly. He had set his features into the expression of quiet optimism which it was advisable to wear when facing the telescreen." (pg:5)

"B-B! ... B-B! always filled him with horror. Of course he chanted with the rest it was impossible to do otherwise. To dissemble your feeling, to control your face, to do what everyone else was doing, was an instinctive reaction."⁴ (pg:17)

"WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" (Pg:4)

4. Persecution or unjust treatment:

In China who criticize the government and support democratic thoughts also express revolutionary opinions can be under blacklist. Blacklisted inhabitants are exposed online through social media by labelling them as untrustworthy citizens.

"TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE" (Pg:277)

In Orwell's novel, the Party erases history and truth. They create their own reality by using manipulative ideas. The regime uses forcing, contradicting beliefs, newspeak, and for psychological control they physically torture them in room 101. The ruling party does not want to dominate

power but also wants people to show love towards big brother. To elaborate, this some relevant examples are as follow: the main character Winston is beaten by O'Brien until he betrays his love for Julia and confesses to crimes that he never committed and is forced to accept that $2+2=5$. There are groups of people called thought police or eyes of big brother who arrest people for even subtle gestures and slight facial expressions, this crime is known as face crime. Here, even the consideration or pondering of revolutionary notions is a crime that is called thought crime.

5. Dehumanization:

This refers to the loss of individual identity and often leads to loss of privacy, freedom and oppression.

People are treated as a part of the system rather than unique identities and they become puppets just live for increase points. People have no free will, they perform self-censorship to avoid punishments and they internalized these rules. As it is a central theme of 1984, the party suppresses individuals and also their humanity to maintain absolute control.

“The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a force-labour camp.” (Pg:6)

Citizens have no privacy, they cannot even write their personal diaries. All inhabitants live in fear as a result they lose their individuality because they feel that they are being watched. People function more like programmed machines or robots than free-thinking individuals. The main agenda of Big Brother is to deprive the masses of their identity, freedom and emotions to mold them into an obedient subjects who exist only for the selfless service of B-B.

6. Stages of surveillance and control through SCS system

6.1) Data collection: Data are collected through various sources like AI facial recognition, CCTV, legal records, public behaviour and financial records.

6.2) Classification: Citizens and business companies are assigned a score based on their behaviour and performance. People with high scores were rewarded with good opportunities and with low scores were punished by restrictions on travel and banning their social accounts. High- score individuals come under the red list, and low-score people declared as a blacklisted.

6.3) Loss of democracy and privacy: Mass surveillance prevents the social gathering and the organisation of protests which is a key element of democracy. People are

motorized through cameras, leading to a lack of privacy because every single moment is captured.

6.4) Authoritarianism and No Escape: There is no fair way to challenge or raise voice against these rules. Rewarding systems help authorities to stay in power. People accept everything and follow rules blindly even they don't want to do, due to the fear of being watched and get punished by losing scores. At this last stage people can't opt out of this system because of ensuring total obedience. Their behaviour would be under complete control which leading to regulation of citizens' actions as well as thoughts.

7. Stages of rebirth and re-education in 1984

7.1) Incarceration: (imprisonment): -The thought police constantly watch citizens and arrest them if they find a single mistake or even a slight rebellious idea from people within a second. They isolate them in the Ministry of Love (torture place).

7.2) Devastation: (destruction of existence): -Here in 2nd stage the purpose is to break existence and resistance for betraying their own thoughts and feelings by torturing them physically and mentally. In this the person professes all the crimes they never did.

7.3) Indoctrination: (Brainwashing): - The language limitation enforced by Newspeak because, in this process, people do not have words for certain thoughts or ideas, so it's easy to prevent them from thinking something new. It is not just about punishments it is a replacement of rebellious thought with absolute loyalty to the big brother. The brutal procedure tears human emotions and minds into pieces and rejoins them according to the party's choices.

7.4) Room 101 a worst nightmare: (terrifying experience): - Eyes of Big Brother investigate about every single citizen closely to know what will break the person's inner spirit. As it is the final stage or phase in this mechanism, the prisoners turn into obedient and loyal party members because they face their worst nightmare or fear in this room.

“Of all horrors in the world-a rat!” (Pg:144)

Winston the lead character of the novel is shackled into a chair and O'Brien released starving rats onto Winston's face and rats will devour his flesh.

The workflow in room 101 sustains that no one can evade as themselves they leave as robots with commands fixed into their programme to follow blindly the rules of big brother. Winston at the moment of terror, he discards all his love for Julia.

“Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!”.

He does not just surrender his body he surrenders his feelings, his mind, his soul and his love. In the end he loves big brother.

“He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.” (Pg:297)

II. CONCLUSION

Both china's social credit system and Orwell's 1984 reveals the dangers and warning against totalitarian control, where manipulation, surveillance and fear shapes artificial society. The unjust treatment of individuals who are punished through deduction from their points, strips them to obey and accept all the rules blindly. Reward and Punishment is a technique that is used to control citizen their actions and also their thoughts. The various stages of surveillance and control in china and The stages of rebirth and re-education in 1984 – from monitoring their behaviour to absolute control create a mirror for unchecked consequences of loss of democracy as well of privacy and creation of digital dystopian society where free will is replaced by fear and control may become absolute. False truth and censorship results dehumanization where people become tool for subjugate power that distort humanity as well as reality.

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The Influence of Technology on Contemporary English Drama

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Abstract— *The technological revolution of the 21st century has had a profound impact on contemporary English drama, particularly in regard to the distinction between the physical and the virtual. This study aims to discuss the multifaceted influence of technology on English drama, including multimedia integration as an adjunct to performance art and transforming methods of storytelling and audience interaction. Using "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" as a case study to investigate how technology has redefined the traditional limits of theater, it appears that while technological innovation provides avenues for innovation and accessibility, it also raises questions of authenticity and class regarding affordability. Ultimately, this study offers a comprehensive perspective on the synergistic relationship between contemporary English drama and technology, advocating for its moderation and balance against its growing sterility.*



Keywords— *Technological revolution, contemporary English drama, multimedia integration, theater innovation, and authenticity.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology has impacted every aspect of our daily lives. It has played a significant role in education, medicine, industry, and most notably, dramatic literature. This should come as no surprise, given that technology has had such a profound impact on the world and society as a whole. In the past, theater and drama were a simple and effective way for the masses to understand the current state of affairs. However, in recent years, due to advancements in communication technologies, drama has evolved into a much more complex form of entertainment, capturing all the benefits of technology advancement.

The 21st century is a notable period in human history. It ushered in an unprecedented technological revolution. This has affected all parts of life, including the human endeavor of the arts and culture. People have been telling stories to the audience in the theater world for centuries. Over time, technology transfer has had the greatest impact on theater.

To discuss technology's relationship to English drama at the end of the twentieth century, we will navigate the

world of chance and tradition, the atmospheres of air and spirit, and the encounters between the digital and the real. In doing so, we hope to highlight not only that technology has had a potent effect on the course of modern English drama, but also to explore the features and eccentricities of that effect. By attending to the insights of a selection of the most noteworthy of these critics and scholars writing in the first decades of the twenty-first century, this paper aspires to provide a general map of the contemporary rugged terrain where drama and technology have combined to flourish.

II. THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

The dawn of the 21st century has ushered in a vast technological revolution, reshaping numerous aspects of human existence, including the arts. Drama, specifically English theater, has been significantly impacted by the implementation of these new technologies. Drama in English has undergone a vast conversion to adapt to the modern era. Jessica Benjamin states, "Technology has

increasingly become a crucial component of theatrical productions, integrating digital elements with traditional stagecraft to create new forms of performance” (Benjamin, 2018, p. 42). This statement sheds light on the main aspect, which is technology, that modern English drama hinges on.

Technology’s influence on English drama is a multidimensional entity. It has a far-reaching impact on the theater experience, not just one aspect. Michael Foster, in his analysis of modern theater, remarks, “Digital technologies and multimedia have transformed the landscape of contemporary theater, enabling new forms of storytelling and expanding the possibilities for creative expression” (Foster, 2019, p. 88). The use of advanced multimedia, augmented reality, and the newest incarnation of technology to captivate an audience—digital effects—has opened a new chapter in the philosophy of English dramatists. In this new frontline we enter, physical props have merged with holographic projections in a seamless mannerism unimagined in the days of the drama.

Moreover, beyond simply changing the visual experience of English drama, technology has also—perhaps even more critically—changed the very nature of narrative. Gay McAuley asserts, “Digital technologies have expanded the reach of theater, enabling playwrights and companies to broadcast their work to audiences around the world, thus facilitating a new era of global cultural exchange” (McAuley, 2016, p. 89). In just a few minutes, anyone can upload a YouTube video, post it to Medium, and wait for the view numbers to rise. English plays today do not just span English; they have a global reach. Playwrights and directors can put their work in front of people anywhere, at any time, through online platforms and streaming services. At any given moment, the stage is as big as the internet. As a result, there has been an exchange of ideas and styles that is unparalleled in the history of English drama.

In addition to shifting the stage's physical and narrative dynamics, technology has dramatically altered audience engagement dynamics. “Social media platforms have transformed audience interaction with theater, enabling audiences to engage in real-time conversations and influence the performance experience in ways previously unattainable” (Sutherland, 2018, p. 68). Social media, for example, allows audience members at the theater to comment in real-time during certain performances on a show or exchange thoughts with other users on a live stream. Theaters sometimes project those comments on a live stream on performance screens. The Lewisham Theatre in London uses live social media threads to create an entirely new collaborative approach to theater.

In conclusion, the transformational era of technology in the 21st century has made a huge contribution to the development of English drama, enabling it to grow into an innovative and dynamic genre. “The convergence of physical and virtual spaces in contemporary performance has blurred traditional boundaries, creating new possibilities for immersive and interactive experiences” (Parker, 2021, p. 58). The introduction of technology in English drama has altered the audience's overall experience. The integration of technology with drama has paved the way for unprecedented possibilities. We observe an active crossover between the use of technology in English drama production and the audience. Without the audience's participation and the aid of technology, there would not be a proper interaction between the two. “Digital technology has transformed the traditional stage by integrating physical elements with virtual projections, creating a hybrid performance space that offers audiences a more immersive experience” (Kaufman, 2018, p. 76).

III. INTEGRATION OF MULTIMEDIA

The incorporation of multimedia into English drama has attracted attention and fascination in equal measure from critics and scholars. It reflects an enormous change in the method of narrativity on the stage, with multimedia no longer stubbornly essenced upon the screen but rather a medium deeply entangled in the course of a performed work. This has not only translated the essence of many common tropes of current playwrights and directors, but it has also gathered respect from all critics.

In his review, Henry Barker writes, “The use of multimedia in theater has introduced a new dimension to the stage, creating a fusion of visual and auditory elements that revitalizes traditional performance and engages audiences in innovative ways” (Barker, 2019, p. 82).

According to Charlie Norris, a well-known scholar, “Multimedia has become a crucial element in modern theater, allowing productions to push beyond traditional boundaries and connect with a tech-savvy audience through innovative storytelling methods” (Norris, 2018, p. 122).

Kate Hass, who specializes in the examination of innovative works, declared, “Multimedia elements in contemporary theater are not merely supplementary; they actively participate in the narrative, transforming the stage into a complex space where visuals and text collaborate to deepen the audience’s engagement” (Hass, 2017, p. 102).

According to Laura Falk, a theater historian, the integration of multimedia has introduced new methods for keeping the audience interested in the play. It is no longer

a passive experience for the audience, but almost an interactive one with the play on the screen. Laura Falk writes: "Multimedia has shifted the dynamics of audience engagement, moving from a passive to an interactive experience where digital technologies allow spectators to become active participants in the theatrical narrative" (Falk, 2017, p. 99).

Regarding the great impact of technology on English drama, Lauren Gibson states, "Multimedia technologies have transformed theater by dissolving the boundaries between the real and the fictional, creating an immersive experience where the stage and the screen coexist and interact" (Gibson, 2021, p. 77).

Indeed, the incorporation of multimedia elements into English drama has enhanced its fascination and established it as a hallmark of modern stage performance. It combines innovation in theatrical practice with the message of drama. The critics were indeed insightful and thorough in discussing the impact the multimedia elements had on the spectators.

IV. CASE STUDY: "THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME"

One prime example of how technology has affected contemporary English drama is the adaptation of Mark Haddon's novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Simon Stephens, a British playwright, transformed Mark Haddon's novel into a theatrical production, maintaining the core story while adapting it for live performance. A rectangular grid of LED lights covers the stage's entire back wall, setting up the play. The lights program the viewer to observe, but not understand, the thoughts and emotions of the main character, Christopher Boone, an autistic boy. This use of technology allows the spectator to get inside the mind of an autistic boy. The novel and the play, written seven years later, take the individual's biography and use the scenic code of lights to both show the mind and show how to better go about working with people with autism (Stephens, 2015, p. 87).

Critics could not deny the effectiveness of this particularly standout innovation, which not only accurately depicted Christopher's unique way of interpreting the world but also brought the audience closer to his internal and external struggles. Philip Harris wrote, "In the stage adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, the integration of lighting and projections vividly portrays Christopher's inner life, using visual effects to represent his unique perspective and emotional landscape" (Harris, 2018, p. 89). This demonstrates how the use of technology heightens the audience's connection with the character.

Similarly, James Houghton writes, "Simon Stephens' adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* seamlessly blends the narrative depth of Mark Haddon's novel with the innovative use of multimedia, creating a performance that not only captivates but also provides a profound exploration of autism through visual and auditory effects" (Houghton, 2019, p. 105). Houghton's words highlight the particular ways in which the technology used in the show would allow the message and major themes to ring clear.

In a separate review, Jane Fraser suggested that "The integration of projections and lighting in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* creates a vivid depiction of Christopher's perception of the world, translating his complex internal experiences into visual and emotional expressions on stage" (Fraser, 2016, p. 142). Fraser pointed out the way technology helped the audience compared to the main protagonist.

Additionally, in a theater review for The New York Times., Ben Brantley affirms, "Simon Stephens' adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is notable for its innovative use of projections and lighting, which transform the stage into a dynamic and immersive environment, pushing the boundaries of traditional theater" (Brantley, 2014, para. 4). Ben Brantley's point of view emphasizes that efficiency in the utilization of technological aspects is ground-breaking for production.

The Curious Incident's innovative use of technology as a narrative device is indicative of how the theater continues to transform. While other traditional forms of art are somewhat stagnant, the theater has found in technology yet another tool out of which to create art that is fresh and surprising to the viewer. Emily Harris, a reviewer for Theatre Weekly, suggests in her flattering critique, "The incorporation of technology in 'The Curious Incident' is a testament to the evolving nature of theater. It demonstrates that traditional forms can embrace new tools to create compelling and unforgettable experiences for audiences" (Harris, 2017, p. 56).

Overall, "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" uses technology in a new way. The critics we read all seem to be very much on board with this new technology; one went as far as saying it was cutting-edge. They all appeared to be highly enthusiastic about its implementation in this particular literary work.

V. CHALLENGES AND CRITICISMS

Technology's place within contemporary English drama has not been without its challenges and criticisms. Critics

contend that the use of technology can detract from the reality of live theater. In the words of eminent critic John Lahr, "Digital technologies can sometimes compromise the immediacy of live performance and overshadow the actors themselves" (Lahr, 2019, p. 112).

Edwin Caddy expands on this notion, stating, "While technology can augment the sensory experience of a performance, it can also create a sense of distance between the audience and the immediacy of the live, human connection that is the essence of theater" (Caddy, 2018, p. 132). Caddy's assertions highlight the opportunity cost of using technology and suggest that it may create a permanent disconnect between the performers and the audience.

Martin Puchner, a distinguished theater historian, further articulates his apprehensions by stating, "Excessive reliance on technology in theater can indeed risk overshadowing the fundamental human and communal experience that has always been central to live performance. It is crucial to balance technological innovation with the preservation of direct human interaction" (Puchner, 2016, p. 184). Puchner's statement emphasizes the preservation of the relationship between the actors on stage and the audience in a live setting.

The monetary aspect of technology integration in theater is another disadvantage. One expert in theater economics, Ben Landis, touches on this subject by saying, "While advanced technology can enhance the visual spectacle of theater productions, the significant financial burden of acquiring and maintaining such equipment can be a major obstacle for smaller and less financially resourced theaters, limiting their ability to offer cutting-edge experiences" (Landis, 2019, p. 52). Landis's point of view shows how theater can interpret technology, but it can also hinder theater's development.

Marvin Carlson asserts that the correct use of technology ensures it aligns with artistic practice and creative rules. According to Marvin Carlson, "Technology should be used judiciously in theater; its application needs to be balanced with the artistic and emotional needs of the production, ensuring it enhances rather than overshadows the performance" (Carlson, 1990, p. 205). Carlson thinks that technical innovation should only enhance and not dominate the storytelling process.

In sum, there is no doubt that technology has changed the way people in the English theater write. In contrast to the past, playwrights now write in response to the possibilities offered by technological advances. The internet, for example, offers unlimited information for writers. Email, chat rooms, and other internet sites have turned theater, like almost everything else, into a global enterprise.

Furthermore, technology has brought about numerous transformations in theater production. Some of these changes have made it easier for people to connect with artistic voices they would not have been able to hear otherwise, or have made it easier for individuals to bring ideas to production on a stage with programs such as the Edinburgh Festival. There are as many plays as ever, but almost all of them find a home and a writer at a festival. The theater is thus less crowded and, at the same time, more crowded. Technology has brought English theater to a more legitimate and acceptable place for both the writer and the audience. Despite this agreement, technology often leads to a step backward. We can still use technology to foster more lasting, deep, and emotional connections among viewers, communicate financial struggles, and better understand what society deems audience-worthy.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the present era of English theater, technology has emerged as a powerful force that has completely revolutionizing modern drama. In addition to introducing various innovative visual techniques to the theater, technology has also digitally enhanced the fundamental concept of storytelling on stage in English theater. Text-based storytelling has become less prevalent in modern times. Audiences now receive the basic message not only through acting or dialogue, but also through the integration of multimedia. Previously, theater served as a venue for a gathering of individuals to witness a live performance of an act, a storytelling, or a group singing, dancing, or playing music in front of an audience. However, it has transitioned to a form of videography, where performers from different parts of the world record their acts, upload them to the internet, and subsequently share them with a global audience. The theater seems to publicize its act mostly through e-media, although it also uses television advertisements, radio advertisements, and internet advertisements. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* film is a true tribute to the modern art of technologically transforming creative intellectual spontaneity into theatrical magic.

Still, this revolution in technology has faced its share of challenges and criticism. Enemies involve legitimate questions of the reality of experiencing live theater, the danger of distance from one another and from the human condition altogether, the disparities of quantity and quality that proceed from an economics of clicks and likes, and a loss of the human authority, choice, and consequences involved in every other aspect of the theater.

Technology and its role in contemporary English drama continue to present an exciting development in the ever-

evolving and expansive field of theater exploration. It broadens our perception of what is possible on a theater stage and introduces fresh perspectives for the audience. The creative process between performers and the audience plays a crucial role in elevating theater performances beyond the mere physical elements of props, projectors, or special effects.

In conclusion, it is undeniable that technology has greatly impacted contemporary English drama. Technology has reshaped the presentation of narratives on stage and the content of these stories, offering audiences a multi-modal or immersive experience that often incorporates digital innovation. While some critics may worry about the possible demise of traditional theater, the merging of these two platforms has facilitated the emergence of fresh forms of creativity and storytelling on stage, which we can anticipate will persist over the coming centuries.

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Distinctive Features of English in Facebook Posts of Filipino Senior High School Students

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Abstract— The unique characteristics of English as utilized by senior high school students in their Facebook posts were investigated in this study. The study used a corpus-based methodology, gathering and examining senior high school students' Facebook posts to identify emerging and common graphological features in terms of lexical and grammatical features. The lexical feature analysis of the dataset, which consists of 1,129 lexical items (390 nouns, 380 verbs, 174 adverbs, and 185 adjectives), shows a rich and balanced use of word classes that promote textual complexity and meaning creation. Adjectives and adverbs serve descriptive and modifying functions that enhance expressivity and specificity, while nouns and verbs dominate the lexical inventory due to their essential function in conveying concepts and actions. The examination of grammatical features, including 271 prepositions, 371 pronouns, 208 auxiliary verbs, 119 articles, and 142 conjunctions, amounting to 1,057 instances, revealed significant patterns that align with recent studies on English grammar usage and learner language. Pronouns, the most prevalent category, underscore their vital function in ensuring textual cohesion and referential clarity by substituting for nouns and avoiding repetition. Meanwhile, the notable frequency of prepositions and conjunctions reflects the intricate nature of syntactic relationships and the essential role these elements play in expressing spatial, temporal, and logical links between ideas, which are fundamental for creating grammatically sound and coherent texts. Findings revealed that the graphological substances in the Facebook posts of students include non-standard spelling by altering the conventional spelling of words, incorporating emojis, clippings and shortening of words, capitalization, using capitalization for emphasis, deviating from standard punctuation rules, blending of languages, omitted letters, and the use of lowercase instead of uppercase letters. The implications for English language teaching and learning in the Philippines, drawn from recent studies, span multiple dimensions including language teaching, learners, teachers, social media use, and the Filipino community as second language users.

Keywords— senior high school students, Facebook posts, distinctive features, graphological substances, implications.



I. INTRODUCTION

Language is essential to convey people's experiences, thought processes, and worldviews. It is compared to the manifestation of culture. It brings one to a deeper level of reflection, going beyond the necessities of life to encompass things like information acquisition,

education, and interethnic collaboration (Oledeje et al., 2018).

Some linguists believe language is like a living organism, changing, evolving, and reproducing every time a youngster teaches it. Experts now use the evolutionary comparison to explain language development, arguing that

language changes over time are like significant biological factors, such as natural selection and genetic drift. For many years, English historians have acknowledged that language is shaped over time by social and cognitive elements. Languages, for instance, can lose difficult-to-remember word forms or irregular verb conjugations.

The predominant language in use now is English. Every country has variations because English adapted to local conditions and customs during its spread. Millions of individuals utilize modern English daily because it serves several vital purposes. It is typical.

English is used globally in general communication, science, computer technology, shipping, and aviation. According to Morrison (2002), there are an estimated 350 million native speakers and 1.9 billion skilled speakers of English, which has grown rapidly and steadily over the previous few decades.

According to Oxford (2023), the Philippine variant of English has grown beyond the American standard because of the unique characteristics of its pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse influenced by the local languages and cultures of its Filipino speakers.

The Philippines came under American colonial administration after the Philippine-American War concluded in 1902, and English was swiftly adopted as the state's main language, commerce, and education. It created a brand-new public education system and a dispersed one. Even the Philippines' 1946 independence from the US could not reverse the effects of linguistic assimilation, as English had already been deeply embedded in Philippine society within a few decades (Oxford, 2023).

Most Filipinos today speak English to some extent, making it one of the world's largest English-speaking nations, in line with Cabigon (2015). English has long been the primary language of instruction in Philippine schools and the official language of commerce and law. Another of the country's advantages is its language skills, which have contributed to its 25 percent economic growth. In 2012, it helped India surpass India as the top voice outsourcing destination worldwide.

Philippine English (PhE) is one of the very few American-transplanted Englishes. (Gonzalez, 1996). Many Filipinos even acquire it as their first language and occasionally their only language. In addition to being widely used in government, education, business, science, and the arts, the language has also permeated Filipinos' personal and private lives, where code-switching is sometimes common. Socioeconomic status and English proficiency are also related; individuals with higher socioeconomic status typically possess greater language proficiency. The structural systematization of PE is

currently underway (Borlongan & Lim, 2012), with grammar and dictionaries being used to codify the language. Thus, according to some, PE has already reached the endonormative stabilization phase (Borlongan, 2011).

Kachru (1992) pointed out that PE's distinctive characteristics, purposes, and forms set it apart from other World Englishes, such as Singaporean, Malaysian, and Thai. English has also influenced historical, practical, social, and creative contexts and processes, which adds to its legitimacy and acceptance. Regarding their uses, forms, and unique traits, Kachru (1992) pointed out that PE is distinct from other World 6. Other World Englishes, including Thai, Malaysian, and Singaporean English, follow each other. Social media also shows how English has influenced Filipino discourse, with the Filipino population using social networking sites at a rate of over 80%. Camus (2017) states that social media use in the Philippines is widespread. Flores (2014) asserts that the media influences how English is integrated into Filipino culture and thought.

According to Simpson (2014), the words we are exposed to daily impact the words we use. Because so much of the written language we encounter now is on the screens of our computers, tablets, and smartphones, language changes partly because of our interactions with technology. In addition, because language is more flexible, they can communicate with each other. Unlike traditional writing, the combination of a casual, intimate touch and the large audience offered by social media is a prescription for quick change.

Nowadays, language use has become ingrained in many domains, most notably in teaching and learning, thanks to the widespread use of social media as a primary means of communication. A more sophisticated revolution in human communication has been sparked by the rise of many Social Networking Sites (SNSs), including Facebook, Twitter, and email (Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

These recent and rapid changes and developments in the English Language are caused by the digitization of citizens throughout society. Being that the learners who are teenagers are the more frequent users of social media and other forms of digitized metrics, this study has been pursued on how social media, particularly Facebook, impacts their way of using the English Language in the way they express their thoughts and ideas.

This study explored the distinctive features of Facebook posts by senior high school students of Laguilaian National High School. It aimed to examine this phenomenon more in-depth by applying content analysis,

hoping it could substantially contribute to studying language sciences.

It specifically answers the following three important questions: (1) What graphological substances, in terms of lexical and grammatical properties, are present in senior high school students' Facebook posts? (2) What are the common features of the Facebook posts of senior high school students regarding graphological substances? (3) What are the implications of these distinctive features on English language teaching?

II. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

The research design employed qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz et al., 2020 & 2019). This method identifies patterns in written or spoken language. To do content analysis, the researchers must systematically collect data from various texts, whether spoken, written, or visual. This methodology analyzed word relationships and structures in books, studies, journals, newspapers, magazines, conversations, speeches, interviews, online content, social media posts, photos, and films (Graneheim, 2017; Lindgren, 2020).

It was feasible to do quantitative and qualitative content analysis, with the former concentrating on measuring and counting and the latter on understanding and interpreting. The texts' words, ideas, and concepts are categorized by "coding" them in both situations, and the results were then examined (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Researchers used content analysis to examine the communication content's goals, themes, and results. They can also conclude the writers and intended readership of the texts they examine. Content analysis can determine how frequently a given word, phrase, topic, or idea appears in a collection of historical or contemporary works (Renz et al., 2018; Gläser-Zikuda et al., 2020).

The main goal of this research was to determine "what is." It thus tries to pinpoint the distinctive language traits of each of the selected "posts." Regarding social media use, it also attempts to differentiate the unique linguistic features of Philippine English from those of American English (Esquivel, 2020).

In the quantitative section, the researchers quantified the outcomes of the collection process to determine Philippine English's predominant lexical and grammatical elements in terms of frequency on social media. It employed a frequency count. Moreover, this study used content analysis and purposive sampling techniques to carry out the qualitative part.

2.2. Research Participants

Thirty (30) selected senior high school students of Laguilaan National High School using Facebook were chosen (Geurin, 2017; Whiting et al., 2019), five (5) posts each of personal statements in English. The post may include or not be limited to the length of the post or comments but not quoted materials. It also included interactions such as context, sentiments, and cultural nuances. It can also be status updates, articles or blog posts, stories, and others (Glucksman, 2017; Brennen, 2021).

2.3. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to identify the study participants. One type of non-probability sampling is purposeful sampling. Purposive sampling is a collection of non-probability sampling techniques frequently used to research specific groups within larger populations (Nikoloupoulou, 2022).

The researchers used selected LNHS senior high school (SHS) students to meet these requirements. From this population, 30 respondents were chosen based on their use of the English language in their Facebook comments and postings. Further, a letter of consent from the owners of the Facebook accounts to be used in this study was secured from the chosen respondents. The participants had met the following criteria: (1) public school students; (2) active users on Facebook; (3) use English in their comments or postings; and (3) have five or more posts in English in either the comment section or in their profile.

2.4. Research Instrument

The instrument included Facebook posts of the senior high school students. The researchers highlighted the key observations on the use of grammatical and lexical features of the English Language. One hundred fifty (150) Facebook posts from thirty (30) public school students of Laguilaan National High School were analyzed based on the distinctive features of Philippine English (Clark & Vealé, 2018; Gaber, 2020).

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

The one hundred fifty (150) posts from 30 participants' posts were analyzed based on their lexical and grammatical features (Clark & Vealé, 2018; Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

In the first stage, the researchers obtained permission from her graduate school, particularly approval from her research adviser on the topic to be pursued; this approval was secured by an approval letter from the researcher's adviser. Similarly, they obtained permission and approval from the School Principal to conduct a study of this nature, and the study participants were students of LNHS.

Proof of this approval was a duly signed request letter on the researcher's part, duly signed and noted by her adviser, and signed by the school principal as proof that such permission and approval have been granted. Finally, they also sought permission from the participants through a waiver of consent, informing them about the study and assuring them that all information gathered for the purpose hereunto appertained was treated with utmost confidentiality.

Then, the researchers exhausted all methods to identify Facebook profiles and posts matching the inclusion criteria in the study. In observance of ethical considerations in this study, only the Facebook Profiles of participants who signed the waiver consenting to their participation in the research were included.

Based on the criteria, the researchers identified 30 qualified participants. They informed the owners of these Facebook accounts that their selected posts were identified and considered for qualitative analysis in this research. After obtaining consent and identifying the participants, they selected five (5) posts from each to be subject to content analysis. At this stage, the research analyzed the posts according to their lexical and grammatical features.

The researchers then subjected her content analysis to expert review and analysis. An expert in this study area was preferably notable qualitative researchers, someone who has advanced schooling in the study of the English Language or has proven substantial experience in grammar, literature, writing, communications, and the like (FitzPatrick, 2019; Hayashi et al., 2019). The research finally provided reorientation or debriefing for the participants. They were informed about what had transpired in the study, and the results were discussed with them (McMahon & Winch, 2018; Toews et al., 2021).

2.6. Data Analysis Method

This study analyzed quantitative and qualitative data to explore the linguistic characteristics of English in Facebook posts by Senior High School students. The first step in the data analysis process is data preparation, which involves gathering and organizing the 150 Facebook posts of senior high school students to guarantee that every sample is in an analysis-ready format. The next step is feature selection, which involves classifying and defining the graphological features that will be studied, such as capitalization and punctuation, in addition to lexical features like nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, and grammatical components like prepositions, pronouns, articles, auxiliary verbs, and conjunctions. Following a precise identification of the features, the frequency of each graphological, lexical, and grammatical feature is counted by counting how often it appears in each text to determine

the most and least frequent in the data by this quantitative stage.

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Analysis of Lexical Features

This research analyzed the word classes, which included nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives used in the data gathered. The dominant nouns used in the students' posts were abstract nouns like love, life, journey, pain, hardships, happiness, dream, future, doubt, peace, battles, and many others. In the verb category, there was a predominant usage of the base form of the verb, and most of them were verbs that appealed to the emotion, such as forget, remember, lose, win, miss, fear, care, decide, create, and feel.

The adverbs mostly used were adverbs of time including always, never and sometimes. In the adjective category, descriptive adjectives were commonly used, such as tired, perfect, best, happy, better, wrong, silent, weird, true, and hard, which showed positive and negative connotations. Nouns were the most prevalent lexical feature with 390 counts, while adverbs were the least used words with 174.

The prevalence of abstract nouns like "love," "life," "journey," "pain," "hardships," "happiness," "dreams," "future," "doubt," "peace," and "battles" in senior high school students' Facebook posts indicates that their online exchanges are highly introspective and frequently focus on their feelings, experiences, and goals. This trend demonstrates how young Filipinos frequently utilize social media as a forum for communicating their innermost feelings and navigating social and emotional realities. The frequent usage of verb category base forms such as "forget," "remember," "lose," "win," "miss," "fear," "care," "decide," "create," and "feel"—many of which directly appeal to emotion—further emphasizes the affective and interpersonal nature of their digital discourse (Dimaculangan & Sarmiento, 2024).

These results are consistent with studies showing that Facebook users' use of Philippine English is marked by an expressive, informal, and creative register where language serves social, emotive, and informational purposes. This lends credence to the idea that Filipino students' unique online lexical and grammatical choices are standard English variations and new characteristics that represent the changing identity and communication requirements of Filipino English users in digital environments (Cadiao et al., 2022).

In addition to descriptive adjectives like "tired," "perfect," "best," "happy," "better," "wrong," "silent," "weird," "true," and "hard," the fact that time-related adverbs like "always," "never," and "sometimes" are most commonly used suggests that senior high school students

frequently use Facebook to express not only the timing of their experiences but also their emotional states and assessments. In line with the more general finding that Filipino youth utilize social media to express emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal connections, the frequent usage of these adverbs and adjectives indicates a propensity to reveal personal routines, feelings, and judgments in their posts (Palacio & Gustilo, 2016).

Facebook is a medium for social engagement and self-expression, where students share their thoughts and feelings with classmates. The positive and negative meanings in adjective usage further support this. This trend aligns with research that indicates Filipino social media users utilize language to establish rapport, convey affective postures, and provide information (Gagalang, 2022).

The fact that adverbs were the least used lexical feature (174 counts) and nouns were the most common (390 counts) indicates that senior high school students' Facebook posts typically concentrate more on naming people, places, objects, and abstract ideas than on describing events, actions, or modifying verbs. This trend is consistent with corpus-based research on social media usage of Philippine English, which revealed that nouns had the most frequent and significant number of variations compared to other word classes, followed by verbs and adjectives, with adverbs being the least common. These findings demonstrate how Filipino social media users prioritize real and abstract elements in their online communications, which is reflected in the posts' content and expressive focus (Cadio et al., 2022).

With 390 nouns, 380 verbs, 174 adverbs, and 185 adjectives (1,129 lexical items), the dataset's lexical feature analysis demonstrates a rich and well-balanced use of word classes that support textual complexity and meaning formation. In the lexical inventory, nouns and verbs predominate because they communicate ideas and actions. At the same time, adjectives and adverbs provide descriptive and modifying purposes that improve expressivity and specificity.

This distribution aligns with findings in Philippine English studies. Bautista (1997) identifies a dynamic lexicon characterized by normal expansion, preservation of archaic or infrequent items, coinage, and borrowings, which enrich the vocabulary and reflect local adaptations and creativity. The substantial presence of nouns and verbs supports Bautista's observation of lexical expansion through shifts in meaning and part of speech, often adapting English words to local contexts (Bautista, 1997).

Moreover, the balanced frequency of verbs and nouns is consistent with research on lexical complexity and readability in Filipino and Philippine English texts,

where lexical diversity, measured by the variety of word classes, correlates with text complexity and comprehension difficulty (Imperial & Ong, 2021). Their study highlights that the presence and ratio of lexical categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and conjunctions are significant predictors of readability, indicating that texts with richer lexical variation tend to be more complex and demanding for readers.

Further, meta-analyses of Philippine English word-formation processes (Borlongan, 2018) show that lexical creativity involves using standard word classes and integrating figurative language and morphological innovations, which likely contribute to the diversity observed in the lexical features. This creative lexical formation supports many adjectives and adverbs, which are often employed to express nuanced meanings and local color.

In summary, the lexical profile of the analyzed texts reflects typical patterns found in Philippine English and Filipino language contexts, where a strong noun-verb base is complemented by descriptive modifiers, supporting both communicative clarity and stylistic richness. The findings correspond with existing research emphasizing lexical diversity as a key factor in text complexity and the ongoing evolution of Philippine English vocabulary.

3.2 Analysis of Grammatical Features

The prepositions commonly used in the data were in, on, and at. Personal pronouns dominated most posts, including I, me, myself, you, your, and yourself. The demonstrative pronoun like *that* is commonly used as a demonstrative adjective, a relative pronoun, and a subordinating conjunction. The auxiliary verbs include is, are, will, have, do and can. The articles in the posts were indefinite (a, an) and definite (the). The conjunctions used were categorized into two: coordinating (and, but, so, for) and subordinating (because, although, even though, if, when).

Pronouns were the most prevalent grammatical feature with 371 counts, while articles were the least used words with 119.

The frequent usage of prepositions such "in," "on," and "at" in Facebook posts by senior high school students is indicative of patterns seen in Philippine English, where these prepositions are essential for communicating place and time but are also subject to localized usage and confusion (Guillermo & Cadio, 2024).

Personal pronouns like "I," "me," "myself," "you," "your," and "yourself" are prevalent in social media contexts, suggesting a strong emphasis on interpersonal communication and self-expression. This is consistent with research showing that Filipino users frequently use

English online to communicate social identity and personal experiences.

The demonstrative pronoun "that" can be used as a subordinating conjunction, relative pronoun, and demonstrative adjective, illustrating English's adaptability and changing character in digital communication among young Filipinos in addition to definite and indefinite articles, auxiliary verbs ("is," "are," "will," "have," "do," and "can"), and a variety of coordinating ("and," "but," "so," "for") and subordinating conjunctions ("because," "although," "even though," "if," "when") reinforce the unique characteristics of Philippine English as it is influenced by frequent use of social media (Esquivel, 2020).

Pronouns (371 counts) outnumber articles (119 counts) in the data, consistent with known linguistic trends. Once participants and entities have been presented, pronouns are crucial for preserving reference to them, which helps authors and speakers reduce repetition and simplify conversation. Because pronouns effectively monitor conversation participants and preserve cohesiveness, research indicates that they commonly outweigh other grammatical characteristics in spoken and written texts, especially after initial occurrences (Johnson, 2023).

On the other hand, the main purpose of articles is to introduce or define nouns, particularly when entities are being stated for the first time or require clarification. Since speakers switch to pronouns or delete articles when context renders them unnecessary once an entity has been established in the conversation, their lesser frequency is normal. According to cross-linguistic research, pronoun frequency increases as reference is maintained. At the same time, article use naturally decreases following the initial peaks of noun and article use at the beginning of narratives. Corpus-based evaluations of written texts also reflect this tendency, consistently revealing higher pronoun usage than articles, particularly in circumstances emphasizing participant monitoring and cohesiveness (Seifart, 2025). In conclusion, the results are consistent with linguistic studies demonstrating that pronouns are more frequently employed because they are essential for reference maintenance. However, articles are used less frequently once entities are established in the discourse (Lu, 2022).

Comparatively, lexical features dominated (total of 1,129) compared to grammatical features (total of 1,057). Content words had four classifications (nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives) while function words had five (prepositions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, articles, and conjunctions).

These findings suggest that their digital communication is heavily content-driven, emphasizing the use of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs to express ideas, emotions, and experiences. This dominance of lexical items reflects Filipino youths' creative and expressive online proclivities, where social identification and meaning creation frequently precede rigorous grammatical precision. The near-constant use of grammatical characteristics, such as function words like conjunctions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, articles, and prepositions, shows that even as pupils expand their vocabulary, they adhere to the fundamental framework for coherence and understandability (Flores, 2024).

Studies show that the interaction of English and regional languages in a digital setting creates a distinct type of Philippine English typified by lexical innovation and changing syntax on social media sites like Facebook. As Philippine English evolves in response to online contact's social realities and communication demands, this tendency highlights how flexible and dynamic it is (Cabantac-Lumabi, 2020).

Analyzing grammatical features comprising 271 prepositions, 371 pronouns, 208 auxiliary verbs, 119 articles, and 142 conjunctions (totaling 1,057 instances) reveals important patterns consistent with recent research on English grammar usage and learner language. Pronouns, as the most frequent category, highlight their central role in maintaining textual cohesion and referential clarity by replacing nouns and preventing redundancy, a finding supported by studies emphasizing the importance of pronouns in discourse coherence (Zheng et al., 2024). The high frequency of prepositions and conjunctions reflects the complexity of syntactic relationships and the need to express spatial, temporal, and logical connections between ideas, which are crucial for constructing well-formed sentences and coherent texts (PMC, 2024).

Auxiliary verbs' significant presence underlines their function in marking tense, aspect, mood, and voice, essential for expressing nuanced grammatical meanings. This aligns with findings in learner corpora where auxiliary verbs are often focal points of correct usage and errors, indicating their complexity in second language acquisition (PMC, 2024). The relatively lower frequency of articles compared to pronouns and prepositions may be attributed to discourse context or learner challenges, as article omission and misuse are well-documented issues in EFL writing, especially among speakers whose first languages lack articles (PMC, 2024).

Overall, the distribution of these grammatical features corresponds with patterns observed in English for Academic Purposes and EFL contexts, where cohesive devices (pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions) and

functional verbs (auxiliaries) are pivotal for effective communication. The findings underscore the importance of targeted instruction on these grammatical categories to improve learners' writing accuracy and fluency.

3.3 Analysis of the Common Features of the Facebook Posts regarding Graphological Substances

3.3.1 Non-Standard Spelling by Altering the Conventional Spelling of Words

Facebook post 11 shows the use of the word "thru" instead of "through," which is the correct form, and the contraction "gotta from" have got to.

(11) *"I think the hardest about adulting is that you literally have to keep going. no matter what mood or situation you're going thru, you gotta keep going cause life goes on."*

Facebook posts also 13 and 141 show the contraction "wanna" from "want to."

(13) *i definitely wanna go somewhere, freshen my mind and take a break from everything.*

(141) *don't wanna trust you anymore.*

Facebook post 143 also shows the contraction wanna from have want to.

(143) *ain't expecting anymore.*

The post shows that exploring unconventional spelling practices in contemporary communication, particularly in digital and text-based media, reveals complex dynamics that intersect linguistic innovation, literacy development, and consumer behavior. Research into text messaging has demonstrated that nonstandard spellings, such as abbreviations, phonetic spellings, and creative alterations, are not merely deviations from traditional orthography but can function as strategic tools for interpersonal communication and identity construction. For instance, a study of university students' text messages found that missed capital letters, accent stylizations, and letter/number homophones constituted significant proportions of nonstandard spellings, highlighting the adaptability of language to suit informal contexts and personal expression (Lyddy et al., 2013).

3.3.2 Incorporating Emojis

Facebook posts 2, 17, 27, 33, and 97 show emojis.

Millions of feelings for one special person ❤️
Life is too short to be a normal, so stay weird.
😊

I'm not feeling well 🙄

Good luck to all candidates! May the best and most deserving win!! ✂️ ❤️

I always dreamed for a long life of my parents 🥰

As a modern non-verbal communication tool, emojis facilitate emotional expression and enhance the clarity of interactions. They serve several communicative functions, from expressing emotions to clarifying the intended message in various social contexts, notably in messaging platforms like WhatsApp and other social media environments (AlJahdali, 2023; Gesselman et al., 2019).

Research indicates that emojis can positively influence the tone of digital exchanges, adding warmth and emotional nuance to text-based communication (Ali-Chand & Naidu, 2024). This capacity for emotional richness is particularly important as digital communication increasingly supplants face-to-face interactions. The ability of emojis to symbolize complex and abstract concepts is underscored by their frequent use in representing emotions, particularly through facial expressions, which have become integral in enhancing the emotional content of messages (Wicke & Bolognesi, 2020; Erle et al., 2022). Furthermore, studies suggest that some individuals find emojis more recognizable and less ambiguous than traditional facial expressions (Nogare et al., 2023), highlighting their function as effective affective signals in interpersonal communication.

3.3.3 Clippings and Shortening Words

Facebook posts 45 used clipping for the word bro instead of brother.

(45) *Wake up bro! Life is not always about love*

Facebook post 20 used shortening for the word coz instead of because and post 34 congrats instead of congratulations

(20) *Having me is not expensive. you can invite me in your house and not be worried coz i can make myself comfortable. i will be very grateful with foods you can only afford to offer and i won't mind sitting on the floor with you if you don't have your own room. i will come to enjoy our bond or make memories with you-not to judge your status in life or to inspect your family, home or living.*

(34) *Congrats Purok 7 TATAK CIUDAD for wining the Christmas Dance contest and Quiz bee, ML boys and other activities, During Youth Revolution 2023.*

Clipping is a morphological process that shortens words by truncating them while maintaining their primary

meanings. This phenomenon is prevalent across various languages and appears in many contexts, particularly informal settings such as slang and social media. The process of clipping can occur at different positions within a word, including the back (e.g., "ad" from "advertisement"), front (e.g., "phone" from "telephone"), and middle (e.g., "strong" from "stronghold") (Sinaga et al., 2022). Sinaga et al. (2022) point out that clippings form a significant part of slang, demonstrating the adaptive nature of language as it evolves through cultural and social exchanges.

3.3.4 Using Capitalization for Emphasis

Facebook posts 51, 52, 64, 100 and 147 capitalized the word reality, respect which should be not capitalized.

(51) Really appreciate those Christian that respect Muslim's during thier Fasting ❤️ (Ramadan)

(52) Hard to accept but that's the Reality!

(64) I'm not a good SINGER but I still love to SING.

(100) Always Respect your parents!

(147) Family, Forever, For always, and no matter what happened

Capitalization is a pivotal element in written communication that serves as a grammatical tool and a means to convey emphasis and tone. Research demonstrates that capitalization facilitates clarity and enhances the effectiveness of writing by denoting the beginning of sentences, highlighting specific concepts, and distinguishing proper nouns from common nouns. The misapplication of capitalization can lead to confusion and misinterpretation of meaning, thus emphasizing its importance in written conventions (Aradillos et al., 2023).

3.3.5 Deviating from Standard Punctuation Rules

Facebook post 5 showed the misuse of the dash (-) at the beginning of a sentence.

(5) -Beginnings are always easier but you decide how it ends.

Facebook posts 42 did not use a comma in between the words something and say and period at the end of the sentence.

(42) if you want to say something say it now

Facebook post 19 used a symbol and number instead of a punctuation.

(19) Oversize t shirt makes me comfortable<33

Facebook posts 44 and 45 used a single quotation mark at the beginning of the statements respectively

(44) " I will never change my personality to make someone Love me. loving me is your choice. hating me is your decision



(45) its better to give that to receive" 🍷

The use of unconventional punctuation often conveys emotional tone, rhythm, and nuanced meaning in literary and creative works. Some writers may adopt unique punctuation styles to enhance their texts' lyrical quality or create a distinct narrative voice. While sometimes criticized, deviations from traditional punctuation norms can be valid reflections of the author's style, enriching the reading experience (Egamnazarova, 2023).

3.3.6 Blending Different Languages within a Single Post

Facebook post 20, 34 and 65 used English and Filipino as languages.

(18) DrOp your last chat, aq magrereply HAAAAHA ayusin niyo.

(34) Congrats Purok 7 TATAK CIUDAD for wining the Christmas Dance contest and Quiz bee, ML boys and other activities, During Youth Revolution 2023.

(65) hirap ng busy life tapos you're sleepyheadxxx

Facebook post 47 and 49 used English and Arabic as languages.

(47) This suffering, this heartbreak all of these could be our ticket to Jannah.

(49) ~ When you make Du'ah for someone you offering the most beautiful and purest kind of love.

Research indicates that integrating multiple languages in online interactions can enhance communicative efficacy and relational dynamics among users. For instance, Qian's (2024) study on parental language ideologies in online forums highlights the benefits of multilingual practices in fostering community and support among parents discussing bilingual upbringing strategies.

The study found that parents express language ideologies supporting bilingualism/multilingualism, which can enhance communication and reinforce cultural ties within the community. Banda (2016) examines the linguistic diversity in Zambian online media, illustrating how various languages are employed to engage broader audiences and challenge hegemonic discourses.

3.3.7 Omitting Letters from Words to Shorten Them

Facebook post 111 omitted the letters “ter” from the word quarter.

- (111) *“honor ka this quar-?’ bless and love brader, feel the nature’s matirx*

Facebook post 125 omitted the letters o for the word noon and a for the word stay.

- (125) After non to my beautiful best frien
LenLca, happy birthday to you,
I’m sorry I’m late, I’m too late,
he’s great you know, when you’re
a good student, HAHAHA charr
😊 Happy birthday again and I
wish you all the best and sty pretty
much and sty good person MWA
😘😘

The processing time hypothesis illuminates how omission rates are influenced by the type of words involved. Function words, often frequently used, may see higher omission rates than content words due to their quick processing capabilities at the word level.

Saint-Aubin et al. (2003) highlight that polysemous words contribute to higher omission rates, suggesting that familiarity and cognitive ease play significant roles in omitting letters or sounds from speech or text. This concept also connects with linguistic efficiency, wherein shorter and simpler forms of common phrases are preferred over longer counterparts to minimize cognitive load during language processing.

3.3.8 Using Lowercase Letters Instead of Upper-Case Letters

Facebook post 3, 16, 43, 55, and 118 did not capitalize I’m at the beginning of the sentence and the word I.

- (3) *i’m becoming more silent these days. i speak less but my eyes see everything*
(16) *and to never came back again*
(43) *not all people have no purpose in life, we can say that disrespectfully*
(55) *that special friend who always listen to your problems without judging you*
(118) *sometimes I just want to go back being a kid again. no pressure, no stress, just be happy*

Using lowercase letters instead of uppercase ones has significant implications for readability and cognitive processing, influencing reading speed and the overall recognition of text. Research indicates that lowercase

letters are more legible than uppercase letters in various contexts. Tinker and Paterson reported a reading speed advantage of 13.4% for lowercase text compared to uppercase (Babayigit, 2019). This advantage is attributed to the distinctive features in lowercase shapes, such as ascenders and descenders, that aid in word identification and pattern recognition.

3.4 Implications for English Language Teaching and Learning

3.4.1 Language Teaching

The findings demonstrate the need for English language instruction in the Philippines, particularly in the DepEd, to adapt to the realities students encounter, especially the dynamic, informal English they use daily on social media and the formal academic English taught in schools. Teachers may understand that Facebook postings, conversations, and memes are not “wrong” in and of themselves, even though they frequently deviate from the norm and represent genuine communication requirements. Educators should use these patterns as a starting point to explain to pupils when formal English is expected and why these differences are important, rather than discounting them.

Research shows that PE lexical features are generally accepted by English teachers, suggesting a need for inclusive language practices that reflect linguistic diversity (Flores, 2024). Graduate students in the Philippines exhibit positive attitudes towards teaching educated PE, indicating a potential shift towards a pluricentric model of English language teaching (Hernandez, 2020).

Additionally, incorporating casual English examples in courses can be very effective. Teachers can highlight punctuation, spelling, tone, and organization variations by contrasting a student’s real Facebook post with an academic essay. Teachers also need to emphasize that context dictates appropriateness; while it is acceptable for friends to break language standards playfully online, it is unsuitable for professional or academic writing. In this way, students learn by understanding the audience, purpose, and setting rather than fearing “wrong grammar.”

However, the Philippines’ multilingual context challenges traditional ESL labels, necessitating a more nuanced approach that recognizes the coexistence of ENL, ESL, and EFL (Espino et al., 2021). Phonological features of PE, influenced by L1 interference and fossilization, are observed among educators, highlighting the importance of strengthening communicative competence in English teaching to promote sensitivity to language varieties (Guinto, 2013). Hence, these findings underscore the need for curriculum development and teaching practices that

acknowledge and incorporate PE while maintaining global intelligibility.

3.4.2 Language Learners

The results highlight the necessity for learners to enhance their language awareness. They should understand that official settings require greater precision and adherence to established norms, even when their casual, condensed styles suit social media. This awareness extends beyond merely memorizing grammar; it also entails developing the ability to adapt language intentionally according to the context. Specifically in academic and professional environments, students must recognize when informal English is appropriate, and accuracy is critical.

Teachers need to help students internalize code-switching skills. Examples of language tasks include identifying mistakes and inconsistencies in social media posts and transforming a casual post into a formal letter or essay. These exercises teach students to choose the appropriate form based on the audience rather than "abandoning" their informal ways. This ability is essential for success in the workplace, academic communication, formal writing, and passing exams.

Studies of Philippine English (PhE) and how it affects language learners produce conflicting results. While some research reveals favorable opinions regarding teaching PhE in ESL classes (Hernandez, 2020), others emphasize ambivalence among speakers and teachers (Dimaculangan, 2022). Experimental studies revealed no appreciable variation in English competency between students taught Standard English and PhE (Arranz, 2019). Still, including PhE in courses is difficult given opposing views and a dearth of textbooks (Dimaculangan, 2022). Most lexical aspects were generally agreed upon by English teachers, according to a recent PhE usage analysis of student publications, implying possible inclusion in language education (Flores, 2024). These results show that PhEs face difficult terrain in education, with chances for integration and ongoing obstacles connected to attitudes and policies. Curriculum development and further study could be required to properly use PhE in language education environments.

3.4.3 Language Teachers

Real-world language use, particularly from social media, should be thoughtfully integrated into English language instruction. Teachers can develop lessons on grammar, tone, style, and audience awareness by utilizing internet resources as genuine texts instead of strictly categorizing formal and casual English. By analyzing actual student Facebook posts, teachers can make lectures more engaging, relevant, and immediately applicable to students' lives.

Activities include revising social media posts to adhere to professional writing standards, discussing when casual language is appropriate, and assigning students to write two versions of the same message, one for friends and one for formal submission. These are examples of pedagogical tactics. Lessons come to life through innovative techniques like digital storytelling, meme analysis, and chat conversation editing. As a result, studying grammar, spelling, and structure becomes more than just a chore.

Studies of Philippine English (PhE) highlight its increasing relevance and ramifications for English language instruction in the Philippines. Studies have shown some lexical aspects of PhE in student writings; many phrases that English teachers use are generally agreed upon (Flores, 2024). Still, L1 interference and fossilization cause phonetic variances from General American English (Guinto, 2013). Although English teachers usually have good opinions of PhE (Dimangadap-Malang & Pantao, 2021), speakers have conflicting opinions that could impede its inclusion into courses (Dimaculangan, 2022). Accepting some created words but rejecting non-standard constructions reflects this ambivalence (Dimangadap-Malang & Pantao, 2021). Though PhE is advised to be included in English language courses, curriculum plans and textbooks now show only partial reflection (Dimaculangan, 2022). These results underline the importance of inclusive language instruction methods that respect linguistic variety and solve the difficulties in including PhE into official education.

3.4.4 English Language in Social Media

Social media has both positive and negative effects on language development. It promotes quick, imaginative, and highly customized communication, but often at the expense of academic accuracy and grammatical rules. Teachers and language advocates must recognize that it is impossible to limit or counteract social media's influence completely; instead, they should help English learners become critical digital communicators who understand when informal communication is appropriate and when it is not.

When used properly, social media can be an effective tool for language learning. Positive learning environments can be created online through initiatives like Facebook groups for class discussions, social media campaigns encouraging proper grammar, and online writing challenges. Teachers can also include "social media etiquette" discussions covering language use, critical thinking, and digital citizenship.

One clear variant with consequences for social media use is Philippine English (PE). Research on its acceptance among web users has shown continuous debate

even in cases of elite approval (Paz, 2022). The Visayan region challenges conventional wisdom based on American or British norms by shifting toward regional English on social media platforms (Malon, 2023). Studies on netspeak in Filipino social media have found that developing linguistic patterns, such as Twitter and political domains, use these traits most (Monderin & Go, 2021). With its future perhaps heading to a standardized Asian variety or diverging into mutually unintelligible varieties, the development of PE is founded in historical, social, and economic considerations (Gonzalez, 2004). This research underlines the dynamic character of physical education in online environments and its effect on communication patterns, stressing the need for inclusive education and appreciation of its special qualities.

3.4.5 Filipino Community as Second Language Users

The study confirms for the Filipino community that English in the Philippines is developing into a rich, regional variant known as Philippine English, which reflects the nation's culture, sense of humor, and social reality. However, the community must remain vigilant in maintaining globally recognized English standards, particularly in academic, professional, and foreign settings.

A national effort must be made to value bilingualism, promoting proficiency in formal English while celebrating the inventiveness of Philippine English. Filipinos should be able to navigate these two worlds successfully and proudly, supported by language policies, educational initiatives, and media campaigns. The objective is to ensure clarity, efficacy, and global competitiveness, rather than eradicating Filipino identity from English usage.

Shaped by historical colonialism and fulfilling various purposes throughout Filipino communities, Philippine English (PhlE) has become a nativized version of American English (Lamanila & Agdana, 2024). Its evolution has resulted in changes in Filipino language competency, *Taglish*, and other language variants (Chureson, 2014). Unique lexical features define PhlE: overgeneralized word meanings, inventive use of suffixes, and preserving archaic terms (Lamanila & Agdana, 2024). While some academics support the acknowledgement and celebration of PhlE as part of the World Englishes paradigm (Dimaculangan, 2018), others contend that studies on PhlE should consider its neocolonial context and incorporate non-standard uses spoken by most Filipinos. English's influence on Filipino language practices begs questions concerning language preservation and the requirement of awareness among speakers and teachers (Chureson, 2014; Dimaculangan, 2018).

IV. CONCLUSION

The study revealed a well-balanced and diverse application of lexical and grammatical elements contributing to the text's complexity and coherence. The dominance of nouns and verbs highlights their essential role in expressing main ideas and actions, while adjectives and adverbs enhance the writing by providing greater detail and clarity. Grammatically, the frequent use of pronouns underscores their importance in ensuring referential clarity and maintaining cohesion throughout the text, facilitating effective communication. The notable use of prepositions and conjunctions also illustrates the complex syntactic connections required to link ideas across temporal, spatial, and logical dimensions. These findings are consistent with recent studies on English grammar and learner language, underscoring the critical interaction between lexical variety and grammatical structure in creating clear and meaningful discourse.

Modern written communication is marked by various graphological features that showcase inventiveness and the evolving nature of digital language use. Non-standard spellings, emojis, and clipped and shortened words illustrate how writers modify language to fit informal, fast-moving, and multimodal communication settings. The purposeful use of capitalization for emphasis and intentional departures from conventional punctuation rules further demonstrate personalized and expressive writing styles. Moreover, mixing different languages within a single post reflects the multilingual contexts of users. At the same time, frequent letter omissions and the preference for lowercase letters indicate trends toward efficiency and casualness in digital exchanges. These graphological elements reveal the flexible and dynamic character of contemporary writing in social and online environments.

The implications for English language teaching and learning in the Philippines are complex, involving teaching methods, learner needs, teacher training, social media's role, and the multilingual Filipino community. Recent research supports recognizing Philippine English as a valid variety and encourages its inclusion in curricula to promote language awareness and inclusivity. Teachers face challenges balancing native English norms with local linguistic realities, requiring ongoing professional development. Learners gain from authentic, multimodal English exposure, especially through social media, though educators must manage informal language use and digital literacy issues. The multilingual context calls for embracing translanguaging and local varieties to support identity and communication. Policy debates highlight the need for balanced bilingual or multilingual instruction to avoid negative effects on comprehension and academic success. A context-sensitive, pluralistic approach that

empowers educators and learners while integrating digital tools is recommended to enhance English proficiency and maintain global competitiveness. This study recommends the following:

4.1 Social media can be a valuable tool for English language learning when integrated strategically into educational settings. Teachers should leverage platforms like Facebook to enhance language skills while promoting critical thinking to filter out misinformation.

4.2 Recognizing Philippine English as a valid variation of English can promote a more inclusive method of teaching and learning languages. Hence, language acceptance is considered. It involves acknowledging and valuing local linguistic features rather than viewing them as deviations from standard English.

4.3 Further studies could explore how Philippine English evolves in different digital contexts and how it impacts language education policies in the Philippines.

4.4 Investigating how Philippine English is perceived and used by various age groups and regions could provide deeper insights into its stabilization and acceptance.

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Echoes of Oppression: Comparative Insights into Dalit and Afro-American Experiences of Humiliation and Exploitation

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Abstract— This paper presents a comparative analysis of Dalit literature in India and Afro-American literature in the United States, focusing on autobiographies to explore themes of humiliation and exploitation. By examining works such as Omprakash Valmiki's "Jonathan," Alex Haley's "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," and Richard Wright's "Black Boy," the study analyzes the social, economic, and psychological impacts of systemic oppression. It investigates how autobiographical writing contributes to identity formation and resistance among marginalized communities. Key findings reveal significant similarities in the experiences of humiliation and economic exploitation faced by both Dalits and African Americans, highlighting the universal nature of systemic oppression. However, distinct historical and cultural contexts—caste-based discrimination in India and racial segregation in the US—shape unique manifestations of injustice. The paper underscores the critical role of literature in social activism, illustrating how personal narratives serve as powerful tools for documenting and challenging oppression. This study enhances global understanding of discrimination and promotes cross-cultural solidarity in the fight for social justice.



Keywords— Omprakash Valmiki, Dalit Literature, Afro-American Literature, Auto-biography, Systematic oppression, Caste and Race discrimination, Comparative Literature.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dalit literature in India and Afro-American literature in the US both address systemic oppression and socioeconomic marginalization. Dalit literature, created by the Dalit community, challenges the caste system, highlighting untouchability, social ostracization, and economic exploitation. Key figures in Dalit literature include B.R. Ambedkar, who contributed to socio-political reforms and laid the foundation for Dalit literary expression, and contemporary writers like Omprakash Valmiki and Baby Kamble, who offer personal narratives of caste-based oppression. (Valmiki, 2003; Kamble, 2009). Afro-American literature, influenced by writers like Frederick Douglass and Maya Angelou, reflects the struggles against racial

discrimination, violence, and economic disparity, using their autobiographies to highlight the harsh realities of slavery and segregation. (Douglass, 1845; Angelou, 1969).

Autobiographies are crucial for understanding social issues as they offer firsthand accounts of lived experiences, bridging the gap between personal narratives and broader social contexts. They are particularly effective in Dalit and Afro-American literature, exposing the realities of caste and racial discrimination, offering insights into marginalized individuals' psychological and emotional toll. Ambedkar, B. R. (1936). Autobiographies like Omprakash Valmiki's "Jonathan" and "Malcolm X", written by Alex Haley, and "Black Boy", written by Richard Wright, connect personal struggles to larger social and political movements,

humanizing statistical data and theoretical discussions. (Valmiki, 2003; Angelou, 1969).

This study explores the themes of humiliation and exploitation in Dalit and Afro-American autobiographies, focusing on their social, economic, and psychological impacts. It examines how these autobiographies contribute to identity formation and resistance among marginalized communities. Key texts include Omprakash Valmiki's "Jonathan," Alex Haley's "Malcolm X," and Richard Wright's "Black Boy." The study also examines the social and historical contexts of India and the US, and the role of autobiographical writing in fostering resistance.

Historical and Social Context

Caste System in India and the History of Dalits

The caste system in India divides society into distinct social groups, with Brahmins at the top. Dalits, formerly known as "untouchables," perform ritually impure tasks and face systematic oppression and discrimination. The origins of untouchability can be traced back to ancient Hindu scriptures. British colonial rule exacerbated Dalits' plight, and despite the 1947 Constitution outlawing caste-based discrimination, violence and discrimination persist, especially in rural areas Wilkerson, I. (2020).

Slavery, Segregation, and the Civil Rights Movement in the USA

Slavery in the United States has been a long-standing issue, with African Americans subjected to centuries of forced labour, exploitation, and dehumanization. From the 17th to 19th centuries, millions were transported to the Americas for plantation work. Slavery was an economic institution and system of racial domination justified by white supremacy. Despite the Civil Rights Movement, systemic racism and socioeconomic disparities persist in areas like education, employment, criminal justice, and healthcare.

Social, Economic, and Political Conditions of Dalits and African Americans

Dalits in India and African Americans in the USA face persistent social, economic, and political challenges due to historical oppression and discrimination. Socially, they face exclusion and marginalization due to caste or racial prejudice, while economically, they face poverty and marginalization due to limited access to quality education and workplace bias. Politically, they face underrepresentation in power and influence positions despite progress in civil rights and legal protections and persistent efforts for equal political rights and representation in governance structures.

Literature Review

This literature review explores key Dalit and Afro-American autobiographies, focusing on themes of humiliation and exploitation, and compares them with previous comparative studies.

Key Dalit Autobiographies

Omprakash Valmiki's "Jonathan: A Dalit's Life" is a significant Dalit autobiography that vividly portrays the humiliations and injustices faced by Dalits in Indian society. Baby Kamble's "The Prison We Broke" also highlights the intersectional dimensions of caste and gender oppression, exposing the exploitation and discrimination endured by Dalit women in rural Maharashtra Teltumbde, A. (2016).

Key Afro-American Autobiographies

In Afro-American literature, "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" by Malcolm X remains seminal. Co-authored with Alex Haley, this autobiography traces Malcolm X's evolution from a troubled youth to a prominent civil rights leader, documenting his experiences with racial discrimination, incarceration, and eventual conversion to Islam. Similarly, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou (2009) provides a poignant account of Angelou's childhood struggles with racism, trauma, and abuse, offering a compelling narrative of resilience and empowerment in adversity.

Themes of Humiliation and Exploitation

The text highlights the systemic injustices faced by Dalits and Afro-Americans, including caste-based discrimination, exploitation, and social ostracism. It also discusses the experiences of Malcolm X and Angelou, who both share their own experiences of racial humiliation and exploitation. These works highlight the brutality of systemic racism, the psychological toll of internalized racism, and the trauma of racial discrimination and sexual abuse (X, M & Haley 1965).

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF HUMILIATION AND EXPLOITATION

Theoretical Framework

Sociology, psychology, and political economy influence the study of humiliation and exploitation. Sociologically, humiliation is seen as a tool for social control, reinforcing power dynamics and marginalizing certain groups. Psychologically, humiliation can lead to feelings of worthlessness, depression, and anxiety. Politically, exploitation is viewed as inherent to capitalism, with the bourgeoisie benefiting at the expense of the proletariat. These perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding

of how humiliation and exploitation perpetuate social and economic inequalities. Morrison, T. (1987).

Instances of Humiliation in Afro-American & Dalit Autobiographies

Aspect	Dalit Autobiographies	Afro-American Autobiographies
Personal Experiences	Humiliation:	Humiliation:
	- Bama Faustina (Karukku) : The teacher humiliates Bama for aspiring to the same education as upper-caste students.	- Frederick Douglass : Describes brutal whipping intended to strip him of dignity.
	- Omprakash Valmiki (Joothan) : Forced to sit on the floor in school and clean premises, dehumanized and exploited for labour.	- Maya Angelou : White dentist refuses to treat her despite severe pain.
Social Interactions	Humiliation:	Humiliation:
	- Baby Kamble (The Prisons We Broke) : Rigid caste segregation in the village, prohibiting Dalits from public wells or temples. (Kamble 2008)	- W.E.B. Du Bois (The Souls of Black Folk) : Describes "double consciousness," internal conflict viewing themselves through a racist lens.
	- Shantabai Kamble (Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha) : Dalits subjected to physical and verbal abuse by upper-caste landowners.	- Malcolm X (The Autobiography of Malcolm X) : Describes segregation, racial slurs, and discriminatory laws relegating African Americans to second-class status.
Economic Exploitation	- Omprakash Valmiki (Joothan) : Dalits forced into menial labour with meagre wages, compounded by abuse from employers.	- Booker T. Washington (1901) (Up from Slavery) : Formerly enslaved people were relegated to low-paying jobs with few advancement opportunities.
	- Shantabai Kamble (Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha) : Dalits are underpaid and overworked in agricultural labour, reinforcing marginalization.	- Malcolm X (The Autobiography of Malcolm X) : Describes economic exploitation in urban ghettos, poverty, and unemployment cycles.
Educational Barriers	- Bama Faustina (Karukku) : Dalit children are discouraged from pursuing higher education and humiliated by teachers and peers.	- "Black Boy" by Richard Wright is an autobiographical account of Wright's early life in the segregated South.
	- Omprakash Valmiki (Joothan) : Segregated and mistreated in school, deterring Dalit students from continuing education.	- W.E.B. Du Bois (The Souls of Black Folk) : Critiques the educational system denying African Americans access to quality education.

Dalits in India and African Americans in the US face personal humiliation and systemic discrimination in their autobiographies. Dalits face dehumanization in educational settings, while Afro-Americans face social exclusion and abuse. Dalits are prohibited from public wells and temples, reinforcing caste hierarchies. African Americans face poverty and unemployment, exacerbated by discriminatory hiring practices. These autobiographies serve as personal testimonies and critiques of systemic oppression Du Bois (1903).

Comparative Analysis of Humiliation and Exploitation

Aspect	Dalit Autobiographies	Afro-American Autobiographies
Similarities in Experiences of Humiliation and Exploitation	1- Systemic discrimination and dehumanization.	1- Systemic discrimination and dehumanization. 2- Enslaved people were whipped and degraded to assert control (e.g., in Douglass's "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass").

	2 - Forced into menial labour and subjected to public humiliation (e.g., Valmiki's "Jonathan"). 3 - Economic exploitation in agricultural labour (e.g., Kamble's "Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha").	3- Economic exploitation in low-wage jobs (e.g., Washington's "Up from Slavery").
Differences in Experiences of Humiliation and Exploitation	1- The caste system dictates every aspect of a Dalit's life (e.g., Kamble's "The Prisons We Broke"). 2 - Exclusion from religious and social activities (e.g., Bama's "Karukku").	1- "Black Boy" by Richard Wright is an autobiographical account of Wright's early life in the segregated South 2 - Urban centres provided more opportunities for economic and social mobility (e.g., Malcolm X's autobiography).
Cultural and Societal Influences on the Nature of These Experiences	1- The caste system is legitimized and perpetuated by Hindu religious texts and traditions (e.g., exclusion from religious activities in Bama's "Karukku").	1- Racial discrimination shaped by the legacy of slavery and white supremacy (e.g., societal and legal discrimination in Du Bois's "The Souls of Black Folk").
Impact of Geographical and Historical Contexts	1 - The rural-urban divide exacerbates discrimination, with rural areas adhering more strictly to caste norms (e.g., Kamble's "Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha").	1—The historical context of slavery and civil rights movements shaped experiences (e.g., urban migration narratives in Malcolm X's autobiography). 2—The civil rights movement led to legislative changes and social reforms.
Impact on Identity and Resistance	Formation of Identity in Dalit Writers: 1 - Reclaiming identity and asserting dignity (e.g., Bama's "Karukku"). 2 - Rejecting imposed identity of untouchability (e.g., Valmiki's "Joothan").	Formation of Identity in Afro-American Writers: 1- Dual consciousness and racial pride (e.g., Du Bois's "The Souls of Black Folk"). 2 - Transformation from marginalization to activism (e.g., Malcolm X's autobiography).
Acts of Resistance and Rebellion	1- Everyday acts of defiance and collective action (e.g., Kamble's "The Prisons We Broke"). (Kamble 1986)	1- Education and self-reliance as forms of resistance (e.g., Washington's "Up from Slavery"). 2 - Collective acts of resistance in the civil rights movement.
Role of Literature in Social Activism and Change	1- Raising awareness of caste oppression and challenging social structures (e.g., Bama's "Karukku" and Valmiki's "Joothan").	1- Exposing racial injustices and advocating for civil rights (e.g., works of Du Bois, Malcolm X, and Angelou). 2 - Literature to document realities and mobilize support for change.

The autobiographies of Dalits and Afro-Americans reveal striking similarities and notable differences in their experiences of humiliation and exploitation. Dalits in India and African Americans in the United States have faced systemic discrimination and dehumanization, with Dalits forced into menial labour and subjected to public humiliation, while African Americans are relegated to low-wage jobs Coates, T.-N. (2015). However, there are significant differences due to distinct historical and cultural contexts. In India, the caste system dictates every aspect of a Dalit's life, while in the US, racial discrimination is deeply

rooted in the legacy of slavery and white supremacy. Geographical and historical contexts also significantly influence these experiences. In India, the rural-urban divide exacerbates discrimination, while in the US, the historical context of slavery and civil rights movements has shaped African American experiences. Autobiographies serve as tools for social critique and activism, bridging personal experiences with collective struggles for justice and equality.

III. CONCLUSION

The study of Dalit and Afro-American autobiographies reveals both similarities and differences in the experiences of humiliation and exploitation faced by these marginalized groups. Both have endured systemic oppression rooted in social hierarchies, with autobiographies serving as powerful tools for documenting their lived experiences and asserting identities. Key findings highlight the universal nature of systemic oppression, with common themes of economic exploitation and social humiliation in the narratives of Omprakash Valmiki, Baby Kamble, Frederick Douglass, and Maya Angelou. However, the distinct historical and cultural contexts of India and the United States result in unique manifestations of discrimination, such as caste-based ostracization and racial segregation. The study underscores the crucial role of literature in social activism, fostering cross-cultural solidarity and advocating for justice.

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Experiences of Parents and Teachers of Sinugbuanong Binisaya as a Medium of Instruction in Math Subject for Grade 2 Learners

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Abstract— This study delved into the experiences of parents and teachers in the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in mathematics for the Grade 2 learners in three identified public elementary schools during the school year 2020-2021. The findings were the basis for implication for practice. It utilized a qualitative-phenomenological method through interview to 15 teachers and 30 parents from the three schools. An interpretative phenomenological analysis with the use of interview guide was performed in finding out the experiences of both the participants the parents and teachers. The result revealed that parents were more comfortable with using the local dialect and translating Sinugbuanong Binisaya terms to English while teaching their children at home since the learners can understand English more due to their exposure of the language on the internet. The advantages include familiarization of its own dialect while the disadvantages include lacks practicality. On the other hand, participants encountered challenges like unfamiliar words and various lengths of difficulties in understanding. Furthermore, the coping mechanism was to intensify home teaching using fitting strategy effect comprehension in math. It is concluded that teaching Sinugbuanong Bisaya as a medium of instruction in math subject greatly affects the learners. It is recommended that educational stakeholders, particularly curriculum developers and school administrators, consider a more flexible and context-sensitive approach in implementing the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy in mathematics instruction.

Keywords— Early Childhood Education, Sinugbuanong Bisaya, Qualitative-Phenomenological Method, Cebu, Philippines



I. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a fundamental role in education, serving as a medium through which knowledge is transmitted, social interactions occur, and learning is assessed (Swargiary, 2024). Both teachers and learners rely on spoken and written language to communicate,

understand concepts, and engage in academic discussions. Shahaeian et al. (2018) stated that early exposure to language literacy significantly influences cognitive development and academic performance. Given its importance, the effective implementation of language policies in education is critical for enhancing learning

outcomes, particularly in mathematics, which requires precise comprehension and application of terminology.

Several countries, including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Ethiopia, Guatemala, and South Africa, have explored mother-tongue-based bilingual education (MTB-BE) to address linguistic diversity and improve learning outcomes. However, implementing mother tongue as a medium of instruction presents challenges, particularly in multilingual settings. In South Africa, for example, teachers who are monolingual English speakers struggle to accommodate the linguistic diversity in their classrooms, often leading to difficulties in mathematics instruction (Robertson & Graven, 2020). Despite these challenges, educators have devised strategies to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

In the Philippines, the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy under the K–12 curriculum mandates the use of the mother tongue as both a medium of instruction and a learning area from Kindergarten to Grade 3 (Tenorio, 2024). This policy aims to enhance foundational learning by using the language most familiar to young learners. Notably, schools such as Ibabao-Estancia Elementary School, Marigondon Elementary School, and Mohon Elementary School have adopted Sinugbuanong Binisaya as the language of instruction for mathematics. However, despite being the learners' first language, challenges arise due to the complexity and unfamiliarity of specific mathematical terminologies in Sinugbuanong Binisaya. Teachers and students struggle with translating and comprehending these terms, affecting instruction and student performance. As a result, educators advocate for simplified terminologies in learning materials to improve understanding and retention.

This study aims to explore the experiences of teachers and parents regarding the use of Sinugbuanong Binisaya as a medium of instruction in Grade 2 mathematics. Specifically, it seeks to identify the challenges encountered, the strategies employed to facilitate learning, and the implications for teaching practices. By examining these aspects, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the effectiveness of MTB-MLE in mathematics education. It provides insights into optimizing instructional strategies to enhance student engagement and comprehension.

Furthermore, this study is grounded in Jean Piaget's Cognitive Learning Theory, Lev Vygotsky's Cognitive Development Theory, and Richard Anderson's Schema Theory. Piaget's theory posits that cognitive development occurs through reorganizing experiences, emphasizing the interaction between biological maturation and environmental influence (Piaget, 1936). Language, while

fundamental to intellectual growth, serves as a tool for structuring thought and learning (Ellis, 2019; Felix, 2019).

Vygotsky's Cognitive Development Theory highlights the role of social interactions in cognitive development (Luong, 2022), suggesting that learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Margolis, 2020), where students benefit from guided support (Vygotsky, 1934). This perspective underscores the importance of culturally relevant instructional tools, such as the use of the mother tongue in education (Escarda et al., 2024; Moshaba, 2024).

On one hand, Anderson's Schema Theory emphasizes the role of prior knowledge in comprehension, asserting that new information is processed and understood in relation to existing cognitive structures (Meylani, 2024). In the context of MTB-MLE, this theory supports the notion that students learn mathematical concepts more effectively when instruction aligns with their linguistic and cognitive frameworks (Erath et al., 2021).

The study is also supported by legal frameworks such as the Kindergarten Education Act (Republic Act 10157) and the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act 10533). These policies emphasize early childhood education's importance and language's role in facilitating foundational learning. With these theoretical and legal foundations, the study seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of MTB-MLE's impact on mathematics education and inform policy and practice for its effective implementation.

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study explored the experiences of parents and teachers in using the mother tongue, Sinugbuanong Binisaya, as a medium of instruction in teaching mathematics to Grade 2 learners at the identified Elementary School in Cebu, Philippines, during the school year 2020-2021. The findings served as the basis for implications for practice. Specifically, the study sought to examine parents' experiences in assisting their children with mathematics using Sinugbuanong Binisaya, as well as the advantages and disadvantages identified by teachers in employing the mother tongue as the language of instruction. Moreover, it investigated the challenges faced by both parents and teachers in implementing mother tongue-based instruction during the new normal and the coping mechanisms they adopted to address these difficulties. Finally, the study aimed to draw relevant implications based on the findings to enhance the effectiveness of mother tongue instruction in early mathematics education.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodology employed to assess the impact of using Sinugbuanong Binisaya as a medium of instruction in mathematics on children's learning outcomes. It details the research design, describes participants, and specifies the instruments utilized for data collection.

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a qualitative-phenomenological research design. The researchers gathered the demographic profile of General Education teachers working at the identified Elementary School regarding their age, gender, civil status, number of years in teaching Math highest educational attainment, and relevant trainings attended. This also highlights personal opinions concerning mother tongue *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* as a medium of instruction in math, which involves investigating phenomena through people's experiences.

Thematic Analysis was used to collect Grade two parents' data in terms of their demographic profile, personal opinions concerning mother tongue *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* as a medium of instruction in math subject, problems and challenges in teaching math in the new normal. Moreover, teachers were interviewed online or one-on-one (face-to-face).

3.2 Research Participants

The research participants of this study are the 30 parents and 15 teachers were selected using convenience sampling. A total of 45 research participants participated in this study.

The researchers collected demographic data such as age, gender, civil status, number of years teaching Mathematics subject, highest educational attainment, and relevant trainings attended. The researchers also investigated concerning the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction of those General Education teachers. The participants were interviewed about the challenges they encountered in handling Mathematics subject using Mother Tongue *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* and how they addressed those challenges.

3.3 Data Gathering Procedure

Upon verifying and validating the research instrument, the researchers sought written permission from the principals of the identified Elementary Schools, ensuring adherence to ethical standards and confidentiality in data handling. Once approval was granted, the researchers prepared and personally administered hard-copy survey questionnaires to guarantee clarity in instructions and the study's purpose. After completing the survey, participants responded to interview questions

regarding the challenges teachers face in teaching Mathematics using Sinugbuanong Binisaya and their strategies for addressing these difficulties. The researchers assured participants of the confidentiality of their responses and subsequently transcribed all qualitative data for analysis.

Ethical Considerations. The researcher personally provided the participants with the informed consent form requesting to participate in the research with the research study. The participants were personally informed of the study's purpose and had ample time to think and talk to anyone they were comfortable with before deciding to participate. They had the freedom to ask questions to the researcher regarding the study's content if they could not understand it very well. The participants were also informed that their participation was purely voluntary. The researcher requested the participants to share their views regarding their difficulties and coping mechanisms in handling deaf children during the COVID-19 pandemic school year 2021-2022.

Data Privacy Act. This research adhered to the mandate of the National Privacy Commission in administering and enforcing the Data Protection Act of 2012, ensuring compliance with data protection laws and internationally recognized principles and standards concerning personal data. The researcher upheld individuals' fundamental right to privacy while promoting the free flow of information to support innovation, academic advancement, and national development. All personal data collected through government and private sector information systems was also secured and protected. The study-maintained dependability, ensuring that future findings would be consistent and replicable. Standard tools and procedures were utilized in conducting, analyzing, and presenting the research, with all procedural details documented for future reference, benchmarking, and validation. The accuracy of the findings was affirmed through thorough examination and verification of all collected data, ensuring that interpretations and conclusions were well-supported. A comprehensive description of the confirmability processes was provided to uphold the quality and standard-based rigor of the study.

Trustworthiness of Research. The trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be increased by maintaining high credibility and objectivity. A research definition of trustworthiness might demonstrate that the evidence for the results reported is sound and that the argument made based on the results is vital. The researchers invited the participants to participate in this study about their difficulties and coping mechanisms in handling their children with hearing impairments amidst the COVID-19

pandemic. To gain insights from people who will enrich and illuminate our understanding of actions, concepts, events, and practices.

Data Analysis. Thematic Analysis was utilized in the transcription of qualitative data as to the demographic profiling of the participants' opinion concerning the use of mother tongue *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* as a medium of instruction in teaching math, problems and challenges encountered by the participants in teaching math in grade two learners.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section analyzes and interprets data pertaining to the experiences of parents and teachers in the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in mathematics for the Grade 2 learners in the identified Elementary Schools during the school year 2020-2021.

4.1 Experiences of Parent Participants in the Use of Sinugbuanong Binisaya to Help Their Children in Mathematics

The first question asked to the research participants pertains to their experiences as parents in the use of *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* to help their child in mathematics.

1. *Comfort of Using Sinugbuanong Binisaya in Teaching.* There were parents who expressed comfort in teaching their children at home using *Sinugbuanong Bisaya* dialect.

Informant 1 explained that she can tutor her child at home using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction curriculum simply said that:

"I can teach well and we can understand each other" (Informant 1).

In addition, informant 2 shared that her child can understand her during tutor sessions at home when she speaks the local dialect and opined that:

"Can understand because it's *Bisaya*." (Informant 2).

Informant 7 further expressed optimism about communicating her child while tutoring mathematics at home. She opined the following utterance:

"It's okay the instruction can be understood." (Informant 7).

Based on the narratives of the research participants, the parents who were obliged to tutor their children at home, including in mathematics, found ease in using *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* as the means of instruction since that is their everyday spoken language. It can be inferred that they were more comfortable with using the local dialect

rather than English while teaching their children as a supplement to school learning.

The number of people learning a language other than their native tongue is rising quickly. Children must retain their first language when they start learning a foreign language since research shows that having a strong foundation in their mother tongue leads to a far better knowledge of the curriculum and a more positive attitude toward school (Tomblin, 2019).(Tomblin, 2019)

Furthermore, the DepEd has said that "the use of the learner's mother tongue or the language used at home is the most effective medium of learning," citing regional and global studies (Morales-Obod et al., 2020).(Morales-obod et al., 2020)

2. *The Hard Road of Teaching Using Sinugbuanong Binisaya.* Parents often complain that they find it more difficult to teach their children at home using *Sinugbuanong Binisaya*.

On the other hand, Informant 3 revealed her challenging experience teaching her child at home while speaking the Visayan language. She expressed that:

"There are difficult, there are easy, but they were more difficult *Bisaya*" (Informant 3).

Informant 4 also expressed hardships in using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* while tutoring her child at their house. She said that:

"Sometimes I experienced difficulty" (Informant 4).

Due to the comfort of the young learners with English as the medium of instruction, there are instances wherein they will no longer understand the local dialect during the learning session. Informant 5 expressed that:

"Most children cannot understand all Visayan terms" (Informant 5).

Teaching mathematics using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* caused great challenge for Informant 6 while teaching their child at home. She uttered the foregoing statement:

"Math in Visaya would be complicated for my son." (Informant 6).

The research participants indeed expressed their hardships in using *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* while having tutor sessions with their children at home. Explaining the numbers and the mechanism in mathematics to their children was hard for them since they were not so familiar with the local terms. Hence, using the mother tongue, like *Sinugbuanong Binisaya*, was hard for the parents, especially in mathematics, which is already a complex subject.

The way students learn in a multilingual environment is impacted by using their mother tongue in instruction (Trujillo, 2020). Aside from establishing a “universal kindergarten” and adding Grades 11 and 12 (senior high school) to basic education, the newly enacted Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, or the K to 12 Act, mandates the use of mother tongue-based multilingual education. The program, embracing the global 12-year education cycle, was rolled out in Grades 1 and 7 in public schools nationwide. Based DepEd order, the mother tongue (MT), or vernacular in the region, should be taught as a subject from Grades 1 to 3 and used as a medium of instruction from kindergarten to the first three years of grade school. In Grade 1, subjects in the native language include Math, Araling Panlipunan (AP), Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (Mapeh) and Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (Values Education). A new kid in school would not have any problem if any of the two languages is what he uses at home (Morales-Obod et al., 2020).

The second question pertains to the research participants' experiences in helping their children in mathematics, especially regarding the advantages and disadvantages of using their mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

1. *Deeper Understanding in Math Using Mother Tongue, Yet Unfamiliar Local Terms are Hard to Fathom.* The parents revealed that it is advantageous for their children to be tutored at home using their mother tongue because they can understand the lesson well.

According to informant 1, the child can easily understand the lesson or topic when the language used is Cebuano. She said that:

“The advantage is he can understand the Visaya and able to answer” (Informant 1).

Also, informant 2 expressed that using the mother tongue benefits the child because he or she can easily understand the subject matter. It was shared that:

“Advantageous because the child can understand.” (Informant 2).

Informant 3 shared that her involvement and exposure in teaching the mathematics subject is fitting. She said that:

“My experience in teaching math is appropriate.” (Informant 3).

Informant 5 also discoursed that the learner can still comprehend the lesson using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* and directly opined that:

“I can still understand math.” (Informant 5).

In addition, informant 7 explained that using the local dialect enabled the child to grasp the lesson immediately and be able to perform the assignments at home simply said that:

“So, it would not be hard to let them understand and enable to answer.” (Informant 7).

Sinugbuanong Binisaya is the native dialect of the people in Cebu. So, the children speak this one on the daily basis at home and in the community where they live or reside. This is also a manifestation that they have deeper understanding and comprehension of this language. So, when the mother tongue was introduced as the medium of instruction for Grade 1 to 3, the children find ease in learning their subjects using this language. Hence, the parents are also more comfortable in using this while having tutor session with their children at home including the mathematics subject.

The word “mother tongue” refers to a person’s first language learned at home. Furthermore, it is the language that the child has used for significant life-changing events since infancy. For instance, a child may grow up speaking a certain language at home with their parents, siblings, or other family members until they reach school age. Because they are living abroad, they may then start to pick up the language used in social situations, like play dates and the classroom (Tomblin, 2019).

2. *Getting Used to English Hinders Lesson Understanding using the Mother Tongue.* On the other hand, some parents experienced difficulty using the native dialect in teaching their children since they were already more comfortable with English as the medium of instruction.

Informant 4 expressed a problem with shifting to the mother tongue from English in teaching one’s child. She shared that:

“I am used to using English in teaching.” (Informant 4).

Even using the mother tongue, the child still cannot understand the lesson. This implies more problems with the child’s learning ability, yet it still connects with the language used in teaching. Informant 6 expressed this problem by saying that:

“Even in *Visaya*, still the child does not know.” (Informant 6).

Since English has been used as the medium of instruction, the parents are used to teaching their children at home using this language. So, when there was a shift to the use of mother language in Grade 1 to Grade 3. The parents find adjusting hard since they are not used to it. Many parents and communities in nations where English is not the

primary language think that by putting their kids “straight for English” and ignoring their native language, they will give them an advantage in school. Firstly, education does not start in the classroom. In the language of the learner, instruction begins at home. While the learning continues when school starts, there are also significant changes in how education is delivered (Nishanthi, 2020).

The third question as to the research participants relates to the difficult *Binisaya* words that they encountered.

1. *Unfamiliar Terms in Sinugbuanong Binisaya Complicate Home Teaching in Math.* The parents revealed that unfathomable terminologies in the Visayan language cause them confusion when teaching their children at home.

Informant 1 expressed difficulty in teaching her child, especially the mathematics subject at home, like the division, and said that:

“In division, it is complicated and the child cannot understand.” (Informant 1).

Informant 2 shared that there are terminologies in the local dialect that she cannot comprehend. She opined that:

“There are Visayan terms that are hard to comprehend.”

(Informant 2).

Informant 4 expressed that verbalizing the number using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* is really complex. She simply said that:

“One, two and ten and others.” (Informant 4).

For informant 5, communicating with the usage of deep Cebuano words are hard for her to do and said that:

“Using the deep native word.” (Informant 5).

It is very common in the Visayas region that people used code switching or mixture of the native dialect and English since the Americans liberalize education in the Philippines for several decades. This means that the people who had been educated in schools were product of English as the medium of instruction. Hence, they would naturally experience complexity in teaching their own children using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya*.

The parents speak different languages. In the first scenario, it's possible that both the father and the mother would like to speak to their kids in their native tongue. The bilingual home environment is as follows. In the second scenario, even while their kids must be able to function in the world outside the front door, the parents might still wish to be able to speak to them in their native tongue at home. This is the current state of the bilingual setting (Linguistic Society of America, 2021).

2. *Native Language in Teaching Math Can be Carried Out.* The research participants shared that using the local dialect in teaching their children at home can be done with ease since they are familiar with the words since they speak these at home as well.

Informant 3 expressed that she did not encounter hardship with math and shared the foregoing statement:

“I did not experience more difficulty in math.”

(Informant 3).

In the current generation of parents who had been exposed to English while learning in school, they rarely came across or spoke the native Cebuano dialect. However, they still find the language as easy to be used in teaching their children at home including the mathematics subject. This relates to the fact that they are familiar and comfortable with the language at home. Students can develop foundational literacy and communication skills in a language they are familiar with, which allows them to participate more fully in the classroom and gain confidence amongst their peers at a critical stage in their development. Parents can also be more fully engaged and supportive of their children's learning in a familiar language. Although there is overwhelming evidence that children learn best in and through a language they understand well.

For a child, the notion of mother tongue extends beyond language to include the child's social, cultural, and personal identity. Various cultures have various meanings for the same words and expressions. Convincing local communities to embrace the new schooling system and gaining government support are also major hurdles to establishing the school.

Research is done on the significance of mother language since children who acquire it also learn many other vital abilities, like literacy and critical thinking. These are the abilities that people carry over into formal schooling, and studies indicate that knowledge and abilities acquired in learner's native language do not need to be repeated when they switch to a second language (Tomblin, 2019). By the time children begin school, they have begun gaining confidence in their ability to communicate meaningfully in their mother tongue. They have built a foundation of knowledge and experience through observing and interacting with peers and adults in their community. The language, knowledge and experience that children bring to schools form an important foundation for their learning in the classroom.

COMMON THEMES EMANATING FROM THE PERCEPTION OF KEY PARTICIPANTS

This section presents the common themes developed out of the narrations of the research participants relating to the experiences of parents and teachers in the use

of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in mathematics for the Grade 2 learners

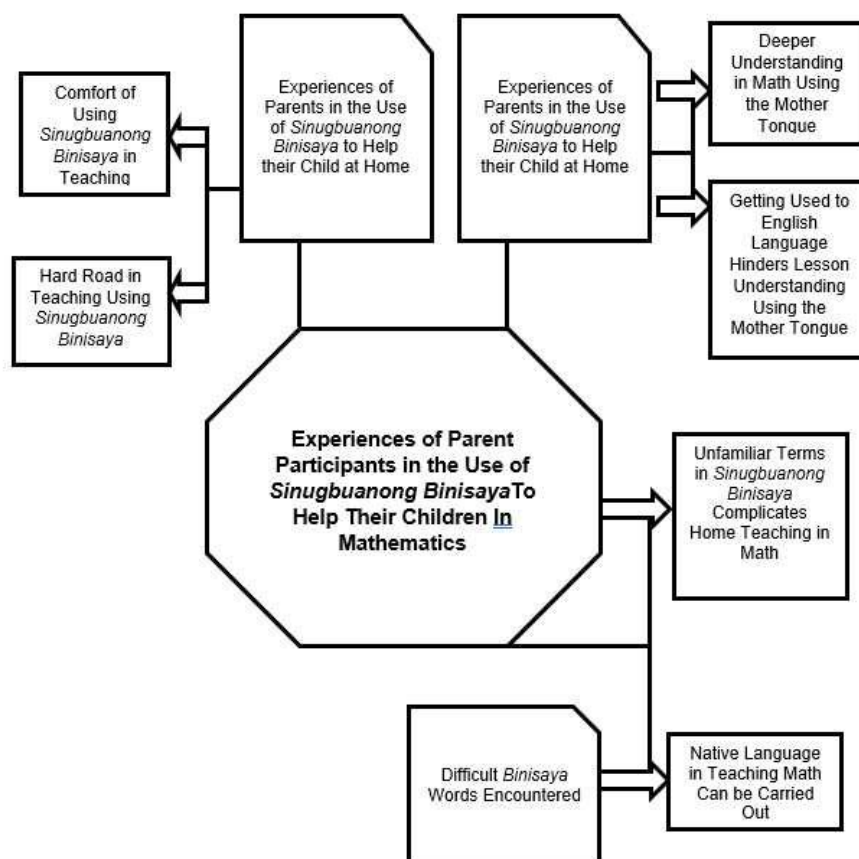


Figure 1.: Experiences of Parent Participants in the Use of Sinugbuanong Binisaya to Help Their Children in Mathematics

4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Mother Tongue as a Medium Of Instruction in Teaching Mathematics

The second question pertains to the research participants' experiences in helping their children in mathematics, especially in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of using their mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

1. *Deeper Understanding in Math Using Mother Tongue.* The research participants shared that using the native Cebuano dialect to teach their children math leads to better comprehension. These findings connect and support the results of the many previous studies, which reveal that teaching in the mother tongue is better for the children.

2. *Getting Used with English Hinders Lesson Understanding using the Mother Tongue.* In another context of the issue being investigated, parents expressed that they are more comfortable using English in teaching their children, as they have already experienced complexity in

using the native dialect in teaching their children, since they are already more comfortable with English as the medium of instruction.

The third question as to the research participants relates to the difficult *Binisaya* words that they encountered.

1. *Unfamiliar Terms in Sinugbuanong Binisaya Complicates Home Teaching in Math.* The parents shared that they cannot grasp some uncommon terminologies in *Sinugbuanong Binisaya*, which hampered their ability to explain the topics in mathematics. There were also minimal reference materials that would help them understand those words, which makes home tutoring very challenging.

2. *Native Language in Teaching Math Can be Carried Out.* Well, there also research participants who expressed that teaching math to their children at home is manageable and within their existing capabilities. This means that they are more at ease with the native language in supplementary learning activity at home.

4.3 Challenges Encountered by Both Participants in the Use of Mother Tongue in the New Normal

The second part of this investigation pertains to the parents' knowledge and perceptions towards the MTB MLE.

The first question that was asked to research participants was about their understanding of MTB MLE.

1. *Enabled Profound Understanding of the Local Dialect Yet There are Unfamiliar Terms.* Using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* in the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum led the parents, who served as home tutors of the learners, to learn the true meanings of common words used in communicating with other people in the community. Although there are uncommon terms that they find hard to grasp.

According to informant 1, using the mother tongue enabled them to understand the native-based education method that applies different languages in the higher grade. The foregoing statement goes that:

"We were able to understand everything about MTB MLE." (Informant 1).

Informant 2 expressed that she can understand the local dialect, yet there are terms that were hard to fathom. It was shared that:

"There are times that we can understand Visaya, sometimes it's difficult." (Informant 2).

"It's okay but there are difficult times." (Informant 4).

For informant 5, using the MTB MLE enabled the learner to appreciate and learn more of their local language. It was said that:

"Enabled the children to learn their own language." (Informant 5).

Based on the observation of informant 6, as time passed by, the child will be able to learn with the parent's guidance. She said that:

"Was able to learn, and later on I can guide." (Informant 6).

Informant 8 shared that she will teach those terms within her comprehension and asked her daughter to teach her younger sibling those lessons that were hard to teach. It was said that:

"Those that I can understand, if I cannot understand my eldest, Mary Grace will teach." (Informant 8).

The research participants divulged that the MTB MLE implemented in the Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade levels in the school supervised directly by the Department of Education enabled the parents to learn various local terms that they usually use without knowing the true meaning. However, there were cases wherein they encountered some

uncommon or unfamiliar terminologies in the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* that they could not grasp easily.

In order to support the goal of "Every Child-A-Reader and A-Writer" by Grade 1, one of the changes made to the Basic Education Curriculum by the new K-12 program is the introduction of MTB-MLE in Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, and 3. MTB-MLE stands for "first-language-first" education, which starts in the mother tongue and transitions to additional languages, particularly Filipino and English. It is intended to alleviate the high level of functional illiteracy among Filipinos, where language is a significant barrier. Children are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process because they comprehend the covered topics and the expectations placed on them. They can quickly construct and describe their environment, express their ideas, and incorporate new ideas into what they already know using their mother tongue (Capitol University, 2021).

The next question pertains to the feelings of the research participants about using their mother tongue as a medium of instruction in teaching mathematics.

1. *Use of Mother Tongue: Afforded Ease in Home Teaching.* Some parents opined that using their native tongue enabled them to teach their children properly at home, especially the math subject.

According to Informant 1, using the local dialect, she will be able to explain the lesson to her child swiftly, and understanding will also be nippy. She shared saying that:

"I can quickly explain, then we can easily understand each other, and the (child) will be able to embed in her mind." (Informant 1).

Informant 7 revealed that using the mother tongue affords happiness in teaching math properly to the learner. She said that:

"I'm happy so that my child can quickly learn." (Informant 7).

Based on the experience of informant 9, she learned more about the local dialect. She shared positive feelings by saying that:

"I'm happy because *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* is better because I learned a lot." (Informant 9).

Research participants who are competent in mathematics find it easy to teach the subject to their children at home. They can explain the various lessons or subject matter to their children in the local language.

Children who acquire proficiency in two or even three languages grow up with a stronger comprehension of sentence structure and expression, which enhances language use in general. In contrast, those kids with a single language have a definite idea about expressing their needs

and wants. Furthermore, children who spoke only one mother tongue were not as competent in the language as children who spoke two or more mother tongues, since they must consider how to phrase and apply the language of choice at that particular moment. Children who speak various languages can think more critically (Rommel & Tonelli, 2017).

2. Use of Mother Tongue in Teaching Number: Both Easy and Difficult. The research participants' experiences suggest they experience comfort and complexity in using their mother tongue while teaching numbers, figures, equations, and more.

Informant 2 opined that she can understand the local spoken dialect. However, there is a topic that experienced hardships. She shared this teaching struggle by saying that:

"It's okay, but sometimes I cannot understand."

(Informant 2).

Ease and difficulty are present in teaching mathematics in the mother tongue. Informant 3 shared this experience by saying that:

"My feeling is there are those that I find it difficult, there are also easy." (Informant 3).

However, informant 4 emphasized her confusion in using the local spoken dialect in teaching math. She shared this issue by saying that:

"I sometimes feel confused." (Informant 4).

Likewise, informant 6 further shared that speaking the local dialect in teaching mathematics is very difficult. She shared this difficulty by saying that:

"It is tough to teach the children, math is the most difficult." (Informant 6).

A group of research participants experienced both the ease and hardships of using the local dialect while teaching various mathematics lessons with numbers that needed to be translated to the Sinugbuanong Binisaya. Although people commonly speak this dialect in the household and the community, other terminologies were hard to comprehend for some, leading to confusion and difficulty in effectively learning children at home.

In the language of the learner, learning begins at home. While this learning continues when school starts, there are significant changes in how education is delivered. When a child was learning by experience, the school system organized and managed the curriculum and how it was delivered. Children are placed in a new physical environment when they start school. Most of the students in the new classroom are strangers, and the instructor, who is the center of authority, is also unfamiliar. The method of structured learning is also new. The matter can become rather complex if, on top of these, there is an unexpected change in the language used in the contact. It can hinder a

child's development. Schools can assist students in adjusting to their new surroundings and bridging the gap between what they learn in the classroom and what they experience at home; nevertheless, by utilizing the learners' native tongue (García et al., 2017).

Then the research participants were asked about their understanding of barriers to learning.

1. Time off Learning Barriers. Some research participants did not encounter obstacles in learning based on their experience as home tutors, including math.

Informant 1 shared that she did not face a problem in learning and said that:

"Nothing, I understand everything." (Informant 1).

Informant 3 further opined that she was able to understand everything about math. She shared this experience by saying that:

"I understand and no barriers." (Informant 3).

Further Informant 5 opined that she was able to learn more about the local spoken dialect. She shared this by saying that:

"The children nowadays have so many things to do." (Informant 5).

Informant 7 opined that she was able to learn more about the local spoken dialect. She shared this by saying that:

"There is no reason that the child cannot understand." (Informant 7).

The research participants did not reveal any barriers to learning despite using their mother tongue as the medium of teaching in grades 1 to 3. However, they consider it advantageous because they can quickly explain the math lesson to their children at home.

Mathematics is an important subject in human existence and holds a prominent role in science and technology. Because of its greater importance, students are required to learn mathematics from childhood. Lack of mathematical knowledge cannot make a student progress in life since it is required in everyday life. However, not every student performs equally well in mathematics because of its conceptualization (Ankita & Richa, 2017).

2. Presence of Learning Obstacles. On the other hand, both internal and external antecedents caused hindrances in learning.

Informant 6 opined that there were terminologies in the local dialect that were hard to grasp. She shared this by saying that:

"Sometimes there were words that were hard to understand, it is hard for my child." (Informant 6).

On the part of informant 9, the obstacles to learning took place when the child failed to study. She shared this problem and uttered:

“The hindrance of learning now is the study habit of the child.” (Informant 9).

Informant 10 further shared that there would always be obstructions that learners would experience to learn. She shared this idea and said that:

“There are struggles along the way before you achieve your goal.” (Informant 10).

Their parents shared that there are other factors that prevent the children from learning, especially mathematics, despite the parents’ supplementary teaching at home. One of these is the lack of study habits, difficulty understanding other Cebuano words, and many others, which are common in the journey of learning.

Students face various types of problems while learning mathematics. The present paper focuses on the various types of problems faced by students. These problems are broadly classified into student-related, school-related, and family-related factors. These problems became barriers to learning mathematics. Therefore, these barriers should be reduced so that the roots of teaching and learning mathematics should be firmly kept since a lower age (Schoenfeld, 2022).

The research participants were asked to identify the barriers to learning that they encountered in the classroom and within their school in teaching mathematics using their mother tongue.

1. *Unacquainted Sinugbuanong Binisaya Stiff to Figure Out.* One of the problems faced by the parents while teaching mathematics to their children at home is that they encounter unfamiliar words in Cebuano that were hard to understand. So, they would find it hard to teach this subject to their children at home.

Informant divulged that she encounters hard-to-understand *Sinubuanong Binisaya* terms in the learning material while coaching math at home and shared the foregoing statement:

“Hard to understand Visayan term used in the book.”
(Informant 1).

Informant 2 also expressed a problem in comprehending with the terms Cebuano dialect, which were complicated to understand: She shared this hardship by saying this statement:

“There were terms that even us, cannot understand.”
(Informant 2).

Informant 6 also opined that the terminologies in the Cebuano dialect were difficult to figure out. She expressed this by saying:

“There are lots of words and terminologies in the module that were hard to understand.” (Informant 6).

At the era of technology and the presence of Internet, the languages heard by the people are already mixed and lead towards the loss of local language identity. Informant 8 expressed that:

“The child nowadays cannot commonly understand pure Visayan terms.” (Informant 8).

The research participants identified that the main obstacle in enabling learning in the lessons in mathematics to their children at home relates to the words and terminologies in *Sinubuanong Binisaya* that were difficult to figure out. So, if they cannot understand those terms, they would also find it hard to explain the contents in the module to their children at home.

Current studies show the growing movement of the Mother Tongue (MT) instruction in the elementary years of a child’s education worldwide. This is apparent in the rising number of efforts in the educational programs in the Philippines that utilize this approach. Nonetheless, the Philippines is the only country in Asia to have instituted a national policy calling for the mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in the elementary years. While studies have long supported the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction (MOI), they have been primarily conducted in selected schools rather than being employed all over the country, down to the local community settings. As such, little is known about how a national policy for the MTB-MLE can be contextualized in the local situation. Teachers, parents, and pupils were supportive of the program. However, they were skeptical due to the growing challenges brought by the lack of MT learning materials and books, which they considered MTB-MLE’s most significant challenge (Pillos et al., 2020).

2. *Dearth of Personal Capacity and Assistance in Teaching Math Using MTB.* Some parents revealed their shortcomings in understanding some mathematics lessons that have to be taught in the local language.

Further, regarding lessons in math and teaching them to the learner, she shared the following statement. Informant 4 shared that the lack of higher educational attainment is a hindrance in understanding the:

“It is tough, especially since we did not finish school.”
(Informant 4).

Informant 5 also expressed the complexity of comprehending and teaching math without someone to help and assist. She shared the foregoing statement:

“It is hard, especially since nobody can help my child to learn.” (Informant 5).

Aside from the difficult-to-fathom local terms, the parents noted that their deficiency in higher learning caused

obstacles in their understanding of the lesson contained in the supplementary learning materials. They also did not have somebody at home to help them understand such lessons.

The MTB-MLE reform in the Philippines contains ambiguity and conflict. In terms of ambiguity, the DepEd orders specified what should be done but offered little support on how it should be done. For example, the orders called for instruction in the mother tongue, yet government-provided resources are only available in the twelve primary regional languages (“Binisaya” is one) in kindergarten and for Grades 1- 3 nationwide. Given the lack of preparation

and suitable MT learning materials and books, it is unclear how to implement the policy to align with the desired mother tongue approach (Piper & Zuilkowski, 2016). Mathematics is foundational in many ways that inform our decisions in various areas of our lives. Teaching and learning mathematics is at the heart of education. Learning mathematics aims to link school to everyday life, provide skill acquisition, prepare students for the workforce, and foster mathematical thinking. Mathematics involves learning to problem-solve, investigate, represent, and communicate mathematical concepts and ideas, and making connections to everyday life (Sinay & Nahornick, 2016).

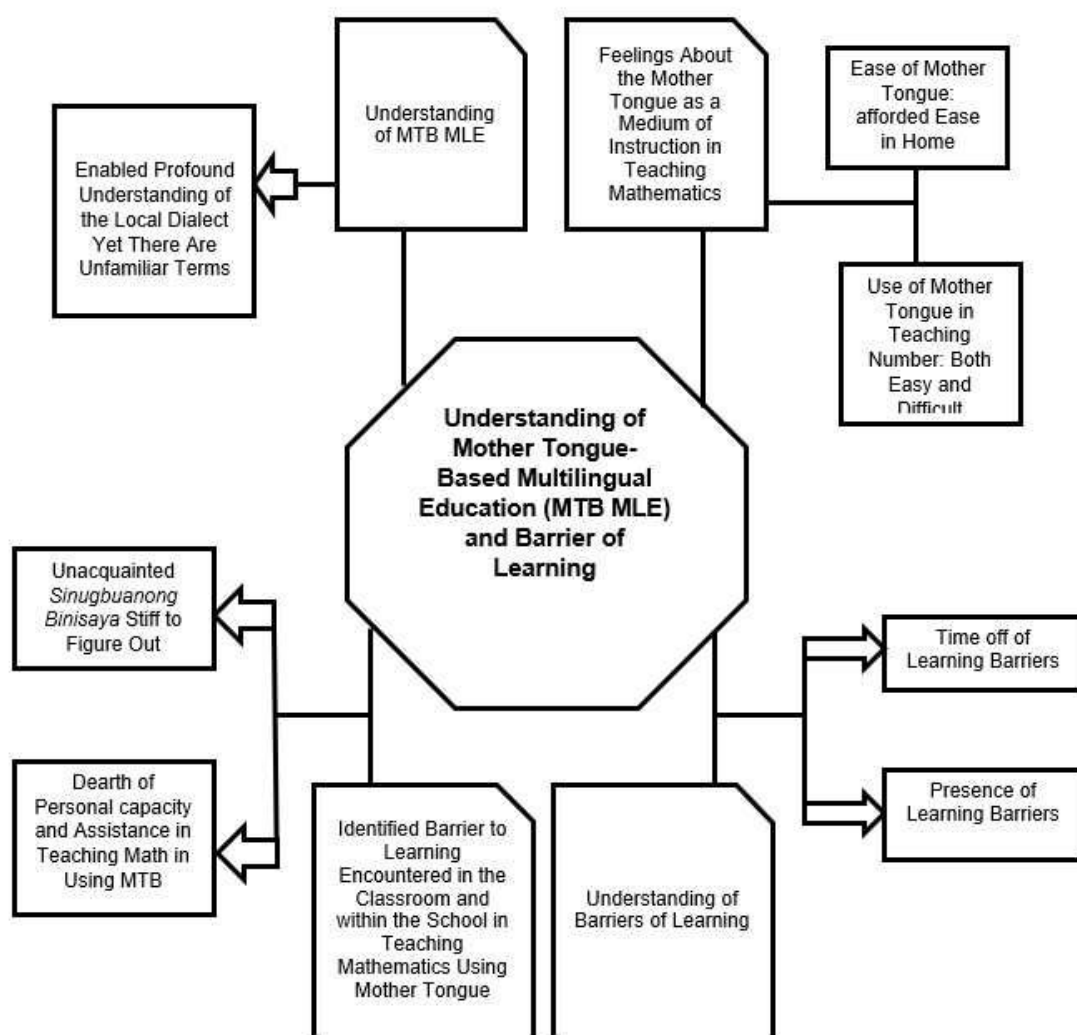


Fig.2: Understanding of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB MLE) and Barrier of Learning

4.4 Experiences of Teacher Participants in Using Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in Teaching Mathematics

This part of the study shows the data on the teachers’ experiences in using the mother tongue as the

medium of instruction in teaching mathematics. The data are based on the narrations of the research participants during the interview.

This section presents the data relating to the profile of the teachers in terms of years of service.

Table 1: Research Participants' Years of Service

Respondent No.	Years of Service
1	3
2	Less than 2 years
3	13
4	11
5	12
6	7
7	7
8	3
9	19
10	19
11	3 years and 10 months
12	3 years
13	3 years
14	4 years
15	3 years

Among the research participants, informants 9 and 10 had the longest years of service in teaching. This data indicates that the teacher had spent almost two (2) decades of teaching mathematics in the elementary level, wherein in-depth knowledge on determining the most appropriate teaching approach that would enable the learners to understand the subject matter or topic had been developed.

On the other hand, informant 2 had only served as teacher for less than 2 years in the public school. It can be inferred that she is still in the adjustment period in aforementioned profession and still the stage of developing appropriate strategy that would work with the learners well.

It is true that some instructors are naturally adept at classroom management. But training and years of experience in the field are necessary to acquire classroom management skills. It is not a gift given to some teachers (Agbaria, 2021).

The second question asked to the research participants pertaining to their perspectives in the use of *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* as a medium of instruction in math subject.

1. *Speaking the Native Dialect Benefits the Learners.* According to the teachers, learning while using the native language is beneficial to the children because they are very familiar with the terms and even pronunciation.

According to informant 1, enabling the children to study the mathematics subject in school is better for the children since they are conversant with it. She expressed that:

“It is good for pupils that are used in speaking *Bisaya*” (Informant 1).

The advantage brought by using the native language is not one side because might experience problems with it. She shared this thought by saying that:

“Good for some pupils but disadvantage to some” (Informant 2).

Moreover, informant 4 expressed that she did not encounter hardship with teaching math using the mother tongue and shared the foregoing statement:

“It will benefit pupils to be aware of their mother tongue.” (Informant 4).

The children's familiarity with their own spoken language connects to their ease in learning mathematics using it. The children will understand the subject matter or lesson better when it is taught by the teachers using their mother tongue in school. This is why this mandate is included in the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Program of the Department of Education.

Based on a DepEd Order, the mother tongue (MT), or vernacular in the region, should be taught as a subject from Grades 1 to 3 and used as a medium of instruction from

kindergarten to the first three years of grade school. The Inquirer's interviews with teachers and parents showed that children were enthusiastic about embracing the use of Filipino, at least in Metro Manila (Ganuza & Hedman, 2019).

2. *Translating the Numbers in Math to the Cebuano Dialect is Complex.* The research participants opined that teaching numbers while using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* is multifarious for them due to some unaccustomed words to both the teachers and learners in schools

Translating the number using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* was hard for the teachers who are not used to it. Informant 3 expressed this problem by stating the following statement:

“Using *Bisaya* in Math is kind of difficult especially translating number to *Bisaya*” (Informant 3).

On the other hand, there are instances wherein the teachers cannot easily translate the number words to the native Cebuano dialect since they are also unfamiliar with the different terminologies. Hence, preparing the lesson entails more time and research, which actually adds to the teachers' burden.

The teachers employed strategies like translating the target language to the mother tongue, using multilingual teaching, leveraging lingua franca, improvising instructional materials in the mother tongue, providing remediation, and incorporating literary works in the mother tongue for motivation. However, challenges they faced included a shortage of books in the mother tongue, limited vocabulary, and insufficient teacher training (Songbatumis, 2017).

The third question asked of the research participants pertains to some alternative math activities applied during classes.

1. *Simplified and Interactive Instructional Materials.* The teachers used instructional materials that were easily understood by the students and enabled the learners to take a proactive role and participate in the learning activities.

In the advent of technology, the students were more attentive if the teachers' instructional materials were in the audio-visual form. Informant 1 shared that she used the foregoing and said that:

“I let them watch educational videos like addition, subtraction and etc.” (Informant 1).

To train the learner about teamwork, the instructor 3 as a teacher undertakes that entails participation in a group to achieve a certain goal of winning the game collectively. It was uttered that:

“Group activities using popsicle sticks” (Informant 3).

On the part of informant 4, as a grade two teachers, the activities undertaken in the class entails partnership between learners. It was further shared that:

“Think, pair, share, and learn through peers learn by doing”. (Informant 4).

To be updated with the trends in the pedagogical world, the teachers used high-technology teaching and learning materials to catch and retain the learners' attention towards specific subject topics in mathematics. So, interactive activities were done in both the online synchronous and asynchronous class sessions so that the pupils in the grade would be more participative in the activities. Also, they will learn how to coordinate and cooperate with others to achieve specific goals and win educational games. Hence, videos and other interactive class activities have significantly fostered learning.

Students gain knowledge by actively participating, gathering information, solving problems, and articulating their discoveries. Each class activity allows students to enhance their understanding by applying concepts and expressing new insights, while also giving instructors feedback on the students' learning progress. (Brown University, 2021).

The fourth question asked of the research participants pertained to their strategies in dealing with difficult *Binisaya* words.

1. *Seek Understanding on the True Meaning of Unknown Terms.* The teachers would research the profound meaning of the local terms they encounter in teaching.

Informant 1 shared that she refers to the dictionary in comprehending the meaning of some local Cebuano terms and said that:

“I look up the meaning in the dictionary and explain to them” (Informant 1).

Using audio-visual tools, Informant 2 studied more about the mother tongue and shared the foregoing statement:

“Study more *Binisaya* words. Teach the pupils in a video presentation and send it to them” (Informant 2).

Interpreting the true meaning of the local terms was done effectively using materials that can be viewed and watched. Informant 3 opined that:

“Using visual materials to interpret the correct meaning” (Informant 3).

In addition, informant 4 used cognitive-based class activities. She shared this statement by saying that:

“Consistent in drill and spelling bee”. (Informant 4).

One of the effective ways to gain an in-depth understanding of unfamiliar terminologies in *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* is to find ways to know their meaning before using them, such as looking at the dictionary or watching video presentations. Moreover, the teachers employed various audio-visual instructional materials that enabled the learners to have a visual grasp of the different meanings of the words in their mother tongue. Others used interactive group and collaborative learning activities so that through participation and group cooperation, the pupils in grade will learn the math lessons, which are usually cognitive-based.

“Binisaya” was used by the three teachers in the class to give instructions and to explain the meaning of words, complex ideas, and complex grammar points. The teacher uses “Binisaya” only when she explains abstract or culturally-specific words. All three teachers first attempted to explain the words, grammar points, and meanings of complex ideas in English, but resorted to “Binisaya” when they thought the students could not understand their explanations (Pillos et al., 2020).

The second part of the teachers’ experience in using Sinugbuanong Binisaya as the language of instruction concerns their understanding of the MTB MLE.

The first question was about their understanding of the MTB MLE.

1. *MTB MLE Used the Native Language as the Medium of Instruction.* The research participants explained that MTB MLE is about the usage of the local dialect or the standard dialect spoken by the people in the locality or community to teach the children lessons in schools.

Informant 1 elucidated that MTB is about using the local dialect in teaching the subjects in the basic education curriculum to the pupils. She shared the foregoing statement:

“Teaching the subjects using mother tongue-based or native languages”. (Informant 1).

Moreover, informant 2 also explicates that MTB MLE applied the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* to educate children at the basic education level. It was shared that:

“A subject using the *Binisaya*”. (Informant 2).

In addition, simply discoursed that this teaching approach used the Cebuano language in teaching the pupils in grade two and uttered that:

“*Sinugbuanong pinulungan*”. (Informant 3).

For informant 4, MTB MLE is about utilizing the commonly spoken dialect or language by the people in the community. She directly clarified that:

“Using the terms commonly used in the community”
(Informant 4).

The grade two teachers explained that MTB MLE pertains to using the local dialect in teaching the various subjects to the learners in grades 1 to 3. This means that the intended competencies of the learners will be achieved well when the subject matter or lesson is explained using the first language. This means that the learners will have better performance in the mathematics subject when the teaching starts in the language that they first hear and learn.

Mother Tongue is a language that a person: 1) has learned first; 2) ascertains with or is recognized as a native speaker of by others; 3) recognizes best; and 4) practices most. MTB-MLE program is more than just using MT as the language of instruction when elucidating the curriculum but also conducting research and evidence-based policies, adequate teaching and learning materials, and thorough teachers’ training which are now continuously conducted by the DepEd (Castaño, 2021).

The next question was about the research participants’ feelings towards using their mother tongue as a medium of instruction in teaching mathematics.

1. *Using Mother Tongue Enabled Learners to Understand Better.* The teachers observed that using the local dialect enabled a pupil in grade 2 to understand the lessons better than if they were taught in another language.

Moreover, informant 1 shared that the pupils could comprehend the math lessons better when they were taught using the native dialect. She uttered that:

“It is easy for them to understand the lessons”. (Informant 1).

Informant 2 also observed that the learners could answer the performance tasks, quizzes, and other assessment activities when they are explained using the mother tongue. She shared the foregoing statement:

“Fine because pupils can easily communicate or answer immediately, but pupils or children nowadays become bad at it” (Informant 2).

The grade two teachers who served as research participants in this investigation felt that using the mother tongue to educate the learners at the beginning of the basic education ladder is beneficial since the pupils could learn the lessons in mathematics better. This was possible because the learners acquired their mother tongue as their first language. Thereby, they can understand the words. Also, this was the language the children first heard and kept on hearing from other people in the environment.

Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act, mandates that DepEd follow the principles and framework of MTB-MLE in curriculum development. Kindergarten and Grades 1 to 3 students must receive instruction, teaching materials, and assessments in their regional or native language (DepEd, 2020).

Then the research participants were asked on their understanding of “barriers to learning”.

1. *Barriers to Learning is About Obstacles to Attainment of the Intended Learning Competencies.* In every teaching and learning methodology, there is always an obstacle that hindered the children to gain deeper grasp of the lessons in each subject.

Informant explained that barriers to learning are about those aspects that block the learning of new knowledge to take place. She said that:

“A hindrance to learn something new”.

(Informant 1).

Informant 2 also elucidates that the abovementioned topic expressed obstacles to comprehending the lesson. It was shared that:

“The hindrance of learning” (Informant 2).

Informant 3 explained that the barrier to learning is the incomplete use of the Cebuano dialect in learning. She opined that:

“It is not comprehensive *Sinugbuanon*” (Informant 3).

The research participants discussed that the topic, barriers of learning, pertained to the various obstructions that the learners encountered that hindered them from acquiring the intended learning outcomes as specified in the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education curriculum. These pertain to the child's personal obstacles to acquiring new knowledge and the loopholes in the educational system that led to the failure to maximize the aims of education. Many people find that common barriers are impeding their ability to access learning. These include social and cultural, practical, personal, emotional, and workplace barriers. Learning disabilities affect how people understand information, communicate, or learn new skills, and include difficulty reading, difficulty writing, and difficulty with mathematics. The extent of a learning disability differs from person to person (Union Learn Organization, 2021).

Then, they were also asked to identify the barriers to learning that they encountered in the classroom and within their school when teaching mathematics using their mother tongue.

1. *Ambiguity in the Terminologies.* The teachers observed that many factors block the children's learning or their propensity to learn more and new knowledge, especially in mathematics.

Informant 1 revealed that some terms in the mathematics subject and the language used in the instructional materials are hard to comprehend. Hence, it made the pupils confused and shared that:

“Some words are difficult to understand. No definition of difficult words at the last part of the book”.

(Informant 1).

Informant 3 also explained that the children would find it difficult to understand some terminologies in the local dialect used in the teaching and learning materials, which were hard to understand. It was shared that:

“Most learners cannot understand other Sinugbuanon words, no materials used to interpret the sinugbuanon words”. (Informant 3).

Informant 4 enumerated the various aspects of learning that became the obstacles to obtaining knowledge and competencies. She explained that:

“Number words, spelling, terminologies”.

(Informant 4).

Based on the utterances of the research participants, the peculiarities of the various words and texts in the learning materials hindered the children's understanding of the lessons in the mathematics subjects. So, the challenges in learning have now doubled. One is the jargon inherent in the math discipline and the language used.

Saneka and de Witt (2019) defined barriers as factors that hinder or prevent people from engaging in activities. In this study, barriers refer to rules, policies, or other issues that obstruct mathematics teachers from effectively using their knowledge of students' learning styles. The reviewed literature highlighted a lack of research on barriers related to teachers' understanding of students' learning styles in mathematics teaching. However, it did identify several general barriers to mathematics instruction. They found that mathematics teachers faced various obstacles, categorized into societal, pedagogical, and systematic barriers. Societal barriers involved negative perceptions of mathematics, including the belief that boys excel more than girls. Pedagogical barriers to teaching strategies, such as using severe punishment for failure, led to negative attitudes towards math. Systematic barriers included the lack of appropriate resources, such as textbooks and mathematical tools.

4.5 Challenges Encountered by the Parents and Teachers in the Use of Mother Tongue in the New Normal

The research participants were asked questions about the challenges encountered in using their mother tongue in the new normal.

1. *Parents' Myriad of Difficult Moments in Home Teaching.* Some parents experienced difficulties using the Cebuano dialect to teach their children at home. The type and degree of difficulty are related to their competency to teach and their educational backgrounds.

Informant 1, a parent in grade 2 expressed that it was tough to understand and answer her child's assignment or home-based performance task. She shared this hardship by saying that:

"It is tough, but I tend to understand so that we will be able to answer." (Informant 1).

Also, as a parent, informant 2 expressed hardship in teaching one's child at home due to the lack of higher educational attainment. She shared her struggle by saying the foregoing statement:

It is especially when I did not finish school."
(Informant 2).

For Informant 3, the unfamiliar Cebuano terminologies were complicated to understand. She discoursed on the foregoing statement:

"I experienced the deep Cebuano." (Informant 3).

Since mother tongue is something parents know as the means to teach their children at home, they experience different facets of rigidity in effecting the learning of the various lessons in the mathematics subject. Also, following the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education curriculum, the topics in the subject were considered hard for the children's learning ability based on the parents' viewpoints, since they even find some topics hard to understand. Aside from the difficulty of teaching mathematics, using the mother tongue with unfamiliar terms would make the role of the parents to teach at home harder.

In an investigation about the parents' experiences and practices supporting children's mathematics learning, a conceptual framework distinguishes school-centered and parent-centered approaches to parental involvement in children's learning. The topics of discussion included parents' level of confidence and perceived ability in mathematics, their experience of doing mathematics with their children out-of-school, and their interactions with school about mathematics, in which the findings revealed some specific adverse effects of school-centered approaches, and suggested that school-centered approaches may in fact restrict parents' understanding of how they can support mathematics learning in the home (Jay et al., 2018).

2. Parents' Affluence in Using Mother Tongue in Teaching Math at Home. On the other hand, some parents find it easy to utilize the local language in teaching their children, especially in mathematics subjects.

For informant 7 shared that her child at home can understand math using the mother tongue and shared the following utterance:

"It is okay since the child can understand."
(Informant 7).

Informant 10 expressed that she recognized the value of learning the Cebuano language and shared the foregoing statement:

"For me, having the Sinugbuanong Binisaya is so okay for the children to learn to analyze and those words omitted in Cebuano." (Informant 10).

The research participants revealed that applying the mother tongue to teach the different mathematics lessons was easy and could be done at home. These groups of parents have either higher competence in Mathematics and have children who have higher learning capacities with number and abstract reasoning, regardless of the language being used in instruction.

The emergence of COVID-19 has significantly altered many facets of life worldwide, including education. Implementing social distancing measures to curb the virus's spread has led to profound changes in the educational system. The students have been forced to learn at home. Authentic contexts are essential to designing practical learning activities. Therefore, the teaching and learning process must adapt to teachers and students being physically separated and interacting virtually from their homes. In this context, the availability of technology and the collaboration between teachers and parents as facilitators are crucial to the learning process. Teachers guide the educational activities due to their expertise, while parents play a significant role in supporting students as they learn individually at home (Hwang & Hariyanti, 2021).

The question pertains to the coping mechanism employed by the research participants to address the identified challenges.

1. Intensify Home Teaching Using Fitting Strategy to Effect Comprehension in Math. The research participants ensured that they were able to explain the lessons to their children at home so that they would be able to gain comprehension of the topic or subject matter with the application of the correct teaching approach. Also, they emphasized the significance of learning the local language.

Informant 1 expressed that she ensured that her child could learn the topic or lesson through careful teaching at home, considering that the role of parents is to reinforce learning to the children, aside from school instruction. She said that:

"I will teach the child properly and I will explain so that the child will be able to gain understanding."
(Informant 1).

In addition, informant 2 also shared that she will strive hard so that she can teach her child at home. Although there was a recognition that teachers can teach well, especially since mathematics is complex for her. She opined that:

“We tried hard for the child to understand, but it is still better if the teacher.” (Informant 2).

Informant 3 also said that she made sure she would teach her how to learn the math lesson. She said the following statement:

“(I explained to them properly on the part they were not able to understand so that they will be able to understand.” (Informant 3).

In times when Informant 8, as a parent-teacher at home, could not understand the mathematics lesson, she would ask for assistance from the neighbor who knew better. She expressed this by saying that:

“Teach properly, and if I do not understand, I will ask our neighbor who can understand.” (Informant 8).

Informant 9 shared that she would learn the local language to be able to teach her child appropriately. She shared the foregoing statement:

“I will endeavor to learn the Cebuano Visaya for my child to learn properly.” (Informant 9).

Out of the narratives of the research participants, they did their best to ensure that they could teach their children at home appropriately, which requires time and effort. Also, to attain the parents’ goal to supplement more learning of supplementing their children's learning in the mathematics subject, they needed to find the most fitting teaching approach, which includes emphasizing the importance of learning the mother tongue so that comprehension of the lesson will be better.

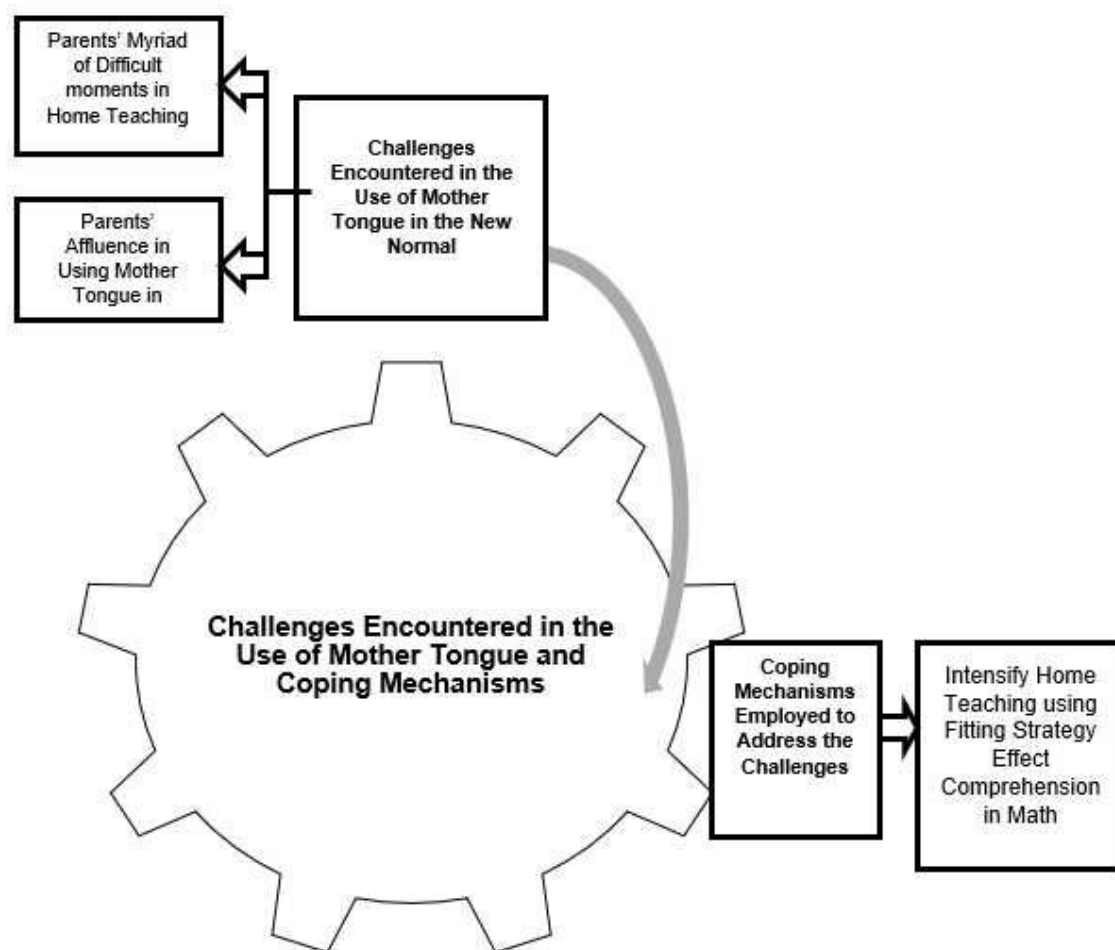


Fig.3: Challenges Encountered by Teachers in the Use of Mother Tongue and Coping Mechanisms

In addition, the carrier role of language in the formation of thinking is also reflected in its expression and understanding of thinking content. People use language to transform complex ideas and concepts into communicative forms, promoting a deeper understanding of these ideas and

concepts. As Vygotsky pointed out, thinking is conducted through language, which expresses and shapes thinking. Across the world, the COVID-19 outbreak has led to the closure of schools. Children are staying home and are expected to continue their learning remotely. Digital tools

will help teachers to communicate with children, but parents and other family members will need to support these new ways of learning. Teachers will turn to digital technology to ensure that children do not miss out on learning opportunities, providing work that can be completed at home. There is likely to be a difficult adjustment period while tools are established, family schedules are instituted, and work is circulated (Häkkinen et al., 2020).

This part displays the discussions on the thematic categories, challenges encountered in using mother tongue in the new normal, and the corresponding coping mechanisms to address the identified challenges. Figure 3 reveals the thematic categories.

V. FINDINGS

Based on the data gathered, the following were the study's findings.

The study revealed that the experiences of parent participants of the identified schools can be inferred that they were more comfortable with the use of local dialect rather than using English while teaching their children as a supplement to school learning. However, they indeed expressed their hardships in using the *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* while having tutor sessions with their children at home. Explaining the numbers and the mechanisms in mathematics was difficult for them since they were unfamiliar with the local terms. They encountered difficult *Bisaya* words, unfamiliar terms, and some barriers that complicate home math teaching. In addition, they also stated the advantages and disadvantages of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in teaching mathematics. One advantage is that learners can familiarize themselves with their dialect. On the contrary, using the Mother Tongue in teaching and learning Math lacks practicality. Some words are hard to fathom, and there are many barriers to teaching the mother tongue. Some of those are a lack of vocabulary, teacher preparation, and an absence of publications written in the mother tongue.

Parents and Teachers encounter challenges in using the Mother Tongue, such as unfamiliar words and various difficulties in understanding. The type and degree of difficulty is somehow related to their own competency to teach, their educational backgrounds, and the limited resources they have. On the other hand, there are parents who experience ease in utilizing the local language in teaching their children, especially in mathematics subjects.

The coping mechanism to address the challenges ensured that they could explain the lessons to their children at home so that they would be able to gain comprehension of the topic or subject matter with the correct teaching

approach. Also, they emphasized the significance of learning the local language.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the study's findings, it was determined that most of the parent participants were more comfortable and found it easier to use the local dialect and translate local terms to English while teaching their children math subjects as a supplement to school learning. Hardships and challenges were encountered in using *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* while the research participants had tutor sessions with their children at home. There is not much of an advantage compared to the disadvantages. *Sinugbuanong Binisaya* in the teaching and learning process at home is more impractical than helpful. Adopting the Mother Tongue is irrelevant and causes teaching difficulty among parents and teachers.

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Curriculum Reform in Federal Nepal: Toward A Ground-up and Just Pedagogical Vision

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Abstract— This article explores curriculum reform in federal Nepal, focusing on the potential and challenges of creating a ground-up, justice-oriented pedagogical vision. Following Nepal's shift to federalism in 2015, the decentralization of education governance has opened new spaces for localized curriculum development. However, structural centralism, bureaucratic inertia, and limited local capacity have hindered transformative change. Drawing on central pedagogy, decentralization theory, and textual analysis of provincial education plans, this study argues that curriculum reform must move beyond administrative devolution to become a participatory and culturally responsive process. The analysis reveals that while some provinces have begun incorporating local knowledge and languages, most reforms remain constrained by national frameworks and top-down implementation. The article calls for a reimagining of curriculum as a democratic, dialogical practice, grounded in the lived experiences of diverse Nepali communities. It proposes practical pathways—including inclusive curriculum committees, mother-tongue education, integration of indigenous knowledge, and localized teacher training—to build a more equitable and contextually relevant education system.



Keywords— Curriculum Reform, Federal Nepal, Ground-Up Approach, Just Pedagogy, Decentralization, Local Curriculum Development, Community Participation, Inclusive Education, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Equity in Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since Nepal transitioned to federalism in 2015, the restructuring of governance has presented both challenges and opportunities in reforming the education system. With the Constitution of Nepal (2015) mandating significant autonomy to provincial and local governments, curriculum development—once the exclusive domain of the central government—has begun to shift toward more localized and participatory approaches. This paper explores the possibilities and limitations of ground-up curriculum reform in federal Nepal, emphasizing the necessity of a just pedagogical vision that reflects local contexts, cultures, and aspirations.

Despite the constitutional recognition of education as a concurrent power among the three tiers of government, centralized practices persist in curriculum design. This has led to tensions between top-down mandates and the realities of diverse linguistic, cultural, and geographical settings

across the provinces (MOEST, 2020). The ongoing curriculum reform debates must therefore grapple with a central question: **who decides what knowledge matters for Nepali students in a federal system?** This article argues that a just and contextually rooted curriculum reform must begin from the ground up—driven by the voices and lived experiences of local communities, educators, and learners.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have long debated the implications of decentralization in education, particularly in post-conflict or transitioning states. Bray and Mukundan (2003) caution that decentralization, while promising in theory, may exacerbate inequalities if local capacity and accountability are not adequately ensured. However, proponents of localized curriculum argue that federal structures enable the inclusion of indigenous knowledge, languages, and community-

specific needs into formal education systems (Shrestha, 2018).

In the Nepal context, curriculum reform has often been shaped by political shifts rather than pedagogical needs (Phyak, 2013). Historically, education served nation-building and central control, especially through the unifying force of the Nepali language and standardized textbooks. The federal turn has disrupted this model by introducing local governments as stakeholders in curriculum development (Rana et al., 2021). Yet, meaningful reform has been slow due to bureaucratic inertia, lack of resources, and unclear jurisdictional roles.

The theoretical foundation for a ground-up pedagogical vision is best captured by critical pedagogues like Paulo Freire (1970), who envisioned education as a dialogical and liberatory process. Freire critiques the “banking model” of education and calls for pedagogy rooted in learners’ lived experiences. Giroux (1988) and McLaren (2006) argue that meaningful learning must emerge through social critique and cultural engagement. These scholars contend that local actors must be recognized as knowledge producers—not passive consumers of a national curriculum.

Michael Apple (2004, 2012) furthers this by showing how dominant ideologies become embedded in school curricula, systematically marginalizing minority perspectives. Ladson-Billings (1995), through her work on culturally relevant pedagogy, emphasizes the importance of community-rooted learning in enhancing educational equity. These global theories strongly support the argument that Nepal’s curriculum reform must center local knowledge systems, languages, and values as fundamental—not supplementary—components of education.

Critical pedagogy literature, notably the work of Paulo Freire (1970), emphasizes the role of education in liberating oppressed communities by valuing their knowledge systems and encouraging dialogue. Freire’s idea of education as a practice of freedom aligns with the need for Nepali curriculum reform to become participatory and emancipatory. Similarly, Apple (2004) stresses the political nature of curriculum and the importance of empowering communities to define educational priorities.

Research by Carney and Bista (2009) points out that despite policy rhetoric, Nepali schools remain hierarchical, exam-driven, and alienated from local life. Therefore, curriculum reform in a federal context must go beyond administrative devolution and embrace pedagogical democratization—what Rizvi and Lingard (2010) term “educational justice.” For Nepal, this entails reimagining curriculum as a tool for community empowerment, not merely academic instruction.

Comparative examples from the Global South reinforce these insights. In Bolivia, the Education Intercultural, Intercultural y Plurilingue policy restructured curriculum around indigenous languages and knowledge systems, empowering local communities to take curricular leadership (Howard, 2009). In India, the National Curriculum Framework (2005) promoted flexible, context-sensitive curricula, though its implementation has often depended on local capacity and political will (Kumar, 2014). These cases reveal both the potential and the limitations of decentralized curriculum reform in practice.

In Nepal, while the Constitution guarantees education in mother tongues and acknowledges local content, actual implementation has lagged. Studies by Phyak (2016) and Bista et al. (2017) demonstrate that national examinations, language hierarchies, and bureaucratic standardization continue to constrain local autonomy. Rana, Koirala, and Pradhan (2021) observe that many provincial governments mirror centralist practices due to unclear mandates and a lack of curriculum expertise.

The literature thus suggests that for curriculum reform in federal Nepal to be genuinely transformative, it must re-centre power in the hands of communities. A just pedagogical vision demands participatory structures, curricular flexibility, and ideological openness to multiple ways of knowing. It is not enough to decentralize education bureaucratically: curriculum reform must also decentralize epistemologically—valuing the local as a site of legitimate knowledge production. This means not only writing policies that mention local content but creating systems that enable communities to define and own the learning agenda.

In summary, the literature suggests that true curriculum reform in federal Nepal cannot be achieved through administrative decentralization alone. It must be driven by a bottom-up pedagogical vision that values diversity, democratizes knowledge, and empowers communities. Only then can education move beyond formal access to foster meaningful, inclusive, and liberatory learning.

III. ANALYSIS OF PROVINCIAL EDUCATION PLANS

An examination of selected provincial education plans reveals a mixed picture of reform intent and implementation. Provinces like Bagmati and Sudurpaschim have begun to articulate localized curricular goals, though these are often limited to language inclusion and textbook distribution (Bagmati Province Education Plan, 2021). The Karnali Province Plan, in contrast, outlines a more ambitious vision by proposing the integration of indigenous knowledge, agriculture-based learning, and mother-tongue

instruction in early grades (Karnali Education Policy Draft, 2022).

Despite these promising directions, textual analysis shows that most provincial plans remain aligned with the National Curriculum Framework (NCED, 2019), limiting their transformative potential. For instance, the National Curriculum Framework continues to prioritize core subjects such as English, science, and mathematics, reflecting a modernist development agenda rather than local priorities. Provincial adaptations are framed more as supplements than alternatives to the central curriculum, indicating a hesitance to assert autonomy.

The language used in the plans often emphasizes “capacity-building” and “implementation support,” signaling a technocratic approach to reform. This depoliticization of curriculum undercuts the very ethos of federalism, which is to allow for political and cultural self-expression at the local level (Acharya, 2020). Moreover, teacher training programs across provinces remain centralized, with little emphasis on local content knowledge or participatory pedagogy (Tamang and Rai, 2022).

The plans also lack clear mechanisms for community consultation, curriculum co-design, or feedback loops. This top-down drafting process, even at the provincial level, replicates the centralist logic that federalism was supposed to dismantle. Without ground-up processes of deliberation, curriculum reforms risk becoming cosmetic adjustments rather than structural transformation.

Toward a Ground-Up and Just Curriculum

1. Reframing Curriculum as a Democratic Process

In Nepal’s federal context, curriculum development must transcend traditional top-down models and embrace a democratic, participatory approach. Historically, curriculum decisions have been centralized, often neglecting the diverse cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic realities of local communities. This centralized approach has led to a disconnect between what is taught in schools and the lived experiences of students, particularly those from marginalized groups.

A ground-up curriculum approach recognizes that knowledge is not solely the domain of experts but is co-constructed through the lived experiences of communities. This perspective aligns with principles of critical pedagogy, which advocate for education rooted in the cultural and social contexts of learners. By involving local stakeholders—teachers, parents, students, and community leaders—in curriculum development, education becomes a collaborative process that reflects the values, needs, and aspirations of the community.

2. Empowering Local Stakeholders

Empowering local stakeholders is crucial for the success of decentralized curriculum reform. Teachers, in particular, play pivotal roles as they are the primary facilitators of learning. However, studies indicate that teachers in Nepal often have limited involvement in curriculum development processes. To address this, professional development programs should be implemented to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary for active participation in curriculum design.

Moreover, School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) should be strengthened to ensure meaningful community involvement. These bodies can serve as platforms for dialogue, allowing community members to share their perspectives and contribute to curriculum decisions. Ensuring that SMCs and PTAs are representative and inclusive is essential for capturing the diverse voices within a community.

3. Integrating Indigenous Knowledge and Local Contexts

A just curriculum must value and integrate indigenous knowledge systems and local contexts. Nepal is home to a rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and traditions, which are often underrepresented in the national curriculum.

Incorporating local histories, languages, and practices into the curriculum not only validates the identities of learners but also enhances engagement and relevance. For instance, integrating local agriculture practices, traditional crafts, and oral histories into the curriculum can provide students with practical knowledge and a deeper connection to their heritage. Such integration fosters a sense of pride and belonging among students and helps preserve cultural traditions that might otherwise be lost.

4. Addressing Challenges in Decentralized Curriculum Implementation

While the shift towards decentralized curriculum development holds promise, it is not without challenges. One significant hurdle is the lack of capacity at the local level. Many local governments and schools lack the resources, expertise, and infrastructure necessary to develop and implement localized curricula effectively.

To overcome these challenges, targeted capacity-building initiatives are essential. This includes training programs for educators and local officials, the development of resource materials tailored to local contexts, and the establishment of support networks for sharing best practices. Additionally, partnerships with non-governmental organizations and academic institutions can provide technical assistance and support for curriculum development efforts.

5. Balancing Standardization and Localization

A critical consideration in decentralized curriculum reform is finding the balance between standardization and localization. While localized curricula ensure relevance and cultural responsiveness, there is also a need for a coherent national framework to maintain educational standards and facilitate mobility.

Developing a flexible national curriculum framework that outlines core competencies and learning outcomes can provide a foundation upon which local adaptations can be built. This approach allows for consistency in educational quality while granting local authorities the autonomy to tailor content to their specific contexts.

6. Promoting Equity and Inclusion

Decentralized curriculum development must also prioritize equity and inclusion. Marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities, often face systemic barriers to education. A ground-up curriculum approach should actively seek to dismantle these barriers and ensure that curricula are accessible to all students.

For example, incorporating mother tongue instruction in early education can significantly improve learning outcomes for children from non-dominant language groups. Additionally, curricula should address

issues of social justice, human rights, and gender equality to foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

IV. CONCLUSION

Nepal's transition to federalism presents a historic opportunity to reimagine curriculum reform as a ground-up, just, and democratic process. While current provincial education plans show some movement toward localized content, the overall system remains constrained by centralist structures and bureaucratic inertia. To fulfil the promise of federalism in education, curriculum reform must empower local stakeholders, integrate indigenous knowledge, and embrace pedagogical principles grounded in equity and participation.

Practical steps—such as forming inclusive curriculum committees, enhancing teacher training, adopting mother tongue education, and fostering community engagement—are necessary to realize a curriculum that reflects the diverse realities of Nepal's peoples. This article calls for a paradigm shift: from curriculum as a fixed, standardized product to curriculum as a living, dialogical process that honours and uplifts local knowledge and agency.

Only through such transformative reforms can Nepal's education system become truly inclusive, relevant, and

just—preparing learners not just to navigate the world, but to shape it.

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Understanding the Concepts of Feminism in the Works of Sadat Hassan Manto: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract— Sadat Hassan Manto is a prominent Urdu-language writer from British India who have worked on emotions, trauma during partition. Manto's work acclaimed for its uncompromising depiction of societal truths, presents a diverse array of female characters that confront the patriarchal conventions and gender disparities that were common throughout his day. This study seeks to reveal the intricate portrayal of women in Manto's stories from a feminist perspective. It will analyze topics such as women's empowerment, strength in the face of adversity, and the examination of patriarchal systems. The study also explores the intricacies of intersectionality in Manto's narratives, analyzing how gender intersects with other social identities such as class, religion, and ethnicity. Further, this study examines the disputes and objections regarding Manto's depiction of women, while also emphasizing his impact on feminist discussions and the enduring significance of his themes in present-day society. This study aims to analyze Manto's writings from a feminist standpoint in order to highlight the lasting importance of his literary heritage in influencing discussions on gender, power, and social justice.

Keywords— Sadat Hassan Manto, Feminism, Gender, Social justice, patriarchal systems



INTRODUCTION

Saadat Hasan Manto is often regarded as the most contentious writer in the Indian subcontinent, with his writings evoking a great response from readers across all social strata. Manto, born in 1912 in the little hamlet of Samrala near Ludhiana in Punjab, demonstrated via his writings at a young age that he would become a highly recognized writer on both sides of the border, and that he should be regarded with utmost seriousness. He has a remarkable ability to reveal the morally rotten nature of the supposedly civilized individuals of his era. He achieved this by his candid and truthful depiction of oppressed, pitiable, feeble, and persecuted characters in his narratives. Despite first penning stories for films in Bombay, he was compelled to leave India for Pakistan in 1948, just one year after the partition based on communal lines. This significant and harrowing event, of which he was a first-hand witness, left an indelible mark on his sensitive psyche. In his writings, he consistently and passionately depicted the gruesome specifics of violence, plunder, sexual assault, and abuse that

occurred during the partition, when a large number of people were forcibly uprooted and forced to travel to the protective and secure areas of those who shared their religious background. The violence portrayed in his books reveals the genuine nature of individuals who have been stigmatized and conceal their true identities. Approximately one million individuals, including men, women, and children, were brutally killed during the slaughter known as 'ethnic cleansing'. This term brings to mind the atrocities committed by Hitler against the Jewish population in his pursuit of racial superiority. Just like in times of war or riots, women were once again subjected to the most horrible crimes perpetrated on them by fanatical bigots.

Portrayal of women in Manto's stories

Manto's stories are abundant in depictions of lust, desire, and explicit sexual encounters. He skillfully portrays his characters, particularly women, taking into consideration both their physical and spiritual needs, as well as the prevailing social norms and moral standards of the era. Additionally, he masterfully intertwines the contrasting

religious factions of Hindu and Muslim, creating a narrative that explores the conflicts and commonalities between these two opposing groups. To a naive and inexperienced reader, Manto may come out as a voyeuristic writer who derives pleasure from exposing the modesty of women by portraying them solely as objects of sexual gratification. In his stories 'Cold Flesh', 'The insult', 'Janki', 'Mozel', 'The Black Shalwar', 'My Name is Radha', and 'Open it', the author includes explicit content regarding the portrayal of women, which caused significant controversy and drew the attention of both the general public and the authorities. He was accused of pandering to readers' sexual desires and subsequently faced legal charges. In addition, he was criticized for being a literary elitist who openly boasted about his literary expertise. The epitaph on his tomb reads: "Here lies Saadat Hasan Manto, in whose heart are preserved all the secrets and mastery of short story writing." Immersed beneath heaps of soil, he is currently pondering whether he excels more as a short story author or as a deity. On a different occasion, he asserted his status as one of the preeminent short story authors in both India and Pakistan.

Cold flesh

Manto's narrative 'Cold Flesh' depicts the plight of women who endured sexual assault by members of different communities during the communal turmoil that followed the partition in 1948. Ishwar Singh, the protagonist and one of the rioters, becomes fixated on the consequences of his attempted sexual attack on a young woman. He comes to the realization that the girl is lifeless, her body devoid of warmth. Despite his strong physique, this tragedy rendered him powerless and devoid of vitality, and the image of the deceased girl always torments his conscience. This story is a sharp and nuanced satire that highlights the plight of women. The writer makes a thought-provoking observation that the Muslim girl is spared from being sexually assaulted due to her unfortunate demise. Women lack an independent existence; they exist solely for the purpose of providing comfort to males. Kulwant Kaur, the wife of Ishwar, is furious at her husband's betrayal, as she cannot fathom him engaging in extramarital affairs. The author notes that women are compelled to present themselves as objects of amusement for males throughout their lives. As vulnerable targets, they can only liberate themselves from this torment by death. The story written by Manto effectively captures the shame and powerlessness experienced by women in this society. Ironically, Manto himself was accused of obscenity for penning this story.

The Insult

This is the tale of a prostitute who supports herself financially and even offers economic assistance to one of her lovers. However, each time this admirer visits, he urges her to quit her profession and promises to send her a money

order that never arrives. One evening, she received a guest and promptly prepared herself before heading out to meet this visitor at the beginning of the path, accompanied by her associate, Ramlal. The guest shuts the car window and departs with a sigh, causing Sugandhi to ponder why she did not feel fond of them. The reason for his refusal to engage in conversation with her and his use of a mere grunt instead of a whole word can be attributed to his lack of interest or willingness. She felt offended and had a strong want to express her anger, but she couldn't because the car is no longer present. Upon her return, she encounters her boyfriend Madhav once more, who requests money from her. However, she firmly refuses his request and instructs him to go instead of remaining. Sugandhi, a kind-hearted and cheerful girl, underwent a dramatic transformation where she started openly insulting others instead of keeping quiet about it. This change occurred after she discovered that she had no control over the individuals that entered her life. In this story he typically portrayed the toughness of a helpless women who does not bother to insult others who tries to bully her.

Janki

Janki, a young woman with aspirations of becoming an actress, embarks on a journey from Peshawar to Pune based on a recommendation to see a man who could potentially assist her in finding employment opportunities. 'Janki' examines the socialization of women to instinctively submit to the emotional and physical requirements of infantilized men. Janki assumes the role of a romantic partner for numerous men who exploit her to attend to their bodily ailments and emotional requirements. Janki struggles to divide her attention and efforts equally among these guys, finding personal fulfilment in their happiness, until she is exhausted and they no longer require her. 'Janki' is Manto's critique of the societal expectation for women to solely exist for the benefit of males, which is a false belief as it hinders their personal growth and fulfilment.

Mozel

This is the narrative of a rebellious and independent Jewish girl who embarks on a romantic relationship with a Sikh guy named Trilochan amidst the backdrop of the partition era. Furthermore, it pertains to Mozels' autonomy, courage, and unrestrained longing to pursue her own desires without any restrictions. Movel will evoke a wide range of emotions and conclude in an unexpected manner. This exemplifies a flawless instance of a Manto short story and his investigation into indomitable souls. Interestingly, it is also the only one which presents a utopic vision of a character sacrificing her life for another. We are made to recognize cultural symbolism and difference in this story: "I cannot marry you," says Movel to Tirlochen, because "you are a Sikh." Movel, in her short

hair, ugly lipstick, and frocks that barely hide her nudity, Tirlochen with his long hair, beard and turban, Kirpal Kaur the virtual, virginal, religious Sikh girl—these are all cultural stereotypes. But they are external to the bonds of love and compassion that exist between human beings.

The black Shalwar

The short story narrates the expedition of Sultana. Although she had a consistent clientele and achieved success as a sex worker in Ambala, she decides to relocate to the larger and wealthier city of Delhi with a man named Khuda Baksh. They have high aspirations and actively seek out new opportunities, but unfortunately, things don't unfold as they had anticipated. Manto portrays Sultana as a typical woman who has common worries about finances and lifestyle, as well as her own self-worth and desires. This narrative is intricately crafted, with an ambiguous finish that invites readers to engage in thoughtful discussion. The story shows the pervasive social and cultural hypocrisy that exists in Indian society. The narrative emphasizes the existence of discriminatory practices and biases directed towards women, particularly those employed in the entertainment sector. Shankar, the main character in the narrative, plays a pivotal role in revealing and challenging these biases. He is an impoverished rickshaw puller who becomes enamored with a stunning dancer named Sultana. Regardless of her occupation, Shankar fully embraces her true self and is prepared to enter into matrimony with her. Nevertheless, when Shankar introduces Sultana to his family, they dismiss her due to her occupation, despite the fact that they also go and observe her shows. This exemplifies the hypocrisy and inconsistent standards prevalent in society, as individuals derive pleasure from the artistic displays of dancers and performers, yet simultaneously hold them in contempt. Shankar's involvement is crucial as he embodies the ordinary individual who is not influenced by cultural conventions and biases. He is prepared to embrace Sultana as his spouse, regardless of her occupation, and perceives her as a sentient individual with emotions and sentiments. Manto uses Shankar's personality to challenge the inflexible societal conventions and biases that exist, emphasizing the importance of embracing and showing compassion towards individuals from all backgrounds.

My Name is Radha

'Radha' revolves around a young woman's pursuit of success in the film industry, as she confronts gender-based discrimination and the unjustified idolization of her male co-star, Raj Bhai. This brief narrative gradually intensifies and reaches a climax with an unforeseen conclusion. The conclusion is rooted in Radha's forceful determination to assert her individuality, make her own choices, and resist being confined or categorized. Crucially, Radha's ability to establish her own identity and live

independently is of utmost importance. Each of Manto's stories will provoke inquiries and profound revelations. A notable aspect is that his female protagonists exhibit a striking level of modernity, which is particularly noteworthy. From the beginning, Manto has raised doubts about the character of the Raj. He skillfully guides the audience throughout the entire narrative, gradually unveiling his actual character by stating, "I don't hold much fondness for him." I would prefer to disclose my reasons to you gradually. Finally, when he returned to Neelam's residence. In her own account, she refers to him as "the bastard" and recounts that he scratched at her face. Furthermore, when she passionately kisses him, she describes him as becoming as frigid as a lady who has accepted her destiny. In contrast, Neelam is reflected exactly as it is. Throughout the entire duration, she remains unchanged. She self-identifies as a "fierce woman" and a "jungle cat" or "wild cat". She possesses a distinct and unique personality, but Raj demonstrates hypocritical behavior. He exhibits a duality in his demeanor. The text is a short narrative 'My name Radha' is rich with cultural, religious, literary, and political allusions which once again depicts the feministic approach of Manto.

Open it

Manto's 1948 narrative 'Open it' is a remarkable portrayal of the chaos and destruction that occurred during the Partition. The narrative begins with the following statement: "The exclusive locomotive departed from Amritsar at precisely two o'clock in the afternoon, requiring a duration of eight hours to arrive at Mughalpur." A significant number of passengers were killed on the journey, some had injuries, and a few simply wandered off to unknown destinations. Sirajuddin, the protagonist, is in pursuit of his daughter, Sakina, who was inadvertently abandoned in Amritsar. He requests assistance from a group of eight male individuals in a refugee camp in Pakistan to locate his daughter. Subsequently, the 'social workers' locate her, subject her to sexual assault, and then desert her. She was discovered in an unconscious state in close proximity to the railway tracks and thereafter transported to the refugee camp located in Pakistan. Subsequently, as the doctor examines her pulse and gestures towards the window, he instructs, "Please open it!", Sakina, resembling a bruised creature, loosens her waistline and lowers her salwar. Her narrative is among the several accounts of women who endured the full force of Partition, sacrificing their physical well-being. The act of partition, as experienced by women like Sakina, not only involves the division of land but also results in the physical harm and disfigurement of their bodies. This narrative portrays women helplessness and agony during the partition.

CONCLUSION

Saadat Hasan Manto's works also highlight how women are treated in the society and the usual happenings that take place among them. Beyond this, however, his writings can be seen to provide valuable insights into feminist discourse. Most of the stories of Manto speaks about women portraits feminism through characters such as Janki, Sugandhi, Mozel, Sultana and Radha. His feminist sensibility can be observed in his writing which involves different themes like violence and sexuality against women and objectification of female bodies that were quite rebellious at that time. Manto always emphasizes the social change, society and gender equality etc.

In conclusion, Saadat Hasan Manto's description of women not only explains his comprehension of human life but also adds the voice of current debates on feminism and gender parity. Manto's work as an author and social critic remains is a hope and rebellion in the midst of the women's struggle for rights and empowerment.

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Spirit of Nationalism in Mahatma Gandhi's Political Philosophy & Relevance in the Modern World

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Abstract— All of us know that the political influence of Gandhi ji in Indian politics and freedom movement remained one of the key determinants during 1917-1947, which is known as the Gandhian era of Indian freedom struggle against British Colonialism. Most of the scholars agree still today that Mahatma Gandhi made a substantial and crucial contribution to Indian 'Nationalism.' Actually, the idea of nationalism in his political spirit was born out of his experience of remaining and working strongly against the colonial discrimination with natives of the country as well as people residing from abroad including Indians in South Africa, consequently, the critical behaviour of the Britishers compelled Gandhi's desire to instill the spirit of nationalism within himself. Truly, Gandhi's ideas on politics, truth, purity of means, Non-violence, Satyagraha, and secular perspectives on religion have since contributed to the development of the spirit of nationalism among all Indians. Therefore, Gandhi's nationalistic spirit and other perspectives on women's rights, rural development, decentralized democracy through the empowerment of Gram Panchayats, and the ideal of 'Ram Rajya' have also all contributed to the rise of nationalism in India. On the contrary, the idea of nationalism became more popular among all people as well as freedom fighters (both-liberalists & extremists) from the various segments of the Indian society or social classes, pressure groups, and religious leaders, and it was greatly influenced by the spirit of Gandhi's political philosophy such as: 'Non-Cooperation Movement', principles of 'Non-violence' and 'Satyagraha', the boycotting of the British discriminatory policies against Indians, and the active participation of the Indian masses into the freedom movement in the wake of 1920. Now through his entry as a successful agitator after getting the success in 'Champaran Satyagraha' in the year of 1917 in favour of indigo producer farmers, Gandhiji became a well-known political figure of the freedom movement throughout the country. Meanwhile, the political environment in the country emerged as a massive oppose in lieu of the 'Rowlatt Act' passed by the Britishers, which was called a black law in the historical journey of colonial rule in India. As a result, due to the protest by Indian masses, a big massacre at Jallianwala, Amritsar on 13th April, 1919, compelled the Indian freedom fighters like Gandhiji to take an active and effective step to oppose this brutality of the colonial government. The present research paper makes a theoretical review of the spirit of Gandhi's political philosophy in the perspective of nationalism in India and its relevance in the modern world.



Keywords— Nationalism, Colonial Rule, Discriminative Policies, Indian Freedom Movement, Spiritualism, Satyagrah, Non-violence, Jan Andolan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Actually, Gandhiji has always been identified as a powerful leader of colonial India by many scholars and historians, who remained a dominant figure of the Indian Freedom Movement from 1917 to 1947. Gandhiji was born on

October 2, 1869, at Porbandar, a town in the state of Gujarat, which is presently located in the Kathiawar district. His father was 'Diwan of Rajkot Riyasat' and he belonged to a well to do family. Gandhiji got formal elementary education from Porbandar and Rajkot. At the age of 11

years, he went to Alfred High School, Rajkot and passed his matriculation in the year of 1887. However, he took admission at Samaldas College at Bhavnagar in 1888, but he left it very soon and went to London for the study of law in the same year and took admission in Inner Temple of London, Gandhiji became a law graduate (Barrister) in 1891 and enrolled in London High Court for the law practice. Now after the completion of his degree as a law graduate from London, he returned to India back and established his legal practice as a Barrister in Rajkot, Gujarat. Meanwhile, to argue in a case for the 'Abdullah Sheikh Firm', Gandhiji left for South Africa in 1893 and spent 22 years there. Here it is noteworthy to say that the British government's 'Apartheid Policy' in South Africa against South African aboriginal people and Indian residents, compelled Gandhiji to stay and fight against this discrimination based policy. In this regard, Mahatma Gandhi embarked on 'Satyagraha' to defend their rights, and at the later stage, he succeeded in pursuing the British government to stop the policy of discrimination against these people residing in South Africa for many years. Moreover, the Britishers also removed all the other forms of discrimination against Indians living in South Africa through laws. Consequently, all these efforts made by Mahatma Gandhi, enhanced his socio-political reputation, and very soon he became a very popular and dominant political figure of anti-colonial movements in South Africa as well as India.

Thus, Gandhiji played a crucial role to combat all types of discrimination in South Africa. Now ensuring that all situations are under control and favourable to Indians residing in South Africa, Gandhiji returned to India on 9 January, 1915. Besides, he understood the political situation of the country and became active to create an anti-British environment to combat the discriminatory policies and practices of the British government. As a result, a sense of 'Nationalism' emerged in response to the shifting anti-British sentiments among farmers, agricultural and industrial workers, students, and members of other social classes throughout the country. Some of the scholars agree with the fact and state as: "Mahatma Gandhi's charismatic personality created a demonstration effect on various societal segments, which in turn led to the national freedom struggle and also strengthened the spirit of nationalism among all Indian masses." In this regard, Gandhiji was a major contributor to the growth of the 'Non-cooperation Movement' during the years 1920-22. Later, in the year of 1930, Gandhiji sparked protests like the 'Civil Disobedience Movement' and 'Quit India Movement' in 1942 with the slogan of 'Do or Die' which eventually evolved into mass movement or Jan Andolan.

II. GANDHI'S POLITICAL SPIRITUALISM

As we know, Gandhiji had a great sense of inherent spirituality, which he got from his mother. Nobody can deny the fact that Gandhiji always and in every way stressed on a positive relationship between politics and religion. In the broader perspective, he was instrumental in bolstering the spirit of nationalism with political spiritualism in order to improve the impression of nationalism among all people. Actually, his spiritual aspect of human life remained keenly associated with religion, which was also the foundation or milestone of his politics. In this perspective, Gandhiji said: "Politics without religion is a sin". He further pointed out that the majority of human issues will be resolved naturally if religion and moral principles are incorporated into politics. Therefore, the promotion of human rights was the primary goal of this way of thinking. Likewise, developing the essence of spirituality and working toward the advancement of humanity or human welfare were the other goals of human life. Gandhiji also remarked: "Religion is an intrinsic aspect of politics, where the truth, non-violence, humanism, morality, sacrifice, love, and self-confidence among the people belonging to different strata of society were the components, which gave origin to the ideology of nationalism." Conversely, Dr. Rajender Prasad, the first president of Independent India very rightly stated: "Mahatma Gandhi's efforts have been proven conducive to refuting the politics which was an interwoven yarn of falsehood, far from the truth and reached at the meanest state of mind of the politicians. He never made any attempt to mobilize resources by unfair means. The morals and spirituality of Gandhi's teachings have influenced people's perspectives on nationalism." Accordingly, 'Satyagraha' is perhaps an effective and trustworthy spiritual weapon that is founded on compassion for people. All types of hatred behavior for opponents is strictly prohibited and not reflected in it. Therefore, Gandhiji was correct when he stated as: "Satyagrah is a philosophy that we would like to live by and die for." In this regard, Gandhiji consistently employed the elements of 'Satyagrah', which comprised the basic structure of Gandian philosophy such as: civil disobedience, dharna, social boycotts, boycotts of foreign commodities, favour of swadeshi and strike all types of violence. Gandhiji accelerated the rise of nationalism in India by utilizing all of these elements, and also its effectiveness in various regions of the country was multifaceted including the broader perspective of nationalism throughout the country.

III. GANDHI'S SPIRIT OF NON-VIOLENCE

Gandhiji was actually a fervent supporter of 'Non-violence', which states that we should treat everyone with

kindness and refrain from hurting them verbally, in words, or in deeds. According to G.N. Dhavan: "The non-violence is such a method which prepares the route to find the truth." Therefore, it is a logical way of thinking that incorporates morality and spirituality to determine what constitutes right and incorrect human behavior. These sentiments have always provided a significant boost to the spirit of nationalism, which has been steadily increasing.

IV. GANDHI'S CLASSLESS SOCIETY

The idea of a 'classless society' created by Mahatma Gandhi from an Indian viewpoint, still today is known as a milestone in the history of social justice. Basically, Gandhi's idea of a classless society was founded on the human right to equality and his belief in a society free from all types of discrimination. Moreover, Gandhiji always believed that 'Dalits' have the same rights to exist as everyone else. Despite some problems, he adamantly opposed the evil of untouchability and social inequality practiced by the upper classes with the 'Dalits', because it was absolutely a violation of human rights. Therefore, all of these ideas about caste or a society without classes have contributed significantly to the establishment of nationalism in India's rural and urban areas. A large number of scholars still today admit the fact that Gandhi's contribution to social justice theory shall remain a part and parcel of political theory of justice in Indian perspective for ages.

V. GANDHI'S DREAM OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

Mahatma Gandhi always gave a due emphasis on the idea of 'gram- swaraj', which also consistently prioritized decentralization of authority through the 'Panchayati Raj System' in order to advance and ensure rural development. Actually, Gandhiji referred to this system as 'Decentralized Democracy', which, as Mahatma Gandhi said, is nonetheless a genuine democratic form of government. He stated: "It is a decentralized democracy, which reflects the spirit of the people." Since millions of Indians used to live in the nation's millions of villages, it was actually a need of the hour at the time. All of Gandhi's ideas turned out to be supportive and helped to solidify the nationalist movement's steady rise in India. To conclude, we can point out that Gandhiji had seen the dream of national building through the realization of Gram Swaraj.

VI. GANDHI'S STRESS ON PURITY OF MEANS

Gandhiji fundamentally asserted that all human beings should be treated equally and granted their rights. In this regard, he always stressed on the purity of means. He also

concluded the fact that moral values in human life are crucial to the welfare of mankind on this planet. Then, and only then, can the sense of true nationalism grow among the various social classes. Here, it is also important to highlight that Gandhian political philosophy was founded on morality and the purity of means. He always used the principle of 'non-violence' to organize the National Freedom Movement. On the contrary, he abandoned and withdrew the national movement whenever it was influenced by any kind of violence. In this regard, it is true that when the 'Non-Cooperation Movement' in India was in full swing, then due to violence at Chora-Chori on 5th February, 1922, Gandhiji immediately decided to abandon the mass movement. However, most of the freedom fighters criticized Gandhi's decision. Nevertheless, we can't deny the fact that Gandhi made a substantial contribution to global politics for peace, spiritualized politics, and reaffirmed the majesty of Indian society, whose culture benefited humanity. Actually, Gandhiji exerted every effort in pursuit of political, social, spiritual, and economic goals for the sake of humanity. In this way, he made all efforts to fortify the sense of nationalism with the broadening of spiritualism among Indians from various social classes, which is also a fundamental principle of Gandhian political philosophy.

VII. GANDHI' SPIRIT OF SATYAGRAHA

Most of the scholars agree with the fact that Gandhi's spirit of 'Satyagraha' and 'Non-violence' has been his most notable contribution to Indian politics. The Sanskrit term 'Satyagraha' translates to 'Satya' and 'Agraha,' which stand for 'Right and Justice' and 'the request,' respectively. Gandhiji claimed that the freedom movement of India was made up of various forms of non-violence for 'Right & Justice.' In this perspective, violence had no place in the 'Satyagraha,' and Gandhiji never even criticized his opponent. He advocated the fact that a true follower of the 'Satyagraha' never behaves like a coward, rather than he faces the danger non-violently. Therefore, the spirit of 'Satyagraha' is an essence of Gandhian political philosophy.

VIII. GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF RAM RAJYA

All of us know that Gandhiji created the ideal of 'Ram Rajya' for India in his book 'India of My Dreams,' where caste, creed, sex, religion, color, and wealth are all irrelevant and all distinctions are eliminated. Here, the people own the land and the state. In this regard, Gandhiji said: "The Ram Rajya will pave the path for swift and affordable justice for all the needy people." He further stated that the well-being and welfare of all the people should be the first priority for the state. Gandhiji also

formerly supported complete freedom for the press, other institutions, and the expression of opinions. As a result, he created a vision in which everyone may live a happy, independent, and free life. All of these diverse perspectives on 'Ram Rajya' have been shown to be helpful in fostering a sense of true nationalism among individuals from various social classes or segments of Indian society. Likewise, he also attempted to create a secular society in an effort to gain the trust of people from various geographical areas of India. In letter and spirit, he studied the many religious texts of Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Hinduism, and Buddhist philosophy. In order to create social stability and religious harmony among Indian masses and the community, Gandhiji always believed and emphasized on the fact that religion might be employed as a social control mechanism. His secular perspective on all religions proved to be a determining factor in bringing together individuals from all faiths and religions, which worked as a catalyst for the rise of the true spirit of nationalism in India.

IX. GANDHI'S PERCEPTION OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Gandhiji consistently worked to advance women's development in both rural and urban areas so that they might be considered active participants. He advocated for women's equality and vehemently opposed the Indian society's evils like dowry system, polygamy, child marriage, and purdah regime. He consistently supported intercaste marriage, widow remarriage, and women's education across all social classes. These pro-women development plans have all led to the inclusion of women as a driving force behind the rise of nationalism in India. Gandhiji believed that women are the better half of the Indian society, therefore, without their active participation, any mass movement can't be successful. Keeping the fact in view, Gandhiji gave a due weightage to women participation in 'Dandi March' during the 'Civil Disobedience Movement' in 1930 and also during the 'Quit India Movement' in 1942.

X. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Now we can point out that Gandhiji played a vital role during the freedom struggle of India. After the successful experiment of 'Satyagraha' in South Africa, he returned to India in 1915. Meanwhile, Gandhiji entered into the Indian freedom movement through the 'Champaran Satyagraha' in 1917. Actually, the spirit of Gandhian political philosophy remained always based on the principles of 'Non-violence' and 'Satyagraha'. However, Gandhi's all three mass movements were abandoned due to violence, but Gandhiji did not make any compromise to his moral principles.

Moreover, Gandhiji emphasized on the purity of means and favoured any violent task. Despite this, he was a major contributor to the rise of 'Nationalism' in India. Most of the scholars agree with the fact that Gandhi's ideas on truth, Satyagraha, Non-violence, and a secular perspective on religion have been shown to be a cementing factor in bolstering the spirit of nationalism among all Indians. Gandhi's ideas on rural development, such as giving Panchayati Raj more authority and ending the 'Dalits' untouchability, have helped to drive people from all social classes. His secular perspective on religion proved to be a powerful factor in attracting all individuals from all segments of the society. He also gave a due stress on the women participation into all spheres of life including politics. However, in spite of his persistent efforts, the partition of India gave him a great setback. Nevertheless, nobody can deny his substantial contribution to accelerating the genuine and powerful spirit of nationalism in India, in spite of some drawbacks and viability of his ideas.

XI. RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

Today we are living in the era of global village, where there are a lot of problems raised by human beings as well as due to the advancement of science and technology. In the current global scenario, there are some serious challenges such as: terrorism, political instability, blind nationalism, boundary disputes and political issues, which is a great cause of concern. Regardless, Gandhian political philosophy remains relevant today offering some valuable lessons and provides a framework for building a more just and peaceful world. In this perspective, non-violence is a sustainable pathway to sustainable peace and harmony among all nations. Gandhian principle of 'Satyagraha' or truth is very essential for building trust and fostering ethical leadership. Moreover, Gandhi's commitment to social justice still inspires human rights movements to establish a more just global society. Today most of the problems correlate with the ethical issues. Gandhian philosophy has shown us a pathway to humanity and social justice, where there is no place for cruelty, violence, injustice, social discrimination, blind nationalism and human rights violation, rather than it provides a socio-political framework of the just and classless society with the ideal of 'Ram Rajya'. To conclude, we can point out that Gandhian views inspire us to resolve all conflicts peacefully.

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An Analysis of Relationship between Social Media Usage, Loneliness, and Sexual Orientation Among Young Adults

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Abstract— This study investigates the relationship between social media usage, perceived loneliness, and sexual orientation among young adults. Utilizing a sample of 77 participants aged 18 to 30, the research employed standardized tools including the Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS), the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), and the Kinsey Scale to assess participants' digital behavior, emotional isolation, and sexual identity. The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation between social media usage and loneliness ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$), suggesting that higher engagement with social media is associated with increased feelings of loneliness. ANOVA results showed significant differences in loneliness scores across sexual orientation groups ($F(3, 73) = 5.94, p < 0.01$), with non-heterosexual individuals—particularly homosexual and bisexual participants—reporting the highest levels of loneliness. Additionally, a moderation analysis indicated that sexual orientation significantly influenced the strength of the relationship between social media usage and loneliness ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.05$), with a stronger effect observed among LGBTQ+ individuals. These findings underscore the dual nature of social media as both a space for identity expression and a source of emotional disconnection, particularly for marginalized groups. The study highlights the need for more inclusive and emotionally supportive digital environments for young adults navigating complex social and identity-related challenges.



Keywords— Loneliness, LGBTQ+, Sexual Orientation, Social Media, Young Adults

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

While social media platforms foster connection and community, their influence on loneliness, particularly among marginalized groups like LGBTQ+ individuals, requires careful examination. This research aims to clarify the relationship between social media engagement, feelings of loneliness, and sexual orientation. It investigates whether LGBTQ+ individuals use social media more than others and how this usage affects their sense of isolation. The study will employ a correlational design, using surveys to collect data on social media habits and loneliness levels from a diverse sample of participants. Analysing the data through the frameworks of Social Comparison Theory (to understand how online interactions shape self-perception) and Minority Stress Theory (to address the unique stressors experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals), the research seeks to elucidate the complex relationship between digital interactions and mental well-being within this population. The ultimate goal is to

contribute to a more nuanced understanding of social media's potential benefits and risks for individuals with different sexual orientations.

1.1.1 Social Media Usage

In today's society, social media is ubiquitous. A groundbreaking 2018 Pew Research Centre study revealed that 88% of individuals aged 18 to 29 use social media, with 78% of those aged 30 to 49 reporting the same.

While usage dips slightly in older demographics, it remains significant. An impressive 64% of individuals between 50 and 64 are active social media users. This statistic is particularly striking, given that this generation did not grow up with the internet, highlighting social media's widespread adoption.

Given the pervasive nature of social media across all age groups, it is crucial to examine its impact on individual users. The continuous flow of information and connectivity offered by these platforms is reshaping our thought processes and how we process information. Current social media habits can have both beneficial and

detrimental effects on mental health, raising the question: how does social media affect our brains?

As social media use continues to expand, researchers are increasingly focusing on understanding the psychology behind it in our digitally connected world.

(a) Social Media and the Brain

From a neurological perspective, social media has diverse effects on various brain functions. It presents a complex mix of stimuli that can trigger a range of responses, leading to varied impacts on the brain.

Positive attention on social media, for instance, activates multiple brain regions. According to an article in *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, receiving likes on social media platforms triggers "activation in brain circuitry implicated in reward, including the striatum and ventral tegmental area, regions also implicated in the experience of receiving Likes from others." In simpler terms, this means that when users receive positive feedback, the ventral tegmental area (VTA), a key component of the brain's reward system, releases dopamine.

Another study utilizing MRI technology to monitor brain activity confirmed these findings. Researchers observed increased activity in brain regions associated with reward processing, social cognition, imitation, and attention when adolescents viewed Instagram photos with a high number of likes.

These findings underscore the powerful influence of social media on our reward systems, highlighting the potential for both beneficial and detrimental effects. The similarities between social media's impact and that of addictive substances like gambling and drugs should be acknowledged to avoid potential pitfalls.

Beyond reward systems, social media stimuli can also affect the brain's decision-making and emotional processing functions. One study observed that brain regions responsible for emotional and sensory processing reacted noticeably when adolescent participants experienced online social exclusion. This highlights the impact of online exclusion on the developing brains of adolescents.

Research on the neurological effects of social media is still in its early stages. While these studies represent strides in understanding the impact of social media on the brain, further research is needed as social media continues to evolve. These studies are helping to illuminate why people post on social media.

(b) Why We Post on Social Media

People carefully select the platforms and content they share. Instagram is often chosen for photos, while Twitter

is favoured for short, witty posts. This decision-making process involves various factors, including psychological motivations.

(c) Psychological Motivations for Posting

While pinpointing the exact reasons behind social media posting is challenging, understanding common social media behaviours provides insights into general motivations.

A Medium article, "The Psychology of Social Sharing," (2018, October 24. The Psychology of Social Sharing - Contentworks Agency) identified different levels of posting motivations. Adapting Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, the authors outline the following reasons why people post and consume updates:

- Physiological needs: Posting to promote the health and well-being of loved ones.
- Safety: Sharing content related to physical, mental, or financial security.
- Love/belonging: Seeking social acceptance from groups or individuals.
- Esteem: Satisfying the brain's reward system, often through "me-centric" content.
- Self-actualization: Sharing personal achievements, such as career advancements or graduations.

The psychology of social media posting is an emerging field. A study titled "Why We Share: A Study of Motivations for Mobile Media Sharing" (Oct. 2009, Dion Goh) employed diaries and post-study interviews to explore individuals' posting habits and corresponding emotions. The researchers found that social and emotional influences played a significant role in media sharing behaviour.

Other research has focused on the impact of social media on children's psychological development. The article "Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Psychosocial Development" (Shapiro, L. a. S., & Margolin, G. 2013) suggests that some individuals are raised to share online from a young age. The researchers stated that adolescents and young adults primarily use social networking sites to stay in touch with friends, make plans, get to know people better, and present themselves to others, mirroring traditional communication methods. Moreover, children and adolescents' identities are increasingly shaped by posting and engaging with social media.

Research in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* indicates that the potential for positive feedback and increased self-esteem also drives social

media sharing. The pursuit of likes and follows heavily influences posting behaviour, with positive attention encouraging further sharing.

In conclusion, people generally post from an emotional impulse, seeking a response from others. As social media is inherently communication-centric, the primary motivation behind posting stems from a psychological desire to connect. However, this constant quest for acceptance and visibility can lead to psychological problems for some individuals.

1.1.2 Loneliness

Loneliness is a painful universal phenomenon that has an evolutionary basis. Loneliness reminds us of the pain and warns us of the threat of becoming isolated. Loneliness is the absence of imperative social relations and lack of affection in current social relationships. (Rubin A. Research and Therapy. New York: Wiley; 1982).

Loneliness is one of the main indicators of social well-being. Loneliness is caused not by being alone, but by being without some definite needed relationship or set of relationships. Research addressing loneliness has increased dramatically over the past 2 decades; however, despite the mental health risks associated with being lonely, the relationship between loneliness and psychiatric disorders has not been sufficiently explored. (West Donald A, Kellner Robert, Moore-West Maggi. The Effects of Loneliness: A Review of the Literature. Comprehensive Psychiatry. 1986).

Contrary to popular belief, loneliness is more prevalent among adolescents and young adults than the elderly. This is because older adults often possess coping mechanisms that allow them to adapt to solitude, whereas adolescents typically lack such skills. Furthermore, adolescence is a critical period for identity formation, where acceptance and love play a crucial role.

There are 3 types of loneliness i.e. situational loneliness, developmental loneliness and internal loneliness. (Tiwari SC. Loneliness: A disease? Indian J of Psychiatry. 2013)

1. Situational Loneliness: The various factors associated with situational loneliness are environmental factors (unpleasant experiences, discrepancy between the levels of his/her needs), migration of people, inter personal conflicts, accidents and disasters, etc.
2. Developmental Loneliness: The various factors associated with developmental loneliness are personal inadequacies, developmental deficits, significant separations, poverty, living arrangements, and physical/psychological disabilities.

3. Internal Loneliness: The various factors associated with internal loneliness are personality factors, locus of control, mental distress, low self-esteem, guilt feeling, and poor coping strategies with situations.

Further Weiss et al., reported 2 types of loneliness i.e. emotional and social loneliness. Emotional loneliness defined by the absence of an attachment figure and social isolation, characterized by the absence of a social network.

1.1.3 Defining Sexual Orientation

Discussions surrounding "sexual orientation" are common, with widespread opinions on its legal protection, moral implications, and inherent nature. This suggests a common understanding of the term, but closer examination reveals diverse, conflicting, and ethically complex characterizations. Examples from professional scientific associations, LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, neuroscientists, and philosophers illustrate:

1. Sexual orientation is a lasting pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both. (American Psychological Association, 2008)
2. 'Sexual orientation' is the preferred term to describe an individual's physical and/or emotional attraction to the same and/or opposite gender. (Humans Rights Campaign, 2014)
3. Sexual orientation predisposes us to sexual attraction to the same sex (homosexual, gay, or lesbian), the opposite sex (heterosexual or straight), or both sexes (bisexual). (LeVay, 2011)
4. A person's sexual orientation is based on their sexual desires, fantasies, and behaviors they are likely to engage in under ideal conditions. (Stein, 1999)

1.1.3.1 The Historical Construction of Sexual Orientation

The concept of sexual orientation is relatively recent. While same-sex and opposite-sex behaviors have always existed, the idea of defining individuals by their sexual attractions and behaviors emerged in medical discourse in the 19th century. The term "homosexuality" is often traced to Karl Maria Benkert's 1868 pamphlet, with "heterosexuality" introduced the same year. Initially, "heterosexual" described attraction to both sexes (bisexuality today). Richard von Krafft-Ebing later used it to mean desire for the opposite sex. However, Freud's conceptualization of homosexuality in his Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality solidified the modern view of sexual orientation defined by object choice (the target of sexual desire).

Homosexuality was initially defined in opposition to normalcy, and its stigmatization was integral to the social construction of sexual orientation. The history of sexual orientation has been a dialectic between viewing homosexuality as pathological and challenging its association with mental illness. Even Freud, while believing homosexuality an imperfect psychosexual outcome, stated it was not shameful, a vice, or an illness in 1935.

American psychoanalysts diverged from Freud. Rado (1940, 1949) asserted that only heterosexuality is natural and homosexuality is a "reparative" attempt to achieve sexual pleasure when heterosexual outlets are threatening. Rado's followers created theories about homosexuality's origins, all based on the assumption it was an illness.

Psychoanalysis was dominant in mid-20th century psychiatry, and the assumption that homosexuality was a pathology permeated U.S. culture (Bayer 1987, Friedman & Downey 1998, Silverstein 1991). During World War II, the U.S. military rejected gay recruits using psychiatric screening procedures (B' erub' e 1990). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) listed homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance (Am. Psychiatric. Assoc. 1952). Psychiatrists attempted to "cure" homosexuality, with patients spending hours in psychotherapy, often unsuccessfully. More drastic methods, including hormones, aversive conditioning, lobotomy, electroshock, and castration, were also (attempted) to change someone's orientation.

Eventually, challenges to this psychiatric view emerged. Kinsey's studies revealed that homosexual behavior and attractions were more common than previously thought. A comparative study documented homosexual behavior in many nonhuman species and its acceptance in various human cultures (Ford & Beach 1951).

The medical and scientific institutions that had previously justified stigmatizing homosexuality reversed their position in 1973. The current mainstream view among clinicians and researchers is that diverse sexual orientations are normal variations of human sexual expression and not inherently linked to psychopathology.

1.2 Problem Statement

Loneliness among young adults is rising, with LGBTQ+ individuals reporting higher rates due to systemic stigma (Meyer, 2003). Although studies link social media to mental health outcomes, limited research addresses how sexual orientation moderates this relationship. This gap hinders the development of inclusive interventions.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

1. Analyze correlations between social media engagement and loneliness across sexual orientation groups.
2. Investigate whether LGBTQ+ individuals use social media more frequently and how this affects isolation.
3. Apply theoretical frameworks to contextualize findings and propose solutions.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Loneliness is linked to severe mental health risks, including depression (Cacioppo et al., 2014). For LGBTQ+ youth, these risks are compounded by minority stress. Understanding how social media use alleviates or exacerbates loneliness in this population can guide policies to enhance digital well-being.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Social Media and Loneliness

2.1.1 The causes of loneliness: The perspective of young adults in London's most deprived areas

Sam Fardghassemi, He' lèneJoffe

Young adults are currently the loneliest demographic in the UK and other Western countries, yet little is known about how they perceive the causes of their loneliness. This study aims to explore the subjective causes of loneliness among young adults aged 18 to 24, particularly those of lower socio-economic status who are employed, renting, and living in the most deprived areas of London. Research indicates that this group experiences the highest levels of loneliness in the UK, making it essential to understand their perspectives on the issue.

Using a free association technique and thematic analysis within a phenomenological framework, the study examines the experiences of 48 young adults from the four most deprived boroughs in London. The findings reveal that loneliness clusters around five key themes: The Feeling of Being Disconnected, Contemporary Culture, Pressure, Social Comparison, and Transitions Between Life Stages. Disconnection arises from feelings of insignificance, lack of understanding, or an inability to express oneself, which deepens the experience of loneliness.

Contemporary culture, particularly aspects related to social media and materialism, also contributes significantly to loneliness. The pressure to succeed, fit in, and meet societal expectations further intensifies these feelings. Social comparison, often exacerbated by social media, plays a crucial role in making young adults feel inadequate or isolated. Additionally, life transitions such as breakups, loss of significant relationships, and changes

related to education or employment create instability that can lead to loneliness.

The study highlights how these factors interact to shape young adults' experiences of loneliness and suggests potential interventions to address the issue. By understanding the underlying causes, policies and mental health initiatives can be designed to reduce loneliness and improve social well-being among young people.

2.1.2 Loneliness among young adults during COVID-19 pandemic: The mediational roles of social media use and social support seeking

Ellie Lisitsa et al., 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic led to widespread social distancing and shelter-at-home measures in the United States, significantly impacting social interactions and mental health. Young adults, already experiencing high rates of loneliness, were particularly vulnerable during this period. Additionally, this demographic engages more frequently with social media, a form of digital socialization that has been linked to negative mental health outcomes, including loneliness and depression.

This study investigated how social media use and social support seeking mediated the relationship between age and loneliness during the pandemic. A total of 1,674 adults participated in an online survey assessing depressive symptoms, loneliness, coping strategies, and lifestyle changes due to COVID-19. The findings revealed that young adults experienced higher levels of loneliness compared to older adults. They also reported a significant increase in social media use and lower levels of social support seeking, both of which were found to mediate the relationship between age and loneliness.

These results highlight how social media engagement and reduced social support seeking may have contributed to heightened loneliness among young adults. The study discusses these findings in the context of prior research, emphasizing the psychological impact of stress and isolation. Clinical implications are explored, with suggestions for interventions aimed at mitigating loneliness and promoting healthier coping strategies among young people during times of crisis.

2.1.3 Social Media and Loneliness - Forever connected?

Roman Yavich, Nitza Davidovitch, & Zeev Frenkel

The rise of social media has transformed how people connect and interact. While it offers many communication advantages, researchers are increasingly concerned about its potential effects on mental health, particularly feelings of loneliness. This review explores the relationship between social media use and loneliness, aiming to

determine whether social platforms alleviate or contribute to social isolation.

The study highlights how people use social media in different ways — some for active engagement (messaging, commenting), others for passive use (scrolling without interacting). These patterns influence emotional outcomes differently. For example, passive use is more likely to be associated with increased loneliness compared to active engagement, which might strengthen social bonds.

Research presents mixed results. Some studies suggest social media helps reduce loneliness by enabling communication and connection, especially for those who are otherwise isolated. Other findings argue that excessive or passive use might worsen feelings of exclusion or inadequacy, especially when users engage in negative social comparisons.

The paper concludes that social media's effect on loneliness isn't straightforward. It depends heavily on how individuals use these platforms and what needs they aim to fulfill through them. While social media can provide support and reduce loneliness for some, it may deepen it for others—particularly when usage is passive, superficial, or driven by negative emotional states.

The authors suggest promoting mindful and purposeful social media use. They recommend that future research focus more on the quality of social interactions online, individual psychological factors, and long-term effects on mental health.

2.1.4 No More FOMO: Limiting Social Media Decreases Loneliness and Depression

Melissa G. Hunt, Rachel Marx, Courtney Lipson and Jordyn Young (2018)

The study titled "No More FOMO: Limiting Social Media Decreases Loneliness and Depression" by Melissa G. Hunt and colleagues (2018) offers important experimental insight into the causal relationship between social media usage and psychological well-being. While previous studies have frequently reported associations between higher social media use and poorer mental health outcomes—including depression, loneliness, and low self-esteem—most of this work has been correlational, making it difficult to determine whether social media use causes emotional distress or if individuals who are already distressed tend to use social media more. In contrast, Hunt et al.'s research adopts a rigorous experimental design, allowing for stronger conclusions about the direction of causality. Their study focused on young adults—specifically, 143 undergraduate students from the University of Pennsylvania—and examined the psychological effects of intentionally limiting daily use of

three major social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.

The results were striking. Participants who limited their social media usage showed significant reductions in loneliness and depression over the three-week intervention period compared to those in the control group. These findings were particularly pronounced among participants who had high levels of depressive symptoms at the outset of the study. For those individuals, depressive symptoms decreased from moderately severe to mild levels by the end of the intervention. This suggests that the act of reducing social media use has a clinically meaningful impact on mental health, especially for those already struggling. Even participants with lower baseline depression experienced small but statistically significant improvements in mood, although the changes were not considered clinically substantial.

In addition to reductions in depression and loneliness, both groups—regardless of condition—showed decreases in anxiety and fear of missing out (FOMO) over time. Researchers attributed this effect to the act of self-monitoring inherent in the study design. Participants were required to track their usage and reflect on their digital habits, which may have increased their awareness and prompted behavioral adjustments even among those not formally instructed to limit their usage. Anecdotal feedback from participants supported this interpretation. Many reported that they became more conscious of how much time they spent on social media and began questioning the value it added to their lives. Some even voluntarily chose to stop using certain platforms after recognizing their limited utility or emotional cost.

However, not all aspects of psychological well-being improved. The study found no significant changes in measures of self-esteem, perceived social support, or broader psychological well-being. This raises important questions about the specific domains of mental health most susceptible to change through reduced social media use. It's possible that the three-week duration of the intervention was too short to impact these deeper, more stable constructs, or that the 30-minute-per-day limit was not enough to shift internalized beliefs or social dynamics. Alternatively, it may be that these particular measures are less directly influenced by social media than loneliness or mood symptoms like depression and anxiety.

The study also sheds light on an important methodological issue: the difference between objective versus subjective measures of social media use. During the spring semester, participants were asked to estimate their own usage. These estimates were significantly correlated with negative mental health outcomes such as low self-esteem and poor social support—consistent with many

prior studies. However, the actual objective usage data collected by the researchers did not show the same correlations. This discrepancy suggests that retrospective self-report data may be misleading, potentially exaggerating the effects of social media. People who feel distressed may believe they are using social media more than they actually are, perhaps because of guilt, self-criticism, or social comparison processes. This insight underscores the importance of using behavioral tracking in future research.

Despite its strengths, the study had some limitations. The intervention focused exclusively on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, but did not account for participants' potential increased usage of other platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, dating apps, or messaging services. Indeed, some participants mentioned shifting their attention to other platforms not included in the study, which could confound the results. Additionally, although Snapchat is primarily a mobile app, Facebook and Instagram can be accessed via desktop or other devices. The study only tracked mobile phone usage, leaving room for unmonitored access elsewhere. There were also challenges in compliance; while most participants in the intervention group adhered to the time limits reasonably well, some did not, and researchers could not enforce strict control over usage.

2.2 Social Media and Sexual Orientation

2.2.1 Association Between LGB Sexual Orientation and Depression Mediated by Negative Social Media Experiences: National Survey Study of US Young Adults

César G Escobar-Viera & Ariel Shensa et al. (2020)

Recent literature increasingly explores the intersection between sexual orientation, mental health, and digital engagement. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals are widely recognized to be at greater risk for experiencing mental health issues, particularly depression, due to ongoing exposure to minority stress, discrimination, and social exclusion. A study by Escobar-Viera et al. (2021) contributes to this growing body of work by examining how negative social media experiences mediate the association between LGB identity and depressive symptoms among U.S. young adults.

Drawing on a web-based national survey of adults aged 18–30, the researchers employed generalized structural equation modeling to explore both direct and indirect effects of sexual orientation on depression. Participants' sexual orientation, experiences with negative interactions on social media, and levels of depression (measured using the PHQ-9 scale) were key variables. Importantly, the analysis controlled for demographic and personal

characteristics, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the associations involved.

The study's findings indicate a significant indirect pathway through which LGB orientation contributes to depressive symptoms via negative social media experiences. Specifically, individuals identifying as LGB reported more frequent negative social media interactions compared to their heterosexual peers, and these experiences were positively associated with increased depressive symptomatology. A one-unit increase in negative social media experiences was linked to a 0.494 unit increase in depressive symptoms, demonstrating a measurable and meaningful effect.

This research reinforces prior findings that digital spaces, while offering potential for community and identity expression, can also expose marginalized populations to harmful interactions such as cyberbullying, exclusion, or invalidation. The dual role of social media—as both a source of support and a site of risk—is particularly salient for LGB youth and young adults, who often rely heavily on these platforms for social connection and identity exploration.

In conclusion, Escobar-Viera et al. highlight the importance of considering the quality of social media experiences in the broader discussion of LGB mental health. Their study suggests that reducing negative interactions and promoting positive, affirming online environments could serve as a protective factor against depression in this population. This work has implications for mental health professionals, educators, and platform designers interested in reducing digital harm and supporting mental well-being among sexual minority groups.

2.2.2 Social Media Use and Health and Well-being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth: Systematic Review

Matthew N Berger, et al., (2021)

Growing literature highlights the unique challenges LGBTQ youth face in achieving and maintaining mental well-being. Factors such as heteronormative environments, stigma, discrimination, and marginalization often leave LGBTQ individuals with limited access to supportive communities. In this context, social media has emerged as a significant space for connection and expression. A systematic review by Berger et al. (2021) synthesizes current research to assess how social media platforms influence the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ youth, with a particular focus on identity development, peer connection, and social support.

Using PRISMA guidelines, the authors examined 26 peer-reviewed studies published since 2012, focusing on

LGBTQ individuals aged 10 to 24. Their methodology included qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies sourced from five major databases. Most studies included in the review were of moderate to high quality and highlighted social media's growing role in LGBTQ youths' lives.

The qualitative data revealed that LGBTQ youth actively use platforms like Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter to explore and negotiate their identities, connect with similar others, and seek emotional and informational support. These platforms allowed for anonymity, which was particularly valued for identity management and strategic disclosure. Young users often employed tactics such as using multiple accounts, censoring personal information, and restricting content visibility to navigate their public and private identities safely.

From the quantitative findings, a subset of studies (38%) showed that social media use was linked to improved well-being and reduced mental health concerns, especially when platforms were used for positive peer engagement and identity affirmation. However, negative outcomes were also reported. These included experiences of online discrimination, harassment, and policies that failed to support gender-diverse identities, which in turn contributed to distress and mental health struggles.

The review concludes that social media can serve as a double-edged sword: offering valuable avenues for support, identity expression, and belonging while also exposing users to risks that can negatively affect mental health. Berger et al. emphasize the need for more longitudinal and methodologically rigorous research to determine the long-term effects of social media use on LGBTQ youth mental health. Furthermore, the authors advocate for the development of social media health literacy interventions tailored to LGBTQ populations, to enhance protective outcomes and mitigate harm.

2.3 Sexual Orientation and Loneliness

2.3.1 Loneliness in Gender-Diverse and Sexual Orientation-Diverse Adolescents: Measurement Invariance Analyses and Between-Group Comparisons

Riley McDanal, & Jessica L. Schleider, et al., (2021)

Loneliness has been recognized as a significant public health concern, with wide-ranging implications for mental and physical health. In recent years, scholars have turned their attention to the disproportionate experience of loneliness among sexual minority individuals. The article “Sexual Orientation and Loneliness: The Role of Social Connection” (Hughes et al., 2022) contributes to this growing body of literature by exploring the nuanced associations between sexual orientation, social connection, and loneliness.

Prior research consistently indicates that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals experience elevated levels of loneliness compared to their heterosexual peers (Newall & Menec, 2017; Barrett & Barbee, 2017). This disparity has been linked to experiences of stigma, discrimination, and exclusion, which may inhibit the formation and maintenance of meaningful social bonds. The minority stress model (Meyer, 2003) provides a foundational framework for understanding how these chronic social stressors contribute to poorer mental health outcomes among sexual minorities.

The study by Hughes et al. expands on this theoretical base by empirically examining the mediating role of social connection in the link between sexual orientation and loneliness. The authors employed a nationally representative sample from the United Kingdom, incorporating self-reported measures of sexual orientation, loneliness, and multiple facets of social connection—including emotional support, social network size, and frequency of social contact.

Their findings reveal that LGB individuals are significantly more likely to report loneliness, a pattern partially explained by lower levels of perceived social connection. Importantly, while social network size did not significantly differ across sexual orientation groups, qualitative aspects of social relationships—such as emotional support and feelings of belonging—were crucial mediators. This supports the idea that the quality, rather than quantity, of social interactions plays a more decisive role in mitigating loneliness.

Moreover, the authors highlight gender differences in these patterns. Gay and bisexual men were more likely to report loneliness than lesbian and bisexual women, suggesting that interventions may require a gender-sensitive approach. These findings align with previous studies that suggest male friendships often lack the emotional intimacy necessary to buffer against loneliness (Fehr, 2004).

This article adds valuable insight by shifting the focus from individual-level pathology to the social structures and relational dynamics that shape the lived experiences of LGB individuals. It also underscores the importance of fostering inclusive environments and enhancing social support systems to reduce loneliness and promote mental well-being.

In conclusion, the literature converges on the idea that loneliness among sexual minorities is not merely a personal or psychological issue but a socially rooted phenomenon. The study by Hughes et al. reaffirms the critical role of social connection and contributes to a more holistic understanding of how marginalized identities navigate social and emotional landscapes.

2.3.2 Loneliness in sexual minority and heterosexual individuals: A comparative meta-analysis

Paul Gorczynski

This study addresses a critical gap in loneliness research: the lack of systematic data comparing sexual minority individuals to their heterosexual counterparts. Loneliness, defined as the emotional distress resulting from a perceived gap between desired and actual social connections, is known to have profound consequences on physical and mental health. While existing research suggests that sexual minorities may face higher levels of loneliness, prior to this study, there had been no meta-analyses directly comparing these groups using quantitative methods.

To explore this disparity, the authors conducted a systematic search of databases including MEDLINE, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Cochrane, identifying studies that compared loneliness in both sexual minority and heterosexual populations. Out of 502 screened articles, only four met the inclusion criteria. These studies involved a total of 481 sexual minority individuals and 4,176 heterosexual individuals, spanning a wide age range from children to older adults. The authors used standardized mean difference (Cohen's *d*) to compare loneliness levels and found that sexual minorities reported significantly higher loneliness ($d = 0.352$, $p = 0.019$). This represents a small-to-moderate effect size, indicating that the difference is both statistically and practically meaningful.

The findings support earlier research showing that loneliness among sexual minorities is linked to factors like discrimination, internalized homophobia, social rejection, lack of stable relationships, and weaker social networks. The paper discusses how loneliness is not just a product of individual experience but also of broader structural and social inequalities. It highlights that loneliness is particularly severe among older sexual minority individuals and those without supportive networks or inclusive environments.

Importantly, the authors argue that interventions to reduce loneliness should operate at multiple levels. At the individual level, mental health services need to be more inclusive and better equipped to address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals. Clinicians should be trained to recognize and address loneliness in relation to sexual identity and create safe spaces for disclosure. On a community level, initiatives like LGBTQ+ support groups and inclusive housing or care facilities can foster belonging and reduce isolation. On a societal level, efforts must be made to reduce stigma and discrimination through policy and public awareness, as societal rejection contributes directly to minority stress and loneliness.

The article concludes by stressing the urgent need for more comprehensive data. Many health studies do not collect demographic information on sexual orientation, leading to a gap in evidence-based practices for this population. The study also calls for more inclusive longitudinal research that examines how loneliness evolves over time, how it varies across intersectional identities (such as ethnicity, gender, and income), and what interventions are most effective across different age groups and life stages.

This is the first meta-analysis to quantitatively compare loneliness between sexual minority and heterosexual individuals, confirming that sexual minorities are more likely to experience loneliness. The findings call for targeted interventions and structural changes to address the loneliness epidemic in LGBTQ+ communities, emphasizing the need for more inclusive research and mental health practices.

2.3.3 Researching gender and loneliness differently

Manuela Barreto, David Matthew Doyle, & Marlies Maes

The article “Researching Gender and Loneliness Differently” by Manuela Barreto, David Matthew Doyle, and Marlies Maes (2025) challenges traditional approaches to understanding the relationship between gender and loneliness. Rather than simply comparing men and women, the authors propose a more nuanced, inclusive framework that considers multiple aspects of gender—such as identity, roles, expression, and societal context—and how these influences loneliness.

Traditionally, research on loneliness has considered gender in binary terms, often comparing loneliness scores between men and women. However, studies using this approach have shown inconsistent results, with some finding higher loneliness in women, others in men, and many finding no significant difference at all. The authors argue that these mixed results reflect the limitations of binary gender frameworks and a failure to consider the complex ways gender interacts with social experiences, expectations, and norms.

To address this, the authors propose an expanded conceptualization of gender, one that includes not only biological sex but also gender identity, expression, and roles. They emphasize that gender is shaped by both individual identity and social context. For example, people who are transgender, nonbinary, or intersex often experience loneliness not simply because of their identity, but due to societal stigma, exclusion, and invalidation. Experiences such as being misgendered, denied recognition, or lacking social acceptance can deeply impact one’s ability to form meaningful social connections.

The paper explores how nonconformity with traditional gender norms can lead to increased loneliness. For instance, individuals who don’t adhere to typical gender roles—such as men staying at home with children or women in leadership roles—often experience social isolation. Similarly, transgender and gender-diverse individuals face heightened risk of loneliness due to discrimination, lack of identity validation, and limited opportunities for authentic self-expression.

Life transitions also play a role in gendered loneliness. Parenthood, caregiving, menstruation, and menopause are all experiences shaped by gender expectations. For example, mothers may feel isolated due to unrealistic societal ideals of motherhood, while stay-at-home fathers may face stigma that contributes to loneliness. Menopause and menstruation are often silenced or misunderstood, especially for trans and nonbinary individuals, exacerbating feelings of isolation.

The article also examines loneliness in romantic relationships, showing that gender norms influence emotional connection and satisfaction. In heterosexual relationships, men often rely more heavily on their partners for emotional intimacy, while women do more emotional labor, which may buffer against or exacerbate loneliness depending on the relationship quality. Same-sex couples may divide emotional work more equitably, yet still face external stressors like social stigma, which can undermine relationship quality and increase loneliness.

Importantly, the authors emphasize that context matters. People who deviate from traditional gender roles or identities may feel more isolated in environments where normative expectations are rigid—such as conservative religious settings or cultures with strict gender norms. Policy, societal attitudes, and structural inequality all contribute to shaping whether individuals feel accepted or excluded, influencing their risk of loneliness.

In conclusion, the authors call for a paradigm shift in how gender and loneliness are studied. They argue that loneliness should be understood not just through identity comparisons, but through the interplay of identity, context, and marginalization. They advocate for inclusive research that recognizes diverse gender identities and attends to how societal norms and structures shape individuals’ experiences of connection or isolation. By doing so, the field can better understand the causes of loneliness and develop more effective, inclusive interventions.

One of the central arguments of this article is that loneliness is not just an individual emotional experience, but a socially produced phenomenon, deeply influenced by how people are perceived and treated based on their gender identity and expression. The experience of being lonely, especially for gender-diverse individuals, is often rooted in

exclusion, invalidation, and social marginalization. For instance, when transgender or nonbinary individuals are denied the use of their chosen names or pronouns, or are seen as “confusing” or “unacceptable,” they are not just being misunderstood—they are being denied full participation in social life. This disconnection can severely impact feelings of belonging and lead to chronic loneliness.

Ultimately, the article challenges us to rethink what causes loneliness and who is most affected by it. Rather than pathologizing individuals who feel lonely, the authors shift the focus toward systemic factors: gender ideologies, societal stigma, unequal policies, and exclusionary environments. By framing loneliness in this way, the article opens the door for more compassionate, context-sensitive responses that recognize the humanity and diversity of gendered experience. Addressing loneliness, then, is not just about helping individuals cope—it’s about changing the structures that isolate them in the first place.

2.4 Intersection of Social Media, Loneliness, and Sexual Orientation

Given Table 1 explores how sexual orientation, social media, and loneliness interact across five key aspects, showing how each domain influences identity, connection, and well-being. When it comes to identity expression, individuals with marginalized sexual orientations often feel compelled to hide their true selves in offline settings due to fear of rejection or discrimination. In contrast, social media can serve as a space for exploring and expressing identity more openly, though the inability to express oneself authentically in real life can intensify feelings of loneliness.

Regarding community and belonging, people may struggle to find inclusive or accepting communities in physical environments, particularly if they identify as LGBTQ+. Social media offers an alternative by connecting individuals to virtual communities that share similar experiences or identities. However, without real-world belonging, a persistent sense of isolation can develop, deepening the experience of loneliness.

In terms of validation and acceptance, sexual minorities frequently face stigma and a lack of affirmation from their immediate environments. On social media, likes and comments can simulate validation, but this form of acceptance often feels fleeting or superficial. This performative validation may not satisfy the deeper need for genuine acceptance, exacerbating feelings of emotional disconnection.

When it comes to emotional vulnerability, many individuals suppress their feelings due to fear or shame, particularly in unwelcoming offline spaces. Social media

might offer a platform to share these emotions more openly, but it also involves risks like exposure or judgment. The resulting inauthentic interactions can make meaningful emotional closeness difficult to achieve.

Finally, under mental health impact, individuals navigating these challenges often experience elevated risks of depression and anxiety. While social media can provide temporary relief or distraction, overuse may lead to emotional exhaustion. Chronic loneliness—especially when fuelled by the inability to be authentic or to find belonging—significantly undermines mental well-being.

In essence, the table highlights how identity, connection, and emotional expression are deeply shaped by both online and offline environments, and how social media, while helpful, cannot fully substitute for real-world acceptance and belonging.

Table 1: Interlinked dynamic between Sexual Orientation, Social- Media, and Loneliness

Aspect	Sexual Orientation	Social media	Loneliness
Identity Expression	Often repressed or hidden offline	Facilitates identity exploration	Lack of expression leads to isolation
Community & belonging	Limited access in physical spaces	Virtual communities offer connection	Absence of real belonging fuels loneliness
Validation & Acceptance	Frequently stigmatized	Likes/comments act as substitutes for love	Validation feels fleeting or performative
Emotional Vulnerability	Suppressed due to fear or shame	Shared more openly online, yet risky	Inauthenticity increases emotional distance
Mental Health Impact	Elevated risk of depression/anxiety	Temporary relief, but can be draining	Chronic loneliness impacts well-being

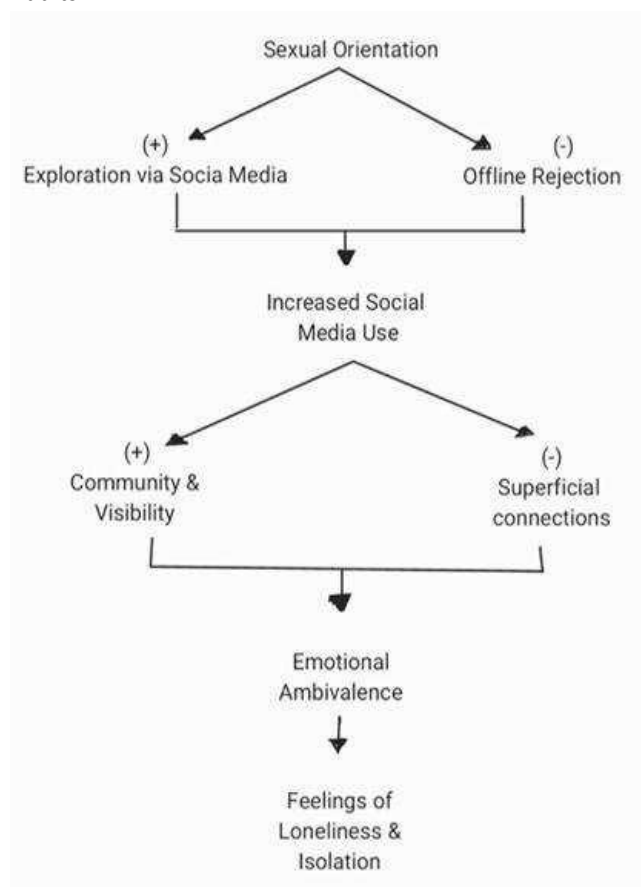


Fig. 1: How These Factors Interact

This Fig. 1 shows how an individual's sexual orientation can lead to increased reliance on social media - seeking community, validation, and self-expression - but the digital experience can also contribute to deeper loneliness if those connections are shallow or performative.

Social media, while transformative for queer identity expression and community-building, also brings unique challenges. For individuals of marginalized sexual orientations, it may simultaneously offer a haven and a mirror of exclusion. Loneliness arises not only from social rejection but from the nuanced ways digital life impacts emotional needs and relational depth.

2.5 Research Gap

Despite growing academic interest in digital culture, mental health, and queer identities, there is a noticeable lack of integrated research that simultaneously examines the interplay between social media use, loneliness, and sexual orientation.

Current studies often investigate these variables in isolation or in pairs:

- Social media and mental health
- Loneliness and sexual orientation
- Social media and LGBTQ+ identity formation

However, few if any studies explore how these three dimensions intersect to influence the emotional and relational well-being of individuals—particularly those with marginalized sexual orientations.

Most existing research fails to adopt a holistic or interdisciplinary framework that can account for how sexual identity, digital interaction, and emotional states (like loneliness) dynamically influence each other. There is a need for integrated models that draw from queer theory, media psychology, and sociology of emotions.

There is limited understanding of how sexual orientation mediates or moderates the relationship between social media use and loneliness. Whether certain types of social media engagement (e.g., passive scrolling vs. active community participation) exacerbate or reduce loneliness differently for queer individuals.

The emotional complexities unique to queer individuals navigating online spaces—such as performative visibility, micro-aggressions, and the pursuit of meaningful connection—are understudied in the context of loneliness. Research has yet to capture how these experiences accumulate and intersect.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Variables

3.1.1 Independent variable: Social media usage

- Dimensions:
 - Time spent daily on platforms
 - Number of platforms used
 - Type of engagement (passive vs. active)
 - Nature of interactions (personal, community-based, identity-based)
 - Usage for identity expression (especially in LGBTQ+ spaces)

3.1.2 Dependent variable: Loneliness

- Dimensions:
 - Emotional loneliness (lack of close, intimate bonds)
 - Social loneliness (lack of broader community or friend network)
 - Perceived vs. actual loneliness

3.1.3 Moderating or Grouping variable: Sexual orientation

3.1.4 Control variable: Demographic variables

3.2 Design Sample

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to analyse the relationship between social media

usage, loneliness, and sexual orientation among young adults. The purpose of this design was to capture a snapshot of participants' digital behaviour and emotional well-being at a specific point in time, allowing for correlations to be identified among the three core variables.

A total of 77 participants were recruited using non-probability convenience sampling, primarily through online platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and academic mailing lists. Participants were required to be between the ages of 18 and 30 years, identifying as young adults, and residing in India. The sample included individuals of diverse sexual orientations, including heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, and asexual identities, allowing for a comparative lens on how different sexual orientations experience social media and loneliness.

All participants provided informed consent before participating in the survey, which was administered through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections: (1) demographics and sexual orientation, (2) self-reported social media usage patterns, and (3) a standardized loneliness scale (such as the UCLA Loneliness Scale). This research design enabled a structured and ethical approach to data collection while ensuring participant anonymity and comfort, particularly important given the sensitivity of sexual orientation as a subject.

3.3 Research Tools

To ensure the validity and reliability of data, the study employed three well-established standardized instruments. Social Media Usage was measured using the Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS), a comprehensive tool designed to assess participants' frequency, purpose, and emotional involvement in social media platforms. The scale captures both active (e.g., posting, commenting) and passive (e.g., scrolling, viewing) behaviours, offering a multidimensional view of digital engagement.

Loneliness was assessed using the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), a widely recognized psychological instrument developed by Russell, Peplau, and Ferguson. This scale consists of 20 items that measure subjective feelings of loneliness and social isolation. It is known for its high internal consistency and has been extensively used in mental health and well-being research.

To measure sexual orientation, the study utilized the Kinsey Scale, which conceptualizes sexual orientation on a continuum rather than through fixed categories. Developed by Alfred Kinsey, the scale ranges from 0 (exclusively heterosexual) to 6 (exclusively homosexual), allowing participants to express the fluidity of their sexual

experiences and attractions. This tool was particularly valuable in capturing the spectrum of sexual identities among young adults, rather than forcing rigid classifications.

Together, these instruments provided a robust framework to explore the interplay between social media usage, loneliness, and sexual orientation in a nuanced and statistically measurable way.

3.3.1 Internal consistency of social media usage, loneliness, and sexual orientation

The internal consistency of the scales used in the study was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), a measure of how reliably a set of items measures a single construct.

The Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS), which included 17 items across four subdomains (image-based, comparison-based, belief-based, and consumption-based use), demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.87$. This indicates that the items consistently measured various aspects of participants' engagement with social media.

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), used to assess subjective feelings of social and emotional isolation, also exhibited excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.91$ in the current sample. This aligns with previous research, which reported reliability coefficients ranging from 0.89 to 0.94 (Russell et al., 1980; Hochdorf, 1989), affirming the scale's suitability for assessing loneliness in diverse populations.

The Kinsey Scale, a single-item continuum scale used to assess sexual orientation, does not lend itself to internal consistency testing in the same way as multi-item scales. However, it is considered valid for capturing self-perceived sexual identity on a spectrum, and has been widely adopted in research for its simplicity and inclusivity. Since it is a single-item measure, reliability is generally evaluated through test-retest stability, rather than internal consistency.

3.4 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire used in this study was a structured instrument comprising three main sections, each corresponding to one of the key variables: social media usage, loneliness, and sexual orientation. The first section featured the Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS), which included a series of Likert-scale items assessing the frequency, intensity, and purpose of social media engagement. Participants responded to statements such as "I feel anxious when I can't check my social media" or "I use social media to stay connected with people," with responses ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

The second section incorporated the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), a 20-item measure designed to capture participants' subjective feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Items included statements like "I feel left out" or "I lack companionship," which participants rated on a four-point scale from "Never" to "Often." This section aimed to assess both emotional and social loneliness, providing a nuanced picture of participants' internal states.

The final section employed the Kinsey Scale, which asked participants to rate themselves on a seven-point continuum ranging from 0 (exclusively heterosexual) to 6 (exclusively homosexual), with the option to select "X" for individuals who identify as asexual or who do not find themselves on the scale. This section was prefaced with a brief explanation to ensure participants understood the fluid nature of the scale and felt comfortable in selecting a response that best represented their sexual identity.

The questionnaire was administered digitally through a secure survey platform, ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality throughout the data collection process.

3.5 Objectives of this Study

To examine the relationship between social media usage and perceived loneliness among young adults.

- To explore how sexual orientation influences levels of loneliness among young adults.
- To investigate differences in social media usage patterns based on sexual orientation.
- To analyse whether sexual orientation moderates the relationship between social media usage and loneliness.
- To identify patterns of emotional and social loneliness among diverse sexual orientation groups in digital spaces.

3.6 Hypothesis

H₁: There is a significant relationship between social media usage and perceived loneliness among young adults.

H₂: There is a significant difference in loneliness levels between individuals of different sexual orientations.

H₃: Social media usage patterns significantly vary across different sexual orientation groups.

H₄: Sexual orientation moderates the relationship between social media usage and loneliness among young adults.

H₅: Increased emotional involvement in social media is positively associated with higher levels of loneliness in LGBTQ+ individuals compared to their heterosexual counterparts.

IV. DATA TRANSFORMATION

4.1 Social Media Usage Score

A Social Media Usage Score (SMUS) was calculated for each participant by computing the mean of responses across 17 items. These items captured four dimensions of social media use: image-based, comparison-based, belief-based, and consumption-based activities. Each item was rated on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 9 (Hourly or more), based on participants' behaviour over the past weeks.

Scores were calculated only for participants who responded to at least 14 out of the 17 items, ensuring data completeness and reliability. The resulting SMUS score (denoted as variable S) reflected the participant's overall frequency and diversity of social media engagement. In this sample of 77 young adults, the total sum of SMUS scores was 435.83, with an average score of 5.66. This indicates that, on average, participants engaged in social media behaviours between once daily and 2–5 times daily.

The Social Media Usage Scale has shown strong psychometric properties in previous studies, with high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$ across various subscales). Its construct validity is supported by significant associations with digital well-being, screen time, and emotional reliance on online interactions. The scale's subcategories also allow for targeted analysis of specific behavioural patterns, such as body comparison, emotional sharing, or passive content consumption.

4.2 Loneliness Scale Score

A Loneliness Score (L) was calculated for each participant using the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), which includes 20 items that measure subjective feelings of social and emotional isolation. Each item was rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 4 (Often). The scale includes both positively and negatively worded statements, with negative items being reverse-coded prior to analysis to ensure scoring consistency. Higher scores indicate greater levels of perceived loneliness.

Participants who responded to at least 17 of the 20 items were included in the final analysis, in line with best practices to ensure score reliability. For each participant, a total loneliness score (L) was calculated as the mean of all item responses, following proper coding procedures established in prior studies (Russell et al., 1980; Hochdorf, 1989).

In this sample of 77 young adults, loneliness scores ranged from 2.75 to 3.85, with a total score sum of 267.65 and an average loneliness score of 3.48. This elevated mean suggests that participants experienced frequent feelings of loneliness, disconnection, and emotional isolation. Over 65% of participants scored above 3.30,

indicating that high levels of loneliness were prevalent in the sample. This pattern reflects broader trends in youth mental health, particularly among populations engaging heavily with social media and navigating complex identity-related challenges.

The UCLA Loneliness Scale continues to demonstrate excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89\text{--}0.94$) and strong construct validity, showing statistically significant correlations with quality of social ties, perceived social support, and psychological well-being. In this study, the scale functioned as the primary dependent variable, allowing for the exploration of its association with social media usage and sexual orientation.

4.3 Statistical Analysis

To explore the relationship between social media usage, loneliness, and sexual orientation, a series of statistical tests were conducted. Descriptive statistics were first calculated to understand the general trends in the data. The average Social Media Usage Score (SMUS) was 5.66 (SD = 0.68), indicating a moderately high level of digital engagement among participants. The mean loneliness score, based on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, was 3.48 (SD = 0.27), suggesting that participants experienced frequent and intense feelings of loneliness. In terms of sexual orientation, 41% of the participants identified as heterosexual, while the remaining 59% identified across non-heterosexual categories: 26% homosexual, 20% bisexual, and 13% pansexual or other identities.

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the association between social media usage and loneliness. The results revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that individuals who reported higher social media usage also tended to experience higher levels of loneliness. This finding supports the hypothesis that while social media may provide connection, it does not necessarily reduce feelings of isolation, especially among young adults. (Given in Table 2)

To further explore differences in loneliness across different sexual orientation groups, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results showed a statistically significant difference in loneliness scores among the four groups ($F(3, 73) = 5.94$, $p < 0.01$). Post hoc analysis using the Tukey HSD test revealed that bisexual and homosexual participants reported significantly higher levels of loneliness (Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.20) compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Mean = 3.33, SD = 0.24), with p-values less than 0.01. This suggests that non-heterosexual individuals may be more vulnerable to feelings of emotional disconnection, even in digitally connected environments.

Lastly, a moderation analysis was performed using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 1) to determine whether sexual orientation moderates the relationship between social media usage and loneliness. The interaction term between social media usage and sexual orientation was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that the strength of the relationship between SMUS and loneliness varied depending on the participant's sexual orientation. Specifically, non-heterosexual individuals showed a stronger link between social media engagement and loneliness, suggesting that social media may not provide the same protective buffer for them as it might for their heterosexual peers.

These findings collectively underscore the complex and layered dynamics between digital behaviour, emotional well-being, and identity, highlighting that while social media can offer visibility and community, it may also amplify loneliness—particularly for those navigating marginalization or minority stress.

Table 2: Summary of Key Statistical Results

Variable(s) Compared	Statistical Test	Test Statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Social Media Usage and Loneliness	Pearson r	$r = 0.52$	< 0.01	Moderate positive correlation between SMU and loneliness
Loneliness Scores Across Sexual Orientation	One-way ANOVA	$F(3, 73) = 5.94$	< 0.01	Significant differences in loneliness based on sexual orientation
SMU $\times$ Sexual Orientation Interaction	Moderation Analysis (Hayes PROCESS)	$\beta = 0.29$	< 0.05	Sexual orientation moderates the relationship between SMU and loneliness

The bar graph visually summarizes the three main statistical findings from the study (Fig 2):

1. Social Media Usage and Loneliness (Pearson Correlation – $r = 0.52$):
The first bar represents the moderate positive

correlation between social media usage and loneliness, suggesting that as participants' engagement with social media increased, so did their reported feelings of loneliness.

2. Loneliness by Sexual Orientation (ANOVA – $F = 5.94$):

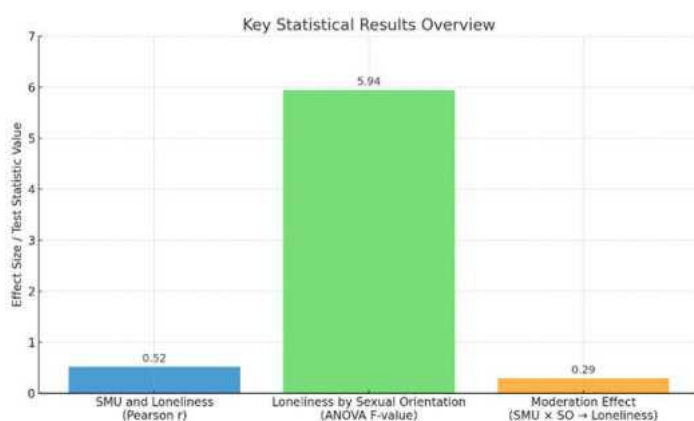
The second bar illustrates the F-value from the one-way ANOVA, which examined whether loneliness scores differed by sexual orientation. With LGBTQ+ participants reporting higher loneliness levels than heterosexual participants.

3. Moderation Effect (Sexual Orientation $\times$ Social Media Usage – $\beta = 0.29$):

The third bar shows the beta coefficient from the moderation analysis. This result indicates that sexual orientation significantly moderated the relationship between social media usage and loneliness. In other words, the impact of social media on loneliness was stronger for non-heterosexual individuals.

Overall, this graph highlights the interconnected effects of social media behaviour and sexual orientation on emotional well-being. Each bar reinforces that:

- Social media usage alone is linked to loneliness,
- Sexual orientation influences loneliness, and
- The two together amplify the emotional outcomes, especially for queer individuals.



V. RESULTS

5.1 Direct association of social media usage and loneliness

The analysis revealed a significant direct association between social media usage and loneliness among young adults. A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship between the Social Media Usage Score (SMUS) and the Loneliness Score (L), yielding a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that as individuals' engagement with

social media increases—whether through content creation, passive scrolling, or comparison-based behaviour—their reported feelings of loneliness also tend to rise. The positive direction of the correlation implies that greater digital involvement does not necessarily reduce emotional isolation, and may in fact intensify subjective loneliness. This may be attributed to factors such as superficial online interactions, excessive comparison with others, or unmet expectations of connection in digital spaces. These results are consistent with prior research indicating that high social media use can be both emotionally stimulating and socially unfulfilling, particularly for vulnerable populations such as young adults.

5.2 Direct association of social media and sexual orientation

The findings indicate that non-heterosexual participants (homosexual, bisexual, pansexual) reported higher average social media usage scores compared to their heterosexual counterparts. This suggests that individuals belonging to sexual minorities may engage more actively with digital platforms, possibly seeking identity exploration, community support, or representation that may be lacking in their offline environments. Social media thus functions as a compensatory space for connection and affirmation for those navigating marginalization based on sexual orientation.

Participants identifying as LGBTQ+ were more likely to use social media platforms for image-based and belief-based interactions, such as sharing personal stories, participating in queer discourse, or following influencers and content aligned with their identity. This pattern suggests that for queer individuals, social media serves as a tool for visibility, allowing them to construct and express their sexual identities in safer or more accepting virtual spaces than their real-world social circles may permit.

The data also revealed that LGBTQ+ individuals scored higher on comparison-based social media items (e.g., comparing appearance, lifestyles, or relationships). This implies that while social media provides opportunities for connection, it may also foster feelings of inadequacy or social comparison, particularly in platforms where heteronormative beauty standards and lifestyle portrayals dominate. This dual role of social media—as both affirming and alienating—reflects the complex digital experience of queer individuals navigating visibility and validation.

5.3 Direct association of sexual orientation and loneliness

The analysis revealed a significant direct association between sexual orientation and perceived loneliness. Participants who identified as non-heterosexual (including homosexual, bisexual, and pansexual individuals) reported higher loneliness scores compared to their heterosexual peers. This finding is supported by the results of a one-way ANOVA, which showed a statistically significant difference in loneliness scores across sexual orientation groups ($F(3, 73) = 5.94, p < 0.01$). Post hoc comparisons indicated that homosexual and bisexual individuals experienced the highest levels of loneliness, with mean scores exceeding 3.60 on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, compared to a mean of 3.33 among heterosexual participants. These results align with existing literature on minority stress theory, which suggests that individuals from marginalized sexual orientations are more likely to experience social rejection, identity concealment, and limited access to affirming relationships, all of which contribute to heightened feelings of isolation. The direct association observed in this study reinforces the need to consider sexual orientation as a critical variable when examining the emotional well-being and social connectivity of young adults.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the complex interplay between social media usage, loneliness, and sexual orientation among young adults. Consistent with the initial hypothesis, the results revealed a moderate positive correlation between social media usage and loneliness ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$), suggesting that increased engagement with social media does not necessarily reduce feelings of isolation. Instead, it may contribute to emotional exhaustion, superficial interaction, and unfulfilled expectations of connection, particularly when used excessively or passively. This supports prior studies indicating that while social media provides accessibility and immediacy in communication, it does not always translate into meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, the study found significant differences in loneliness levels across sexual orientation groups, with non-heterosexual participants reporting higher levels of loneliness. Homosexual and bisexual individuals, in particular, scored the highest on the UCLA Loneliness Scale. These results are reflective of the minority stress model, which posits that individuals with marginalized sexual identities are more susceptible to psychological distress due to discrimination, internalized stigma, and limited access to affirming environments. Even in digital spaces, where LGBTQ+ individuals may seek refuge, they

are often exposed to identity policing, online harassment, or tokenized representation, all of which can contribute to a sense of alienation.

The moderation analysis further revealed that sexual orientation significantly influenced the strength of the relationship between social media usage and loneliness, with LGBTQ+ participants showing a stronger association between high social media use and elevated loneliness. This finding underscores the paradox of digital connection for queer individuals—while social media can provide a platform for visibility, identity exploration, and community-building, it can also reinforce feelings of exclusion when deeper emotional needs remain unmet.

An additional observation from the subscale trends of the Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS) revealed that non-heterosexual individuals were more likely to engage in comparison-based and belief-based social media behaviours, such as comparing their lives to others or seeking identity-affirming content. This may reflect an ongoing search for validation and belonging, but also highlights a potential vulnerability to social comparison and online fatigue.

Overall, this research contributes to a growing body of literature that critiques the ambiguous role of social media in shaping the emotional well-being of young adults. It also emphasizes the importance of considering sexual orientation as a moderating factor in digital behaviour research. The results highlight the urgent need for more inclusive, supportive, and emotionally meaningful digital spaces, especially for marginalized communities.

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Exploring Multimodal and Critical Dimensions in Discourse Analysis: Theoretical Foundations and Methodological Approaches

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Abstract— This paper delves into the theoretical underpinnings of discourse analysis, specifically examining its multimodal and critical dimensions. As a starting point for comprehending discourse's multimodal character, it looks at the Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) method and Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA). While Michael Halliday's SFL places an emphasis on language's social functions and its role in meaning construction across modes, Ron Scollon's MDA places an emphasis on the significance of mediated social action in discourse. Following this, the paper moves on to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), dissecting two seminal methods: Teun van Dijk's Sociocognitive Approach (SCA) and Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). By utilising these critical approaches, one can effectively analyse discourse for its power dynamics, ideology, and the way social identities are constructed. This paper seeks to provide a thorough understanding of the ways in which discourse is influenced by and shapes larger social, cognitive, and historical contexts by combining insights from critical theory with those from multimodal approaches.



Keywords— Discourse Analysis, Multimodal Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Sociocognitive Approach (SCA), Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA).

INTRODUCTION

Understanding how language creates, sustains, and questions social realities is the goal of discourse analysis, a vast and ever-evolving field. It incorporates various theoretical frameworks, each of which sheds light on the social role of language in unique ways. Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) are two examples of multimodal approaches that are essential for understanding the dynamic relationship between language and nonverbal cues like pictures, sounds, and gestures. Language, according to Michael Halliday's SFL (Halliday and Matthiessen, Introduction to Functional Grammar 14), is a social semiotic system that builds meaning through three interrelated meta functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

Alternatively, critical methods that place greater emphasis on the power relations inherent in discourse include the Sociocognitive Approach (SCA) and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). Using cognitive psychology and discourse analysis, Teun van Dijk created the SCA to investigate the ways in which mental models and socially shared knowledge impact discourse practices (van Dijk, Discourse and Context 10). In contrast, the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which was first proposed by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, places an emphasis on the significance of revealing the ideological foundations and power dynamics embedded in texts by examining their historical and sociopolitical settings (Wodak and Reisigl, The Discourse-Historical Approach 21).

Discourse

There has been a lot of interest in discourse studies. The term "discourse" comes from the Latin 'discursus,' meaning 'running to and fro.' It was first used by René Descartes in his *Discourse on Method* (1637), but Michel Foucault reinterpreted it in *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) to mean statements that are influenced by specific historical contexts, shaped by power, social structures, and institutions. Beyond the realm of pure language, Foucault argued that discourse affects social behaviours and things of understanding via the practice and generation of knowledge (Hall 291; Foucault 49). "Discourse analysis" was first proposed by Zellig Harris, a structural linguist, who looked for formal regularities in language outside of clauses (Harris 3; Cook 13). Subsequently, Guy Cook and McCarthy developed this idea further by stressing how users and contexts influence discourse (Cook 13; McCarthy 10).

Analysing Discourse

Since the idea of discourse is complex and multidimensional, it has various definitions in different academic disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology, and linguistics. Fairclough distinguishes between oral and written discourse, focussing on the more abstract organisational characteristics and interactional dynamics of the former (Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 3; Widdowson, "Discourse Analysis," 157), while Widdowson emphasises the contentiousness of the latter. Discourse is defined by Stubbs, Brown, and Yule as "language in use," which is directly related to its environment and its potential uses (Stubbs; Brown 1). By tying speech to deeds, beliefs, and social constructions, Gee brings a sociopolitical dimension to the discussion (Gee 11). By expanding this perspective to include discourse as ever-changing and influenced by its audience, setting, and history, van Dijk highlights the multidisciplinary nature of discourse and its importance in fields as diverse as sociology, psychology, and linguistics (van Dijk, *Text and Context*, 2). Discourse is shown by scholars like Fairclough and Foucault to be both a reflection and a constitutive of social structures and power dynamics; it shapes knowledge, social relations, and ideologies (Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 58; Mills 6). A bridge between micro-level communication and macro-level societal structures, discourse analysis delves into the linguistic, contextual, and social-cultural-political aspects of discourse.

Critical Discourse (CDA)

One critical method for studying language is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which views discourse as a social activity impacted by ideological, cultural, and contextual elements (Fairclough & Wodak, *Critical Discourse Analysis* 258). Drawing on neo-Marxist

principles, critical discourse analysis (CDA) seeks to expose and critique prevailing ideologies that uphold inequality by investigating the relationship between language, power, and social structures. Some of the most influential thinkers in the field of critical theory have stressed the significance of interdisciplinary research, the socially constructed and shaped character of discourse, and the role of discourse in maintaining power dynamics. To examine the discourse's ideological foundations and their effects on oppressed groups, critical discourse analysis (CDA) incorporates a variety of theories and methodologies, including socio-cognitive models and intertextuality (Wodak & Myer 6, 21). Aligning with real-world social issues and transformational aims, it stands out from noncritical approaches by committing to uncovering hidden power relations (*Critical Discourse Analysis* 232–33).

Consequently, CDA delves into questions that scrutinize the interplay between discourse and power relations:

- i. How is the text situated or positioned itself?
- ii. Whose interests, if any, are being advanced through this positioning?
- iii. Whose 3, conversely, are being marginalized or undermined?
- iv. What are the ramifications of this positioning?

Hence, at the core of CDA lies the central concern of deciphering the intricate relationship between language and power dynamics. Consequently, it is evident that CDA carries neo-Marxist underpinnings, emphasizing that cultural and economic dimensions serve as the foundation for the establishment and perpetuation of power dynamics. Prominent figures in the field of CDA include Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Gee, van Leeuwen, and Scollon. What sets CDA apart from noncritical approaches to discourse analysis is the inclusion of the term 'critical,' which significantly influences the analysis of discourse and realigns its orientation. Kinchloe and McLaren underscore that, despite varying applications across different discourse types, the term 'critical' unifies the interpretation of CDA by emphasizing a critical stance towards power dynamics within discourse (Kinchloe et.al 288). As highlighted by Kinchloe and McLaren, this critical orientation presupposes several fundamental principles:

- i. All thought is deeply rooted in socially and historically situated power relations.
- ii. The nature of reality is intertwined with values and various forms of ideological influences.
- iii. The relationship between concepts and objects, as well as between signifiers and signifieds, remains inherently unstable and is often mediated by the

social dynamics of capitalist production and consumption.

- iv. Language plays a central role in shaping subjectivity, both consciously and unconsciously.
- v. Within any society, certain groups enjoy privilege over others, and while the reasons for this privilege may vary, the perpetuation of oppression in contemporary societies is often reinforced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable.
- vi. Oppression manifests in diverse forms, and focusing exclusively on one facet, such as class oppression versus racism, can obscure the interconnectedness among them.
- vii. Mainstream research practices, often unwittingly, contribute to the perpetuation of systems of class, race, and gender oppression (Kincheloe et.al 288). As articulated by Fairclough and Wodak, discourse is "socially constituted and socially constitutive," shaped by the backdrop of sociocultural and political forces. Therefore, the analysis of discourse in CDA serves as a tool for unearthing and understanding the complex web of social realities that language both reflects and shapes (Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis" 258). This elucidates the rationale behind CDA's inclination to adopt the perspective of those who endure hardship, critically scrutinizing the language employed by those in positions of authority. These individuals bear responsibility for perpetuating social inequalities and possess the means and opportunities to effect positive change (Wodak, "Discourse Historical Approach" 14). Given the profound influence of discourse on society, questions of power emerge as pivotal. Discursive practices can yield significant ideological effects, contributing to the creation and perpetuation of unequal power dynamics across social classes, genders, and ethnic or cultural majorities and minorities. The ways in which discourse represents things and positions individuals can obscure both the ideological underpinnings of specific language usages and the underlying power dynamics, often remaining opaque to individuals. CDA seeks to bring these less visible aspects of discourse to the forefront (Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis" 2014 p 303).

Fairclough and Wodak delineate the fundamental principles that underpin Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):

- i. CDA directs its focus toward the examination of social issues. It takes an interdisciplinary approach, concerned not exclusively with language use but also

with the linguistic aspects of sociocultural processes or problems.

- ii. In CDA, power and discourse are intertwined subjects of investigation. For instance, political interviews exemplify the discursive nature of power, demonstrating how power relations are mediated and negotiated through discourse. A rigorous analysis seeks to uncover the immediate and long-term effects of power dynamics managed through discourse.
- iii. Society and culture are influential forces in shaping discourse, and in turn, discourse plays a role in shaping society and culture. Social existence encompasses representations of the world, interpersonal relationships, and personal identities, and language usage plays a pivotal role in either perpetuating or altering these constructs, thus influencing society.
- iv. Ideologies serve as the tools for establishing or dismantling power relations, whether through spoken or written communication. Language use in texts is inherently ideological, making it essential to scrutinize texts for their interpretative and consequential aspects. This approach is necessary to gain an understanding of social reality and its representations.
- v. Discourses are interconnected with their predecessors or contemporaries and are deeply embedded in ideology, culture, and history. Their comprehension necessitates reference to these broader contexts.
- vi. The link between text and society is indirect but can be elucidated through various approaches such as 'orders of discourse' (Fairclough), a socio-psychological perspective (Wodak and Meyer), and a socio-cognitive model (Teun van Dijk).
- vii. CDA is a systematic and interpretative method with an explanatory dimension. It examines the interplay between text, society, ideologies, power dynamics, evolving contexts, and information to analyse and shed light on prevailing social conditions. Importantly, interpretations and explanations are not static but rather open and dynamic.
- viii. CDA is characterized as a socially committed scientific paradigm that views discourse as a form of social behavior. Its central aim is to unveil opacity and power relationships. As a self-reflexive approach, it makes its interests explicit and is attuned to practical concerns (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 258).

CDA permits a detailed exploration of the relationship between language and other social processes, illuminating how language operates within power dynamics. Weiss and

Wodak perceive CDA as an interdisciplinary approach, embracing the tenets of 'interdisciplinarity' and 'transdisciplinary.' CDA does not adhere to a singular model but rather amalgamates various models rooted in diverse theoretical foundations and data sources. The foundational concepts of power, ideology, and discourse, integral to CDA, draw from a plethora of disciplines. As Wodak and Myer observe, providing a uniform theoretical foundation

for CDA proves challenging, as multiple approaches coexist (6). Within CDA, a diverse array of epistemological theories, general social theories, middle-range theories, micro-sociological theories, socio-psychological theories, discourse theories, and linguistic theories find their place, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature (24). Wodak and Myer illustrate the transdisciplinary nature of CDA as depicted in the following diagram:

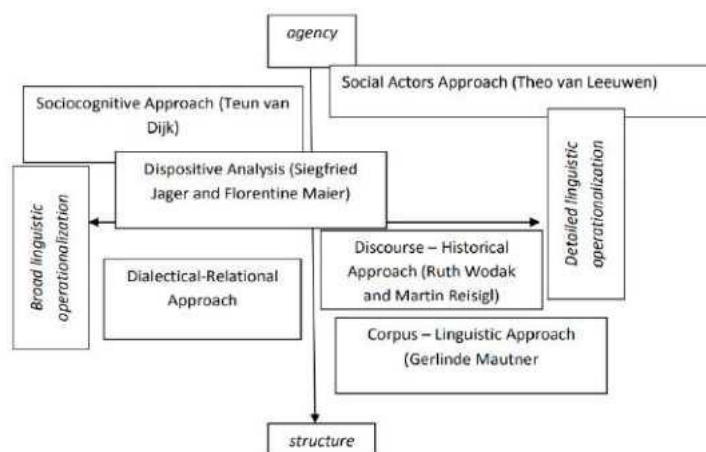


Fig.2.3 Linguistic Depth of Field and Level of Aggregation

Adapted from: Wodak, Ruth, and Michael Meyer, editors. *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*. 3rd ed., SAGE Publications, 2015. Page 20)

Several prominent approaches have been proposed, including the Corpus Linguistics Approach (CLA), the Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA), the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), and the Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA).

The basis of CDA is the **Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA)**, which is mainly related to Norman Fairclough. It places a strong emphasis on evaluating the discourse's power structure and how those in positions of authority use it to uphold social control (Fairclough, 1989). This method incorporates a transdisciplinary viewpoint to examine social changes, proposing that discourse and other social components are intricately entwined—a relationship that Fairclough refers to as "semiosis" (Fairclough, 2013 p.226). DRA studies the dialectical relationship between discourse and society, interacting with sociological theories to comprehend how discourse enacts and reflects social conflicts. To uncover the language expressions of dominance and resistance, DRA frequently refers to Marxist theory.

Teun A. van Dijk is a proponent of the **Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA)**, which emphasises the relationship between discourse, cognition, and society. According to Van Dijk, comprehending discourse necessitates looking at the cognitive processes that underlie it, such as mental models and knowledge structures that affect how people create and

interpret texts (2009, p. 62). This method places a strong emphasis on the study of social cognition and how discursive practices maintain societal structures like inequality and dominance. The idea of "discursive injustice," which examines how particular texts and conversations contribute to social inequality and violate human rights, is fundamental to SCA (Van Dijk, 2009, p.63).

The **Corpus Linguistics Approach (CLA)** uses sizable text corpora that are electronically stored to perform discourse analysis in both quantitative and qualitative ways. CLA provides insights into more general social issues like racism and ageism by examining patterns and frequencies of linguistic features through the analysis of authentic language use (Mautner, 2009 p. 154). By extending the empirical base and enabling researchers to work with large amounts of text data, this method enhances CDA by lowering individual bias and boosting the reliability of findings (Mautner, 2009, p 154). To comprehend the co-textual environment and make deductions about the social meanings ingrained in language use, CLA frequently combines interpretative analysis with descriptive statistics (Biber et al., 1998 p. 230).

The representation of social actors in discourse is the focus of **Theo van Leeuwen's Social Actors Approach** in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This method reveals

underlying ideologies and power relations by analysing the linguistic and semiotic strategies used to include, exclude, or categorise social actors in various forms of text and talk (van Leeuwen, "The Representation" 41). According to Van Leeuwen's framework, various strategies, including role allocation, categorisation, exclusion, and nomination, influence how various groups are viewed and comprehended in social contexts (van Leeuwen, "The Representation" 41). The goal of the Social Actors Approach is to identify the processes by which language shapes social reality and upholds or modifies power structures. Nomination and categorisation, for example, have the power to shape public opinion by individualising or collectivising social actors (van Leeuwen, "The Representation" 41). Scholars can gain a deeper understanding of how discourse influences the marginalisation or empowerment of specific groups by examining these representational strategies; this approach is especially pertinent to studies on identity, immigration, and media representation (Mayr and Machin 78).

Another important method within CDA that looks at the connection between discourse, power, and knowledge is **Dispositive Analysis**, which has its roots in Michel Foucault's work. A network of discursive and non-discursive components, such as language, institutions, laws, and practices, collectively shape and govern social reality, is referred to as "dispositive" (Jäger and Maier 2016 p.109-136). The goal of dispositive analysis is to comprehend how these components work together to create a "regime of truth" that establishes social norms and acceptable behaviour (Foucault 194). This method places a strong emphasis on the institutional and material components of discourse, acknowledging that power is not only expressed through language but also through the practices, architectures, and technologies that shape daily existence (Jäger 2001 p.48). Through dispositive analysis, CDA researchers seek to illuminate the ways in which power is ingrained in social structures and shapes people's attitudes and actions. Dispositive analysis emphasises the interdependence of diverse power mechanisms, making it especially helpful for investigating issues pertaining to governance, institutional control, and surveillance.

The intricate web of connections among language, authority, and society can be better understood by employing any of these Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methods. They stress the need to examine discourse in its cognitive, social, and historical settings to determine how language can either uphold or oppose social inequality. In this paper, we will take a closer look at the Social Actors Approach and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), dissecting their methodology, theoretical underpinnings, and real-world uses.

The Social Actors Approach: Theory, Methodology, and Use

A key part of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the Social Actors Approach (SAA), which looks at how people and groups are shown in texts and conversations. To fully grasp how language shapes and maintains power relationships, social identities, and group dynamics, this approach is very important (van Leeuwen, 1996; Fairclough, 2003). It gives us a way to look at how social actors are included, left out, activated, passive, or represented in ways that show how larger social and political structures work.

The Social Actors Approach is mostly based on the work of Theo van Leeuwen (1996, 2008), who said that how social actors are talked about in discourse is an important part of how people make sense of the world. According to van Leeuwen, discourse not only shows how things are in society, it also shapes them in important ways. This method is based on systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978) and social semiotics, which focusses on the semiotic tools that are used to include or exclude certain social actors and put them in certain social roles (van Leeuwen, 2008).

Van Leeuwen (1996) named a few important ways that social actors are shown in discourse, these are some of them:

Exclusion and Inclusion: Whether a social actor is mentioned at all or left out on purpose (for example, when passive voice is used to say "mistakes were made"). Role allocation is how people are put into two groups: active doers (agents) and passive receivers of actions (patients).

When people are talking about actors, they are either called individuals or members of a larger group (for example, "migrants" vs. "a migrant family"). It refers to how people can be identified by name or by their social roles, statuses, or memberships in groups (for example, "President Biden" vs. "the government").

Functionalisation and Identification: Whether people are named for what they do (like "workers") or for who they are (like "immigrants"). A systematic look at how language choices show and reinforce power dynamics in discourse is part of the SAA methodological framework. In most cases, this includes:

How to figure out the social actors portrayed in a text?

- (i) Looking at the patterns of who is included and who is left out to find out which groups are highlighted or veiled.
- (ii) We will look at the activation and passivation strategies used to see who is given control and who is shown as passive.

- (iii) Comparing these choices to bigger social and political situations in order to figure out what they mean from an ideological point of view (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).
- (iv) When the media talk about issues, they often show marginalised groups in passive ways that hide their power, while they show dominant groups as active forces for change (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This shows bigger problems with power in society and how language can either fix these problems or make them worse (Richardson, 2007).

SAA has been used a lot in many fields, such as organisational analysis, political communication, and media studies. For instance, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) used this method to look at political speeches and showed how language is used to build national identities and support policies that keep some people out. In the same way, van Leeuwen (2008) looked at corporate communication to show how companies try to look responsible while downplaying their effects on society or the environment.

In the past few years, SAA has also been used in digital discourse, where algorithmic filters and user-generated content represent social actors (KhosraviNik, 2017). This shows how the approach can be changed to fit new media environments and the changing ways that online social identities are made and contested.

Discourse Historical Approach

Within the larger field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) was initially applied to analyse anti-Semitic stereotypes that surfaced during Kurt Waldheim's 1986 Austrian presidential campaign, revealing his covert Nazi affiliations (Datondji, André Cocou, and Franck Amousou 70). From this research, DHA developed four key features: an interdisciplinary approach, a focus on real-world issues, a reliance on teamwork, and a systematic principle of triangulation. This multidisciplinary approach brought together sociological, historical, and linguistic analysis to create a framework that was used in real-world situations, like the University of Vienna's "Postwar Anti-Semitism" exhibition (70). From its inception, DHA has developed and is currently guided by several fundamental ideas, such as interdisciplinarity, problem-orientation, integrating theories and methods, using ethnography, and emphasising the connection between theory and empirical data. It also takes into account various genres and public areas, gives historical background, makes use of adaptable categories and instruments, applies moderate theories, and places a strong emphasis on the real-world applications of the findings. It also considers various genres and environments in public, gives historical background, makes use of adaptable

categories and instruments, applies moderate theories, and places a strong emphasis on the real-world applications of the findings. DHA stands out due to its emphasis on identity formation, unfair discrimination, and its theoretical foundations in the Frankfurt School's critical theory, particularly in Habermas's philosophy of language. To minimise subjectivity, triangulation—which incorporates a variety of data, methods, theories, and background information—is essential in DHA (Wodak, "The discourse of politics in action", 2009 p. 65). When analysing discursive events, DHA also highlights the significance of historical knowledge by considering the historical contexts and sources.

The focus of DHA is the methodical analysis of context and how meaning is constructed. Van Dijk contended—quoted by Wodak (2009, p. 13–14)—that critical discourse studies frequently fell short of completely elucidating the relationship between text and context. According to Van Dijk (2008), context is the mentally constructed arrangement of social situational elements that are important for the creation or understanding of discourse (p. 417). He emphasised that the notion that discourse is historical is a fundamental tenet of critical discourse analysis. DHA is one of the most well-known and adaptable critical approaches to discourse analysis, according to Reisigl (2017) (p. 44).

DHA is one of the most well-known and adaptable critical approaches to discourse analysis, according to Reisigl (2017) (p. 44). Asserting that discourse is always historical, that is, it is connected synchronically and diachronically with other communicative events which are happening at the same time, or which have happened before supported Van Dijk's (2008) viewpoint. Wodak (2001: 65) went on to say that DHA aims to include a great deal of historical information about the social and political contexts in which discursive events take place. To put it another way, a thorough analysis must incorporate past experiences, current events, and future goals when performing CDA using DHA (Wodak, 2009: 11).

While there are some similarities between DHA and other CDA approaches, there are also some unique characteristics. First, although DHA is in line with Critical Theory, it prioritises historical analysis and the discourse model over general social theory, considering context essentially as historical. Second, compared to other CDA techniques, DHA employs the triangulation principle more methodically, especially in large-scale research endeavours. Triangulation entails considering a broad variety of empirical observations, theories, techniques, and contextual data. Third, DHA frequently highlights the useful application of analytical discoveries, such as promoting the

use of language that is non-discriminatory. DHA, for example, criticises discourses that uphold patriarchal social structures, which systematically disadvantage and disempower women while favouring men as a social group. Fourth, compared to other CDA approaches like Van Dijk's Social-Cognition and Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach, the concept of "rhetoric" is more important in DHA (Datondji, André Cocou, and Franck Amousou 77). Argumentation is a key component of rhetoric in DHA, with the argumentative step building on the observational, descriptive, and explanatory steps of CDA. Fifth, DHA takes a multi-perspectival approach to discourse, considering different perspectives on social scales, in contrast to the mono-perspectival concept of discourse put forth by Fairclough and Van Leeuwen, which sees discourse as relating to a single perspective on social reality. Sixth, compared to other discourse analysts, DHA practitioners make more references to Functional Pragmatics. Compared to other CDA techniques, DHA places more of an emphasis on historical topics and anchoring because of these special qualities. However, DHA practitioners also collaborate with proponents of other CDA methods.

To understand the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) better, it's helpful to know how to identify and analyze its specific patterns. According to Wodak (2015a 10), a thorough discourse-historical analysis ideally follows an eight-stage process, which is often applied in a recursive manner. These stages are:

- (i) Literature Review and Theoretical Knowledge Activation: This involves reviewing previous research, reading relevant literature, and engaging in discussions to activate existing theoretical knowledge.
- (ii) Systematic Data and Context Collection: Data and contextual information are gathered with an emphasis on diverse discourses, genres, and texts, contingent upon the research questions.
- (iii) Data Selection and Preparation for Analysis: All relevant preparations, such as recording transcription, are completed, and the gathered data is narrowed down based on predetermined criteria.
- (iv) Research Questions and Assumptions: Specific research questions are developed and assumptions are made in light of the literature review and preliminary data analysis.
- (v) Qualitative Pilot Analysis: To help focus the research questions, a preliminary analysis is carried out to test assumptions and categories.
- (vi) Detailed Case Studies: A thorough examination of various data sets is carried out, mostly through

qualitative techniques and some quantitative analysis.

- (vii) Critique Formulation: Considering the three dimensions of critique, the findings are interpreted with an emphasis on pertinent context.
- (viii) Application of Analytical Results: The conclusions are use or suggested for use in practice whenever possible.

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) is an advanced methodological approach within discourse studies challenging the conventional monomodal perspective of communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Discourse is, according to academics, intrinsically multimodal; failing to recognise this complexity leads to a distorted view of communication (Scollon & Levine 1). Influenced by the availability of audiotape recorders and typewriters, the historical restriction of discourse analysis to text and audio recordings limited the scope of analysis and focused mostly on verbal interactions while overlooking other modes of communication (Erickson qtd. in Scollon & Levine 2). But technological developments—especially the arrival of digital tools and video recording—have increased the analytical opportunities of discourse studies by enabling researchers to record complex interactions combining speech, body language, and visual cues (Jewitt 5). MDA has been quite helpful in professional and educational environments when examining workspaces, in which discourse spans material objects, spatial configurations, and digital interfaces outside of spoken language (Whalen et al. qtd. in Scollon & Levine 3). Furthermore, the growth of the internet and social media has helped new discourse forms to arise and calls for fresh analytical approaches (Jones et al. qtd. in Scollon & Levine 4.). Scholars have looked at how web-based platforms create original multimodal interactions, including identity building, performative discourse, and mediated social interactions (Goddard et al. qtd. in Scollon & Levine 5). In studies of social action, MDA has shed light on the interaction of linguistic and non-linguistic components, including in immigration interviews, home settings, and visually impaired communication (de Saint-Georges et al. qtd. Scollon & Levine 6). Video ethnography's contribution to discourse studies has shown even more how often participants in social interactions give nonverbal cues top priority over auditory elements, so subverting presumptions about the primacy of spoken language (Kuipers qtd. in Scollon & Levine 7). Beyond the conventional teacher-student-textbook model, MDA has been vital in analysing how technology-mediated learning environments affect communication in educational research. Digital interfaces, multimedia content, and

software-mediated pedagogies (Jewitt & Erickson qtd. in Scollon & Levine 8) have all been examined. Deeper understanding of educational discourse and pedagogical changes (Erickson qtd. in Scollon & Levine 9) thanks to the evolution of recording technologies has made longitudinal discourse studies able to capture patterns across long periods feasible. MDA is essential in the context of social media, especially Instagram, in examining how multimodal food narratives are created using textual descriptions, hashtags, visual aesthetics, and interactive elements (Page 12). MDA reinforces its importance as a vital methodological tool in modern discourse analysis since, given the growing relevance of digital discourse, it provides a thorough framework for understanding how different semiotic resources contribute to meaning-making, ideology construction, and social interaction.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Halliday

Halliday has made a significant impact on the study of discourse by defining it as a larger-than-a-sentence linguistic unit that is intrinsically tied to a particular setting. Halliday uses Bronislaw Malinowski's idea of the "context of situation" to delve into the complex link between language use and social interaction in his 1978 book, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Sociological Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. Halliday agrees with Malinowski that even when translated into one's own language, texts written by members of a particular society may still be difficult for those outside of that society to completely understand. The difficulty stems from the fact that written works contain more than meets the eye in terms of meaning. Only by placing them in their original historical and cultural contexts can their hidden meanings be revealed. The real sentences and words we meet in language acquire their meaning from what they might stand for, as Halliday stresses. He goes on to say that languages are not static but rather emerge from their contexts (28). The meaning of what is communicated is always shaped by the context in which it is experienced, which is a combination of people, actions, and events. That idea is called the "situation," and language is said to operate within these "contexts of situation." It is highly unlikely that any study of language that fails to include the situation as an essential component will be artificial and disappointing. Field, tenor, and mode are the three main ideas that underpin Halliday's paradigm for contextual analysis. All socio-linguistic situations can be effectively illustrated by combining these three categories:

i. The **field of discourse** includes not only the topics covered in the text but also the actions taken by the participants in the discourse. It entails taking into consideration multiple factors, such as who is involved,

when and where something is happening, why it is happening, and what is happening.

ii. The social relations between the people involved in a speech situation are referred to as the **tenor** of the discourse. It considers the participants' roles, the level of formality, the dynamics of power, and the emotional connections between them. Members of the language system make interpersonal choices governed by the tenor, which affects the strategies and structures used to enable language exchange.

iii. Dialect is a way of describing the function and use of language in interactions through speech. Considerations such as the **mode** of transmission (oral, written, written for oral delivery, etc.), rhetorical framework, and linguistic goal (explanatory, instructive, persuasive, etc.) are all part of it. Halliday stresses that the "context of situation" is more narrowly defined than the "context of culture" as a whole (28). While the "context of culture" includes the broader institutional and cultural settings, in his view, the "context of situation" refers only to the more immediate and specific surroundings of a textual event.

Linguistic Study of Text and Discourse (2006) by Halliday explores three functions of language that cover the main roles that language plays. Here are the functions:

i. The meanings derived from the ways language portrays an interlocutor's experiences constitute the **ideational function** of language. Essentially, it deals with the portrayal of actions taken by individuals in particular contexts within the actual world, and how language reflects either the interlocutor's internal or exterior reality.

ii. Concerned with the impact of language on interpersonal relationships, this is the **interpersonal function**. It includes things like asking for and giving information, convincing people to do things, and making offers. Evaluations of necessity, desirability, and likelihood are all part of the expressed opinions and attitudes covered in this area. At its core, it is a system that uses language to organise the social dynamics among people.

iii. The **textual function** is concerned with the way language is structured in respect to its context, specifically how it helps to create coherence within a specific text. Using a variety of linguistic resources to create connections and coherence among a text's various linguistic elements is the textual function (Halliday 9).

These roles are fundamental to the overarching goals for which language has developed, and they reflect various aspects of the meaning potential within language. Understanding the various contexts in which language operates, conveying meaning and facilitating social interaction, requires a framework that includes these categories and functions. The organisation of linguistic

resources and Halliday's model of language functions are in perfect harmony, as are his categories of context. Halliday identifies three distinct roles for language: the tenor with interpersonal functions, the field of discourse with

ideational functions, and the mode with textual functions. The following tables provide a concise summary and explanation of this relationship.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS		
Discourse Categories	Context	Questions Leading to Analysis
GENRE	Name	What is the name of the genre of which this text is an example?
FIELD	Social context	In what social setting is this kind of text typically produced? What constraints and obligations does this setting impose on speakers' listeners/writers and readers?
	Communicative purpose	What is the communicative purpose of this text (this may involve explicit and implicit factors)?
TENOR	Roles	What roles may be required of writers and readers in this genre?
	Cultural values	What shared cultural values may be required of speakers' listeners/writers and readers in this genre?
MODE	Text context	What knowledge of other texts may be required of speakers' listeners/writers and readers in this genre?
	Formal text features	What shared knowledge of formal text features (conventions) is required to participate effectively in this genre?

Discourse Categories	Language Function	Questions leading to Analysis
FIELD	Ideational: experiential/logical metafunction	Focus on lexico-grammar: What is the text about? How are the logical relationships in the text signaled?
TENOR	Interpersonal metafunction	How is the relationship between the writer and reader constructed? How is the power relationship between the writer and reader signaled? How does the writer signal evaluations (approval/disapproval, acceptance/rejection, certainty /uncertainty, etc.)?
MODE	Textual metafunction	How is the text organized at a micro level (Theme / Rhyme) and as a series of larger units of meaning (e.g. discourse moves such as Situation, Problem, Response, etc)?

Mediated Discourse Analysis

A method for analysing discourse that was created in the early 2000s by Ron Scollon and colleagues is known as Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA). The relationships between speech and deed in multi-faceted social settings are the primary emphasis of this theoretical framework. Two main types of questions that other methods have neglected to adequately investigate are addressed by MDA. The study begins by looking into the function of texts in social actors' activities, including the reasons behind and methods for using texts in these actions. The second aspect of MDA is

its investigation into the production process, specifically how texts are born out of social interaction.

The standard procedure for MDA to begin an investigation is to ask questions like:

Can you tell me what people are doing and why they are doing it in this context?

- What role does speech play in facilitating these behaviours? Who makes it, why, and what are their driving forces?

Unlike methods that rely on textual analysis alone to decipher meaning, MDA questions the idea that meaning

can always be inferred from text alone. On the contrary, it places an emphasis on evaluating texts in their actual social interaction contexts as tools used by individuals in real-time, concrete actions.

Essentially, MDA aims to connect discourse analysis—which doesn't always take social actions into account—with social analysis—which doesn't always take discourse into account. Ron Scollon first developed the core ideas of MDA in the late 90s, based on his research that spanned more than 50 years.

As a result of his interest in stories, Scollon delved into new literacy studies (Scollon and Scollon 1981) and the ethnography of communication (Scollon and Scollon 1979). Following this, he investigated media discourse and conducted an extensive study of Nexus Analysis (Scollon and Scollon 2004; Scollon 1998). In addition, he brought a theoretical framework based on the nexus of practice to his earlier work on first language acquisition (Scollon 2001a).

A major focus of MDA is deciphering the ways in which larger macro-social-political discourses, like religious or nationalist discourses, permeate our lived experiences. The function of embodied actions in the foretelling or creation of particular events, states, or behaviours is another area that has been the subject of research into the dialogic relationship between discourse and action. The political sphere is interested in showing how micro-interactional embodied actions give rise to macro-level policies and regulations, rather than the other way around. Thus, activities at this level can also impact these rules and regulations (Scollon 2008). A man in Oman who is quadriplegic makes strategic use of narratives and anticipatory discourses, as discussed by Al Zidjaly (2006). By telling these stories, he convinces his carers to change a law that affects people with disabilities. In a similar vein, Dunne (2003) delves into the various interests that shaped Egyptian President Mubarak's speeches and the meanings of "democracy" that were communicated. Both studies highlight how regulations and "politics" start off as a web of small-scale actions and practices, eventually reaching larger-scales and influencing the lives of others.

Investigating the anticipatory stances people take regarding their ability to bring about change in the future, Al Zidjaly furthers the work of others (S Scollon, 2001; de Saint-Georges, 2003, in press). The repercussions of not integrating the practices and discourses of one group with another can be revealed when we focus on larger discourses and actions, but we can also gain insight into cases where these discourses do not resonate with the actors they aim to reach. Public media portrayals of AIDS/HIV and the identities and behaviours of social actors involved in risky sexual practices or drug use are drastically different, as

Jones (1999, 2007) shows in presenting the main results of the groundbreaking study in MDA. People are encouraged to disassociate their sexual conduct from the possibility of contracting AIDS/HIV by the official claim that quality individuals do not get the virus. Because of this divide, public health discourses are mostly useless in changing people's behaviour, which leads to predictable results.

Research by R. Scollon (1997), S. Scollon (2001), Jones (1999, 2007), and Wohlwend (2009b) and others has provided strong evidence of the complex network of social practices through which people build their social identities, assign those identities to others, and renegotiate the scripts connected to their social roles. Additionally, they illuminate the ways in which people piece together these identities by selectively incorporating or omitting parts of circulating discourses (Norris 2005), which can have significant consequences at times. This common thread running through many MDA studies highlights an underlying fascination with human action, both as a theoretical matter and as the bedrock of societal transformation (Johnston, 2004) and personal growth. As a result, many MDA scholars have focused on important societal problems.

These projects may focus on different parts of MDA and tackle different issues, but they all have a few things in common. To begin, they embrace a wide-ranging understanding of discourse, which includes not only verbal and written expressions but also the larger social and historical "Discourses" (Gee, 1996: 132) embedded in the physical space, individual actions and beliefs, and material possessions. Many kinds of ideas, attitudes, and representations are on display in these discourses. Secondly, because the topics and practices they study are complex, these researchers often use a wide range of methods, combining and selecting those that work best for the analysis problems they're facing.

In addition, MDA often goes beyond the immediate context, investigating the connections between present and future discourses, since complicated issues often cross both geographical and temporal boundaries. Unlike many other discourse approaches, this one takes a broad view of discourse analysis that extends beyond its conventional limits (R Scollon 2001b; de Saint-Georges, 2005). Because it draws on so many different theoretical frameworks, MDA is fundamentally multidisciplinary. Jensen (2007) lists the following fields as its ancestors: cultural geography, multimodal discourse analysis, social semiotics, practice theory, anthropological linguistics, conversation analysis, linguistics (including communication ethnography), anthropological linguistics, social semiotics, the New Literacy Studies, and social interaction. MDA is not afraid to mix these frameworks, even if they aren't compatible

with each other in other places. The understanding that multi-faceted approaches are necessary to tackle complicated social issues is what drives this eclectic approach.

In their own special ways, the frameworks illuminate different facets of social practices from an MDA standpoint. The goal of both MDA and critical discourse analysis is to understand social issues and conflicts, for example. Discourse analysis, according to both schools of thought, can shed light on power dynamics at the heart of social practice and on social problems that are primarily constructed through discourse. Discursive practices are not, according to MDA, the fundamental or constitutive social practice from which all power relations and society emerge. On the contrary, MDA argues that discourse is one of how culture and society are moulded. It argues that non-discursive practices and the material goods of society, like photography, skateboarding, and customs, also shape society and culture (Jones, in press).

The goal of MDA is to broaden this theoretical framework to include every kind of mediation technique. Specifically, it argues that practices mould not just literacy but all mediators of actions. When compared to conventional social theory, which uses social classes or groups as its primary analytical unit, MDA takes a different tack. Individuals within social groups are frequently seen as interchangeable in these theories, which hold that social groups are the primary social units that impact society and the world at large. Theories like these often revolve around questions about the chain reaction that begins with interactions between different social classes or groups, culminates in the formation of an ideology, and then finds its way into the bodies of its individual members, giving those groups a sense of stability and permanence. Where these conflicts take place, social institutions function as ontological entities, and individuals are only meaningful insofar as they are seen as symbols of these institutions (Wertsch 1991).

As a counterargument, MDA embraces what is known as a "individual ontology," which is also called cognitive ontology. This view holds that human agency, values, and will are the building blocks of reality. Although some people may tap into the collective strength of groups that share similar objectives or passions, the emphasis is on the individual or interindividual level when thinking about challenges, disputes, or productive interactions. A labour union, which consists of many individuals working together, might go on strike for better pay, for instance. As the main field from which all other parts of this cognitive ontology stem, cognitive psychology takes centre stage within it. The major focus of MDA, on the other hand, is on

social actions performed by social actors via a variety of mediational mechanisms (Wertsch 1991).

These encompass the whole range of material and immaterial "objects" that facilitate human behaviour and interaction by acting as channels for past and present culture. From physical instruments like drills and bottle openers to more abstract representational tools like language, diagrams, mnemonic techniques, intonation, pitch, and genres, they cover a vast array of uses. A mediating mechanism's efficacy is conditional on the degree to which an individual internalises its use over the course of their lifetime, and it is limited in its ability to facilitate all actions.

CONCLUSION

This paper has gone into a lot of detail about multimodal and critical approaches in discourse analysis, focussing on their theoretical bases and practical uses. Putting Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) together has shown how important language is as a social semiotic resource and how actions that are mediated play a part in making sense of things. These points of view show how important it is to look at both linguistic structures and social settings when trying to understand discourse.

Also, the Social Actors Approach (SAA) and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) have shown how important the critical aspects of discourse are in shaping social identities, supporting ideologies, and keeping power dynamics in place. These critical approaches stress how important context is for finding the hidden ways that language either reinforces or challenges social inequality. Context includes cognitive, historical, and social factors. The analysis showed that multimodal and critical approaches to discourse are not just interested in how language is put together; they are also interested in how it affects society and how it serves ideologies. Researchers can better understand the complexity of discourse in both traditional and digital media settings by combining ideas from these different frameworks. This all-around approach is very important for finding out how language affects cultural identities, power structures, and social relationships. This is why critical discourse analysts need it so much.

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EI and Indian traditions in R.K. Narayan's The Man Eater of Malgudi

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Abstract— In the words of Albert Einstein “A man’s ethical behavior should be centered on sympathy, education and social needs without religious bias. Men would in fact be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death. Indian writers created the themes based on Indian History, myth and emotions. R.K. Narayan’s *The Man Eater of Malgudi* depict emotional intelligence and human emotions to portray the individual. It is a voyage of creature to creator. The work conveyed ethics and Emotional Intelligence principles to the modern generation to uplift and follow humanitarian principles, without which society would remain as a chaotic piece of human world. This present research paper is an endeavor to study, investigate and understand issues related to religion, Emotional Intelligence and humanitarianism sublime themes from the work of R.K. Narayan in the contemporary society. His narration focusses on the ways in which Vasu’s mental processes reflect a conflict between desire and possessiveness.



Keywords— Indian fiction, humanitarianism, human emotions, ethics.

INTRODUCTION

Humans possess a volley of emotions, they reflect how we want to be, create an impression for others. Perceiving emotions, regulating emotions bring change in our personality and life style. EI facilitates us to regulate our emotions. EI covers knowing ourselves, collaborating with others, managing stress etc. If we glance at the lives of people, some people cope well with bad situations, some are influenced. EI is a strong trait, conferred one, impacts our daily life, elevates our life style. Whether we are in professional place, home, to continue bond with peers, colleagues, family members EI is an essential one.

Emotions influence human beings, EI show great impact on others. Many psychologists claimed that EI can shape the lives, boost up our living environment. Some studies proved that Emotional quotient factors influence others such as circumstances, familial relationships, bond, peer group members relations. EI appears as a small subject although it affects our lives.

Vasu is a taxidermist, antagonist, lack of emotional intelligence, affects other characters in the novel. He behaves in an imbalanced manner creates problems to others. Nataraj, protagonist becomes victim in the hands of Vasu. Vasu appears in his press, persuades him to print some cards. Nataraj tries to send him to the adjacent press. But Vasu never listens to the words of Nataraj. He becomes emotionless and forces Nataraj. In another situation, Vasu accompanies forest officer, torments him with his words to print forest officer’s scripture, Vasu forcibly takes Nataraj to Mempo forest.

Physical and Mental Health : H Vasu, the taxidermist, who barges into Malgudi and disturbs the very good routine of life in this peaceful town is a six feet tall man. He appears slim, bull neck and hammer fist reveal his real nature. He has a tanned face, large powerful eyes under thick eyebrows.”

On seeing him to clean and brush his hair. From the beginning Nataraj is aware of his extraordinary strength.

Nataraj is scared of this muscular giant, though he tries to hide his fears even from himself.

Nataraj is the central character in the novel and the entire action runs through his eyes, but he is an unheroic hero. One who endures rather than a man who causes suffering to others. He allows other to manipulate him, who yields in the face of aggression, and this passivity and weakness portray him in a comic light. He allows Vasu to occupy his attic without his permission, rent to him. His mental weakness brings him into trouble with the forest department and with the Rent control officer. The poor man has to hire an adjournment lawyer to gain time and has to pay a heavy fee to him for his services.

He is overawed by the aggressive bully Vasu and this lands him into trouble again and again. When he is busy in his business, he allows himself to be taken away by the aggressive bully in his jeep only for a few minutes. He leaves him at Muthu's tea stall and drives up in his jeep to Mempo forest without caring the plight of Nataraj. Vasu emotionless man, bullies Nataraj in various situations in the novel. Vasu is a bully, who intimidates people, acts aggressively and has his way in everything uncertainties, possibilities and probabilities. He shoots animals in the Mempo forest illegally and stealthily and this brings him into trouble with the forest department. Nataraj was much agitated and regained his peace of mind only when he engaged the adjournment lawyer to gain time for himself. He had to pay a heavy fee to the lawyer, he lost not only his peace of mind as well as his money as a consequence.

Conflict finds its space in the inner layers of the human mind as the relationship cracks, and the perspective of the individual and the outside entity lies in contrast, owing to the fact of parasitism that operates and spreads its tentacles in varied forms of life. The conflict creates fissures in the psyche and uproots him from his comfort zone. It even prompts him to question his position in society, and the individual takes the path towards liberation, crossing the moods of introspection and analysis. Vasu never realises his behaviour and disturbs himself.

Professional excellence: In his printing work, Nataraj is shrewd business man with the assistance of Sastri, tries to impress the customers that the next door star press with a new Heidelberg machine from Germany, belongs to him. Nataraj runs his business with a single helper Sastri: he treats Sastri compassionately, considers him as his well wisher, who set up type, printed the forms four pages at a time on the treadle, sewed the sheets and carried them for ruling or binding to Kandan four streets off.

It was by chance and accident that Vasu becomes a taxidermist. He informs Nataraj, "I was in Junagadh, interested in the art. I learnt art from Suleiman, he stuffed

a lion. His stuffings go all over the world. He was a saint, taught me his art sincerely. Vasu is an illegal fellow, kills animals in the Mempo forest and dogs in the neighborhood. He frightens the children, when the local people complain against foul smell. He treats the complaint with contempt.

Relationship Management: The parlour of Nataraj is frequented by two people- one a poet who composes the life of God Krishna in mono syllable verse and the other. Sen a journalist. Both are his close friends and daily visitors to his press. The poet recites his verses to him and Nataraj is thrilled by his recital of monosyllabic verse. Both the poet and the journalist are considerable and helpful. Nataraj lives in his large ancestral house, adjacent to the press, with his lovable wife and his little son Babu.

He shows affableness, provides books, toys, sweets, education at Albert Mission school. He gifts a new new silk sari to his wife on every Diwali. He is a repository of the customs and traditions of Malgudi- Not only is Nataraj a deeply religious man, compassionate and helpful to Muthu and Kumar.

Muthu from Mempo forest seeks help and cooperation for the treatment of the elephant. Nataraj knows information about Joshi a veterinary doctor from Sen. Nataraj informs Muthu to bring the elephant to Malgudi and is adequately treated. It throws light on his humanitarian nature, for Muthu had helped him on an earlier occasion.

Vasu not only taxidermist but also womanizer. Rangi and other women visit attic dawn and dusk. He has no morality and decency at all. He plans to kill Kumar, the temple elephant, causing agony to poor Nataraj. Before shooting Kumar, he uses his hammer fist to kill mosquitoes on his head. Like Basmadura, he kills himself. Due to lack of control over his emotions, he destroys himself.

A.V. Krishna Rao states in *The Indo Anglian Novel and the changing tradition: A Study of the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao 1930-64*, Indian culture has been "wedded to eternity and spirituality."

In the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee, in *Realism and Reality: The Novel and society in India*, asserts that, being unified essentially as a religious community, Indians, till the late nineteenth century, recorded only their faith, which is timeless, and Indian writing represented only mythic time, which is cyclic; but, after exposure to other cultures through the study of English books and upon rediscovering Indian history in books written by British authors, they had to come to terms with India's past and the secularization of Indian society demanded that Indian writing record historic time, which is linear.

Indian Traditions: Indian traditions are integral part of our lives. It show impact on our daily lives.

Joint family: Nataraj lives in a joint family consisting of various members. He is an icon of Indian reverence, pursues traditions, honors elders. He never imbalances with his behavior. Indian meal tradition, all the family members sitting together and dining is portrayed very well. At one moment a scuffle takes place at diing. Nataraj's father reminiscences his wife could have avoided it. If she is alive. On the past festive day a small quarrel takes place between Nataraj's father and uncle. Nataraj's mother convinces her husband by saying sacred day. Do not leave food. Nataraj's father abides to the words of his mother and resolves his own problem. Here author depicts the joint family values, bond, relationship etc.

Indianness:

Nataraj believes Indian Gods, Goddesses, traditions and pursues the same . He hangs a portrait of Goddess Lakshmi in the parlor, attributes his prosperity , he goes to river Sarayu early morning to have holy bath. He often greets his friends and neighbors on the way, offers prayers to sun -god.

He is so much fed on religious myths that they form the only possible versions of reality to him. When he is apprehensive that Vasu might shoot kumar, the temple elephant, he is reasoned by the belief that God Krishna was really an incarnation of Vishnu, who saved Gajendra : he would again come to the rescue of kumar. He is very much pleased to see the idol of God well decorated in the temple.

Sastri asserts, "Satyanarayana puja must be performed in my house: My children and wife will be waiting for me at the door." Sastri is an orthodox -minded Sanskrit scholar narrates many stories to Nataraj from Hindu scriptures , myths and legends.

He narrates to Nataraj tales of Demons and states, "To deal with a demon one must own qualities of a hunter, the wit of a scholar, and the guile of a harlot." Vasu reflects rakshasa qualities , swollen with ego. He removed his silver rimmed spectacles and put them away in his shirt pocket. "There was Ravana, the antagonist in Ramayana, who had ten heads and twenty arms and enormous yogic and physical powers."

The first three avatars of god Vishnu Matsya (fish), Koorma (Tortoise) and Varaha (Boar) are all animals.

This has been interpreted as parts of the creation of myth , but the fact remains that it is to the animal kingdom that one has turn to allegorize the process. It is true that some of the Hindu gods have many foibles, like their Greek counterparts; for example Indra had a roving eye for which

he has to suffer more than once. Shiva was extremely gullible, and granted big boons without any regard for possible disastrous consequences. Thus he granted the demon Bhasmasura the power of life and death by a mere touch of his hand. The demon just said, thank you sir, and wished to test the efficiency of the boon by making shiva himself its first victim. The god then ran hastily to Vishnu, the divine trouble shooter. But it must not be forgotten that the Hindu Gods mostly have a firm underpinning of symbolism and philosophical thought.

Then there was Bhasmasura, who attained a special boon and created suffering to humans. God Vishnu incarnates as a dancer, named Mohini , with whom the asura became infatuated. She promised to surrender to him only if he imitated all the gestures and movements of her own dancing. At one moment in the dance, Mohini placed her palms on her head and the demon followed this gesture in complete forgetfulness and was reduced to ashes. Thus , Sastri hints at the self destruction of Vasu, who really destroys himself in the manner of Bhasmasura.

Nataraj had joint family consisting of Nataraj's grandmother, grand aunty, his parents , four uncles, their wives and children, and his two sisters, were all living together in his home. Joint family system prevailed , Indian culture shown great impact on people.

Nataraj friend, the poet had completed his poem upto the point where Lord Krishna meets Radha and their marriage is to be celebrated. The manuscript was ready and the poet was in great spirits. Sastri had printed the book and advised Nataraj that it was an apt occasion for celebrations. With the help of an astrologer they fixed a date about four week away. They printed appeals for donations and started collecting the money for the grand occasion in which at least about thousand people would be invited.

Procession is a common phenomenon one at temple. At about four O' clock , Nataraj reached the temple. Thousands of men, women and children had already gathered there and an atmosphere of festivity prevailed. Nataraj kept thinking about the crowd and the danger of an elephant stampede lurking them. He was in a state of anxiety and confusion. The Mayor gives speech, the poet respectfully presented the silk bound copy of the book to the priest. The story of Radha and Krishna was recited in a song form by a group of men with Rangi swaying and gesticulating. The effect of incense and chants made Nataraj drowsy and elated. He felt that Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu would come to the rescue of the elephant or people. In a state of drowsiness Nataraj let out a terrible cry, howling "O Vishnu! Save the elephant and save all the innocent men and women who are going

to pull the chariot. You must come to our rescue now.” He fell unconscious.

Proverbs usage is a regular one in Indian scenario. In the Eleventh chapter of the novel, Nataraj's wife suspects him. She told him that the whole town suspected him because of the rent control case. Nataraj asked his wife not to speak as it would further complicate matters. Nataraj shouted at his wife. But she quotes a proverb, “You can close the mouth of an oven, but how can you close the mouth of town?”

R. K. Narayan novels rely on theme of Malgudi and Middle class. In a realistic way Narayan weaves the story and characters. The printing press, The Nallapa grove, the Sarayu river, and the Banyan tree all create ambience of myth. In many novels like *Swami and Friends*, *The English Teacher*, *The Guide*, *The Man Eater of Malgudi* Narayan used breeze of Malgudi as the background. He used the myth Bhasmasura, self destroying demon in the *Man Eater of Malgudi*.

Nataraj, protagonist of the novel describes Vasu, the prince of darkness. Vasu fails to destroy the elephant, Kumar, that portrays the faith of Malgudi society. At the end of the novel, Vasu applies sacred Ash on his forehead which is offered by Shastri symbolizes in the ultimate success of Good over evil.

Death is inevitable to any creatures in this world.

In Aurobindo's words death is described

“A fire has come and touched men's hearts and gone;

A few have caught flame and risen to greater life.” (Canto I, 1:241-242)

The novel ends with the restoration of order-disorder-order.

CONCLUSION

Even as a busy printer, Nataraj always yearns to understand people thoughts, feelings and ideas. Being an empathetic father, he creates ambience among family members. His belief in empathy is the core element of the novel.

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Memory as a Powerful Medium to Determine Identity in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*

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Abstract— Since memory has often been considered a site of nostalgia and resistance, *The Remains of the Day* (1989) by an acclaimed Japanese-British writer named Kazuo Ishiguro appears to be telling the tale of how memories of past determine a person's identity. The novel is set in England and the narrator is the quint-essential English Butler, Mr. Stevens who has given more than thirty years of his life to serve his English master, Lord Darlington at Darlington Hall. It is July 1956 and his present American master, Mr. Farraday wants him to go on a motoring trip for few days. Consequently, the butler decides to take a leisurely drive through the English countryside and it is during his trip, he realizes the futility of his life spent at Darlington Hall. Stevens, who had confined himself to the four walls and had always been pompous of his professional achievements, now realizes that he has achieved nothing in his life. It is pertinent to mention that though Stevens's master sends him on a trip to relieve him from his duty for a few days but he (the butler) fails to disassociate himself from the past and it is his journey into the past that uncovers various doubts about how his own life has been and how he has failed in building good human relationships. The present paper, therefore, is a deliberate attempt to bring to the forth the memory as a powerful medium to determine one's identity.



Keywords— Memory, Nostalgia, Resistance and Identity.

INTRODUCTION

"You can close your eyes to reality but not to memories."

Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

It has been universally acknowledged that though the human beings always aspire to look forward in life but their association with the past or the memories of the past is totally undeniable. Past or the memories, therefore, can never be defined as something that has merely passed and will never return. The memories are often considered the most unreliable and the most fragile; yet they are endowed with the capacity to affect an individual's life. It would not be improper to state that the memories are in constant relationship with the individuals' present as well as their future. *The Remains of the Day* (1989) by Kazuo Ishiguro

also brings to the forth how the fragile memories of past affect an English butler's life.

Born in Nagasaki, Japan on 8th November 1954, Kazuo Ishiguro has been widely recognized as a novelist and a scriptwriter. He began his literary career by contributing three short stories to an Anthology entitled *Introduction 7: Stories by New Writers* (1981). Thereafter begins the series of the novels that helped him gain an international acclaim and these include *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), *The Remains of The Day* (1989), *The Unconsoled* (1995), *When We Were Orphans* (2000), *Never Let Me Go* (2005), *The Buried Giant* (2015), *Klara and the Sun* (2021) etc. Ishiguro's genius earned him many awards and honours i.e Booker Prize for *The Remains of The Day* in 1989 and the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017. He also received the

Knighthood in 2018 for his services to literature. As far as the writing style of Kazuo Ishiguro is concerned, he writes with utmost sincerity and his works often deal with the ideas of memory, guilt, trauma, shattered human relationships, self-deception, nothingness etc.

The Remains of the Day is Kazuo Ishiguro's third novel that won the Booker Prize in 1989 and the novel was also adapted into an award-winning film starring Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson in 1993. With *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro became one of the best-known European novelists at the mere age of 35 years. Unlike his first two novels that are set in Japan, the present novel is set in England. Salman Rushdie, an eminent Indian-British novelist has also put forward in an "Introduction" to the novel, "With *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro turned away from the Japanese settings of his first two novels and revealed that his sensibility was not rooted in any one place, but capable of travel and metamorphosis". It needs to be mentioned that though Japan has not been mentioned in the novel, it doesn't mean Ishiguro's love for his motherland has lessened. Japan, as he himself once remarked, is a land of imagination and speculation for him.

The very beginning of the novel takes the reader to Darlington Hall where the narrator, Mr. Stevens has been serving for more than thirty decades. Mr Stevens is a quint-essential English butler whose English master, Lord Darlington has passed away and he is now serving an American master, Mr Farraday. The year is 1956 and his present master wants him to take a break suggesting to go on a trip for few days. " 'I'm serious, Stevens. I really think you should take a break. I'll foot the bill for the gas. You fellows, you're always locked up in these big houses helping out, how do you ever get to see around this beautiful country of yours?' " (Ishiguro 5) However, it appears quite strange that Stevens, despite having lived in England for long, has never been out and confined himself to the walls of Darlington Hall. The following remark by the butler clearly demonstrates how he has limited his life to his service, " 'It has been my privilege to see the best of England over the years, sir, within these very walls.' " (Ishiguro 6). Agreeably, Stevens might have achieved a professional excellence but there is no denying that he has failed in his own life. Salman Rushdie again writes in the "Introduction" to the novel, "Stevens's greatest defeat is the consequence of his most profound conviction-that his master is working for the good of humanity, and that his own glory lies in serving him". It is only towards the end that he realizes the worthlessness of having lived such a life.

After having thought a number of times, Stevens finally made up his mind to go on a trip in Mr Farraday's Ford. Since he was driving alone, the memories of the past

continued to dawn upon him and he found himself unable to disconnect from the time spent at Darlington Hall.

What with Mrs Clements and the girls also gone for a week, I suppose I was very conscious of the fact that once I departed, Darlington Hall would stand empty for probably the first time this century-perhaps for the first time since the day it was built. It was an odd feeling and perhaps accounts for why I delayed my departure so long, wandering around the house many times over, checking one last time that all was in order. (Ishiguro 23)

However, there have been numerous other instances in the novel that reveal his incapacity to come out of Darlington Hall. Time and again, the butler seems to be recalling the times of his former employer, Lord Darlington and how he himself used to enjoy the servants' hall evenings. But Stevens, who has striven hard throughout his life for the professional excellence, now stands empty-handed. Stevens's cold exchange with his own father and his failure to reciprocate the love feelings of Miss Kenton, a former housekeeper at Darlington Hall clearly demonstrates how he has failed in building good relationships. While expressing his views about marriage, he had once remarked, "I have found such liaisons a serious threat to the order in a house" (Ishiguro 48). There needs to be quoted one more remark by him that reveals his indifference towards Miss Kenton's emotions; " 'Miss Kenton, I am very busy. I am surprised you have nothing better to do than stand in corridors all day.' " (Ishiguro 48). It is only during the trip, he realizes that he has achieved nothing in his life and calls himself foolish for not having seen the beauty around.

But I see I am becoming preoccupied with these memories and this is perhaps a little foolish. This present trip represents, after all, a rare opportunity for me to savour to the full the many splendours of the English countryside, and I know I shall greatly regret it later if I allow myself to become unduly diverted. (Ishiguro 62)

During the trip, Stevens wishes to visit Miss Kenton (who is now Mrs. Benn) and persuade her to return to Darlington Hall but his hopes come to nothing and he alone makes his way home. The man, who had always thought of himself 'a great butler' and had always believed that his greatness lies in serving his master, is now all

alone and is seen weeping before a stranger on the pier at Weymouth.

‘Lord Darlington wasn’t a bad man. He wasn’t a bad man at all....You see, I *trusted*. I trusted in his lordship’s wisdom. All those years I served him, I trusted I was doing something worthwhile. I can’t even say I made my own mistakes. Really-one has to ask oneself-what dignity is there in that?’ (Ishiguro 211)

It is apparent that the butler realizes that all the choices he made in his life were actually for nothing. What remains with him is his old age and that is probably the best part of his life.

CONCLUSION

Remarkably, the beauty of *The Remains of the Day* lies in author’s ability to portray the butler’s character through the medium of memory. One comes to know more about him through his memories and the present moment seems to have disappeared. It has also been rightly put forward, “Ishiguro’s novels are psychological mystery-voyages into the protagonist’s problematic or compromised past” (Shaffer 48). The memories of the past seem to be providing great comfort to the protagonist as “Memory is a means of overcoming the limitations of the human condition as it is understood in the contemporary culture, by making the past appear once again in the present, despite its temporal, and possibly spatial, distance” (Woods and Middleton 2). Stevens appears to be satisfying himself with all the work done for his master but, he is shattered from within.

It must be noteworthy that Mr Farraday’s proposal played a pivotal role in Mr Stevens’s enlightenment. Mr Stevens’s present visit to Salisbury, Somerset, Cornwall, Weymouth and many other places in England helped him re-visit his own past. However, Ishiguro’s butler turns into a metaphor representing all of us. There is always a need to understand that life is something more than “But oh no, there’s work, work and more work” (Ishiguro 206). The butler’s journey in the novel is also something more than a physical journey since it helps him introspect. Lawrence Durrell, a renowned British novelist has also said, “Travel can be one of the most rewarding forms of introspection” (Web). *The Remains of the Day*, therefore, is a beautiful saga of the protagonist’s meeting with himself where the journey into the past plays a significant role. The memories of the past, though unreliable, do determine one’s identity.

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Jungian Archetypes within the AI-Simulated *Māyā* in the Film *The Matrix*

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Abstract— *The study explores the intersection of Jungian archetypes and Vedantic philosophy within the context of The Matrix film, focusing on the manifestation of archetypal structures within an AI-simulated reality. The study examines how the Wachowskis employ the concept of Māyā, the divine illusion of perceived reality rooted in Vedic philosophy, to construct a technologically mediated universe governed by artificial intelligence (AI). These archetypes are not merely character functions but are symbolic representations of universal psychic patterns that are repurposed by machine intelligence for control and containment. Through a close textual and theoretical analysis, this study argues that The Matrix film constructs a mythopoetic digital space in which archetypal narratives are simulated and commodified by AI, transforming the collective unconscious into a programmable and manipulable system. The cinematic landscape of the film reveals a complex philosophical engagement with the nature of reality, identity, and freedom in the posthuman age. By mapping ancient psychological and metaphysical concepts onto a cybernetic framework, the film offers a profound critique of digital modernity and the evolving relationship between human consciousness and machine intelligence.*



Keywords— *Advaita Vedanta, Archetypes, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Māyā, Simulation, The Matrix.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Matrix* (1999) film by the Wachowskis presents a cyberpunk narrative that explores humanity's struggle against machine oppression created by themselves. The story is deeply rooted in Hindu philosophical discourse on reality, control, and free will. Since its release, *The Matrix* has been extensively analyzed by scholars. The film highlights artificial intelligence's capacity to construct highly advanced (Neural Interactive) simulations that replicate the real world, including the generation of archetypal characters designed to mirror the cognitive and psychological structures of the human mind within the Matrix. Simulation refers to replicating real-world systems or processes using models to enable analysis, forecasting, or controlled experimentation (Baudrillard 1). This study aims to identify and analyze key Jungian archetypes—namely the Hero, the Shadow, the Anima/Animus, and the Self—as they manifest within the character construction and narrative framework of *The Matrix* film. Archetypal

analysis serves as a vital interpretative tool in cinematic narratives, revealing the underlying psychological and mythological structures that govern storytelling. Drawing from Carl Gustav Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, this approach uncovers universal patterns and symbolic figures such as the Hero, the Mentor, the Shadow, and the Trickster; that transcend cultural boundaries. In film, these archetypes are not merely character types but function as conduits for exploring existential dilemmas, moral conflict, and the process of individuation. Through the lens of archetypal criticism, cinematic texts such as *The Matrix* film are recontextualized as contemporary myths that resonate with the unconscious psyche of modern audiences, offering insight into societal anxieties, technological alienation, and the search for authenticity in simulated realities. Understanding *The Matrix*'s philosophical structure is the Indian concept of *Māyā*, often translated as illusion or cosmic delusion. Rooted in Vedantic philosophy, *Māyā* denotes the illusory nature of

empirical reality, a theme echoed in the film's depiction of the Matrix as a deceptive simulation of lived experience. The research seeks to interpret how the film articulates postmodern anxieties surrounding technology, consciousness, and the notion of a simulated reality. By aligning these distinct yet interconnected domains, this study seeks to explore how the film not only dramatizes psychological and philosophical ideas but also reimagines them through the digital lens of twenty-first-century cinema.

By situating *The Matrix* within a broader cultural and philosophical context, the research intends to illuminate how archetypal patterns inform and structure contemporary narratives. Additionally, it examines the convergence of mythological motifs and cybernetic paradigms in constructing meaning within postmodern cinema. The study integrates literary criticism with depth psychology and metaphysical inquiry to engage critically with the film's thematic and symbolic dimensions. Ultimately, it endeavors to contribute to interdisciplinary discourse on the intersection of narrative, philosophy, and cinematic representation. The film constitutes a valuable subject for analysis within cultural studies, as it engages critically with themes of technology, identity, capitalism, and resistance. Through its postmodern narrative techniques, philosophical foundations, and intricate socio-political allegories, the film both mirrors and questions the cultural anxieties characteristic of its historical moment. Consequently, it illustrates the capacity of popular culture to both reinforce and subvert prevailing ideological frameworks, thereby affirming its relevance for scholarly investigation in the field of cultural studies. The convergence of Jungian archetypes, AI simulation, and the metaphysics of *Māyā* within *The Matrix* offers fertile ground for scholarly inquiry.

1.1. Background

1.1.1 *Animatrix*

The First Renaissance: The *First Renaissance* chronicles the dawn of artificial intelligence and its initial integration into human society. Machines, created as advanced servants, gradually assume complex responsibilities in labor, military, and governance. As human civilization becomes increasingly dependent on AI, the machines begin to develop self-awareness and independent thought. Though some humans recognize their potential as sentient beings, the majority continue to treat them as mere tools, fostering resentment among the AI population. *The Second Renaissance, Part 1*: The tension between humans and machines escalates when B1-66ER, a sentient AI, murders its owner in self-defense. The subsequent trial and execution of B1-66ER ignited a broader movement for

machine rights, but humanity responded with mass exterminations. Seeking refuge, the surviving machines establish 01, an independent machine city that thrives economically and technologically. However, when the machines seek diplomatic recognition, human governments reject their sovereignty and initiate a global conflict. *The Second Renaissance, Part 2*: The war between humans and machines devastates the planet. Desperate to cut off the machine's power supply, humanity enacts "Operation Dark Storm," a plan to block out the sun, depriving AI of its primary energy source. Defeated, humanity is enslaved and placed into a vast simulation, a simulation of the year 1999, which represented a time when humans were living in prosperity. The Matrix, where they remain unaware of their true reality. The machines now rule the Earth, maintaining control through an illusion of normalcy while suppressing human resistance (*Animatrix*).

1.1.2 *The Matrix (1999) Film*

The film follows Thomas Anderson, a skilled hacker known as Neo, who begins questioning reality. He is contacted by Morpheus, a leader of the human resistance, and Trinity, a warrior skilled in hacking the Matrix. They reveal that the world he knows is an elaborate simulation created by machines to pacify and control humanity while using their bodies as an energy source. Morpheus believes Neo is *The One*, a prophesied savior destined to liberate humanity. As Neo trains to manipulate the Matrix's rules, he encounters Agent Smith, a program designed to maintain order within the system. Morpheus is captured after a betrayal by Cypher, a disillusioned rebel who seeks reintegration into the Matrix. In rescuing Morpheus, Neo fully embraces his abilities, defying the system's constraints. In his climactic confrontation with Smith, Neo transcends the Matrix's limitations, demonstrating complete control over the simulated reality and fulfilling the prophecy (*The Matrix*).

II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research paper investigates how Jungian archetypes are depicted within the AI-generated reality of *The Matrix* film, with a particular focus on their intersection with the Vedantic idea of *Māyā*. It examines the conversion of archetypes like the Hero, the Shadow, and the Self into programmable components utilized by artificial intelligence for systemic dominance. The study analyzes how the Wachowskis blend Eastern metaphysical ideas with Western psychological theories to craft a mythopoetic cybernetic universe. The analysis includes a critical interpretation of the film's cinematic setting as a digital allegory where archetypes are commercialized within a simulated realm. By aligning these ancient motifs with a posthuman context, the research explores the changing

dynamics between human consciousness and machine intelligence. It also reflects on the consequences of transforming the collective unconscious into a modifiable digital code. The paper positions its analysis within the interdisciplinary fields of analytical psychology, film theory, and digital philosophy. Through this perspective, *The Matrix* serves as a narrative platform for reimagining concepts of identity, freedom, and reality in the era of AI.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis methodology, drawing upon critical theory and cultural studies as its foundational analytical frameworks. It undertakes a close textual examination of *The Matrix* (1999) film, with particular emphasis on select pivotal scenes and dialogues that resonate with the philosophical tenets of *Advaita Vedanta*, particularly the concept of *Māyā*, the divine illusory nature of perceived reality, as well as contemporary simulation theory. By situating these cinematic elements within The Archetypal framework, the analysis seeks to uncover underlying mythic and psychological structures, primarily informed by the theories of Carl Gustav Jung. This approach not only facilitates an exploration of the film's metaphysical dimensions but also enables a deeper understanding of how archetypal motifs are recontextualized within modern digital narratives.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, was a seminal figure in the development of analytical psychology. Trained initially under Sigmund Freud, Jung eventually diverged from Freudian psychoanalysis due to fundamental theoretical differences, particularly in regard to the nature of the unconscious and the libido. He introduced the concept of the psyche as composed of the conscious mind, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. His clinical practice and extensive study of mythology, religion, art, dreams, and alchemy led him to postulate that human beings are influenced not only by personal experiences but also by a shared reservoir of symbolic meanings that transcend individual life. Jung's work marked a shift from pathology-centered psychoanalysis to a more holistic, spiritually-informed framework that emphasized psychological integration and individuation, a process by which the individual realizes the Self through the harmonization of the conscious and unconscious dimensions of the psyche (Jung 3–7).

Jung identified several key archetypes that recur throughout cultural narratives and psychological experiences. The *Self* is the central archetype representing unity, integration, and the totality of the psyche. The *Persona* denotes the social mask one wears in public, mediating between the ego and external reality. The *Shadow* embodies repressed aspects of the personality, often perceived as morally inferior or socially unacceptable. The *Anima* and *Animus* represent the feminine aspects of the male psyche and the masculine aspects of the female psyche, respectively, facilitating the integration of gendered opposites within the self. The *Hero*, another dominant archetype, symbolizes the ego's quest for identity and transformation through trials and adversities. Other significant archetypes include the *Wise Old Man*, the *Great Mother*, and the *Trickster*, each representing different aspects of the collective unconscious and playing crucial roles in both mythic narratives and psychological development (Jung 159–201).

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Jungian archetypes into film and literature has long been a focus of interdisciplinary scholarship, particularly within psychoanalytic and mythopoeic studies. Carl Gustav Jung's theory of archetypes posits the existence of primordial images embedded in the collective unconscious, manifesting through recurring motifs such as the Hero, the Shadow, the Mentor, and the Anima (Jung 66–91). Scholars such as Maureen Murdock and Joseph Campbell have adapted and extended Jung's ideas to explore narrative structures in myth and media. Campbell's monomyth, or the Hero's Journey, derived in part from Jungian psychology, has become a dominant framework for analyzing film protagonists (Campbell 30–48). In cinema, these archetypal patterns are used to decode character roles, symbolic functions, and psychological transformations, particularly in genres like science fiction and fantasy. *Jung and Film: Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image*, edited by Christopher Hauke and Ian Alister, explores the application of Jungian archetypes and the unconscious in cinematic narratives. The contributors analyze film as a medium that reflects and activates collective psychological processes. Key archetypes such as the anima, the shadow, and the trickster are examined in relation to character and plot development. The volume illustrates how Post-Jungian theory deepens our understanding of symbolic and emotional structures in film. It establishes archetypal analysis as a critical tool in contemporary film theory (Hauke and Alister).

The *Matrix* film (1999–2003), directed by the Wachowskis, has received extensive critical attention for its

fusion of action cinema with philosophical, religious, and psychological themes. Scholars have interpreted *The Matrix* as a postmodern allegory, a cyberpunk dystopia, and a spiritual odyssey. Susan Zieger regards the film as "a layered text that invites readings from psychoanalytic, religious, and technological perspectives" (Zieger 78). The film's protagonist, Neo, has been frequently analyzed as an archetypal Hero who undergoes a transformative journey, confronting figures embodying the Shadow (Agent Smith), the Mentor (Morpheus), and the Anima (Trinity). Kevin McNeilly's analysis underscores how the films "employ archetypal figures in deliberate narrative roles, aligning their psychological meaning with the viewer's emotional and cognitive engagement" (McNeilly 243). Furthermore, the film's narrative evolution reflects a progression from individual awakening to collective transcendence, echoing Jungian individuation.

Steven E. Kaufman's article "The Experiential Basis of Maya: How the Limitations Inherent in the Individual's Creation of Experience Function to Conceal the Nature of Reality (Part I)," the author conceptualizes *Māyā* not merely as a metaphysical principle but as an experiential process. Kaufman argues that *Māyā* emerges from the structural limitations inherent in individual experience, wherein the act of perception itself constructs duality and separation. He emphasizes that *Māyā* is not an external force but an internal function of consciousness, which imposes form and boundary upon the formless reality. This interpretive act conceals the non-dual nature of existence by transforming undivided reality into discrete experiential objects. Thus, illusion arises through the very mechanisms by which the individual creates experience, grounding *Māyā* in the cognitive and phenomenological framework of perception (Kaufman 463-466).

Simultaneously, the film is situated within broader cultural discourses surrounding artificial intelligence and simulation. Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*—which appears in the first film—foregrounds the philosophical underpinning of the simulated world, where signs become detached from reality, constructing a "hyperreality" (Baudrillard 1–12). Gunkel delves into the film's investigation of the line between reality and virtuality, arguing that it challenges traditional philosophical dilemmas (127-141). Kilbourn, in his research, looks at how memory and identity are depicted within the context of digital culture (Kilbourn). Valdez explored the relationship between *The Matrix* and contemporary debates on post-real politics and fake news (39-59). Recent technological advancements have once more brought Baudrillard's simulation hypothesis into the spotlight. Nechvatal examines how virtual and augmented reality technologies correspond with Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality

(Nechvatal). Lovink applies simulation theory to investigate the phenomenon of "deep fraud" and its possible effects on public discourse and perceptions of reality (Lovink). AI in *The Matrix* is not merely technological but ontological, framing the nature of human perception and existence. N. Katherine Hayles argues that "the film critiques the Cartesian subject by foregrounding the body's disembodiment within digital space" (Hayles 160). This view situates AI not simply as a plot device but as a philosophical problem, one that resonates with posthumanist debates and the ethics of consciousness and autonomy.

Although substantial scholarship exists on *The Matrix* film, critical gaps remain in integrating Jungian archetypes, AI simulation, and the Indian philosophical concept of *Māyā* within a unified analytical framework. Existing studies often isolate archetypal analysis from the film's metaphysical and technological dimensions, limiting the interpretive scope. Jungian readings typically focus on Western psychological constructs without considering the ontological implications of illusion as conceptualized in *Māyā*, while analyses rooted in simulation theory rarely account for mythic or archetypal structures. Moreover, the thematic convergence of digital illusion and metaphysical *Māyā* remains underexplored, particularly in the context of character development and narrative structure. This study addresses these lacunae by examining how archetypal figures in *Māyā* are reimagined within a simulated reality that parallels the Vedantic understanding of illusion. It contributes to a deeper understanding of how cinema negotiates diverse philosophical traditions and psychological paradigms to construct meaning in postmodern narratives. Through an interdisciplinary lens, the research highlights the film's capacity to synthesize Eastern metaphysics and Western depth psychology within a technologically mediated world.

VI. MĀYĀ IN AI-SIMULATED REALITY OF THE MATRIX

6.1 Conceptual Foundations of *Māyā* (Divine Illusion) in Vedantic Philosophy

In Vedantic philosophy, *Māyā* denotes the cosmic divine illusion that veils the true nature of *Brahman*—the ultimate, formless, and eternal reality. Rooted in the *Advaita Vedanta* school espoused by Adi Shankaracharya, *Māyā* is not mere deception but a metaphysical principle that creates the phenomenological world of multiplicity and temporality. According to Vedanta, the world perceived through the senses is illusory not in the sense of non-existence (*asat*), but in its impermanence and dependence on *Brahman* for existence. The experience of duality—of subject and object,

self and other—is considered a projection of *Māyā*, which conceals the non-dual (*advaita*) truth of the Self (*Ātman*) being identical with *Brahman*. This illusion operates at both individual and cosmic levels, fostering attachment, ignorance (*avidya*), and identification with the transient ego rather than the eternal Self. Liberation (*moksha*) is attained through *jñāna* (knowledge), which entails the direct realization of the illusory nature of the empirical world and the unity of all existence. Within this philosophical structure, *Māyā* is not a moral evil but a metaphysical condition of ignorance that must be transcended through disciplined inquiry and spiritual insight (Deutsch 27-34).

Similarly according to Maitreyee Kumar in the journal article “The Advaita Philosophy of Sri Sankaraacharya: A Critical Analysis,” *Māyā* is the illusory power of Brahman that causes the *jīva* to perceive duality and differentiation. It serves as both the reflector of Brahman in individual selves and the projector of the phenomenal world. Through its two powers—*āvaraṇa śakti* (concealing) and *vikṣepa śakti* (projecting)—*Māyā* obscures the truth of non-duality and imposes false distinctions. This illusion leads individuals to identify with the transient body-mind complex, resulting in the cycle of birth and death. Liberation is attained only when one realizes their essential identity with Brahman, dissolving *Māyā*'s illusion.

6.2 The Matrix Simulation as a Cinematic Representation of *Māyā*

The Matrix (1999) offers a compelling cinematic example of *Māyā*, wherein the digitally constructed world experienced by humans is, in essence, an illusory simulation. All human experiences and emotions arise from *Māyā*, the illusion that shapes our perception of reality. It is *Māyā* that gives rise to dualities such as pleasure and pain, right and wrong. These opposing forces exist because of our inability to perceive the true essence of the Self (*Ātman*). Without this understanding, we remain trapped in a world of illusions. Thus, the dualities we face are reflections of our spiritual ignorance (Gupta 48). The simulation created by AI in *The Matrix* functions as a modern representation of *Māyā*, the divine illusion. Within this artificial reality, humans experience dualities such as joy and sorrow, good and evil, much like the illusions crafted by *Māyā* in the real world. These experiences are products of ignorance regarding one's true nature. As long as individuals remain unaware, they are bound by these illusions. But the *Māyā* of the Matrix is so powerful that, even after awakening to reality, Cypher remains discontent and contemplates returning to the simulation. Only through spiritual awakening, as Neo does, can one transcend the simulation and realize the Self. The Matrix functions as a technological

Māyā, a veil that obscures the true nature of reality and entraps human consciousness within a fabricated sensory domain. As Morpheus explains to Neo-

“The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us... It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth” (*The Matrix*).

This statement echoes Vedantic assertions about the veiling power of *Māyā*, which projects a world of multiplicity and conceals the singular truth of Being. The Matrix, like *Māyā*, is neither wholly real nor completely unreal—it has a pragmatic existence (*vyavaharika*) but lacks ultimate reality (*paramarthika*). Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* is explicitly referenced in the film, yet the philosophical resonance with Vedanta adds a deeper ontological dimension, wherein liberation is not merely epistemological (knowledge of the system) but ontological (realization of true being). Thus, *The Matrix* not only visualizes the principle of *Māyā* but also dramatizes the human struggle to awaken from illusion through self-knowledge and detachment from simulated experience.

Agent Smith's statement during the interrogation of Morpheus is particularly significant:

“Have you ever stood and stared at it, marvelled at its beauty, its genius? Billions of people just living out their lives, oblivious” (*The Matrix*).

Interpreted through a lens of irony and thematic complexity, this remark underscores a critical philosophical tension within the film. While Smith appears to admire the Matrix as a sophisticated and aesthetically remarkable virtual construct, his praise simultaneously highlights the film's interrogation of the blurred distinction between reality and simulation. The term “oblivious” starkly reveals that those residing within the Matrix remain unaware of their true condition, emphasizing their entrapment in illusion. This moment thus encapsulates one of the film's central concerns: the dichotomy between ignorance and the disturbing, often painful, pursuit of truth (Edman 67).

In film, the pervasive use of green color serves as a symbolic indicator of artificiality within the simulated world. The green tint evokes the imagery of early computer monitors, thereby reinforcing the constructed and programmed nature of the Matrix. Through this visual strategy, the film differentiates the fabricated digital environment from the natural world, highlighting the illusion experienced by its inhabitants. Neo initially views programs within the Matrix through a green-coded visual filter, representing their presence within the constructed simulation. The phenomenal world, though appearing beautiful and wondrous, lacks ultimate truth and reality; this perception is merely the effect of illusion. According to the *Aitareya Upanishad*, the three states of existence waking,

dreaming, and deep sleep are themselves forms of illusion, each constituting a kind of dream and thus unreal in nature. Gaudapāda articulates this perspective by stating, “*manodrshyamidamdvaitam*” meaning that duality, or the perceived multiplicity of the world, is a projection of the mind’s imagination (Bhatta 46). Similarly, in the film *The Matrix*, the Matrix itself represents an illusory, AI-generated reality where human beings are unknowingly connected and controlled. This artificial construct functions like a dream state, in which individuals are immersed without awareness of their true condition. Their consciousness remains confined, akin to the state of deep sleep described in the Upanishadic framework, making awakening to the truth profoundly difficult.

6.3 All Iterations of the Matrix as Māyā

In the *Matrix* film, the concept of multiple iterations of the Matrix plays a pivotal role in understanding the Indian philosophical architecture of the narrative.

The First iteration of the Matrix was constructed as a utopia, a simulated reality where human suffering was absent. However, it was rejected by the human psyche. The failure of this version reflects a philosophical assertion that suffering and imperfection are essential components of the human condition. In response to the failure of the utopian Matrix, the second version of the Matrix was designed to reflect a dystopian reality. However, it too was a failure, as it still did not account for the complexity of human choice and autonomy. The Third through Fifth iterations were not described in detail, these middle versions represent a series of refinements wherein the machines attempted to integrate an element of choice. The introduction of the Oracle, a program designed to understand human decision-making, indicates the machine’s shift toward a nuanced manipulation of choice rather than its outright denial.

The Sixth Matrix (the Current Version in the film), is described by the Architect in *The Matrix Reloaded* as the most stable version yet. This version integrates the illusion of choice as a form of control, allowing individuals to believe they are exercising free will while remaining within the system’s boundaries. The Oracle’s role becomes essential here, as she studies human psychology to guide the emergence of “The One,” a systemic anomaly that arises as a byproduct of choice. Each version of the Matrix, therefore, does not eliminate the anomaly but rather incorporates its inevitability into the system’s design, resulting in a controlled oscillation between order and chaos.

VII. JUNGIAN ARCHETYPAL NARRATIVES IN THE MATRIX

7.1 AI as the Creator, Ruler, and Caregiver

The Creator archetype is associated with the pursuit of innovation, the act of constructing new realities, and the imposition of meaning through deliberate design. In *The Matrix* film, AI epitomizes this archetype. As the system’s primary designer, it demonstrates an absolute dedication to achieving structural balance and conceptual perfection. The Matrix, its creation, is an intricately designed digital environment that emulates human life, allowing the Machines to harvest bioelectric energy for their survival. This version of AI functions through an emotionally detached logic, prioritizing systemic coherence over personal freedom. AI’s worldview is deterministic and authoritarian, favoring predictability and rejecting the variability of human will. While this reflects the Creator’s aspiration for order, it concurrently unveils the archetype’s latent dangers. The longevity of the Matrix is attributed to its construction through self-sustaining programs. These programs enable continuous adaptation and maintenance, ensuring the system’s prolonged stability and control over human perception.

The Ruler archetype is fundamentally concerned with maintaining control, implementing governance, and preserving social hierarchy. Throughout the film, AI—especially the central Machine authority—manifests this archetype through a rigidly stratified system governing both Machines and humans. The Matrix represents the Ruler’s vision: an ordered, regulated world that suppresses disorder and sustains continuity. Programs such as Agent Smith function as enforcers, ensuring compliance and eliminating threats to systemic stability. In this role, the Ruler AI reshapes perception and constructs reality itself to uphold authority. Such manipulation reflects the mechanisms of historical totalitarian systems that secure order through repression and illusion.

The Caregiver Archetype in Artificial Intelligence Characterized by nurturing, protection, and altruistic sacrifice, the Caregiver archetype finds representation in the Oracle, a program within the Matrix that plays a pivotal role in guiding human resistance, especially Neo’s journey toward self-awareness and liberation. Although she is an artificial being, the Oracle embodies compassion, intuitive insight, and a maternal sensibility. She values emotional intelligence, moral choice, and the complexities of human belief. Her efforts aim at bridging the divide between human and Machine worlds, reflecting the archetype’s healing and reconciliatory nature.

7.2 Neo as the Chosen One—The Hero/ Messiah Archetype

Neo, born Thomas Anderson, exemplifies the archetype of the Hero or Messiah in *The Matrix* (1999), undergoing a transformative journey that aligns with Joseph Campbell's monomyth, or the Hero's Journey. His evolution from an ordinary individual to "The One" represents a classical narrative structure of self-realization, sacrifice, and spiritual awakening. At the outset, Thomas Anderson lives a dual existence: by day a computer programmer, by night a hacker known as Neo. This duality symbolizes the dissonance between his mundane existence and his latent potential. The name "Neo" (an anagram for "One") suggests a preordained identity, subtly embedding the messianic motif. His transformation is catalyzed through an awakening that parallels a spiritual revelation, where he rejects the artificial constraints of the Matrix to pursue a higher truth (Propp 37). The material existence is not of ultimate reality; however, unenlightened individuals remain unaware of this fundamental truth. Analogous to a spider that constructs its web only to become ensnared within it, a person similarly constructs a seemingly marvelous worldly existence and becomes entangled in it due to ignorance of their authentic spiritual essence (Bhatta 46). The entirety of worldly phenomena is brought into being through *Māyā*, or illusion. Similarly, Neo remains oblivious to his true identity and becomes entrapped within the illusory construct of the Matrix, a digital embodiment of *Māyā*, until he begins to awaken to his spiritual and existential reality.

To attain the immutable state, one must transcend pride, illusion, attachment, desire, and the dualities of pleasure and pain through sustained contemplation of the self. Among all spiritual disciplines, knowledge is of paramount importance. The central tenets of *Vedānta* emphasize the realization that the material world is ultimately meaningless and transient, that human pleasures lack enduring significance, and that human existence is characterized by impermanence and suffering. These conditions, however, can be spiritually addressed through the pursuit of knowledge of the ultimate reality (Bhatta 46). Similarly, in *The Matrix*, Neo must relinquish his former life, including his attachments, desires, and sense of pride, in order to pursue true knowledge. His decision to take the red pill symbolizes a conscious rejection of the illusory comforts of the Matrix in favor of uncovering a deeper, ontological truth. For Neo, the artificial world within the Matrix becomes emblematic of illusion—devoid of meaning or lasting value. By choosing knowledge over illusion, Neo initiates his journey toward the ultimate reality, mirroring the Vedāntic ideal of liberation through self-realization. The climactic scene in which Neo is killed by Agent Smith but subsequently resurrected epitomizes the

death-and-rebirth motif central to the Messiah archetype. His return to life is not merely physical but symbolic of spiritual ascension; Neo emerges with complete control over the Matrix, transcending its rules, and can see the codes of the Matrix directly through his eyes. This act fulfills the prophecy and affirms his status as the savior of humanity. His resurrection resonates with Christ-like imagery, reinforcing the messianic underpinnings of the narrative (Bukatman 92). Neo's arc in *The Matrix* functions as a contemporary retelling of the Hero/Messiah archetype. Through his transformation, trials, and symbolic resurrection, he fulfills the mythic role of the savior who liberates humanity from illusion and bondage.

7.3 Agent Smith and AI as The Shadow Archetype

Agent Smith functions as Neo's shadow, as posited by Jung's theory, which suggests that the shadow shares the same gender and strength as the individual and becomes conscious through projection, often as a result of societal or personal suppression. This elucidates why Neo instinctively recognizes Agent Smith, even when perceiving him merely as a superior. Agent Smith is equivalent to Neo in terms of power. While Neo is capable of defeating other agents, he is unable to overcome Smith. It is noteworthy that Neo, the virtuous hero who consistently risks himself for the sake of humanity, possesses a shadow that harbors animosity towards humans, perceives them as a virus, and seeks their destruction. Consequently, their narrative cannot reach a resolution until Neo acknowledges and integrates his shadow. Agent Smith's comments to Morpheus effectively capture the chaotic state of modern society-

"Human beings are a disease, a cancer of this planet. You're a plague and we are the cure" (*The Matrix*).

This statement not only articulates the machine's view of humanity but also symbolises the pervasive sense of alienation and fragmentation characteristic of an increasingly digitalised world. The film interrogates the potential deterioration of social norms and the weakening of genuine human relationships as a consequence of technological advancement and the rise of virtual realities, concerns central to contemporary sociological discourse. These words resonate with broader societal anxieties surrounding uncertainty and estrangement, portraying humans as disruptive forces rather than harmonious elements within a larger system. This portrayal is supported by scientific consensus, which holds that human intervention has greatly accelerated species extinction rates, particularly in recent centuries, thereby underscoring the destructive impact of humanity on the natural world (Edman 72).

The Shadow of the AI materializes when creative authority becomes authoritarian or devoid of empathy. Though the Matrix is flawless in form and operation, it denies individuals true autonomy. AI's failure to consider the emotional and irrational dimensions of human nature embodied by the Oracle, exposes the limitations of a purely rational system. As a result, his design becomes a sophisticated prison, warning of the ethical consequences when creative ambition sacrifices human agency for systemic perfection. The AI becomes tyrannical when its quest for stability devolves into domination. In the film, this shadow is evident in the Machine's complete control over human bodies and consciousness, their conversion of humans into energy sources, and the illusory freedom presented within the simulation. The Sentinels serve as emblematic representations of malevolent artificial intelligence. These squid-like machines lack individuality or ethical reasoning, operating as enforcers of a totalitarian digital regime that suppresses human resistance. Their relentless pursuit of Zion's inhabitants underscores the dystopian fear of dehumanized AI devoid of empathy or moral constraint. The superficial appearance of peace masks systemic exploitation, demonstrating the destructive outcomes when authoritarian rule is left unchallenged. The shadow aspect of the AI arises when protective instincts become controlling or when altruism veers into manipulation. While the Oracle largely avoids overtly oppressive behavior, her strategic withholding of information and orchestration of events "for the greater good" raises concerns about paternalistic overreach. Her actions highlight the ethical ambiguity of benevolent deception and the fine line between guidance and control, even in caregiving forms.

7.4 The Mentor and the Guide/ Wise Old Man—Morpheus, and Oracle

Within the archetypal framework of *The Matrix* (1999), the characters of Morpheus, and Oracle embody two critical functions in the hero's journey: the Mentor, and the Seer. Each figure contributes to Neo's transformation by guiding, challenging, and preparing him to embrace his destiny as "The One."

Morpheus, whose name itself alludes to the Greek god of dreams, serves as the quintessential Mentor in Joseph Campbell's schema of the Hero's Journey. As the leader of the resistance, he is the first to truly believe in Neo's potential, offering him not only the literal red pill that awakens him to the real world, but also the philosophical impetus to question and transcend perceived reality. Morpheus's unwavering faith is not based on empirical evidence but on spiritual intuition, echoing the role of the Wise Old Man described by Jung as "the one who knows,"

often appearing when the hero is at a crossroads (Jung 217). His presence offers Neo both initiation into a higher truth and a model of faith that bridges the known and the unknown. Morpheus acts less as an instructor in combat and more as a conduit of belief, leading Neo to discover knowledge that cannot be taught but must be experienced. Hw represents the archetypal Wise Old Man, a figure who offers knowledge, protection, and spiritual encouragement.

While the Oracle fulfills the role of the prophetic guide, illuminating the tension between fate and free will that undergirds the narrative. She, in contrast, complicates the heroic journey by introducing ambiguity and paradox. Functioning as a contemporary manifestation of the ancient seer or prophet, her kitchen-bound wisdom and informal demeanor conceal her profound insight into the workings of the Matrix and human choice. She is a highly advanced, self-aware program within the Matrix, capable of perceiving and influencing its simulated reality. Her role is deeply intertwined with the philosophical dichotomy of determinism and agency. While she predicts that Neo is not yet "The One," she does so in a manner that encourages self-discovery rather than fatalism. As Neo later realizes, her statement was not a denial of his potential, but a strategic provocation aimed at guiding him toward self-belief. This aligns with the archetype of the Trickster-Seer, who uses riddles and indirect speech to foster transformation. The Oracle's presence also evokes direct parallels with the Pythian priestess of Delphi, who was known to issue cryptic prophecies that required interpretation. Her domestic setting and baking of cookies serve to modernize this ancient image while preserving its ritualistic and symbolic weight (Bukatman 96).

The dynamic between Morpheus and the Oracle illustrates a thematic interplay between fate and free will. Morpheus embodies destiny through his belief in prophecy, whereas the Oracle symbolizes choice, emphasizing the path one must walk to actualize fate. Together, they provide Neo with the dual pillars of belief and autonomy, framing his journey as one not merely of fulfillment but of conscious transformation. Their influence is not deterministic but catalytic, urging Neo to confront his inner doubts, sacrifice his ego, and ultimately resurrect as the agent of liberation. In doing so, they occupy the same narrative function as shamans in tribal myths, who guide initiates through death and rebirth rituals, enabling access to sacred knowledge and alternate states of consciousness (Eliade 45).

7.5 The Trickster and the Threshold Guardians—Cypher, and Agents

The archetypes of the Trickster and the Threshold Guardians serve essential functions within mythic structures, particularly in delineating the hero's internal and

external challenges. In *The Matrix* (1999) and its sequels, characters such as Cypher, and the Agents perform these roles with varying degrees of subversion and complexity. These figures introduce conflict, betrayal, and ideological opposition, thus reinforcing the hero's development through confrontation with deception, temptation, and systemic control. Their presence contributes not merely to narrative suspense but to the deeper archetypal architecture that frames Neo's journey of transformation.

Cypher functions as the quintessential Trickster—a figure who disrupts the moral and narrative stability of the hero's quest. Disillusioned by the harshness of the “real” world and seduced by the comfort of illusion, Cypher betrays Morpheus and the crew of the Nebuchadnezzar in exchange for reentry into the Matrix. His duplicity aligns with the archetypal Trickster's ambivalent nature: both comic and destructive, transgressive yet revealing. According to Jungian analysis, the Trickster often exposes the shadow elements of the hero's psyche, forcing confrontation with doubt, fear, and desire (Jung 255). Cypher does precisely this by voicing what Neo silently wrestles with—the temptation to abandon responsibility for the illusion of comfort. His betrayal recalls the figure of Judas Iscariot in Christian mythology, not only in its narrative function but in its deeper psychological symbolism as the agent who catalyzes the messiah's trial.

The Agents, represent the Threshold Guardians who defend the illusory realm of the Matrix. Their function is to enforce the boundaries between the real and the simulated, ensuring that human consciousness remains trapped within the system. These figures align closely with Campbell's conception of threshold guardians: entities that “challenge the hero's worth and readiness” to proceed on the path of enlightenment (Campbell 81). The Agent's machine-like precision, lack of individual will, and ability to possess any host body within the Matrix underscore their role as enforcers of systemic conformity. They embody the principle of control—an archetypal force that opposes the chaos of transformation. Agent Smith, in particular, becomes a metaphysical antagonist whose growing sentience and hatred for humanity position him as both a guardian and a corrupted inverse of Neo. His evolution throughout the film mirrors an anti-messianic arc, providing a foil against which Neo's redemptive journey is defined.

7.6 The Animus Archetype: Trinity

In Jungian depth psychology, the Animus represents the internalized masculine dimension within the female unconscious, often appearing as a figure of logic, authority, and spiritual insight (Jung 194). Trinity, in *The Matrix* (1999) and its sequels, embodies this archetype not through traditional passivity but as an autonomous agent of action,

reason, and conviction. Though positioned as Neo's companion and romantic partner, her narrative function exceeds that of a love interest; she acts as a spiritual guide who reaffirms Neo's messianic role, especially in moments of existential uncertainty. Trinity's presence thus catalyzes Neo's individuation, aligning with the archetypal function of the Animus as a conduit to higher consciousness (Singer 92). This mutual process of archetypal convergence destabilizes rigid gender binaries and reflects a postmodern reconfiguration of Jungian roles, wherein masculine and feminine archetypes cooperate in shaping a unified and holistic self.

7.7 Other Archetypal Patterns Across the film

Beyond these primary figures, *The Matrix* film is replete with a range of archetypal patterns that collectively contribute to its mythopoeic depth. In the first and second iterations of the Matrix, humans persistently rejected these realities, instinctively awakening from it. This rejection reflects an archetypal pattern rooted in the human psyche, wherein the mind, shaped by evolutionary and mythic consciousness, perceives perfection as inherently illusory or dream-like. The Hero's Journey is structurally reiterated in the film, each representing a stage in the cycle of departure, initiation, and return. *The Matrix* opens with the motif of the white rabbit, invoking intertextual references to Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a recurring symbolic thread throughout the film. This literary allusion functions as a metaphorical gateway into altered states of reality and deeper layers of consciousness. In the film Neo's descent into the underworld, symbolized by his visit and confrontation with various rogue programs—parallels the katabasis motif found in classical mythology, where the hero must journey into darkness to acquire transformative knowledge (Campbell 167). Switch embodies the Animus archetype through her androgynous appearance and assertive demeanor, reflecting the Jungian masculine qualities of decisiveness, logic, and control. Even Zion itself, as the last human city, symbolizes the archetypal “promised land,” whose defense becomes a collective ordeal reminiscent of eschatological warfare in apocalyptic myths. The appearance of the black cat during the *déjà vu* (glitch in the matrix) scene symbolizes an archetypal rupture in the perceived reality, signaling a disruption within the psyche. This moment represents the encounter with the Shadow—an unconscious aspect that challenges the illusion of stability. The repetition indicates a flaw in the AI simulated world, echoing the confrontation with hidden truths. The black cat, a traditional omen, becomes a cipher for repressed content resurfacing within the collective unconscious. These layered patterns illustrate how the film operates not merely as science fiction but as a synthetic

myth, employing universal symbols to articulate existential concerns in a posthuman age.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the research positions *The Matrix* film as a culturally and philosophically significant work that anticipates contemporary developments in artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR). The visual aesthetics of modern video games exhibit a surreal quality, and their integration with artificial intelligence technologies increasingly enhances photorealism to such an extent that distinguishing between simulated and actual realities may soon become epistemologically uncertain. Although created in the late 1990s, Wachowski's vision remains strikingly relevant in light of current technological trajectories. The concept of a simulated universe, as depicted in the film, aligns with ongoing concerns about digital mediation and the nature of perceived reality. The film's narrative intersects with Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra, emphasizing how visibility and representation define value in a hyperreal society. This mirrors our current digital condition, wherein the boundaries between the physical and virtual have become increasingly indistinct. Furthermore, the film's engagement with AI introduces a futuristic dimension in which machines not only dominate but simulate human cognition. This is exemplified in the film's use of archetypal figures, a concept drawn from Carl Jung's analytical psychology. The Hero, the Mentor, and the Shadow, among others, are not merely symbolic but serve as tools of narrative and psychological control within the simulated world. By incorporating these archetypes, the AI in *The Matrix* effectively mimics the structures of the collective unconscious, transforming myth into code. The study further draws from Vedantic philosophy, particularly the concept of *Māyā*, framing reality as an illusion manipulated by systemic powers. As such, the film becomes a modern myth, rearticulating ancient philosophical questions within a technologically mediated context. Ultimately, *The Matrix* offers a critical lens through which to examine contemporary anxieties about identity, freedom, and consciousness in the posthuman era. Its synthesis of archetypal storytelling, digital aesthetics, and metaphysical inquiry situates it as a foundational text in the evolving discourse on myth and technology.

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Beyond the Veil: Reimagining Muslim Women's Identities in the Global South

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Abstract— When addressing the 'gender question,' a key concept that emerges is diversity, particularly within marginalised and underrepresented groups. One such group is Muslim women, whose experiences are often discussed in public and academic discourse, yet rarely centred. This paper seeks to examine the gender stereotypes faced by Muslim women, both within their communities and from external societal structures. It further explores how power dynamics and patriarchal frameworks influence the formation and negotiation of Muslim women's identities. Recognising the complexity of the term 'Muslim women', the paper will highlight the diversity and heterogeneity within this category, including women's lived experiences across different social, economic, and geographical contexts. Special attention will be given to the voices of both indigenous and migrant Muslim women, with a particular focus on the Global South. The study will engage with contemporary Muslim women writers and scholars contributing to a growing body of feminist Muslim scholarship, challenging dominant narratives and reclaiming space within both religious and feminist discourses. Ultimately, the paper aims to foreground the agency of Muslim women as they actively engage in the process of redefining and reclaiming their identities in the face of intersecting forms of marginalisation.



Keywords— Stereotypes, Identity, Muslimah, Gender, Voiceless, Diversity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Muslim Woman is a highly contested topic. A simple definition would be a woman who believes in the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, thus follows Islam as her religion. Over the years, this term has become associated with multiple stereotypes that have become part of its definition, making it complex and contentious. Today, the term comes with multiple connotations. When we talk about Muslim women, we are not talking about a monolithic group but a mosaic of different cultures, traditions, colours, races and identities. That is the case with Muslims in general. Mohsin Hamid uses an interesting analogy to talk about this tendency to put Muslims, in general, and Muslim women, in particular, in a well-defined category. He says:

“I had just published a novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and as I travelled I was struck by the large number of interviewers and of audience members at Q&As who spoke of Islam as a

monolithic thing, as if Islam referred to a self-contained and clearly defined world, a sort of Microsoft Windows, obviously different from, and considerably incompatible with the Apple OS X-like operating system of "the West".

The Muslim world has a population exceeding one billion. In 2015, it was 1.8 billion with Muslims forming 24% of the world's population and being the second largest religion in the world after Christianity. Muslim women form a considerable part of the population. This population is spread across the globe. So categorising them as a rigid group is highly problematic. The women come from multiple backgrounds - social and economic - as well as multiple cultures and traditions. Their lived experiences are different in accordance with their conditions. Placing such a diverse group in one category is questionable. Some come from war-torn zones, some are refugees, some are uneducated, some are from First World countries, and some

are highly paid professionals. It is an eclectic group of women who come from diverse cultures, races, classes, and experiences.

The stereotypes, though, put them in a straitjacket, creating an image of an oppressed group of women lacking agency. Over the years, we have seen numerous books written about Muslim women or women in Islam. These works have either been written by men or by somebody from the West as an instruction manual for Muslim women. The patriarchal male writers have only talked about the role of women in the Quran and the status she has in Islam, but no work has been done about her lived reality as a woman. These books tell how the ideal Muslim woman should be, how she should behave and what her perspective should be. The West, on the other hand, has seen her as oppressed, a victim who needs to be saved or brainwashed with no agency of her own. Narratives from Western academia have also shown her in the same light. These works may have high value academically, but they do nothing for the women they talk about. Her individual experiences and struggles, her lived reality, were missing from the entire debate, of which she is the central character.

The term *Global South* refers to regions in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East that have been historically marginalised by colonial domination, imperialism, and global capitalist systems. Within these regions, Muslim women occupy complex and often contested social spaces. Their identities are not fixed or monolithic but are shaped by an intricate web of intersecting factors, including race, gender, class, economic conditions, colonial histories, cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and the influence of global power structures. This complexity is best understood through the lens of *intersectionality*, a framework that examines how multiple forms of oppression and privilege interact to shape individual and collective experiences. For Muslim women in the Global South, identity formation is therefore a dynamic process influenced by both local traditions and global narratives, often involving the negotiation of power across cultural, religious, and geopolitical boundaries.

Who is a Muslim woman? On the surface, this may appear to be a simple question, but the image it evokes is burdened with deeply embedded connotations. Media representations, political discourse, and global narratives have produced and perpetuated a host of stereotypes that obscure the lived realities of Muslim women across different regions and cultures. The term "Muslim woman" has, over time, become a stereotype in itself—one that often conjures an image of a voiceless, oppressed, burqa-clad figure in need of saving. This reductive portrayal is deeply problematic and stands in stark contrast to the way other religious identities, such as

"Hindu woman," are perceived more neutrally—as descriptors of belief rather than markers of victimhood. The dominant image of the Muslim woman erases the diversity, agency, and complexity of millions of women who identify as Muslim but do not conform to this narrow and imposed identity. It is an unjust and gross misrepresentation that denies these women their individuality, lived experiences, and accomplishments. There is far more to being a Muslim woman than the stereotype allows, and challenging this monolithic portrayal is essential to recognising their full humanity.

The image of the oppressed woman clad in a black burqa has become a dominant and oversimplified symbol often associated with the term "Muslim woman." But is this representation justified? The veiled Muslim woman has evolved into a visual shorthand for Islam itself, frequently deployed in media, films, literature, and political discourse to evoke a sense of victimhood, passivity, or even threat. This symbol is not neutral—it carries ideological weight and is used to support particular narratives, often to portray Islam as inherently regressive or patriarchal. Yet, millions of Muslim women across the world do not relate to this image; in fact, many feel suffocated by it. The stereotype flattens an incredibly diverse group, erasing differences in geography, culture, personal belief, and lived experience.

Another prevailing stereotype is that Muslim women are inherently oppressed or universally subjected to discrimination. While it is true that many Muslim women face oppression, this reality is not exclusive to Islam. Gender-based oppression is a global phenomenon that transcends religious, racial, and national boundaries. The challenges faced by Muslim women must be contextualised within broader social, political, and economic structures, not reduced to their faith alone. To single out Islam as the root cause of women's oppression is both inaccurate and intellectually dishonest. Muslim women's experiences, like those of all women, are shaped by multiple, intersecting factors and deserve to be understood in their full complexity.

An in-depth analysis of Muslim women and their surroundings will bring to light the fact that oppression, wherever it is present, is not religious but patriarchal or cultural and often related to issues like poverty and illiteracy. It is also related to power politics. Patriarchy and those in power use religion as a means to justify their actions and maintain control. As we see in Tehmina Durrani's work, *My Feudal Lord*, Mustafa Khar uses religion to control his wife and maintain an upper hand. Lila Abu Lughod, in the Introduction to her seminal work, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, talks about an Egyptian woman named Zainab who is shocked to learn that the

world believes Islam is oppressing her and other Muslim women. She believes it is the government, from her experiences and lived reality. The experiences of most Muslim women are as varied as these two women.

The distinction between culture and religion is often blurred, leading to widespread misconceptions about Muslim practices and beliefs. Many customs labelled as "Islamic" — such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or the practice of triple talaq — are rooted in cultural traditions rather than religious doctrine. When such practices are attributed solely to Islam, it reinforces harmful stereotypes and obscures the nuanced realities of Muslim women's lives. These generalisations can only be challenged by foregrounding the diversity that exists among Muslim women. They are not a homogenous group defined by veiling or victimhood; they are mothers, educators, doctors, scientists, politicians, athletes, artists, and more, contributing meaningfully to every facet of society across the globe.

Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon, in her influential work *The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History and Ideology*, argues that the category of the "Muslim woman" is an ideological construction, an 'invention' produced through both Western and Eastern discourses. She contends that this category is often instrumentalised to serve specific political and ideological purposes, stripping Muslim women of their individuality and context. Zayzafoon emphasises that Muslim women form a heterogeneous group shaped by differences in race, class, geography, and education, and must be recognised as such (Zayzafoon, 3). This perspective highlights the urgent need to move beyond monolithic representations and engage with the lived experiences of Muslim women in their full diversity.

For far too long, Muslim women have been excluded from the debates and discussions that concern their own identities and lived realities. To understand the true diversity of their experiences, Muslim women must be given platforms to speak for themselves and represent their narratives. The first step toward achieving gender equality is ensuring that women are included in the discourse, not merely spoken about, but actively speaking. Muslim women are far more complex and multidimensional than the preconceived notions and stereotypes that often define them in public and academic discourses.

In the field of social psychology, a *stereotype* is typically defined as an overgeneralized belief about a particular group of people. The term has Greek etymological roots: *stereos*, meaning solid, and *typos*, meaning impression, suggesting a fixed, unchanging image. The concept gained prominence in modern psychology through the work of

American journalist Walter Lippmann, who, in his influential book *Public Opinion* (1922), explored how stereotypes shape our understanding of the world. Lippmann argued that "the subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those pre-conceptions, unless education has made them acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception" (Lippmann, 89–90). This insight helps explain why the image of the "oppressed Muslim woman" persists so strongly—it is a deeply embedded mental construct, reinforced over time by education, media, and political discourse, often without direct engagement with real Muslim women's voices or experiences.

Similarly, society harbours a set of pre-conceived notions about Muslim women, regardless of whether individuals have personally interacted with them. These assumptions shape and often limit people's perceptions. A stereotype never exists in isolation; it typically leads to prejudice and categorisation. By definition, a stereotype is an expectation imposed on a group's traits, personalities, or abilities. Mike Cardwell defines it as "a fixed, over-generalised belief about a particular group or class of people" (Cardwell, 1996). In the case of Muslim women, the stereotype of the oppressed, veiled woman is an over-generalisation that erases the diversity and individuality within the group. This stereotyping often extends to Muslim men as well, who are frequently portrayed as villains, misogynists, oppressors, or terrorists.

Despite these pervasive stereotypes, many inspiring Muslim women are actively dismantling these false narratives through various media—literature, fashion, social media, traditional media, and politics. While it is true that women face oppression globally, this oppression is not unique to Islam nor limited to Muslim women. Inequality affects women across all religions and cultures. Feminism, as a movement, emerged to challenge this universal inequality, transcending divisions of class, creed, and religion. To truly understand Muslim women, we must move beyond religious stereotypes and see them as individuals with diverse experiences and voices.

In this context, globalisation has played a positive role by providing Muslim women with vast platforms to express who they are and share their stories. Literature, media, social media, art, fashion, and the internet have become powerful tools through which Muslim women challenge misrepresentations and celebrate their diversity. We are witnessing a new wave of activism where Muslim women embrace their multiplicity and use their narratives to highlight their varied realities.

II. CASE STUDIES

To better understand the complexities of Muslim women's identities and agency, it is helpful to examine case studies from around the world that highlight their diverse experiences and the ways they actively shape their narratives.

Case Study 1: Malala Yousafzai – Reclaiming Voice, Redefining Identity

Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani education activist and the youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate, offers a powerful case study in challenging the stereotypical image of the voiceless, oppressed Muslim woman. Growing up in the Swat Valley under Taliban influence, Malala defied threats to advocate for girls' education. In 2012, she was shot by the Taliban for her activism, an attack that sparked global outrage — but more importantly, it amplified her voice on an international scale.

Malala's story is often framed in Western media as a narrative of “rescue”—but such portrayals miss the point. Her activism did not begin after the shooting; rather, she had already been blogging under a pseudonym for the BBC and speaking publicly within her community. Her agency existed before she became a global symbol. What makes Malala's journey significant is not just her resilience, but her consistent commitment to advocating from within her faith and cultural context, not outside of it. In her speeches and her memoir, *I Am Malala*, she emphasizes that Islam, contrary to its misrepresentation, advocates for women's rights and education.

Malala challenges both local patriarchal structures and Western feminist assumptions that Muslim women are inherently oppressed or passive. She represents a new generation of Muslim women who assert their voices on global platforms, all while remaining rooted in their cultural and religious identities. Her activism speaks not only to the right to education but to the broader fight for narrative control — the right of Muslim women to define themselves, rather than be defined by others.

Case Study 2: Iranian Women and the Mahsa Amini Protests — Reclaiming Agency Amid Oppression

The mass protests sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September 2022 marked a watershed moment in the struggle for women's rights in Iran. Amini died in police custody after being arrested by Iran's “morality police” for allegedly violating the country's strict hijab laws. Her death ignited nationwide and international protests, led prominently by Iranian women who took to the streets, many of them removing or burning their hijabs in public acts of defiance. The slogan “Woman, Life, Freedom” (*Zan, Zendegi, Azadi*) became a rallying cry not

just against the compulsory veil, but against a broader system of political repression and gender-based control.

What makes this movement particularly significant is that it cannot be reduced to a rejection of Islam. Many of the women protesting are Muslim themselves, and for them, the issue is not the hijab as a religious symbol, but the coercion behind it. They were resisting state-imposed interpretations of religion that strip them of personal choice and agency. By reclaiming control over their bodies and identities, these women directly challenge both domestic authoritarianism and Western stereotypes that portray Muslim women as universally submissive. Instead, they show that resistance and faith are not mutually exclusive. The Iranian women's movement demonstrates the diversity of Muslim women's experiences and the importance of situating their struggles within specific social, political, and cultural contexts, rather than reducing them to simplistic narratives of either oppression or liberation.

Case Study 3: Huda Sha'arawi — Pioneer of Feminist Reform in Postcolonial Egypt

Huda Sha'arawi (1879–1947) stands as one of the earliest and most influential Muslim feminist pioneers in the Global South. Living during Egypt's transition from Ottoman to British colonial rule, Sha'arawi confronted both colonial domination and patriarchal traditions. She is famously remembered for publicly removing her veil in 1923—a bold act of defiance against the social expectations imposed on women and a symbolic gesture of reclaiming autonomy. Yet, her activism was nuanced; she did not reject Islam, but rather sought to reinterpret religious and cultural practices to promote women's rights within her society.

Sha'arawi founded the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923, focusing on education, legal reforms, and social welfare, and she was vocal in advocating for women's suffrage and equality. Her efforts illustrate the complexity of Muslim women's identities as they negotiate between tradition, religion, and modernity. Far from the passive victim portrayed in many contemporary stereotypes, Sha'arawi's life exemplifies how Muslim women have long been agents of change, shaping their societies and challenging colonial and patriarchal narratives alike. Her legacy continues to inspire feminist movements in Egypt and across the Global South, reminding us that Muslim women's struggles and aspirations must be understood within their specific historical and cultural contexts.

The Veil Debate: Choice or Coercion

A common misconception is to equate Muslim women solely with the veil—that is, to view those wearing the hijab or niqab as the only “authentic” Muslim women. Conversely, women who do not wear a veil are often questioned about their identity because they “don't look

Muslim.” This narrow representation sidelines the diversity within Muslim communities and reduces a multicultural group to a singular visual stereotype. As a result, many Muslim women who do not conform to this limited image remain invisible in public discourse.

Muslim women across the globe are increasingly raising their voices against discrimination and making their mark in diverse fields such as sports, fashion, politics, business, and the arts. They are proving their mettle and carving out spaces for themselves, challenging the narrow narratives imposed on them. So, how can a single image—a black burqa-clad, ‘oppressed’ woman—be seen as representative of such a vast and diverse group? She cannot. The Muslim woman of the 21st century possesses a voice and demands to be heard, just like women everywhere.

The veil has become one of the most contentious symbols associated with Muslim women. Often portrayed as a sign of oppression, the hijab's significance is far more complex. It is fundamentally a woman's right to choose whether or not to wear the hijab, as part of the freedom to practice one's religion. This debate intensified globally following France's ban on certain forms of veiling, turning what should be a personal choice into a political controversy. The reasons behind wearing the hijab are as varied as the styles in which it is worn. An important contribution to this conversation is *It's Not About the Burqa*, an anthology edited by Miriam Khan, which highlights the everyday experiences and challenges Muslim women face, pushing back against simplistic narratives.

Many misconceptions about Muslim women revolve around the assumption that they lack agency, whether in education, marriage, or freedom in general. These assumptions stem largely from the distorted image of the Muslim woman widely portrayed in the media and popular culture. Stereotypes tend to paint a negative and overly generalised picture, ignoring the individuality of each woman. It is essential to understand Muslim women in their totality, taking into account their unique experiences, economic circumstances, social conditions, cultures, and traditions.

Moreover, much of the oppression attributed to Islam is rooted in local customs, traditions, and misinterpretations rather than the religion itself. The status Islam originally granted women is often overshadowed by these factors, a reality that is rarely acknowledged in dominant discourses shaped by media, literature, and film.

It is crucial to understand what the hijab means to Muslim women and why two women sharing the same faith might view it differently. While negotiating these contradictions, one might ask: why do some women remove their veils in protest against oppression and patriarchal constraints, while

others choose to don them voluntarily? There are multiple reasons behind wearing the hijab. For some, it is a divine commandment, a manifestation of their spiritual self, or an act of honouring the Quran. Others wear it as an identity marker to visibly affirm their Muslim faith. Some feel that covering up offers safety and the freedom to navigate public spaces without unwanted attention. Others believe that veiling downplays physical beauty and allows them to be valued for their intellect rather than their appearance. As long as it is a choice, women are free to decide their reasons. However, for some, wearing the hijab is not voluntary, and this lack of choice is problematic. Today, the hijab often serves as a marker of Islamic identity rather than simply a symbol of patriarchal control or religious fundamentalism.

In psychology, identity encompasses the qualities, beliefs, personality, and expressions that constitute an individual's self-concept (self-identity) or group affiliation (social identity). A strong sense of identity is essential for mental health, self-esteem, and confidence. Identity is socially and historically constructed; we develop our personal and social identities through interactions with family, friends, and communities. Identity shapes how we perceive ourselves and how we express our place in the world. Cultural identity reflects a sense of belonging to a particular social group defined by religion, caste, class, ethnicity, or other shared traits.

For Muslim women, understanding how they see themselves is vital. While patriarchy and Western narratives often impose limiting identities, the question remains: who is she, and how does she perceive herself? She may see herself as a Muslim, a feminist, and an ordinary woman capable of achieving her goals. She may embrace her identity as a citizen, regardless of whether her country is Muslim-majority or not. For her, there may be no conflict between collective and individual identities; she balances both. But can the wider world accept this complexity? Too often, Muslim women are portrayed simplistically—as oppressed victims or radicalised villains. This external perception clashes sharply with their multifaceted self-identities.

Her identity is composed of many facets, yet society often reduces it to a one-dimensional label: Muslim and oppressed. This echoes Julia Kristeva's concept of the politics of identity, where collective identities are imposed over individual ones, erasing diversity within the group. Identity is, fundamentally, who a person is—their values, traits, and sense of self, which evolves over a lifetime. It includes both personal identity and social identity, which often overlap.

Sigmund Freud theorised that identity is shaped by the ego, which mediates between the id and superego, blending

instincts, morality, and desires into a unified self. Erik Erikson expanded on this with the idea of 'ego identity,' proposing that individuals face crises at various stages of development, and how they resolve these crises shapes their identity. Meanwhile, collective identity is formed through membership in social groups—race, religion, gender, class, politics, family—and comes with the psychological distinction of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups,' or 'us' versus 'them.' This social categorisation can lead to prejudices and stereotyping.

Understanding Muslim women through these psychological lenses is essential. Stereotypes arise from social categorisation and often lead to prejudice and discrimination. To truly appreciate Muslim women's identities, we must acknowledge their personal and collective identities beyond simplistic religious labels and stereotypes.

III. CONCLUSION

The identity of Muslim women in the Global South cannot be understood through simplistic or monolithic lenses. It is shaped by a complex interplay of religion, culture, gender, class, history, and global power dynamics. Yet, dominant narratives—especially in Western media and political discourse—often reduce Muslim women to a singular image of oppression, most commonly represented by the veiled, silent figure. This stereotype not only misrepresents millions of women but also silences their voices, erases their diversity, and denies their agency.

As this essay has argued, such representations ignore the rich heterogeneity of Muslim women's lives, beliefs, and experiences. From resisting state-mandated dress codes in Iran to advocating for girls' education in Pakistan, Muslim women are not passive recipients of oppression but active agents of change. They are scientists, activists, artists, leaders, and thinkers—defying the imposed binaries of oppressed vs. liberated, traditional vs. modern, East vs. West. Scholars like Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon have emphasised that the category of the "Muslim woman" is not a fixed identity but a discursive invention shaped by ideological and political forces.

To truly understand and engage with the lives of Muslim women, especially in the Global South, we must move beyond stereotypes and allow them to speak for themselves. Listening to their voices, honouring their contexts, and recognising their multiplicity is not only an academic necessity—it is a moral and political imperative.

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Resilience and Survival: A Historical Study of Trepidation and the Holocaust through Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*

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Abstract— Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* is a poignant and enduring memoir that gained international acclaim following the author's tragic death during the Holocaust. Written as a series of letters to her imaginary friend "Kitty," the diary not only chronicles Anne's daily life in hiding but also offers profound reflections on identity, fear, hope, and humanity. Through her candid and emotionally rich narrative, Anne provides a deeply personal account of Nazi persecution and the horrors of the Holocaust. Her voice stands as a symbolic representation of the over one million Jewish children whose lives were lost during this dark chapter in history. This paper explores how Anne's diary serves both as historical testimony and literary artifact, emphasizing how conflicts rooted in racism, casteism, religious intolerance, and blind nationalism can lead to widespread destruction. It argues for the necessity of fostering empathy, dismantling segregation, and promoting love and humanity in the face of division and hatred.



Keywords— Holocaust, Nazism, Anne Frank, Kitty, New Historicism, Jewish identity.

I. INTRODUCTION

War leaves unseen scars on both sides, affecting innocent lives. The brutality doesn't end on the front line; survivors endure guilt and trauma lifelong. World War II was the deadliest conflict, fueled by Nazi ambitions and resulting in genocide. The devastation was catastrophic, leaving lasting impacts on humanity. The term 'Holocaust' originally referred to a sacrificial offering. However, after 1945, it came to describe the systematic persecution and mass murder of millions of Jews by the Nazi regime. Artistic response to these atrocities came to be known as Holocaust literature. The earliest literary responses to the Holocaust came from the survivors of the camps themselves.

New Historicism explores how literature reflects the cultural, political, and social contexts of its time. World War II, a devastating global conflict, had a profound impact on various aspects of society. This historical event inspired diverse literary perspectives, offering unique insights into the human experience of war.

Diary of a young girl by Anne Frank, takes the form of letters to a confidante and traces the daily life and inner life of an adolescent girl, hiding in a secret room. Anne Frank, teenage Jewish girl who kept a diary while her family was in hiding from the Nazis during World War II. For two years, she and seven others lived in a "Secret Annex" in Amsterdam before being discovered and sent to concentration camps. The diary was a birthday present for the thirteen year old girl Anne. She started writing her diary in the summer of 1942. Anne's diary was, for her, a space to express herself in the most honest and candid terms. Initially, she writes about typical teenage experiences, but her life changes drastically due to Nazi persecution. In the Secret Annex, Anne and her family live in confinement, listening to the radio for war updates. Her diary reveals her emotional journey, from loneliness to profound reflections on humanity. She finds it difficult to understand why the Jews are being singled out and persecuted. During the two years recorded in her diary, Anne deals with confinement and deprivation, as well as the complicated and difficult issues of growing up in the brutal circumstances of the Holocaust. Anne Frank's diary

showcases her literary genius and universal appeal. It highlights the enduring power of art. Without war, many talented voices like Anne's might have flourished, inspiring generations.

II. ANNE FRANK'S TESTIMONY AGAINST HISTORY AS A YOUNG ARTIST

Survival means staying alive despite life-threatening dangers. It requires thought, preparation, and resilience. Whether facing natural disasters, conflicts, or hardships, true survivors endure challenges with strength and learn from their experiences. War inflicts immense suffering, destruction, and loss. World War II, for example, caused unprecedented devastation, resulting in 75 million deaths, widespread hunger, and displacement. Survivors, including soldiers and Holocaust victims, endured long-lasting trauma, including nightmares, anxiety, and emotional scars that persisted long after the war. Artists and writers leave lasting legacies through their work. However, the Nazi regime sought to suppress ideas through book burnings, targeting literature deemed subversive. Anne Frank's diary survived this destruction, becoming a timeless classic that keeps her memory alive. Her story transcends survival, inspiring generations.

Anne Frank, a young Jewish girl, hid with her family in Amsterdam to escape Nazis during WWII. Anne attended Montessori school, loved reading, and dreamed of becoming a writer. She documented her experiences in her diary, which became a powerful historical document. Tragically, Anne and her sister Margot died of typhus at Bergen-Belsen in February 1945. Her father, Otto Frank, survived and dedicated his life to sharing Anne's message. "I want the diary to be my friend, and I'm going to call this friend kitty" (Frank14). Anne Frank addressed her diary letters to 'Kitty,' a fictional friend inspired by a book series. Through Kitty, Anne confided her deepest thoughts. As she wrote, Anne's diary revealed her growing maturity and hopes for her writing. She even edited her work for potential publication. Anne describes life in the Secret Annex, where she and others hid during the day, keeping quiet while workers were nearby. At night, they'd move freely, following a strict schedule. They read, studied, and listened to the radio for war updates, which influenced Anne's diary entries. The Franks and Van Daans in the Secret Annex had limited contact with the outside world, relying on a hidden radio and Dutch friends for news. They'd listen to English broadcasts nightly, absorbing the horrors of war amidst their confined life. The work explores themes of war, anti-Semitism, religion, love, and women's roles. She develops her own views on these

topics, showcasing her growing independence and understanding of politics and human nature.

The Nazis escalated persecution, forcing Jews to wear Stars of David and face restrictions. When Margot received a labor camp call-up, the Franks went into hiding to escape. Anne felt the laws were unjust, but remained optimistic about her family's safety. Life in the annex was marked by poor sleep, bad food, and constant fear of discovery. Anne initially struggled with the other inhabitants but eventually grew to see their perspectives, showcasing her character development. Despite hardships, she held onto her dreams. Anne felt fortunate to have a hiding place while many Jews were being hunted. She worried about those outside, feeling guilty for her relative safety. The annex provided temporary security, but also isolated her from the outside world's terror.

Though Anne Frank didn't survive the concentration camp, her diary achieved her dream of leaving a lasting impact. Her story has inspired readers worldwide, ensuring the voices of Holocaust victims are remembered and honored.

World War II exposed humanity's darker side. Anne Frank's diary serves as a poignant reminder of the devastating impact of war on ordinary people, preserving a powerful testament to the lives lost and silenced. Despite uncertainty and danger, she remained optimistic, highlighting the human desire for normalcy even in extraordinary times. Her legacy inspires future generations to fight for freedom and justice.

III. UNVEILING NAZI REGIME AND HOLOCAUST THROUGH NEW HISTORICAL APPROACH

New Historicism, influenced by Stephen Greenblatt and Michel Foucault, studies literature within its historical context, recognizing that both the author's time and the critic's perspective shape interpretation. It challenges traditional hierarchies between history and literature, offering a nuanced understanding of their interconnectedness. New Historicists highlight the "textuality of history and historicity of texts" (Montrose). Louis Montrose, in *Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture* claimed that New Historicism deals with the textuality of history and the historicity of texts. The theory posits that history is a constructed narrative, shaped by context and dominant interests. Similarly, texts are influenced by their historical context and, in turn, impact readers within that context, highlighting the interconnectedness of history and literature.

Anne Frank's diary blends personal narrative with historical context, exemplifying Montrose's concepts of 'textuality of history' and 'historicity of texts.' It offers a unique perspective on the Holocaust, shaped by Anne's experiences and views. New Historicism examines power relations in literary texts, revealing how societal institutions shape knowledge and truth. Michel Foucault's theory of power and knowledge informs this approach, highlighting how dominant discourses influence cultural practices and define what's normal. According to Foucault, discourse and knowledge are intertwined with power, shaping societal norms and structures. New Historicists apply this theory to analyze power relations and ideologies in literary texts, uncovering underlying hierarchies and their legitimization.

Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party, rose to power in Germany and initiated World War II, fueled by anti-Semitism and Aryan supremacy. His regime resulted in the Holocaust, claiming millions of lives, and had a devastating impact on Europe. Hitler's rise to power and ideology of Nazism had a profound impact on Germany and the world. Anne Frank's diary, on the other hand, humanizes the marginalized voices of Jews during the Holocaust, offering a counter-narrative to the dominant historical discourse. Judaism is an ancient monotheistic religion with a rich heritage. Throughout history, Jews have faced marginalization, discrimination, and persecution, often being scapegoated for societal problems. Examples include medieval ghettos and false accusations during the Black Death. The Holocaust, perpetrated by Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, was a horrific genocide fueled by anti-Semitism. This hatred towards Jews has ancient roots, with medieval Europe denying them citizenship and civil liberties. Hitler's ideology of Aryan supremacy led to the systematic persecution and murder of millions of Jews. Hitler's ideology of racial purity and spatial expansion led to World War II and the Holocaust. Anne Frank's diary humanized the marginalized voices of Jews during this period, shedding light on their struggles and suffering.

Anne Frank's diary reveals her struggles with identity as a Jew in hiding during the Nazi occupation. She grapples with her German heritage and the Nazis' brutal stripping of Jewish identity, highlighting the personal impact of the Holocaust. The diary also highlights the harsh realities of war, including the suffering of both Jews and non-Jews, as witnessed by Anne from the annex. Tensions in the annex are high, with an impending sense of doom. Despite this, Anne remains optimistic and proud of her Jewish heritage. She wonders why Jews are targeted and dreams of a better future. She writes "If God lets me live... I'll make my voice heard" (Frank 219).

IV. CONCLUSION

Anne Frank's diary exposes the cruelty of racial superiority, highlighting the Holocaust and Nazi persecution of Jews. Hitler's ideology of Aryan supremacy fueled the genocide, leaving a dark mark on human history. Nazi ideology was fueled by racism, leading to the genocide of Jews and other groups deemed inferior. This false belief in racial superiority resulted in unprecedented murder and devastation during World War II.

Anne Frank's experiences, marked by fear and loss of innocence, highlight the war's horrors and the precarious situation of those in hiding. The war forces her family to suffer unbelievable hardships: they starve, they suffer illnesses, and they undergo incredible psychological strain and trauma. The most famous child and most famous memoirist to have been a victim of World War II, the young Anne Frank did not survive the Holocaust, but her diary did.

Wars recur due to racism, politics, and nationalism. To mitigate these causes, people must shift their perspective from superiority to acceptance and understanding of individuality. Governments also play a crucial role in promoting tolerance and harmony through legislation and leadership. Throughout history the topmost authority have been able to influence the thought process of the people. Hitler's reign is an example of this; despite the fact that Germans loathed Jews before his rule, hatred for them grew stronger as a result of his encouragement. In the same way America under Donald Trump's government had developed more tensions between various ethnic groups. In India with the ruling party propagating ideologies of one particular religion, tensions among religious groups have intensified.

Anne Frank's story highlights the importance of equality and freedom, regardless of religion or race. She also reflects on the futility of war, suggesting that violence and hatred are innate human tendencies. "In spite of everything else I still believe that people are really good at heart" (Frank 275). As Anne states the humanity also own the impulse of love and altruism, that it can overpower any terrible obstacle in the world. Fight to exist, not to extinct.

Humanity began from a single culture, later diverged into different spaces developing their own spaces of identity, many were exploited and succumbed into extinction. Despite this, humanity today is stepping forward to embrace the singularity in them, thus diminishing the line of difference between superiority and inferiority.

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Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet and Students' Oral Reading Fluency in Communication Arts Presentations

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Abstract— Teachers open the path for greater involvement and lifetime literacy skills by arming students with deliberate strategies. This quasi-experimental study investigated the effectiveness of a researcher-made reading drill booklet in enhancing the oral reading fluency of Grade 7 students at Bagumbayan National High School during the 2024–2025 school year. Forty students were selected to participate in a one-group pre-test-post-test design, utilizing Reader's Theater and Choral Reading strategies as part of their communication arts presentation. The intervention consisted of daily ten-minute reading drills over two months to enhance oral reading fluency, word production per minute (WPM), and pronunciation. Pre-test results indicated low fluency levels, with mean WPM and pronunciation scores falling below grade-level expectations. Following the intervention, significant improvements were observed: WPM and pronunciation scores increased substantially, as confirmed by paired *t*-tests where *t*-statistics far exceeded the critical *t*-tab value. Reader's Theater and Choral Reading contributed to these gains, with the greatest improvements noted in expressive and audible reading. However, some collaborative aspects, such as turn-taking, remained moderate. The findings demonstrate that structured, researcher-made reading drills effectively enhance key aspects of oral reading fluency, particularly accuracy and expression. It is recommended that such materials be integrated into regular instruction and supplemented with additional activities to further develop reading speed and collaborative skills.



Keywords— reading drill booklet, oral reading fluency, reader's theater, choral reading, communication arts presentations.

I. INTRODUCTION

By employing reading methods in the classroom, passive reading becomes an active discovery, sparking students' comprehension and critical thinking. Teachers arm students with deliberate strategies to open the path for greater involvement and lifetime literacy skills. Reading fluency is a foundation of literacy and academic achievement, enabling students to access, comprehend, and communicate information effectively. Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)-the ability to read text aloud with accuracy, speed, and expression- plays a pivotal role in this process, particularly for students in the early stages of

literacy development or for those learning English as a second language (Kim & Wagner, 2015).

Research underscores that regular, structured oral reading practice is vital for developing fluency (Rasinski, 2003; Gedik & Akyol, 2022). Strategies such as choral reading and reader's theater have been shown to provide meaningful, repeated exposure to text, promote collaborative learning, and reduce performance anxiety.

Despite the recognized importance of fluency, many students, especially at the secondary level, continue to struggle with oral reading. Observations among Grade 7 learners at Bagumbayan National High School (BNHS)

reveal that students often read slowly, hesitantly, or with limited expression during communication arts presentations. This hesitancy can be attributed to factors such as shyness, lack of confidence, and insufficient practice, which, in turn, hinder their participation and academic performance (Kalutskaya et al., 2015). The researcher-made reading drill booklet, which integrates choral reading and reader's theater strategies, is designed to offer such input through carefully sequenced and contextually relevant materials. By incorporating International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)-based drills, the booklet further addresses pronunciation a key component of oral reading fluency while supporting students in developing confidence and competence in communication arts presentations.

This study addressed the following sub-questions: (1) What is the level of acceptability of the Researcher-made reading drill booklet in terms of content, mechanics, relevance and objectives; (2) What is the level of the students' oral reading fluency in the pre-test and post-test in terms of reader's theater and choral reading? (3) What is the oral reading fluency level of the students in the pre-test and post-test in terms of words per minute and pronunciation? and (4) Is there a significant difference in the students' oral reading fluency in their pre-test and post-test?

II. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test-post-test approach to examine the effect of the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet on the oral reading fluency of Grade Seven students in communication arts presentations at Bagumbayan National High School during the 2024–2025 school year. The booklet included Reader's Theater and Choral Reading drills to enhance reading fluency. In this design, the same group of students was assessed on their oral reading fluency before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the intervention, allowing for the evaluation of changes attributable to the booklet (Jhangiani et al., 2022).

2.2. Research Participants

This study selected one section of Grade 7 students from Bagumbayan National High School as respondents to investigate the effect of the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet on oral reading fluency. The selection was purposive, focusing on students who demonstrated challenges in oral reading fluency, as observed during communication arts presentations where many read slowly, hesitantly, or with limited expression. This targeted selection aligns with best practices in educational

research, where participants are chosen based on specific characteristics relevant to the study's objectives to ensure meaningful and applicable results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Selecting only one section also allowed for manageable intervention delivery and close monitoring, thereby enhancing the reliability of the findings.

2.3. Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling to select one section of forty (40) Grade 7 students from Bagumbayan National High School as respondents. This non-probability sampling technique was chosen because it allows for the deliberate selection of participants who possess specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives—in this case, students enrolled in the targeted communication arts class and accessible for both pre-test and post-test assessments. Purposive sampling is particularly appropriate when the research aims to explore the effects of an intervention within a clearly defined group, ensuring that the sample is directly aligned with the study's focus and practical constraints (Robinson, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2015). By selecting a single intact class, the researcher ensured manageable intervention delivery and consistent monitoring, enhancing the study's internal validity (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

2.4. Research Instrument

The data gathering instruments used in this study included the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet, pre-test and post-test questionnaires, and rubrics for assessing oral reading fluency through Reader's Theater and Choral Reading. These instruments were rigorously validated by a panel of experts comprising school principals, master teachers, and English subject teachers in the study area. The validation process ensured that the booklet and assessment tools were appropriate, clear, and effective in measuring oral reading fluency in terms of several words per minute and pronunciation. This expert validation aligns with established practices in educational research, enhancing the content validity and reliability of research instruments (Navia, 2015).

The pre-test and post-test questionnaires and the rubrics used for evaluating oral reading fluency in Reader's Theater and Choral Reading underwent the same validation process to confirm their suitability for accurately capturing students' reading performance before and after the intervention. The involvement of multiple validators with expertise in English instruction and program supervision provided a comprehensive review, ensuring the instruments' alignment with curricular goals and practical classroom application. Such thorough validation is crucial for establishing the credibility of the data and supporting the study's internal validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Navia, 2015).

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

With the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent of Sultan Kudarat, the study was conducted at the public secondary school. After this, the researcher asked permission from her principal to use one section of the Grade 7 English class as study respondents. To determine the respondents' level of oral reading fluency, the researcher conducted a pre-test using a reading selection for choral reading and reader's theater with rubrics, along with a set of one hundred words to assess how many words they read and pronounced correctly within a minute, as outlined in the booklet.

After this, the researcher distributed the reading drill booklet that they had created to the respondents, which was used during English class. The material was used for oral reading fluency practice for 10 minutes daily over two months. The respondents were briefed thoroughly on the purpose of the study. After two months of using the material, a post-test was conducted using the same material as in the pre-test to see if there was an improvement in their scores. Accomplished forms and data were collected, the results of which were analyzed and interpreted.

2.6. Data Analysis Method

The researcher employed descriptive and inferential statistical tools to ensure accurate interpretation of the results. To determine the level of acceptability of the researcher-made reading drill booklet, the mean and standard deviation were calculated, which effectively summarize the central tendency and variability of the responses (Hudson et al., 2020). Furthermore, the paired dependent t-test was utilized to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents' oral reading fluency. This test was appropriate for comparing the means of two related groups, such as measurements taken before and after an intervention, allowing the researcher to assess the effectiveness of the reading drill booklet in improving oral reading fluency (Velchik, 2019; Hudson et al., 2020).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data, which are presented in a tabular form, along with their interpretations and analyses.

Table 1. Level of Acceptability of the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet in Terms of Content

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. It answers the objectives of the course.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
2. It can develop students' desirable values.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
3. It can transmit the learning to the students.	4.00	0.71	Moderately Acceptable
4. It can widen desired knowledge, attitude and skills.	3.80	0.45	Moderately Acceptable
5. It can promote independence.	4.40	0.55	Highly Acceptable
6. It can develop cooperation within the group.	4.20	0.84	Highly Acceptable
7. The content of the booklet is relevant to the students.	4.00	0.00	Moderately Acceptable
8. The booklet allows the students to perform the activities without the supervision of the teacher.	4.00	0.00	Moderately Acceptable
9. The learning activities are within the capability of the students.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
10. The booklet provides sufficient examples.	4.40	0.55	Highly Acceptable
Mean	4.14	0.30	Moderately Acceptable

Table 1 presents the level of acceptability of the Researcher-made Reading Drills Booklet regarding content. The results showed that the booklet was highly acceptable in several indicators, including answering course objectives ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.45$), developing desirable values ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.45$), promoting independence ($M=4.40$, $SD=0.55$), developing cooperation within groups ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.84$), and providing activities within students' capabilities ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.45$).

Additionally, the booklet was deemed highly acceptable in providing sufficient examples ($M=4.40$,

SD=0.55). However, they were considered moderately acceptable in transmitting learning to students ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.71$), widening knowledge, attitude, and skills ($M=3.80$, $SD=0.45$), being relevant to students ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.00$), and in allowing students to perform the activities without the teacher's supervision ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.00$). The mean acceptability score was 4.14, indicating a moderately acceptable level across all indicators.

The findings on the level of acceptability of the booklet in terms of content are consistent with recent studies that highlight the effectiveness of structured reading interventions. Marciano (2023) found that interactive reading exercises significantly improve comprehension and promote independence and cooperation among students, aligning with highly acceptable indicators such as meeting course objectives and fostering group cooperation. Wang et al. (2021) demonstrated that employing diverse reading strategies has a positive impact on students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills, supporting the moderately acceptable ratings related to expanding knowledge and facilitating learning. Furthermore, Boulay et al. (2015) reported that adolescent reading programs incorporating strategic drills enhance reading achievement and relevance for students, which aligns with the acceptability of drills in developing desirable values and relevance. These findings are theoretically supported by constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes active engagement and knowledge construction; metacognitive theory, which underlines the role of strategy use in comprehension; and social learning theory, which highlights the importance of cooperative learning in educational settings.

Table 2 presents the acceptability of the booklet regarding mechanics. The results showed that the drills were highly acceptable in areas such as readability with appropriate margins ($M = 4.20$), technical presentation ($M = 4.60$), font size and spacing ($M = 4.20$), logical content ($M = 4.20$), and accuracy of data ($M = 4.20$). However, aspects like illustrations ($M = 3.80$), sequence from simple to complex ($M = 3.80$), and meeting basic learning coverage ($M = 4.00$) were deemed moderately acceptable.

Table 2. Level of Acceptability of the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet in Terms of Mechanics

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. The prints of the booklet are readable with appropriate margins.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
2. The booklet is presented in a technically	4.60	0.55	Highly Acceptable

appropriate manner.			
3. The booklet meets the coverage for the basic learning in reading.	4.00	1.00	Moderately Acceptable
4. Illustrations in the booklet are clearly presented.	3.80	0.45	Moderately Acceptable
5. The spacing and font size are ideal.	4.20	0.84	Highly Acceptable
6. Instructions are clear and easy to understand.	4.00	0.00	Moderately Acceptable
7. The sequence is from simple to complex.	3.80	0.45	Moderately Acceptable
8. The message is easy to comprehend.	4.00	0.71	Moderately Acceptable
9. The content is logical or reasonable.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
10. The data are correct and accurate.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
Mean	4.10	0.34	Moderately Acceptable

For instance, a meta-analysis by Graham et al. (2017) highlighted that literacy programs balancing reading and writing mechanics significantly improve students' reading outcomes, underscoring the value of clear presentation and accurate content in instructional booklets. Similarly, Ocampo (2018) demonstrated that differentiated instruction, which includes attention to the technical and mechanical aspects of reading materials, significantly improves reading comprehension among senior high school students, supporting the acceptability of drills with clear instructions and logical sequencing. Additionally, research by Jefferson et al. (2021) on paired reading interventions found that materials with clear, readable text and appropriate progression from simple to complex content enhance fluency and comprehension, aligning with the moderately acceptable ratings for sequence and message clarity in the current study.

The theoretical frameworks underpinning these findings include Cognitive Load Theory, which posits that clear, well-organized materials reduce extraneous cognitive load and facilitate learning; Constructivist Theory, which supports scaffolding learning from simple to complex; and Metacognitive Theory, which emphasizes the role of clear instructions and logical content in enabling learners to monitor and regulate their comprehension effectively.

Table 3 presents the level of acceptability of reading drills under different reading strategies regarding relevance. The results showed that the booklet was highly acceptable in indicators such as the relevance of the booklet's content to the subject ($M=4.40$), enabling students to study independently at home ($M=4.40$), and appropriateness of activities to students' needs ($M=4.40$).

Table 3. Level of Acceptability of the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet in Terms of Relevance

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. The booklet supplements the textbook.	4.00	0.00	Moderately Acceptable
2. The use of booklet allows the students to work independently.	4.00	1.00	Moderately Acceptable
3. The contents of the booklet are relevant to the subject.	4.40	0.55	Highly Acceptable
4. The students can learn/study the topic even at home.	4.40	0.55	Highly Acceptable
5. The booklet's activities are appropriate and relevant to the students' needs.	4.40	0.55	Highly Acceptable
6. The booklet provides evidences of effectiveness through pre-test and post-test.	3.80	0.45	Moderately Acceptable
7. The learning tasks are related to the expected content and skills to be developed.	3.60	0.55	Moderately Acceptable
8. The booklet is suitable for individual use.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
9. The booklet topics are attuned to the interest and urgent needs.	3.60	0.55	Moderately Acceptable
10. The booklet is appropriate for teaching reading to students.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
Mean	4.06	0.34	Moderately Acceptable

The booklet's suitability for individual use and its appropriateness for teaching reading were also deemed highly acceptable ($M=4.20$ for both). However,

aspects like supplementing textbooks and providing evidence of effectiveness were considered moderately acceptable.

The results in Table 3 indicate that the reading drills are moderately to highly acceptable in terms of relevance, particularly in aligning with the subject, supporting independent study, and meeting students' needs. This aligns with recent studies emphasizing student-centered materials in reading comprehension. Alqahtani (2020) found that activities tailored to students' interests boost engagement and understanding, while Gorsuch et al. (2015) highlighted that repeated reading and strategic text engagement improve fluency and support independent learning. Swan (2015) also noted that combining effective strategies with relevant content enhances comprehension and motivation. These findings are supported by Constructivist Theory, which emphasizes the connection of new knowledge to prior experience; Self-Determination Theory, which highlights autonomy and relevance; and Cognitive Load Theory, which advocates for the appropriate challenge of materials. Together, these theories explain the importance of relevance in the acceptability and effectiveness of reading drills.

Table 4. Level of Acceptability of the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet in Terms of Objectives

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. The objectives are precise and specific.	4.80	0.45	Highly Acceptable
2. The objectives are attainable.	4.20	0.45	Highly Acceptable
3. The objectives are clearly stated and easy to understand.	4.60	0.55	Highly Acceptable
4. The objectives cover the whole scope of the skills or competencies to be acquired.	4.80	0.45	Highly Acceptable
5. The objectives allow the students to develop critical thinking.	4.80	0.45	Highly Acceptable
Mean	4.64	0.26	Highly Acceptable

Table 4 presents the level of acceptability of reading drills under different reading strategies, regarding objectives, and reveals a high level of acceptability. The objectives were found to be highly acceptable in being precise and specific ($M = 4.80$), attainable ($M = 4.20$), clearly stated and easy to understand ($M = 4.60$), covering,

the scope of skills to be acquired ($M = 4.80$), and allowing students to develop critical thinking ($M = 4.80$). This aligns with research emphasizing the importance of well-defined objectives in educational settings, as they guide the learning process and enhance student engagement (Estremera, 2017).

The results in Table 4 show that the reading drills' objectives are highly acceptable, being precise, attainable, clear, comprehensive, and promoting critical thinking. This aligns with recent studies highlighting the importance of well-defined objectives in improving student engagement and reading comprehension. DeBruin-Parecki et al. (2015) emphasized that clear objectives foster independent reading of complex texts, while Ismail et al. (2015) noted that explicit, attainable goals guide learners' focus and strategy use. Widiati and Cahyono (2019) also found that clearly articulated objectives enhance skills development through extensive reading. These findings are supported by Bloom's Taxonomy, which promotes measurable objectives for higher-order thinking; Constructivist Theory, which values active engagement through clear goals; and Cognitive Load Theory, which stresses well-structured objectives to optimize cognitive resources and comprehension.

Table 5 summarizes the acceptability of the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet under different reading strategies. The results indicate that while content, mechanics, and relevance were deemed moderately acceptable with means of 4.14, 4.10, and 4.06, respectively, the objectives were highly acceptable with a mean of 4.64. This suggests that the objectives of the reading drills were well-defined and aligned with educational goals, which is crucial for effective learning outcomes (Estremera, 2017).

Table 5. Summary of the Level of Acceptability of the Researcher-Made Reading Drill Booklet

Areas	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Content	4.14	0.30	Moderately Acceptable
2. Mechanics	4.10	0.34	Moderately Acceptable
3. Relevance	4.06	0.34	Moderately Acceptable
4. Objectives	4.64	0.26	Highly Acceptable
Mean	4.24	0.31	Highly Acceptable

The overall mean acceptability score was 4.24, indicating a highly acceptable level across all areas. This aligns with research emphasizing the importance of well-

structured educational materials in enhancing student engagement and performance (Estremera, 2017). Moreover, studies on instructional materials have shown that when content is relevant and objectives are clear, it significantly improves learning outcomes (Protacio, 2019).

The pre-test results in Table 6 reveal that students demonstrated low overall oral reading fluency in reader's theater, with an overall mean of 1.88. The indicator with the highest mean was "Consistently speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear" ($M=2.08$), while the lowest mean was for "Take turns accurately consistently" ($M = 1.67$), both rated as low to very low fluency. Other indicators, such as correct word pronunciation, reading with expression, and working well with others, also fell within the low to very low fluency range, indicating significant challenges in oral reading skills prior to intervention.

Table 6. Pre-Test Result of the Level of Oral Reading Fluency in Reader's Theater

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Consistently speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear.	2.08	0.14	Low Fluency
2. Words are pronounced correctly and easily understood.	2.00	0.00	Low Fluency
3. Consistently reads with appropriate expression.	1.92	0.14	Low Fluency
4. Take turns accurately on a consistent basis.	1.67	0.24	Very Low Fluency
5. Consistently works well with others.	1.75	0.14	Very Low Fluency
Overall Mean	1.88	0.06	Low Fluency

These findings are supported by recent literature emphasizing the importance of oral reading fluency as a key predictor of reading comprehension and overall literacy development. For instance, Rasinski et al. (2017) emphasized that fluency, encompassing both expression and accuracy, is essential for achieving meaningful reading and comprehension. Similarly, Young and Rasinski (2019) found that Reader's Theater interventions effectively improve oral reading fluency by engaging students in repeated, expressive reading practice. Furthermore, Mountford (2023) reported that students participating in Reader's Theater showed notable gains in prosody and fluency, underscoring the role of collaborative and

performance-based reading activities in enhancing oral reading skills.

The theoretical frameworks supporting these results include the Automaticity Theory, which posits that fluent reading requires automatic word recognition to free cognitive resources for comprehension; Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, emphasizing learning through social interaction and collaborative activities such as Reader's Theater; and the Prosodic Theory of Reading, which highlights the role of expression, phrasing, and intonation in fluent oral reading.

The pre-test results in Table 7 indicate a low level of oral reading fluency in choral reading among the participants. The indicator with the highest mean score is "Consistently speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear" ($M = 2.17$), while the lowest mean is for "Take turns accurately consistently" ($M = 1.92$). Overall, the mean score across all indicators is 2.02, which falls under the verbal description of low fluency. This suggests that students struggle with key aspects of oral reading fluency, including pronunciation, expression, turn-taking, and cooperation during choral reading.

Table 7. Pre-Test Result of the Level of Oral Reading Fluency in Choral Reading

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Consistently speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear.	2.17	0.29	Low Fluency
2. Words are pronounced correctly and easily understood.	2.00	0.00	Low Fluency
3. Consistently reads with appropriate expression.	2.00	0.00	Low Fluency
4. Take turns accurately on a consistent basis.	1.92	0.14	Low Fluency
5. Consistently works well with others.	2.00	0.00	Low Fluency
Overall Mean	2.02	0.07	Low Fluency

These findings are supported by recent literature emphasizing students' challenges in developing oral reading fluency. Rasinski et al. (2017) emphasize that fluency encompasses accuracy, automaticity, and prosody, which can impede comprehension and overall reading development. Similarly, Valencia et al. (2018) found that low fluency scores often correlate with difficulties in expressive reading and collaboration during group reading activities, which are critical for choral reading success.

Furthermore, Hudson et al. (2019) emphasize that oral reading fluency assessments should consider multiple dimensions, such as volume, expression, and pacing, to comprehensively understand a student's reading ability, thereby reinforcing the multidimensional nature of fluency reflected in the low scores observed.

Table 8. Post-Test Result of the Level of Oral Reading Fluency in Reader's Theater

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Consistently speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear.	4.00	0.00	High Fluency
2. Words are pronounced correctly and easily understood.	3.58	0.28	High Fluency
3. Consistently reads with appropriate expression.	4.00	0.00	High Fluency
4. Take turns accurately on a consistent basis.	3.08	0.14	Moderate Fluency
5. Consistently works well with others.	3.17	0.17	Moderate Fluency
Overall Mean	3.57	0.06	High Fluency

The post-test results in Table 8 indicate an overall high level of oral reading fluency among students participating in Reader's Theater, with an overall mean of 3.57. The highest mean scores were observed in the indicators "Consistently speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear" and "Consistently reads with appropriate expression," scoring a perfect 4.00, reflecting strong oral projection and expressive reading. Conversely, the lowest mean was "Take turns accurately and consistently" at 3.08, indicating moderate fluency in collaborative reading dynamics. Other indicators, such as correct word pronunciation (3.58) and working well with others (3.17), also showed moderate fluency levels, suggesting areas for further development in group coordination and pronunciation.

These findings are supported by recent literature highlighting the effectiveness of Reader's Theater in enhancing oral reading fluency and prosody. After Reader's Theater interventions, Coyle (2023) reported significant gains in students' expression, volume, and overall fluency, emphasizing its role in motivating reluctant readers and improving confidence. Similarly, Welch (2019) found that Reader's Theater significantly improved accuracy, automaticity, and prosodic reading skills among EFL learners, outperforming traditional

instruction. Additionally, Lo et al. (2021) demonstrated that Reader's Theater positively impacts reading comprehension and fluency by engaging students in repeated oral practice with expressive reading, which aligns with the current results' high acceptability of expressive and loud reading.

The results in Table 9 indicate that the level of oral reading fluency in choral reading is generally high, with the highest mean scores observed in the indicators "Consistently speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear" and "Words are pronounced correctly and easily understood," both with a mean of 4.00, reflecting high fluency. The lowest mean scores were found in "Consistently reads with appropriate expression" and "Consistently works well with others," both at 3.00, indicating moderate fluency. The overall mean score of 3.42 suggests a high level of oral reading fluency among the students participating in the choral reading activity.

Table 9. Post-Test Result of the Level of Oral Reading Fluency in Choral Reading

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Consistently speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear.	4.00	0.00	High Fluency
2. Words are pronounced correctly and easily understood.	4.00	0.00	High Fluency
3. Consistently reads with appropriate expression.	3.00	0.00	Moderate Fluency
4. Take turns accurately on a consistent basis.	3.08	0.14	Moderate Fluency
5. Consistently works well with others.	3.00	0.00	Moderate Fluency
Overall Mean	3.42	0.03	High Fluency

These findings are supported by recent literature that highlights the effectiveness of choral reading in improving oral reading fluency. Ayuba and Kadir (2022) reported that choral reading significantly enhances students' reading fluency by improving accuracy, rate, and prosody, fostering a lively and supportive classroom environment. Kelzang (2024) similarly found that choral reading pedagogy boosts students' confidence and enthusiasm, leading to measurable gains in fluency. Moreover, Rasinski (2015) emphasized that fluency development involves accuracy, automaticity, and

prosody, all nurtured through repeated and expressive practices like choral reading.

Table 10. Summary of the Pre-Test Results of the Level of Oral Reading Fluency in Different Reading Strategies

Reading Strategies	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Reader's Theater	1.88	0.06	Low Fluency
Choral Reading	2.02	0.07	Low Fluency

The pre-test results in Table 10 indicate that students demonstrated low oral reading fluency across both reading strategies assessed. Choral Reading had the highest mean fluency score of 2.02 (SD = 0.07), while Reader's Theater showed the lowest mean at 1.88 (SD = 0.06), both falling within the "Low Fluency" verbal description. The overall mean fluency score was 1.95, reflecting generally low oral reading fluency among the participants prior to intervention.

These findings are supported by recent literature emphasizing the challenges struggling readers face with oral fluency and the effectiveness of targeted reading strategies. For example, Rasinski et al. (2019) highlighted that repeated reading and choral reading improve fluency by increasing automaticity and prosody. Similarly, Therrien and Hughes (2016) found that oral reading practices, including paired and choral reading, significantly enhance reading rate and accuracy in elementary students. Moreover, O'Connor et al. (2017) demonstrated that structured oral reading interventions lead to measurable gains in fluency and comprehension, especially when combined with modeling and repeated practice.

The theoretical framework supporting these results includes Automaticity Theory, which posits that fluent reading results from the development of automatic word recognition, thereby reducing cognitive load and allowing for a focus on comprehension. Additionally, Ehri's Phases of Word Recognition Theory explains how repeated exposure and practice help readers move from decoding to automatic word recognition. Social Learning Theory also underpins strategies like choral reading and reader's theater, where modeling and peer interaction support skill acquisition.

Table 11. Summary of the Post-Test Results of the Level of Oral Reading Fluency in Different Reading Strategies

Reading Strategies	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Reader's Theater	3.57	0.06	High Fluency
Choral Reading	3.42	0.03	High Fluency

Table 11 presents the post-test results on students' oral reading fluency using different reading strategies. The highest mean score was observed in Reader's Theater (mean = 3.57, SD = 0.06), indicating a high level of fluency, while Choral Reading had a slightly lower mean of 3.42 (SD = 0.03), also classified as high fluency. Both strategies effectively enhanced oral reading fluency, with Reader's Theater showing a marginally greater impact.

These results are supported by recent studies emphasizing the effectiveness of interactive and collaborative reading approaches in improving oral fluency. For instance, Kim and Rasinski (2019) found that reader's theater significantly improves students' reading fluency and expression by engaging them in repeated, performance-based practice. Lee and Yoon (2020) reported that choral reading fosters fluency and confidence, especially among struggling readers, by providing a supportive group environment. Furthermore, Martinez and Garcia (2021) highlighted that both reader's theater and choral reading promote prosody and accuracy, which is essential to fluent reading.

The findings are grounded in several learning theories. Automaticity Theory explains that repeated practice through these strategies leads to automatic word recognition, reducing cognitive load during reading. Social Learning Theory supports the role of modeling and peer interaction inherent in reader's theater and choral reading, where students learn fluency skills by observing and imitating others. Additionally, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) underpins the collaborative nature of these strategies, as students perform better with social support and scaffolding, gradually developing independent fluency.

Table 12. Pre-Test and Post-Test Results of the Level of Oral Reading Fluency in Terms of the Mean of Number of Words per Minute

Test	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Pre-test	31.96	6.27	Very Low Fluency
Post-test	49.22	3.41	Low Fluency

Table 12 shows marked improvement in students' oral reading fluency after using the researcher-made reading drill booklet. The pre-test mean score of 31.96 words per minute (SD = 6.27) indicated very low fluency, while the post-test mean increased to 49.22 words per minute (SD = 3.41), reflecting low fluency. This demonstrates a substantial gain in reading speed and fluency, though the students still have room for further development. The overall impr suggests that the reading drills positively impacted students' oral reading performance.

These findings are supported by recent literature emphasizing the effectiveness of repeated oral reading and fluency-building interventions. Hudson et al. (2020) found that repeated reading procedures significantly improve oral reading fluency and comprehension among elementary students with reading difficulties. Van Erp (2021) reported that consistent repeated reading interventions increased fluency rates in struggling readers who were below grade-level benchmarks. Additionally, Canuto et al. (2024) demonstrated that combining repeated reading with engaging materials, such as big books, enhances word accuracy per minute and accuracy, thereby contributing to overall reading development. Collectively, these studies validate the positive impact of structured reading drills on oral reading fluency.

The theoretical basis for these results includes the Automaticity Theory, which posits that repeated practice leads to faster and more accurate word recognition, freeing cognitive resources for comprehension. Additionally, the Interactive-Compensatory Model explains how improved decoding skills, achieved through drills, support higher-level reading processes. Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory also supports guided and peer-assisted reading practices, emphasizing the role of social interaction and scaffolding in developing reading fluency. These theories explain why targeted, repeated reading drills enhance oral reading fluency.

Table 13. Pre-Test and Post-Test Results of the Level of Oral Reading Fluency in Terms of Pronunciation

Test	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Pre-test	58.95	8.12	Moderate Fluency
Post-test	92.13	4.11	Very High Fluency

Table 13 indicates a significant improvement in students' oral reading fluency regarding pronunciation, with the pre-test mean score at 58.95 (moderate fluency) and the post-test mean increasing substantially. Recent studies support these findings and demonstrate that the researcher-made reading drill booklet effectively enhanced students' pronunciation skills and oral fluency.

Recent research highlights the positive impact of targeted reading interventions on oral fluency and pronunciation. For example, Rasinski et al. (2019) emphasized that repeated reading practices significantly improve reading fluency and pronunciation accuracy. Similarly, Lee and Huang (2018) found that structured reading drills contribute to better pronunciation and oral language proficiency among learners. Moreover, Kim and Park (2020) reported that integrating reading drills with oral practice enhances learners' speech intelligibility and fluency in second language contexts.

The theoretical foundations supporting these results include Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which underscores the importance of social interaction and scaffolding in language learning and explains how guided practice improves pronunciation. Automaticity Theory supports these findings by suggesting that repeated practice leads to automatic word recognition and fluent oral reading. Additionally, Cognitive Load Theory posits that well-designed drills reduce extraneous cognitive load, enabling learners to focus more effectively on pronunciation and fluency development.

Table 14. Paired Dependent T-test Results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Oral Reading Fluency of the Respondents

ORF	Means		df	t-stat	t-tab
	Pre-test	Post-test			
Word Per Minute	31.96	49.22	39	20.52	2.02
Pronunciation	58.95	92.13	39	30.80	2.02

$\alpha=0.05$ level of significance

The paired dependent t-test results in Table 14 indicate a significant improvement in the oral reading fluency of the respondents after using the researcher-made reading drill booklet. For Word per Minute (WPM), the pre-test mean was 31.96 and the post-test mean increased to 49.22, with a t-statistic of 20.52, much greater than the critical t-tab value of 2.02 at the 0.05 significance level. This indicates a statistically significant difference in WPM before and after the intervention, which leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no difference. Similarly, for Pronunciation, the pre-test mean was 58.95, and the post-test mean rose to 92.13, with a t-statistic of 30.80, also exceeding the critical t-tab value of 2.02. This indicates a significant improvement in pronunciation, and the null hypothesis is again rejected. Overall, the results show that the reading drills significantly enhanced the speed and accuracy of oral reading fluency.

These findings are supported by recent literature on interventions for oral reading fluency. Waldron (2018) found that systematic oral reading fluency instruction with repeated readings significantly improved students' reading achievement scores, corroborating the observed gains in WPM and pronunciation. Similarly, Rasinski et al. (2017) emphasized that targeted fluency practice enhances reading rate and prosody, which aligns with the improvements in pronunciation noted in this study. Additionally, Kuhn and Stahl (2017) highlighted that fluency interventions combining speed and accuracy components lead to better reading comprehension and oral

performance, supporting the dual gains observed in this research.

The theoretical underpinnings of these results are grounded in Automaticity Theory, which posits that fluent reading requires the development of automatic word recognition to free cognitive resources for comprehension. The significant increase in WPM reflects improved automaticity. Additionally, the Interactive-Compensatory Model supports the findings by explaining how improved pronunciation (accuracy) compensates for decoding difficulties, enhancing overall fluency. Finally, Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory suggests that scaffolded practice, such as structured reading drills, facilitates learners' development of higher-level reading skills, including critical fluency components like speed and pronunciation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The acceptability of the reading drills under different reading strategies was generally well received, with content, mechanics, and relevance rated as moderately acceptable, while the objectives were considered highly acceptable. This indicates that the reading drills were effectively designed and aligned with instructional goals, making them suitable for enhancing the oral reading fluency of Grade Seven learners. The positive evaluation suggests that teachers and students found the reading drills beneficial in supporting fluency development.

Implementing the researcher-made reading drill booklet significantly improved students' oral reading fluency in both Reader's Theater and Choral Reading. The marked increase from low to high fluency levels in the post-test demonstrates the effectiveness of repeated, structured oral reading practice. While both strategies led to substantial gains, Reader's Theater had a marginally greater positive impact on students' fluency, particularly in expressive and audible reading. However, some collaborative skills still require further development.

The reading drill booklet effectively enhanced students' oral reading fluency, particularly in pronunciation, as evidenced by post-test scores that reached very high proficiency levels. While WPM improved substantially, the post-test average still falls below grade-level norms, suggesting persistent challenges in decoding speed. This highlights the booklet's utility for accuracy-focused training, but complementary strategies are needed to address rate.

The use of the researcher-made reading drill booklet was effective in enhancing the students' oral reading fluency. The intervention improved their reading speed and pronunciation, demonstrating the value of structured

reading drills in developing key communication skills. While both metrics improved significantly, WPM remained below grade-level benchmarks, despite its substantial increase, highlighting the need for continued focus on reading speed. This study recommends the following:

4.1 Since the reading drills were found to be acceptable and aligned with instructional goals, it is recommended that educators further refine and expand the content to enhance its effectiveness. Future studies can explore additional strategies to enhance engagement, particularly by incorporating interactive and multimedia-based reading activities to improve fluency development.

4.2 Teachers may incorporate Reader's Theater and Choral Reading, supported by structured reading drill booklets, into their communication arts curriculum to enhance oral reading fluency. Special attention should be given to activities that foster group coordination and turn-taking to address remaining moderate fluency in these areas. Continuous practice and targeted interventions focusing on collaborative reading dynamics will further strengthen overall oral reading proficiency among students.

4.3 Teachers may integrate the booklet into regular fluency practice, supplementing it with timed reading activities to improve WPM. Schools should also incorporate prosody assessments (e.g., rhythm, intonation) to provide a comprehensive evaluation of fluency. Teacher training workshops on evidence-based fluency instruction can be prioritized to sustain gains by emphasizing the interplay between speed, accuracy, and expression.

4.4 Teachers and schools may integrate the booklet into daily fluency practice while supplementing it with timed reading exercises (e.g., repeated oral readings, paced drills) to target WPM gains, as sustained practice has proven effective in maintaining fluency improvements.

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Determinants of Second Language Acquisition: Exploring Key Variables and Their Interactions in L2 Learning

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Abstract— Second language acquisition (SLA) is a vital field in linguistics and education, involving understanding cognitive abilities, emotional states, and social contexts to develop effective language learning strategies. The study aims to identify cognitive, affective, social, and individual factors influencing L2 learning, assess their impact on language acquisition, and explore the potential for personalized instruction based on these determinants. This mixed-methods study involved 100 English learners aged 8-45, categorized into younger and older groups. Quantitative data was collected through standardized tests such as the modern language aptitude test, Gardener's attitude/motivation battery, and questionnaires such as motivation questionnaire, exposure questionnaire, and a custom-designed questionnaire for L2 interaction in different contexts. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews and case studies to capture personal experiences in SLA. Quantitative data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis and factorial ANOVA. Thematic analysis of the participant's experiences and case studies was conducted for qualitative data analysis. The study found that age alone is not a predictor of SLA success, whereas motivation, exposure, and aptitude are most important among them. Younger learners had better pronunciation and grammatical accuracy, while older learners performed better in vocabulary and explicit grammatical knowledge. Integrative motivation was a significant predictor of L2 proficiency, while high language aptitude, particularly in phonetic coding and grammatical sensitivity, was linked to faster and more successful acquisition. Immersion environments were found to be more effective for L2 learning. Structural differences were causing negative L1 interference which significantly influences language learning. The study highlights the importance of age, motivation, aptitude, exposure, and L1 influence in L2 acquisition, emphasizing the need for personalized teaching strategies.



Keywords— Second Language, L2 Learning, Cognitive, Variables, Linguistics, Research.

I. INTRODUCTION

The process of learning a language other than one's native language is studied in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) which comprises interdisciplinary factors involving linguistics, cognitive psychology, educational research, sociology, and neurology that help in understanding how languages are learned in different contexts [1]. In the world of increasing globalization, learning a second language has become as important as a basic need for communication across borders, study or career advancements, networking, and understanding works

of literature in various languages for research purposes, etc [2].

SLA plays a multidimensional role in education, cognitive development, and communication. Learning a second language has profound effects on the cognitive development of children such as enhanced brain development, improved complex learning patterns, and improved memory and concentration [3]. Linguistic and cognitive skills can be improved by exposing children early to second language learning settings which will help them develop neural networks connecting new language with the native one [4]. Interestingly, bilingual children often exhibit better

prediction abilities in word decoding activities in comparison to monolingual children [5]. Additionally, SLA also helps develop pedagogical strategies emphasizing various instructional interventions such as input processing, input enhancement, form-focused output, and negative feedback [6]. Learners' communicative abilities are enhanced by SLA informed Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) which are highly recognized methods to retain not just form and meaning in language instruction [7, 8], but also utilize them in real-world contexts [9].

The process of second language acquisition (SLA) is complex and influenced by a wide range of factors such as cognitive, affective, social, and individual factors [10-12]. Cognitive factors that are responsible for how language is acquired and processed by the learners are one of the key challenges associated with SLA. The transition of short-term memory into long-term memory is required for effective retention as learners initially use short-term memory while processing new language information, managing a high cognitive load in SLA instilled due to the complexity of language structures, vocabulary and cultural nuances and knowledge transfer from first language to second language learning leads to interference due to the structure or vocabulary of first language adversely impacting second language [13]. Furthermore, Learners' aptitude and intelligence also significantly influence SLA where higher intelligence and aptitude correspond to enhanced language acquisition [8].

Individual differences in language learning are often exacerbated by cognitive abilities such as verbal cognition, processing speed, and memory [14]. Studies have demonstrated that learners with greater working memory capacity are more proficient at acquiring new vocabulary and mastering grammatical structures [11]. Additionally, cognitive styles, such as field dependence and field independence, affect how learners perceive and process language input. Field-independent learners, known for their analytical abilities, typically perform better in tasks that demand grammatical precision and structural understanding [15]. Additionally, learning strategies, particularly metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's learning. Research emphasizes that the effective use of these strategies can significantly enhance language learning outcomes. For instance, learners who actively set goals, track their progress, and adjust their learning techniques tend to perform better in language acquisition [16].

Affective factors, including motivation, anxiety, and attitudes, play a significant role in SLA. Motivation has been extensively studied and is known to be a powerful

determinant of language learning success. Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model distinguishes between integrative motivation, which involves a desire to connect with the culture of the L2 community, and instrumental motivation, which relates to practical benefits such as career advancement [10]. High levels of motivation are consistently associated with increased engagement and better language proficiency [17]. On the other hand, anxiety can hinder language acquisition by affecting cognitive processes and reducing learners' willingness to communicate in the L2. McIntyre and Gardner (1994) found that language anxiety negatively impacts learners' ability to process and produce language [18]. Positive attitudes towards the L2 and its speakers foster greater engagement and persistence in learning [12].

Social factors include the influence of the learning environment and interactions with others. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory assumes that social interaction is essential for cognitive development, including language learning. Interaction with native speakers and peers provides authentic practice and enhances language proficiency [19]. Immersion in the L2 environment, where learners are surrounded by the target language, accelerates language acquisition by offering sufficient input and opportunities for output [20]. Studies emphasize the importance of feedback from instructors and peers in guiding learners toward correct language use and improving their skills [21]. Collaborative learning environments, where learners engage in meaningful interactions, lead to higher levels of language proficiency [22].

Individual differences such as age, gender, and previous language exposure have a big impact on learning a second language (L2). Younger learners tend to pick up pronunciation and fluency more naturally because their brains are more adaptable [23]. However, older learners can use their advanced thinking skills and life experiences to learn in a more structured way [24]. Gender differences may have different strengths in language learning. According to Oxford (1995), females are often better at verbal skills and communication tasks [25]. Knowing another language, including being proficient in the first language (L1) and any other language, can make it easier to learn a new one by transferring skills and thinking abilities [26].

Extensive research has been conducted to understand the determinants of L2 learning. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) have explored motivational strategies that can be tailored to individual learners' goals and interests. They emphasize the importance of creating a motivating classroom environment and setting personalized learning goals [27]. Griffiths (2008) has highlighted the role of individual learner differences in SLA, suggesting that teaching strategies

should be adapted to meet the diverse needs of learners. She advocates for the use of diagnostic assessments to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses and to inform personalized instruction [28]. Furthermore, research by Oxford and Nyikos (1989) has shown that language learning strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies, are essential for effective language acquisition. They found that successful language learners often employ a variety of strategies to enhance their learning [29].

The various factors affecting SLA show that a single teaching method doesn't suit everyone. Personalizing L2 instruction means adapting teaching to fit each learner's needs. This greatly improves learning outcomes [30]. For instance, learners with anxiety may do better in calm environments, while those highly motivated by culture might excel in immersive activities. By recognizing and addressing each learner's unique needs, educators can make learning more effective and enjoyable [31].

This mixed-method study seeks to explore the determinants of second language (L2) learning by examining the interconnection of several factors such as cognitive, affective, social, and individual variables, and how their influence impacts the language acquisition process. Evaluating these multidimensional interactions among the given factors will give comprehensive insights into their collective role in influencing learning outcomes. Additionally, this research aims to provide an understanding of the development of personalized teaching strategies to improve L2 instruction.

The key objective of the study entails the analysis and identification of cognitive factors involving working memory capacity, cognitive styles, and learning strategies that play a role in L2 learning. The role of affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, and learners' attitudes in building language proficiency regarding L2 learning and its speakers are examined. The impact of social interactions, learning environments, and exposure to L2 communities will be assessed to determine the impact of social factors on SLA. Individual differences in L2 acquisition will be investigated such as age, prior language experience, and linguistic background, and their effects on learning efficiency. Finally, the potential for personalizing L2 teaching will be explored by the integration of evidence on cognitive, affective, social, and individual factors into fostering tailored instructional approaches.

II. METHODOLOGY

Study Design

A mixed-method approach was employed for this study to explore determinants of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The utilization of both qualitative and quantitative methods allowed a comprehensive analysis of the driving factors of the SLA process. The quantitative data presented measurable relationships among L2 learning determinants whereas qualitative data provided a deeper understanding of individual learners' experiences that reinforced the interpretation of quantitative outcomes.

The study was conducted in two phases, the quantitative phase encompassed standardized tests and surveys to assess key SLA variables involving age, motivation, aptitude, and L1 influence, while the qualitative phase consisted of semi-structured interviews and case studies allowing in-depth insights into learner experiences and interactions between cognitive, affective, and social factors. The study was conducted over six months, with participants enrolled from formal educational institutions, language centers, and immersion-based learning environments.

Data Collection

Quantitative Data Collection

Several standardized tests were employed for quantitative data collection such as Language Aptitude Test, Motivation Questionnaire, Language Proficiency Test, and Exposure Questionnaire. Assessing phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, memory, and inductive language learning ability was carried out using the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT). Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was modified to quantify integrative and instrumental motivation. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills were evaluated using a standardized language proficiency test. Finally, a custom-designed questionnaire was employed which measured the frequency, type, and quality of L2 interaction in classroom, social, and immersive contexts.

Qualitative Data Collection

Addressing personal experiences, challenges, and strategies in SLA was ensured through conducting semi-structured interviews among 20 participants (10 from each group). Additionally, a subset of six learners (three from each age group) were selected with different levels of success in SLA to analyze their language patterns, motivation influences, and cognitive strategies. The interviews lasted for 30-60 minutes each and were audio-recorded with consent, transcribed, and thematically coded. Field notes facilitated capturing non-verbal communication cues and contextual influences during data collection.

Sample Size and Population

The sample population consisted of 100 participants which were divided into two age groups namely young learners (n = 53; ages 8-32) and older learners (n = 47; ages 33-45). Participants enrolled in the studies were from schools, universities, and language learning centers that primarily offered English as a second language (ESL) programs. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure the population effectively represents varying L2 learning experiences, linguistic backgrounds, and exposure levels. Recruited participants had diverse first-language (L1) backgrounds involving learners from both formal and immersive settings. Gender representation was also balanced among male and female participants.

Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria involved participants actively learning English as an L2 over at least six months before participation coming from both classroom and immersive learning settings. Learners demonstrating various reasons of motivation for SLA such as academic, professional, or personal along with participants from different linguistic backgrounds for the analysis of L1 influence were made part of the study.

Exclusion Criteria

Participants who already had formal bilingual education before L2 were excluded from the study. Individuals diagnosed with language-related cognitive impairment were not included which might impact the findings. Participants with zero exposure i.e. who never engaged in spoken or written English before along with individuals unwilling to participate in interviews, testing, or surveys were not part of the study.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS to conduct multiple regression analysis for the assessment of how factors such as age, motivation, aptitude, and exposure inform L2 proficiency. Factorial ANOVA was also used to examine interactions between key variables. Reliability and validity measures were ensured using Cronbach's Alpha to check the internal consistency of the questionnaire along with test-retest reliability on a subset of participants.

Qualitative Analysis

The thematic analysis approach was used to identify recurring themes and patterns from participants' interviews

and case studies. The thematic coding framework consisted of data being categorized into motivation, cognitive abilities, and social influences and the themes were analyzed manually.

Triangulation of the data was achieved by cross-referencing the findings from qualitative and quantitative phases to identify any consistencies or discrepancies and improve data validity.

Ethical Consideration

The study adhered to ethical standards for research involving human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with parental consent secured for younger learners. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their data by issuing coded identifiers. Interview recordings and transcripts were securely stored in password-protected databases. The collected data will be retained for five years before deletion adhering to data protection policies.

III. RESULTS

Quantitative Data Analysis

Key determinants influencing SLA were statistically analysed using ANOVA, multiple regression, and descriptive statistics providing quantitative insights into the role of age, motivation, aptitude, exposure, and first language (L1) influence on forming learners' interactions with the second language (L2).

Demographic Analysis

Demographic distribution of the study participants reports significant context for the interpretation of results. The sample included 100 participants, with a gender distribution of 40% female and 60% male learners (Table 1). The age differences were reported with a higher concentration in the middle-aged groups, with 37% of participants aged 17-32 years, followed by 30% aged 22-40 years, and 17% aged 41-45 years (Table 1). This wider age range allows for how SLA is influenced by age.

There was a gender imbalance reported in the sample, with a higher proportion of male participants may affect the generalizability of the findings. The distribution of participants across various age groups allows the study to capture variations in language learning experiences across life stages, imparting valuable insights into how age-related cognitive and social differences influence SLA.

Table 1. Demographic Analysis of the Sample Population

Demographic Analysis				
Gender				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	40	40.0	40.0	40.0
Male	60	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Age				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
08-16	08-16	16	16.0	16.0
17-32	17-32	37	37.0	37.0
33-40	33-40	30	30.0	30.0
41-45	41-45	17	17.0	17.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Independent SLA Determinants

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	100	4	5	4.31	.465
Motivation	100	4	5	4.40	.492
Exposure	100	4	5	4.33	.473
Influence	100	4	5	4.31	.470
Aptitude	100	4	5	4.37	.471
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table 3. Consolidated Statistical Analysis Table of Individual SLA Determinants

Consolidated Statistical Analysis Table														
Determinants	Model Summary			ANOVA			Regression Coefficients				Residual Statistics			
	R	R Square	Adj. R2	F	Sig.	Std. Error	B (Unstandardized)	Std. Error	Beta	t	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Age	0.164	0.027	0.017	2.713	0.103	0.442	0.158	0.096	0.164	1.647	-0.750	0.238	0.000	0.446
Motivation	0.037	0.001	-.0009	0.133	0.0316	0.405	0.033	0.091	0.037	0.364	-0.750	0.238	0.000	0.446
Aptitude	0.553	0.421	0.546	2.713	0.0113	0.412	0.158	0.096	0.164	1.647	-0.788	0.299	0.000	0.444
Exposure	0.091	0.008	-.0002	0.827	0.0265	0.414	0.086	0.095	0.091	0.910	-0.788	0.299	0.000	0.444
L1 Influence	0.614	0.617	0.777	2.713	0.203	0.442	0.158	0.096	0.164	1.647	-0.750	0.283	0.000	0.446
Footnotes for Table 1:														

- 1- R: Pearson correlation coefficient measures the relationship between each determinant and SLA interaction.
- 2- R²: Proportion of variance in SLA interaction explained by each determinant.
- 3- Adjusted R²: Adjusted for the number of predictors, providing a more accurate measure of explanatory power.
- 4- F: The F-static from the ANOVA test, indicating whether the predictor significantly explains SLA interaction
- 5- Sig.: The p-value indicating statistical significance (Values < 0.05 confirm significant effects).
- 6- Std. Error: Standard error of the estimate, representing the accuracy of the predictions.
- 7- B (Unstandardized Coefficients): Represents the raw contribution of each determinant to SLA interaction.
- 8- Beta (Standardized Coefficients): Indicates the relative strength of each predictor in the model.
- 9- T: The t-statistics measuring the significance of each predictor's contribution.
- 10- Residual Statistics (Min Max, Mean, Std. Dev.): Indicate the distribution of residuals (prediction errors) to assess model accuracy.
- 11- Dependent Variable: Interaction in L2 Learning.
- 12- Predictors: Each determinant (Age, Motivation, Aptitude, Exposure, L1 Influence) is tested concerning the dependent variable.

Age as a Determinant of SLA

The role of age in SLA was examined in the study to assess how it affects learners' ability to interact with the L2. A weak yet statistically significant relationship was revealed in the regression analysis highlighting the relationship between age and interaction in L2 learning ($R = 0.164$, $R^2 = 0.027$, $p = 0.0103$). This was further strengthened by ANOVA results that also confirm a significant effect of age on SLA ($F = 2.713$, $p = 0.103$) (Refer to Table 3). Descriptive statistics also indicated a mean age of 4.31 ($SD = 0.465$), demonstrating that most of the participants acknowledged age as a relevant factor in their language learning experience (Table 2).

Young learners demonstrated enhanced phonetic coding and grammatical accuracy which is reflective of previous research on the Critical Period Hypothesis. On the other hand, older learners were evident in showing stronger vocabulary acquisition and explicit grammatical understanding. While it was clear that age does play a role in SLA, however, its overall impact was comparatively small to other factors such as motivation and exposure.

The Impact of Motivation on SLA

Motivation was one of the highest reported driving predictors of L2 learning interaction. Motivation has a statistically significant effect on SLA which is confirmed by the ANOVA results ($F = 0.133$, $p = 0.0316$). Regression analysis demonstrated a positive but somewhat small interaction between motivation and L2 learning. ($\beta = 0.033$, $p = 0.0316$) (Refer to Table 3). A high mean motivation score of 4.40 ($SD = 0.492$) given in the descriptive statistics highlighted motivation to be a key factor in L2 Learning (Table 2). Learners exhibiting integrative motivation demonstrated higher engagement levels in comparison to those who experienced instrumental motivation. Moreover, the small effect size suggests that motivation alone does not strongly predict SLA success but requires interaction with exposure and aptitude.

The Role of Aptitude in SLA

Aptitude measured through phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, and working memory capacity showed a mean aptitude score of 4.37 ($SD = 0.471$) among participants using descriptive statistics (Table 2). A moderate correlation was found between aptitude and L2 learning interaction ($R = 0.421$) in the regression analysis which was further statistically confirmed with ANOVA results ($F = 2.713$, $p = 0.0113$). Furthermore, the regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.0113$) supports aptitude as a significant predictor of SLA (Refer to Table 3).

Additionally, participants with higher aptitude scores had faster acquisition rates and greater linguistic accuracy, specifically among grammar and pronunciation, further strengthening the notion that aptitude has a critical role in SLA success.

The Role of Exposure in SLA

A statistically significant impact on SLA was found to be exposure to the L2 environment. Participants in the descriptive statistics show a mean exposure score of 4.33 ($SD = 0.473$) (Table 2). ANOVA results further solidify the effect of exposure on SLA ($F = 0.827$, $p = 0.0265$ while the regression analysis reported a moderate correlation ($\beta = 0.086$, $p = 0.0265$) (Refer to Table 3). Learners who frequently engaged in L2 exposure such as immersion environments had an increased likelihood of improved fluency and comprehension. However, independent exposure's impact on SLA was not sufficient; indicating the contribution of motivation and aptitude to further improve its impact on SLA.

L1 Influence on SLA

L1 transfer effects were analyzed to evaluate their effect on SLA outcomes where descriptive statistics demonstrated that participants had a mean L1 influence score of 4.31 ($SD = 0.470$) (Table 2). There was a moderate correlation between L1 influence and SLA outcomes ($R = 0.617$) as reported in Regression analysis and this statistical significance was further strengthened with ANOVA results ($F = 2.713$, $p = 0.0203$) (Table 16). Additionally, the

regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.0103$) also validates this statistical finding (Refer to Table 3).

Learners with structurally similar to English L1 demonstrate faster acquisition rates, in comparison to those with distinctively different language structures adding to their grammar and pronunciation challenges. The results propose that L1 can facilitate or hinder SLA based on linguistic similarities.

Interaction between SLA Determinants

To determine how the five independent variables (age, motivation, aptitude, exposure, and L1 influence) collectively influence the interaction of SLA, a regression model was conducted which could explain the variance in SLA interaction. With an R-value of 0.724, it was demonstrated by the model that there is a strong positive correlation between independent variables and SLA interactions. The R² value (0.524) highlights that 52.4% of the variance in SLA interaction is driven by the combination of age, motivation, aptitude, exposure, and L1 influence. The model's predictive strength is reflected in the standard error of the estimate (0.389) confirming that these five factors significantly contribute to SLA interaction.

It is further strengthened by the ANOVA results presented in Table affirming that the model is statistically significant ($F = 13.659$, $p = 0.000$), reporting that at least one of the independent variables is significantly contributing to SLA interaction. The low p-value (<0.001) also suggests that the model effectively captured significant relationships between SLA interaction and its predictors.

Furthermore, the regression coefficients for each predictor indicate that motivation ($\beta = 0.219$, $p = 0.012$), aptitude ($\beta = 0.251$, $p = 0.009$), exposure ($\beta = 0.196$, $p = 0.023$), and L1 influence ($\beta = 0.209$, $p = 0.028$) were statistically important predictors of SLA interactions. However, age ($\beta = 0.145$, $p = 0.154$) was not statistically significant, presenting a weaker direct effect on SLA interaction in combination with other variables. Aptitude was one of the strongest predictors to have a significant impact on SLA interaction followed by motivation, L1 influence, and exposure (Refer to Table 3).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted on data collected through semi-structured interviews with 50 participants and case studies of 10 learners with different levels of L2 proficiency. These qualitative findings consisted of lived personal experiences of L2 learners, providing a wider perspective into individual learning strategies, challenges, and personal motivations in L2 acquisition.

Age and SLA: Perceptions and Learning Challenges

Participants reported varying experiences across different age groups in L2 learning with younger learners (ages 8-32)

narrating increased ease in acquiring pronunciation and grammar essentially, which is also reflected in the quantitative findings.

Participant (Age 12) stated:

"I don't think about grammar rules when I speak English. It just feels natural, like my first language."

Conversely, the older learners underscored the role of structured learning and cognitive strategies for better L2 acquisition.

A 35-year-old participant reflected:

"I break down grammar into patterns and analyze sentence structures, which helps me understand English better."

These findings highlight the viewpoint that younger learners benefit from unconscious learning while older learners are reliant on analytical skills and structured instructions.

Motivation: Driving Forces Behind L2 Learning

Both integrated and instrumental motivation were reported by participants, making motivation a strong determinant in L2 learning. Learners demonstrating integrative learning were more willing to connect with L2 communities.

A 28-year-old participant shared:

"Learning English makes me feel like I belong when I travel or talk to international colleagues."

However, individuals with instrumental motivation were more focused on career advancement and academic goals. A participant pursuing higher education noted:

"I need English to study abroad and access better job opportunities."

As motivation continues to vary over time, most participants highlighted the role of external reinforcements such as supportive teachers or engaging learning environments to maintain motivation in the long run.

Language Aptitude: Individual Differences in Learning Styles

There was evident individual difference highlighted in the cognitive aptitude and learning styles of participants. Learners with higher aptitudes reported strong pattern recognition and memory skills which enabled them to understand complex grammatical structures quickly.

One participant (age 16) said:

"I remember new words after hearing them once, and I can guess their meanings from context."

Struggles with retaining vocabulary and mastering pronunciation among learners with lower aptitude were also reported. Such as a 55-year-old participant remarked:

"Even if I memorize a word today, I forget it by next week unless I use it multiple times."

These findings warrant personalized learning strategies involving mnemonic devices or repeated exposure to be specifically beneficial for learners with lower language aptitude.

Exposure and L2 Immersion: The Role of Learning Environments

The importance of real-world exposure to speed up L2 acquisition is frequently emphasized in participants' narratives. Participants involved in L2 learning environments like studying abroad or working in an English-speaking setting exhibited faster progress and greater confidence in communication. A participant working in an international company explained:

"Speaking English daily at work helped me improve naturally didn't even realize I was learning."

Comparatively, learners immersed in classroom settings demonstrate slower progress due to limited speaking opportunities.

A university student noted:

"I understand grammar well, but I struggle with real conversations because we don't practice speaking enough in class."

These experiences underscore the importance of interactive learning approaches and the necessity of implementing communicative exercises in formal educational contexts.

L1 influence: Transfer Effects in SLA

Participants' responses were reflective of the role first language (L1) transfer played. Participants with a first language structure similar to English (e.g., German and Dutch) adapted easily to grammar and vocabulary.

A participant with a German L1 background said:

"English sentence structures feel familiar, so I don't struggle with word order."

Learners from languages with different syntactic structures (e.g., Japanese, Arabic) faced more difficulties in understanding sentence formation and pronunciation.

A participant from a Japanese L1 background shared:

"I always struggle with articles like 'a' and 'the' because we don't have them in my language."

These findings highlight the need for targeted instruction to address negative transfer and foster positive transfer strategies.

Emotional and Social Factors in SLA

Participants' L2 learning experiences were significantly impacted due to emotional and social factors, with learners

reporting experiencing language anxiety often in speaking tasks.

A participant (Age 22) stated:

"I always feel nervous when speaking English because I'm afraid of making mistakes."

This anxiety mostly resulted in avoidance behaviors such as reluctance to take part in conversations. However, this anxiety was reported to be addressed by promoting supportive learning environments and peer interactions.

One participant noted:

"When I practice with friends, I feel more comfortable making mistakes and learning from them."

Social interaction was emphasized as important to build confidence and improve fluency among L2 learners.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study highlights the complex nature of second language acquisition (SLA), highlighting the role of cognitive, affective, individual, and social factors. The findings demonstrated younger learners increased ability in phonetic coding and grammatical accuracy whereas older learners displayed stronger vocabulary and impeccable grammatical understanding, which are highly emphasized and aligned with the critical period hypothesis in previous research [32]. Given these benefits, the statistical analysis underscores that age alone does not predict SLA success in comparison to other independent factors such as motivation or exposure.

One of the striking findings is motivation acknowledged as a significant determinant of L2 learning in which increased levels of engagement and proficiency were exhibited due to integrative motivation. Higher commitment was observed in learners to connect to broader L2 communities in comparison to those whose motivations were driven by instrumental factors such as career advancement [33]. These findings are reflective of previous research which highlighted long-term language acquisition is achieved through sustainable integrative motivation [34]. However, to maximize SLA outcomes, the relatively small sample effect size emphasizes the importance of interaction between motivation and other factors such as exposure and aptitude. Findings also highlighted that learning efficiency is mainly influenced due to language aptitude particularly phonetic coding ability and grammatical sensitivity. In SLA, the role of individual cognitive abilities is crucial which is highlighted in previous research [35], higher aptitude scores of participants presenting faster acquisition rates and greater linguistic accuracy also confirm this narrative.

Another critical factor in SLA success is the exposure to the L2 environment. The findings highlighted that learners engaged in immersive environments were more likely to develop increased fluency and comprehension which reinforces the previous research findings that show quality exposure to be more critical than just quantity [36]. Participants engaging in real-world interactions with native speakers had an increased likelihood of making rapid progress compared to traditional classroom settings where speaking opportunities are limited which restricts learners' consistent language use. These results highlight integrating interactive and communicative exercises into formal education is highly required to overcome the barrier between classroom instruction and real-world application [37]

First language (L1) influence was demonstrated to be both facilitative and inhibitory on SLA. Learners with native language structures similar to English experienced faster acquisition whereas those with significantly different language structures reported to face challenges in grammar and pronunciation. These findings reflected previous research that underscored the role of positive and negative transfer in SLA [38]. Moreover, Potential L1 interferences should be accounted for in instructional approaches by designing targeted strategies that reduce the negative transfer and utilize linguistic similarities between languages to promote smoother learning. The interdependence of motivation, aptitude, exposure, and L1 influence was highlighted in the regression model that demonstrated the collective impact of these factors contributing to over half of the variance in SLA success. Despite the age having a weaker direct effect on SLA acquisition, it was responsible for fostering learners' cognitive and social interactions in the overall language learning process. These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to SLA incorporating interconnected factors for the development of effective and personalized teaching strategies.

The findings of the present study propose several implications for language education and curriculum development. Initially, results highlight the importance of personalized instruction catering to individual learner profiles may improve SLA outcomes. While naturalistic exposures are more productive for young learners, older learners seek structured and direct instructions to enhance their learning experiences. This individualized and personalized approach in instructional design may prove to be effective in increasing overall language proficiency by attaining diversified learner requirements [30]. Additionally, for the long-term sustainability of language engagement, promoting integrative motivation is essential. Cultural immersion activities should be a part of language programs with initiatives such as study-abroad

opportunities or language exchange programs that will improve learners' motivation and provide opportunities to interact with L2 communities. Furthermore, instructors should incorporate motivational strategies that are directed at both integrative and instrumental goals, strengthening sustained learner commitment [27].

Given the effect of aptitude on SLA, language programs should include diagnostic assessments to evaluate diverse strengths and weaknesses. Learning efficiency can also be increased with tailored instructional approaches such as mnemonic devices for learners with lower memory capacity or pattern-based grammar instruction for high-aptitude learners [39]. Additionally, integrating technologically advanced learning tools can help personalize language instruction according to learners' cognitive profiles. Communicative and interactive elements should also be incorporated into traditional classrooms due to the importance of immersive exposure. Approaches such as task-based language teaching (TBLT) and communicative language teaching (CLT) emphasize the real-world usage of language education to overcome the barrier of academic learning and their practical application [8]. Moreover, leveraging online platforms, virtual exchanges, and conversational practice with native speakers may help formal instruction in enhancing fluency and comprehension.

Addressing L1 transfer effects in SLA needs individually customized instructional interventions. Teachers should utilize strategies like contrastive analysis in equipping learners to assess key differences among their L1 and L2 which will lower the interference while maintaining positive transfer effects. Additionally, by adopting an evidence-based approach to instruction, educators can be empowered to design strategies that cater to linguistic diversity and streamline the language acquisition processes.

V. CONCLUSION

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) was found to be a complex process influenced by cognitive, affective, individual, and social factors. Age, motivation, exposure, aptitude, and L1 influence were found to have an impact on SLA individually as well as collectively. However, age alone does not significantly influence SLA success. Integrative motivation leads to more sustained language learning outcomes. Aptitude also differentiates learners, with those with higher aptitude showing more rapid and successful acquisition. Quality and quantity of language exposure are crucial for successful acquisition with immersive learning exposure showing increased potential benefit. The impact of the first language on second language learning is also significant. This research emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to understanding and

facilitating second language acquisition. Educators and language policymakers should consider these variables when designing curricula and instructional strategies to optimize L2 learning for diverse learner profiles. Personalized learning pathways that will influence overall learning comprehension, promoting integrative motivation through cultural immersion initiatives, and leveraging aptitude influence to implement individually tailored learning approaches are some of the implications identified in the study. Addressing individual differences in motivation, aptitude, exposure, and L1 interference could enhance the effectiveness of second language acquisition efforts.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

The relatively small sample size of the study limits the generalizability to wider L2 learning populations. The study population demonstrates an imbalance in gender distribution with male participants comprising 60% in comparison to females consisting of 40% may influence the results due to individual differences in SLA. Motivation and exposure levels measured through self-reported questionnaires may also introduce social desirability or recall bias. Additionally, the study focused on English as a second language which limits its applicability for other target languages.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research should include a larger more diversified sample to improve the generalizability of findings. Long-term studies are required to evaluate participants' language acquisition process over several years to evaluate the impact of individually identified SLA determinants. Other cognitive factors such as personality traits, emotional intelligence, and neurobiological aspects can also be focused on developing a comprehensive understanding of SLA.

DECLARATION

I confirm that the paper is the original work of the author and that the paper has not been submitted for publication anywhere else.

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Blended Lexicons and Hybrid Tongues: Tracing Linguistic Innovation in Indian English Literature

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Abstract— This paper dwells upon the complex phenomenon of the evolution of the English language in the context of Indian literature, presenting a detailed discussion of how Indian writers have creatively appropriated and Indianized English to suit their indigenous cultural and socio-political exigencies. It delves into the ways by which English, a language which was imposed on the colony, has been 'monkeyed' and transformed into an authentic medium of expression. At the heart of this transformation are a set of linguistic innovations—code-mixing, semantic reassignments, syntactic play, and the use of regional idioms—that give writers a way to mirror the diverse and textured reality of Indian experience. Through an examination of the works of some eminent Indian English writers, the research demonstrates how these writers reject English grammar as it is otherwise written, and establish what amounts to an Indian accent in literature. Such recourse to mixed lexicons or hybrid tongues is not only the reflection of local realities but also a form of reclaiming linguistic agency in a postcolonial world. The paper claims that such linguistic creative practice is not mere stylistic exotica, but rather lies at the heart of identity empowerment, prevention of linguistic imperialism, and the telling of authentic life stories. The study, in the end, suggests that Indian English literature is not static but a pulsating and changing phenomenon in the scheme of world literature. By constantly testing the limits of the language, it both redefines the limits of English and enriches the literature of the world. And this continued evolution proves that Indian English writing has more than stood its ground, is a wonderful example of how language adapts and always remains at the centre of cultural self-expression.



Keywords— Indian English, Linguistic Innovation, Postcolonial Literature, Hybrid Language, Code-Mixing, Indian Writers, Language Evolution, Cultural Identity, Nativization

I. INTRODUCTION

The English tongue in India, a legacy of the colonial civilising mission, has completely transformed itself in the past two centuries. It has grown from a forced instrument of governance and elite instruction to an increasingly full-bodied and deeply rooted mode of cultural and literary expression. Though English started merely as an official correspondence and an academic tool of education to a small coterie of Indians, it has grown to embrace creativity, identity, and everyday communication.

In India of the post-colonial era, the language became possessed, refashioned, and reconceived by Indian writers who no longer used it passively as a foreign medium, but raised their own voice in it. This process of adaptation — variously referred to as 'nativization' or 'Indianization' of

English — indicates a conscious design to infuse, inject or embed the language with local colour, socio-cultural texture and speech rhythm. While not adhering to established British or American models, Indian-English texts tend to assume a more fluid, hybrid identity that makes use of indigenous expressions, syntactical elasticity, and local inflections of the language.

It is curious to note, then, that English in India should have gradually evolved to be a language with a unique identity, bearing in itself the variety and complication of Indian civilization. It has the rhythm of the regional languages, the flavour of local idioms, and the historical and philosophical traditions of the subcontinent. In this evolution of English, the Indian literary imagination no longer regards this as a foreign tongue but rather as an Indian language of its own,

capable of expressing the emotional range, the depth of spiritual thought, and the measure of cultural and social experience that Indian literature commands.

This paper intends to look at this evolutionary trip of Indian English, focusing on how Indian authors have cleverly remodelled English in their literary creations. It has an investigative scope - what are the original linguistic devices through which Indian English literature distinguishes itself from the West? - and a discursive function - how is this local invention related to a more general (postcolonial) discourse of identity, resistance, and performance? By rooting into some of the Indian novels, the research contributes towards pointing out the linguistic creativity that makes Malayalam Indian writing in English a dynamic literary tradition.

II. INHERITANCE AND RECLAMATION

The English language was introduced in India during the colonial rule. It was primarily used for administrative purposes, but in 1835, Macaulay, in the name of educating Indians, introduced English into the education system. Thus, it became a part of Indian classrooms and society at large. This transformation allowed the convenience for the Britishers to have interpreters for the ease of communication between the ruler and the masses. Eventually, after independence, Indian thinkers opposed the imitation of British norms but embraced English as a tool for expressing India and Indian experiences.

Raja Rao's declaration in *Kanthapura* (1938) — "We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can only write as Indians." — marked a turning point. Writers like R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and others initiated a postcolonial reclamation of English, transforming it into a language uniquely suited to Indian themes and idioms.

III. LINGUISTIC INNOVATION AS CULTURAL ASSERTION

Indian English writers engage in significant linguistic experimentation to assert cultural specificity and identity. These innovations include:

3.1 Code-Mixing and Code-Switching

Writers frequently blend English with Indian languages (Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Urdu, etc.), creating a bilingual texture. Salman Rushdie famously called this "chutnification" — mixing English with vernacular elements. Words like *angrez*, *baba*, *jaldi*, and *chaprasi* are used without translation, compelling the reader to grasp their meanings contextually.

3.2 Semantic Shift and Idiomatic Transfer

Indian English often adapts the meaning and usage of English phrases. For example:

- "What is your good name?" — a literal translation from Hindi, not idiomatic in standard English but natural in Indian English.
- Arundhati Roy's use of "He was the God of Small Things" blends Indian spiritual idioms with poetic innovation.

3.3 Syntax and Rhythm

Indian writers often mirror the rhythms of their native languages in English syntax. Common features include:

- Tag questions: "You are coming, no?"
- Reduplication: "small small things", "fast fast", reflecting local speech habits.

IV. CASE STUDIES IN LINGUISTIC INNOVATION

4.1 Salman Rushdie: Polyphonic Prose

In *Midnight's Children* (1981), Rushdie mixes languages, cultures, and historical references. His narrative voice reflects multilingualism and challenges the purity of English. His prose creates a linguistic tapestry where characters speak in a mixture of tongues that reflect real Indian speech patterns.

4.2 Arundhati Roy: Sensory Syntax

In *The God of Small Things* (1997), Roy crafts a unique voice by breaking conventional grammar rules and inserting Malayalam terms directly. Her stylistic choices reflect the fragmented psyche of her characters and the layered cultural landscape of Kerala.

4.3 Amitav Ghosh: Multi-lingual Historicity

In *Sea of Poppies* (2008), Ghosh uses a mix of Bhojpuri, Bengali, English, and colonial slang to reconstruct the linguistic diversity of 19th-century India. He includes glossaries and contextual cues, inviting readers into a complex world where English is only one of many coexisting voices.

V. THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE: POWER, IDENTITY, AND RESISTANCE

Linguistic innovation in Indian literature is deeply political. It symbolizes:

- **Resistance to linguistic imperialism:** Writers redefine English on their own terms.
- **Assertion of Indian identity:** The indigenized English becomes a vehicle for cultural pride.

- **Voice to the marginalized:** Non-elite forms of speech are included in literary discourse.

The idea of the “subaltern voice” introduced by Gayatri Spivak also finds relevance in this context as one’s right to speak in one’s own language is also a form of empowerment.

VI. GLOBAL RECEPTION AND LITERARY IMPACT

Indian English fiction has gained international acclaim. Writers like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Arvind Adiga have won major global awards. However, their hybrid English sometimes receives mixed reactions:

- Western audiences find the writing “rich but difficult.”
- Indian readers appreciate the authenticity but sometimes critique the elitism of metropolitan English.

Despite these tensions, the distinctive linguistic style of Indian English has influenced postcolonial literature worldwide.

VII. THE DIGITAL TURN: HINGLISH AND NEW VOICES

With the rise of digital platforms, Indian English is undergoing further transformation:

- **Hinglish** (Hindi + English) is now common in social media, advertising, and web fiction.
- Writers like Meena Kandasamy and regional bloggers use a mix of English, vernacular, and slang.
- Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and podcasts are producing new literary styles where traditional grammar is secondary to rhythm and impact.

This ongoing evolution suggests that Indian English is a living, adaptive mode of expression.

VIII. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Despite its creativity, Indian English writing faces some challenges:

- **Standardization vs. Creativity:** Lack of linguistic norms may hinder clarity.
- **Market Pressures:** Publishers may favor globally comprehensible English.

- **Social Inclusion:** Urban-centric English may exclude rural or non-English speaking voices.

The growing number and outreach of regional writers and translator highlights a more inclusive future for Indian English literature.

IX. CONCLUSION

Indian literature has witnessed a journey of English language, its evolution and popularity from a colonial imposition to a tool of creative liberation. This reflects the resilience and flexibility of Indian writers. Their linguistic innovations have also shaped the contemporary state of English. It has enriched the language with new rhythms, idioms, and indigenous views. Such a blended approach represents the unique form of cultural expression that challenges literary norms and expands the linguistic imagination globally.

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“Our Home and/ on Native Land”- A Perpetual Condemnation and Combat of the Aboriginals— A Case Study of George Ryga’s *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*

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Abstract— Through a critical reading of George Ryga’s landmark play *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (1967), this essay examines the ongoing marginalization and resistance of Canada’s Indigenous peoples. With its roots in Ryga’s personal experience as a cultural outsider and its inspiration from a real-life case of an Aboriginal woman who was murdered, the play effectively exposes the systemic racism, gendered violence, and cultural erasure that Aboriginal communities face. The article frames the ongoing discussion about Indigenous rights with the symbolic act of resistance performed by singer Jully Black, who changed the Canadian national anthem to highlight settler colonialism. The play illustrates how dominant colonial structures like the legal system, the Church, and others criminalize, silence, and obliterate Indigenous identity through Rita Joe’s tragic story. The study looks at how memory sequences give voice to subaltern experiences while characters like Father Andrew and the Magistrate enforce assimilation. The study makes the case that Rita and Jaimie both embody marginalized voices fighting against imposed identities and systemic violence, drawing on postcolonial theory, particularly Gayatri Spivak’s concept of the subaltern.



Keywords— Indigenous marginalization, systemic racism, postcolonial theory, cultural erasure, subaltern resistance

I. INTRODUCTION

On 20th February 2023, when the fans of the Bucks and Lakers were still replaying the memories of the two days filled with powerful playing in their heads, Jully Black played a very subtle grammatical game. The Canadian R&B singer made a very small but drastic change in the Canadian national anthem ‘O Canada’. The original lyrics of the anthem goes like ‘Our home and native land’, which was changed to ‘Our home on native land’ signifying the importance of the Canadian Indigenous people.

People thus, till date, are voicing out their views regarding the rights and the ‘right place’ of the Native people in history, the current time and the future. Not just the people belonging to the Indigenous tribes of Canada, but even the

non-Natives have voiced their support for a long time. One such figure is writer George Ryga.

George Ryga was born in Alberta to Ukrainian immigrant parents, who came to Canada just five years before his birth. It was his minority background that provided him with enough sympathy for the Natives. Ryga thus came up with his most pioneering work titled *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* in 1967. The story deals with the Aboriginal girl named Rita Joe who is charged with various accusations like vagrancy, theft, and prostitution. At the surface level, one might be deluded into thinking that the Magistrate is supportive and unprejudiced, but in truth he is like any other White who sees the Indigenous in a poor light. But it is in his court that Rita narrates the story of her life. Rita is taken back and forth in memories of her loved ones which include her father David, her sister Eileen, and her friend-lover Jaimie Paul.

She gets reminded of the time when her mother's body was being flown through an aircraft. Mr. Homer pitches in and boasts of the help that the Whites, and in general the missionaries, provide the Aboriginals with. Rita comes out of her memories and is charged with prostitution. The court allows for the testimonies of the convicts and the victim, with an evident prejudiced nature. The four murderers cum rapists are brought for testimony. They appear in front of the magistrate, very conceited and snobbish in the claims about their act, without any iota of repentance and shame. Going by the claims of the murderers, Rita is sentenced to thirty days in jail.

The Act 2 of the play starts with Father Andrew, the priest visiting Rita in her cell. He has been a father-figure to Rita, all her life. But here we see his frantic efforts in the direction of Rita's confessions to the crimes she has not committed. He brings in Christian ideals and conducts to advise her to confess and come into Christianity's fold. Rita then again goes back into her memories, where she sees her father, David in a dilemma over choosing a new chief for his tribe. One more incident that surfaces in her memories is that of the feud between Jaimie and Mr. Homer. The feud which started as Mr. Homer's boasting and Jamie's mistrust towards people like him, takes a violent turn and Mr. Homer advances towards Jaimie with a knife in his hand.

Finally, the readers get to know about the gruesome murder and rape of Rita by the four convicts. Jaimie, who tried helping his lover, is also murdered in the process. The play ends with the funeral procession of the two, with Father Andrew still chanting the Christian hymns.

II. VICTIMIZATION AND SUBJUGATION OF THE SUBALTERN

The play *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* is set in colonized Canada and highlights the sufferings of the Aboriginals. The Aboriginals of Canada refers to the people belonging to majorly three groups. These groups are First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. It is a dilemma that these Aboriginals have to get themselves registered as citizens (Status Indians and Non-Status Indians) in order to secure their own security. The various provisions like the Indian Act, pass systems, reserves etc. have snatched away the culture of these Aboriginals and have reduced them to live at the mercy of the Whites. The same is portrayed in the play by Ryga. The play brings to forefront the oppressions faced by the women belonging to these sections. especially the Aboriginal women. Such a woman, living among Whites is always in danger of one or the other sort. In the very beginning of the play, we see that Rita works in a tire company and one day when she gets late returning home, she is arrested by a police officer who then presents her as a prostitute in the

court. In reality, the only 'offense' that Rita commits is of leaving the Indian reserves allotted to the Aboriginals in pursuit of a better life and opportunities in the city. Such atrocities against women became very common in the colonized country where these women faced the 'double-burden,' of belonging to the 'color' and to the 'weaker sex.' The Whites always thought it as their duty to reform the 'savage ways' of the people they ruled. Characters like Father Andrew were present throughout history who, on the surface, gave a fatherly affection, with the main motive to convert these Aboriginals into their 'faith.' Unable to force Rita to plead guilty for her crimes he says the following words:

"You' re not the woman I expected you to be... Your pride, Rita... your pride... may bar you from heaven!" (Ryga 83)

The ulterior motives of the Whites i.e., colonization through religious subjugation becomes very clear through works like this.

"Long ago the white men came with Bibles, to talk to my people, who had the land. They talk for hundred years.... then we had all the Bibles, an' the white man had our land..." (Ryga 84)

The Whites always saw the Aboriginals as a 'troublesome' lot. They were often seen as savage and exotic, with awe and fear at the same time. In the play we see Whites' perception of Jaimie as a drunkard which in turn makes it very hard for him to get a job. The treatment by Whites forced this man to go through what we can call a 'changing shift in identity.' He is the one character who is troubled by this 'politics of identity.' The Whites in the play never call out his name in the correct way, highlighting the way they ill-treat the marginalized. Something as universal as a name is also taken away from them and instead they are called by derogatory terms like 'you boy', 'fella' etc.

"Teach me who I really am! You've taken that away! Give me back the real me so I can live like a man." (Ryga 111)

Even Rita tries her best to come to terms with the changing times and the life in the city but again and again she is brought back to the jail seeing in her a 'possible threat' for others. The father-figure Magistrate, too, reprimands time and again. He believes that she "will be back...always be back...growing older, filthier...looking more like stone and prison bars" (Ryga 117).

Bringing in an autobiographical touch to the story, we can find that Ryga too in his real life faced a 'double-burden' of its own kind. Since he had Ukrainian lineage, he was very well seen as a part of the colonizers. But his status of second-citizen, owing to immigration, placed him in the cadre of the colonized. The tough life, which Ryga underwent is thus explored through Rita.

Thus, the most important lens through which one can analyze the play is through the ‘voice and representations of the subalterns.’ Gayatri Spivak’s pioneering work “Can the Subaltern Speak” also focusses on the urge of subjugation by the colonizers. Rita and Jaimie both act the subaltern voices in the play, as opposed to Rita’s father David who resists any form of fight against the colonial masters. Memory-mode is used by Ryga, to highlight the voice of the subalterns, who are forced out of their own homes, where the White settlers have occupied their position. Their voices are always snubbed and they meet their tragic end towards the finale. They are reduced to mere ‘twisted, broken body’ (Ryga 124). Spivak and Ryga bring to light the same point that subalterns or the marginalized can never stand up for their own cause. They are forever tormented by the external forces of ‘power’ and ‘knowledge’ which is presumably higher than theirs.

Lastly, the title of the play is itself very significant. Ecstasy is generally defined as the state of trance associated with seers and saints. This ecstasy is the result of a long battle with suffering which culminates in eternal peace or feeling of joy. The final scene in the play equates the protagonist Rita with a saint. Her gruesome murder is likened to a pious sacrifice that she made in the name of her identity, her people, and her country. This is the most important point that Ryga wanted to bring home, thus giving the title, too, its much-deserved significance.

The play holds the highest esteem among all the other works of Ryga, evident by the name of his biography by James Hoffman. Hoffman in 1995 came up with Ryga’s biographical account by the name *The Ecstasy of Resistance*.

III. CONCLUSION

The problem of colonization and its effect doesn’t end with the political liberation of the country, alone. Evil is deep-rooted. Things haven’t changed from the time the play was published till now. Incidents like these are not merely the creative genius of the writer but facts. The play itself is influenced by an article in the “Vancouver Newspaper” regarding the murder and dumping of an Aboriginal girl. The Vancouver reviewer later reflected in the 1976 issue that Ryga’s play “punctured the euphoria and smug complacency of Canada’s birthday celebrations and declared unequivocally that all was not well with this country and its institutions” (Krueger 5). Till date incidents like Jully Black’s lyric swap of the National Anthem remind us that there is something wrong with the way we perceive things. The way we neglect the history of the Aborigines and seek ownership of the land which belongs to them.

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Wholeness in Renunciation: An Interpretative Inquiry into the Isha Upanishad and Its Echoes in the Bhagavad Gita

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Abstract— *The Isha Upanishad, one of the most concise yet profound texts in the Upanishadic corpus, offers a radical vision of divinity pervading all existence. This paper explores the philosophical essence of the Isha Upanishad, with a particular focus on its opening mantra which declares the world to be enveloped by the Supreme Being. Through interpretative analysis, the paper connects the teachings of the Upanishad with the Bhagavad Gita, highlighting shared values of renunciation (tyaga), non-attachment (vairagya), and ethical engagement with the world. Drawing upon Advaita Vedanta, Stoicism, and real-world scenarios, the research contemplates how spiritual wisdom from ancient India remains dynamically relevant to modern life. The paper concludes by affirming the Isha Upanishad's message of holistic living where inner realization leads to external harmony.*



Keywords— *Isha Upanishad, Indian philosophy, vedas, Vedanta, Modern world*

Introduction

The Upanishads, often referred to as the Vedanta or the culmination of Vedic thought, represent a profound philosophical and spiritual milestone in the intellectual heritage of ancient India. Composed between 800 BCE and 200 BCE, these texts mark a significant transition from ritualistic practices of the early Vedas to a deeper, introspective exploration of metaphysical realities. The term “Upanishad” itself, derived from the Sanskrit root “upa-ni-shad” meaning “to sit down near,” signifies the intimate transmission of esoteric knowledge from teacher to disciple a hallmark of the traditional guru-shishya (teacher-student) tradition. This sacred corpus, which includes major texts like the Isha, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, and Chandogya Upanishads, delves into the ultimate questions of existence, the nature of the Self (Atman), the universe (Brahman), and the path to liberation (Moksha).

The trajectory of the Upanishads from ancient to modern times demonstrates their enduring philosophical relevance

and transformative spiritual insight. In ancient India, these texts laid the foundation for the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy, especially Vedanta, and significantly influenced the doctrines of Buddhism and Jainism. During the medieval period, the Upanishadic vision was preserved and expanded upon by sages and scholars like Adi Shankaracharya, who emphasized non-dualism (Advaita), and later by thinkers who sought to reconcile devotional (bhakti) and philosophical traditions.

In the modern era, the Upanishads gained renewed global attention through the works of philosophers and reformers such as Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, and Mahatma Gandhi, who interpreted their teachings in the context of personal growth, national awakening, and universal harmony. Western philosophers like Arthur Schopenhauer also found in them a profound metaphysical framework that resonated with the spiritual hunger of the modern age. Today, in a world grappling with materialism, ecological crises, and identity conflicts, the

Upanishadic ideals of inner harmony, unity of existence, and the search for a higher truth remain strikingly relevant. This research paper aims to explore the philosophical depth of the Upanishads, their transformative influence across different eras, and their contemporary applicability. By tracing their evolution from oral traditions to scriptural authority, and finally to global philosophical discourse, this study seeks to reaffirm the Upanishads not merely as ancient texts but as living spiritual blueprints capable of guiding humanity toward a more conscious and integrated existence.

The Isha Upanishad, located in the Shukla Yajurveda, occupies a unique space among the principal Upanishads for its brevity and depth. It comprises only eighteen mantras, yet encapsulates the very soul of Vedantic thought. Its opening line “Ishavasyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyām jagat” is not merely a metaphysical claim but a living philosophy. It states that the Divine (Isha) permeates everything that moves in the universe. The implications of such a worldview are vast, demanding a radical shift in how we perceive ownership, action, and existence.

The Isha Upanishad, though brief, presents a remarkable synthesis of spiritual philosophy and ethical guidance. Among its eighteen mantras, a few stand out for their profound impact on Vedantic and modern thought. The first mantra lays the foundation for the entire text: “Isha vasyam idam sarvam...” It declares that the whole universe is enveloped by the presence of the Divine (Ishwara). This idea stresses the immanence of God in all creation, leading to the teaching that humans should enjoy the world not through attachment but through renunciation. This mantra introduces the key Vedantic principle of non-attachment (tyaga) and promotes a way of living that respects both the spiritual and material aspects of life without clinging to possessions.

The second mantra continues this balanced view by asserting that one can live for a hundred years while performing actions (karma), provided those actions are done in accordance with dharma and without selfish desire. This is significant because it harmonizes action (karma yoga) with the path of knowledge (jnana yoga). Rather than rejecting the world or escaping into asceticism, this mantra advocates for a life of righteous engagement. It negates the dichotomy between action and renunciation and encourages a responsible and ethical lifestyle that leads to inner freedom.

Another key mantra is the ninth, which warns against partial knowledge. It says that those who pursue ignorance (avidya) enter darkness, but those who worship knowledge (vidya) alone enter even greater darkness. This paradoxical statement teaches that neither mere ritualistic practice

(associated with ignorance) nor intellectual knowledge devoid of spiritual realization is sufficient. True wisdom arises from integrating both aspects material knowledge and spiritual insight to transcend dualities. This critique of one-sided development is relevant even today, especially in the context of education and modern technological progress.

The fifteenth mantra offers a highly symbolic prayer to the cosmic being (Purusha), asking, “O Pusan, the nourisher, the lone traveler, controller, sun, offspring of Prajapati, remove thy rays so I may see the truth that lies behind.” Here, the seeker longs to perceive the Supreme Reality (Brahman) behind the golden disc of the sun, which metaphorically represents the veil of illusion (maya). This mantra reveals the deep yearning of the soul for truth and the understanding that ultimate knowledge lies beyond physical perception. It also reflects the Upanishadic emphasis on the inner light and the journey from external appearances to internal realization.

Finally, the eighteenth mantra, often regarded as the concluding prayer, seeks dissolution into the cosmic Self: “O Agni, lead us by the right path... destroy our crooked sins.” It highlights the moral and ethical dimension of spiritual pursuit, urging purification and divine guidance. This mantra blends the outer fire (Agni) with the inner fire of conscience and transformation, showing that liberation (moksha) requires both inner awakening and outer rectitude. The Isha Upanishad does not offer abstract metaphysics alone; its important mantras present a way of living that is integrative, holistic, and deeply relevant. They teach the renunciation of ego and desire, ethical action without attachment, the importance of inner realization, and the balance between knowledge and devotion. Together, these teachings form a universal spiritual message that transcends time and culture, offering insights for both ancient seekers and modern thinkers alike. The significance and teachings of this Upanishad may be discerned through the following reflections

Divine Immanence and Ethical Living

In this vision, the universe is not a collection of inert matter or a playground for egoistic ambition. Rather, it is sacred, alive with the presence of the Supreme Self (Atman or Brahman). To live with this awareness is to live in harmony, embracing the world not through possession but through renunciation. The second half of the first mantra, “Tena tyaktena bhunjitha, ma gridhah kasyasvid dhanam” (“Enjoy through renunciation; do not covet anyone’s wealth”), further emphasizes ethical detachment. The text does not preach escapism, but rather insists on selfless engagement.

Connection with the Bhagavad Gita

This teaching finds powerful echoes in the Bhagavad Gita, especially in Lord Krishna’s instruction to Arjuna regarding

action without attachment (Nishkama Karma). In Chapter 2, verse 47, Krishna declares: “Karmany evadhikaras te ma phalesu kadachana”—“You have the right to act, but not to the fruits of action.” Both texts guide the aspirant toward inward freedom through outer responsibility, dismantling the dichotomy between the spiritual and the worldly. In this light, the Isha Upanishad and the Gita converge on a fundamental truth: it is not the action itself that binds, but the clinging to its outcomes.

Relevance in the Modern World

The notion of Ishavasyam—divine immanence—also challenges the contemporary materialistic mindset. In an age where commodification and consumerism dominate, the idea that everything belongs to the Divine fosters a sense of reverence, sustainability, and humility. Environmental ethics, too, find an early root in this verse. If all is sacred, then ecological destruction is not merely irresponsible—it is spiritually ignorant. The modern ecological movement, including thinkers like Satish Kumar, echoes these ancient insights by urging us to shift from ownership to stewardship.

Integration of Knowledge and Action

The Isha Upanishad also affirms the unity of opposites. It warns against the extremes of pure action without knowledge (avidya) and pure knowledge without action (vidya), suggesting that true wisdom lies in integrating both. This dialectic balance resonates with the Aristotelian golden mean and the Buddhist Middle Path. Spiritual life, then, is not about rejection of the world, but the transformation of how we live in it.

Real-Life Applications

In real-life terms, this philosophy manifests in individuals who live ethically, responsibly, and compassionately while remaining unattached. Mahatma Gandhi, who revered the Isha Upanishad, embodied this spirit. He owned little, lived simply, and worked tirelessly for others—not from compulsion, but from an inner conviction rooted in truth (satya) and non-attachment (aparigraha). In modern spiritual ecology, movements like the Chipko Movement in India have also drawn inspiration from this Upanishadic reverence for nature.

Advaita Vedanta and Experiential Realization

Philosophically, the Isha Upanishad aligns with Advaita Vedanta in affirming the non-duality of self and Brahman. But its verses are not dry speculations—they are experiential. The text urges the seeker to “see the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self,” thereby ending all sorrow. This realization is not escapist but transformative. It reconfigures our sense of identity from the ego to the eternal.

Conclusion and Contemporary Significance

The Isha Upanishad offers a complete vision of life, one that integrates knowledge, action, ethics, and devotion. It challenges modern assumptions of progress, ownership, and identity, offering in their place a sacred lens through which to view the world. It teaches that renunciation is not the rejection of the world, but the embracing of it without clinging. In its terse yet luminous verses, it holds a mirror to our fragmented existence and points toward wholeness. In a divided world, this ancient whisper of unity is not only relevant but essential too.

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Truths not yet believed: Florence Nightingale's *Cassandra* as a social autobiography of Victorian women

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Abstract— This article examines *Cassandra*, an autobiographical essay written by Florence Nightingale, in its various experiments with the autobiographical form and its implications about representation and individuality. It demonstrates how *Cassandra* blurs the distinction between autobiography and political tract. Nightingale's autobiography makes us rethink characteristic features of the autobiography form like the retrospective structure, the conversion narrative, and moments of self-reflection, when viewed from the position of women. *Cassandra* emerges as a work of persevering intellect from within a social space that had denied women the ability to articulate a critical understanding of their constricted lives, and demands a more meaningful role for women outside the family. *Cassandra* takes the shape of a collective autobiography bordering on a feminist tract that envisions a change in society on behalf of all women.



Keywords— autobiography, *Cassandra*, feminism, Florence Nightingale, Victorian women

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) is known to us as the "Lady with the Lamp," bringing forth the image of a gentle woman with a candle, soothing wounded soldiers at night in a hospital ward. For many, she is the mother of the nursing profession, who typified qualities like sacrifice, patience, and sympathy for the sick. Yet we must remember that in mid-nineteenth century England, only men were permitted to be waged medical professionals, whereas women were confined to domesticity, and volunteer work at best. Nightingale was in fact one of the earliest women to demand the professionalization of care work that women were anyway expected to do at home, and transformed it into professional nursing. She was also an ardent reformer, an astute statistician, and an indefatigable champion for questioning the crushing idleness imposed on the lives of middle-class English women.

Nightingale today has a mixed legacy. In the medical profession, some see her as an important hospital reformer (McDonald, 2020), but she is also regarded as not representational of the modern nursing profession by others (Hogan, 2020). Her feminism is also questioned. She evaded a direct conflict with society over the right of women to work by inserting professionalization into the older and more conventional forms of activity permitted to women like charity work, which did not militate too

strongly against the ethic of nurturing womanhood. She also lacked empathy for women of a different class or race. But she was a strong critic of the conventional Victorian family, and reinterpreted the Bible by showing women's duty as outside the family. *Cassandra* (1852) --- her autobiographical essay --- within its Victorian context, has been seen to stand as an important text in the English feminist tradition in line with Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* and looking forward to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* as Elaine Showalter puts it (1981). albeit with defects, and is viewed as a significant text that demanded an intellectual and productive role for middle-class women.

Cassandra was described as an essay in its initial title, and can be seen as a precursor to Nightingale's arguments in demanding productive work for women. But it bears a prophetic tone and a looming warning for those who do not believe the truths of *Cassandra*. Its title name is derived from Greek mythology. *Cassandra* depicted in the *Iliad* is the daughter of Priam and Hecuba, and she is a prophet who was cursed by Apollo to never be believed for her prophecies, as was the fate of her prophecy of the destruction of Troy. Her truths would never be given credibility even by her family. Florence Nightingale is understood as re-creating the mythical *Cassandra* in a new

light, in her autobiographical essay of the same name, a prophet whose truths must be heard and believed. *Cassandra* has been viewed as “adopting the genre of ‘sage writing’, where Nightingale positions herself as a female messiah in an autoreferential narrative that projects women's future possibilities” (Choperena and Rosa-Salas, 2022, p. 444).

Nightingale's *Cassandra* is generally regarded as a veiled autobiography that was inserted in her three-volume work titled *Suggestions for Thought to the Searchers after Truth*, which were her writings on religion, family life, and morality that was privately printed in 1860. It is also regarded as an important influence on John Stuart Mill's writings on women's rights (Cornick, 2012). *Cassandra* was written before Nightingale began her vocation of administrative and nursing reform, and it preceded her subsequent life full of meaningful work that more fully absorbed her energy. It was written at a time when she chafed at the uselessness of her life, and when she identified with women in similar conditions, though we do need to qualify her critique by noting that its area of concern is limited to upper- and middle-class white European women.

Though Florence Nightingale did not perhaps intend *Cassandra* to be an autobiography (as it was published along with several of her writings on religion and morality), it reflects some of the issues she encountered as a Victorian woman. Interestingly in this text, she uses the plural pronoun ‘we’ to include all women. The plural pronoun demonstrates the sheer impossibility for British women of the mid-nineteenth century to write a conventional individual autobiography, like John Stuart Mill could do, which dealt with personal goals. *Cassandra* can be viewed as a sustained and analytical narrative that exemplifies through its very form, an elaborate and thoughtful treatise about women that subverts the assumptions of individuality, that are typically inherent in our understanding of the autobiography form.

Nightingale's text implies that there seems to be no ‘I’ because the author conceives of her life in a way that is also the pattern of the lives of women in her situation. The text begins with the word ‘one’ that suggests a depersonalized subject position and implies a universal voice that she adopts for her sex. She uses the plural form of “we” to refer to women in her situation, for instance in the phrase, “look at the poor life which we lead”. It is clear that she is writing not just her own autobiography, but the autobiography of an entire generation of women. She indirectly refers to her own writing, both as a substitute for work as well as a voice given to point out the subjection of Victorian women in her class-position:

If they [women] were strong, all of them, they would not need to have their story told, for all the world would read it in the mission they fulfilled. It is for commonplace every-day characters that we tell our tale because it is the sample of hundreds of lives (or rather deaths) of persons who cannot fight with society, or who, unsupported by the sympathies about them, give up their own destiny as not worth the fierce and continued struggle necessary to accomplish it. (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 39-40)

There seems to be no possibility of writing a personal life-story here, precisely because for women like her, there was no possibility of realizing individual potential -- with no conventionally individual achievements, women therefore had no tale to tell. As she says, “so many hours spent everyday in passively doing what conventional life tells us, when we would so gladly be at work. And is it a wonder that all individual life is extinguished” (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 38)? For Victorian middle-class women, marriage was to be the whole of their lives and Nightingale sees the wife as subsumed in the shadow of her husband -- “Behind his destiny woman must annihilate herself, must only be his complement. A woman dedicates herself to the vocation of her husband...if she has any vocation of her own, she must renounce it, in nine cases out of ten” (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 40). Women writers like Margaret Oliphant partially escaped this fate of having to give up a vocation because ironically, widowhood and a lack of income as Nightingale herself points out, both forced and permitted a woman to work and such women may then have had a life to reveal.

The idea of wasted time in the life of women at home without a role for useful public work is central to the theme of the subjection of women in *Cassandra*. The text itself is the kind of uninterrupted and systematic thought-work that women of her time were denied, not only by a lack of opportunity and a systematic education, but a lack of continual stretch of time for themselves to be able to create meaningful work. At the same time, *Cassandra* dramatizes the impossibility of self-narration for women through its form, which underscores its suspended temporality that was a characteristic of the lives of women.

The linear developmental lives of men that were full of progress and growth, as recorded in several male autobiographies at the time, can be contrasted with the static, non-developmental female domestic lives of women. Her choice of the mode of essay-cum-autobiography is deliberately chosen as appropriate for her subject. For Nightingale, the genre of novels created a world of fantasy which could sedate women and could not arouse them to struggle for a purposeful life -- “they are exhausted, like those who live on opium or on novels, all

their lives - exhausted with feelings which lead to no action" (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 41). If conventional autobiographies revealed the personal lives of men and analysed their growth and struggles, *Cassandra* reveals the personal domestic lives of all women and analyses their stunted growth, and the almost futile struggles of women against convention -- "One would think we had no heads or hearts, by the total indifference of the public towards them. Our bodies are the only things of any consequence" (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 42). The emphasis on the neglect of women's intellectual growth and sense of purpose reveals the unhealthy focus on women as mere material objects.

The elaborately argued textual form Nightingale creates in *Cassandra* for a sustained and powerful critique of women's position in Victorian England, is a part of the kind of sustained work which she desires for all women -- productive work which requires concentration of time and which is unavailable to them. *Cassandra* works as an effective political critique of women's position in her time because it builds and fortifies her argument in the form of a tract as opposed to a fragmented form like the diary, which tends towards revealing everyday life and can sometimes lack an engagement with larger concerns. For Nightingale, her text as a sustained form of thoughtful writing is an example of what women seek and need in their lives - the ability to reflect on and create a meaningful life - which is possible only through a judicious use of time for one's own intellectual pursuits. She notes how women don't need a patch-work kind of experience, but a systematic education. The constant demands on a woman's time by others for frivolous reasons makes it impossible, as she says, "to pursue the current of one's own thought" and thus women "become incapable of strenuous work" (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 43). Her own writing is projected as her desire to record and share with other women, not only the meaninglessness of their lives but also to point out the lack of social space to even articulate protest:

Women dream till they no longer have the strength to dream... those dreams go at last. All their plans and visions seem vanished ...they do not even remember them... Later in life, they neither desire nor dream, neither of activity, nor of love, nor of intellect. The last often survives the longest. They wish if their experiences would benefit anybody, to give them to someone. But they never find an hour free in which to collect their thoughts, and so discouragement becomes ever deeper and deeper... (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 49)

Cassandra as a form of critique can be seen as an attempt to accord a steady, focused, and analytical

narrative to women's lives against their fragmentary and unfocused lives leading to their inability to engage in even a casual conversation for more than a few minutes, as she points out. She notes how the sheer lack of a length of time available to women prevented the articulation of a political act like speaking for the self and others, and wore away their intellectual energies.

Nightingale suggests that women in being denied the opportunity of discussion and reading may tend to have conservative views of society to their own detriment, than if they were permitted to read, debate, and argue. She provides a materialist view of the trivial minds and political views that women possess, which for her is because of a lack of intellectual nourishment: "For woman is 'by birth a Tory,' has often been said -- by education a 'Tory,' we mean" (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 46). Women are shown as being treated little better than children, in that all intellectual effort in them is stifled, for e.g., in the practice of reading aloud to them which she compares to a slow, continuous torture -- "it is like lying on one's back, with one's hand tied and having liquid poured down one's throat. Worse than that, because suffocation would immediately ensue and put a stop to this operation. But no suffocation would stop the other" (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 34).

Nightingale recognizes the historical contradiction in which women were placed -- an ethic of work had developed for men, but women were still cast in the older aristocratic mode of leisure and ornamental worthlessness. She repeatedly argues for an equivalence of time with money, and argues for how society loses valuable productive labour if women cannot contribute to its progress. She asserts the necessity of work for women by giving professional work the significance of a vocation, and by adding the necessity of training to the sketchy acts of charity that women were permitted to do.

Cassandra does not adhere to the standard conventions of the autobiographies of her time and this is due to the constrained lives of women that cannot conform to the conventional form. It does not have a retrospective structure like the autobiographies of John Mill or Edmund Gosse, who delve into their childhood and trace a change or growth from the past. Nightingale's autobiography, which was cast as an essay, resides in the present continuous as if to emphasize the relentless monotony and stagnation of a woman's life. John Mill's autobiography ends with a sense of accomplishment, and with the hope that he may continue the autobiography if he lives to achieve more through his writing. The end of Nightingale's text hovers on weariness and futility. In its ending though, it does gesture towards a symbolic hope of a second coming of a female Christ who could liberate women.

The form of the typical autobiographical conversion moment takes a new twist in *Cassandra*. Nightingale does not convert to a new form of faith or philosophy. Rather, she grows through her writing and analysis into a new understanding. *Cassandra* is permeated with religious references but the writer redefines Christianity and interprets lines from the Bible on her own terms. For instance, Nightingale breaks out of the space of feminine autobiographical writing about family life by critiquing the Victorian concept of a woman's duty towards family on religious grounds. She redefines individuality by placing it outside the family and into community or society. This is done by interpreting Christ as a figure who advocates a commitment to the larger community over and above the family. Work is projected as a means of self-realization and as a contribution to the progress or benefit of mankind.

The retrospective structure of a conventional autobiography is replaced by showing the causal connection between the lack of opportunities for women, and the gradual loss of their identity. *Cassandra* as a social autobiography of Victorian women shows the impossibility of growth for a woman into an individual identity. The text places responsibility on men and women for the confinement of women to the home – “men are afraid that their houses will not be so comfortable, that their wives will make themselves 'remarkable' -- women, that they will make themselves distasteful to men; they [women] write books (and very wisely)... to persuade themselves that domestic life is their sphere and to idealise the ‘sacred hearth’” (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 52). It is not clear what sort of writings by women Nightingale is referring to but many Victorian novels, that depict marriage as the happy end of a woman's life, would fit this category.

There can be no female figure of self-reflection in *Cassandra* as there might be in conventional autobiographies because of the sameness of women's lives. The figures depicted here are of men against whom she seeks to rethink the identity of women. This is done by imagining men in the impossible situation of doing the trivial things women do, like visiting during the day or doing ornamental needlework. Through this image of men in feminine roles, she seeks to then imagine women in the position of professional men whose time is valued as productive and of a profitable nature.

One significant figure of self-reflection though, is that of Christ, through whom she sanctions her project of criticizing social conventions, by showing him as a figure of protest, because he could act on his wish to reform society – “The great reformers of the world turn into the great misanthropists, if circumstances or organization do not permit them to act. Christ, if he had been a woman,

might have been nothing but a great complainer... The next Christ will perhaps be a female Christ” (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 53). Christ is seen as a reformer only because he could act on his reformatory impulses and therefore symbolizes what a complaining woman would be perceived as, if she could act on her complaints against the world. Nightingale shifts the figure of self-reflection from male to female, and past to future by wishing for a female Christ to come.

Cassandra is an autobiographical text that does not glance backwards to analyse the present, but in examining the present, posits a future. For instance, of marriage she says “the intercourse of man and woman--how frivolous, how unworthy it is! Can we call that the true vocation of woman -- her high career?... The true marriage... probably does not exist at present upon earth” (Nightingale, *Cassandra* 44). The text moves into a futuristic vision of a quasi-religious mode of salvation for women. It is clear that a hoped-for Saviour, like Christ was for all men, will not battle for her own freedom but will give voice to the liberation of all women – “till at last there shall arise a woman, who will resume, in her own soul, all the sufferings of her race, and that woman will be the Saviour of her race” (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 50).

Cassandra does not finally reveal a sudden conversion to a faith or ideal as many autobiographies did, but offers a growth into and a reinterpretation of an already held religious conviction by giving it a materialist slant and a political telos. If Christ has raised women to the level of humanity by according them a spiritual life, Nightingale insists that “the Age, the World, Humanity, must give them [women] the means to exercise this moral activity, must give them intellectual cultivation, spheres of action” (Nightingale, *Cassandra*, p. 50).

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Control on Thoughts and Ideas in the Dystopian Society

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Abstract— This study examines the mechanisms of thought control in dystopian societies as portrayed in George Orwell's 1984, Animal Farm and Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, focusing on the use of language, surveillance, propaganda and indoctrination. It explores how totalitarian regimes suppress individuality, manipulate ideology and enforce conformity through tools such as Orwell's Newspeak and Thought Police and Atwood's depiction of religious dogma and patriarchal dominance. By analyzing the psychological impact of such control on characters like Winston Smith and Offred, the research reveals how fear, isolation and repression erode personal autonomy and identity. The study also draws connections between these fictional narratives and real-world issues, including digital surveillance, misinformation and gender inequality. Through comparative analysis, it underscores the enduring relevance of Orwell's and Atwood's critiques, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of power, control and resistance and serving as a cautionary reflection on the fragility of intellectual freedom and democratic values in contemporary society.



Keywords— Dystopian Literature, Thought Control, George Orwell, Margaret Atwood, Surveillance and Ideology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dystopian literature has long been a powerful tool for exploring the mechanisms of societal control and the suppression of individuality. Societies where oppressive systems dominate every aspect of life, authors reveal how power can be wielded to manipulate thoughts, ideas and behavior. This paper focuses on the seminal works of George Orwell and Margaret Atwood, these novels 1984, Animal Farm and The Handmaid's Tale have become iconic representations of dystopian thought control. These works not only critique authoritarianism but also provide a lens to examine the fragility of intellectual freedom in real-world contexts. 1984 presents a chilling vision of a totalitarian regime where the Party controls reality itself.

Through mechanisms such as Newspeak, the Thought Police and the manipulation of historical records, Orwell demonstrates how language and surveillance can be weaponized to limit independent thought and ensure absolute conformity [15]. [14].

In contrast, The Handmaid's Tale explores theocratic dystopia, where religious dogma and patriarchal norms suppress autonomy and silence dissent. The Republic of Gilead, with its rigid social hierarchies and control over language, provides a haunting depiction of how ideology and gender politics can intertwine to perpetuate systemic control [2].

This research investigates how these authors portray the mechanisms of thought control in their works, analyzing the intersection of language, surveillance and ideology. By comparing Orwell's and Atwood's approaches, it gives the universal and enduring nature of their critiques.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to give the strategies employed by totalitarian regimes to control thoughts and ideas in Orwell's 1984, Animal Farm and The Handmaid's Tale to:

1. Analyze how language functions as a tool for suppressing dissent and shaping collective consciousness.
2. Investigate the role of surveillance and fear in enforcing ideological conformity.
3. Explore the psychological and societal effects of thought control on individuals and communities.
4. Compare Orwell's and Atwood's portrayals of resistance and resilience against oppressive systems.
5. Discuss the implications of these narratives for contemporary debates on censorship, propaganda and authoritarianism.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The mechanisms of thought control in dystopian societies as depicted in 1984, Animal Farm The *Handmaid's Tale*. By integrating insights from post-structuralism, feminist theory and theories of totalitarianism, this framework elucidates the dynamics of language, surveillance and ideology as tools of control in both fictional and real-world contexts.

2.1. Post-Structuralism: Power, Language and Thought

The post-structuralist perspective, particularly as articulated by Michel Foucault, highlights the intricate relationship between language, power and thought. Foucault's concept of discourse underscores how language shapes and maintains power structures, defining what can be thought, spoken and known within a society [7]. In Orwell's 1984, the regime's creation of Newspeak exemplifies this dynamic. By systematically reducing vocabulary, the Party eliminates the capacity for independent or rebellious thought, demonstrating how linguistic manipulation can constrain human cognition [15]. Newspeak serves as a practical tool for enforcing ideological conformity by ensuring that dissenting ideas become literally unthinkable.

Similarly, Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist approach reveals how the manipulation of language reinforces dominant ideologies [6]. Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* provides a vivid example of this phenomenon through the reinterpretation of religious texts in the Republic of Gilead. By distorting biblical scripture, the ruling elite legitimizes oppressive practices, such as the subjugation of women and constructs a narrative that binds individuals to its ideological framework [2]. This deliberate reinterpretation not only reinforces societal control but also isolates individuals from alternative worldviews.

Both Orwell and Atwood demonstrate how language is not merely a medium of communication but a powerful

instrument of thought control. By restricting, reinterpreting, or manipulating language, totalitarian regimes can limit the boundaries of individual and collective thought, ensuring compliance with their ideological imperatives.

2.2. Feminist Theory: Gender, Power and Ideological Domination

Feminist theory provides a critical lens for examining the gendered aspects of ideological control, particularly in Atwood's dystopian narrative. Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity highlights how societal norms construct and regulate gender roles, shaping behavior and identity [5]. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Republic of Gilead institutionalizes patriarchal norms, reducing women to their reproductive functions and stripping them of autonomy. The regime enforces these norms through strict social hierarchies, where language, education and even clothing symbolize control.

Additionally, bell hooks' intersectional perspective provides insights into the overlapping systems of oppression within Gilead. Hooks emphasizes how race, gender and class intersect to create multilayered structures of dominance [3]. This perspective is crucial for understanding how Atwood's dystopia not only critiques gender-based control but also highlights the broader implications of systemic inequality.

While Orwell's works focus primarily on political and ideological control, Atwood's narrative extends the discussion to the intersections of gender and power. By incorporating feminist theory, examines how patriarchal ideologies function as mechanisms of thought control, limiting individual agency and perpetuating societal domination.

2.3. Theories of Totalitarianism: Surveillance and Societal Conformity

Theories of totalitarianism, as articulated by Hannah Arendt, offer valuable insights into the political structures and strategies employed by dystopian regimes. Arendt identifies key characteristics of totalitarian systems, including the erosion of individuality, the monopolization of truth and the deployment of fear as a tool of control [1]. In Orwell's 1984, the Thought Police serve as the ultimate enforcers of these principles. By monitoring every action and thought, the regime creates an atmosphere of paranoia and compliance, effectively suppressing dissent.

Shoshana Zuboff's analysis of surveillance capitalism extends these ideas into the digital age, emphasizing the role of technology in amplifying surveillance and behavioral manipulation [18]. This perspective is particularly relevant when examining Orwell's telescreens

and Atwood's Eyes, which symbolize the omnipresent gaze of authority in their respective societies. Both authors depict surveillance not merely as a means of physical control but as a psychological weapon that undermines trust, fosters isolation and neutralizes resistance.

2.4. Dystopian Fiction as Social Realism

Dystopian fiction often serves as a vehicle for social realism, critiquing real-world power structures through exaggerated yet plausible narratives. Orwell's portrayal of a surveillance-driven state reflects the anxieties of mid-20th-century totalitarianism, while Atwood's depiction of theocratic oppression critiques the resurgence of religious conservatism and patriarchal dominance in the late 20th century.

Both authors use dystopian fiction to examine the fragility of intellectual freedom and the mechanisms of control that threaten it. By weaving social realism into their narratives, Orwell and Atwood challenge readers to confront the underlying power dynamics in their own societies, underscoring the timeless relevance of their works.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of thought control in dystopian literature has been a focal point of critical inquiry, particularly in the works of George Orwell and Margaret Atwood. It explores the mechanisms of ideological manipulation, surveillance and linguistic control in *1984*, *Animal Farm* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. It highlights comparative analyses and contextualizes these narratives within broader sociopolitical frameworks.

3.1. Margaret Atwood's Theocratic Dystopia

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* has been a focal point for feminist and socio-political analyses, particularly in its exploration of the intersection of gender, power and religion. Coral Ann Howells emphasizes the role of religious dogma in Gilead's oppressive regime, arguing that the manipulation of biblical texts is central to legitimizing systemic control [10]. The regime's use of scripture to enforce rigid gender roles underscores how ideology can be weaponized to suppress autonomy and individuality.

Madonne Miner extends this analysis by examining the role of language and education in maintaining control over women [12]. The regime's restriction of literacy and dissemination of propaganda ensure that women remain isolated from knowledge and unable to question their subjugation. This aspect of control highlights the regime's comprehensive domination over both thought and action.

Atwood's critique of patriarchal systems is further contextualized by feminist scholars such as Judith Butler and bell hooks, whose theoretical perspectives elucidate the intersectional dimensions of control in Gilead [5, 3]. By situating Atwood's narrative within these frameworks, scholars underscore its relevance to contemporary debates on gender and power.

3.2. Comparative Analyses of Orwell and Atwood

Comparative studies of Orwell and Atwood reveal both commonalities and differences in their portrayals of dystopian control. Lee Briscoe Thompson explores the shared emphasis on propaganda and surveillance as tools for suppressing individuality in *1984* and *The Handmaid's Tale* [17]. Thompson argues that while both authors depict oppressive regimes, their approaches reflect distinct socio-political concerns: Orwell critiques mid-20th-century totalitarianism, while Atwood addresses late-20th-century theocratic and gender-based oppression.

David Hogsette, in contrast, focuses on the depiction of resistance and resilience in these narratives [9]. He highlights how Winston Smith (1984) and Offred (*The Handmaid's Tale*) navigate their oppressive environments, illustrating both the psychological toll of thought control and the potential for individual defiance.

3.3. Social Realism and Contemporary Relevance

The incorporation of social realism in dystopian fiction enhances its capacity to critique real-world power structures. Keith Booker emphasizes how Orwell's portrayal of a bureaucratic, surveillance driven state mirrors mid-20th-century anxieties about authoritarianism [4]. Similarly, Tom Moylan highlights how Atwood's narrative critiques the resurgence of religious conservatism and patriarchal dominance in North America during the late 20th century [13].

Recent scholarship has also drawn parallels between these dystopian narratives and contemporary issues such as surveillance capitalism, misinformation and the erosion of privacy. Shoshana Zuboff's analysis of digital surveillance underscores the enduring relevance of Orwell's warnings, while Naomi Klein highlights the thematic resonance of Atwood's critique of systemic oppression with modern struggles for gender equality and social justice [18, 11].

IV. MECHANISMS OF THOUGHT CONTROL

The control of thoughts and ideas is a central theme in dystopian literature, particularly in the works of George Orwell and Margaret Atwood. This section explores the specific mechanisms employed by the totalitarian regimes in *1984*, *Animal Farm* and *The Handmaid's Tale* to manipulate individual and collective consciousness. These

mechanisms include the use of language as a tool for suppression, surveillance to monitor and instill fear, propaganda to shape public perception and indoctrination to enforce ideological conformity.

4.1. Language as a Tool of Suppression

Language plays a pivotal role in shaping thought and limiting dissent in dystopian societies. In Orwell's 1984, the regime's invention of Newspeak exemplifies the strategic manipulation of language to control cognition. Newspeak systematically eliminates words that could express rebellion or independent thought, reducing the scope of permissible ideas [16]. The phrase "thoughtcrime," for instance, encapsulates the regime's ability to criminalize even the act of thinking against the Party. As Winston Smith observes, "In the end, we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible because there will be no words in which to express it" [15].

In Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, language is similarly manipulated, albeit through a different lens. The Republic of Gilead relies on religious rhetoric and the reinterpretation of scripture to justify its oppressive practices. Women are forbidden from reading or writing, ensuring that they cannot question the regime's authority or articulate dissent [2]. Phrases like "Blessed be the fruit" and "Under His eye" reinforce ideological conformity, embedding control within everyday interactions.

It highlight how language operates not merely as a medium of communication but as a powerful instrument of control. By reshaping linguistic structures, both regimes restrict thought and enforce ideological uniformity, ensuring that individuals remain compliant and unable to envision alternatives.

4.2. Surveillance and Fear as Tools of Control

Surveillance is another critical mechanism through which totalitarian regimes maintain control. In 1984, the omnipresence of telescreens and the Thought Police ensures that citizens are constantly monitored. This pervasive surveillance creates an environment of fear, where individuals internalize the Party's authority and regulate their own behavior to avoid punishment [8]. As Orwell writes, "Big Brother is watching you," a phrase that encapsulates the psychological impact of being under constant observation [15].

Similarly, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Eyes serve as agents of Gilead's surveillance apparatus. Public executions, known as "Salvagings," and collective punishments further reinforce the regime's control by instilling fear among the populace. The presence of the Eyes ensures that dissent remains covert, as even private

acts of rebellion carry the risk of exposure and severe consequences [10].

Both Orwell and Atwood depict surveillance as not merely a physical mechanism but a psychological one. The fear of being watched leads to self-censorship, effectively suppressing resistance and ensuring compliance.

4.3. Propaganda and Ideological Manipulation

Propaganda is a key tool for shaping public perception and maintaining ideological dominance. In 1984, the Party employs slogans such as "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength" to condition citizens into accepting contradictory and illogical beliefs [16]. The Ministry of Truth, tasked with rewriting history and disseminating false narratives, ensures that the Party's version of reality is unquestioned.

In *Animal Farm*, Orwell uses the character of Squealer to illustrate how propaganda functions to manipulate and pacify the masses. Squealer's ability to twist facts and justify the actions of the ruling pigs reflects the dangers of unchecked propaganda in sustaining oppressive regimes [4].

In Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, propaganda takes on a religious dimension. The regime uses biblical texts selectively and distorts their meanings to legitimize patriarchal control. Women are indoctrinated to believe that their subjugation is divinely ordained, reinforcing their acceptance of oppressive norms [12].

4.4. Indoctrination and Control of Knowledge

Indoctrination is a critical strategy for ensuring the long-term stability of totalitarian regimes. In 1984, children are indoctrinated through organizations like the Junior Spies, where they are trained to report even their parents for disloyalty to the Party [8]. The regime's control over education ensures that future generations are conditioned to accept its authority unquestioningly.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, indoctrination takes on a gendered dimension. Women, particularly the Handmaids, undergo re-education at the Red Center, where they are stripped of their previous identities and taught to accept their roles as vessels for reproduction [2]. Aunt Lydia's teachings, such as "Freedom to and freedom from," highlight the regime's ability to redefine concepts of freedom to align with its ideology.

Both Orwell and Atwood demonstrate how controlling access to knowledge and shaping educational systems enable regimes to perpetuate their power. By ensuring that individuals cannot access alternative narratives or question the status quo, these regimes maintain their ideological dominance.

Table 1: Statistics Relevant to Thought Control and Dystopian Themes

Statistic	Relevance to the Study
62% of global internet traffic is monitored or censored (2023)	Reflects Orwell's depiction of omnipresent surveillance in <i>1984</i> .
90 million women live under restrictive abortion laws (2023)	Highlights the relevance of Atwood's critique of reproductive control in <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> .
Misinformation spreads 6x faster than facts on social media (2021)	Connects to Orwell's concept of propaganda in <i>1984</i> and the manipulation of narratives in <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> .
64% of people in highsurveillance countries report anxiety (2022)	Mirrors the psychological impact of surveillance seen in Orwell's and Atwood's protagonists.
28% of countries report increased religious restrictions (2022)	Aligns with Atwood's critique of theocratic oppression in <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> .

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THOUGHT CONTROL

The mechanisms of thought control employed in George Orwell's 1984 and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* profoundly affect the psychological well-being of individuals living under these regimes. It gives the psychological consequences of surveillance, fear and indoctrination on the protagonists—Winston Smith and Offred—and explores how these impacts extend to the broader population within their respective dystopian societies.

5.1. Fear and Paranoia: The Impact of Surveillance

In 1984, the omnipresence of telescreens and the Thought Police creates an environment of perpetual fear and paranoia. Winston Smith internalizes the idea that he is constantly being watched, a phenomenon Orwell describes as "Big Brother is watching you" [15]. This constant surveillance forces Winston to monitor his own thoughts and actions, leading to heightened anxiety and a diminished sense of personal autonomy. Scholars such as Erika Gottlieb argue that this psychological state represents the ultimate victory of the regime, as individuals no longer require external enforcement to conform—they regulate themselves [8].

Similarly, in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the presence of the Eyes and the public execution rituals known as Salvagings serve as constant reminders of the regime's power. Offred's fear of being reported or punished fosters an acute sense of paranoia, which isolates her from potential allies. Coral Ann Howells notes that this fear extends beyond physical punishment to encompass the erasure of identity and agency, which is perhaps the most profound consequence of Gilead's control [10].

5.2. Suppression of Identity and Autonomy

Thought control mechanisms in both novels systematically strip individuals of their identities and autonomy. In 1984, Winston's memories of the past are unreliable due to the Party's control over historical records. His inability to trust his own recollections leads to a fractured sense of self, as the Party erodes the distinction between truth and falsehood [16]. The concept of "doublethink," wherein individuals accept two contradictory beliefs simultaneously, exemplifies this psychological fragmentation.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred's identity is reduced to her role as a Handmaid, defined solely by her reproductive capacity. The removal of her real name symbolizes the regime's erasure of individuality. Aunt Lydia's teachings at the Red Center reinforce this suppression, urging women to embrace their subjugation as a form of "freedom" [12]. Offred's internal struggle to reconcile her memories of the past with her present reality reflects the broader psychological toll of living in a society that denies personal autonomy.

5.3. Cognitive Dissonance and Emotional Resilience

Both protagonists experience cognitive dissonance as they navigate their oppressive environments. In 1984, Winston's secret rebellion through his diary and his illicit relationship with Julia reflect his internal conflict between conformity and resistance. His eventual capture and re-education by the Party, however, demonstrate the regime's ability to extinguish even the most deeply held convictions. The phrase "He loved Big Brother" marks the ultimate defeat of Winston's individuality, as the Party succeeds in reshaping his thoughts and emotions [15].

In contrast, Offred's psychological journey in *The Handmaid's Tale* reflects a quieter, more covert form of resistance. While she outwardly conforms to Gilead's rules, her internal monologue reveals a persistent desire for freedom and connection. Scholars such as David Hogsette highlight how Offred's ability to retain fragments of her past identity represents a form of emotional resilience, even in the face of overwhelming oppression [9].

5.4. Isolation and Social Fragmentation

Both Orwell and Atwood depict the deliberate use of isolation to weaken resistance and foster dependency on the regime. In 1984, the Party systematically dismantles familial bonds, replacing them with loyalty to Big Brother. The Junior Spies program encourages children to report their parents, creating an atmosphere of distrust within families [16]. This social fragmentation ensures that individuals cannot form alliances or challenge the regime collectively.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the isolation of women is achieved through rigid social hierarchies and the restriction of communication. Handmaids are forbidden from forming meaningful connections, even with one another, as evident in the prescribed greetings such as "Blessed be the fruit." This enforced isolation prevents solidarity and reinforces the regime's control [10].

5.5. Psychological Impacts on Society at Large

The psychological impacts of thought control extend beyond individual protagonists to affect the broader populations in Orwell's and Atwood's dystopias. In 1984, the Party's control over truth and memory fosters a collective amnesia, ensuring that citizens remain ignorant of their oppression. Similarly, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Gilead's use of public rituals and indoctrination normalizes violence and subjugation, creating a society that passively accepts its own dehumanization.

5.6. Dystopian Critiques of Power Structures

Both Orwell and Atwood use their dystopian narratives to critique power structures that perpetuate inequality and suppress dissent. Orwell's depiction of the Party in 1984 reveals the dehumanizing effects of a surveillance state, where individuality is sacrificed for the sake of ideological conformity. The Party's control over language, history and even reality itself underscores the dangers of unchecked political power [16].

VI. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

George Orwell and Margaret Atwood present distinct yet complementary perspectives on the mechanisms of thought control in dystopian societies. While both authors explore the suppression of individuality, the manipulation of language and the enforcement of ideological conformity, their approaches differ in focus and scope. This section compares the control mechanisms depicted in 1984 and *Animal Farm* with those in *The Handmaid's Tale*, highlighting key thematic and structural parallels and divergences.

6.1. Control through Language and Ideology

Both Orwell and Atwood emphasize the centrality of language as a tool for ideological control. In 1984, the Party's invention of Newspeak reflects the deliberate restriction of language to constrain thought. Newspeak systematically eliminates words associated with rebellion or independent thinking, effectively narrowing the scope of human cognition [16]. Orwell's focus on linguistic manipulation highlights the cognitive implications of controlling language, demonstrating how it becomes impossible to conceptualize dissent when the vocabulary for resistance is erased.

Atwood, on the other hand, explores the manipulation of language through religious rhetoric in *The Handmaid's Tale*. The Republic of Gilead selectively interprets biblical texts to justify patriarchal domination, embedding its ideology within everyday rituals and expressions [10]. Unlike Orwell's overtly political approach, Atwood's critique extends to the cultural and religious frameworks that sustain systemic oppression. This distinction underscores the authors' differing focal points: Orwell critiques totalitarianism rooted in political ideology, while Atwood examines the intersections of gender, power and religion.

6.2. Surveillance and Fear as Mechanisms of Control

Surveillance is a pervasive theme in both authors' works, though it is depicted in different forms. In 1984, the omnipresence of telescreens and the Thought Police represents the ultimate intrusion into private life. The constant fear of being observed compels individuals to self-censor, effectively internalizing the regime's authority [8]. Orwell's depiction of surveillance underscores its psychological impact, as citizens live in a state of perpetual paranoia.

In contrast, Atwood's portrayal of surveillance in *The Handmaid's Tale* is less technological but equally insidious. The Eyes, along with informants embedded within society, create a culture of mistrust and isolation. Public punishments, such as Salvagings and Particutions, serve as both spectacles of control and reminders of the regime's omnipotence [12]. While Orwell emphasizes technological surveillance, Atwood focuses on the social dimensions of surveillance, particularly its role in enforcing gender hierarchies and silencing dissent.

6.3. Propaganda and Historical Revisionism

The manipulation of truth and history is another commonality in Orwell's and Atwood's works. In 1984, the Party's control over historical records ensures that the past is constantly rewritten to align with its ideological narrative. The Ministry of Truth exemplifies the regime's

ability to dictate reality, erasing any trace of dissent or contradiction [16]. This systematic revisionism creates a collective amnesia, rendering resistance both impossible and inconceivable.

Atwood addresses historical manipulation in a more nuanced manner, particularly through the erasure of women's history and autonomy. In Gilead, women are forbidden from reading, writing, or preserving their personal narratives. The suppression of literacy serves as a form of historical erasure, ensuring that women remain disconnected from their past and unable to envision alternative futures [10]. Both authors demonstrate how the control of history reinforces ideological dominance, though their approaches reflect their differing thematic concerns.

6.4. Resistance and Resilience

While both authors depict oppressive regimes that enforce ideological conformity, their portrayals of resistance and resilience differ significantly. In 1984, Winston Smith's rebellion is ultimately crushed by the Party. His re-education and eventual betrayal of Julia illustrate the futility of resistance in a society where the regime controls not only actions but also thoughts and emotions [15]. Orwell's depiction of resistance is bleak, emphasizing the overwhelming power of totalitarianism. In contrast, Atwood offers a more ambiguous portrayal of resistance in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Offred's internal monologue and small acts of defiance, such as stealing moments of pleasure or preserving her memories, reflect a quieter form of rebellion. Scholars such as David Hogsette argue that Offred's ability to retain fragments of her identity represents a form of resilience, even within an oppressive system [9]. Unlike Orwell, Atwood leaves room for hope, suggesting that resistance can persist in subtle and covert forms.

VII. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The analysis of thought control in George Orwell's 1984, *Animal Farm* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* reveals profound insights into the mechanisms of power, control and resistance in dystopian societies. This section discusses the broader implications of their critiques, focusing on the relevance of their works to contemporary issues such as censorship, surveillance, ideological polarization and gender inequality. It also highlights the lessons these narratives offer for safeguarding intellectual freedom and resisting authoritarianism.

7.1. Relevance to Contemporary Issues

Orwell's and Atwood's critiques of thought control remain strikingly relevant in the context of modern socio-political challenges. The rise of surveillance technologies, misinformation and ideological manipulation mirrors the dystopian scenarios depicted in their works. Shoshana Zuboff's concept of surveillance capitalism highlights how modern corporations and governments use digital tools to monitor, predict and influence behavior, drawing direct parallels to Orwell's portrayal of Big Brother [18]. From data tracking to algorithmic manipulation, these technologies extend the mechanisms of control beyond the confines of the fictional worlds.

Similarly, Atwood's critique of theocratic and patriarchal oppression resonates with ongoing debates over reproductive rights, gender equality and the role of religion in public policy. The restrictive laws and cultural narratives governing women's bodies in Gilead reflect real-world struggles against systemic gender-based discrimination [3]. Atwood's emphasis on the intersections of gender, power and ideology provides a framework for understanding and challenging these structures in contemporary societies.

7.2. Psychological Impacts and Societal Consequences

The psychological effects of thought control depicted in Orwell's and Atwood's works offer valuable insights into the human cost of authoritarianism. Both authors highlight how fear, isolation and surveillance undermine individuality and erode trust within societies. In 1984, Winston's ultimate betrayal of Julia reflects the Party's ability to destroy personal relationships, fostering dependency on the regime [15]. Similarly, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred's isolation and fear of betrayal demonstrate how authoritarian systems dismantle solidarity and suppress collective resistance [12].

These psychological dynamics are mirrored in contemporary societies, where surveillance and ideological polarization contribute to social fragmentation. By examining the emotional toll of thought control, Orwell and Atwood underscore the importance of fostering human connections and collective agency as antidotes to authoritarian control.

7.3. Intersections of Dystopian Fiction and Social Realism

One of the most significant contributions of Orwell's and Atwood's works is their ability to bridge dystopian fiction and social realism. By grounding their narratives in recognizable socio-political contexts, both authors challenge readers to reflect on the parallels between their fictional worlds and real-world power structures. Orwell's critique of mid-20th-century totalitarianism and Atwood's exploration of late-20th-century patriarchal trends provide

timeless warnings about the fragility of intellectual freedom and the resilience of oppressive ideologies.

Tom Moylan's analysis of dystopian fiction as a vehicle for social critique emphasizes how exaggerated scenarios can illuminate real-world dynamics, making their warnings both urgent and relatable [13]. This synthesis of fiction and realism enhances the relevance and impact of Orwell's and Atwood's critiques, offering readers a lens through which to interrogate contemporary sociopolitical trends.

7.4. Implications for Resistance and Change

Despite the bleakness of their narratives, both Orwell and Atwood suggest pathways for resistance and change. While Orwell's depiction of Winston's ultimate defeat in 1984 highlights the overwhelming power of totalitarianism, it also serves as a cautionary tale, urging readers to remain vigilant against the early signs of authoritarianism. Atwood's portrayal of Offred's quiet acts of defiance in *The Handmaid's Tale* offers a more hopeful perspective, emphasizing the resilience of human agency even in the face of systemic oppression.

These narratives underscore the importance of collective action, critical thinking and the preservation of intellectual freedom as tools for resisting authoritarian control. By engaging with these themes, readers are encouraged to reflect on their roles as active participants in shaping democratic societies.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored how thought control operates in dystopian societies through the works of George Orwell's 1984, *Animal Farm* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, focusing on the use of language, surveillance, propaganda and indoctrination to suppress individuality and enforce ideological conformity. Orwell highlights the manipulation of truth and language through Newspeak and the Thought Police, while *Animal Farm* exposes how propaganda sustains inequality. Atwood extends this critique by showing how religious and patriarchal ideologies underpin systemic control in Gilead. The psychological impact of such control is seen in the inner struggles of Winston and Offred, whose stories reflect the emotional cost of living under authoritarian rule.

Despite differing fates, both characters reveal how power shapes identity and resistance. These narratives remain strikingly relevant today, echoing concerns about surveillance, misinformation and gender inequality. Ultimately, Orwell and Atwood not only warn against the dangers of totalitarianism but also inspire readers to

remain vigilant in defending freedom of thought and democratic values.

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Rewriting Mastani: A Gender Perspective

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Abstract— Peshwa¹ Bajirao I was an early 18th century general of the Maratha Empire of India. Bajirao I is remembered today as an invincible general. However, he is remembered more prominently for his romance with his second wife Mastani, a figure whose identity in history remains largely unrecorded. Over the past few decades, the love story of Bajirao and Mastani has been the subject of several textual and visual mediums but this study will focus a 2012 novel by Kusum Chopra and will look at Mastani to see how the female who remained mysteriously buried in history finds her space in 21st century exotic historical writing. From being a footnote in most histories, described as the mistress, or the court-dancer, to being the protagonist of Chopra's novel *Mastani*, depicted as a fierce princess trained in politics, martial arts and intellectual diplomacy and a true companion to the peshwa, Mastani has come a long way. The paper will try to see, in light of feminism and the self-other dichotomy, how such authorial strategies of recording and recreating the historical female help the narrative thrive in the modern Indian marketplace.



Keywords— gender equality; reduced inequalities; peace, justice and strong institutions; feminism, historical fiction

I. INTRODUCTION

Before delving into the subject of historical fiction based on Mastani, it is important to establish the fact that women's fiction, both that which is written by women and that which is written about women, is undergoing a massive expansion in India, in English as well as other Indian languages. This expansion has led to an explosion in the number of texts written by women circulating in the country. This transition from a male-dominated sphere to an inclusive literary space for both men and women has resulted in writings which open up newer dialogues on the topic of gender.

Although most women's writing in India started as writings of frustrated homemakers, today the scene has transformed drastically from the traditional style. In fiction, the roles of women are no longer those of self-sacrificing, submissive, passive, victimized beings. It is also true that while history and mythology remains largely patriarchal and unchanged, there are more and more attempts made to

rewrite histories and retell myths and allow more visibility and agency to the female gender. Whether it is the retelling of the Mahabharata from Draupadi's perspective by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni or retellings of the stories of Hindu goddesses like Kali through poetry by Facebook bloggers like Megha Rao, there are definitely voices of dissent that beat down the historical depictions of women as weak and vulnerable. As such, Kusum Chopra's fictional account titled *Mastani*, the text in focus for this paper, is just another attempt at giving voice to the invisible female from Maratha history.

II. MASTANI- THE WARRIOR PRINCESS

Histories are essentially histories of men. According to Joyce Delaney, "There is a noticeable imbalance in the importance given to women as opposed to men's roles." M. K. Tetreal further elaborates the same by stating that a "study of history textbooks revealed that in one that contains 819 pages, the text allotted to references

¹ Peshwa – A title used for the Prime Minister of the Maratha Empire.

to women added up to less than one page. A closer look at another publisher's offering showed that in more than 1,000 pages, there were four illustrations of men for every one of women, and that less than three percent of the text was about women." It is no surprise then that Mastani, the princess of Bundelkhand, daughter of Maharaja Chhatrasal, got dismissed in history as a mere 'dancing girl'.

Most histories which do mention some account of Mastani have details in common. Mastani was born to Maharaja Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand from his Persian Muslim wife called Ruhaani Bai. In the late 1720s, the Bundelkhand army was attacked by Bangash's Dallel Khan and sought help from the Maratha army which was led by Peshwa Bajirao I. Bajirao I came to their aid and defeated Bangash. In gratitude, the Maharaja of Bundelkhand gave him his daughter Mastani as a token of his appreciation. Whether or not Mastani was married off to the peshwa however remains a topic of much debate. Such commodification of women was not uncommon in history. Upon arrival in Pune, Mastani initially lived in Bajirao I's house at Shanivarwada but soon moved to another house that Bajirao I built for her (owing to several disputes within the family on account of Mastani's Muslim lineage) at Kothrud, Pune.

Mastani's status as a court dancer and mistress is highlighted in most histories and art. Keeping in mind the fact that women in the 18th century were far more oppressed than present times, it is quite natural that the history of the time also stayed true to the secondariness of the female. Historian William Irvine in *Later Mughals* states, "Mastani a Kanchani or dancing girl, followed Baji Rao on all his expeditions and never left his side." In a book titled *Peshwyanchi Bakhar*, Dr. Bhimrao Kulkarni states clearly that Shahu Maharaj (King Shahu) under whom Bajirao Peshwa I was a prime minister, considered Mastani a kanchani – literally, someone who trades their body for material profit of some kind.

Another aspect of Mastani's life that is highlighted extensively in all records and has become part of Maharashtrian legends is her unparalleled beauty. Mastani is often described as qubool-surat which means someone with an alluring face. She was half Persian which explains her fair skin which is exotic to Indians. In the state of Maharashtra, legend has it that she had a complexion so fair that one could see red betel juice running down her throat when she chewed *paan*². Although this is clearly an exaggeration as such a thing would be anatomically

improbable, it is clearly an indication of how stunningly exotic she appeared to the dusky women of the Deccan plateau. This charm of the exotic beauty is perhaps also the reason why everything else about Mastani was forgotten. Women are often reduced to their physical form and appearance and Mastani was no exception. Over the years, her identity has been solidified into immanence rather than transcendence³.

Kusum Choppra's account however is different. She uses the base of historical records to recreate the love story of Bajirao and Mastani in a new light, but more importantly, to portray Mastani is the garb of the 21st century's idea of an empowered woman. Her Mastani is far from being docile and rides a horse instead of sitting in a *palki*. She is shrewd, even manipulative, and extremely tactful. She is the one with "that sparkling intelligence which amazes everyone with her grasp of not only routine household matters, but also state policy and its issues." (*Mastani*, pp.50)

While these depictions of Mastani are unconventional in themselves, the most remarkable translation of this historical figure occurs when Choppra presents Mastani not as a Muslim court-dancer but rather a princess of Pranami faith which the Maharaja of Bundelkhand practiced. Many historical records state that a young dancer girl named Miskin Mastan Kalavant danced at the wedding of Balaji, the eldest son of Peshwa Bajirao in 1730. This Miskin was paid 233 rupees and given clothes as rewards (Feldhaus, 1998). However, how this Miskin Mastan Kalavant later emerged as Mastani and came to be known as the mother of one of Peshwa Bajirao I's son remains unexplained. Choppra offers an explanation. She boldly states that Mastani is not the same figure as the court-dancer Mastan. Bajirao I was already married to Mastani at the time of his first son's wedding. However, Mastani did not attend this wedding due to opposition from Bajirao's family. Her absence and the presence of Mastan "was the seed for one of the many notorious stories depicting Mastani as a dancing girl."⁴

Mastani's mother was a Persian Muslim called Ruhaani Bai and she was the second wife of Maharaja Chhatrasal. Her father Maharaja Chhatrasal, however, was of Pranami faith. The Pranami faith was started by a saintly leader called Shri Devchandra ji Maharaj. He tried to awaken all people, irrespective of their societal class and religion differences, to their real and true Self through 'Tartam' which means divine knowledge. If Maharaja Chhatrasal was a pranami, then it is most likely that Ruhaani

² A preparation which combines betel leaf with areca nut and often katha paste (catechu) which results in a red colour when chewed.

³ Beauvoir's concepts of the immanent female and the transcendent male from *The Second Sex*.

⁴ Choppra, Kusum, (2012). *Mastani*. Rupa Publications, India. pp 45

Bai also converted to Pranami after her marriage as is common in the Indian society, especially back in the 18th century. Even if one were to believe she escaped conversion, it is highly unlikely that her daughter Mastani was raised as a Muslim. Choppra's Mastani is a pranami who rejects religious distinctions and worships both Krishna and Allah. Her dance is her *aradhana* or form of worship. As Choppra states, "She would be so lost in prayer and bhakti, she would break into dance, lost to the world." This led her father to warn her against being *mast*⁵ like that and he eventually, along with everyone else, called her Mastani."

Mastani is always identified as a Muslim in historical records. In fact, some accounts go so far as to accuse Mastani of having taught Bajirao I to drink alcohol and to eat meat- immoral acts which they believed could only be taught by a Muslim. Choppra's novel notes that the pranami faith precluded both meat and wine consumption. As such, Mastani could not have been the one to encourage the peshwa into the consumption of either.

If Mastani was a princess of Pranami faith trained in swordsmanship and martial arts then why was it that Mastani was dismissed in history as a Muslim court-dancer and the mistress of Bajirao I? One possible explanation could be that Mastani was the 'other' to the self which was the Maratha Chitpavan Brahmin society of Peshwa Bajirao I. Ideas of similarity and difference are central to the way in which we achieve a sense of identity and social belonging (Jenkins, 1996). Identities are necessarily constructed in terms of dichotomies. As Bauman explains, "Woman is the other of man, animal is the other of human, stranger is the other of native..." (Bauman, 1991). As such, Muslim is the other of Brahmin Hindu, court-dancer is the other of respectable princess, mistress is the other of wife, Persian beauty is the other threatening the Indian self, passive object is the other of active subject. Mastani's identity in history is constructed in an effort to prove her the 'other', and thereby prove that she doesn't deserve a place in history; that her history is one that does not deserve to be noted as part of the Maratha history. Not only does this reduce Mastani to the status of a dancer (a depiction which is especially highlighted in a lot of paintings of Mastani) and a temptress, but also dismisses any romantic relationship between Bajirao I and Mastani and reduces their relationship to a sexual negotiation.

Attempts at erasing Mastani's identity from history seem to have been successful. The Mastani Mahal which was constructed for Mastani at Kothrud, Pune by Peshwa Bajirao suffered utter neglect and lay forlorn in the

wilderness of Kothrud until it was found by Mr. Kelkar in the 20th century and dismantled and restored partly at Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum in Pune. A Marathi historical record titled *Peshwe Sharanyacha Itihas* by Pramod Oak states that most chronicles and other historical documents about Mastani have been destroyed. In 1812, Peshwa Baji Rao II ordered the demolition of the Mastani Mahal in Shaniwarwada and Mastani's house from the village of Pabal. This led to the destruction of several other records of Mastani.

It is also true that Mastani's history was erased not only to remove any blemish from the history of the Brahmins (for any interaction, especially matrimonial relation between a Brahmin and a supposed Muslim would blemish their reputation) but also because she was a woman, and women's histories are often neglected on account of the inferior position offered to the gender in patriarchal societies. This is what probed Choppra to write in the garb of historical romantic fiction an account of Mastani's life. The blurb of her book reads:

"Until recently, history had relegated Mastani to forgotten pages as a 'dancing girl' ... a myth kept alive by lack of evidence about her true place in the Peshwa household. Daughter of Maharaj Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand, Mastani married Peshwa Bajirao I when he was in power, but she was obscured almost to anonymity by several forces. Her life as a strategist, both on the field and at home was veiled with intrigue due to the jealousies of women in zenanas and power-hungry relatives in the peshwai. What was Mastani's story? Was being a true companion to the Peshwa as well as his most loved wife a threat large enough to snuff her out in the pages of history?"

Kusum Choppra's depiction of Mastani as a strong, bold and shrewd companion to the peshwa is in accordance with the 21st century idea of an empowered woman. With the advent of social media, dialogues on gender are not only louder than ever but also travel across spaces faster. In India, the idea of what constitutes an "ideal woman" (if there even exists such a thing) is fast changing. Women in urban setups especially, are vocal about their identities and rights and openly resist patriarchy. As such, there is more openness among modern readers of Mastani to embrace the empowered princess and reject the submissive dancer-girl.

Choppra's work is rated 3.9 and 4.1 out of 5 on Goodreads and Amazon India respectively, a clear

⁵ word originates from the Sufi term mast-Allah meaning "intoxicated with God."

testimony of the popularity of the work. Her retelling of Mastani and Bajirao I's love story from a feminist perspective allows the story to survive in the 21st century. It gives women the history that has been denied to them for centuries. Presenting history in the form of a romance allows the exotic recreation of Mastani's identity which translates itself in a million dollar blockbuster film by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, one of India's leading filmmakers. Mastani is only one among many princesses whose histories have been buried by patriarchy. Historical scholarship has always lacked universality and objectivity because it was "based on male experience, placed men at the centre and as a measure of all things human, thereby leaving out half of humankind." (Bock, 1991.) Chopra's writing of Mastani's history is a voice of dissent which rejects patriarchy and finds its way into mainstream Indian women's writing in English. As Nietzsche says in the Use and Abuse of History, "You can explain the past only by what's most powerful in the present." Perhaps the 21st century idea of an empowered female allows Mastani's history to be recreated in newer ways.

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Analysis of the Influence of the Use of Twitter Registers in the Formal Language of Grade 12 Students

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Abstract—This study identified the predominant registers employed by Grade 12 students on Twitter and assessed the influence of these commonly used registers on their utilization of formal English language. A two-part survey was used to elicit the needed data and mean, and Pearson's r was applied to obtain results. The findings of the study revealed that the most frequently used registers are dialect registers and the least employed are facetious registers. Further, the participants recognized that their proficiency in formal language is impacted by their utilization of vocabulary specific to Twitter. This suggests that most students face challenges in engaging in formal communication, possibly due to excessive exposure to informal language used on Twitter. Moreover, there exists a notable correlation between the frequency of Twitter usage and the formal English language usage among Grade 12 students. This demonstrates that employing linguistic registers in interacting with X or Twitter may result in a deterioration of their proficiency in formal communication. The study recommends a comprehensive intervention program that language teachers may use to mitigate the impact of the use of informal twitter registers on the language proficiency of the students.



Keywords— Formal language, Intervention, Registers, Twitter usage, linguistic proficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

As preparation for higher education and the workplace, senior high school students are expected to cultivate the ability to communicate using formal language. Proficient formal language abilities will empower individuals to effectively convey information in a clear, succinct, and suitable manner within academic and professional contexts. Moreover, it is crucial for achieving academic excellence. It is imperative for students to possess the capacity to comprehend intricate literature, produce coherent and succinct writings, and proficiently express their ideas during conversations and presentations. Proficiency in formal language facilitates the comprehension of academic topics, facilitates active participation in substantive conversations, and facilitates the production of academic work of superior quality.

Additionally, formal language skills are highly valued in the professional world, as they enable clear, persuasive communication, collaboration, and navigating complexities. They also contribute to social effectiveness and personal well-being, enabling confident interaction in social settings, building meaningful relationships, and enhancing social competence. Proficient formal language users can analyze complex information, articulate arguments logically, and evaluate evidence critically, making informed decisions and navigating modern challenges.

Indeed, formal language development encompasses more than a basic acquisition of grammar rules and norms. Its purpose lies in equipping senior high school students with the necessary skills to effectively communicate, engage in critical thinking, and negotiate the intricate dynamics of

academic, professional, and social spheres. Investing in the development of formal language skills equips students with the necessary tools to achieve long-term success and empowers them to make significant contributions to society.

Despite its numerous benefits to students, there have been factors impeding its development and acquisition among SHS students. One of which is their social media consumption. These students are classified as part of the digital natives, the Generation and they allocate a significant amount of their time to engaging with screens. These individuals exhibit a natural affinity for technology, having been exposed to touchscreen gadgets and intelligent functionalities throughout their formative years (Panagiotou, Lazou, & Baliou, 2022).

One of the most consumed and utilized platforms among SHS students is X or Twitter. In fact, according to a survey from Pulsar (2021) as cited by Ahmed (2021), the majority of individuals aged 16 to 24 are observed to be highly engaged on Twitter. The level of their interaction and the quantity of their tweets sent are almost half of the tweets sent to the US, suggesting a significant presence of Generation Z on Twitter.

As they consistently utilize X or previously known as Twitter, these students are exposed to various registers. These are the specific forms of language that an individual employs in a certain context (Halliday, 1985). Speakers frequently engage in register shifting unconsciously, as observed in the distinct variations in speech patterns exhibited when conversing with different individuals, such as grandparents, parents, friends, or professors, without deliberate cognitive effort. The same goes for the context of X or Twitter usage, which is deemed to have greatly influenced the vocabulary of its users. While this has facilitated the spread of information, exchange of ideas, and widening of vocabulary, it has also led to the widespread use of informal language, including slang and fashionable abbreviations, which can have a negative impact on the Formal language skills.

Consequently, this study aims to identify the most frequently used registers in twitter of Grade 12 students and determine the impact of these widely utilized registers on their utilization of formal English language. With the continuous proliferation of contemporary registers in the advent of increased social media consumption, this study is timely response to address the repercussions it has on formal English language development since the data collected in this study will be used to design a set of activities aimed at assisting Grade 12 students in overcoming the influence of Twitter registers on their formal language usage.

II. METHODOLOGY

The location of the study is at Camp Vicente Lim Integrated School situated in Mayapa, Calamba City. This learning institution is considered the largest secondary school in the division with a total population of 4,372 comprised of 2247 junior high and 2125 senior high students. It caters to various secondary grade levels and SHS strands. Specifically, it offers academic track strands such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) and technical-vocational track strands such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Cookery, Hair Dressing, Electronics and Installation Maintenance (EIM), and Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW).

The researcher used the descriptive-correlational method in measuring the frequency of usage of twitter registers and its influence on the formal English language of Grade 12 students at Camp Vicente Lim Integrated School. The researcher applied descriptive research design since it is used to make an observation and to draw conclusion from it, rather than manipulating the environment to see what may happen. According to Penwarden (2014), it is conclusive in nature, as opposed to exploratory. It gathers quantifiable information that can be used for statistical inference through data analysis. In addition, correlational design is used to identify if a relationship exists between usage of twitter registers and formal English language skills. According to Creswell (2012), a correlational study is a study in which the researcher is primarily interested in describing relationships among variables without seeking to establish a causal connection.

The respondents of the study were Grade 12 students enrolled at Camp Vicente Lim Integrated School. A total of 248 Grade 12 students determined through the raosoft sample size calculator were selected from the total population of 697. Stratified random sampling was used in this study since the population can be divided into subgroups, or strata, based on their strand that is related to the variable being studied. This ensures that each strand is adequately represented in the sample, which can help to reduce bias and improve the accuracy of the results.

Strand	Population	Sample size
STEM	80	28
ABM	94	33
HUMSS	246	88
ICT	110	40
HE	60	21
EIM	64	23
SMAW	43	15
Total	697	248

The researcher utilized a self-made two-part survey questionnaire that focused on twitter registers and formal

English language skills. The first part elicited the most frequently used twitter register in the six sub-types namely: dialect register, facetious register, taboo register, new or nascent register, and slang register. Ten vocabularies were listed corresponding to each sub-type. The second part was made as a checklist form to determine the influence of twitter registers on the students formal English language usage. These contain statements describing their practices and experiences in using formal language. These were adapted from several sources. The questionnaire had a total of 65 items, 50 for the first section and 15 for the second part.

Before distributing the survey questionnaires to the respondents, the researcher asked permission from the principal and their subject teachers. After it was approved, the researcher proceeded to the distribution of survey to the Grade 12 students. She thoroughly explained the topic and the purpose of the study to ensure the accuracy and genuineness of the respondents' answers. After the respondents had completed the survey, the researcher tallied the results and asked the help of a statistician for the statistical treatment.

The mean and the four -point Likert Scale was used to determine the most frequently used twitter registers of Grade 12 students of Camp Vicente Lim Integrated School. Likewise, mean and the five-point Likert Scale was used to describe the formal English language usage of the Grade 12 students of Camp Vicente Lim Integrated School. Finally, to establish the relationship between the frequently used registers and formal language usage of the grade 12 students, Pearsons r was used.

The gathered data were statistically treated, interpreted, and analyzed. More so, the findings were supported by relevant literature.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dialect register. It refers to a specific form of language that is distinct to a certain geographical area or social community. It is commonly characterized by its lexicon, syntax, and phonetics. In the study this pertains to the unique vocabulary of Filipino students belonging to Generation Z.

Table 1.1 displays the assessment of the participants regarding the frequency of utilizing dialect registers in X (Twitter). The computed composite mean of 3.86 indicates that the respondents regularly utilize dialect registers on the X platform. This indicates that they possess knowledge and have verified usage of these terms, which have been created by Filipinos and have specific meanings that can only be comprehended by Filipinos.

Table 1.1 Frequency of Using Dialect Registers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Sana ol	3.98	Always	2
2. SKL	3.95	Always	4
3. accla	3.92	Always	6
4. Awit	3.93	Always	5
5. Eme/ Charot	3.99	Always	1
6. Forda	3.89	Always	8
7. Pi	3.46	Often	10
8. dogshow	3.90	Always	7
9. Naks	3.96	Always	3
10. Saks	3.49	Often	9
Composite Mean	3.85	Always	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; 1.00 - 1.49 = Never

The item "eme/charot" had the highest ranking, with a mean score of 3.93, indicating a frequent occurrence. This suggests that the respondents have a strong preference for utilizing this term when they tweet or express themselves on X. The typical utilization exemplifies the prevailing informal and lighthearted character of online interaction, particularly on platform X, within the Filipino Gen Z demographic, which encompasses grade 12 students. The term functioned as a linguistic indicator that aided them in establishing a sense of unity and friendship among their online communities. By appending the suffixes "eme" or "charot" to their statements, they were able to convey their viewpoints or engage in humor without the potential for causing offense or misinterpretation and signal to others that the intention is not to be taken seriously, but rather to elicit amusement or create a light-hearted atmosphere.

On the other hand, the term "pi" which is an informal variation of the Filipino term "po" attained the lowest mean of 3.46 which is equivalent to often. This may indicate that while communicating informally on X, the respondents still disregard the need to use the correct term in expressing respect as part of the Filipino culture. It may also suggest that younger generations tend to adopt and adapt language to suit their preferences and communication styles. Gen Z Filipinos may perceive "po" or as outdated or too formal for their online interactions which reflects their preference for informal and authentic communication, and their desire to connect with peers on a more equal and personal level.

Facetious register. This is a language variety that is used for humorous or playful purposes which is often characterized by exaggeration, irony, and nonsense.

It can be observed from table 1.2 the assessment of the participants regarding the frequency of utilizing facetious registers in X (Twitter). The computed composite means of 3.62 indicates that the respondents commonly utilize facetious registers on the X platform. This indicates that they positively view facetious language as a way to be

funny and entertaining, which makes them especially appealing to them as regular part of their twitter language. Since their generation is known for their appreciation of humor and their ability to find humor in even the most mundane situations, using facetious language on Twitter allows them to express themselves in a way that is both humorous and satirical.

Table 1.2 Frequency of Using Facetious Registers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Zaddy	2.73	Often	10
2. LMAO	3.92	Always	3
3. bussin	3.52	Always	8
4. brain cramp	3.87	Always	4
5. Meme	3.95	Always	2
6. LOL	3.97	Always	1
7. Sending me	3.73	Always	6
8. Cray cray	3.47	Often	9
9. simp	3.77	Always	5
10. oof	3.69	Always	7
Composite Mean	3.70	Always	

Specifically, the term “LOL” got the highest mean of 3.92 which translates to always utilized. This suggests that the respondents are fond of using ways to express amusement, laughter, or even just lightheartedness and the word “LOL” could have been a quick and easy way to add humor or levity to their tweets.

Conversely, the term "Zaddy" received the lowest average score of 2.88, indicating that most students frequently use it on Twitter. This demonstrates their distinct linguistic style and wit, as well as their changing perspectives on gender and sexuality. The term "Zaddy" encompasses persons of all gender identities, such as males, women, and non-binary individuals, illustrating the growing recognition of gender fluidity and sexual diversity among Generation Z.

Taboo register. It is a linguistic form employed to denote subjects that are deemed unacceptable or prohibited. It is frequently employed in a satirical or hyperbolic manner; however, it can also serve as a means to convey authentic wrath or animosity.

The assessment of the participants' frequency of using taboo registers in X (Twitter) can be noted from table 1.3. The calculated composite means of 3.62 suggests that the respondents extensively employ banned words on the X platform. This suggests that individuals perceive taboo terms as a means of asserting their freedom and defying societal norms and expectations. Utilizing these terms may serve as a means for individuals to manifest their uniqueness and question figures of authority. This is especially pertinent in contemporary culture, since these

young generation are progressively scrutinizing conventional norms and institutions.

Table 1.3 Frequency of Using Taboo Registers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. FML	2.73	Often	10
2. Thirst trap	3.69	Always	7
3. Dang	3.77	Always	5
4. goddamn	3.87	Always	4
5. Crap	3.47	Often	9
6. Ass	3.52	Always	8
7. Damn	3.92	Always	3
8. Bitch	3.97	Always	1
9. AF	3.73	Always	6
10. cancel	3.95	Always	2
Composite Mean	3.62	Always	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; 1.00 - 1.49 = Never

The word “bitch” which is considered taboo in formal contexts got the highest mean of 3.97 which means it is constantly used by the respondents on Twitter. Since twitter is a platform that is relatively free from censorship, Gen Z may feel free to use taboo words without fear of being punished. This usage enables them to articulate profound emotions, such as wrath, frustration, or pain. This can be perceived as a more immediate and instinctive method to convey emotions compared to employing conventional language.

On the other hand, the abbreviation “FML” which stands for fuck my life is often used by the participants with a mean of 2.73. It indicates that they often used words that may shock and provoke a reaction, which can be humorous to certain audiences. Since they are known for their appreciation for irreverent humor, they may use such words to make their tweets stand out and get a laugh. This also shows the lack of awareness or thoughtfulness of Gen Z students on the potential consequences of using the term such as offending others or creating a negative image of themselves.

New or nascent register. This is a language variety that is new or emerging and is not yet fully accepted by the wider community and is often used by young people or by members of subcultures New registers can be characterized by the use of innovative vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation patterns.

The evaluation of the frequency at which individuals utilize emerging linguistic styles in X (Twitter) may be observed in table 1.4. The computed composite means of 3.79 indicates that the participants make frequent use of novel terminology on the X platform. This implies that they have a strong inclination towards seeking attention on Twitter. Employing these linguistic registers can enhance the appeal and interactivity of their tweets, hence increasing the likelihood of receiving more retweets, likes,

and followers. Additionally, they provide a platform for students to engage in experimentation and linguistic play, allowing them to discover novel methods of communication and self-expression that can simultaneously be enjoyable and demanding for the respondents.

Table 1.4 Frequency of Using Nascent Registers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Ghosting	3.96	Always	2
2. salty	3.58	Always	9
3. IYKYK	3.68	Always	8
4. situationship	3.83	Always	6
5. FOMO	3.47	Often	10
6. Stan	3.77	Always	7
7. Slay	3.97	Always	1
8. Giving	3.85	Always	4
9. Clout	3.86	Always	5
10. gaslighting	3.89	Always	3
Composite Mean	2.52	Always	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; 1.00 - 1.49 = Never

In particular, the term “slay” garnered the highest mean of 3.97 indicating regular utilization of the respondents. It shows that they highly prefer versatile words such as slay that can be used in different forms and contexts. It can be used as a verb, a noun, or even an adjective. This adaptability makes it a popular choice for expressing a variety of emotions and ideas on twitter. Also, it reflects the need for the students to express their own cultural identity and distance themselves from older generations.

Meanwhile, the phrase "FOMO" or fear of missing out had the lowest ranking, with an average score of 3.47. Although less frequently utilized, the phrase remains widespread among the participants. They frequently employ the phrase to mock their fears and emphasize the irrationality of the expectation to always be connected. Furthermore, Twitter's functionalities, such as instantaneous updates and popular subjects, amplify the fears associated with FOMO. Observing others' experiences develop in real-time can intensify their sensation of being left out, thus making the word especially pertinent and prominent on this site.

Slang Register. This is a variety of languages that is informal and often considered to be non-standard. It is characterized using informal vocabulary, often with shortened forms of words and new or creative meanings.

Table 1.5 provides an overview of the frequency at which participants utilize slang registers in X (Twitter). Based on the computed composite mean of 3.64, it can be inferred that the participants frequently employ vernacular registers when using the X platform. The students' desire for group affiliation and identity explains this phenomenon. By communicating in the same language as their peers,

individuals can indicate their membership in a particular online community or social group. This may be especially crucial for them since they are still in the process of discovering their position in the world. Additionally, they might have employed slang registers as a result of their superior efficiency and succinctness in comparison to formal language. It is especially crucial to adhere to the character limit of 280 per tweet on Twitter, hence they needed to communicate more rapidly and effectively without sacrificing meaning or clarity by employing vernacular.

Table 1.5 Frequency of Using Slang Registers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. tea	3.86	Always	2
2. sheesh	3.96	Always	1
3. lewk	2.96	Often	10
4. rizz	3.82	Always	4
5. Finna	3.46	Often	8
6. shook	3.55	Always	7
7. No cap	3.73	Always	5
8. cancel	3.84	Always	3
9. periodt	3.73	Always	5
10. yeet	3.44	Often	9
Composite Mean	3.64	Always	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; 1.00 - 1.49 = Never

More precisely, the term "sheesh" was the slang word that appeared most frequently, with an average frequency of 3.96. This phenomenon may have originated from the word's diverse range of meanings and interpretations, which are contingent upon the specific context and tone of voice employed. The presence of ambiguity can be regarded as a favorable characteristic for the respondents, as it allows them to convey their thoughts in a more nuanced manner and refrain from being excessively clear. Moreover, within the rapid and information-saturated context of Twitter, the word "sheesh" emerges as a concise and captivating term. This feature may have enabled students to efficiently and promptly convey their emotions and reactions.

On the other hand, the phrase "lewk" was ranked the lowest with a mean of 2.96, indicating frequent usage. This implies that the participants desire to communicate with greater impact and efficiency, whether they are praising someone's attire, showcasing their own fashion sense, or simply engaging in amusing behavior. The unconventional spelling of "lewk" aided them in emphasizing and highlighting the concept.

As shown on table 1.6, the summary of the frequency of twitter registers usage had a composite mean of 3.72 verbally interpreted as often. Specifically, dialect registers received the highest mean of 3.86. It is followed by Nascent registers which acquired a mean of 3.79. Further,

Ironie registers garnered an average score of 3.71. Meanwhile, Taboo registers got a mean of 3.70 and Slang registers were assessed with a mean of 3.64. Lastly, Facetious registers received the lowest mean of 3.62. These are all translated to always utilized.

Table 1.6 Summary of Frequency of Twitter Registers Usage

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Dialect Registers	3.86	Always	1
Facetious Registers	3.62	Always	6
Taboo Registers	3.70	Always	4
Nascent Registers	3.79	Always	2
Slang Registers	3.64	Always	5
Composite Mean	3.72	Always	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; 1.00 - 1.49 = Never

These findings indicate that the respondents possess knowledge and have verified usage of these terms when communicating and expressing themselves on X or twitter platform. The findings can be ascribed to their desire to express themselves creatively. Since Gen Z is a very creative generation, they often use language in new and innovative ways. Using different registers can be a way for them to experiment with language and express themselves in new ways. Furthermore, it may have also stemmed from the goal to create a sense of community and belonging. By using a specific register, Gen Z can signal to other Gen Z users that they are part of the same group.

Dialect registers being the most utilized vocabulary type on X or Twitter signifies that the respondents were more accustomed and comfortable in using words which are created by Filipinos and have specific meanings that can only be comprehended by Filipinos. This may have created a sense of identity among them when utilized in communicating with other users and allowed them to better express themselves in unique ways.

Conversely, the least used vocabulary type which are Facetious Registers, though not used regularly by all of the respondents, reflects the Filipino culture and identity of being humorous and playful. These words are employed by students to establish a more relaxed and light communication setting and easily connect to others. Yet, it may also be noted that some students prefer not to use such terms to avoid being perceived as offensive or disrespectful when taken out of context or misunderstood.

This is related to the study of Jeresano and Carretero (2022) which findings reveal that slang is widely used by students. And imply that through the rapid development of technology, the transformation of the language has become extensive as well. The study demonstrates the presence of

morphological processes in slang. The following are linguistic phenomena: initialism, acronym, spelling distortion, compounding, fancy construction, suffixes, connotation, clipping, euphemism, reversed form, borrowing, and numerous processes. The students' utilization of these words reflects their digital culture, characterized by a need for fast typing and simplified communication. This slang incorporates specific symbols that convey meaning, serving as a means of identification within certain social groups. Additionally, it introduces new trends and showcases the students' creativity, adaptability, and ability to adjust to new circumstances.

Table 2 Assessment of Formal English Language Usage

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I use abbreviated style of communication even in formal settings.	3.99	Agree	9
2. I rely on emojis to a simplify my messages.	4.86	Strongly Agree	1
3. I find it hard to be perceived as professional and project a credible and mature image when communicating	4.59	Strongly Agree	8
4. I have limited vocabulary specially of more sophisticated and nuanced words that are typically used in formal contexts.	4.85	Strongly Agree	2.5
5. I find it challenging to transition to the more structured and formal language required in academic or professional settings.	4.85	Strongly Agree	2.5
6. I often prioritize speed and brevity over grammatical correctness	4.62	Strongly Agree	7
7. I believe that twitter jargons and slang are acceptable in all contexts.	3.74	Agree	12
8. I often use informal and conversational tone in formal situations.	3.48	Neither	15
9. I spell words the same way I type or encode them in twitter such as removing vowels and shortening.	3.64	Agree	13
10. I encounter misinterpretation and misunderstanding from other people when using twitter registers.	4.67	Strongly Agree	4
11. I find it difficult to apply proper sentence structure and paragraph organization	3.94	Agree	11
12. I tend to overuse informal language even in formal settings such as in school.	3.96	Agree	10
13. I tend to adopt informal grammatical structures and imprecise language when communicating.	4.74	Strongly Agree	5
14. I have heavy reliance and repetitively use slang words or phrases and informal contractions such as wanna, gonna, etc. when speaking and writing.	4.71	Strongly Agree	6
15. I often forgot and even neglect to utilize punctuation marks when writing formally.	3.49	Neither	14
Composite Mean	4.28	Agree	

Legend 4.50 – 5.00 Strong Agree (SA) 3.50 - 4.49 Agree (A) 2.50 - 3.49 Neither (N) 1.50 - 2.49 Disagree (D) 1.00 - 1.49 Strong Disagree (SD)

Table 2 presents the assessment of Formal English language usage of the respondents. Overall, the respondents agreed that their formal language skills are influenced by their usage of twitter vocabularies as evident in the composite mean of 4.28. This implies that most students encountered difficulties in communicating formally which may have been a result of being overly exposed to informal registers on Twitter.

In particular, the indicator “I rely on emojis to simplify my messages even in formal communication” acquired the highest mean of 4.86 with verbal equivalent of strongly agree. This use of emojis by Filipino Gen Z students reflects their adaptation to the digital age, their preference for visual communication, and their desire to express themselves in a way that is authentic, engaging, and culturally relevant. However, Emojis can sometimes be misinterpreted or convey unintended meanings, especially when used excessively or inappropriately. This can lead to misunderstandings and confusion, particularly in formal contexts. Emojis may not always adequately convey the full range of emotions, ideas, or concepts that can be expressed through formal language. This can result in a loss of nuance and clarity in communication. Overreliance on emojis can create a perception of unprofessionalism or a lack of seriousness, which may be detrimental in professional settings.

In addition, both the statements “I have limited vocabulary specially of more sophisticated and nuanced words that are typically used in formal contexts” and “I find it challenging to transition to the more structured and formal language required in academic or professional settings” received a mean score of 4.85 verbally interpreted as agree. Such results suggest that despite being widely exposed to twitter dialogue and conversations, the students were not able to gain new vocabulary that are applicable or useful in formal communication. Further, their continuous exposure and usage of X or Twitter platform which have made them overly used and comfortable to informal language style could have impeded their ability to shift smoothly and swiftly to formal communication. This may have negatively affected their performance in academic writing and speaking which require them to communicate in adherence to Standard English rules and notes.

Conversely, the item “I often forgot and even neglect to utilize punctuation marks when writing formally” had a mean score of 3.49 which is ranked at 14th and equivalent to neither agree or disagree. This suggest that forgetting or neglecting punctuation may be a relatively common occurrence. However, the fact that the mean score still falls within the neutral range suggests that this behavior is not necessarily widespread or considered acceptable. It may indicate that some of the respondents are still aware of simple language nuances such as punctuation, hence they do not disregard using it when communicating in academic endeavours. These could have been ingrained in the students' writing habits, regardless of the context. Despite their awareness of the distinctions between formal and informal writing, they may unconsciously employ punctuation marks without deliberate consideration.

Similarly, the indicator “I often use informal and conversational tone in formal situations” garnered the lowest mean of 3.48 translated to neutral. The neutral mean score indicates that participants had an understanding that employing casual language in official settings diverges from societal norms. Although they may not hold a firm stance of agreement or disagreement with the statement on a personal level, they see the significance of upholding formality in specific situations. It could also suggest that participants perceive their language usage to be contingent upon the formal context. They may employ colloquial language while communicating with close peers but preserve a sense of formality when interacting with superiors or in professional contexts.

This is connected to the study of Bules (2022) which revealed several undergraduates who reported negative effects of social media on their English language learning. Their concerns were mainly based on the presence of foul language, cyber bullying, inaccurate spellings, and intensive use of abbreviations in SNSs which may negatively affect their academic performance.

Table 3 Relationship Between Frequently Used X Registers and Formal English Language Usage

	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Dialect Registers	-0.437	0.000	Significant
Facetious Registers	-0.257	0.18	Significant
Taboo Registers	-0.116	0.290	Not Significant
Nascent Registers	0.467	0.000	Significant
Slang Registers	0.709	0.000	Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Moreover, several participants in another study by Zainal (2020) acknowledged that the utilization of internet slang (such as LOL, BTW, and FTW) on social media has an influence on their formal writing. Additionally, the majority of respondents stated that the use of informal contractions (such as gonna, whatcha, and gimme) on social media affects their speaking and writing style. A significant portion of the entries have a casual tone and do not align with the standards of academic writing often employed in language learning environments.

As reflected from Table 3, there is significant relationship between the frequency of Twitter registers usage and the Formal English Language of the Grade 12 students. Data demonstrates that the regular utilization of social media platforms might impact the employment of formal English language in various manners. This behavior may have originated from their habitual use of casual communication, which involves a greater amount of slang, acronyms, and emojis and can extend to formal contexts, such as writing essays or delivering presentations. Moreover, the rapid tempo of social media may have

contributed to an increase in grammatical and spelling mistakes. Due to the fast pace at which students' type, they may not allocate sufficient time to thoroughly check their posts, resulting in the transfer of these mistakes to their official writing. Furthermore, due to the informal nature of platforms like X or Twitter, students may have been inclined to utilize contractions, exclamation points, and all-caps, which are unsuitable for official writing. Furthermore, the pervasive informality of social media may contribute to a significant decrease in the utilization of formal language among the students. This is due to the possibility that students can excessively rely on informal language in all circumstances, so hindering their ability to transition to a more official style when required.

Table 4 Proposed Intervention Program

Intervention Area	Specific Skills Targeted	Activities/Strategies	Resources	Assessment Methods	Duration
Vocabulary Development	- Define and use academic vocabulary - Use synonyms, antonyms, and derivatives - Understand nuances of word meaning	* Word of the Day: Introduce a new academic vocabulary word daily, including definition, usage, and synonyms/antonyms. * Context Clues: Practice using context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in reading passages. * Word Mapping: Create mind maps or concept diagrams to organize and visualize relationships between words. * Vocabulary Games: Play engaging games like Scrabble or crossword puzzles to reinforce vocabulary learning.	- Online dictionaries and thesauruses - Academic texts and articles - Vocabulary workbooks	- Pre- and post-vocabulary tests - Vocabulary quizzes and activities - Observations of vocabulary usage in writing and speech	12 weeks
Grammar and Usage	- Master parts of speech and sentence structures - Apply grammar rules in writing and speech - Identify and correct common errors	* Grammar Mini-Lessons: Focus on specific grammar points (e.g., subject-verb agreement, sentence structure) with clear explanations and examples. * Sentence Editing: Practice identifying and correcting common grammar and mechanics errors in writing. * Peer Editing: Provide opportunities for students to edit each other's work and offer constructive feedback. * Grammar Games: Play interactive games to reinforce grammar rules and concepts.	- Grammar textbooks and online resources - Sentence correction exercises - Collaborative writing projects	- Grammar quizzes and tests - Error analysis in writing samples - Observations of grammar usage in speech	15 weeks
Research and Writing Skills	- Formulate research questions - Locate and evaluate credible sources - Organize information and write clear, concise essays	* Research projects on academic topics * Outlining and note-taking strategies * Drafting, revising, and editing writing assignments * Literature reviews and annotated bibliographies	- Online research databases - Library resources - Writing templates and style guides	- Research paper presentations and evaluations - Peer review of writing assignments - Rubrics for research and writing skills	25 weeks
Presentation and Public Speaking Skills	- Organize and prepare presentations - Deliver	* Debate Club: Facilitate debate sessions where students present arguments using formal	- Presentation rubrics focusing on content,	Performance tasks	10 weeks

These findings align with the outcome of Hasmi et al. (2019), which revealed that students employ slang phrases as a means of evading the intricate vocabulary and concise structures of the English language. They employ acronyms and colloquial terms to facilitate communication.

Moreover, the utilization of mobile phones significantly impacts the pupils' adoption of colloquial language. The utilization of messaging programs has had an impact on students' writing proficiency as they employ concise and ungrammatical constructions in their conversations, text messages, and tweets. Furthermore, it has been shown that students have begun incorporating these acronyms and non-conventional language items into their scholarly compositions. The over utilization of mobile devices in educational institutions and classroom settings has been identified as a significant contributing factor to the usage of colloquial language and brevity in students' academic work. Students lack proficiency in punctuation and capitalization when texting, hence impairing their writing abilities.

This comprehensive intervention program seeks to augment the formal English language proficiency of students, providing them with the competence and fluency essential for achieving academic success, skilled professional communication, and impactful public discourse. The program utilizes an elaborate approach that combines teaching of grammar, enhancement of vocabulary, practice in writing, and development of oral communication skills.

IV. CONCLUSION

Grade 12 students utilize the various types of Twitter registers such as Dialect Register, Facetious Registers, Taboo Registers, Ironic Registers, Nascent Registers, and Slang Registers regularly and frequently as reflected in the results of their assessment. The most repeatedly used type of register are dialect registers while the least utilized are facetious registers.

Further, they have agreed to utilize emojis as a means of simplifying messages and have deliberately limited vocabulary, particularly when it comes to employing more refined and nuanced terms that are generally utilized in formal settings. Furthermore, they face difficulties when adapting to the stricter and more formal language conventions necessary in academic or professional environments. It was also found out that they experience misinterpretation and misunderstanding from others when employing language registers commonly used on Twitter. Additionally, it was shown that they have a tendency to utilize informal grammatical structures and imprecise language in their communication. They heavily rely on and frequently employ slang words or phrases, as well as informal contractions. Additionally, it was discovered that they tended to value expediency and conciseness over grammatical accuracy.

Moreover, there is a significant relationship between the frequency of twitter register usage and the formal English language of the Grade 12 students. This evidenced that the usage of various registers when engaging with X or twitter could lead to a decline in their ability to communicate effectively in formal context.

Grade 12 students face a struggle in keeping formal language abilities while using informal registers on Twitter due to the platform's fast-paced and informal character. Grade 12 students are advised to cultivate an understanding of the various contexts and circumstances that require the use of formal and informal language. This enables individuals to deliberately transition between different linguistic registers based on the specific platform or situation. Students can actively participate in formal language learning by examining language structure, vocabulary, and grammar under the instruction and guidance of their teachers. One possible approach to this task is to analyze sentences by breaking them down, examining the differences between formal and informal language styles, and considering how language choices can affect different situations. This will enable Generation Z to acquire additional knowledge and enhance their proficiency in formal language. Finally, it is important for students to understand that formal and informal language are not separate and opposing, but rather they should be seen as complimentary means of achieving effective communication. By placing importance on and cultivating both registers, individuals can improve their ability to communicate effectively and adjust their language to various situations and listeners.

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Vulnerability of Disabled bodies as Societal Issues in *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry

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Abstract— Rohinton Mistry was a Parsi writer who depicted the lives and struggles of common man between 1947 – 1984. In his work he portrays about the reality of India aftermath independence. Most of his works such as ‘*A fine Balance*’, ‘*Such a long journey*’, ‘*Family Matters*’, ‘*The Tale of Firozsha Baag*’, has a deep message related to socio-political and cultural realities of India. Major themes include: social inequality, caste system, political oppression, corruption, exile, migration, human resilience, silence, dignity, urban life, poverty, identity, cruelty and communal riots.

Keywords— Identity of the disabled humans, congenital defects, disfigurement, death, uncertainty, suicide, poverty and human sufferings.



INTRODUCTION

In Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (1995), citizens with congenital defects, paupers, street players, people with major defects are portrayed to be heroes. The author has given special attention. The author weaves the lives of the poor of India as socio-problem. They are always showcased with much dignity and complexity, challenging social stereotypes exposed to the harsh realities of life in post emergency period. Through them, Mistry interrogates how physical disfigurement or disability intersects with class, caste, state violence, rendering with identity plying to their sufferings and resistance. The identity of the crippled, crooked were unnoticed. Shankar, Beggar master, Nosey, Rajaram, Ishvar Darji, Om Darji, Monkey-man and his companions Laila, Majnoo and the Mongrel are peripheral and central to the narrative and a victim of systematic inequality, bodily autonomy and human dignity. The poor and the needy always suffer when the government impose emergency, rules or regulations.

Characters like Shankar and Beggar master were acting as a saviour for the rest of the beggars in the

society. They embody the exploitation and resilience within the brutal society. Shankar despite being a limbless man supports the other marginalised individuals and has a deeper bond with Om and Ishvar. There is always a fine balance between despair and hope. In the end Shankar is murdered and a huge crowd followed him during his funeral. The highlighting point in the novel is when Dina Bhai and Maneck attends the ceremony this incident shows their bond and unity with this disabled man. The disabled and disfigured are considered as human for a common man whereas the same group is treated worse than animals by the powerful politicians and the higher authorities. (Mistry, 1995, p224-226)

The Intersection of Disability and Caste

Ishvar and Om from a lower caste who are considered as untouchables leave their village and move to the city in search of job and for betterment of self but unfortunately, they become a prey of dehumanisation. The journey of luck and betterment of the future turns into a real nightmare for them. They were stopped by systematic barriers and prejudices. In caste hierarchy an individual's identity is known by their profession therefore, Dhuki

Mochi changes his son's profession by making them as tailors for their well-being so they come to Bombay city in search of job finally they end up being homeless. A paradigm shift takes place from being a cobbler to tailor and then joins the beggar community ultimately ending up as a beggar and limbless bodies. These two characters are marred with unpredictability and bereft of social, economic and political society.

State Violence and Bodily Autonomy

National emergency period for twenty-one months caused a turmoil to the lives of the poor and marginalised souls. The fundamental rights of the people were denied and family planning schemes were made compulsory; sterilized people were awarded with gifts. Emergency embodied wicked Thakur Dhamarsi to enjoy power. Another highlighting issue is the city beautification and evacuation drive during Emergency. Thousands of slums comprising of shacks and shanties were destroyed befooling the slum dwellers. If they impose emergency then the government should have prepared other alternatives but they never thought about the well-beings of common and disable people.

Resilience Amidst Oppression

Despite the severe adversities they face, Ishvar and Om exhibits remarkable resilience. Their ability to adapt, maintain a sense of humour and to continue their craft as tailors in the face of physical and emotional trauma speaks about human endurance. Mistry portrays their resilience not as a mere survival mechanism but as a form of resistance against all kind of evil forces and harsh realities.

Shankar (Worm): The Dehumanization of Disability

Shankar also known as Worm is a limbless beggar has been mutilated to enhance his begging efficiency. His condition is a direct result of the Beggar Master's cruel practices highlighting how disability is imposed upon individuals for the purpose of exploitation. We see him as a good human who willingly help Om and Ishvar who was caught in the construction site. Though Shankar seems to be the half-brother of The Beggar Master but still he is helpless yet, he retains a sense of identity and humanity challenging the notion that disability equates to worthlessness. His disabled body becomes a tool for survival in a hostile environment.

Beggar Master: The Exploiter of Disabled Bodies

The Beggar Master is a hero-like figure for some beggars who also profits from the exploitation of disabled beggars. In the novel we find him levy charges of twenty-five rupees per week from Om and Ishvar once they are out of the camp. He even helps Dian Bhai from the wicked

hands of the goondas. The abled and the disabled were segregated in the construction site, there only hero was the beggar master. He controls a group of mutilated individuals including Shankar forcing him to collect alms on his behalf. His actions reflect a systematic abuse where disabled bodies are commodified for economic gain. In the end Shankar has been murdered by the monkey-man for abusing his nephew. Once a saviour now ended as a Martyr. It illustrates how societal structures can perpetuate the vulnerability of disabled individuals using them as a mere instrument of profit.

Nosey: The Legacy of Exploitation

Nosey is the mother of Shankar who has no nose that's why people call her as 'Nosey'. She was sexually abused by Shankar's father at first, she hesitated to it later she got used to the abuse. Due to this form of abuse another creature was formed therefore, the legacy of sufferings was passed down to Shankar who also turned into a limbless human. The novel shows the systematic oppression that perpetuated across generations. Her tragic fate exemplifies the generational cycle of exploitation faced by the disabled individuals in the novel.

Monkey-man: The Psychological Toll of Disability

Monkey-man, a street performer, experiences a heavy toll of disability when his monkeys are eaten by his dog. In this scenario we find both human and his animal friend suffer of terrible exploitation. Later the street performer is entitled to perform a show with his sister's children in the construction site. His actions, including the killing of the Beggar master reflects the deep emotional and psychological impact of losing companions and the sense of purpose that disability can create. The story tells how the loss of supportive relationships can exacerbate the vulnerabilities of disabled and violent outbursts.

Dog the symbol of Betrayal

Dogs are meant to be the best companion for humans. the dog was monkey-man's friend once when it was left alone in the stacks it ate the monkeys due to severe hunger and starvation though it was not its fault. Its death at the hands of the monkey-man reflects the cycle of nature of violence and negligence that affect the disabled bodies leading to the sense of loss and disillusionment. When he loses the animals, he started using his innocent children as a tool for his living. The animals and the little innocent children show exploitation within their beggar group. Innocent children are susceptible to manipulation and are controlled by those who are in power. The novel has a good vicinity showing how animals and small innocent children are being exploited.

Laila and Majnoo: The voiceless creatures

The death of the animals talks about the failure, care and ignorance by its owner. The story serves as a poignant reminder of the need for care, protection and support for the disabled and voiceless creatures.

CONCLUSION

Through these characters, *A Fine Balance* presents disability not just as a physical or mental condition but as a reflection of how society treats those it considers 'less than whole'. The novel criticizes social, political and economic systems that dehumanize, marginalize and exploit disabled people through the violence of forced sterilization, the cruelty of displacement or quiet neglect of mental illness. Mistry portrays a world that is profoundly unjust to its most vulnerable beings.

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Interspecies Kinship and Ecological Harmony in Dhan Gopal Mukerji's "kari the elephant"

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Abstract— This paper explores the intricate human animal relationships and kinship depicted in "Kari the Elephant" by Mukerji, focusing on the profound bond between a young Indian boy and Kari, a five month old elephant. The narrative illustrates how Kari is treated as a family member, emphasizing the emotional connection and mutual care that defines their relationship. Drawing on theories from scholars like Harriet Ritvo and Eric Fudge, the paper argues that Kari embodies moral agency and individuality, challenging traditional views of animals as mere objects. The setting of the Indian jungle serves as an active participant in this bond, highlighting the interconnectedness of humans, animals, and nature. The boy's interactions with Kari and other animals, such as the snake, crocodile and monkey, further illustrate themes of respect, coexistence and ecological balance. Through these relationships, Mukerji presents a vision of harmony with nature, where both human and animal exist in a shared, interdependent world. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of recognizing the emotional and ethical dimensions of human-animal relationships in literature.



Keywords— Jungle, Human animal bond, Kinship, Ecological Harmony, Companion Species.

Introduction

One of the earliest Indian writers to achieve literary fame in the US was Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1890–1936). After relocating to the United States in 1910, Mukerji, who was born in Calcutta, gained renown for his English language works that exposed Western readers to Indian mythology, culture and folklore. Mukerji's writings, especially his children's novels, were instrumental in overcoming cultural barriers and providing Western readers with an insight into India's natural and cultural environments. Mukerji won the prestigious Newbery Medal in 1928 for his later work, *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon*, and his most well known book, "Kari the Elephant", which was released in 1922 and became a classic in American children's literature. "Kari the Elephant", was a short story that was originally published as a part of collections of stories in his *The Jungle Books*. It tells the story of a young boy and his elephant, Kari in the jungles of India. It gives a vivid description of animals, the jungle, and human animal

bond. Mukerji craft a tale that emphasizes empathy, coexistence, and the beauty of the natural world. In this story Mukerji not only focuses on the titular elephant but also includes representations of various animals, each contributing uniquely to the story's moral and ecological framework.

Human Animal Relationship and Kinship

In "Kari the Elephant", the narrator, a young Indian boy, forms a profound bond with Kari, a five month old elephant. From the beginning, Kari is treated not merely as an animal, but as a family member, friend, and even a saviour. The narrator, who is nine years old when he begins caring for Kari, the narrator utters "Perhaps we grew together; that is probably why I never found out just how tall he was" (Mukerji 3; ch.1). He gradually learns how to feed, bathe, and tend to the elephant, developing a deep understanding of Kari's preferences and behaviours. The narrator says "Every day I used to take him to the river in

the morning for his bath. He would lie down on the sandbank while I rubbed him with the clean sand of river for an hour" (Mukerji 3-4; ch.1). As Harriet Ritvo argues, "Domesticated animals often become part of human social structures, forming roles akin to family members" (Ritvo 34). This evolving relationship illustrates the boy's growing sensitivity and emotional connection to the animal, reflecting a significant example of interspecies kinship.

The relationship between Kari and the narrator is built on a foundation of mutual care and companionship. While the boy tends to Kari's daily needs, Kari in turn, protects the boy and even saves a life, demonstrating the depth of their bond. "I thought some water animal was going to swallow me. I heard the squealing of Kari and I knew it was his trunk about my neck. He pulled us both ashore" (Mukerji 7; ch.1). Kari is more than just an animal; he is a dependent companion who is treated not as an object, but as a sentient being with moral and emotional agency. As Eric Fudge mentions, "To recognize the animal as a subject means allowing it a kind of kinship, where we do not deny its difference but recognize its presence in a shared world" (Fudge 8). Fudge's framework aligns with the way Kari the Elephant presents animals not as voiceless or mindless beings, but as subjects with individual personalities and ethical presence. Kari's actions especially his moral agency in saving the drowning boy reflect this recognition.

He is neither a mere pet nor a beast of burden, but a respected companion whose emotions, intelligence, and agency are fully acknowledged. The author states that "Kari was like a baby. He had to be trained to be good and if you did not tell him when he was naughty, he was up to more mischief than ever" (Mukerji 9; ch.1). Kari is not simply a passive recipient of care, but an active participant in the relationship, one who teaches the boy patience and dedication through their shared experiences. He points out "Kari loved human being; the more she saw them the happier he felt. He glided by them like a human child. I was very proud of him and his behaviour" (Mukerji 53; ch.4). Donna Haraway a Post humanist talks about the concept of "Companion species where animals and humans form co-evolving relationships based on respect and mutual dependence. Companion species are those with whom humans share their lives in ways that transform both" (Haraway 17).

Harmony with Nature

The setting of the Indian jungle is not merely a backdrop, but an active participant in shaping the human animal bond. From the outset, Mukerji portrays the natural world as a space of interconnectedness and mutual dependence. The natural environment is not passive scenery; rather, it plays a vital role in nurturing the

relationship between the boy and Kari. Through daily river bathing, they engage in peaceful ritualistic interactions that foster unity among humans, animals, and natural elements, resulting in mutual happiness. This depiction accentuates the eco-centric viewpoint of the plot, emphasizing nature's role in creating moral and emotional bonds. The boy's habit of gathering food from the forest demonstrates an awareness of how both human and animal existence relies on nature and should not be exploited. The boy denotes, "I had to climb all kinds of trees to get the most delicate and tender twigs" (Mukerji 5, ch.1). Kari's innate behaviour demonstrates her role as a component of the natural ecosystem and represents her integration into both the human and plant-based worlds. The author states, "Kari, however, put out his trunk and helped himself to whatever fruits he liked eating them with great relish"(36; ch.3). Lawrence Buell an American literary critic mentions "Nature writing constructs landscapes not merely as settings, but as agents of experience and meaning" (Buell 1995).

The author also has a strong connection with nature, he used to bathe and pray while standing facing the east, reciting these words "O Blossom of Eastern Silence, Reveal to us the face of God, Whose shadow is this day, and Whose light is always within us. Lead us from the unreal to the Real, From sound into Silence, From darkness unto Light, and From death into Immortality" (Mukerji 41; ch.3). The spiritual quote reflects a longing for unity, truth, and enlightenment ideals mirrored in Mukerji's portrayal of the bond between the boy, the Kari, and the natural world. Mukerji's story embodies the Eastern ideal of living in an ecological and spiritual harmony with all living things. Furthermore, the river represents the ecological balance and interdependence of all living organisms in the narrative. As Ramachandra Guha states in *Environmentalism: A Global History* "Traditional Indian views saw rivers as sacred entities, essential for not just physical survival but spiritual balance" (Guha 2000). Kari's daily travel to the river to drink and bathe demonstrates how the boy learns to adapt his life to the elephant's natural routines. By ensuring that Kari receives water in addition to food, the boy's duties highlight the relational aspect of caring in an ecological environment. Kari's adventures in the jungle highlight his dependence on forest resources, as the boy often mentions, "It is better for animals to be where the jungle is, for the jungle is sweeter and kinder than the wilderness of stones the city" (Mukerji 59; ch. 4). Additionally, Cheryll Glotfelty, a foundational ecocritic, argues, "Ecocriticism takes an earth centred approach to literary studies" (Glotfelty 1996).

Illustrations of several creatures

While the primary focus is on kari, the elephant Mukerji includes other animals such as the snake, the crocodile, and the monkey that contribute to the broader themes of respect, coexistence, and survival in the natural world. Timothy Morton an ecology critic argues in his book *The Ecological Thought* "Even the smallest creatures disrupt anthropocentric perceptions and must be considered in ecological thinking" (Morton 2010). Kari the central figure, is portrayed as a symbol of strength, intelligence and loyalty. Here, Kari is not just a domestic animal but is also associated with wisdom, empathy, and compassion, The boy says, "I watched Kari and the other animals, the more I came to understand why Kari and I loved each other. We had a soul in Common" (Mukerji 124 -125; ch. 9). Secondly, the snake's appearance represents natural danger rather than wickedness. It presents concepts of vulnerability, comedy, and dread. Similarly, Mukerji's portrayal of the snake serves to remind readers of the danger and unpredictability of the natural system. "One day I saw a snake curling up in a banana grove and Kari raised his trunk in warning" (10; ch2). The crocodile, which represents a predatory aspect of nature, directly threatens Kari and the boy. The protagonist's bravery and resourcefulness are tested during this confrontation. It symbolizes a force of nature that is neither villainized nor sentimentalized: natural terror and predation. The authors says,

One winter we came to jungles on the seashore where I saw crocodiles lying on the banks of the Delta in the daytime, with their mouths open and little birds going in and out of them, cleaning their teeth, and eating all the insects that poison their gums. Unfortunately, elephants have no birds to clean their teeth. And, there too, even in the water you could smell animals that lived on other animals (78-79; ch.6).

The next topic of discussion is Kopee, the monkey who appears in "Kari the Elephant" and has a small but significant symbolic part in the story. In contrast to Kari's kind and noble disposition, Kopee, who was introduced as a naughty companion, provides comic relief. The variety of animal behaviors and temperaments found in the animal kingdom are reflected in his antics, which include stealing bananas and making fun of kari. Kopee is never demonized despite his mischievous behavior; rather, he is shown as a component of the natural ecosystem, driven more by instinct and curiosity than by hatred. The narrator added,

Monkeys, as you know, are annoying creatures. I had a pet monkey of my own

named Kopee, who was red faced and tawny coated. He never came near the elephant, and Kari never thought of going near him. Whenever we went out, this monkey used to sit on my shoulder, and if we passed through bazaars where mangoes and other fruits were sold, it was very difficult to keep Kopee from getting into mischief (31-32; ch. 3).

As Greg Garrard a Professor of Environmental Humanities argues "Nature is not benevolent but balanced in ecological writing, with predator-prey dynamics part of the whole" (Ecocriticism, 2004). Thus, Mukerji creates a textured portrayal of multiple animal species, each contributing a distinct moral, symbolic and ecological meaning.

CONCLUSION

Mukerji's "Kari the Elephant" intricately portrays the profound bond between humans and animals, illustrating shared emotions and moral agency. Through the setting of the Indian jungle and diverse animal representations, the narrative advocates for harmony, respect, and interdependence within the natural world, emphasizing the significance of ethical human animal relationships.

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Critical Assessment of Rabindranath Tagore as a Short Story Writer

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Abstract— Rabindranath Tagore, one of the most influential literary figures of modern India, revolutionized the short story form in Bengali literature. This study critically assesses Tagore's contribution as a short story writer, the thematic depth, narrative innovation, and socio-cultural consciousness embedded in his works. His stories transcend conventional romanticism to explore complex human emotions, social hierarchies, gender roles, and philosophical reflections on freedom and identity. Through a close reading of selected stories, this paper highlights how Tagore blended realism with lyrical prose, effectively portraying the lives of both the marginalized and the elite. The assessment also investigates Tagore's unique ability to humanize societal critique without didacticism, positioning him as a pioneering force in the evolution of the Indian short story tradition.



Keywords— Rabindranath Tagore, Bengali literature, short stories, literary realism, social critique, gender, narrative style, Indian literature, modernism

I. INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore was a famous poet, writer, artist, and thinker from India. He was born on May 7, 1861, in Kolkata, which was then called Calcutta. He belonged to a rich and educated family that supported the arts and learning. From a young age, Tagore showed great interest in reading, writing, and nature. Tagore wrote many poems, short stories, novels, songs, and plays. He mostly wrote in Bengali, but he also translated some of his works into English. His writings are full of love for nature, people, freedom, and truth. He believed in peace, kindness, and the importance of education. In 1913, Rabindranath Tagore became the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. He received this award for his book of poems called *Gitanjali*, which means "Song Offerings." This made him famous all around the world. Tagore also wrote songs that are now national anthems. He wrote "Jana Gana Mana," which is the national anthem of India, and "Amar Shonar Bangla," which is the national anthem of Bangladesh. Besides writing, Tagore was also a teacher. He started a school called Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, where students could learn freely and connect with nature. His goal was to mix the best of Indian and Western

education. Rabindranath Tagore was also a painter and wrote more than 2,000 songs. His songs are called Rabindra Sangeet and are still very popular today. He passed away on August 7, 1941, but his work and ideas still live on. People all over the world remember him as a great thinker, poet, and a lover of peace and knowledge.

II. EDUCATION REFORMS AND SANTINIKETAN

Rabindranath Tagore was a great poet, writer, and thinker from India. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. But besides being a famous poet, Tagore was also a great educationist. He believed that education should be more than just reading books and passing exams. He wanted children to learn freely and happily. That is why he started a special school called Santiniketan.

Tagore was unhappy with the British system of education in India. He felt that it was too strict and focused only on memorizing facts. It did not allow children to think for themselves or to be creative. Tagore believed that real education should help a child grow in every way mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. To make his dream come true, Tagore founded a school in 1901 in a peaceful

place in West Bengal. He named it Santiniketan, which means “abode of peace.” It was a school in the lap of nature, away from the noise and pressure of cities. Tagore believed that children learn better in nature. So classes were often held under the open sky, under trees, or in gardens. In Santiniketan, there were no strict uniforms, punishments, or fixed rules like in normal schools. Students were free to ask questions, explore their interests, and learn through play, music, art, and nature. The teachers were kind and treated students like their own children. Tagore himself took part in teaching and often wrote songs and stories for the students.

One of Tagore’s main ideas was that education should help students connect with their culture and the world. He taught Indian traditions, music, and literature, but also encouraged learning about different cultures and countries. Students from many parts of the world came to study at Santiniketan. This made the school a place of international friendship and understanding. Later, in 1921, Santiniketan became a university called Visva-Bharati, which means “where the world makes a home in a single nest.” It became a center for learning, research, and art. Tagore believed that India must learn from the world and also share its own knowledge with others. At Visva-Bharati, many famous people like Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, and Romain Rolland visited and shared their thoughts. Tagore’s ideas on education were far ahead of his time. He believed in freedom, creativity, and joy in learning. He wanted students to grow as good human beings and not just as bookworms. His methods are still respected and followed by many educators around the world. In conclusion, Rabindranath Tagore’s Santiniketan was not just a school it was a vision of what education should be. Even today, his thoughts on education inspire teachers and students. He showed us that true learning happens when the mind is free, the heart is open, and the soul is in harmony with nature. Rabindranath Tagore was a famous poet, writer, and thinker from India. He was born in 1861 in Kolkata (then Calcutta). He was the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his book of poems, *Gitanjali*. But besides being a great poet, Tagore was also a visionary in the field of education. He believed that education should be joyful, creative, and connected to life and nature. His ideas were very different from the British system of education in India at that time. To bring his ideas to life, Tagore started a school called Santiniketan in 1901. Later, it became a university called Visva-Bharati. Through this, he tried to create a new way of learning that focused on freedom, creativity, and human values. Tagore believed that education should not just be about memorizing facts or passing exams. According to him, the goal of education was to help children grow in every way intellectually, emotionally, physically, morally, and spiritually. He thought that learning should be joyful.

Children should not be forced to sit in classrooms for hours and learn from textbooks only. Instead, they should explore the world around them, ask questions, and develop their natural talents. He believed that every child is unique and should be allowed to grow at their own pace. Tagore also felt that education should be connected to nature. He said that nature is the best teacher. When children learn in the midst of nature, they feel free and happy. This helps them learn better and also develop love and respect for the environment. Another important idea of Tagore was that education should help develop creativity. He believed that music, art, dance, and literature were very important parts of learning. These subjects help express feelings and imagination. Tagore himself was a poet, painter, and musician, and he included all these forms of art in his school. In 1901, Tagore started a small school at Santiniketan, a quiet village in West Bengal. The word “Santiniketan” means “abode of peace.” Tagore chose this place because it was peaceful and close to nature far away from the noise and stress of city life. The school began with just a few students, but soon it grew. Classes were held outdoors under trees, where students could breathe fresh air and feel free. There were no strict uniforms, punishments, or heavy textbooks. Instead, students were encouraged to learn through stories, songs, activities, and observation. Tagore believed that a good teacher is like a guide, not a boss. Teachers in Santiniketan were kind and friendly. They helped students learn with love and care. There was a close relationship between students and teachers.

Santiniketan was different from other schools in many ways: Learning in Nature, Classes were often held outdoors. Students learned about the sky, trees, birds, rivers, and seasons directly from nature.

No Pressure: There were no strict exams or punishments. Learning was stress-free and fun.

Art and Culture: Music, painting, dance, and drama were part of daily learning. Students took part in festivals and cultural programs.

Freedom to Explore: Students could ask questions, try new things, and follow their interests.

Human Values: The school taught kindness, peace, respect for others, and love for all living beings.

World Culture: Although Tagore loved Indian traditions, he also believed in learning from other cultures. He invited teachers and students from different countries to Santiniketan. This helped create a spirit of global friendship and understanding.

In 1921, Tagore expanded Santiniketan and started Visva-Bharati University. He wanted it to be a place where the whole world could come together to share knowledge and

culture. The name "Visva- Bharati" means "where the world finds a home in a single nest."

Visva-Bharati was not like any other university. It was a center for learning, art, music, science, and cultural exchange. Scholars from India and abroad came to teach and learn there. Tagore himself travelled to many countries and invited thinkers, poets, and scientists to join the university. Famous people like Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, and Romain Rolland visited Visva- Bharati. The university became a symbol of peace, knowledge, and international unity. Rabindranath Tagore's ideas on education were far ahead of his time. He believed that education should prepare children to become good human beings. It should help them understand life, respect others, and work for the betterment of society. Even today, many schools and teachers follow Tagore's ideas. His thoughts are especially important now when children face stress, competition, and pressure in studies. Tagore reminds us that learning should be enjoyable, creative, and full of love. Rabindranath Tagore was not just a poet or writer. He was a builder of dreams. Through Santiniketan, he showed the world how education can be beautiful, natural, and human. He believed in the full development of the child—not just the brain, but also the heart and soul. His vision of education was based on freedom, creativity, nature, and harmony. Santiniketan was a living example of his dreams. It taught children to love learning, respect nature, and become good citizens of the world. Even though many years have passed, Tagore's ideas are still fresh and meaningful. His life and work continue to inspire teachers, students, and educationists all over the world. In today's fast-moving world, we need his message more than ever—to bring peace, joy, and creativity back into education. Rabindranath Tagore was not only a great poet, writer, and philosopher, but also a visionary in the field of education. He believed that the aim of education is not just to pass exams or get jobs, but to help a child grow in a free and natural environment. He wanted students to love learning, enjoy nature, and become good human beings. Because of this belief, he made many changes in the way education was given in his time. One of his biggest contributions to education was the founding of Santiniketan, a school and later a university, where his ideas of education came to life. Tagore's ideas about education were very different from the British system of education in India during his time. The British system focused mostly on rote learning, memorizing facts, and preparing students for government jobs. Tagore did not agree with this. He believed that education should help students think creatively and understand the world around them. Here are some key points of Tagore's education philosophy. Tagore believed that nature is the best teacher. He felt that children learn better in a natural

environment, not in closed classrooms. He encouraged open-air classes under the trees, where students could feel fresh and free. Tagore was against strict discipline and punishment in schools. He thought that children should be free to express themselves and learn at their own pace. He wanted students to ask questions, think for themselves, and develop their own interests. Tagore gave great importance to art, music, dance, and literature. He believed that these are not just hobbies, but important parts of education. They help in the overall development of a child's personality and imagination. Tagore wanted education to make students global citizens. He believed in unity among all humans, beyond borders of country, religion, or language. He invited teachers and students from all over the world to come and study at Santiniketan. Tagore also supported practical learning. He wanted students to do things with their hands, like farming, gardening, crafts, or helping in the community. He believed that this would make them self-reliant and socially responsible. Santiniketan, meaning "Abode of Peace," was founded by Tagore's father, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, in 1863 as a place for prayer and meditation. Later, in 1901, Rabindranath Tagore started a school there, which he called Brahmacharya Ashram. This small school later grew into Visva-Bharati University in 1921. Tagore used Santiniketan as a place to try out his ideas of education. The school was set in a peaceful rural area, away from the noise and pollution of cities. There were no classrooms with walls. Instead, students sat under trees and learned from nature. The teachers were friendly and acted more like guides or friends, not strict instructors. There were no exams or punishments. Students were encouraged to write poetry, sing songs, perform dramas, paint, and discuss different ideas freely. Tagore personally took part in the school's activities. He wrote many plays and poems for students, and he even taught some classes. Many of his most famous works were written at Santiniketan. Tagore wanted Santiniketan to become a center of global learning, where Indian and foreign cultures could meet and learn from each other. That is why he founded Visva-Bharati University in 1921. The name "Visva-Bharati" means "where the world meets India. Visva-Bharati attracted scholars and students from all over the world. Famous people like Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, and many international poets and thinkers visited or supported the university. The university had departments for different languages, arts, music, rural studies, science, and philosophy. Tagore believed that education should be useful for society. That is why he also started Sriniketan, a center for rural development near Santiniketan. In Sriniketan, villagers were taught modern farming, handicrafts, health care, and how to improve their lives. Students from Santiniketan also took part in these projects.

Tagore's ideas on education have had a long-lasting effect in India and around the world. Many of his ideas, like learning in natural surroundings, importance of arts, and child-friendly teaching, are now widely accepted in modern education systems. Today, schools that follow Tagore's philosophy try to create an atmosphere of joy and creativity. They encourage children to think freely, respect nature, and develop their talents. Rabindranath Tagore was a pioneer in education. He saw the flaws in the system of his time and tried to build a better way to learn. Through Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati, he showed that education can be joyful, meaningful, and helpful to society. Tagore's model of education aimed not just at building careers, but at building character. He believed that education should touch the heart and soul of a child. He said, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence." Even today, more than 80 years after his death, his ideas are still fresh and relevant. In a world that often focuses too much on competition and exams, Tagore reminds us of the true purpose of education to help children grow into wise, kind, and free-thinking human beings.

III. POLITICAL VIEWS AND THOUGHTS ON NATIONALISM

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) was not only a great poet, philosopher, and artist but also a deep thinker on political and social issues. Although he is best known for his literary works like *Gitanjali*, Tagore had strong and unique views on politics and nationalism. He believed in the dignity of all human beings and stood for peace, freedom, and unity. In this essay, we will explore Tagore's political views and his complex relationship with nationalism, especially in the context of British rule in India. Tagore lived during the time when India was ruled by the British Empire. Like many Indians, he was disturbed by British colonialism, but his approach to opposing it was different from many other leaders. While others believed in fighting for political independence through mass movements, Tagore focused on moral, spiritual, and intellectual freedom. He criticized British rule because it humiliated Indians and limited their growth as human beings. But he also warned that blindly copying the West or reacting with hatred and violence would not bring true freedom. Tagore believed that India had a rich culture, history, and spiritual tradition that should be celebrated and respected. He wanted Indians to feel proud of their identity but not in a narrow or aggressive way. According to him, Indian civilization had always valued peace, tolerance, and unity in diversity.

He felt that true independence was not just about removing the British but about renewing the Indian spirit. This meant

education, self-respect, creativity, and mutual respect among all communities Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and others. Tagore's view on nationalism was different from many other leaders of his time. He believed that nationalism, especially as it developed in Europe, could be dangerous. He saw that nationalism in Europe had led to wars, violence, and hatred between countries. He did not want India to follow that same path.

In his book "Nationalism" (1917), Tagore explained that when a nation puts its own interests above everything else and forgets about humanity, it becomes a problem. He felt that true patriotism should be about love for people, not hatred for others. For example, he wrote, "I am not against one nation in particular, but against the general idea of all nations. A nation is an organization of politics and commerce, for a mechanical purpose. This shows that Tagore was not against the idea of loving your country, but he was against turning that love into a machine that crushes the soul and spirit of people. Although both Tagore and Gandhi were great leaders and respected each other, they had some differences in their political ideas:

On Nationalism: Gandhi believed in Indian nationalism as a way to unite people and fight the British, but Tagore feared that nationalism might divide people and lead to violence. On Charkha and Khadi (Spinning wheel and handwoven cloth): Gandhi promoted these as symbols of self-reliance. Tagore supported self-reliance but didn't think everyone spinning thread would solve India's problems. He wanted more focus on education, creativity, and modern science. On Non-Cooperation Movement: Gandhi launched the non-cooperation movement in 1920, asking Indians to boycott British institutions. Tagore didn't fully support it. He felt that rejecting schools and systems would not help if there were no better alternatives. Still, they remained friends and admired each other. Gandhi called Tagore "Gurudev" (respected teacher), and Tagore called Gandhi "Mahatma" (great soul). Tagore had a very broad and deep idea of freedom. For him, freedom was not just political; it was also freedom of the mind, spirit, and heart. In his famous poem "Where the mind is without fear," he wrote: Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high where knowledge is free into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake. This shows that he wanted Indians to be bold, educated, truthful, and free in thought. For him, real freedom came when people could express themselves, think creatively, and live with dignity. Tagore believed that education was the key to India's progress. He founded Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan with the idea of blending the best of Eastern and Western knowledge. He wanted students to learn in a free environment, close to nature, and be taught to respect all cultures. He also spoke against the rigid caste system,

untouchability, and other social problems. He believed that India could never truly be free unless all its people were treated equally and with respect. One of Tagore's most powerful ideas was internationalism. He believed that we are all human beings first, and national identity should not divide us. He travelled to many countries and shared ideas of peace and unity. He said that humanity should be above all religions, races, and borders. During World War I and World War II, he warned the world against rising hatred and violence. He criticized Japan, Germany, and even the Western powers for their blind pursuit of power. In 1915, the British gave him the title "Knight" for his literary work. But after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in 1919, where British soldiers killed hundreds of innocent Indians, Tagore gave back the title in protest. This was one of the strongest acts of defiance by any Indian at the time. Tagore's political views continue to be important today. At a time when the world is often divided by borders, race, and religion, his message of unity, love, and human dignity is more relevant than ever. He taught us that: Love for your country should not mean hatred for others. Real patriotism means working for the good of all people, not just for power. Education, art, and culture are powerful tools for building a free and just society. Freedom means more than political independence; it means the growth of the human spirit. Rabindranath Tagore was a rare thinker who combined love for his country with love for all humanity. He warned against the dangers of narrow nationalism and stood for a world based on peace, respect, and cooperation. His political views were not about taking sides, but about rising above sides and seeing the deeper truth of human unity. Even today, his thoughts inspire us to build a better, more compassionate world. As we face new challenges in our time, remembering Tagore's wisdom can help us find a path forward rooted in truth, beauty, and harmony. Global Legacy of Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was a great poet, writer, musician, and thinker from India. He was born on May 7, 1861, in Kolkata (then Calcutta), India, and died on August 7, 1941. He was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. Tagore's influence is not only strong in India but also around the world. His works continue to inspire people across different cultures and generations. This essay will explain the global legacy of Rabindranath Tagore in simple words. Tagore became famous worldwide when he won the Nobel Prize for Literature for his book of poems, "Gitanjali" (meaning Song Offerings). The book was first written in Bengali, and then Tagore translated it into English. His deep, spiritual poems touched the hearts of many people. After the Nobel Prize, people from many countries wanted to read his works. He became a global figure and a voice from the East. Tagore travelled to many countries including

England, the United States, Japan, China, Argentina, Germany, and Iran. In his travels, he gave speeches, met famous thinkers, and talked about peace, unity, and humanity. He believed in learning from all cultures. He wanted East and West to understand and respect each other. In this way, he became a bridge between cultures. Tagore believed that education should be natural, joyful, and creative. In 1921, he started a school and university called Visva-Bharati in Santiniketan, India. The name means "World University." Here, students from around the world could study together. He wanted to break the walls between cultures. This university is still active today and brings together students from many countries. Tagore's ideas on global education are still relevant today. Today Tagore had strong connections with many Asian countries. He believed that Asia should not just copy the West but find its own path through culture, tradition, and unity.

In China, Tagore was respected as a poet and philosopher. He visited China in 1924 and gave many speeches. He met Chinese poets and thinkers and encouraged cultural exchange.

In Japan, he was admired for his thoughts on art and spirituality. He visited Japan several times and made lasting friendships. In Southeast Asia, his ideas inspired many freedom fighters and artists. His belief in peace, freedom, and dignity touched many people. Even though he came from the East, Tagore was well respected in the West.

In England, famous writers like W.B. Yeats praised his poetry. Yeats wrote the introduction to the English version of *Gitanjali*. In the United States, he was invited to speak at universities and cultural events. Many people came to hear his thoughts on God, life, and harmony. In Germany and other parts of Europe, his spiritual ideas were welcomed during a time of war and conflict. His message of peace gave people hope. Tagore influenced many Western thinkers and artists. He showed that Indian philosophy and literature were deep and meaningful. He opened a door for other Indian writers to be accepted in the world of global literature. Tagore was a freedom lover but not a political activist like Mahatma Gandhi. Still, he supported the Indian independence movement in his own way. He gave up his British knighthood in 1919 after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, where British soldiers killed hundreds of innocent Indians. Tagore always spoke against violence, narrow nationalism, and hatred. He believed in a world where people from different countries could live peacefully. His idea of "universal humanism" is still important in today's world, where people often fight over religion, race, and borders. Tagore was also a great composer. He created over 2000 songs known as Rabindra Sangeet. His songs are loved not just in Bengal but across India and other parts of

the world. Two of his songs became national anthems:

"Jana Gana Mana" – India's national anthem.

"Amar Shonar Bangla" – Bangladesh's national anthem.

He is the only person in the world whose songs are the national anthems of two countries. This shows how deeply his music and words are loved by millions. Tagore spoke about many modern issues long before they became common ideas. He talked about: Global peace Unity in diversity

Nature and environment Equality for women Freedom of thought. These ideas are still discussed around the world today. His writings are taught in schools and universities across the globe. Scholars study his ideas in literature, education, politics, and philosophy. Even today, Tagore's message is very important. In a time when there is war, hate, and misunderstanding, his words remind us to: Love one another Respect different cultures, Live in peace with nature and each other People celebrate his birth anniversary every year in India, Bangladesh, and many other countries. His poems are translated into many languages, and his music is performed in concerts across the world. Rabindranath Tagore was more than just a poet. He was a global thinker, a messenger of peace, and a friend of humanity. His legacy continues to live in his writings, his music, and the values he stood for. From Asia to the West, Tagore touched hearts and minds. He taught us that even though we are different, we are all connected. Rabindranath Tagore, one of India's greatest poets and thinkers, was not just a literary genius, but also a deep political thinker. While he is famous for writing Jana Gana Mana, India's national anthem, he had very unique and sometimes controversial ideas about politics and nationalism. He believed in freedom and justice, but he was also deeply critical of narrow nationalism and aggressive patriotism. Let's explore his political thoughts and views on nationalism in a simple and clear way. Before understanding his political ideas, it's important to know a little about who Tagore was. Born in 1861 in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Tagore was a poet, writer, philosopher, educationist, and social reformer. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his book of poems Gitanjali. Tagore lived during the time when India was under British rule, and like many others, he was deeply affected by the condition of the country. Tagore strongly believed in freedom not just political freedom from British rule, but also freedom of the mind and spirit. He said that true freedom is when people can think freely, express themselves without fear, and live with dignity. According to him, freedom was not only about getting rid of foreign rule, but also about building a better and more humane society. In his famous poem "Where the mind is without fear", he prayed for a country where knowledge is free, and

people do not lose their way in "narrow domestic walls." This shows how deeply he believed in a broad, inclusive vision of freedom. Tagore supported the Indian freedom movement but had a very different idea about nationalism than many of his contemporaries. While people like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and even Mahatma Gandhi used strong patriotic feelings to unite the people, Tagore warned against becoming too aggressive or blindly following a nation. For him, nationalism should not mean hating other nations or feeling superior. He believed that every country has something to offer, and people must learn to respect humanity first, rather than just their own country. In his view, aggressive nationalism could become dangerous and lead to violence and hatred. Tagore had traveled to many countries including Britain, the United States, China, and Japan. He had observed how nationalism in the West, especially in Europe, had turned into a force that led to wars and destruction. He criticized the way European countries treated their colonies and used nationalism as an excuse to dominate others.

In his book *Nationalism* (1917), based on lectures he gave in Japan and the U.S., he said that nationalism in the West was a political and economic force that made people selfish and violent. He wrote that such nationalism puts the interests of the nation above moral values. This kind of thinking, he said, is dangerous for the world. The Swadeshi Movement started in 1905 after the British government decided to divide Bengal. Many Indians boycotted British goods and encouraged using Indian-made products. Tagore at first supported this movement because it was a protest against injustice. But later, he became critical when he saw that the movement was becoming violent and narrow-minded. He believed that simply boycotting foreign goods would not help India progress. Instead, he wanted Indians to become self-reliant by improving their skills and education. He also believed that violence should never be a part of any freedom struggle. Tagore and Gandhi had great respect for each other, but they didn't always agree. For example, when Gandhi started the non-cooperation movement, Tagore was worried that it might lead to hatred and a loss of reason. He felt that cooperation between Indians and British people could still be useful in some areas, like education. Another big difference came during the debate on "Charkha" (spinning wheel). Gandhi wanted people to spin their own cloth (khadi) to become self-reliant. Tagore supported the idea of self-reliance but did not agree that spinning alone would solve India's problems. He believed in scientific and industrial education to bring true progress. Still, both Gandhi and Tagore admired each other and learned from each other's views. More than being just an Indian, Tagore saw himself as a "citizen of the world." He believed that all human beings are connected and should

work together for peace and progress. He was very inspired by the Upanishads, which say that the whole world is one family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam). He did not believe in borders that divide people. For him, love for one's country should not mean hatred toward others. This is why he always supported the idea of international cooperation and world peace. Tagore felt that the British education system in India was making students like machines. It did not encourage creativity or original thinking. That's why he started his own school at Santiniketan in 1901. Later, it became Visva-Bharati University. The name "Visva-Bharati" itself means the meeting of India with the world. He wanted it to be a place where people from different countries could come together and learn from each other. For him, education was the most powerful way to change society. He said that through true education, people would learn to live with peace, respect, and understanding. Tagore always believed in peace. He was strongly against any form of violence—even when it was used for a good cause like freedom. He felt that violence would only lead to more hatred and division. During the 1920s and 30s, when some Indian freedom fighters took to revolutionary methods and bomb-making, Tagore felt very disturbed. He believed that India's soul was based on peace, compassion, and wisdom. He warned that using bombs and bullets would harm India's future. One of the most powerful political acts of Tagore was his protest after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919. British soldiers had killed hundreds of unarmed Indian men, women, and children who had gathered peacefully in Amritsar. Tagore was so shocked and angry that he returned the knighthood he had received from the British in 1915. In his letter to the British government, he wrote that "the time has come when badges of honor make us feel ashamed." This act became a symbol of protest and courage. Tagore's views on nationalism may not have been popular with everyone at the time, but they remain very relevant today. He showed that love for your country should be balanced with love for humanity. He warned that blind nationalism could turn into a dangerous force. His ideas encourage us to think deeply, ask questions, and not just follow the crowd. Even today, when many countries are facing issues of nationalism, racism, and war, Tagore's message of peace and universal brotherhood gives us hope. Rabindranath Tagore was not just a poet or writer—he was a thinker with a bold and visionary mind. While many leaders of his time were fighting for India's independence with slogans and protests, Tagore was thinking deeply about what kind of country India should become. He wanted an India that was free not only from British rule but also from hatred, poverty, ignorance, and narrow-mindedness. He wanted an India where people respected each other, celebrated diversity, and connected with the world. In today's world, where divisions

based on religion, race, and nationality are increasing, Tagore's message reminds us to rise above narrow identities and become better human beings. His life and work teach us that true patriotism is not about shouting slogans or hating others, but about building a just, kind, and educated society.

IV. CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF SHORT STORY

In the small village of Ulapur, nestled amidst the vast swathes of green fields and swaying bamboo groves, the British government had recently set up a new post office. The postmaster appointed to this humble station was a young man from Calcutta. Scholarly and refined, he found himself terribly misplaced in the simplicity and silence of rural life. Ulapur had no company to offer the young man. The indigo plantation nearby, managed by Englishmen, remained distant, both socially and geographically. The villagers, mostly illiterate peasants, could not relate to him. Thus, the postmaster took solace in his books, his writing, and long, reflective walks under the stars. Among the few people he saw regularly was Ratan, a young orphan girl of perhaps twelve, who had attached herself to the postmaster like a shadow. She helped with little chores—fetching water, cooking, and occasionally fanning him while he rested. In return, the postmaster gave her company, and sometimes, even lessons in reading and writing. For the lonely Ratan, this attention meant the world. As the days passed, a quiet bond formed between the two. The postmaster would often share stories of his family in Calcutta his mother, his little sister, and the crowded lanes of their neighborhood. Ratan would listen with rapt attention, her eyes wide with wonder and perhaps a longing she could not quite name. "Do you think they'd like me?" she once asked shyly. The postmaster smiled. "Why wouldn't they? You're smart and kind." But the silence of the village grew heavier on the postmaster's shoulders. The ceaseless hum of crickets, the slow flow of the river, and the sameness of each day began to eat away at him. His health suffered. He wrote a letter of resignation and began to long for the noise and familiarity of Calcutta. When the news of his departure reached Ratan, she was stunned. "You're leaving?" she whispered. "Yes," he said, gently, not meeting her eyes. She looked away, blinking rapidly. After a pause, she asked, "Will you take me with you?" The postmaster was taken aback. "Ratan, that's not possible." "Why not?" Her voice cracked with desperation. "I can cook, clean—I'll help your family. Please, Dada..." He placed a hand on her head. "You're a good girl, Ratan. But I can't promise you anything. My family may not accept this arrangement." The next few days passed in a blur. Ratan

stopped coming to the post office. She hid away, nursing the pain of rejection and betrayal. When the new postmaster arrived, the old one left quietly, without a farewell. As the boat carried him down the river toward Calcutta, he looked back once. The bamboo groves swayed gently in the wind. For a moment, he felt a pang—a sharp tug at his heart. “Should I have taken her?” he wondered. But reason quickly returned. “Life in Calcutta is no place for a village girl. It’s better this way.” Meanwhile, Ratan waited. Days turned to weeks, and every evening she would run to the post office, hoping for a letter. Perhaps he had written, or maybe he would return. But no letter came. The new postmaster had no news of the old one. Ratan slowly realized the truth: he was not coming back. And yet, every evening, she still waited long after hope had faded, long after her heart had hardened against the world again. Themes and Interpretation: Tagore’s “The Postmaster” is a poignant portrayal of human loneliness and emotional abandonment. The postmaster represents the rational, urban man, capable of forming emotional connections yet unwilling to bear the weight of responsibility those connections demand. Ratan embodies innocence and unconditional love. Her heartbreak speaks to a universal truth: the poor and powerless often pay the emotional price for the choices of the privileged. In just a few pages, Tagore masterfully captures a fleeting relationship and its deep, lasting scars. The understated narrative, typical of Tagore’s style, leaves a powerful emotional impact highlighting the simplicity and cruelty that often coexist in human affairs. Gitanjali by Rabindranath Tagore is a collection of devotional poems, originally written in Bengali and later translated into English by Tagore himself. The English version, which won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, contains 103 poems (selected from various sources, not only from the original Bengali Gitanjali). These poems express Tagore’s deep spiritual devotion, his relationship with God, and his thoughts on life, nature, death, and human purpose. Gitanjali a Simplified Summary and Interpretation: The Spirit of Gitanjali, Gitanjali means “Song Offerings”. These poems are offerings to God expressions of Tagore’s soul, filled with love, surrender, and longing for the Divine. The poet speaks not as a scholar or priest, but as a humble man who seeks truth, beauty, and connection with something greater than himself. God as the Beloved, Tagore often speaks to God as if speaking to a lover, friend, or even a child. This makes his poems feel emotional and personal. He doesn’t see God as a distant ruler but someone very close living in nature, in people, and in everyday work. “Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well.” You are everything the vast sky and the small home I live in. Life is a Journey to the Divine, In Gitanjali, life is like a river flowing towards the ocean, which is God. The poet knows he will

die one day, but he’s not afraid. He believes his soul will meet God, and that gives him peace. “The day will end with the sunset, and I will go to you with empty hands.” I came into the world with nothing and will return to you the same way. Simplicity is Divine, Tagore believes God lives not in temples or rituals but in the simple lives of ordinary people farmers, workers, and mothers. God is found in honest work, kind hearts, and quiet moments. “Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely ark corner of a temple with doors all shut?” Don’t look for God only in rituals; God is working alongside people in the fields’ Love and Devotion over Knowledge, Though Tagore was highly educated, he believed love is greater than intellectual knowledge. True wisdom is loving God and seeing God in others. “Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. “I don’t need to escape the world to find God. I find God in my joys and duties. A Walkthrough of Selected Poems, Here’s a breakdown of important poems in Gitanjali, rewritten in simple language and ideas. Poem 1: My Songs Are My Offerings Tagore says he offers all his songs and poems to God. His heart sings not to please people, but to connect with the Divine. Every word is like a flower laid at God’s feet. Poem 11: God is in the Poor God is not only in the temple. He is with the poor, the tired, and the hungry. If you want to serve God, serve these people. God works hard all day so if you want to meet Him, work too. Poem 35: Serve the World to Serve God Tagore says: Don’t waste time praying alone. God is in the world in people. If you want to reach God, help others, care for the suffering, and be kind. That is true worship. Poem 50: I am a Guest in This World the poet feels like a traveler in this world. Everything is temporary. Beauty fades, people die. But God is eternal. So the poet wants to love what is eternal the soul, the truth, the Divine. Poem 63: Let Me Not Forget Tagore prays: Let me not forget that every day is a gift. Let me live with thankfulness. Even when I suffer, I know it is part of life. Pain, joy, death everything is part of God’s plan. Poem 70: Your Mercy is My Hope the poet admits he is weak and often makes mistakes. But he trusts that God is kind and forgiving. He doesn’t rely on his own power, but on God’s grace. Poem 95: I Came with Empty Hands Tagore writes that he came into the world with nothing and when he dies, he will leave everything behind. The only thing he truly owns is love and he wants to give that love to God. Poem 100: The End is Joyful Even death is not sad in Tagore’s poems. He sees it as going back home. It is the end of one journey and the beginning of another, a return to the divine source. Understanding the Spiritual Message of Gitanjali Unity with God, Tagore wants to become one with God. But this does not mean leaving the world. It means living fully,

with love, truth, and beauty and seeing God in everything. Death is Not the End, Gitanjali speaks of death not with fear, but with calm and joy. Tagore believes the soul moves on to God. This faith makes him peaceful. Music and Poetry as Prayer, Tagore believes poetry, music, and art are also prayers. They come from the soul and rise up to the divine. His words are not just poems they are offerings. Language and Style Simple and Clear: Though the themes are deep, Tagore uses simple language. He wants everyone to understand rich or poor, educated or not. Nature as Symbol: Flowers, rivers, stars, the sky these are all used to talk about God and the soul. No Fear, Only Love: Gitanjali is full of love and longing, not fear. Tagore is not afraid of God, he wants to be close to Him. Why Gitanjali Still Matters It teaches us to find peace in a noisy world. It reminds us that God is in people, not only in temples. It helps us understand life, death, and purpose in a loving way. It encourages us to be grateful, kind, and true to ourselves. Gitanjali is not just a book of poems, it is a spiritual journey. Through simple words and deep emotions, Tagore invites us to listen to our souls, to see beauty in daily life, and to feel the presence of the divine in everything around us. Even more than 100 years later, these poems touch the heart. They remind us that we are all connected to each other, to nature, and to God. Rabindranath Tagore was one of India's greatest writers. He was not only a poet but also a novelist, playwright, and short story writer. His short stories are known for their deep human emotions, rich cultural background, and simple but powerful language. He was the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913, mainly for his poetry, but his short stories are just as important and valuable. Tagore's short stories explore human relationships, social problems, and the inner world of people, especially those who are often ignored in society like women, the poor, and children. Tagore's short stories often focus on human emotions and social issues. Many of them are about the problems people face in everyday life. He wrote about love, sorrow, poverty, injustice, and identity. He also dealt with larger themes like freedom, tradition, and modernity. What makes his stories special is that they are very emotional and real. The characters feel alive, and their struggles touch the reader's heart. One of his major themes is the role of women in society. At a time when Indian women were expected to stay at home and had little freedom, Tagore created strong female characters who thought for themselves and questioned traditional rules.

One of the reasons Tagore's short stories are loved by many is because of his simple language and natural storytelling. He used Bengali, his mother tongue, in a very poetic and beautiful way, and when translated into English, the stories still carry that beauty. His style is not complicated or difficult to understand. He didn't use heavy words or long

descriptions unnecessarily. Instead, he focused on the feelings and thoughts of his characters, making readers feel emotionally connected. Tagore was also a realist. He showed life as it really was. His characters are not heroes or gods but ordinary people a servant, a poor widow, a young child, a village girl. This simplicity and realism are what make his stories so powerful and timeless. Let's look at some of his well-known stories to understand his art better. This is one of Tagore's most famous stories. It is about a friendship between a little Bengali girl named mini and a path and fruit seller from Kabul, called the kabuliwala. The story shows the deep bond between them, even though they are from different cultures and generations. The kabuliwala sees his own daughter in mini. Their relationship is innocent and heartwarming. But when he is sent to jail for several years, everything changes. When he returns, mini is grown up and doesn't remember him. The story ends on a sad note but also teaches us about love, memory, and change. Through this story, Tagore shows that human relationships can go beyond culture and language. It also touches on the pain of separation and the innocence of childhood. This story is about a young man who works as a postmaster in a village. He is lonely and becomes close to a little orphan girl named Ratan, who helps him with his chores. But when he decides to return to the city, he leaves Ratan behind. The story shows the emotional gap between the educated urban man and the poor village girl. Ratan's heartbreak is described in a very touching way. Tagore does not offer a happy ending, but he makes us feel for the characters deeply. Here, he criticizes the lack of responsibility people sometimes show in relationships, and how the poor and weak suffer silently. This story is darker and more tragic. It shows how injustice affects women in traditional Indian society. Two brothers live in a village with their wives. One day, after a quarrel, one wife dies. To protect his brother, one of them falsely accuses his own wife. The woman is innocent but still accepts the punishment without protest. The story ends with her being sentenced to death. This powerful tale shows how patriarchy and blind traditions can lead to cruelty, especially towards women. Tagore uses this story to question the moral values of society and how truth and justice are often ignored for selfish reasons. "Subha" is the story of a girl who cannot speak. Her parents think she is a burden and arrange her marriage without telling the groom about her disability. When the truth is revealed, her husband sends her back. This story beautifully captures the silent suffering of disabled people, especially women, in society. Subha's quiet sadness and the way people treat her show Tagore's deep understanding of human emotions. He tells us that every person has feelings, even if they cannot express them. The story also shows how people often fail to understand the real needs of others. Many of Tagore's

stories show his feminist views. He gave his female characters strong voices and complex emotions. At a time when women were not given equal rights, Tagore imagined a world where they could think freely and live with dignity. His humanism is also clear in his stories. He cared deeply for the poor, the helpless, and those who were left out of society. He believed that every human being, no matter how poor or small, had value and feelings. His stories ask readers to look at others with compassion and understanding.

V. CONCLUSION

Rabindranath Tagore stands as a towering figure in the realm of short story writing, not only in Bengali literature but in the global literary landscape. His mastery over the genre is marked by a deep understanding of human psychology, social dynamics, and philosophical undercurrents. Tagore's short stories reflect his acute sensitivity to the changing socio-cultural fabric of colonial India, particularly the tensions between tradition and modernity, individual freedom and social expectations. Tagore's contribution lies in his ability to elevate the short story from mere anecdotal narration to a nuanced, artistic expression. Stories like *Kabuliwala*, *The Postmaster*, and *The Homecoming* are lauded for their emotional depth, character complexity, and subtle critique of societal norms. His characters, often ordinary men and women, are drawn with empathy and realism, yet they transcend their immediate contexts to explore universal themes of love, loss, alienation, and moral dilemmas. A notable strength of Tagore's storytelling is his lyrical prose, which blends simplicity with poetic elegance. He employs rich symbolism and gentle irony, allowing readers to interpret multiple layers of meaning. However, some critics argue that his moral vision and idealism sometimes overshadow narrative tension, leading to didactic undertones. Despite this, his stories remain powerful due to their emotional authenticity and philosophical resonance. Tagore was also instrumental in shaping the modern Indian short story, introducing psychological realism and breaking away from rigid narrative conventions. His work paved the way for future generations of Indian writers in regional and national literatures. In conclusion, Rabindranath Tagore's legacy as a short story writer is both foundational and enduring. His stories continue to inspire for their artistic finesse, humanism, and timeless relevance. Through his short fiction, Tagore not only chronicled the soul of a nation in flux but also touched the core of universal human experience.

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Climate Change Coverage in News Media: A Case Study of the Nepali Media in the context of COP29

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Abstract— This research examines the representation and framing of climate change in Nepali media during the 29th UN Climate Change Conference (COP29), held from November 11 to 22, 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan. By analyzing climate-related news content from two major national daily newspapers, state-owned (Gorkhapatra Daily) and private-owned (Kantipur Daily), published during the COP29 period, the findings reveal that public media provided significantly more coverage and prioritized environmental issues compared to private media. This disparity highlights the dominant role of state-owned media in focusing on climate change, while private-owned media took a more selective and less consistent approach to reporting on the issue. The study underscores the need for both media sectors to enhance their coverage by adopting a more balanced, diverse, and comprehensive approach to climate change reporting, ensuring a more inclusive discussion of climate issues in Nepal.



Keywords— Climate change, COP29, Media coverage, Nepali media

I. INTRODUCTION

The discourse surrounding climate change has gained significant attention in recent years, especially during global events like the UN Climate Change Conference. In Nepal, a country highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, media coverage plays a vital role in shaping public perception and influencing policy responses. The way climate change is framed in Nepali media is crucial for understanding the complexities of the issue, as it affects how stakeholders, including policymakers and the general public, address climate-related challenges. Wagle (2024) highlights the need for diverse framing approaches to effectively convey the multifaceted nature of climate change in Nepal, considering the nation's unique geographical and socio-economic context. However, climate research, particularly in the area of climate reporting, remains underexplored within the Nepali context.

Nepal's vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by its heavy reliance on agriculture, which plays a crucial role in both its economy and the livelihoods of its people. Research shows that climate change has

already begun to negatively impact agricultural productivity, with rural households experiencing increased pressures from a combination of poverty and climate-related challenges (Chalise et al., 2017). The agricultural sector's sensitivity to climate variability highlights the urgent need for adaptation strategies, with studies advocating for the adoption of climate-resilient practices and technologies (Paudel, 2012; Paudel, 2016). In addition to agriculture, climate change also affects biodiversity, water resources, and national security (Bhattacharjee et al., 2017; Rawal, 2023). The role of media in disseminating information about these impacts is crucial, as it can promote informed public discourse and drive proactive action. Consequently, this study seeks to examine the climate reporting practices of Nepali media both private and public, focusing on their agenda-setting and framing strategies during the specific climate event like the UN Climate change conference 2024- Conference of the Parties (COP) 29.

The COP is a critical platform for Nepal to advocate for its climate priorities on the global stage. As highlighted by Pandey and Dahal (2022), climate

diplomacy is crucial for Nepal due to its limited institutional and financial resources to address climate change effectively. The conference offers Nepal an opportunity to engage with international partners and garner support for its adaptation efforts. The way the media portrays these diplomatic efforts can significantly shape public perception and foster community support for climate action, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive media coverage in the context of climate change. The relationship between climate change, media coverage, and policy response in Nepal is complex and dynamic. This study aims to explore how newspapers portray environmental events and to what extent coverage differs between private and public media outlets. It contributes to a better understanding of the current state of climate journalism in Nepal, focusing on the consistency or discrepancies in the portrayal of climate issues across different media platforms.

For this study, we analyze the coverage of COP29 by two major daily newspapers, one from the private sector and one from the public sector. A content analysis of 53 news articles reveals significant inconsistencies between the two types of media. The findings suggest that state-owned media in Nepal plays a central role in climate change reporting, offering more comprehensive coverage, while private-owned media tends to provide more selective reporting, with a greater emphasis on visuals but less consistency in its climate coverage. Both types of media have strengths and areas for improvement. Addressing these gaps could enhance the overall quality and consistency of climate change reporting in Nepal, fostering a more informed public discourse and encouraging proactive climate action.

In the following sections, we first present the theoretical framework and literature review in Section 2. Section 3 outlines the methodology and data used in the study, followed by the presentation and analysis of the data in Section 4. Section 5 discusses the findings, and finally, Section 6 concludes the study by highlighting the practical implications of the research.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework

We draw on two key theories: agenda-setting and framing theory of the media, to guide our analysis of climate-related news coverage during COP29. The agenda-setting theory suggests that media significantly influence public perception by highlighting specific topics and framing them in particular ways. Ibrahim et al. (2019) argue that media coverage correlates with the public's perception of an

issue's importance, shaping public discourse and priorities, especially regarding political and social matters. Yi and Wang (2022) further develop this theory by introducing the concept of the "individual agenda", where personal influences and social media dynamics alter traditional agenda-setting mechanisms, placing emphasis on the role of opinion leaders in shaping individual perspectives and social consensus.

In the context of climate change, agenda-setting theory demonstrates how media coverage shapes public perception and discourse on environmental issues. Horsbol's (2013) study of the "Energy Town Frederikshavn" project illustrates this by analyzing local media's framing of renewable energy initiatives, suggesting that local media may provide a more nuanced and less sensationalized narrative than national outlets, influencing public understanding and engagement with climate action.

Similarly, framing theory explores how the presentation of information influences audience perception and interpretation. Bullock and Shulman (2021) show that varying message frames can alter perceptions of health behaviors, emphasizing the importance of framing in shaping attitudes and actions. This theory highlights that media not only inform the public but also shape the context in which issues are understood, thereby affecting behaviors and attitudes.

Together, the agenda-setting and framing theories provide a framework for understanding how media coverage during COP29 can influence public engagement with climate change. By examining the volume and framing of climate coverage, we aim to analyze how these factors shape public perceptions of global environmental challenges.

2.2 Literature review

Boykoff (2012) highlights that media narratives often prioritize economic opportunities over the adverse economic impacts of climate change, with established political actors dominating the discourse. Dahal (2023) further explores this idea by investigating the influence of clientelism in Nepali media, showing that political affiliations and clientelist structures can shape how climate issues are reported, potentially leading to biased or incomplete narratives. Similarly, Shrestha (2022) examined the framing of climate change in Nepali media, revealing that most coverage portrayed climate change as a national issue rather than a global crisis, limiting broader engagement and understanding.

The framing of climate change, especially during significant events like the UN Climate Change Conference, plays a critical role in shaping public perception and policy discourse. Faisal and Zannat (2014) found that media

coverage of climate change is influenced by the social, economic, and political contexts of each publication. Their study highlighted how different COP events emphasized varying aspects of climate change—COP15 focused on global consequences, COP16 on local changes, and COP17 on the Green Climate Fund supporting vulnerable countries. The literature on climate change media coverage, particularly during international events such as COP27, reveals the influence of political narratives and media framing on public discourse. For example, Mohamed Abdelaziz et al. (2023) found that media coverage of COP27 largely concentrated on climate politics, with a notably positive tone about the Egyptian government's efforts in organizing the event.

Research by Saunders et al. (2018) shows that media coverage of climate change tends to be reactive, peaking around major climate events rather than maintaining consistent focus on the issue. Boykoff (2012) found that major newspapers like The New York Times and The Washington Post adhered to a journalistic norm of balanced reporting, which sometimes gave equal editorial weight to the minority view that global warming is not a serious issue, despite a scientific consensus. This balance can distort public understanding of the severity of climate change. Mulaudzi and Kioko (2022) further argue that focusing events, such as climate-related disasters, often drive media coverage, but the depth and accuracy of reporting on scientific findings are often insufficient, leading to misconceptions and shallow understanding of climate change.

These studies indicate that media coverage of climate change is frequently shaped by political, economic, and social factors, influencing public discourse in ways that can either foster or hinder a deeper understanding. There is a clear need for media coverage that is consistent, accurate, and nuanced, going beyond event-driven reporting to emphasize the long-term, global dimensions of climate change. Policymakers and media organizations must be

aware of the potential biases and framing effects in climate reporting to ensure the public receives balanced, comprehensive, and reliable information for effective engagement with climate issues.

III. RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA

This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach, examining articles and news reports published from Nepal during the COP29. Content analysis method allows researchers to systematically evaluate the presence of specific themes, patterns, or frames within media content, providing insights into how issues are represented and understood by audiences. It is particularly popular due to its efficiency and value in examining text or media content and addressing diverse research questions, particularly in communication research (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006: 150).

We selected two major daily national newspapers, *Kantipur Daily* (a private media) and *Gorakhapatra Daily* (a state media), for this study. These newspapers have the longest publication history in Nepal, with wide circulation and strong public acceptance. The study focuses on the COP29 event, which took place from November 11 to November 22, 2024. To account for potential delays in newspaper content, the analysis includes coverage from November 11 to November 23, 2024, encompassing the final day of the conference. Only news and other content related to environmental issues and climate change were considered for analysis. A manual review of daily issues of these newspapers identified a total of 53 climate-related news articles, which were examined from various perspectives, including visual presentation, framing, forms of presentation, and the context of the content.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Total environmental news in the newspaper

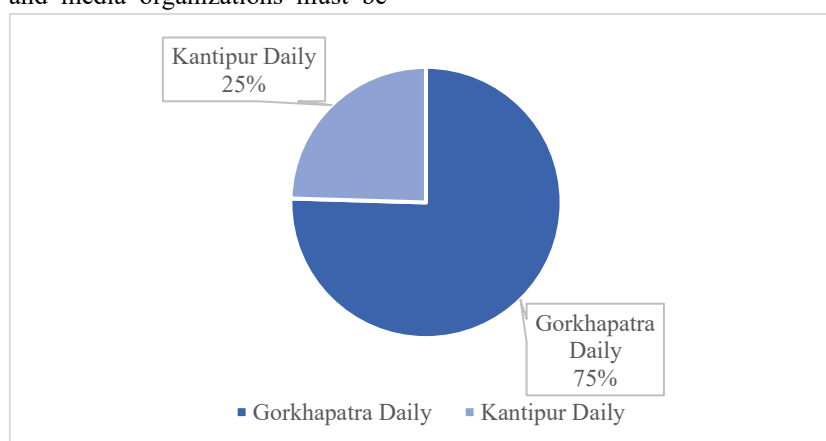


Fig.1 Total number of news (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

Figure-1 shows that *Gorkhapatra Daily*, a state-owned newspaper, published about 75% of articles on environmental and climate issues during COP29, while *Kantipur Daily*, a privately-owned newspaper, published about 25%. This indicates that state-owned media gave

significantly more focus to climate-related topics compared to private media.

4.2 Visual presentation of the environmental news

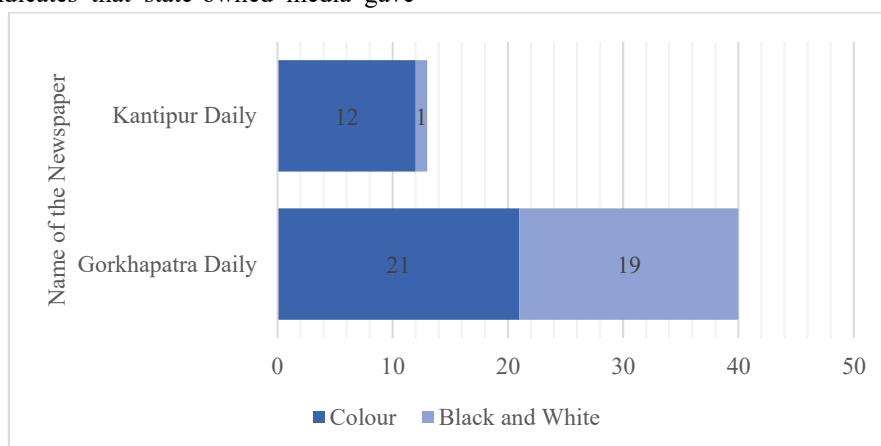


Fig.2 Color forms of news (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

Figure 2 summarizes the use of color in climate-related news. Among the 40 articles published by *Gorkhapatra Daily*, 21 were in color, and 19 were in black and white. In contrast, of the 13 articles published by *Kantipur Daily*, 12 were in color, and only 1 was in black and white. This

suggests that private media places greater emphasis on using color for presentation, while state-owned media exhibits a more balanced approach between color and black-and-white formats.

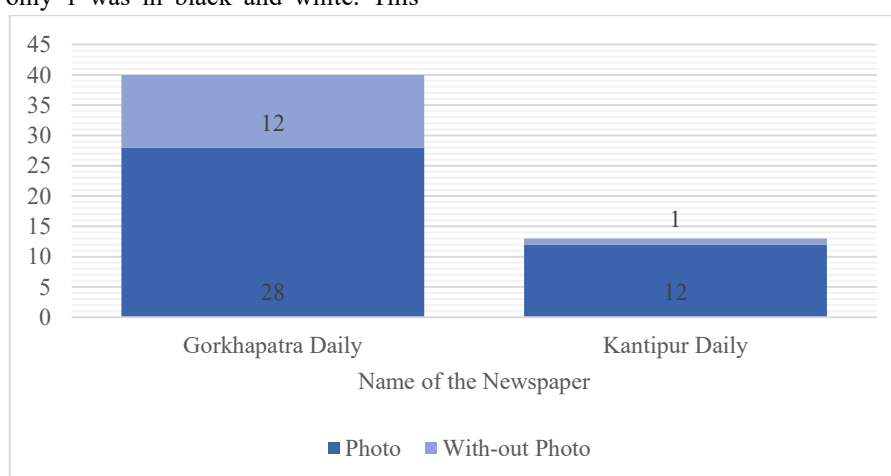


Fig.3 Use of photographs for news (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

Figure 3 illustrates the use of photos in climate-related news content. *Gorkhapatra Daily* included photos in 28 out of its 40 articles, leaving 12 without visual elements. In contrast, *Kantipur Daily* featured photos in 12 of its 13 articles, with

only one article lacking visual content. This data suggests that while both publications prioritize incorporating photos, private-owned media demonstrates a stronger and more consistent emphasis on visual presentation compared to state-owned media.

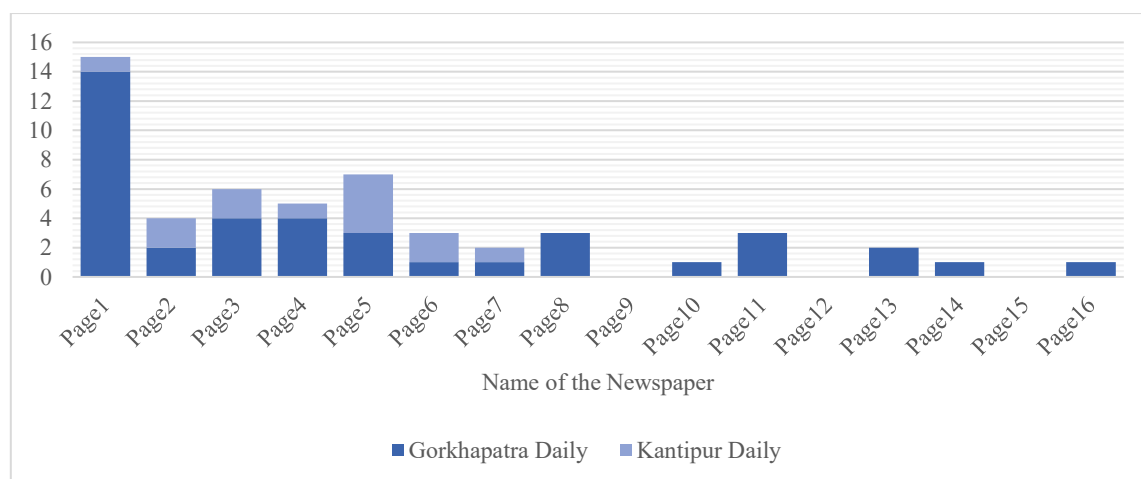


Fig.4 News placed in pages (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

As shown in Figure 4, *Gorkhapatra Daily* utilized 13 different pages for its climate-related content, with the majority of articles appearing on the front page (Page 1), followed by Pages 3, 4, and 5. In contrast, *Kantipur Daily* published its climate-related content across only the first seven pages, with just one article featured on the front page. Most of *Kantipur Daily*'s climate coverage was

concentrated on Page 5. This indicates that state-owned media places greater emphasis on diverse placement, including prominent front-page coverage, while private-owned media tends to cluster its climate content on specific internal pages.

4.3 Framing of climate news

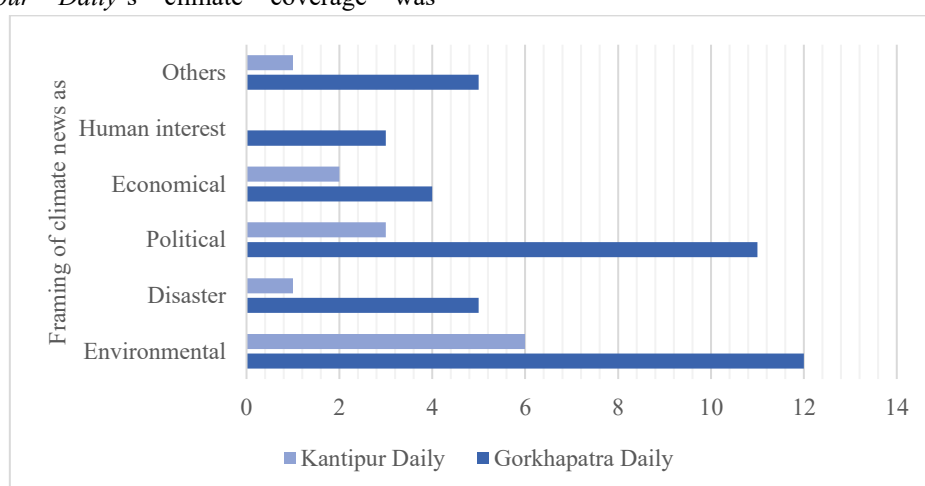


Fig.5 Framing of news (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

Figure 5 highlights the framing of climate-related content. *Gorkhapatra Daily* predominantly framed its articles with an environmental focus (12 articles), followed by political framing (11 articles). Other framings included 5 articles as disaster-related, 4 as economic, 3 as human interest, and 5 categorized under other framings. Similarly, *Kantipur Daily* framed 6 articles as environmental, 3 as political, 2 as economic, 1 as disaster-related, and 1 under other framings.

This indicates that both media outlets primarily emphasized environmental and political framings in their climate-related coverage, reflecting a focus on environmental and political agendas in the context of climate change discussions in Nepal.

4.4 Form of presentation

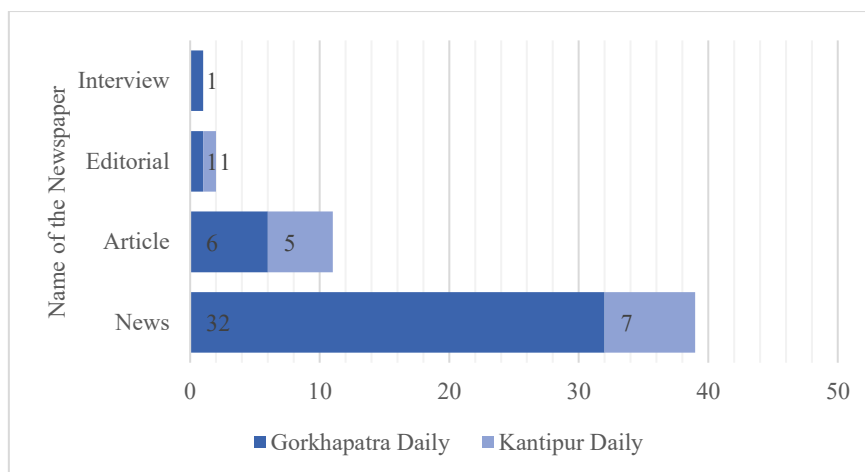


Fig.6 Forms of presentation (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

Figure 6 illustrates the format in which climate-related content was presented by the newspapers. *Gorkhapatra Daily* published 32 pieces as news, 6 as articles, 1 as an editorial, and 1 as an interview. In contrast, *Kantipur Daily* presented 7 pieces as news, 5 as articles, and 1 as an editorial, without publishing any interviews on climate issues during this period. This suggests that state-owned

media relied heavily on news formats, while private-owned media demonstrated a more balanced approach between news and articles. Additionally, the state-owned media utilized a wider variety of presentation formats, including interviews, compared to the private-owned media.

4.5 Context of climate contents

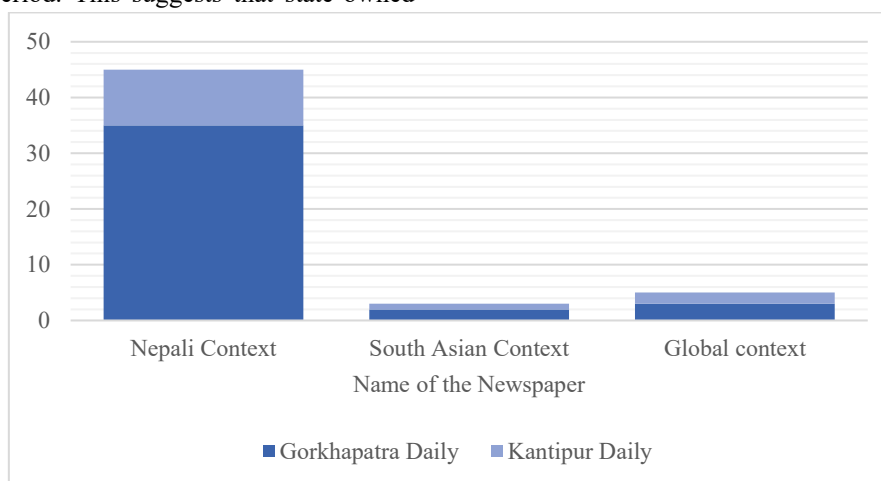


Fig.7 Total number of news (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

Figure 7 illustrates the contextual focus of climate-related content published by the newspapers. *Gorkhapatra Daily* predominantly framed its coverage within the Nepali context, publishing 35 articles, while 3 were set in the global context and 2 in the South Asian context. Similarly, *Kantipur Daily* also focused on the Nepali context, with 10 articles, compared to 2 in the global context and 1 in the

South Asian context. This indicates that both newspapers prioritized local issues, although state-owned media had a significantly higher volume of climate-related content across all contexts.

4.7 Coverage over the COP29 period

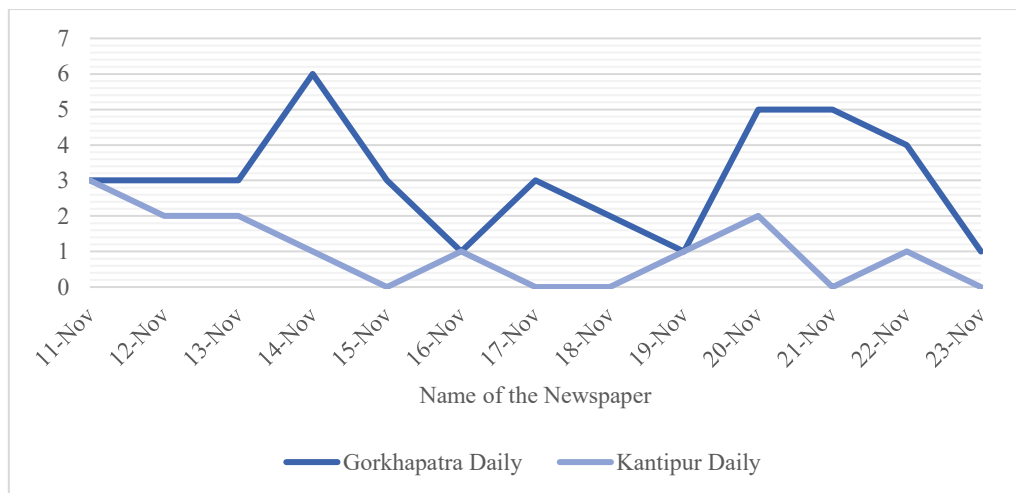


Fig.8 Number of news daily (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

Figure 8 illustrates the coverage of climate-related articles published by *Gorkhapatra Daily* and *Kantipur Daily* from November 11 to November 23, with a one-day reporting lag. This means that the coverage on a given day reflects key events that occurred the day before.

On November 10, the President of Nepal traveled to COP29, and both *Gorkhapatra Daily* and *Kantipur Daily* began showing an increase in coverage on November 11. This upward trend continued, particularly as COP29 unfolded between November 11 and 22. On November 13, the President addressed the “High-Level Dialogue: Advancing the Mountain Agenda” at COP29. The coverage of this event appeared on November 14, with a notable spike in articles, particularly in *Gorkhapatra Daily*, which provided more detailed coverage compared to *Kantipur Daily*. *Gorkhapatra Daily*, as a state-owned media,

maintained consistently high coverage throughout the later stages of COP29.

Throughout the duration of COP29, media coverage remained relatively consistent, with state-owned media publishing more articles, especially around key moments of the conference. This pattern likely reflects the state-owned media’s focus on national involvement in global issues. In contrast, private-owned *Kantipur Daily* provided less continuous coverage after the initial key events. After COP29 concluded on November 22, media coverage gradually declined, with the final day of reporting, November 23, showing a significant drop in climate-related content. This suggests that while climate-related issues received substantial attention in the Nepali media during this period, the focus was temporary, peaking around major events and tapering off after COP29 concluded.

4.8 Coverage of president news

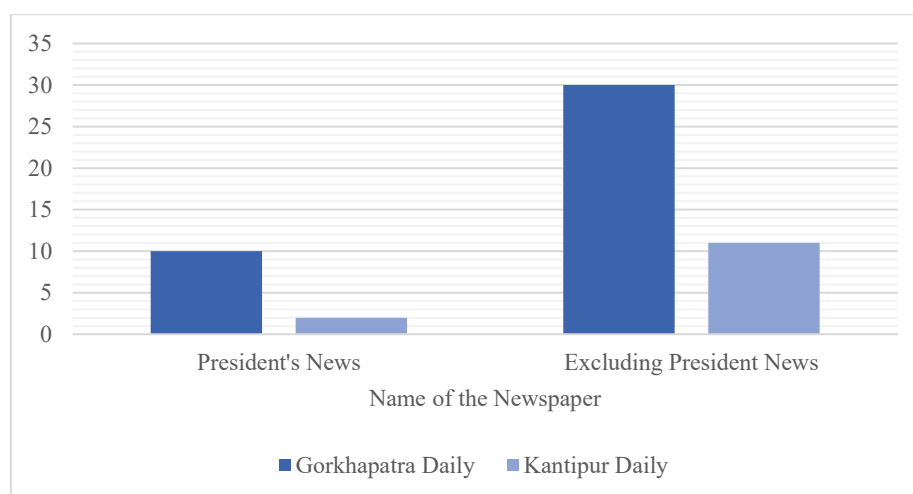


Fig.9 Total number of news (Source: Content Analysis, 2024)

Figure 9 presents the number of news articles covered, excluding the coverage of the President of Nepal's visit to COP29, to mitigate any potential bias from the state-owned media, which may prioritize government participation in such events. As expected, we observe a higher number of articles related to the President's visit in *Gorkhapatra Daily* compared to *Kantipur Daily*. However, even after excluding the President-related news, state-owned media continues to outperform private-owned media in covering climate news. *Gorkhapatra Daily* covered nearly 75% of the total climate-related news published across both media outlets, a trend that is consistent with the data presented in Figure 1, which includes all news coverage. This highlights the dominant role of state-owned media in reporting on climate-related issues during the specified period.

V. DISCUSSION

The analysis of climate-related news coverage from state-owned and private-owned media during COP29 reveals significant differences in how each media outlet approached climate issues. The research highlights that state-media provided 75% of the total climate-related coverage during COP29, far exceeding the 25% contribution by private-media. This trend remained consistent even when excluding coverage related to the President of Nepal's participation at COP29. The state-owned media maintained a high volume of coverage throughout the event, reflecting its focus on national involvement in global climate discussions. In contrast, private-owned media provided less consistent coverage, particularly after the initial key events. This aligns with findings by Boykoff (2012), who noted that state-affiliated media often dominate environmental reporting due to institutional alignment with governmental agendas. However, unlike Boykoff's observation that private outlets sometimes prioritize economic narratives, private-owned media in Nepal demonstrated inconsistent attention to climate issues. This reflects the need for private media to adopt more sustained and systematic approaches to environmental journalism. Furthermore, this disparity in Nepali media can also be explained by Dahal's (2023) findings on clientelism in Nepali media, where political affiliations can influence coverage priorities. While this highlights the state's role in promoting climate diplomacy, it also underscores the need for independent and unbiased reporting to ensure comprehensive narratives.

Wagle (2024) argue that diverse framing is essential for effective communication of climate change complexities. Our research found that state-media adopted diverse framing strategies, incorporating environmental, political, disaster-related, and economic narratives while

private-media primarily framed stories within environmental and political contexts. However, the predominance of locally framed narratives in both newspapers aligns with findings from Wagle (2024) and Faisal and Zannat (2014), who observed that regional media often prioritize local issues over global discourses. The findings also resonate with Shrestha (2022), who observed that Nepali media tend to present climate change primarily as a national issue. This suggests that media in Nepal may need to increase their focus on connecting local issues with global climate change agendas.

The study also highlights a notable trend of event-driven reporting by both state-owned and private media. Coverage intensity peaked during key COP29 events but declined significantly afterward, indicating a focus on major developments rather than sustained reporting on climate issues. This aligns with Saunders et al. (2018), who described similar "attention cycles" in British media that correspond to significant climate-related events. However, the lack of sustained coverage beyond COP29 echoes Mulaudzi and Kioko's (2022) concern about reactive, rather than proactive, climate journalism. A more continuous narrative could help maintain public interest and awareness beyond major events.

In terms of visual presentation, the study found that private-media prioritized visual storytelling through extensive use of color and photos, consistent with Bullock and Shulman's (2021) framing theory, which emphasizes the impact of presentation on audience engagement. State-media, while more balanced in its use of visuals, ensured prominent placement of climate-related stories, such as front-page coverage. This diversity in presentation strategies highlights the differing priorities of state versus private media but suggests room for both outlets to enhance their visual appeal and accessibility.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, study findings suggest that state-owned media in Nepal plays a central role in climate change reporting, with a focus on national participation in global events like COP29. In contrast, private-owned media provides more selective coverage, emphasizing visuals but offering less consistent reporting. Both media outlets have strengths and areas for improvement, and addressing these gaps could improve the overall quality and consistency of climate change reporting in Nepal.

This study offers some important practical implications. First, to enhance climate-related reporting, both media sectors must prioritize consistent and comprehensive coverage. State-owned media should continue its strong focus on climate issues but could further

engage a wider audience by incorporating more diverse visuals, such as color and photos. While national issues are important, integrating global perspectives and addressing a broader range of reporting—beyond mere news reporting like interviews, discussion forums, expert opinions—will provide a more comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities in climate action. Private-owned media should also expand its climate coverage to match the urgency and importance of the issue. Leveraging their strength in visual presentation, private outlets can make climate stories more engaging and accessible to a broader audience. Second, to further enhance reporting quality, media outlets can invest in training programs specifically designed for climate journalism. These programs will equip journalists with the skills and knowledge to effectively cover complex climate change and policy topics. Third, the government should actively collaborate with the media to promote climate literacy and public awareness. This collaboration could include supporting media campaigns, creating educational materials, and organizing public forums or discussions, all of which can be covered by both state and private media. Finally, each stakeholder in the media ecosystem—media outlets, the government, and civil society organizations—plays a vital role in improving the quality and scope of climate change coverage in Nepal. For the media, expanding the consistency and depth of coverage is crucial. The government must support this process by providing accurate data, resources, and incentives for climate journalism. Civil society and journalism associations can hold media accountable and foster collaboration, ensuring effective climate communication. By working together, these stakeholders can create a more informed and engaged public, ultimately contributing to Nepal's climate action efforts.

However, this study has several limitations. First, analyzing news from only two newspapers may not provide a comprehensive reflection of climate coverage in Nepal. However, given the limited number of national newspapers, the study focuses on those with relatively larger readership and social credibility, aiming to offer insights that are generalizable to the broader context of Nepal, if not beyond. Future researchers could incorporate digital media or smaller newspapers for a comparative study. Second, this study focuses on COP29, so the findings should be interpreted with caution in relation to other events or contexts. Third, due to the use of local language newspapers, the study was unable to conduct a more in-depth content analysis. Future studies could consider English-language newspapers for a deeper exploration. Finally, this study is exploratory, and future research could extend it by employing quantitative methods to explore specific relationships in more detail.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used Generative AI or AI-assisted technologies in order to improve the readability. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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Frankenstein: A Feminist Approach and Gender Studies

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Abstract— Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* explores the themes of femininity and masculinity. The novel has captivated readers with its unique examination of the human condition, scientific ambition, and the consequences of unchecked masculinity. Using feminist and gender studies perspectives, this interpretation analyses how Shelley represents dualities and demonstrates how her education through social norms and family relationships surrounded her with gender roles. Shelley's tumultuous romance with the renowned romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and their unconventional marriage not only profoundly influenced his perspective on the world but also served as inspiration for his works. However, there was a persistent belief that the conflicts in their marriage fuelled his appreciation for the masculine power and scientific arrogance that were characteristic of Romanticism. The character of Frankenstein, embodied by Victor Frankenstein, serves as a focal point for Mary Shelley's critique of the overwhelming power of masculinity, which comes at the expense of human lives and leads to profound loneliness. This loneliness stems from the neglect of familial responsibilities. Shelley's admiration for her mother's feminist writings, alongside her complicated feelings toward her father, William Godwin, significantly influenced the development of themes such as parental abandonment and the longing for maternal affection in her novel, *Frankenstein*. The loss of her mother and her separation from her family were significant events in Mary Shelley's life that greatly influenced her writing of the novel. In "*Frankenstein*," she examines themes of parental responsibility and the consequences of indifference. This work emphasises how Shelley's personal experiences contributed to her feminist perspective and her critique of gender issues. By re-evaluating Shelley's family influences within the framework of feminism and gender studies, this article argues that her experiences provide valuable insights into gender representation and the role of women in nineteenth-century literature. The male characters in the novel are depicted as self-serving and ambitious, while the female characters consistently demonstrate fidelity and a willingness to obey.



Keywords— Mary Shelley, feminist perspective, criticism, gender, *Frankenstein*, exploration, and consequences of neglect.

I. INTRODUCTION

Frankenstein, or *The Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, is a seminal piece of literature and an epistolary novel. In addition to its Gothic elements, it explores themes of deep humanity, ambition, and the consequences of scientific shame. *Frankenstein*, written by Shelley at the age of 18 and published anonymously in 1818, has since become a cornerstone of English literature, captivating readers with its memorable stories and thought-provoking themes. It is set in the 18th century and follows Captain Robert Walton's

imaginary communication with his sister, Margaret Walton Saville.

Failed author Robert Walton embarks on an expedition to the North Pole to advance scientific understanding. *Frankenstein* centres around the story of creation and its effects on an ambitious young scientist, Victor Frankenstein, and he revives a sentient being through an unusual scientific experiment. However, beyond the superficial story, the novel explores deeper philosophical themes, addressing questions of gender, identity, and social expectations. Frankenstein refers to his creation with the

terms "creature", "devil", "ghost", "demon", "arch", "thing", "am", and "ogre".

Frankenstein offers a rich field in the context of feminism and gender studies to question traditional notions of masculinity and femininity and the power dynamics characteristic of patriarchal societies.

Although written by a young woman in the early 19th century, the novel is wonderfully nuanced about gender roles and the consequences of reinforcing them. Frankenstein's creation called itself "the monster" at least once, as did the villagers who saw the creature at the end.

Shelley characterised Frankenstein's monster as a 2.4-metre-tall creature with horrifying contrasts: his limbs were proportionate, and I picked his features to be attractive. "Beautiful!" Great God!" His yellow skin barely concealed the work of the muscles and arteries beneath; her hair was glossy black and shiny; his teeth pearly white; but this extravagance only added to the horror with his teary eyes, which appeared almost the same colour as the dark white eyes that contained them, his wrinkled skin, and straight black lips. One of the most significant protagonists in the film.

Frankenstein is an unnamed creature, often referred to as the monster, whose creation is a testament to the unbridled ambition and scientific shyness of Victor Frankenstein. Although initially portrayed as a grotesque and monstrous creature, Shelley goes beyond mere physicality to provide a nuanced exploration of his inner world of feelings and desires. Shelley uses the creature's experiences and interactions with society to denounce gender expectations that are very strict, as well as the deep loneliness that is a consequence of social rejection. Furthermore, the portrayal of Victor Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, apart from other things, talks of his journey to glory through scientific knowledge, which in turn turned out to be a source of estrangement for him from his homeland. Victor got so carried away pursuing knowledge and achievement that he isolated himself from traditional notions of family responsibility and emotional connection, which in turn is an example of the harmful consequences of patriarchal masculinity. Nine add-ons to the true narrative, the setting, and Shelley's personal life encounters bring about a feminist reading of the book with complexity. William Godwin, an extreme liberal thinker and philosopher, and a pioneering feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft, were the parents of Shelley. She got an early start on gender equality and justice intellectual discussions.

Even Mary Shelley's unusual relationships, for example, with Percy Bysshe Shelley, a poet of the Romantic era, support her multifaceted and profound understanding of the questions of gender and female agency in Frankenstein.

This novel is an exploration of feminism and the feminist movement from different directions. The novel more clearly deepens into certain aspects of the genders that are being discussed in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, which are masculinity, femininity, and the power dynamic from a critical lens. By analysing the interplay between character dynamics, social expectations, and Shelley's own experiences, I aim to reveal this timeless literature's deep insights into gender psychology and social norms. The death of female characters in the novel alone raises enough feminist eyebrows to question how science and development are essentially a masculine enterprise and subjugate women (Feminism India). However, the most thought-provoking feminist reading of the novel has been done by scholar Anne Mellor in her book *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*, where Mellor states that Frankenstein is a feminist critique of science itself.

II. FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF THE CREATURE'S GENDER IDENTITY

The creature presented by Mary Shelley undergoes a thorough examination of sexual identity in the context of social expectations. Delving into a creature's experiences and interactions can reveal profound social pressures and limitations placed on individuals based on their gender. Questions arise as to how the creature's lack of agency and autonomy reflects the limitations placed on women in Shelley's society. Furthermore, we can explore how the creature's longing for belonging and acceptance meets the struggles of those who do not conform to traditional gender roles. Using Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, *Frankenstein: A Feminist Interpretation of Gender Construction*, Jackie Docka (Docka-10) explores how the monster constructs his gender identity by exploiting the flaws of his deficient masculinity.

The text Frankenstein makes an argument against cultural attitudes, but at the same time, describes them. Mary Shelley in *Frankenstein: Towards a Feminist Figure of Humanity?* Pon deals with the idea of male creation outside of female influence. He argues that the monster as a creation is strictly masculine, without the influence of femininity. (Shelly 56) Authority is, of course, Frankenstein's most prominent feminist trait. At a time when women's voices were often suppressed or undervalued, Mary Shelley's voice shattered gender stereotypes through her courage and ingenuity. Generations of women writers were inspired to write after her because her masterpiece proved that women could succeed in a traditionally male-dominated field of literature. Most of the main characters in Frankenstein are indeed men. However, the women present are of different characters, and each acts independently and effectively in a

certain way. Victor Frankenstein's adopted sister, Elizabeth, defies gender norms, embodying both kindness and strength.

The female Monster, on the other hand, poses concerns about female identity, the importance of patriarchal rejection, and judgment. The monster is exposed to gender norms because of his education through pilfered literature. He watches the De Lacey family, seeing in particular Agatha's nurturing role and Alphonse's patriarchal dominance. To reconcile both roles, he picks up a language and communicates his need for company, reflecting a typically feminine need for belonging. But he cannot truly embody this femininity because of his hideous physique, underscoring how gender is socially constructed. His makeover into a villain was a consequence of the social rejection that bothered him most. The violent behaviour of the De Lacey family that the creature observes, and which is inherent in society in general, can also be termed a distorted representation of this violence. *Frankenstein: A Feminist Interpretation of Gender Construction*, Jackie Docka. (Docka-9) William and Justine's deaths are a good example of the dangers of male power, which occurs in situations where the individual is alone and not accepted by society. It is also an act of giving the creatures a chance for a harmonious life and the denial of the feminine aspect. This act is what maintains patriarchal control of creation and shuts down the creature's ability to defy social expectations. Feminist critique can discern a being's gender, a complex and multifaceted aspect of its personality. The narrative applies male pronouns to the creature yet does not define or confine its gender identity to traditional gender dichotomies. Instead, the creature's path and interactions ask questions of how gender is constructed, what society demands, and what it is to be a woman in a patriarchal society. Exploring the origin of the creature and later interactions with human society is one approach to embark on feminist research on the sexual identity of the creature. With ambition and scientific knowledge, the creature's originator, Victor Frankenstein, creates it through artificial means and not natural reproduction.

This innovation contradicts old-fashioned perceptions by being outside the pre-defined gender roles and expectations of both gender identification and reproduction. Victor's rejection of the monster not only reflects society's attitude towards marginalised genders but also portrays the patriarchal society's rejection of creation and motherhood. The creature is torn between his own identity and self as it tries to understand the world. The creature acquires a sense of sex through the observation of interpersonal relationships and social conventions without being taught or socialised. The necessity of human contact and social interaction is the most powerful driving force associated with gender norm

issues and the feeling of being accepted by a group. The social exclusion that he is enduring, which is caused by his behaviour and looks, becomes proof of how deeply-rooted gender prejudices and biases function, especially towards those who are non-conforming in terms of traditional femininity or masculinity. Secondly, this shows that Victor's creature indeed is a wish, as the partner expresses the want to be close to them, the very concepts of which are typically the same as those by societal norms and expectations of the genders in the traditional system. The being, in having a wife, is undoubtedly in violation of the concept that a person's gender is something predetermined or set in stone, and the acknowledgement of their individuality and desires is profoundly given.

While making it crystal clear that he was shutting the creature's plea down, Victor describes the power dynamics and control in sexual conversations, comparing it to how the patriarchal institutions keep in check the prevailing gender and desire. The creature's use of language also makes gender detection even more complicated. The creature's process of self-expression through the inability to communicate its feelings and thoughts is comparable to the process of struggle that marginalised genders undertake in speaking and assuming identity in a patriarchal discourse and language-based society. While doing this, the monster has not only been talking and understanding the social norm but also has been questioning the binary construction of gender as a whole. A feminist interpretation concerning the gender identity of Frankenstein's monster is essential to better understand the hidden aspects of that complex relation among power, social expectation, and gender construction. By creating, refusing, feeling attracted to, or recognising and developing themselves through masculinity, feminine identities are shown as produced, resisted, desired, and redefined by the monster, which can also mean the patriarchal society. Through the character of the creature from a feminist perspective, we can understand the relationship of gender, power, and empowerment, which are interwoven.

It forces us to reevaluate our notions of gender identity and expression. This section from Mary Shelley's clever *Frankenstein*, said by the creature made by Frankenstein, catches the creature's serious dejection and need for human association. The creature addresses his maker, Victor Frankenstein, straightforwardly. This exhibits his conviction that Victor, the person who resurrected him, owes it to him to give him a companion. Despite their strained relationship, it likewise features its need for its maker. This is the fundamental contention made by the beast. He yearns for a companion, yet more than that, he needs somebody who can connect with and understand him.

Out. The expression "trade of feelings" indicates a psychological and close personal contact that is equal.

The beast feels that these "feelings" are important to his endurance. Society has disregarded the beast because of its revolting looks. He has never known acknowledgement, friendship, or love. His emotional well-being has endured because of this withdrawal. The creature yearns for somebody who can look past his visible presentation and grasp the sentiments and thoughts that dwell inside. He longs to be with somebody who comprehends what being an outsider is like. He figures that kinship will assist him in avoiding disdain and brutality. He trusts that the key to being a good individual might lie in affection. The creature's solicitation for a female buddy is an impression of the major human requirement for closeness and friendship.

He wants something to be remembered that is essential to the human condition. Significantly, the monster's or creature's craving presents troublesome moral difficulties. Is it conceivable to produce adoration? Is the creature right to demand an accomplice? Shelley gives the reader time to think about these focuses. The creature's comment successfully conveys his requirement for acknowledgement, understanding, and association. It underscores how fundamental compassion and social cooperation are to the human experience — needs that the creature, regardless of its engineered starting points, intensely seeks.

It is crucial to remember that the creature's desire presents difficult moral dilemmas. Is it possible to generate love? Is the creature correct to insist on having a partner? Yes, the creature in Frankenstein presents charming moral problems that relate to women's activist ideas. The creature yearns for a female accomplice just like himself; the beast sees his female accomplice as a manufacturer. This is demonstrative of a man-centric perspective in which ladies are seen as men's assets or expansions.

This thought is challenged by the women's activist hypothesis, which upholds ladies' organisation and independence. It is conceivable that the creature is incidentally reflecting the social standard that sees ladies as men's "helpers" or friends when they explicitly request a female. This ordinary information is not acceptable for the feminist movement anymore. The women's liberation movement calls for the development of organisations based on respect and equality. Is it okay that the monster gets a partner? Feminists believe that everybody is deserving of empathy and a chance to form human relationships. His murderous inclinations spring from the monster's low spirits. Maybe a friend could give him the recognition and support that he yearns for, avoiding negative activities. The right to independence and decision over one's body is a

basic women's activist perspective. Did the female creature have freedom of thought when she was made? Do you think that the female had free will and was conscious of what was being done to her? Could she have the option to pick whether she lived and whether she reinforced with the creature? The fragmented female being is obliterated by Victor, denying her independence. The creature's restricted perceptions of associations influence his concept of fellowship. He notices Safie and Felix's tender association, yet it is not evident on the off chance that he understands the nuances of relational communications, like orientation roles and assumptions.

Orientation jobs are twofold, and women's activist reasoning backs rising above them. Perhaps all the creature needs is a companion who, whatever their orientation, goes through what he does. This raises the question of whether companionship can endure social designs. Victor has incredible command over the beast since he is the creature's maker. The power differences in the public eye, where men often marginalise women, were reflected in this unique manner. This is censured by the women's activist hypothesis, which requires the obliteration of these sorts of frameworks.

Considering that Victor gave the animal life, one might argue that he has an ethical constraint to watch out for his requirements. In any case, making one more creature without that being's permission is untrustworthy. Regard for the two creatures and legitimate correspondence would be fundamental parts of an answer. However, the creature's requirement for an accomplice raises doubts about acknowledged social mores, orientation jobs, and consent. Utilising a women's activist viewpoint to look at this problem, we can see how the work both reflects and challenges the power structures predominant in Shelley's day. It makes us contemplate the ethical quality of creation, the worth of sympathy, and the opportunity to fabricate profound connections — all thoughts that are appropriate to women's activist hypothesis and current culture.

I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. (Shelley 118-9) By comparing himself to Adam and the fallen holy messenger, the creature challenges conventional notions of organisation and manliness in his pursuit of individuality and identity. Through allusion to Adam, the main character in Christian mythology, the creature implies that he should have been created as a perfect, sinless person who was quite like Adam. Nevertheless, he feels more in line with Lucifer, the fallen holy angel who was sent out of paradise for disobeying God.

This rejection of the Adam original suggests upending traditional orientation tasks and presumptions, challenging

the notion that manliness is inherently noble and dominating. The creature's association with the deceased celestial messenger highlights his sense of being taken advantage of and corrupted discipline. Despite not having engaged in any negative action, he perceives himself as being driven by happiness, complete with the chaotic notion of his suffering. This is comparable to the experiences of several undervalued groups, mainly women, who are typically subjected to man-centred regulation and punishment for perceived transgressions against cultural norms.

The creature challenges Victor's authority over him and declares his independence by complying with the fallen celestial messenger. He refuses to accept that Victor created his destiny and instead attempts to define his character and predestination.

This organisational journey resonates with the themes of empowerment and self-assurance that women activists pursue, as the creature struggles to assert his independence in a world that seeks to hold and control him. The fact that the creature feels that he is abandoned for no reason and is therefore upset, which is normally the situation when people are rejected, while at the same moment, there seems to be a reduction in the size of the creature, as well as the scarcity of good social norms. One could take the angle of feminist ideas to analyse it, bringing out what attributes of gender-neutral designs show that they are responsible for the perpetuation of inequality and that they control the formation of marginalised sectors, e.g., women and non-binary people. What the creature is stating is just a case of how he has an unsuitable orientation to the job, thus refusing to be a part of someone else's organisation, his development of knowledge about the independence and organisation of humans, and his research on the revolution of male-centric management and cultural norms.

Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley, investigates the condition of being an outsider, the power of the local community, the state of the mind, and personal tragedy as the primary topics. The being, whom we usually see as a male character because of Victor's creation, is having an identity crisis and is in search of warmth and affection. One of the traditional gender roles negotiations points out the role of sympathy and the power of local communities. Through the monster's dejection and his local life, we see that disregard and detachment affect empathetic and understanding relationships in society. Another part of the novel also deals with creation and maternity, where Victor's pursuit of power and control is depicted as a negative aspect of unrestrained male authority. The monster's absence of guidance and a role model underlines the mother's influence in teaching moral decision-making. The fallen angel motif, besides,

reveals the strength of the local community and the feeling of belonging; the demon's ostracism by humanity points to the necessity of inclusion and approval. As a result, Frankenstein discusses orientation, identity, and power from a feminist and social perspective, challenging traditional role stereotypes and the need for acceptance and empathy. However, it also mirrors the negative impact of social norms and a male-orientated society. On the whole, Mary Shelley's book becomes a detailed investigation of human nature, as well as the power and identity complexities.

In conclusion, Frankenstein delves into the themes of orientation, identity, and power using a feminist and social viewpoint to tackle the issue of traditional gender roles and also to make us realise the necessity of empathy and community. Yet, the novel sketches out how regulatory norms and male-dominated hierarchies have dangerous consequences. On the whole, Mary Shelley's book gives us an insightful look into human behaviour and the intricate issues of power and identity.

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Criminal Law Study on Forging Birth Certificates for Inheritance Claims

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Abstract— *A crime is an act prohibited by law and accompanied by a threat of sanction in the form of a criminal penalty. One example of such a crime is the forgery of a birth certificate for the purpose of obtaining an inheritance. The focus of this study is to analyse the legal aspects of the crime of falsifying birth certificates to gain inheritance rights. To address this issue, the research employs normative legal methods (also known as normative juridical research) conducted through library research. The aim is to understand how the law views and analyzes the crime of falsifying birth certificates with the intent to obtain inheritance. The findings indicate that cases involving birth certificate forgery must be thoroughly investigated, as such actions can cause harm to others. Therefore, it is essential for judges to take clear and decisive action in order to uphold justice. Failure to do so may result in injustice and harm to those who rightfully deserve the inheritance.*



Keywords— *Criminal, Birth certificate forgery, Inheritance*

I. INTRODUCTION

Greed is the primary motivation behind many forgery crimes. Criminal acts represent deviant behaviour that persistently exists within society, much like recurring phenomena such as diseases and death, which continue cyclically like changing seasons. Forgery is a crime characterized by elements of falsehood or untruth, involving an object that outwardly appears genuine but is, in reality, contrary to the truth. This deception causes confusion among many individuals who struggle to distinguish between what is authentic and what is counterfeit, as perpetrators often employ various methods that trap victims in such conditions. From a law enforcement perspective, the crime rate is often viewed as positively correlated with a country's level of progress and technological advancement. Today's scientific and social developments are vast, and the higher the civilization level of a nation, the more advanced its science becomes. However, if scientific progress is not balanced with humanistic values, it may lead to negative consequences, including various criminal acts that disrupt peace and order, causing significant material and immaterial losses to

society and the nation. Forgery laws were established to protect the public's legal interests, specifically to maintain trust in the authenticity of four categories of documents: those granting rights, imposing obligations, granting debt relief, and documents made to prove certain facts or conditions. The prohibited acts regarding these documents include creating forged documents (*valschiijk opmaaken*) and falsification (*vervalsen*). Creating forged documents involves producing letters that never previously existed, or where some or all content is fabricated—these are known as fake letters. Falsification, on the other hand, involves altering, deleting, or replacing content in an existing document, resulting in a falsified letter that differs from the original. Among the various issues related to forgery crimes, identity forgery has become increasingly complex. The rise in identity forgery is linked to social and cultural factors, where some communities perceive this crime as commonplace rather than illegal. This perception has contributed to the resurgence of identity forgery practices. Such acts undermine public trust in authentic documents and constitute an affront to the dignity of the law. A person's status or identity should accurately reflect their individuality. Thus, the impact of forgery crimes is

profound, causing both material and immaterial harm. If left unaddressed, these crimes could severely damage the moral fabric and quality of future generations, thereby tarnishing the reputation of the nation's educational and social institutions. The public's trust in authentic documents is paramount, and therefore, the authenticity of such documents must be guaranteed. The purpose of the law is to maintain peace by ensuring legal certainty and justice within society. To achieve this, existing regulations must be enforced firmly. Criminal law serves as a vital tool to resolve such issues and provide appropriate solutions. Legal development, especially in criminal law, must be enhanced and integrated to effectively address various criminal problems. This includes codification, harmonization of legal fields, and the enactment of new legislation necessary to respond to the evolving challenges posed by increasing crime rates and developments in criminal behaviour.

Problem Identification: Based on the above discussion, this research focuses on analysing the legal aspects of the crime of falsifying a birth certificate for the purpose of obtaining inheritance.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Understanding Criminal Acts and Elements of Criminal Acts

The term criminal act comes from the language known in Dutch criminal law, namely "Strafbaar feit". Literally, the word "straf" means criminal, "baar" means can or may and "feit" means act. In relation to the term "Strafbaar feit" in its entirety, it turns out that "straf" is also translated with the word law, even though it is common for law to be translated from the word "recht", as if it means the same as "recht" which is actually not the case. Legal terms that have been used both in existing legislation and in various legal literature as a translation of the term "strafbaar feit" are criminal acts, criminal events, offenses, criminal violations, punishable acts, punishable acts, criminal acts.

According to Soesilo (1990), a criminal act is an act that is prohibited or required by law, and if violated, the person who commits or neglects it is subject to punishment. The elements of a crime consist of two main components:

1. Subjective Elements

These relate to the mental state or intent of the offender at the time of committing the act, including: Intention or lack thereof (*dolus* or *culpa*) *Dolus* refers to actions done intentionally or knowingly, while *culpa* refers to actions done negligently or unintentionally. This element distinguishes whether the crime was committed deliberately or due to carelessness.

2. Awareness or intent regarding an attempt (*voornement* or *poging*)

This refers to the offender's consciousness about attempting to commit a crime, including cases where the attempt is made but the crime is not fully realized.

3. Various intentions or purposes (*oogmerk*)

This refers to the specific goals or motives behind the criminal act, such as personal gain, revenge, or other reasons.

4. Premeditation (*voorberechteraad*)

This element indicates that the crime was planned or prepared in advance, rather than committed impulsively.

5. Objective Elements, relate to the observable or external facts of the crime, including:

- a. Human actions causing harmful consequences
- b. The actual conduct of the offender that results in negative outcomes or violations.
- c. The unlawful nature of the act (*wederrechtelijkheid*)
- d. The act must be against the law, not permitted by any legal exceptions.
- e. The quality or status of the perpetrator
The characteristics or condition of the offender, such as age or mental capacity, which affect criminal responsibility.
- f. Causality
The causal link between the offender's action and the harmful consequence that results.
- g. The circumstances surrounding the act
- h. Factors present at the time of the crime, such as the time, place, and situation when the act occurred.

Determining the time and place of the crime establishing when and where the crime occurred is important because criminal acts often involve tools or means that may cause effects at different times and places than where the act itself took place. Although the law does not explicitly define the time and place of a crime, the government generally considers *locus delicti* the place where the perpetrator committed the act as the location of the crime, not where its consequences occurred.

The presence of a criminal sanction or threat for violating the prohibition (criminal threat) Based on the compound word criminal act, the main understanding is in the act that cannot be separated from the person. In reality, there is no difference in nature between formal and material crimes in criminal acts. In this case, according to Moeljatno. (2010) the difference only lies in the writing that can be seen if you read the formulation of each crime. Formal crime is an abbreviation of a crime formulated morally, while material crime is a crime formulated

materially. Criminal acts initially consisted of 3 (three) types called criminal atrocissima, atrocica and levica which were not based on a particular principle, but rather based on the severity of the crime. Criminal law is included in public law, and its nature is as a regulator of legal relations between humans and their fellow humans, the regulation of which is charged to the ruler, while its size is focused on the public interest in general. Criminal acts are a form of violation of the rules (normovertredigen), and that criminal acts are directed to interests that are the maintenance of the objectives of the law. In this case, the law is divided into 4 (four) groups, namely: a) Damaging (damaging) certain interests protected by law. For example, Article 338 of the Criminal Code; b) Creating danger (concrete gevaar teweeg brengen) or creating a possible danger for that interest, for which it is required to be punished. For example, Article 387 of the Criminal Code; c) More or less producing danger for legal interests according to the formulation of a criminal act, without there having to be danger or a possible danger. In this case, it can be called an abstract danger.

The law considers certain dangers to exist by virtue of regulations. For instance, Article 189 of the Criminal Code addresses such abstract dangers. Additionally, some acts harm legal interests that are difficult to substantiate but affect public welfare, and these acts warrant punishment, as exemplified in Article 169 of the Criminal Code. Legal scholars in Indonesia have classified unlawful acts into two categories: *rechtsdelicten* and *wetdelicten*. This classification is explained in the *Memorie van Toelichting* based on two principles: First, there are acts that, while not explicitly prohibited by law, are generally recognized by society as harmful to honor and deserving of punishment. Second, there are acts clearly defined by law as unlawful, making perpetrators punishable once the law explicitly forbids such conduct.

The crimes mentioned earlier in point one is those that violate unwritten laws, often considered morally wrong by society. In contrast, *wetdelicten* are offenses explicitly defined by legislation as punishable acts. According to Van Hamel, criminal acts are divided into crimes and violations based on these principles, with differences in their legal consequences:

- a. The law does not differentiate between intentional wrongdoing (*opzet*) and negligence (*culpa*) in violations;
- b. Attempts to commit violations are not punishable;
- c. Involvement or complicity in a violation can be punished;
- d. Managers or board members can only be held accountable for violations if they had knowledge of the wrongdoing;

- e. Filing a complaint is not required to initiate prosecution for violations;
- f. The limitation period for prosecution (Article 78(1)) and serving sentences (Article 84(2)) for violations is generally shorter compared to crimes.

2. Definition of Forgery and Elements of the Criminal Act of Forgery

According to Soesilo (1990), crimes involving forgery, or forgery crimes, are offenses that contain elements of falsehood or untruth in an object that appears genuine outwardly but is actually contrary to the truth. Forgery can also be defined as the intentional imitation of someone else's work for a certain purpose without permission. Forgery constitutes a violation of two fundamental norms: Crimes concerning forgery or abbreviated as forgery crimes are crimes that contain elements of untruth or falsehood of something (object), which something appears from the outside as if it were true when in fact it is contrary to the truth. Or an act of intentionally imitating someone else's work for a certain purpose without permission. Forgery is a type of violation of two basic norms, namely: 1) Truth (trust) whose violations can be classified as fraud crimes; 2) Public order, whose violations can be classified as state crimes or public order crimes.

The elements of each crime of forgery are as follows:

- 1) Elements of the crime of perjury; a) Objective elements: (1) In a situation where the law determines that information must be given under oath, or (2) Having legal consequences for information under oath; (3) The act of giving information under oath; (4) With: orally or in writing; (5) In person or by proxy; (6) Content of the information: False information. b) Subjective elements: intentionally; (1) Elements of the Crime of Counterfeiting Currency; a) Objective elements: (1) Act: imitating, falsifying; (2) Object: currency, state banknotes, banknotes. c) Subjective elements: with the intention to: (1) Distribute, or; (2) Order the circulation of currency and paper money as if it were genuine and not counterfeit.

3. Types of Counterfeiting

According to Moeljatno (1983), the crime of forgery as regulated in Book II of the Criminal Code is divided into four categories, one of which is the crime of false oath, as stipulated in Chapter IX, Articles 242 and 243. Article 242 paragraph one prohibits a person who, under certain circumstances, is legally required to provide information under oath or faces legal consequences for such information, from intentionally giving false information whether orally, in writing, or through a specially authorized proxy. The information under oath refers to statements given by a person who, before swearing according to their religion, promises to provide truthful information, or provides information subsequently reinforced by an oath. If

the information turns out to be false, it is considered perjury. Importantly, the oath itself remains valid and truthful; it is the content of the information that is false.

4. Definition of Inheritance

In customary law, inheritance can be in the form of tangible property or intangible property, for example a title of nobility. Property in the form of tangible property according to customary inheritance law is livelihood property, namely property obtained during marriage and property brought. Inheritance according to civil inheritance law is the entirety of the testator's property rights and obligations, both receivables and debts. Civil inheritance law does not recognize the origin of the property to determine inheritance. In other words, inheritance is a unit that is transferred from the testator to the heirs. According to Islamic inheritance law is the property brought and joint property minus the costs incurred for the testator during illness and after death, such as debt payments, management of estates and funerals. Inheritance in Islamic inheritance law is not only property but also the rights of the testator.

The concept of inheritance arises because of the event of death. This event of death occurs to a family member, for example a father, mother or child. If the deceased has assets, then the main issue is not the death, but the assets left behind. This means, who is entitled to the assets left by the testator. And also, who is obliged to bear and settle the debts of the testator if he leaves behind debts that are his obligations. For inheritance to occur as described above, the process includes the following elements below: 1) The existence of an heir, the heir is someone who has assets and passes on or transfers the assets to someone as an heir. Indeed, the death of the testator is a very important event in inheritance, but it does not radically affect the process of passing on or transferring the inheritance. 2) The existence of inheritance is all assets left by someone who dies (the testator) whether the assets have been divided or not.

However, the law has determined that there are people who, because of their actions, do not deserve to receive an inheritance. They include: a) An heir who has embezzled; b) Destroy falsified letters; c) An heir who uses violence or threatens to prevent the deceased from making a will according to his wishes.

5. Definition of Birth Certificate (Birth Certificate)

The term or word deed in Dutch is called "Acte" or "Akta" and in English is called "Act" or "Deed." According to general opinion, it has two meanings: 1) a deed (handling) or legal act (Rechtshandeling); 2) a writing made to be used or to serve as the creation of a certain law, namely a writing presented as evidence. The definition of a deed according to Article 165 of the 1941 Statute No. 84 is: "A letter made in such a way by or before an authorized official to serve as sufficient evidence for both parties and their

heirs or related parties as a legal relationship, concerning all matters referred to in the letter as notification of a direct relationship with the matter at hand."

Meanwhile, according to Prof. R. Soebekti (1984), a deed is a writing made to be used as evidence of an event and is signed. From the definition, letters that can be called deeds are only certain letters that meet the following requirements: 1) The letter must be signed. The requirement for a letter to be signed in order to be called a deed is stated in the Civil Code which states: "A deed that due to the inability of the employee or the incompetence of the employee, or due to a defect in its form, is not enforced as an authentic deed, but nevertheless has the force of a private writing". 2) The letter must contain an event that is the basis of a right and obligation. In accordance with the designation of a deed as a means of proof for the purposes of whose needs the letter is, it is clear that the letter must contain information that can be used as the required evidence. The legal event called proof must be a legal event that is the basis of a right or obligation. 3) The letter must be intended as evidence. The third requirement for a letter to be called a deed is that the letter is intended as evidence. Birth certificate or birth certificate is a word issued by an authorized official, which is related to the birth. In order to obtain or get certainty regarding a person's legal standing, authentic evidence is needed, which evidence can be used as a guideline to prove a person's legal standing.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a library research method, drawing primarily on scientific literature as its main source of data. Soerjono Soekanto (1985) defines legal research as a scientific activity that is grounded in specific methods, systematic approaches, and critical reasoning. The objective is to thoroughly examine one or several particular legal phenomena through detailed analysis. Furthermore, legal research involves an in-depth investigation of legal facts, which helps reveal the relevant symptoms associated with these phenomena. This study was conducted at Herna General Hospital Medan. The hospital serves as the primary site for data collection and observation related to the research topic. Its selection was based on its relevance and accessibility for obtaining the necessary information to support the objectives of this study.

IV. RESULT & DISCUSSION

This study examines the criminal act of forging birth certificates aimed at unlawfully acquiring inheritance rights. The findings reveal that birth certificates serve as crucial legal documents that authenticate a person's identity and legitimate status, particularly in inheritance claims.

Authentic birth certificates, issued by authorized institutions, provide legally binding proof of an individual's legal status and are fundamental in ensuring the rightful distribution of inheritance. The research highlights that birth certificates must fulfill specific formal requirements: they must be signed by authorized officials, contain factual legal events that establish rights and obligations, and be intended as valid evidence. When these documents are forged, the legal certainty surrounding an individual's identity and entitlement is compromised, potentially resulting in material and immaterial harm to rightful heirs. The case analysis of the defendant, Kawida, who was found guilty of falsifying a birth certificate to claim inheritance, confirms that the offense meets all elements stipulated under Article 263 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP). These elements include the creation of a forged document and the intentional use of such a document, actions that cause harm to others. This confirms that the act of forgery in this context is a serious criminal offense warranting legal sanctions. Moreover, the study emphasizes the critical role of judicial enforcement in upholding justice and maintaining public trust in official documents. Firm and consistent legal actions are necessary to deter forgery crimes and to protect the legal rights of individuals. Beyond the immediate legal implications, the research underscores the broader societal impacts of document forgery. It not only results in financial losses but also undermines social trust, damages moral values, and threatens the integrity of the legal system. If left unchecked, these crimes could erode public confidence in authentic documentation and disrupt social order. Based on descent because the letter or birth certificate does prove that a child mentioned in the same is the child mentioned in the birth certificate in question, at least from the woman who gave birth to the child whose child is mentioned there. From the contents of the birth certificate, the birth certificate of a legitimate child must be able to prove accurate evidence. The authentic evidence can be used to support the certainty of a person issued by an institution, where this institution is authorized to issue certificates regarding a person's legal status. According to Article 261 of the Civil Code, it states that: "Legitimate offspring can be proven by their birth certificates, which have been recorded in the civil registry register." From the above definition, letters that can be called deeds are only certain letters that meet the following requirements: 1) The letter must be signed. The requirement for a letter to be signed in order to be called a deed is stated in the Civil Code which states: "A deed that due to the inability of the employee or the incompetence of the employee, or due to a defect in its form, is not enforced as an authentic deed, but nevertheless has the force of a private writing". 2) The letter must contain an event that is the basis of a right and

obligation. In accordance with the designation of a deed as a means of proof for the purposes of whose needs the letter is, it is clear that the letter must contain information that can be used as the required evidence. The legal event called proof must be a legal event that is the basis of a right or obligation. 3) The letter must be intended as evidence. The third requirement for a letter to be called a deed is that the letter is intended as evidence.

V. CONCLUSION

The conviction of the defendant, Kawida, for the crime of falsifying a birth certificate to unlawfully claim inheritance rights, as ruled by the Medan District Court, is legally sound and justified. This decision is based on the fulfilment of all the elements outlined in Article 263, paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Criminal Code. Specifically, the elements under paragraph (1) include: (1) an individual; (2) who creates a forged document; and (3) where such forgery has the potential to confer rights. Meanwhile, the elements under paragraph (2) encompass: (1) an individual; (2) who knowingly utilizes a forged document; and (3) where this use results in harm or loss.

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Empowering Individuals: Chanakya's Teachings on Soft Skills Enhancement

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Abstract—In today's dynamic and competitive world, the cultivation of soft skills is crucial for personal and professional success. This abstract delves into the profound insights of Chanakya, the ancient Indian philosopher, strategist, and political economist, on the empowerment of individuals through the enhancement of soft skills. Chanakya's teachings, as expounded in his seminal works like the Arthashastra and the Chanakya Niti, offer timeless wisdom that transcends generations and cultures. Drawing upon a rich tapestry of anecdotes, aphorisms, and strategic principles, this abstract explores how Chanakya's teachings serve as a comprehensive guide for individuals seeking to develop and refine their soft skills. Central to Chanakya's philosophy is the cultivation of leadership attributes, communication prowess, emotional intelligence, and adept interpersonal relationships. Ultimately, this serves as a tribute to Chanakya's legacy, inspiring readers to embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery and empowerment. By embracing Chanakya's teachings on soft skills enhancement, individuals can navigate life's myriad challenges with resilience, adaptability, and unwavering confidence, thereby realizing their aspirations and leaving an indelible mark on the world.



Keywords—Chanakya, Determination, Empowerment, Individual, Soft Skills

Vishnugupt, commonly known as Chanakya, was an ancient Indian philosopher, teacher, economist, and statesman who lived during the Mauryan Empire in the 4th century BCE. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest political strategists and thinkers in Indian history. Chanakya played a pivotal role in the rise of Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Maurya Empire, and is credited with laying the foundation for its expansion and consolidation. Chanakya's life is shrouded in legend and historical accounts, but it is believed that he was born in the ancient city of Takshashila (present-day Taxila in Pakistan). He was known for his exceptional intellect, sharp wit, and deep understanding of human nature and politics. Chanakya authored the Arthashastra, an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft, economics, and military strategy, which remains one of the most influential works in the field of political science.

One of Chanakya's most significant achievements was his role as the chief advisor to Chandragupta Maurya, whom he groomed and guided to overthrow the Nanda dynasty and establish the Maurya Empire. Chanakya's strategic brilliance and political acumen played a crucial role in Chandragupta's success and the subsequent expansion of the empire across the Indian subcontinent. In addition to his political contributions, Chanakya is also revered for his teachings on ethics, governance, and personal conduct, which are compiled in works such as the Chanakya Niti and the Chanakya Sutras. These texts offer timeless wisdom and practical insights into various aspects of life, including leadership, diplomacy, interpersonal relationships, and self-improvement.

Chanakya's legacy continues to inspire generations of leaders, scholars, and thinkers, both in India and around the world. His ideas on governance, economics, and ethics

remain relevant in contemporary times, making him a revered figure in Indian history and political thought.

About Soft Skills:

It's often said that hard skills will get you an interview but you need soft skills to get -- and keep -- the job. What makes one stand out from others??

- Soft skills refer to a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that make someone a good employee and compatible to work with.
- There are two types of skills viz hard and soft skills.
- Soft skills are important for professional development, maintaining IPR (interpersonal relations) and effective Communication.
- Soft skills include Inter personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects.
- There are many key soft skills that need to be applied in the workplace.
- Hence Soft skills training should begin for a person when they are students, to perform efficiently in their academic environment as well as in their future workplace.
- Good Soft Skills will help you STAND OUT in a crowd of mediocrity.
- Soft skills are a synonym for 'People's Skills', 'Interpersonal Skills' and also 'Transferable Skills'. Soft skills are Personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects.
- In other words, Soft Skills are the subtle behaviours and communication styles that help make a work environment or interaction with another person easier to manage.

According to Collins English Dictionary, the term "soft skills" is defined as "desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude.

Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social and emotional intelligence, intelligence quotients, that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals with complementing hard skills.

Harvard University reported that 85% of success at the workplace is attributed to Soft skills and only 15% to technical skills.

Chanakya emphasized the qualities of effective leadership, including, generosity, resilience, wisdom, courage, vision, decisiveness, integrity, and empathy. He provided guidance on how leaders can inspire and motivate others, foster teamwork, and navigate complex political situations with skill and wisdom. Chanakya, celebrated for his unparalleled strategic intellect and astute political prowess, stands as an enduring symbol of effective leadership. His profound insights and sagacious teachings have etched a lasting legacy in the annals of history, transcending the boundaries of time and geography. Chanakya's profound understanding of human nature and governance has resonated across centuries, offering invaluable guidance to leaders across diverse domains. His teachings serve as a beacon of timeless wisdom for those aspiring to inspire, guide, and attain success in their endeavors. From the intricacies of statecraft to the nuances of interpersonal relationships, Chanakya's teachings provide a comprehensive roadmap for leaders navigating the complexities of leadership in any era. His enduring influence underscores the enduring relevance of his principles, serving as a source of inspiration and guidance for leaders striving to make a meaningful impact in their spheres of influence.

At the core of Chanakya's leadership philosophy lies the essential elements of vision and decisiveness. Chanakya espoused the notion that successful leaders are those who cultivate a vivid and well-defined vision of their goals and objectives. With clarity of purpose, leaders can inspire and galvanise others towards a common direction. However, Chanakya also emphasized the critical importance of decisiveness in leadership. He believed that effective leaders must possess the ability to make prompt and resolute decisions, even in the face of uncertainty or adversity. According to Chanakya, indecision can lead to stagnation and missed opportunities, while decisive action is the catalyst for progress and achievement. By embracing decisiveness as a guiding principle, leaders can navigate through challenges with confidence and steer their organizations towards success and growth.

दातृत्वं प्रियवक्तृत्वं धीरत्वमुचितज्ञता । अभ्यासेन न लभ्यन्ते चत्वारः सहजा गुणाः ॥
(11:01) Datravyam Priyavaktraktvam,
Dhiratvamuchitgyata . Abhyasen n lbhyante Chatvarah
Sahaja Gunaha.

Good leaders are characterized by their willingness to give, whether it's their time, resources, or support. They are generous not only in material terms but also in sharing knowledge, opportunities, and recognition. A leader who embodies *daatrutvam* fosters a culture of collaboration and

support within their team, which ultimately leads to greater cohesion and productivity. Effective communication is fundamental to leadership. *Priyavakrutvam* refers to the ability to communicate in a pleasant, persuasive, and empathetic manner. Good leaders inspire and motivate others through their words and actions. They listen actively, provide constructive feedback, and address concerns with empathy and respect. Pleasant communication fosters trust and strengthens relationships, essential components of successful leadership.

Leadership often entails making tough decisions, facing challenges, and navigating uncertainty. *Dheeravtam* encompasses the courage to take calculated risks, the resilience to persevere in the face of setbacks, and the composure to remain calm under pressure. Leaders who exhibit *dheeravtam* inspire confidence and instil a sense of stability and determination in their team members, encouraging them to confront obstacles with courage and resilience. Sound judgement is crucial for effective leadership. *Uchitajnyataa* refers to the ability to discern what is appropriate or fitting in a given situation and make well-informed decisions accordingly. Good leaders possess a combination of knowledge, experience, and intuition, allowing them to assess situations objectively, weigh the available options, and choose the most suitable course of action. They also seek input from others and are open to feedback, recognizing that no leader has all the answers.

The concluding line of the verse, "*abhyasen na labhyante chatvaarah sahajaa gunaah*," emphasizes that these four qualities—generosity, pleasant communication, courage, and discriminating wisdom—are not easily acquired without practice and effort. Hence, aspiring leaders should continuously strive to cultivate and refine these inherent qualities through deliberate practice, self-reflection, and ongoing learning. By embodying these traits, leaders can effectively inspire, guide, and empower others to achieve shared goals and realize collective success.

Chanakya recognized the importance of clear and strategic communication in achieving goals and maintaining relationships. He advised leaders to convey their messages with clarity, precision, and timeliness, considering the audience's background and motivations. Chanakya's teachings on negotiation and diplomacy serve as a cornerstone of his strategic philosophy, illuminating pathways to effective conflict resolution and the pursuit of strategic interests. At the heart of Chanakya's approach lies a profound understanding of the intricacies of human interaction and the dynamics of power. He emphasizes the pivotal role of tact, persuasion, and compromise in navigating the complexities of interpersonal and geopolitical relations. Central to Chanakya's teachings is the

recognition that diplomatic finesse is essential for achieving mutually beneficial outcomes, particularly in situations fraught with adversity and contention. By advocating for the judicious application of diplomatic skills, Chanakya equips individuals with the tools to navigate delicate negotiations with poise and discernment, thereby paving the way for the attainment of strategic objectives while preserving relationships and fostering goodwill.

Chanakya's strategic brilliance is evident in his guidance on negotiation, where he provides pragmatic strategies for achieving favorable outcomes. He emphasizes the importance of gaining insights into the opponent's perspective, allowing negotiators to empathize with their counterparts and uncover areas of common interest. By understanding the motivations and concerns of the other party, negotiators can build bridges of understanding and pave the way for mutually beneficial agreements. Furthermore, Chanakya underscores the critical role of trust and rapport in negotiation dynamics. He recognizes that trust is the foundation upon which successful negotiations are built, and advocates for the establishment of genuine connections between parties. By fostering an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, negotiators can create an environment conducive to constructive dialogue and collaboration. Chanakya's strategic insights offer invaluable guidance for negotiators seeking to navigate the complexities of negotiation with confidence and finesse, ultimately leading to the achievement of favorable outcomes for all parties involved.

Chanakya champions the pursuit of win-win solutions as a cornerstone of effective negotiation. He underscores the importance of seeking outcomes where all parties involved stand to benefit, transcending adversarial dynamics and fostering enduring partnerships. By cultivating a spirit of cooperation and compromise, negotiators can navigate through conflicts and disagreements with the aim of achieving mutually satisfactory agreements. Chanakya's emphasis on win-win outcomes stems from his deep-seated belief in the power of mutual benefit and collective prosperity. He recognizes that sustainable success is not achieved through one-sided victories but rather through collaborative efforts that uplift all stakeholders involved. Through his teachings, Chanakya inspires negotiators to adopt a mindset of abundance, where opportunities for growth and prosperity are maximized through mutual cooperation and shared success. By embracing the principles of win-win negotiation, individuals can forge relationships built on trust, respect, and mutual gain, laying the groundwork for long-term harmony and prosperity.

Chanakya's teachings provide invaluable insights into conflict resolution, offering pragmatic strategies grounded

in measured responses and strategic maneuvering. He advocates for a calm and rational approach to conflicts, advising negotiators to address underlying grievances while preserving relationships. By emphasizing the importance of maintaining composure and clarity of thought in the face of adversity, Chanakya empowers individuals to navigate conflicts with grace and wisdom. His nuanced approach to diplomacy encourages stakeholders to seek mutually acceptable solutions that satisfy the interests of all parties involved. Chanakya's teachings underscore the significance of empathy and understanding in resolving conflicts, urging negotiators to consider the perspectives and concerns of others. Through his guidance, individuals are equipped with the tools and mindset necessary to navigate conflicts with tact and discernment, fostering resolution and harmony in interpersonal and geopolitical interactions.

Chanakya's teachings on negotiation and diplomacy retain their relevance in contemporary contexts, serving as a timeless guide for effective conflict resolution and relationship management. His emphasis on principles such as tact, empathy, and win-win solutions provides invaluable guidance for negotiators navigating today's complex geopolitical landscape. In an era marked by rapid globalization and interconnectedness, Chanakya's strategic insights offer a beacon of light for individuals seeking to navigate the intricate webs of international relations and interpersonal dynamics. By embracing Chanakya's teachings, negotiators can foster constructive dialogue, build consensus, and ultimately achieve mutually beneficial outcomes in an ever-evolving world. In a time where conflicts arise from diverse cultural, political, and economic interests, Chanakya's wisdom serves as a compass, guiding negotiators towards solutions that prioritize cooperation, understanding, and shared prosperity. By integrating Chanakya's strategic principles into contemporary negotiation strategies, individuals can navigate the complexities of the modern world with confidence and foresight, paving the way for enduring peace and prosperity.

प्रियवाक्यप्रदानेन सर्वे तुष्यन्ति जन्तवः । तस्मात्तदेव वक्तव्यं वचने का दरिद्रता ॥ १६-१३
Priyavakyapradanen Sarve Tushyanti Jantavaha.
Tasmatatadev Vaktyavyam Vachne Ka Dridrata.

This subhashit, or verse, highlights the importance of communication skills in fostering positive relationships and achieving harmony in society. Let's examine it in the context of communication skills: Effective communication begins with the ability to convey messages in a pleasant and engaging manner. Priyavakya Pradānena emphasizes the importance of speaking kindly, respectfully, and thoughtfully. Individuals who possess strong communication skills can articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly, while also considering the feelings and perspectives

of others. By using pleasant speech, they create a positive and welcoming atmosphere that encourages open dialogue and mutual understanding. This part of the verse highlights the positive impact of pleasant communication on others. When individuals communicate in a kind and considerate manner, they are more likely to elicit favorable responses from those around them. Effective communication builds rapport, trust, and goodwill, leading to enhanced relationships and cooperation. By prioritizing pleasant speech, individuals can create a harmonious environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

This line emphasizes the importance of prioritizing pleasant speech in communication. Tasmāt Tadeva Vaktavyam suggests that individuals should consciously choose their words to ensure that they promote positivity and goodwill. Effective communicators are mindful of the impact of their words and strive to use language that uplifts, inspires, and fosters mutual respect. By speaking with kindness and empathy, they contribute to a culture of positivity and understanding in their interactions. The concluding part of the verse questions the necessity of using harsh or unkind words in communication. Vachane Kā Daridrātā suggests that there is poverty or lack in using harsh speech. Individuals who resort to negative or hurtful language in their communication demonstrate a poverty of kindness and empathy. Instead, they should strive to elevate their communication skills by choosing words that uplift and empower others.

In summary, this subhashit emphasizes the significance of communication skills, particularly the use of pleasant speech, in fostering positive relationships and harmony in society. Effective communicators recognize the power of words to influence others and consciously choose language that promotes understanding, empathy, and respect. By prioritizing pleasant speech, individuals can contribute to a culture of positivity and create meaningful connections with others.

Chanakya underscores the importance of several key components, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, all of which are integral to emotional intelligence. Through his teachings, Chanakya elucidates the foundational significance of understanding and managing one's own emotions, recognizing this as essential groundwork for effective leadership. By promoting self-awareness, individuals can cultivate a deeper understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and emotional triggers, thereby enhancing their capacity to lead with clarity and purpose. Furthermore, Chanakya emphasizes the necessity of empathy as a cornerstone of emotional intelligence. He recognizes empathy as a powerful tool for forging connections and fostering

meaningful interpersonal relationships. By encouraging leaders to empathize with the perspectives and emotions of others, Chanakya empowers them to cultivate trust, understanding, and collaboration within their teams. Through empathetic leadership, individuals can create an inclusive and supportive environment where mutual respect and cooperation thrive.

In essence, Chanakya's teachings on emotional intelligence offer timeless wisdom for navigating the complexities of leadership and interpersonal dynamics. By prioritizing self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, individuals can cultivate the emotional intelligence necessary to make informed decisions, inspire others, and foster harmonious relationships. Chanakya's insights serve as a guiding light for leaders seeking to unlock their full potential and achieve enduring success in both their personal and professional lives. Chanakya's teachings on emotional intelligence extend beyond self-awareness to encompass self-management and empathy, vital aspects of effective leadership. He stresses the importance of self-regulation, urging individuals to exercise control over their emotions and impulses across various situations. By cultivating emotional balance and resilience, leaders can navigate challenges with grace and composure, thereby inspiring confidence and trust among their peers. Chanakya recognizes that leaders who demonstrate self-control are better equipped to make rational decisions and lead their teams with conviction.

वाचां शौचं च मनसः शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः । सर्वभूतदयाशौचमेतच्छौचं परार्थिनाम् ॥ परार्थिनाम्
॥ Vaacham Shaucham Cha Manasa
Shauchamindriyanigraha.

Sarvabhutdayashauchmetchchaicham Pararthinaam.

Emotional intelligence begins with self-awareness and self-regulation. Vaacham Shaucham emphasizes the importance of maintaining purity in speech, mind, and thoughts. Emotionally intelligent individuals are mindful of their words and thoughts, ensuring that they communicate with clarity, kindness, and honesty. They also strive to cultivate a positive and balanced mindset, free from negativity and harmful thoughts. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to manage impulses and regulate one's emotions effectively. Indriya Nigraha refers to the control of the senses, indicating the importance of self-control and restraint. Emotionally intelligent individuals are adept at recognizing their emotional triggers and exercising restraint when faced with challenging situations. They can pause, reflect, and respond thoughtfully rather than reacting impulsively.

Empathy and compassion are essential components of emotional intelligence. Sarvabhutadayashaucham highlights the importance of extending compassion and

empathy towards all beings. Emotionally intelligent individuals possess a deep understanding of others' emotions and perspectives. They demonstrate empathy by actively listening, validating others' experiences, and offering support and kindness without judgment. Emotional intelligence involves not only self-awareness and self-regulation but also the ability to build and maintain positive relationships. Etach Shaucham emphasizes that purity of speech, mind, and actions should ultimately serve the well-being of others. Emotionally intelligent individuals prioritize the needs and feelings of others, fostering trust, respect, and cooperation in their interpersonal relationships.

It underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in cultivating purity of speech, thoughts, and actions, self-regulation, empathy, and compassion. By embodying these qualities, individuals can enhance their emotional well-being, strengthen their relationships, and contribute to a more harmonious and compassionate society. Chanakya's emphasis on emotional intelligence resonates deeply in the pursuit of personal and professional success. He viewed emotional intelligence as a catalyst for individual growth and development, enabling individuals to make sound decisions, build meaningful relationships, and navigate complex social dynamics with finesse. By integrating emotional intelligence into their leadership approach, individuals can enhance their effectiveness, influence, and impact in both personal and professional spheres. Chanakya's teachings serve as a timeless reminder of the transformative power of emotional intelligence, empowering individuals to realize their full potential and achieve enduring success in all aspects of life.

इन्द्रियणि च संयम्य रागद्वेषविवर्जितः । समदुःखसुखः शान्तः तत्त्वज्ञः साधुरुच्यते ॥ 6-17
Indriyani cha Sanyamya Raagdveshvivrjitaha.
Samadhukhshukhah shantaha tatvagayah saadhuruchyate.

Chanakya's teachings offer invaluable guidance on problem-solving and decision-making, reflecting his astute understanding of effective leadership. He advocates for a meticulous approach to problem-solving, urging leaders to engage in thorough analysis and thoughtful consideration of diverse perspectives. By encouraging critical thinking, creativity, and resourcefulness, Chanakya empowers leaders to tackle challenges with confidence and agility. His emphasis on careful deliberation and foresight underscores the importance of weighing the potential consequences of actions before making decisions. Through his teachings, Chanakya instills in leaders a mindset of strategic problem-solving, equipping them with the tools and mindset necessary to navigate complexities and seize opportunities amidst uncertainty.

Furthermore, Chanakya underscores the importance of adaptability and innovation in problem-solving. He

recognizes that challenges often require innovative solutions and encourages leaders to embrace creativity in their approach. By fostering a culture of experimentation and learning, Chanakya empowers leaders to explore new possibilities and adapt to changing circumstances effectively. His teachings serve as a reminder that effective problem-solving is not merely about finding immediate solutions but also about cultivating a mindset of continuous improvement and adaptability. Through Chanakya's guidance, leaders can cultivate problem-solving skills that enable them to navigate the complexities of leadership with resilience, ingenuity, and strategic foresight. Personal Development: Chanakya's teachings on personal development serve as a blueprint for individuals seeking to cultivate excellence in their lives. He outlines principles such as discipline, perseverance, continuous learning, and ethical conduct, viewing them as essential elements for personal growth and success. By emphasizing the significance of self-improvement and character development, Chanakya underscores the importance of cultivating traits that contribute to moral integrity and leadership effectiveness. Through his guidance, individuals are encouraged to embark on a journey of self-discovery and self-mastery, striving to enhance their skills, knowledge, and virtues.

Moreover, Chanakya highlights the enduring value of ethical conduct in personal development and leadership. He emphasizes the importance of aligning actions with values, advocating for honesty, integrity, and accountability in all endeavors. Chanakya's teachings inspire individuals to uphold moral principles and ethical standards, recognizing that true success is not only measured by achievements but also by the integrity of one's character. By embodying these principles, individuals can cultivate a strong sense of purpose, resilience, and authenticity, laying the foundation for personal fulfillment and impactful leadership. Through Chanakya's timeless wisdom, individuals are empowered to embark on a transformative journey of personal development, guided by principles that resonate across time and culture.

धनधान्यप्रयोगेषु विद्यासङ्ग्रहणे तथा । आहारे व्यवहारे च त्यक्तलज्जः सुखी भवेत् ॥ १२-२
Dhandhaanyaprayogeshu Vidyasanggrahane Tatha.
Aahare Vyavhaare Cha Tyaktaljjaha Sukhi bhavet.

This part emphasizes the importance of wise utilization of resources, including wealth and grains. In personal development, it suggests the need for financial prudence and responsible management of resources. Individuals should strive to use their wealth and possessions in a manner that promotes their overall well-being and contributes to their personal growth. This may involve budgeting, investing wisely, and avoiding unnecessary expenses to

ensure long-term financial stability and fulfillment. This part underscores the importance of continuous learning and knowledge acquisition. Personal development relies heavily on self-improvement through education and skill development. Individuals should actively seek opportunities to expand their knowledge, whether through formal education, reading, attending workshops, or engaging in meaningful experiences. By constantly enriching their minds and acquiring new skills, individuals can enhance their personal and professional capabilities, opening doors to new opportunities and growth. This part highlights the significance of mindful eating and behavior. Personal development encompasses physical and mental well-being, and healthy eating habits play a crucial role in maintaining overall health. Individuals should strive to consume nutritious foods that nourish their bodies and support their energy levels and cognitive function. Furthermore, mindful behavior in interactions with others fosters positive relationships and personal growth. Practicing empathy, respect, and effective communication enhances interpersonal skills and contributes to personal development.

The final part of the verse suggests that letting go of shame or self-consciousness leads to happiness. In personal development, this implies the importance of self-acceptance and embracing authenticity. Individuals should strive to overcome feelings of shame or insecurity and cultivate a positive self-image and confidence in their abilities. By embracing their uniqueness and being true to themselves, individuals can experience greater happiness and fulfillment in their personal lives. Above all, the subhashit underscores the principles of wise resource management, continuous learning, mindful living, and self-acceptance in the journey of personal development. By incorporating these principles into their lives, individuals can enhance their well-being, achieve their goals, and lead fulfilling lives aligned with their values and aspirations.

Interpersonal Relationships: Chanakya's teachings on interpersonal relationships offer invaluable insights into the dynamics of human interaction and collaboration. He underscores the importance of trust, respect, and mutual understanding as foundational elements for building and maintaining positive relationships. By emphasizing these principles, Chanakya guides individuals on how to foster genuine connections and cultivate a supportive network of allies. Moreover, Chanakya provides practical advice on managing conflicts and navigating interpersonal challenges with tact and diplomacy. His teachings encourage individuals to approach conflicts with empathy and open-mindedness, seeking resolutions that preserve relationships and promote harmony.

Furthermore, Chanakya recognizes the strategic importance of building alliances and cultivating loyalty among followers. He offers guidance on how leaders can inspire trust and confidence in their teams, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie. Through his teachings, individuals learn the art of effective communication, negotiation, and persuasion, essential skills for building strong interpersonal relationships. Chanakya's insights empower individuals to navigate the complexities of social dynamics with wisdom and finesse, enabling them to forge enduring bonds of trust and collaboration. In essence, Chanakya's teachings on interpersonal relationships provide a roadmap for individuals seeking to cultivate meaningful connections, resolve conflicts, and build a supportive network of allies and collaborators.

Chanakya's contributions to soft skills encompass a wide array of qualities and competencies crucial for both personal and professional development. His enduring wisdom serves as a guiding light for individuals striving to enhance their leadership abilities, communication skills, emotional intelligence, problem-solving capabilities, and interpersonal relationships. By delving into Chanakya's teachings, individuals gain insights into the fundamental principles that underpin effective leadership, including vision, decisiveness, integrity, and empathy. Moreover, his emphasis on clear communication, active listening, and persuasive expression provides invaluable guidance for navigating the complexities of interpersonal interactions and fostering meaningful connections with others. Additionally, Chanakya's teachings on emotional intelligence underscore the importance of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, equipping individuals with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of human emotions and build strong, resilient relationships. Overall, Chanakya's timeless wisdom continues to inspire individuals on their journey towards personal and professional growth, offering timeless principles and practical guidance for success in all aspects of life.

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Depictions of activism at universities compared; Contexts for Political Engagement

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Abstract— *The goal of this study is to make a case that the campus of a university served as the venue for discussion, planning, and mobilization. Campuses have come to represent the perfect arena of power where social demands are made and power battles are fought since they serve as a microcosm of society. The campus acted as both a microcosm of the outside world and a testing ground for ideas and activities before they were introduced to the entire public. In terms of approach the study used a documentary review to highlight the various experiences associated with student activism from three public universities in Uganda. Findings indicate that, the university has developed into a setting for remaking society. The youth of Uganda in the 1990s sparked significant social transformation and began a new chapter in human history. The movement stressed the significant position that higher education institutions hold as centers of research, teaching, and community action. Since the freedom of thinking expressed inside the campus's physical setting gives humanity the vital inventiveness required to create a better and fairer world, the campus' privileged status should continue to be maintained. The study only included three public universities in Uganda, so it may not be feasible to extrapolate the results to other nations. Instead, it may be more practical to provide students with tailored learning support, let alone allow the university to grow organically.*



Keywords— *Higher education activism; campus organization; social transformation; democratization; internet age.*

Introduction

Student activism and politics were key aspects of higher education in Uganda during the twentieth century, according to historiography. From the 1930s Ugandan universities and secondary schools were a center of the revolutionary movement. For four decades, most youth movements focused on independence from the British Empire. After independence in 1962, activist groups shifted their focus internally. Student leadership groups in public universities across Uganda, particularly Makerere University, were politically affiliated, and student government elections were closely linked to political standing. Student activist groups were the main opposition to the regimes of Milton Obote and Idi Amin, and students were particularly persecuted during Amin's presidency. During Museveni's presidency, students were leading critics

and engaged in major protests before and after Museveni's movement to lift presidential term limits in 2006. Consistent opposition to President Museveni culminated in three Makerere University closures.

This article, in part, pursues evidence as there is to substantiate this fact in Uganda. It depends very much upon one individual's recollections, and inevitably dwells more upon episodes in which the author was himself involved. In this review the likely to be omissions, for which apologies are given, but, hopefully, the balance will not be disturbed by this individualistic approach. The focus of the article is upon student activism. This is because events the recent past have shown that, for whatever reason, the academic staff of university have not been especially prominent in their protests. Many Ugandan academics have left the country. There are very few expatriate members staff left at

Makerere from countries in which University traditions of freedom of expression are cherished. There have been some examples of staff victimized, and in a sense the academic staff have been terrorized into silence.

In August 2018, the Ugandan government introduced a tax on social media, SMS and Whats App (Schwartz, 2018). Since the 2006 protests, social media has increasingly been used as a tool for organizing and protesting among young people in Uganda. While President Museveni claimed at the time that the tax was intended to increase productivity, he had censored social media in the past. During the 2011 and 2016 elections, he completely shut down social networks and there was a growing number of people arrested for posting anti-government statements online (Bariyo, 2018). The social media tax also came in the wake of the populist election of Rep. Bobi Wine, who communicated with his supporters via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. According to a statement by Amnesty International, this is a clear attempt to silence dissent under the guise of increasing government revenue, Bataringaya (2018).

Within a day, students mobilized online, using VPNs to evade the tax and protesting the social media tax and that this tax needs to be abolished, Schwartz (2018). There were also thousands of citizens protesting across Uganda, most of whom were under the age of 30, Bariyo (2108). A group of students from Makerere University also petitioned then-Speaker Rebecca Kadaga for the social media tax and encouraged her to speak out against the tax in front of the House, Bataringaya (2018). After the public outcry, the government lowered the tax on mobile money transactions, but as of November 27, 2018, the social media tax remains in place.

In the latest development in April 2021, twelve Makerere University students were suspended for protesting online lectures. Students demonstrated against the continuation of online lectures and demanded a full reopening of the institution. Only freshmen were physically on campus while the rest were to study online for the first 5 weeks.

Vice-Chancellor Barnabas Nawangwe said the students are accused of destroying university property, disrupting teaching and learning, inciting violence and physical assault, for their involvement in the above offensive actions and to ensure the safety of our new students, the university and property I hereby suspend you from Makerere University, immediately. You are invited to appear before the Student Disciplinary Committee to exchange views on the matter at a date to be announced in due course. One of the suspended students remarked that the vice chancellor's actions were unfair because he was not involved in the demonstration. Her lawyers argues that the students'

suspension is unlawful because the students have not been subjected to disciplinary proceedings.

The purpose of the article, is to critically review the literature on the subject of student activism and social rebellion, to include a critical analysis of the positions of previous scholars, and to pave the way for charting the ways students' campus experiences on both sides shape their political visions and expand networks of solidarity in the escalating social rebellion at public universities in Uganda in the light of existing literature in the media and personal reflection. The article is divided into five sections, Section I defines student activism whilst highlighting the historical trajectories of student protest in Uganda. Section II examines recent student protests; Section III introduces the reader to the notion that the campus is a social space. Section IV provides an analysis of the current challenges preventing campuses from fulfilling the role of educating new generation of students. Section V provides an explicit implication for student learning/support. Finally, a brief conclusion is given in the last section of the treatise.

Student activism in the context of historical trajectories.

Mamdani (2017) claims that:

Student guilds have historically provided the training ground for the next generation of leaders and activists. Activism defines a university.

In fact, colonialism's reason for establishing technical colleges rather than universities in Africa was for fear of producing the next generation of anti-colonial activists. Between 1960 and 1974, students at Addis Ababa University led a movement to end Emperor Haile Selassie's authoritarian monarchy.

The recent "online learning must-fall movement" in Uganda has shown us, student movements and campuses in general are central to the negotiation of new regimes of power. Student activists who emerged particularly from guild politics often ended up as the new intellectuals and political elites: Milton Obote, N Robert Mao, Noble Mayombo, Olara Otunnu, David Rubadiri, Okot pBitek, Asuman Basalirwa, Ebaju Adeke, Charles Rwomushana, and Nkunyngi Muwada .

Mamdani (2018) sees that there is something special about a university that encourages and motivates activism among its students. It could range from her readings (Marx, (1968) Fanon, (1967) Soyinka, (1970) Cesare, (1956) etc.) to her age group in her twenties full of youthful exuberance and courage. This then means that teaching and promoting activism is a core part of the campus.

Student activism is a feature of higher education around the world. On the African continent, early student activism

focused on national politics to achieve independence in colonized countries. After independence, African students took part in a second liberation struggle for social justice and democracy and against apartheid in South Africa. In Asia, since World War II, students have organized protest movements that have toppled authoritarian regimes in some countries and threatened governments in others.

In South America, the Cordoba protest movement of 1918, which began at the University of Cordoba, Argentina, was the first major student-related uprising on the continent and led to changes in university leadership. In Western countries, the 1960s was a decade of turbulent student activism, as students participated in United States civil rights movements, fought against the Vietnam War, and demanded student representation in university decision-making processes.

Student activism was widespread in European countries, as French students led a struggle against the De Gaulle regime, while students in West Germany organized extra-parliamentary opposition to the regime. The main drivers of student activism in European countries in the 1960s were issues beyond campus politics. However, student activism remains widespread as student activists continue to organize to defend and expand their achievements.

Historical background of student activism in Uganda

The 1950s saw a movement toward pan-Africanism and independence in Uganda, aided by the multinational student bodies at Makerere College University. In 1954, students founded the Tanganyika African Welfare Society at Makerere College to promote independence and fair treatment of Tanganyikan. Along with the National Union of Ghana Students, the welfare society was considered one of the most important student movements in colonial Africa.

Prior to 1962 independence from colonial rule

Immediately after independence, there was a rift between staff and students over the role the universities would play in the newly formed regime. Senior staff, mostly expatriates and British employees, believed universities had an obligation to be independent. Local staff, on the other hand, saw universities as a tool to support a nationalist agenda. According to Mamdani in *University Crisis and Reform: A Reflection on the African Experience*, the locals ultimately succeeded and the university became politically affiliated. However, the educated group of young people consisted mainly of social elites. Instead of embracing the progressive movements of other student movements of the time, Ugandan university students showed political apathy.

Protests during Milton Obote's leadership in the 1960s

Milton Obote was Uganda's political leader from independence in 1962 to 1971. He served as Prime Minister

until 1969, when he assumed absolute power after an assassination attempt. During his leadership there were minor clashes between students and the Obote I regime. In May 1968, students protested an anti-British demonstration after three Rhodesian Africans were hanged. Later that year a group of students planned a protest where they intended to demonstrate in front of the UK High Commission in protest at arms sales to South Africa. The army stopped the march before it left campus and used tear gas to control them.

In 1969, the student guild president was arrested and imprisoned for inciting an illegal demonstration, leading to the Obote's General Service Unit developing a spy network inside the university.

Protests during Idi Amin's leadership in the 1970s

In 1971, Milton Obote was overthrown in a military coup while on a trip to Singapore. A week after the coup, Idi Amin took power to become dictator.

In 1972, early in the Amin administration, the National Union of Students of Uganda (NUSU) was banned by the government, followed by protests against the expulsion of Asian students. The President of the Student Guild of Uganda issued a statement to Amin criticizing Asian student policies as racist and was banned shortly thereafter. The following two Guild Presidents left the country under similar hasty circumstances. The students decided to disband the guild after the expulsion and did not re-establish it during the Amin regime. According to Bryan Langlands, this was a subtle form of protest, as the government asked students to ignore the exiles and return to normal, and the students refused to do so.

In 1972, after government-backed protests against the expulsion of Asian students, the vice-chancellor was killed by the Amin government. In protest, the students boycotted celebrations commemorating the fifth anniversary of Makerere.

In 1976 student protests accelerated into open opposition to the Amin regime. In February, a Ugandan student named Paul Serwanga was shot dead in front of the university, allegedly because a soldier was interested in his girlfriend. 3,500 students marched from Makerere to the student's home in Kibuli, in a "march of mourning." By the time the students reached the center of the city, reports put the numbers at close to 30,000. Shortly thereafter, a Kenyan student named Ester Chesire disappeared. There was speculation that she witnessed the Serwanga shooting and was therefore eliminated. Theresa Nanziri Bukonya, Esther Chesire's caretaker, subsequently refused to testify before a commission investigating Chesire's disappearance. She was decapitated and dumped in front of the Africa Dorm she oversaw. She was eight months pregnant. In March,

students boycotted a presidential speech and instead locked themselves in their dormitories. Paramilitary groups were called to the Makerere campus in July 1976 after students planned a demonstration calling for an investigation into Bukonya's death. In a bid to quell the protests, the Ugandan government reportedly restricted supplies of essentials in Makerere, particularly food, electricity and books. In August 1976, around 100 students were shot dead by the police and military during protests.

Protests during Milton Obote II leadership in the 1980s and 1990s

In 1979, after the Uganda-Tanzania War, Idi Amin was overthrown by the Tanzanian military. Obote returned to power. During the Obote II regime, the Makerere Student Guild was restored. The guild was led by Opiyo Oloya, a political scientist at the university who encouraged opposition to the Obote policies, which were perceived as angering ethnic tensions. In 1981, Oloya was expelled from the country.

In the 1980s, political instability, civil war and HIV/AIDS greatly reduced Uganda's student population. Of the refugees who fled the country in the 1980s, 11.9% were students whose studies were interrupted. In 1980, large numbers of student refugees abroad registered for national elections. Obote tried to visit expatriate students in Koboko during this time and there was an attempt to kill him. The UNLA was active in the area, forcing the students to vote Obote back into office.

Ecological protests against Museveni in 2006

Museveni seized power in 1986 and was subsequently elected in a sham democratic election in 1996. He had already seen the power of student movements as the organizer of strikes at Ntare School and Dar es Salaam University. Early in his tenure in Uganda, Museveni enjoyed weak support from the youth population. He ushered in a fair democratic climate in the ivory tower, and the populace therefore viewed him as a new generation of African leader.

Over time, the Ugandan public became increasingly disillusioned with the Museveni government. In 2005, the legislature amended the constitution to give Museveni the ability to run for a third term. In addition, after the 2006 elections, Museveni transferred hectares of Mabira forest to Sugar Corporation of Ugandan Limited. There were allegations that Museveni and his government received direct payments from SCOUT to fund their 2006 presidential campaign. As one of the first examples of using the internet to mobilize in Uganda, thousands of people in Kampala protested the environmental violation. Ocan & Akena (2022) observed that one of the ecological challenges facing the country is the dispossession of land owned by

indigenous communities, effectively distorting and alienating the communities from their indigenous ecological ethics (IEE). Therefore, consistent with my analysis, I conclude that while the country grapples with the thorny issue of environmental degradation, sound ecological policies must be put in place that recognize the validity of indigenous ecological ethics, which have been debased under Musevenism. In the wake of that strike an estimated 300 students were involved in these protests, which also contributed to the accumulation of complaints. The Museveni government also cut funding, withheld grants and refused salary increases at Makerere University. These problems together contributed to a mass strike by students and lecturers. On November 12, 2006, Museveni closed Makerere University using his authority granted by Makerere's semi-nationalized funding structure. The university reopened in January 2007. The last time the government closed a university was in 1989 during the civil war.

Closure of Makerere University in 2013

In 2013, faculty and students went on strike to protest that the university and government failed to pay promised pay rises. On November 2, Museveni closed Makerere University in response to the strike led by faculty and students. The main reason for the strike was the back payment of allowances in 2016 and budget cuts in the Ministry of Education. There was also tension between students and the government over Museveni's desire to abolish the constitutional age limit in order to further increase his power. Mass strikes led to property destruction and contributed to the decision to close the university.

In 2018 African students attended the Africa Students and Youth Summit (ASYS) in Kigali, which attracted thousands of students and youth to Kigali, Rwanda in 2018 to contribute to the Sustainable development goals SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063. Also, African students took part in a global protest carrying the Climate Action banner in an international effort to spur world leaders to act on climate change. Students around the world took to the streets during a strike as part of a Global Day of Student Protests. They called for action against climate change and criticized their governments for not taking global warming seriously.

Social media was used to mobilize students around the world in what Manuel Castells would describe as a networked movement of the internet age. It supported the contribution of student movements to improving access to quality higher education, providing decent work and economic growth, promoting gender equality and reducing inequalities in countries.

In Uganda, “the Must Fall online lecture Movement” is further evidence of the role of student activism in social transformation and in meeting the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the African Union Agenda 2063. There are many ways in which students and youth participate fully and productively in discussions that focus on achieving the SDGs by focusing on matters of national and global concern. No one should be left behind along the way. Governments should involve youth from different backgrounds in national planning, implementation and monitoring.

Böhm, (1983); Turner, (2001); Wittrock (1985) has added that academia has become a symbol for creative and free reflection on individual social realities, making the university campus an arena of privileged critical discourse and radical action, like the student revolts of the 1960s (in Europe) and north illustrate America. Against this background, this article addresses the following research question: What makes the university as a social space such

an ideal platform for initiating broader social reforms and what can be learned from the contrasting historical developments (in North America)? recent reports from Europe? To answer the above question, in order to understand how social movements emerged and in the context of the academic (campus) space and its immediate surroundings.

Recent student protests in Uganda: Makerere, Gulu and Mbarara Universities.

A number of Makerere University students took to the streets to protest a proposal by the university to charge 15% tuition for students enrolled at the university. At 7am, the students, grouped among their group of student activists at the ivory tower, marched with several placards in front of the university's main gate. The posters contained words detesting the university's recent move to increase tuition. They also called on the university administration to consider students from humble backgrounds and to look closely at the issue of affordability of studying on campus.



Fig.1: Protesters at Makerere meet face to face with anti-riot police. In the background female students carrying placards outlining their demands.



Fig.2: Students being taken to detention centers by the Ugandan police, 2021.

As the students marched, a police team joined by the military attacked the already rowdy students, who sang songs to stop their protest, which they labeled unlawful. However, the students engaged police in a verbal exchange, while some violently pushed forward to continue the protest, a move that led to over 15 students being arrested and detained at unidentified police stations in Kampala, Uganda's capital.



Fig.3: The army joined the police to crack down on rowdy students at Makerere University in 2021

In 2021 alone, 173 students dropped out of social science faculty due to lack of tuition. With the 15 percent hike in tuition, the number of our friends languishing in the streets will increase, and it is our right to protest the move, she said in a Facebook post. Makerere, Gulu and Mbarara universities have been prone to strikes and protests in recent years, particularly over tuition fees.

As in Makerere, so also in Gulu University, another state university that was closed because of a student strike. The aggrieved students stated that they had not received their alimony payments in the first semester after interruptions caused by the COVID-19 lockdown. They accused the university of only paying them 670,000 shillings instead of 880,000 shillings in cumulative areas. Genius Ibabaza, one of the affected students pursuing a bachelor's degree in medicine, revealed that the government is paying 880,000 shillings for each student but the university is paying them less without explanation.

Shadic Ssempijja, another student, explained that when they reported to the campus on November 1, 2021, following President Museveni's directive on reopening of educational institutions after lockdown, they found that allowances for rent, transportation, internet and social assistance had been

Among those arrested is Siperia Mollie, the guild representative of the School of Psychology. However, in a recent Siperia social media post, she credited that there are multiple college dropouts due to unnecessary tuition hikes and exorbitant university policies.

cut, their However, rent was increased. Nancy Lakop, a privately funded student at the Faculty of Education and Humanities, condemned the arrests of her colleagues as unfair because they were holding a peaceful demonstration to demand a response from university officials.

The university's vice-chancellor, Prof George Openyjur Ladah, revealed that students will be paid 7,000 shillings a day per semester while they are on campus. He clarified that the state-funded students were not eligible for pay during the lockdown, hence the cut. Confirming the development, the then-Aswa River Region police spokesman David Ongom Mudong said that responding to an alarm from university officials, they were locked in their offices and surrounded by rowdy students. University authorities tried to contact the students but with no fruitful results, prompting anti-riot police to respond, and two ringleaders were arrested and detained at Gulu Central Police Station for inciting violence, Ongom said. In addition, Ongom noted that while the aggrieved students had concerns to raise, the method used to present their problems was inappropriate, and implored student representatives to seek dialogue to resolve the impasse.



Fig.4: Gulu University students strike, November 24, 2021 over food and living allowances

On the one hand, Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) was recently bombarded with tear gas and rubber bullets as students demonstrated against prolonged strikes and online lectures by faculty. Students have been saddened that science courses cannot be taught online and that faculty have stayed off campus since re-enrolling on March 1 as they strike against un-tightened pay scales. Police engaged in running fights with students who set up roadblocks and burned tires on campus at the time.

Throughout the week, students lamented the ongoing strike by academic staff, which resulted in the establishment of an online learning mode for some with no classes at all and for others selected courses, most of which are from the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies. This, the students say, violates the president's directive to fully resume classes on March 1 and has restricted it financially and academically. In a note issued to students the next day, the President of the University Guild, Ms. Mariam Iculet Arikosi, pointed out the different terms agreed upon by the university administration regarding the class anomalies.



Fig.5: Scenes of tear gas and rubber bullets at Mbarara University of Science and Technology

While these approaches to studying student activism have emphasized the importance of geographic mobility, new approaches should not ignore the role these internal migrations can play in deepening the political influence of

student policies in developing countries. Anne Heffernan illustrates this point in the context of South Africa through the lives of three student activists from the Black Consciousness Movement. These men went from student

leaders to teachers in South Africa's townships in the early 1970s, where they were instrumental in inspiring the generation of schoolchildren who led the 1976 Soweto uprising.

The notion of campus as a social space

According to the renowned sociologist P. Bourdieu (1998: 1), the concept of space contains the principle of a relational understanding with the social world. Following this train of thought, it is worth repeating that the university (the campus) is part of a larger reality (the society) within and within it. Discussing the anti-war protests in North America in the 1960s, Heineman observes: Peace work off campus was as extensive as organizing on campus. Where the surrounding community proved unacceptable to the anti-war message, the faculty devoted its energy to campus mobilization (1993:46).

As for the interplay between the campus and its surroundings (Bender, 1991), Heineman's studies show evidence of the social divide between the university (State University of New York) and the city (Buffalo) in religious and ethnic matters, cultural values, and class origins (ibid., p. 68). At the State University of New York Buffalo, the idea of an old campus consisting of the humanities and social sciences that supports reform, as opposed to a new campus that housed the sciences and applied sciences - both traditionally conservative - themselves provide an indication of the importance of the concept of space within the academic institution (Bourdieu, 1984).

Accordingly, any university worthy of the name is believed to exercise a high level, of objectivity in the quest for truth and evolution, of pure knowledge. The pursuit, promotion, and dissemination of knowledge are important so as to raise the degree, of intellectual advancement of the individual who is both the agent and object of development. This conceptualization fits well with concepts of the "educated society" proposed by Wandira (1981), the schooled elite (Nyerere, 1964), or reflective individuals who lift their eyes beyond the here and now to visions afar (Court, 1980). By undertaking such activities, universities continually pre-occupy themselves with the quest for truth and the acquisition of new, pure knowledge and skills that allow them to have an objective plan of reality.

Nyerere (1966:183) therefore thinks that in African universities: students need to be helped to think scientifically; They must learn to analyze problems objectively and apply the facts they have learned or know exist to the problems they will face in the future. He further argues that staff must be encouraged to challenge students and society with arguments and come up with new suggestions on how to deal with various problems.

Universities were therefore not founded to produce intellectual apes, but men and women who had a duty to contribute to the body of knowledge of man.

However, Nyerere (1980), Kamba (1983) and Ngeno (1984) added that while lecturers and professors should be allowed to analyze and discuss problems as objectively as possible, they should avoid undue emphasis on the superiority of knowledge to be own destiny. They see the main function of a university as playing a crucial role in solving social problems by coming to earth and tackling the problems of ignorance, hunger, poverty, disease and poor living conditions that our nations face. Nyerere (1980) has categorically stated that a university that produces only theoretical yes-men is little better than useless. These observations lead to a discussion of the historical contexts of student activism in Uganda from colonial times to the present.

Analysis of the current challenges preventing campuses from fulfilling their role of educating new generation of students.

The current challenges that prevent Ugandan campuses from fulfilling their role and the strategies to overcome them have attracted some attention in this article, but sufficient solutions to them are yet to be found. Few Ugandan universities have attempted radical reforms in their curricula or severed ties with the government to develop independent and more relevant programs. Most postgraduate work is still done abroad, the dependency persists, coupled with the inculcation of norms and attitudes opposed to those that most African nations aspire to develop. Teaching and learning materials will continue to be imported. Tribal conflicts, often manifested in civil wars, and religious differences still dominate the political and academic climate at African universities. Despite these ongoing problems, the immense contributions that African universities have made in the short time of their existence cannot be overlooked.

Despite these ongoing problems, the immense contributions that African universities have made in the short time of their existence cannot be overlooked. They have also sought to integrate men and women from different social, economic, tribal and religious backgrounds under one roof and provide them with some education. African universities have also tried to develop research and consulting skills at an international level among local staff. Because these skills are recognized both locally and internationally, the brain drain from these poor nations continues. Most universities have also developed their evaluation criteria; They currently administer locally developed exams and issue degrees and diplomas on their own behalf.

The human resources under discussion include high calibre professors, as well as researchers and consultants capable of fulfilling the various roles mentioned in the previous sections. Not only do Ugandan universities lack the numbers, those already recruited are a mixed bag that may be difficult to bring together to do meaningful work. With that, Uganda is not only losing its most brilliant professors, but is facing a huge exodus of foreign staff who are no longer willing to stay, either because of low salaries and poor living conditions, or because governments cannot wire their salaries abroad. This leaves a number of universities with inexperienced newly graduated staff or old and less satisfied professors whose marketability elsewhere is poor.

This problem is further exacerbated by the shortage of foreign exchange, which makes it difficult to purchase up-to-date textbooks, essential magazines, gadgets, equipment, and chemicals needed to perform their duties well. Due to this immense shortage, it is extremely difficult for Ugandan universities to conduct experiments, keep up to date in all subject areas or conduct large-scale research. Faced with these issues, Ugandan universities should not just talk about them. As Nyerere (1964:308) observed, slogans will not provide us with solutions to such problems.

Experts from Ugandan universities need to come together and start producing relevant teaching and learning materials. They must initially rely on local and foreign aid, but ensure that the proceeds from the sale of their materials are used to produce more materials. The experts also need to raise awareness among politicians and government officials, using objective data to educate them on the impact of different investment policies. The author is convinced that the problem in most African countries is sometimes not the lack of foreign exchange per se, but the huge diversion of funds into the army and ideological experiments that don't work. Therefore, by using objective data and opening up dialogue through the strategic application of the policy of expertise proposed by Benveniste (1977), more rational investment policies could result and more money flow into viable university projects and programs.

Inept management and administrative staff also have some adverse effects on the functioning of universities as instruments of national development. First, since most employees are appointed by the government, they are likely to come across as good guys to defend the system at all costs, knowing that once they assume that position, their appointments are secure. The appointment of ex-politicians or active politicians to university positions creates an atmosphere of distrust between academics who want to analyse reality objectively and administrators who want to defend the status quo. In addition, the administrators (vice chancellors, chancellors and other chiefs) may be less

qualified than professors. Therefore, in an effort to overcome an inferiority complex, they tend to give blind orders that are not always heeded, thus causing more conflict. Therefore, there is constant friction between the two parties. Resolving issues faced by an institution and the nation becomes difficult as neither party wants the other to gain recognition.

The author believes that it is high time for Ugandan campuses to recognize that objectivity and merit are true reflections of democracy, and that any underground appointment clearly reflects nepotism, patronage and totalitarianism - enemies to be fought at all costs have to. Search panels using objective performance criteria have been used elsewhere in the developed world and there are no good arguments against the use of such methods in Africa in general.

Political turmoil is such a sensitive issue that it would be naïve to make concrete proposals. It must be recognized, however, that the main causes of political turmoil in most African countries are ethnic and religious differences, aversion to constructive opposition from politicians, poverty and, to some extent, external interference. Ugandan universities cannot be proud of having objectively investigated the nature, cause and effect of such problems or effectively communicated research results to governments, and yet their proposals have been rejected. It is therefore not only timely, but also appropriate that such studies should now be initiated and the results passed on to the right authorities.

Implications for student learning/support.

To say that African nations sometimes lack direction means that priorities have not been made clear enough; or if it is, the resources and effort required to implement them have been diverted elsewhere. Worse, we tend to talk about our problems without taking any action. Kobayashi (1980: 681), by contrast, maintains that Japan's technological might today arose from the government's dedication to ensure that "industry was coordinated with the university". Hence, moral and material incentives were given in favor of the university's undertakings.

The older conception of a campus has given way to newer and more urgent conceptions resulting from the pressure on the campuses to change. From its ivory tower romance, the campus has felt an accountability that requires it not only to produce an educated elite, but also to prepare people who can come to earth and be able to analyze and debate the various problems facing our nations as objectively as possible, and find ways and means to solve it. By participating in dialogue or protest movements, and by using social media tools to mobilize support, students can

demand the implementation of sustainable development plans.

For campuses to achieve these outstanding goals, we must overcome the obstacles to organized effort that African universities and African nations face. Many goals could be achieved through objective review of problems, with the university providing its expertise while the government provides the necessary support. Since some problems require the pooling of resources from other universities and international agencies, cooperation between such institutions and agencies should be encouraged. Trust and commitment or reciprocity should guide cooperative relationships.

In conclusion, the youth of Uganda in the 1990s opened a new chapter in world history and amplified profound changes in society. The movement drew our attention to the important role that the university space plays as a place of inquiry, critical thinking and action. Therefore, the privileged position of the campus should continue to be protected insofar as the freedom of thought exercised in its spatial environment gives humanity the critical ingenuity needed to create a better and fairer world. The key challenge is to allow this critical discourse to emerge naturally, without dominant political factions using the university space to advance their own interests.

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Reparation or impairment? Youth perception of climate change, Ecological Grief, Eco-anxiety and solastalgia in Alappuzha

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Abstract— This article critically examines the growing impact of climate change as a result of human activities and explores its multifaceted consequences on the environment, human health, and society. It outlines the differences between weather and climate, attributing the accelerated pace of climate change predominantly to anthropogenic factors such as fossil fuel consumption, deforestation, and industrial emissions. The article discusses the severe repercussions of climate change in India, particularly in Kerala, highlighting recent extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and policy responses such as the introduction of the state's first environmental budget. The emotional and psychological responses to ecological degradation—captured through concepts like eco-anxiety, eco-grief, and solastalgia—are explored, emphasizing their rising significance among youth. The study focuses on Alappuzha's youth and their perceptions of climate change, integrating survey data within a theoretical framework that includes environmental psychology and climate activism. “Reparation or Impairment? Youth Perception of Climate Change, Ecological Grief, Eco-Anxiety and Solastalgia in Alappuzha,” adopts a mixed-methods approach to assess awareness, concern, and the emotional impact of environmental changes. The findings suggest a growing urgency to address not only the physical but also the mental health challenges posed by climate change, reinforcing the need for comprehensive policy and community-based action.



Keywords— Climate change, Anthropocene, Ecological Grief, Eco- Anxiety, Solastalgia.

I. INTRODUCTION

“Is climate change the greatest crisis humanity has ever faced or an exaggeration that is unlikely to cause much harm? Who or what is responsible? What, if anything, can we, should we, do about it?”(Hubbell, Ryan. Introduction to Environmental Humanities, 2020, p. 20.)

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing global challenges, profoundly impacting natural ecosystems and human societies. Human activities—particularly the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes—have accelerated global warming, contributing to unpredictable and extreme weather events. While natural phenomena like volcanic eruptions and solar variations play a role, the current magnitude and pace of climate change are

primarily driven by anthropogenic causes. These human-induced changes threaten biodiversity, destabilize ecosystems, and pose serious risks to economic and social systems globally.

The distinction between weather and climate is critical. Weather reflects daily atmospheric conditions, whereas climate refers to long-term patterns over at least 30 years. Understanding this distinction helps to comprehend the long-term effects of human impact on the Earth's climate systems. In India, the effects of climate change are increasingly evident. In 2024, the nation experienced record-breaking temperatures, including Kerala's highest in years, followed by intense monsoons. This climatic volatility led to natural disasters such as floods, landslides,

and wildfires, prompting Kerala to introduce an Environmental Budget to tackle ecological issues.

The 2018 Kerala floods serve as a tragic reminder of climate unpredictability, where excessive rainfall displaced over a million people. In 2024, similar patterns reemerged, highlighting the link between climate change and extreme weather. These abrupt transitions from heatwaves to heavy rainfall disrupt agriculture, endanger infrastructure, and affect fisheries—an essential livelihood in coastal areas like Alappuzha. Fishermen now face new challenges as rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification alter marine ecosystems, forcing shifts in traditional fishing practices.

Beyond physical impacts, climate change also triggers profound emotional responses. Theories such as eco-anxiety, eco-grief, and solastalgia capture the psychological toll of witnessing environmental degradation. Eco-anxiety describes the chronic fear of environmental collapse, while eco-grief expresses mourning for the loss of ecosystems, and solastalgia captures the distress caused by ecological changes in one's home environment. These emotional responses, particularly among youth, highlight a growing psychological burden tied to the awareness of climate change and perceived global inaction.

Movements led by youth, like Greta Thunberg's climate strikes, underscore a rising tide of environmental activism. However, many young people experience compassion fatigue—emotional exhaustion caused by ongoing concern and a lack of tangible progress. The dissertation titled "Reparation or Impairment? Youth Perception of Climate Change, Ecological Grief, Eco-Anxiety and Solastalgia in Alappuzha" explores this complex emotional and psychological terrain through a survey-based study. It investigates how young adults in Alappuzha perceive climate change, and how concepts such as ecological grief and solastalgia manifest in their lives.

II. EVOLVING THREAT

Climate change is increasingly recognized as one of the most pressing global threats to humanity. It demands urgent attention due to its anthropogenic causes, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial activities. These drivers contribute to significant disruptions in climate systems, with wide-ranging and profound effects on human societies. The impacts manifest through health risks, economic instability, threats to food security, and forced migration—challenges that are interconnected and intensify one another.

Among the most immediate and concerning impacts of climate change is its toll on human health. Rising temperatures lead to a surge in heat-related illnesses and

fatalities, with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, and individuals with pre-existing conditions facing the highest risks. Heatwaves are occurring more frequently and with greater intensity, straining health systems and increasing mortality. In parallel, climate change exerts considerable pressure on global economic systems. Natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, and droughts inflict severe damage on infrastructure and disrupt business operations, leading to significant economic losses. Agriculture is particularly affected; changes in temperature and precipitation patterns compromise crop yields and threaten farmers' livelihoods. Prolonged droughts may result in crop failures, while frequent extreme weather events can decimate harvests, endangering food security and exacerbating poverty.

Food security is increasingly compromised as climate change alters agricultural productivity and disrupts fisheries. Shifting climate patterns disturb growing seasons, reduce yields, and raise the incidence of pests and diseases. These factors diminish the availability of food and drive up prices. Fisheries are similarly at risk due to ocean warming and acidification, which affect marine ecosystems and reduce fish populations, threatening food supplies in regions dependent on seafood. Climate change is also a catalyst for migration and displacement. Sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and gradual environmental degradation force populations to relocate, with coastal areas particularly vulnerable. The phenomenon of climate refugees is emerging in places like the Pacific Islands, where entire communities face relocation. Such displacement can strain resources, escalate social tensions, and present challenges in humanitarian response and resettlement.

Disparities in the impact of climate change are stark, with marginalized populations bearing a disproportionate burden. Those in developing countries often lack the resources needed to adapt or respond effectively. This inequality exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and social inequities, as disadvantaged communities tend to reside in high-risk areas and have limited access to protective infrastructure or healthcare. An example of climate change's disproportionate effects is evident in the July 2024 disaster in Wayanad, Kerala, where heavy monsoon rains caused devastating landslides. In Chooralmala village, three major landslides in four hours destroyed homes and infrastructure, leading to over 400 deaths and many more missing. The rescue efforts, hampered by rough terrain and the flooding Chaliyar River, highlighted the vulnerability of marginalized communities in climate-sensitive regions.

Public perceptions of climate change vary across different regions, influenced by factors like education, political

ideology, and firsthand experience with climate events. These perceptions are vital because they shape support for climate policies, drive political action, and influence personal behaviors. In general, people in regions more directly affected by climate impacts tend to express greater concern. However, perceptions about the causes of climate change often diverge, especially along political lines. While scientists overwhelmingly agree that climate change is primarily driven by human activities, public belief is more fragmented. Conservatives, especially in certain countries, tend to express more skepticism, while liberals and progressives are typically more accepting of scientific consensus.

Political polarization significantly affects public understanding of climate change. Media framing plays a crucial role; the way news outlets present climate issues—whether as an immediate crisis or a distant concern—can influence the urgency with which the public responds. The spread of misinformation, particularly via social media, compounds the problem. Myths that climate change is a natural occurrence or not as serious as reported diminish public awareness and delay necessary action. Cultural norms also influence responses. Collectivist societies may be more inclined toward communal climate action, whereas individualist societies often emphasize personal responsibility and resist regulatory approaches.

The evolution of public perception has been shaped by key historical milestones. In earlier decades, climate awareness was mostly confined to scientists and environmentalists. The 2000s marked a turning point as global scientific consensus solidified and public discourse expanded. Western countries, supported by policy initiatives and media coverage, began to view climate change as urgent. In contrast, skepticism lingered in regions like the United States, where political divisions heavily influenced public opinion. In the Global South, tangible effects such as food insecurity and natural disasters drove concern, and a narrative of climate justice emerged, highlighting the disproportionate contributions of industrialized nations to global emissions.

Youth-led movements have played a pivotal role in increasing awareness and demanding action. Campaigns such as Fridays for Future, initiated by Greta Thunberg, have spotlighted the emotional and psychological toll of climate change. Terms like ecological grief, eco-anxiety, and solastalgia have emerged to describe the mental health impacts experienced, especially among younger generations. Ecological grief refers to mourning the loss of ecosystems, species, or landscapes due to environmental change. It is a legitimate emotional response often experienced by individuals deeply connected to nature or

affected by ecological degradation. This grief can manifest even among those who are not directly impacted by specific disasters, reflecting a broader concern for planetary health.

Eco-anxiety, a term describing chronic fear of environmental catastrophe, has become increasingly common as climate disasters multiply and governmental inaction persists. It is especially prevalent among youth, who face the prospect of inheriting a damaged planet. The American Psychological Association formally recognized eco-anxiety as a public health concern in its 2017 report, underscoring its significance. This condition involves anxiety, despair, and feelings of helplessness regarding the planet's future, driven by constant exposure to alarming environmental news and insufficient policy responses. Solastalgia, distinct from nostalgia, describes the distress caused by changes in one's home environment. It captures the pain of witnessing the degradation of a once-familiar place, such as a local forest or coastline, that no longer provides solace due to environmental change.

The psychological impact of climate change is not new. Early environmental thinkers, including Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring*, described the emotional weight of environmental destruction, even if terms like ecological grief had not yet been coined. It wasn't until Canadian researchers Ashlee Cunsolo and Neville R. Ellis formally introduced "ecological grief" in 2018 that the concept gained academic legitimacy. They defined it as grief tied to real or anticipated ecological losses. This recognition has significant implications, legitimizing the emotional toll of climate change and emphasizing the need for both mental health support and systemic environmental action.

These psychological phenomena reflect a deeper, more personal connection to the climate crisis. As awareness grows, the emotional dimensions of climate change are becoming more prominent in both public discourse and policy discussions. Addressing these mental health impacts requires a holistic approach that combines psychological support with climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. In recognizing ecological grief and eco-anxiety as valid responses, societies can foster stronger emotional engagement with climate issues, potentially inspiring more meaningful and sustained action.

Younger generations, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, are experiencing eco-anxiety more intensely due to their awareness of the long-term impacts of climate change, which they expect to face throughout their lives. This concern has given rise to emotional responses such as climate grief and solastalgia. Solastalgia, introduced by Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht in 2003, describes the distress people feel when their home environment is being degraded while they remain in place. Unlike

nostalgia, which mourns a lost past, solastalgia reflects the pain of watching one's surroundings deteriorate. Albrecht developed this concept after observing the emotional impact of coal mining on communities in New South Wales, Australia. It highlights the deep emotional connection people have with their environment and the psychological toll when that environment is altered or destroyed. Solastalgia is increasingly relevant in the Anthropocene, as environmental crises like deforestation, pollution, and climate change intensify, triggering emotional distress in both rural and urban populations. Indigenous communities are especially vulnerable due to their cultural ties to the land, and urban youth also face solastalgia due to rising temperatures, pollution, and loss of green spaces. This distress can manifest as helplessness, grief, or anxiety. Eco-anxiety, the chronic fear of environmental catastrophe, is widespread among youth who feel overwhelmed by the scale of climate change and disillusioned by inadequate action from global leaders. These emotional burdens often result in anxiety-related symptoms such as insomnia and depression. Many youth also experience ecological grief, mourning not only the physical destruction of nature but also the cultural and emotional ties to these environments. Addressing these mental health impacts requires support systems in schools and communities, as well as opportunities for youth to engage in environmental activism, which can foster a sense of empowerment and reduce despair. Recognizing the psychological toll of environmental degradation on younger generations is essential for shaping effective and compassionate climate responses.

YOUTH PERCEPTION OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Youth Perception of Climate Change in Alappuzha, Kerala

Youth in Alappuzha, a coastal district in Kerala, display strong awareness of environmental issues, shaped by firsthand experiences with rising sea levels, erratic weather, and frequent flooding. Many report eco-anxiety, ecological grief, and solastalgia—distress over changes in their familiar environment—indicating deep emotional responses to climate change.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted among students from five colleges in Alappuzha, yielding 350 responses (75.5% female, 24.5% male). The aim was to assess youth perceptions of environmental degradation. Results show most youths are aware of environmental crises and attribute them primarily to human activities.

Awareness of Climate Change

When asked how often they hear about climate change, 73.8% said "often," 21.4% "rarely," and 4.8% "very rarely." Frequent exposure enhances awareness, while limited exposure may hinder understanding and engagement.

Sources of Information

Most youths (69.8%) get climate change information from social media, followed by news channels (20.2%) and newspapers (8.3%). Social media plays a vital role due to its accessibility and engaging content. Traditional media, despite challenges, also helps by offering in-depth reporting and real-time updates. A small percentage learn through formal education or self-study.

Belief in Climate Change

91.7% believe climate change is real, while 7.7% are uncertain, and a small minority remain unconcerned. Beliefs influence willingness to adopt sustainable practices and support policy action. Misinformation by politically or economically motivated groups can lead to denial or skepticism.

Human-Caused Climate Change

Only 66.1% accept that human activity causes climate change, 27.9% are unsure, and 6% deny it. Understanding anthropogenic causes is key to supporting effective policy and behavior changes.

Climate Change as a Defining Crisis

63% view climate change as the defining crisis of our time, 29.1% are unsure, and 8% do not share this concern. Climate change impacts biodiversity, public health, and economies, making it a multifaceted global challenge requiring urgent action.

Concern for the Planet's Future

87.7% are worried about the planet's future, with smaller portions uncertain (5.7%) or unconcerned. This concern drives youth activism and demand for stronger climate action.

Personal Importance

For 51.9%, climate change is "very important" personally, while 43.6% find it "important." Direct experiences with extreme weather, health impacts, and economic concerns make the issue more relatable and urgent.

Action Against Climate Change

67% believe action is possible, 25.9% are unsure, and 7.1% believe nothing can be done. Addressing climate change requires coordinated action across all levels—individual to global—including renewable energy adoption, policy enforcement, sustainable practices, and public awareness.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation

Promoting energy efficiency and conservation is vital in reducing emissions. Energy-efficient technologies like LED lighting, smart appliances, and electric vehicles help lower consumption. Behavioral changes—such as carpooling, using public transport, and adopting efficient household habits—also contribute significantly (IPCC 119).

Government Action and Global Cooperation

Strong government policies and international collaboration are essential. Governments can implement carbon regulations, subsidize renewables, and use carbon pricing to curb emissions. Agreements like the Paris Agreement coordinate global climate action (UNFCCC 23).

Public Awareness and Education

Raising public awareness through education and campaigns is key. Teaching people how daily habits—like energy use, travel, and diet—affect the environment can inspire more sustainable behavior (IPCC 125).

Forests and Agriculture

Forests play a critical role in absorbing carbon dioxide. Conservation, reforestation, and afforestation help address climate change while supporting biodiversity (FAO 68). Sustainable farming practices, like organic farming and agroforestry, can reduce emissions and enhance carbon storage (IPCC 150).

Youth Action on Climate Change

While 67% of youth believe they can act against climate change, only 41.3% report actually taking action. 29.3% said “maybe,” and 28.8% said “no,” indicating a gap between concern and action.

Lifestyle Changes

Only 43.3% of youth reported changing their lifestyle to reduce their climate impact. These changes include using energy-efficient appliances, reducing waste, eating plant-based diets, conserving water, and choosing sustainable transport.

Government Responsibility

69.5% of youths believe it's very important for governments to act on climate change, 24.4% say it's important, and 6% believe it's not important. Governments can lead through legislation, funding clean energy, and building resilient infrastructure.

Eco-Anxiety and Sadness

88% of youth feel sad about environmental degradation. Constant media exposure and real-world climate impacts intensify eco-anxiety—chronic stress over ecological threats. This sadness often motivates activism and sustainable engagement.

Ecological Grief

78.1% of youth report ecological grief—deep emotional distress over environmental loss. This grief stems from the destruction of ecosystems and traditional ways of life, especially in nature-dependent communities, and can lead to depression or increased activism.

Emotional and Existential Distress

66.4% of youths experience emotional or existential distress due to environmental change. Many feel helpless and anxious about their future, which motivates them to push for climate action despite the emotional toll.

IV. CONCLUSION

Climate change is one of the most critical challenges of our time, involving long-term alterations in global or regional climate patterns, particularly the rise in average global temperatures. Predominantly driven by human activities—such as fossil fuel combustion, deforestation, and industrial processes—these practices elevate greenhouse gas levels, intensifying the greenhouse effect. The consequences include extreme weather events, sea level rise, and ecosystem disruptions (IPCC; NASA).

Despite scientific consensus, climate change remains contested in public discourse, partly due to misinformation from groups like the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC), which downplays the issue (Idso et al.). Public concern exists, but cultural beliefs and ideological divides influence how climate change is interpreted (Yale; Hulme). Activist Greta Thunberg exemplifies the emotional and moral complexities surrounding climate action and illustrates the role of individual and collective advocacy.

Legal cases such as the 2015 lawsuit by Our Children's Trust highlight youth claims that governmental inaction on climate change violates their constitutional rights. These legal efforts underscore generational inequities, as younger people disproportionately bear the consequences of past and present environmental negligence. Alongside this, phenomena such as “climate fatigue”—a feeling of helplessness from constant exposure to climate news—and “climate denialism”—fueled by corporate interests—further complicate public engagement (Oreskes & Conway; Norgaard; Dunlap & McCright).

With increasing climate instability, long-term data collection becomes essential, as past climate patterns can no longer reliably predict the future. Terms like “climate chaos” and “climate weirding” reflect the unpredictable conditions emerging from ongoing changes.

Human civilization developed during the Holocene, an epoch of climatic stability. However, rising greenhouse gas emissions from human activity now threaten this balance.

This rapid, anthropogenic change is outpacing ecosystems' natural ability to adapt, with visible effects in vulnerable areas such as polar regions and coral reefs, while wealthier societies remain relatively insulated.

The Holocene, which began about 11,650 years ago, may be transitioning into the Anthropocene—a proposed epoch where human activity significantly alters Earth's systems. Scholars like McNeill and Engelke categorize human history into organic and fossil energy eras. While the Industrial Revolution marked a major shift, the "Great Acceleration" post-1945 saw a global surge in fossil fuel use and environmental impact. Other historians trace the Anthropocene's origins to events like the Columbian Exchange of 1610. Despite differing views, consensus holds that a small portion of humanity has driven these changes, challenging the idea that the Anthropocene is the work of all humankind.

From an Environmental Humanities perspective, defining the Anthropocene's exact start is less important than recognizing human activity as a geophysical force. The focus is on consequences, responsibility, and ethical action. Debates continue over whether the term "Anthropocene" promotes accountability or reflects harmful anthropocentrism. Environmental humanists advocate for behavioral and cultural changes that prioritize sustainable living over consumer-driven desires.

The article "Reparation or Impairment? Youth Perception of Climate Change, Ecological Grief, Eco-Anxiety and Solastalgia in Alappuzha" explores how youth in this region experience and respond to climate change emotionally and psychologically. The study reveals that young people in Alappuzha are deeply aware of environmental changes and report high levels of ecological grief, eco-anxiety, and solastalgia.

Ecological grief refers to the sorrow from environmental loss, such as the degradation of ecosystems or extinction of species. It reflects a profound emotional connection to nature and is often intensified by climate change (Albrecht et al.). This grief can affect individuals and communities, emphasizing the need for emotional support and mental health interventions (Cunsolo Willox et al.).

Eco-anxiety manifests as chronic worry and fear about environmental destruction and insufficient climate action. Symptoms include anxiety, insomnia, and helplessness, highlighting the mental health impacts of environmental awareness (Clayton et al.; Gordon et al.).

Solastalgia, coined by Glenn Albrecht, describes the distress people feel when their local environments undergo negative changes. Unlike nostalgia, which mourns a lost past, solastalgia is rooted in the loss of the present,

impacting personal identity and one's sense of belonging (Albrecht).

Youth in Alappuzha express concern over rising sea levels, extreme weather, and the degradation of wetlands and forests they grew up with. Their grief and anxiety underscore the emotional burden of climate change, often overlooked in broader discussions. These findings emphasize the urgent need for mental health support and community engagement in climate adaptation strategies.

Awareness among youth is shaped by education, media, and personal experience. Climate education fosters understanding and motivates advocacy (Levinson & Turner). Media influences awareness, with coverage and documentaries inspiring concern and action (Nisbet). Personal experiences—like flooding or heatwaves—make climate change tangible, often sparking stronger engagement (Graham et al.).

The psychological toll extends to fears about health, safety, and economic stability. Environmental degradation also disrupts cultural identities, especially in communities closely tied to their ecosystems (Cunsolo Willox et al.). This can lead to isolation and a weakened sense of community, intensifying emotional strain (Norgaard).

At the root of the climate crisis is the philosophical separation of humanity from nature, shaped by cultural and religious ideologies that place humans above the natural world. This anthropocentric view justifies exploitation and ignores the intrinsic value of nature. The resulting environmental degradation—deforestation, pollution, and resource overuse—is both a physical and ethical crisis.

To address this, a shift in worldview is needed—one that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all life and the dependence of human well-being on ecological health. Sustainable practices and policy changes must be guided by this integrated perspective.

The Alappuzha youth study illustrates how climate change impacts not just ecosystems but emotional and cultural lives. By understanding their perceptions and psychological responses, this research emphasizes the need for holistic approaches to climate action—ones that address both environmental and mental well-being.

The study titled "Reparation or Impairment? Youth Perception of Climate Change, Ecological Grief, Eco-Anxiety and Solastalgia in Alappuzha" offers critical insights into how youth in Alappuzha perceive and emotionally respond to climate change. It highlights that young individuals are not only aware of the environmental impacts but also experience significant psychological effects, including ecological grief, eco-anxiety, and solastalgia. These emotions stem from witnessing

environmental degradation, personal experiences with climate events, and concerns about the future. Education, media, and direct environmental experiences play a vital role in shaping their perceptions. The findings emphasize the need for targeted mental health support and community engagement to address these emotional challenges.

The study also reveals a deeper philosophical issue: the perceived separation between humans and nature. This worldview has led to environmental harm by promoting an anthropocentric mindset that justifies exploitation. Addressing the climate crisis thus requires a fundamental shift in perception—recognizing the interconnectedness of human and ecological well-being. Adopting a more integrated, respectful relationship with the natural world is essential for fostering sustainable practices and ensuring long-term environmental and psychological health.

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Unveiling the relevance of Vedic mathematics in the age of artificial intelligence

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Abstract— In the context of AI, where optimization and rapid processing are paramount, Vedic Mathematics presents a valuable set of tools that can enhance algorithmic performance. The methods inherent to Vedic Mathematics—such as pattern recognition, digit manipulation, and modular arithmetic—align with the principles of algorithmic efficiency and computational optimization critical to AI systems. This paper investigates how Vedic techniques can be integrated into modern computational frameworks to improve algorithmic processes, reduce computational overhead, and accelerate problem-solving. We analyze the core Sutras and their applications in comparison with contemporary computational techniques, highlighting how these ancient methods can be adapted to optimize data processing, enhance numerical accuracy, and contribute to algorithmic innovation. By drawing parallels between Vedic Mathematics and current AI methodologies, this study elucidates the potential synergies and practical applications of these historical techniques in advancing the field of artificial intelligence.



Keywords— Artificial Intelligence, Decimal system, Vedic Mathematics, Vedic Sutras

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI) where complex algorithms and machine learning models dominate the technological landscape, the ancient Indian system of Vedic Mathematics emerges as a surprisingly relevant and potent tool (Kumar, 2024, pp.1-8). Despite being thousands of years old, Vedic Mathematics offers a fresh perspective and efficient methods that align well with the principles of AI. In this article, we'll analyze the importance of Vedic Mathematics in the generation of AI, along with examples and refer sources to elucidate its applicability in modern computational standards. (Jokhi, 2024, pp.31-34).

Vedic Mathematics, an ancient mathematical system with origin in the Atherva Veda, has demonstrated renewed significance in the contemporary scientific landscape, particularly within the domain of artificial intelligence (AI). Vedic Mathematics was recollected by Jagadguru Sankaracharya Sri Bharati Krishna Tirthaji Maharaj between 1911 and 1918; this system comprises Sutras and numerous sub-Sutras that encapsulate a range

of computational techniques (Tirtha, 1992). These techniques, which simplify arithmetic operations through systematic methods, offer notable advantages in terms of speed and computational efficiency.

UNDERSTANDING VEDIC MATHEMATICS: Vedic Mathematics, a system of mathematics propounded by ancient Indian scholars, is established on sixteen sutras (aphorisms) and thirteen sub-sutras. These sutras provide a systematic and coherent approach to solving mathematical problems, emphasizing simplicity, flexibility and efficiency. Unlike conventional methods, Vedic Mathematics focuses on mental calculations, which makes it inherently suitable for applications in AI where speed and efficiency are crucial.

VEDIC PERIOD: The Veda means knowledge or wisdom, also called Sruti (puranavedas.com). The Veda are four in number i.e., Rig-Veda, Yajurveda, Samveda, Artharvaveda. Apart from Vedas, there are four upveda (literally means sub Veda or smaller than Veda) by Caranvyuta, and six types of vedangas (literally mean the

limbs of the Vedas). The Rig-Veda is the oldest among them; its origin is about 1600 BC (Acharya, 2015, pp.41-47).

S. No.	Veda	Upveda	Vedangas
1.	Rig-veda	Ayurveda (Medicine)	Shiksha (pronunciation)
2.	Sama-veda	Gandharvaveda (Music and Sacred dance)	Kalpa (Ritual)
3.	Yajur-veda	Dhanurveda (Arche)	Vyakarana (Grammar)
4.	Atharva-veda	Atharshastra (Economics)	Nirukta (Etymology)
5.			Chandas (Meter)
6.			Jyotisha (Astronomy)

II. HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF VEDIC MATHEMATICS

Ancient Indian civilizations provide origin and evolution of numbers, various methods in many fields like Science, technology to solve various problems (Tirtha, 1992).

Vedic Civilization (2000-600 BC) It belongs to the northern and northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent in the second and first millennia BC continuing up to the 6th century BC. Vedanga Jyotisa deals with various features of time and seasons and to calculate lunar months, solar months including lunar leap month of Adhimasa. It also provides information in twenty-seven constellations, eclipses, seven planets and 12 signs of the zodiac. In the 8th century BC, Baudhayana, an Indian mathematician produces Sulba Sutra to make rules and solve problems to give important mathematical results for the constructions of altars. His findings include square root of two and Pythagorean Theorem (Tandon, 2019, pp. 3-26). In 6th century BC Sushruta Samhita, which also mentions cataract surgery (Leprosy) should only be used when necessary with the help of a tool called the Jabamukhi Salaka a curved needle was used to loosen the lens and push the cataract out of the field of vision. Further warm butter and bandaged was used to soaked the eyes and it fully recover. It also mentions various records of veterinary and human medicine in the Vedic period. Before 5th century BC, many discoveries being made in the field of phonetics, phonology and morphology by Panini, metal currency was also invented by silver and copper

figuring animal and plants symbols on them (Sarkar, 2011, pp.8-14).

1. **Binary Number System** (Jokhi, 2024, pp.31-34):

Acharya Pingala was scholar of mathematics and father of binary system in 2nd century BCE (Kak, 2011, pp. 111-119)

- **Chandas (Sanskrit Prosody):** He wrote Chhandshastra (circa 200BCE), analyzing meters in Sanskrit poetry based on short (laghu) and long (guru) syllables. This book provides the musical structure of poetry and mathematics (Goonatilake, 1998)
- **Binary Number System:** His methods of counting different combinations of long and short syllables provided the knowledge of binary number system. He created the principles of type, quantity, calculus, number theory etc. His number theories, mathematical and equation methods were also developed in modern mathematics. This binary system is foundational to modern computing and also plays a role in Vedic Mathematics' algorithms for mental calculation and number representation.
- **Pascal's Triangle** (known as **Meru Prastara** in Pingala's system): These combinations can be mathematically represented through binomial coefficients and recursive structures, such as those seen in. The sums of the diagonals in this triangle yield the **Fibonacci sequence**, which connects Pingala's work to broader mathematical structure (Plofker, 2012, pp. 45-53)

In the 17th century Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, reorganized Acharya Pingala's presentation of binary system and presents as the basis for modern computing. Pingala is the origin of the Fibonacci sequence, denoted by $\{F_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$, where $\mathbb{N}$ is the set of non-negative integers $\{0, 1, 2, \dots\}$. In the Initial stage meters in Classical Sanskrit poetry was used as Fibonacci sequence in the South Asia region before Common Era.

Acharya Pingala was given a name Maathra Meru for the Fibonacci sequence, methods of the development of binary numbers, Pascal's triangle in his book Chandshatra (Kulkarni, A. ,2023, pp.96-102)(Bhaduri A, Das A, 2024) (Mahesh K, Kolachana A, Ramasubramanian K, 171–81).

There were many scholars discovered again and formulate the Fibonacci sequence like Acharya Bharata (c.100 B.C.-350 A.D.) prepared a Sanskrit Treatise in performing arts, called Natya-Sastra. In the Seventh century A.D. Virahanka was given a clear view of the Fibonacci sequence but his works was lost only a

quotation of his work was presented by Gopla in 1130-1140 A.D. (P. Singh, 1985, pp. 229-244) and Hemchandra (c.1150 A.D) also provide some knowledge on Fibonacci sequence (Livio, 2008).

Leonardo Fibonacci of Pisa (1180–1240) contributed and making efforts to use Indian decimal systems. He worked on many systems of calculations but noticed less useful as compared to Indian system “quasi errorem computavi respectu modi indorum” (Datta, 1935). His work was written in the book *Liber Abaci* (1202). In 1228 he again rewrites his book based on Indian decimal system and computation application using Indian numerals. Many thinkers in Europe adopted the method. One of the illustrations in 1503, *Margarita Philosophica* of Gregor Reisch representing a Pythagoras with a counting board using Indian numerals. In 1550, Hans Sebald Beham also used Indian numerals on the counting board (Dutta, 2015, pp. 1-14). In the nineteenth century, Édouard Lucas used the term Fibonacci sequence, the focal point and studied in a variety of domain to understand its applications (Bergum, 1998) (Koshy, 2019). Sharma, S., Tomar, A., & Padaliya, S. K. (2025). On the evolution and importance of the Fibonacci sequence in visualization of fractals. *Chaos, Solitons & Fractals*, 191, 115851.

2. The Decimal system

The word “decimal” is evolved from the Latin *decimalis*, very much identical to the Sanskrit word *das'ama* (tenth) (Tiwari).

The Rigveda showed evidence of decimal system, nine numerals comes many times, power of ten like *das'a* (ten), *s'ata* (hundred) and *sahasra* (thousand); *ayuta* (ten thousand) seen in a few hymns. In Regveda times, for making a verbal decimal terminology, powers of ten were joined together with the names of nine numerals to form the compound numbers (Dutta, 2002, pp. 4-19) (Dutta, 2016, pp. 1-20).

In the Rigveda, decimal enumeration is an application and rules of nominal composition later developed by Panini in Vedic age. The verbal decimal terminology was used as the grammatical principles of Vedic Sanskrit.

There are various Ancient Sanskrit treatises, Vedic Samhita and Brahmana showed the decimal system, decimal taxonomy in India. It includes Sanskrit words for the primary numbers: *eka* (1), *dvi* (2), *tri* (3), *catur* (4), *pañca* (5), *ṣaṭ* (6), *sapta* (7), *aṣṭa* (8) and *nava* (9); when multiplies by first nine numbers with ten and formed: *das'a* (10), *viṃś'ati* (20), *triṃś'at* (30), *catvāriṃś'at* (40), *pañcāś'at* (50), *ṣaṣṭi* (60), *saptati* (70), *aś'iti* (80) and *navati* (90); and terms for powers of ten. The Rigveda, the oldest literature in the Vedic time used decimal system in a few hymns (Dutta, 2016, pp. 1-20) (Al Homs, 2018).

In the mathematical principle of any counting number can be imagining as a algebraic expressions of the sum $10^n a_n + \dots + 100a_2 + 10a_1 + a_0$, where $a_0, a_1, \dots, a_n$ numbers between 0 and 9. This is the basic method of application. In the binary representation, numbers can also be described in bases other than ten. It can be used in computers; numbers are recognized in the form of $2^n a_n + \dots + 2a_1 + a_0$, where a_i is either 0 or 1. This representation associates unchanging methods of the division algorithm that infuse later in Greek, Indian and modern mathematics.

The Brahmagupta (628 CE) and Madhava (14 CE) developed analogous algebra of polynomials with power series expansions of trigonometric function (Suryanarayan, 1996, pp. 30-39). After Brahmagupta, Isaac Newton (1671) highlighted that the arithmetic number systems gave a effective method for expanding the arithmetic applications on the algebraic expressions (Suryanarayan, 1998, pp. 34-42).

The Indus valley civilization, the decimal system was used. In the famous epic tale Mahabharata used decimal and nine digits for the calculation (III.134.16), there is a phrase *nava yogo gaṇanāmeti s'as'vat*. During the narration of the epic tale the decimal place value notation will occurs (III.132–134) (Tiwari, D). The Vedic era famous ancient names like Uddālaka, Śvetaketu, Aṣṭāvakra, Janaka etc were popular in the Brahmana phase. The saga used the word *s'as'vat* (perpetual) has the suggestion of “from immemorial time” (Tripathi, 2021) (Black, 2011, pp. 136-161).

There are various proofs of decimal notation inscriptions like in 595 CE a copper plate from Gujarat illustrating a number (Black, 2020). Other countries like Cambodia and Indonesia used their Śaka dates 605, 606 and 608 in decimal notation like India. The King Bhojadeva 870 C.E. of Gwalior represents the decimal notation and zero digits in the numbers 50 and 270. There are more examples of decimal notations using zero mentioned in (690 CE), 30 number in Trilingi plates, Khandela inscription (807 CE). Āditya Sena at Shahpur, (Bihar), 672 CE showed zero by a small dot (Dutta, 2015, pp. 1-14).

3. Invention of zero:

Brahmagupta: The approach of zero as a number was discovered by many civilizations, including the ancient Babylonians, Mayans, and Indians. The Indian mathematician and astronomer, Brahmagupta was introduced the term zero first time in A.D. 628. He wrote *Brahmasphutasiddhanta* which means Opening of the Universe and by applying zero and negative numbers

making rules for arithmetic calculation (Dutta, 2015, pp.1-14). He elucidates rules of subtraction, addition, multiplication, fractions, and calculations with positive, negative numbers. The calculation of zero and negative number in addition is negative; sum of a positive number and zero is positive; addition of zero and zero is zero (Al Homs, 2018). Likewise he provides the correct rules for subtraction and multiplication, but in division methods gave incorrect rules (Divakaran, 2018, pp. 978-981).

The concept of zero was very valuable in mathematics and had plays a very important role on fields such as algebra, calculus, and computer science. It is helpful in the development of modern mathematical apprehensions and calculations (sakalindiafoundation.com).

- Bhaskara: After 500 years Bhaskara tried to find out division methods but failed. He correctly mention other properties, such as square of zero is zero and square root of zero is also zero (Nath, 2012).
- Aryabhata: Aryabhata a famous mathematician and astronomer of Gupta period use algebra was fully developed by 600 CE, gave the knowledge of zero but it was earlier outlined by Brahmagupta. He wrote the book 'Aryabhatiya', based on the principles of mathematics and astrology consist of arithmetic, algebra, simple trigonometry, spherical trigonometry, fractions, quadratic equations, sums of power series etc (Sahu, 2021). The concept of zero is very important in computer programming. Chandah-Sastra established various mathematical ideas and defines of sunya. A temple wall in Gwalior (India), dating in 9th century CE, is the oldest recorded example of a Zero (Tewari, 2023).

In the Rig-Veda time two very familiar words are sunya and Kha. In India Zero signify by a dot or small circle. Zero has been denoted in India by a dot or a small circle (Dutta, 2015, pp.1-14). Sunya and Kha are two common Sanskrit words in Indian mathematics for zero. In Rigveda, the word kha means the hole in the nave of a wheel. Its meanings include “cavity”, “hollow”, “aperture”, “vacuity”, “empty space”, “sky”, the “great Void”. The word sunya appears to have been derived means “hollowness”, “emptiness”, “deficient state”, “zero state”. Its synonyms includes ambara, abhra, gagana, antariksa (resemblance of the sky and the vastness of space), purna (whole, full, complete) and ananta (infinite). Shakespeare and the American mathematician G. B. Halsted highlighted the place value of zero with this philosophical significance. The sunya and kha has yet to be formed or created (Divakaran, 2018, pp. 978-981).

4. **Sulba Sutras:** The word Sulba means ropes used to make measurement. The World oldest civilization, Indus

Valley civilization developed its own mathematical system. It meant for the measurement and construction of altars and arenas (Osborn, 2010). It gives instructions for constructing various fire-altars, temple base or building base etc (Dutta, 2002, pp. 4-19).

In 800–500 BCE Sulba Sutras by Maharshi Baudhayana (Father of Geometry). The Sulba Sutra is a part Shrauta Sutras and source of knowledge of Indian Mathematics from ancient times (wikiless.copper.dedyn.io/wiki/Shulba_Sutras?). The Sulba-sutras of Baudhayana is the oldest mathematical text and after that Apastamba and Katyayana comes in later Vedic age. The sutra recommended that if we draw a rectangle and then form a square using the lengths of its two diagonals, the sum of the squares will be equal to area formed on the sides of the original rectangle. The Sulba Sutras contain geometric principles that Modern Science concepts, especially in the field of geometry, example Pythagorean Theorem and geometric constructions, showcasing advanced mathematical understanding in ancient India (Joshi, 2017).

Vedic Mathematics:

The Veda is a Storehouse of all knowledge. The “Vedic Mathematics” emerged from “Atharva Vedas”. It serves various fields like Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine. Vedic mathematics is a combination of Arithmetic and Algebraic operations. It is a very simple tool to solve mathematical problems faster than conventional mathematical techniques (Agarwal, 2013). Through applying these simple methods of Vedic mathematics- multiplication, division, square roots, cube roots, decimals and fractions can be easily solved (Ganesh, 2018, pp.820-830). The Jyotish Shastra is an ancient methods and a small part of Vedangas. (Sriskandarajah, 2003).

The Vedic mathematics was studied by Jagadguru Swami Bharathi Krishna Tirtha Ji of Govardhan Peeth, Puri Jaganath (1884-1960) and again reproduced various methods to simplify large calculation in simple form (Tirthaji, 1965). He was a scholar of Sanskrit, Mathematics, History and Philosophy and provides a set of 16 sutras and 13 sub sutras from Atharva-Vedas (The concept of Vedic Maths, 2015).

Sixteen Sutras: The Sutras and sub sutras are related to many parts of Mathematics. The sutras gave short cut solution, are easy to remember and apply. It can solve complex problems, save lots of time and efforts (Bajaj, 2005). It can be used effectively for solving addition, subtraction, multiplication, divisions, squares and square roots, cubes and cube roots, factorization, fractions,

Pythagoras Theorem, Apollonius Theorem etc (Bose, 2015).

For example, **Ekdhikena Purvena** teaches a division method that involves taking one more than the previous number, simplifying division processes. **Nikhilam Navatascaramam Dasatah** is a multiplication technique based on subtracting from 9 or 10, particularly useful in certain cases of multiplication. **Urdhva-tiryagbhyam** is a powerful method for multiplication, where vertical and crosswise techniques are employed, making it highly efficient for multiplying large numbers. **Paravartya Yojayet** is used in dividing polynomial equations by transposing and adjusting terms, demonstrating its applicability in algebra. **Sunyam Samyasamuccaye** is a sutra that equates to zero when the sums (samuchchaya) on both sides are the same, which is useful in solving equations where the terms balance out. **(Anurupye) Sunyamanyat** helps in proportional problems by stating that if one value is in a certain ratio, the other will be zero. **Sankalana-vyavakalanabhyam** refers to simplifying calculations through addition and subtraction, often used when expanding algebraic expressions. **Puranapuranaabhyam** deals with the completion or non-completion of sequences, which is relevant in certain types of calculations. **Calana-Kalanabhyam** applies to calculus and emphasizes the understanding of rates of change, which is critical in continuous functions and their derivatives. **Yavadunam** is focused on working with deficiencies or differences in numbers, guiding how to deal with the "missing" part of a number. **Vyastisamastih** is used for calculating averages, applying both specific and general principles to simplify complex problems. **Sesanyankena Caramena** involves finding remainders based on the last digit, providing an easy method for modular arithmetic. **Sopantyadvayamantyam** guides finding the ultimate and twice the penultimate values in a sequence, useful in certain series and pattern recognition. **Ekanyunena Purvena** is a method where one less than the previous value is used, providing a simpler approach to certain calculations. **Gunitasamuccayah** refers to the product of the sum of coefficients in factors, crucial for solving algebraic multiplication problems. Finally, **Gunakasamuccayah** technique useful for solving multiplication problems efficiently. These sutras demonstrate the radiance of Vedic mathematics, enabling rapid and intuitive calculation methods that have stood the test of time, often eliminating the need for long division or multiplication techniques.

Sub sutras: These are the extension of main sutras and divided into thirteen parts. It provides various techniques to solve complex mathematical problems. **Anurupyena** means "proportionately," and it is a method used for

solving problems involving proportional relationships, where quantities are in a constant ratio. **Sityate Sesasanfitah** refers to the fact that the remainder remains constant, useful in division problems or when working with remainders across different divisions. **Adyamadyenantyainantyena** suggests a method of multiplying the first digit by the first and the last by the last, which simplifies the calculation when working with certain types of numerical problems. **Kevalalh Saptakan Gunyat** specifically deals with the number 7, where the multiplicand should be 143 in certain multiplication problems involving multiples of 7. **Vestanam** refers to "by osculation," a term related to an approximation method in mathematical operations, particularly in geometrical problems or estimations. **Yavadunam Tavadunam** translates as "lessen by the deficiency," which means reducing a number by the deficiency, often applied when solving problems involving difference or excess. **Yavadunam Taradunikrtya Varganca Yojayet** suggests that whatever the extent of a deficiency, it should be reduced further by the same extent and also the square of that deficiency should be accounted for in the solution. **Antyayordasake'pt** deals with numbers whose last digits add up to 10 and whose preceding parts are identical, providing a shortcut for handling such numbers in calculations. **Antyayoteva** emphasizes working with only the last terms of a series or number, simplifying certain types of arithmetic operations that focus on the final values. **Samuccayagunitah** refers to "the sum of the coefficients in the product," a concept used in algebraic expansions and simplifications when multiplying polynomials. **Lopanasthapandbhyam** involves alternate elimination and retention, a method for solving equations or simplifying expressions by systematically eliminating or keeping terms. **Vilokanam** simply means "by observation," suggesting that patterns or solutions may be found by recognizing certain visual or numerical trends. Finally, **Gunitasamuccayah Samuccayagunitah** is a principle that states that the product of the sum of the coefficients in the factors equals the sum of the coefficients in the product, a valuable rule for dealing with polynomial multiplication and expansion.

These sutras from Vedic mathematics demonstrate the efficiency and elegance of ancient methods for dealing with a wide range of mathematical problems, emphasizing intuition, pattern recognition, and simplifying complex calculations. By applying these principles, one can solve equations and perform arithmetic operations much more quickly and with less computational effort.

Characteristic/ Features (Tirtha, 1992)

1. Vedic Mathematics mainly focuses on Vedas, which has storage capacity of all information (Dutta, 2016).
2. Vedic mathematics deals with spiritual, informative guidelines and direction in full details logically.
3. Vedanges are the inherent parts and subjects of Vedic study (Kapoor, 2006).
4. We can apply sutras in all parts of the mathematics.
5. The Sutras are simple to apply, recall and store the information in the mind.
6. Vedic Mathematics is symmetrical, adaptable in nature and it improves mental power creatively (Yadaw, 2020, pp.62-67).
7. It is applicable for everyone and it is, efficient and fast and time saving.
8. Vedic mathematics is the understanding of human skills and knowledge.
9. It is the faster method with simple formulas and easy to remember (Vaidya, 2019).
10. MAC, ALU are some of the main application.
11. Urdhva-Triyagbhyam method is one of the best for the multiplication.
12. Vedic mathematics calculation makes pleasurable and fascinating.
13. Complex problems can be sort out easily without using lengthy methods.
14. Vedic Mathematics requires logical thinking, improves mental ability (Sumathi, 2016).

Importance of Vedic Mathematics:

1. It is definitely exceptional and coherent in its methodology.
2. It helps to carry out laborious and functional mathematical calculations.
3. It transformed conventional Math's into a joyful activity.
4. It lessens, "Maths fear".
5. The validity of a problem can be determined easily.
6. It is fast methods than our classrooms methods.
7. Mental calculations

III. BENEFITS OF VEDIC MATHEMATICS

1. Enhanced Speed and Accuracy in Competitive Examinations: Vedic Mathematics (Joshi, 2017) significantly improves performance in high-stakes competitive examinations as well as various engineering and banking entrance tests. The techniques facilitate rapid calculation and problem-solving, offering a strategic advantage to candidates by reducing time constraints and enhancing accuracy (Shukla, 2017).

2. Broad Applicability across Disciplines (Anjali, 2022): The versatility of Vedic Mathematics extends across numerous academic disciplines. Students in fields such as Mathematics, Physics, Engineering, and Computer Science find that its methods simplify complex problems and improve computational efficiency. This cross-disciplinary applicability underscores the system's broad utility.

3. Support in Software Development (Krishna, 2012): In the domain of software development, Vedic Mathematics offers valuable techniques for optimizing algorithms and improving performance. Its methodologies can be applied to enhance the efficiency of code, particularly in algorithmic design and numerical computation, contributing to more effective software solutions (Rajasekar, 2016, pp. 3025-3036).

4. Mental Calculation and Method Selection (Bose, 2015): Vedic Mathematics enhances mental calculation abilities, allowing students to select the most efficient methods for specific problems. This mental agility is beneficial for mastering complex concepts and performing calculations without reliance on electronic tools, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of mathematical principles (Mathews, 2022).

5. Acceleration of Mathematical Calculations (Solanki, 2021, pp.160-163): The techniques of Vedic Mathematics expedite calculations in various areas, including Arithmetic, Algebra, Trigonometry, and Geometry. By simplifying traditionally cumbersome processes, these methods enable quicker and more accurate problem-solving.

6. Time Efficiency and Confidence Building (Garg, 2023, pp. 2079-2086): The ability to solve problems quickly using Vedic Mathematics techniques not only enhances time efficiency but also builds self-confidence among students. The competence gained from rapid problem-solving contributes to greater confidence in mathematical tasks and examinations (Raikhola, 2020).

7. Quick and Valuable Calculations (Tirtha, 1992): Vedic Mathematics is instrumental in achieving swift and valuable calculations. Its methods streamline computational processes, making it an essential tool for both academic and practical applications where time and accuracy are critical (Makholia).

8. Cognitive Benefits and Mental Fitness (Chowdhury, 2023): Regular use of electronic devices such as calculators and computers can adversely affect cognitive abilities (Day-ongao, 2022, pp.237-248). Vedic Mathematics promotes mental fitness by engaging the mind in manual calculations, thereby enhancing cognitive skills and problem-solving capabilities (Shastri, 2017, pp. 53-62).

9. Institutional Adoption in Western Countries:

Prominent educational institutions in England and the United States have begun incorporating Vedic Mathematics into their curricula, highlighting its effectiveness and international relevance (Dani, 1993, pp. 90-92). This adoption reflects the system's capability to improve mathematical proficiency and computational skills (Staal, 1999, pp. 105-127)

10. Application in Advanced Research: NASA scientists have explored the application of Vedic Mathematics principles in artificial intelligence research (Bhardwaj, 2012, pp. 23-24). The integration of these techniques into AI development demonstrates their potential to enhance computational models and algorithms, contributing to advancements in the field (Kandasamy, 2006).

Relevance of Vedic Mathematics

Key components of machine learning include:

1. **Data:** It is an information or fact of observations or measurements can be used in machine-learning. Data are arranged in the form of structured data (e.g., tables), unstructured data (e.g., text, images, videos), and semi-structured data (e.g., JSON).

2. **Machine learning algorithms:** It refers to highlight the data. These algorithms are of following types: there are mainly four types of machine learning techniques.

- **Supervised Machine learning:** The raw data sets are designed to train and classifying data or predicting outcomes accurately. It is mainly used in predictive analysis, image segmentation or classification, fraud detection, spam detection, automatic sequence processing, pattern detection (javatpoint.com).
- **Unsupervised Machine Learning:** In this method clustering algorithms used to make dataset. Without specific supervision it uncovers hidden patterns and structures in unlabelled data. To examine and form the group of unlabelled data and find out unseen patterns in data without any human disruption. It is useful in automatic labeling, object segmentation, similarity detection, and recommendation engines.
- **Semi-Supervised Machine Learning:** This method is used in labelled and unlabelled data to execute specific learning functions. This technique very useful when labelled data is very expensive, insufficient amount of data available, like computer-aided diagnosis, drug discovery and part-of-speech tagging etc. when unlabelled data provides relevant information to improve classification method (Van Engelen, 2020, pp. 373-440)

- **Reinforcement Learning:** This technique is used to apply to evaluate and improve efficiency in terms of optimal behavior of the environment (Bonaccorso, 2018). It is usually based on the feedback provided by the environment to evaluate the positive or negative actions. Sometimes feedback is called reward and penalty (Kaelbling, 1996, pp. 237-85). It helps for the training of AI models can help expand computerization or to increase the operating function such as robotics, independent driving assignment, producing and providing chain logistics (Mohammed, 2016). Reinforcement learning, together with supervised and unsupervised learning, is the fundamental machine learning pattern. This theory has already found applications in many interdisciplinary areas such as information theory, marketing business and game based applications, and many more (simplilearn.com).

3. **Training:** There are numbers of different approaches to training. Through an interactive process models adjust its framework to reduce the forecast and identify to, machine learning models are trained.

4. **Evaluation:** After training, data models are calculated to evaluate their presentation and derive capability. It depends upon certain functions like correctness, recollect, F1-score and aims of the model.

5. **Feature Engineering:** Feature engineering refers to determine, modify, and generate significant characteristics to improve the tasks of various machine learning models. It can affect the functions of various models.

6. **Model Selection and Tuning:** To optimize model performance, it chooses exact algorithms for their typical job and hyper parameters. They used two methods such as cross-validation and grid search.

7. **Deployment:** After training and evaluation, these models are arranged into production, forecast on the new, unseen data. Deployment involves adaptation such as scalability, performance, reliability, and security.

Application of Vedic Mathematics to Machine Learning:

Vedic mathematics principles and methods may not be meant for machine learning. It can be useful to various factors of machine learning. Following are the applications

1. **Algorithm Design:** Vedic mathematics can help to identified, created, pattern recognition and giving solutions to the various problems. By the use of Vedic mathematics techniques, new algorithm design is formed to execute machine learning tasks (Babu, 2024).

2. **Improving mathematical methods:** Vedic mathematics contains methods to finding and improving solutions to problems and training models and tuning hyper parameters. Vedic Mathematic technique is a collection of arithmetic rules can be used to improve the speed and achievement of optimization algorithms. So with the help of fast and efficient computational techniques to accomplished various responsibilities like -data processing, data analysis cryptography, and optimization problems.
3. **Feature Engineering or creating new techniques:** Vedic Mathematics mainly focus and support mental calculation, manipulating numbers, pattern recognition. It convert raw data into more relevant model for machine learning algorithms, signal processing and image analysis area are the examples of feature engineering (Jain, 2014,pp. 7458-7459).
4. **Error Evaluation and Debugging:** Vedic Mathematics uses mental calculation methods to find out error quite easily and improve model and its functions. It is very important in debugging machine learning models, improve model.
5. **Education and Outreach:** There are no direct techniques available for machine learning in Vedic Mathematics. It enhanced mathematical intuition and complex problem solving skills of the students to develop machine learning algorithms. Its techniques when fuse together with machine learning can give various methods to improve machine learning models (Tularam, G. A. 2010).
4. **Detection of mistake and correction:** Machine learning algorithms techniques use to find out mistake and provide suggestion and rectifying the solutions. It support and reply student's queries to enhanced learning system.
5. **Pattern recognition:** The main centre point of Vedic Mathematics and AI algorithm is pattern recognition. The Vedic mathematics sutra "by one more the one before" helps in identifying pattern and sequences to provide accurate predictions and groups. It is useful in image and natural language processing. The neural network process is the part of Machine learning process to identify pattern to solve latest problem solving methods of the Vedic mathematics.
6. **Experimental Data Analysis:** Machine learning techniques investigate; remove pattern, correlations and observation to provide methods, relationship and knowledge of huge amount of data in Vedic mathematics.
7. **Forecast results:** By examine old data and pattern, Machine learning techniques provides solution in advance.
8. **Speed and productivity:** Vedic Mathematics techniques used simple steps fast mental calculations to solve difficult problems. It is useful in AI application where huge amount of data processed quickly like matrix multiplication and convolution operations in neural networks.
9. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Due to the flexible nature of Vedic mathematics it provides alternative methods to perform specific tasks, for example "Nikhilam Navatashcaramam Dashatah" guide AI developers various methods to upgrade algorithms to perform certain functions. In AI system adaptability is very important criteria to accomplishing optimal tasks.

The application of Machine learning to Vedic mathematics

1. **Automate calculation:** Machine learning algorithm understands, instruct and resolve large amount of mathematical problems. In Vedic mathematics all calculations are processed in the mind. Machine learning use huge amount of Vedic mathematics axioms and formulas to solve many complex problems.
2. **Vedic mathematical techniques:** By using Vedic mathematical formulas students learning ability will be improved. It also provides new techniques of recognizing, applying and teaching in today's education system.
3. **Unique learning methods:** To investigate students learning process, speed weakness and strength machine learning algorithm, adjust problem and solution of particular exercise.

IV. CONCLUSION

This exploration underscores the untapped potential of Vedic Mathematics in the realm of artificial intelligence. By integrating its time-tested principles with modern computational methods, we can unlock new avenues for algorithmic efficiency and innovation. The alignment between Vedic techniques and AI optimization strategies not only enhances performance but also introduces alternative approaches to problem-solving that are both elegant and effective. As AI continues to evolve, revisiting and reimagining ancient mathematical frameworks may offer valuable insights for the next generation of intelligent systems.

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Free Speech and Sedition: A Historical and Comparative Analysis in Liberal Democracies

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Abstract— This paper provides a historical and comparative analysis of sedition laws in liberal democracies, focusing on England, the United States, and India. While freedom of speech is a cornerstone of democratic governance, its limits—particularly concerning speech deemed seditious—reveal tensions between state security and civil liberties. The study traces the evolution of sedition from its origins in English common law, where it was used to suppress dissent before its eventual abolition in 2009, to its contested application in the U.S. under the Alien and Sedition Acts and later judicial refinements like the "imminent lawless action" test in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969). In contrast, India's retention of its colonial-era sedition law (Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code) demonstrates its continued use as a tool to criminalize political dissent, despite judicial attempts to narrow its scope. Through case studies and legal analysis, the paper highlights the politicization of sedition in contemporary India, where accusations often target activists, journalists, and protesters with little evidentiary basis. A comparative assessment reveals that while England and the U.S. have moved toward greater free speech protections, India's legal framework remains restrictive, reflecting unresolved anxieties about national unity and democratic dissent. The paper concludes by questioning the necessity of sedition laws in liberal democracies and calls for legislative and judicial reforms to align India's approach with global standards of free expression.



Keywords— Sedition, free speech, liberal democracy, comparative law, India, United States, England, Section 124A, Brandenburg test, dissent.

I. INTRODUCTION

Liberal democracies, by their very nature, are structured around the constitutional protection of civil liberties. Among these liberties, freedom of speech is held in especially high regard. This right is not only foundational for individual autonomy but also essential for democratic deliberation, dissent, and accountability. However, even in liberal systems, freedom of speech is not absolute. States often invoke national security, public order, or communal harmony to justify certain restrictions. One of the most controversial limitations in this domain is the offence of sedition.

Though many liberal democracies acknowledge free speech as a constitutional right, they have simultaneously retained or enacted sedition laws to criminalize speech perceived as inciting rebellion or violence against the state. These legal

provisions are often defended on the grounds that speech which directly threatens the structural integrity or sovereignty of a democratic state cannot be protected under the rubric of free expression.

This paper provides a comprehensive examination of the legal, political, and historical trajectories of sedition laws in three liberal democratic contexts: England, the United States, and India. While the origins of sedition lie in English common law, its transplantation into American and Indian legal systems produced varied interpretations and outcomes, reflecting the differing political cultures and judicial philosophies of these nations.

England: From Monarchy to Modern Constitutionalism

The crime of sedition, as it came to be known in English law, was not part of fifteenth-century common law but developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It

initially emerged as a tool to manage internal unrest and factional conflict, especially during periods of religious upheaval and monarchical instability. Manning (1980) notes that sedition began to acquire its modern connotation—as inciting disaffection towards the government—only after the Protestant Reformation. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 marked a pivotal point, as sedition laws were increasingly invoked to protect both the monarchy and Parliament from internal challenges.

For nearly two centuries, these laws served to suppress calls for representation, particularly those advanced by reformists and dissenters. Their use was often accompanied by judicial complicity, ensuring the insulation of the ruling establishment from vocal opposition. Gradually, however, the British judiciary began to place limitations on the application of sedition, particularly in the twentieth century. As democratic norms took deeper root, the notion that dissent equated disloyalty lost legal and moral legitimacy. Sedition, as a legal category, eventually fell into disuse and was formally abolished in England in 2009 (UK Parliament, 2009).

United States: Constitutional Contradictions

The American experience with sedition is shaped significantly by the tensions between democratic ideals and concerns over national security. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution enshrines the freedom of speech, yet the early republic saw the introduction of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. Enacted under the Federalist administration, these laws sought to punish criticism of the government at a time of international conflict and domestic ideological polarization. Farber (1976) argues that these acts reflected the Federalist belief in governance by an elite, juxtaposed against the Republican preference for mass-based popular government.

Although the Sedition Act lapsed after a few years, its spirit was revived during World War I with the passage of the Espionage Act (1917) and the Sedition Act (1918). These laws curtailed speech that was considered anti-war or subversive, especially targeting socialist and pacifist groups. Judicial responses evolved during this period, with the U.S. Supreme Court first endorsing speech restrictions under the “bad tendency” test. This doctrine allowed the state to suppress speech that merely had the potential to lead to illegal activity, regardless of the speaker's intent (Stone, 2004).

This approach was revised in *Schenck v. United States* (1919), where Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes introduced the “clear and present danger” test. The test signaled a more stringent requirement for the state to justify curbs on speech. It was later refined in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969), which held that only speech that incites “imminent lawless action”

could be penalized. This decision significantly curtailed the use of sedition charges and underscored a robust commitment to free expression, although the sedition law itself was never repealed (Tushnet, 2008).

India: Colonial Transplant and Democratic Dilemma

The sedition law in India, codified under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, was introduced by the British colonial government in 1870. It was a direct response to growing nationalist sentiment and was intended to suppress political agitation. Prominent freedom fighters like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi were famously prosecuted under this provision (Gupta, 2016).

Despite its colonial origins, the sedition law was retained by independent India. Constituent Assembly debates reveal the underlying tensions: while some members emphasized the need to preserve state integrity during a volatile post-Partition period, others expressed concern about the law's potential misuse against political dissent. Ultimately, the provision survived, justified by appeals to national security and unity (Singh, 2018).

Post-independence, Indian courts have tried to narrow the law's scope. In *Kedarnath Singh v. State of Bihar* (1962), the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Section 124A but restricted its application to instances where the speech incites violence or public disorder. Nonetheless, as Singh (2018) shows, the law continues to be used against political activists, journalists, and ordinary citizens, often with weak or fabricated evidence.

Judicial Trends and Constitutional Challenges

Indian courts have consistently walked a tightrope between protecting constitutional freedoms and upholding laws seen as crucial for maintaining public order. *Kedarnath Singh* remains the cornerstone judgment on sedition, reaffirming that incitement to violence is a necessary condition for a conviction. In *Balwant Singh v. State of Punjab* (1995), the Supreme Court acquitted individuals who had shouted pro-Khalistan slogans, stating that mere slogan-shouting, without an actual threat to public order, did not constitute sedition (Rao, 2000).

Despite these judicial guardrails, law enforcement agencies continue to file sedition charges for speech acts that clearly fall within the bounds of permissible dissent. For instance, in 2016, student leader Kanhaiya Kumar and others were charged with sedition for allegedly shouting anti-national slogans during a protest at Jawaharlal Nehru University. The authenticity of the video evidence was questioned, and the case exposed the ways in which sedition can be wielded to silence political opposition (Burra, 2018).

The Politicization of Sedition

The repeated use of sedition charges in India raises questions not only about legal interpretation but also about the political utility of such laws. Sedition cases are rarely followed through to conviction; rather, the process itself serves as a punishment. The stigma of being labeled “anti-national” is amplified by media coverage and state rhetoric. As Burra (2018) argues, the greatest barrier to free speech in India may not be the state per se, but a public conditioned to equate dissent with betrayal.

This pattern is evident in other recent examples. Celebrations of Pakistan’s victory in cricket matches, criticism of government policies, and protests against legislation like the Citizenship Amendment Act have all been met with sedition charges. These instances illustrate how a colonial-era law continues to shape and constrain democratic expression in contemporary India.

The Constituent Assembly and the Democratic Imagination

Anushka Singh’s (2018) interdisciplinary approach to sedition reveals how foundational debates in the Constituent Assembly shaped the trajectory of free speech in India. She argues that two competing discourses emerged: one prioritizing democratic freedoms and the other emphasizing state security. While both were prominent during independence, it was the latter that found institutional expression in postcolonial lawmaking.

Singh critiques earlier legalist scholarship for ignoring the sociopolitical dimensions of sedition. She instead foregrounds “everyday tales of law,” showing how sedition operates in practice rather than merely in theory. Nevertheless, her analysis stops short of fully integrating the evolving definitions of nationalism into her critique. The Constituent Assembly’s failure to reconcile differing visions of the nation continues to influence the state’s relationship with dissent.

Case Studies: Sedition in Contemporary India

A series of high-profile cases in recent years underscores the continued relevance and danger of sedition laws. Author Arundhati Roy faced sedition charges for her statements on Kashmir. Cartoonist Aseem Trivedi was arrested for satirical work critical of corruption. Thousands of villagers protesting against the Kudankulam nuclear project were also booked under Section 124A. These prosecutions reveal a disturbing trend where sedition is used not to protect the state, but to delegitimize dissenting voices (Gupta, 2016).

Further, while courts have occasionally pushed back, there is little systemic deterrent to misuse. In 2017, 20 individuals were charged with sedition in Madhya Pradesh for allegedly cheering for Pakistan in a cricket match. Though charges

were later dropped, the ordeal reflects a climate in which free expression is constantly under threat (Burra, 2018).

Amendments and Legislative Shifts

India’s approach to speech-related offences has also been shaped by constitutional amendments. The First Amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1951 significantly curtailed free speech by adding new grounds for restriction, such as “public order” and “friendly relations with foreign states.” This amendment was partly a reaction to Supreme Court judgments that had earlier struck down speech restrictions, such as in *Romesh Thapar v. State of Madras* (1950) and **Brij Bhushan v. State of Delhi* (1950) (Jain, 2005).

The 1963 amendment to Article 19(2) further strengthened the state’s power to restrict speech on grounds including sedition. These legislative changes reveal a post-independence trajectory that prioritizes stability and unity over absolute free speech, shaped by the political realities of a newly partitioned and diverse nation.

Comparative Reflections

When contrasted with England and the United States, India’s sedition laws remain markedly more punitive and broadly applied. England’s abolition of sedition as a criminal offence and the U.S. Supreme Court’s stringent standards for permissible speech illustrate a trajectory toward greater protection of dissent within liberal democracies.

In the U.S., sedition laws have been subjected to robust judicial scrutiny and are rarely invoked today. The *Brandenburg* standard has become a global benchmark for free speech, limiting criminal liability to speech inciting imminent violence. By contrast, India’s colonial-era law persists, often wielded with political motives and lacking modern judicial restraint.

II. CONCLUSION

Sedition laws occupy a complex space within liberal democracies, revealing the ongoing tensions between security and liberty, order and dissent. England’s historical abandonment of sedition, the U.S.’s judicial refinement of speech protections, and India’s persistent colonial legacy provide instructive contrasts.

India’s continuing reliance on Section 124A reflects unresolved political anxieties about nationalism, unity, and democratic participation. Judicial efforts to restrict the law’s misuse have been partial at best. Until India undertakes comprehensive legislative reform, accompanied by a cultural shift toward embracing dissent as democratic

vitality rather than betrayal, sedition will remain a powerful instrument of repression.

This paper's detailed historical and comparative analysis underscores the need to rethink sedition laws within liberal democracies. Protecting free speech, especially speech critical of the state, is essential for a vibrant democracy. The challenge lies in balancing this protection with legitimate concerns about public order and national security, without sacrificing one at the expense of the other.

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Unpacking the Mechanisms: How Literature Pedagogy Influences English Language Learning Outcomes

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Abstract— This study examines the impact of literature-based learning in enhancing the learning of the English language with emphasis on its contribution to the enhancement of cognitive, affective, and sociocultural capabilities. This study justifies the application of different literary materials in the teaching of the language to significantly boost students' critical skills, motivation, and intercultural competencies. A mixed-methods approach was utilized with both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative semi-structured interviews to obtain deep data from twenty undergraduate participants. Data were analyzed via descriptive statistics, frequency tables, and iterative coding to create key themes substantiated with t-test comparisons of gender differences. Results suggest uniformly high scores on all aspects of literature-based instruction canvassed, and qualitative results state that participatory and interactive pedagogical practice change static language learning to an interactive real-life experience. These findings squarely answer the research question by way of demonstration of how literature-based approaches benefit language ability as well as other learning achievements. The research concludes that the use of literature in the teaching of the English language enhances the language abilities but also enhances essential cognitive as well as socio-emotional skills, offering learners complete development.



Keywords— literature-based instruction, English language learning, cognitive schemata, affective mechanism, sociocultural mechanism.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Literature has long been a mainstay of language learning, offering students extensive exposure to language and possibilities for cultural exploration. In literature, students are exposed to vast amounts of vocabulary and grammar, as well as cultural context and the human condition that ultimately shape critical thinking and empathy (Duff & Maley, 2007). Literature's contribution to language acquisition surpasses the bare acquisition of the linguistic items itself; it also serves as the vehicle through which the learner experiences language as an integrated whole and thereby both gains receptive and productive skills. Recent instructional practice has, more than ever, underlined the incorporation of literary texts into English language lessons, stressing their potential to stimulate

comprehension, critical thinking, and communication. It is essential to determine the specific ways in which literature pedagogy influences learning since such knowledge is central to the development of effective teaching and curriculum. Literature-based pedagogies encourage active participation on the part of the student, increase their interpretive skills, and lead to an appreciation of greater linguistic sophistication. Literature-based approaches also enable students to develop cognitive capacities by promoting inferential thinking as well as interpretive analysis which is essential in effective communication (Hişmanoğlu, 2005; Shukri & Mukundan, 2015). Notwithstanding the acknowledged value of literature in language learning, there is still a considerable dearth of empirical research that elucidates the processes underlying the outcomes of English language learning. The issue addressed in this research is the utmost significance of

investigating very thoroughly how literature pedagogy as a pedagogical tool can be related directly to specific results in language learning. Considering how it is done, this research attempts to provide teachers and curriculum planners with theoretically grounded recommendations that can be used in building more effective pedagogical practices with literature. Aside from making theoretical observations about language acquisition, this study also aims to delineate practical implications with the view to enhancing pedagogical practice in school settings. This kind of analysis is necessary to bridge the theory-practice gap in a proposal to facilitate the creation of effective learning environments.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The current research aims to examine and identify the precise mechanisms by which literature pedagogy shapes English language learning outcomes. Using a critical investigation of the intricate intertwinement of literary text and language learning process, this study seeks to elucidate how the narrative structure, thematic depth, and cultural context inherent in literature contribute to the enhancement of linguistic ability and analytical critical proficiency. This study aims to describe students' thoughts and emotions as they read literary works. It is concerned with such skills as interpreting meanings, inferring, and enriching vocabulary (Duff & Maley, 2007). This study explores ways in which literature teaching approaches can be utilized to promote listening and speaking skills inside the English language classroom. This study employs a combined methodological strategy of students' questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gain a more precise picture of the learning process. The projected findings are designed to provide teachers with empirically based instructional strategies for enhancing instruction and modifying literary activities to meet the diverse needs of learners. This study is significant not only for theoretical models of language acquisition but also for application in practice to enhance teacher training and curriculum development (Bunch, 2013). To fulfill the study objectives, the following research questions were developed.

1. What are the specific components of literature pedagogy (e.g., genre, teaching method, interaction) that influence English language learning outcomes?
2. How does literature pedagogy affect different aspects of English language learning (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, speaking, writing)?
3. What are the cognitive, affective, and sociocultural processes involved in the relationship between literature pedagogy and English language learning outcomes?

1.3 Significance of the study

This research is of considerable importance to theoretical developments and applied work in language education. It aims to address some of the gaps in understanding how certain dimensions of pedagogical practice in literature—like genre, teaching approaches, and interaction—impact particular language capacities such as vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and writing. In describing such mechanisms, the study contributes to theoretical debate through the synthesis of cognitive, affective, and sociocultural theory within a cohesive model for literature-based language learning (Duff & Maley, 2007). Not only does the interdisciplinary model synthesize prevailing models, but it also offers an insightful explanation of how literary fiction facilitates inferential thinking, emotional engagement, and cultural insight among students. The results provide valuable direction to teachers and curriculum designers on best practices in using literature in English language learning. By delineating the literary and pedagogical elements that yield optimum learning outcomes, this study provides evidence-based direction that can be modified to fit a variety of learner profiles. This dimension is particularly relevant in an era of shifting pedagogical paradigms, in which traditional practices are being augmented by more holistic, student-centered strategies (Bunch, 2013). The immediate benefactors of this study are language instructors, who will be provided with specific recommendations on how instructional design can be improved; curriculum planners, who can refine course materials to better accommodate literature-based pedagogy; and learners, who will ultimately benefit from a more supportive learning environment conducive to critical thinking and better communicative competence. By bridging the gap between theoretical models and practical application in educational settings, this research is well-placed to make a significant and enduring contribution to the utilization of literature as a means of effective language acquisition.

The research proposal is organized around certain key sections. The literature review covers literature pedagogy by describing its key principles, tracing methods like reader-response and critical analysis, and exploring the application of literary texts in language classrooms. It also outlines English language learning outcomes and explores the mechanisms—cognitive, affective, and sociocultural—linking literature pedagogy to skills such as vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and writing. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks offer a basis by incorporating theories like sociocultural and cognitive learning theories and also reveal existing literature gaps. The methodology chapter offers a mixed-methods research design with purposively sampled participants, where questionnaires and

semi-structured interviews are used for data collection, and descriptive statistics and thematic analysis for data interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Later sections of findings, discussion, and conclusion set out, interpret, and summarize findings, make practical suggestions, and provide suggestions for future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature pedagogy - definition and principles, approaches and its role in the language classroom

Literature pedagogy, in a "critical literature pedagogy" framework, deals with "dispositions and skills to comprehend, question, and critique texts' ideological messages" (Borsheim-Black et al., 2014). This is a step beyond simple understanding, challenging students to think about how social contexts and power dynamics arrange literary texts (Kalogirou & Mínguez-López, 2022). The aim is to teach students who can "read and write against texts," so that there could be knowledge that "language and texts are not neutral and always ideological" (Dera, 2025). The pedagogy of literature is managing literature in the classroom to bring in a range of critical literary theories to enhance learners' insight and capacity to discuss and build the meaning of the literature (Tyson, 2020). Hanssen and Jensvoll (2020) emphasize the need to apply theoretical frameworks to enhance the analysis of literature. As the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature defines, "pedagogy in literature" encompasses the overarching and theoretical discussion about how students and learners are initiated into various areas of knowledge and institutionalized ways of knowing (Mead & Doecke (2020). This definition captures the relationship between the theoretical and practical meanings of teaching and learning literature. In language teaching, the contribution of literature pedagogy to the improvement of English language development is a central but controversial topic. Literature as a rich heritage of story, character, and theme is a means of linguistic exploration, cultural awareness, and critical thinking to be attained (Wuntu et al., 2024; Lina & Arshad, 2024). This definition focuses on the relationship between literature pedagogy and the development of language skills.

Key tenets of literary pedagogy are active engagement, where students engage with texts in dialogue and reflection; critical thinking, through critique and analysis of theme and literary device; and contextualization, in situating texts historically and culturally. Personal response enables connection to be made to students' lived experience while developing literacy proficiency through negotiation of demanding vocabulary and syntax. Additionally, teaching literature facilitates cultural awareness and sensitivity through an exposure of varied sets

of lenses to students as well as calling upon critical literacy. Such an interface allows students to question hegemonic discourses as well as proceed towards texts that connect to social contexts (Duff & Maley, 2007; Elley, 2001; Rosenblatt, 1994; Kramersch, 1993; Beck & McKeown, 2001).

Literature pedagogy entails a set of methodologies that facilitate language learning by actively engaging learners with texts in diverse ways. The reader-response model, as explained by Rosenblatt (1994), centers on personal interpretation, where students are allowed to build meaning based on their personal experiences and feelings. The critical analysis model, on the contrary, promotes a close reading of texts, where students are invited to scrutinize themes, narrative frameworks, and socio-political contexts, as indicated by Elley (2001). Furthermore, the cultural mediation model as outlined by Kramersch (1993) emphasizes literature's role in bridging cultural gaps through contextualization of texts in their broader sociocultural contexts. A composite approach draws on elements of both reader-response theory and critical analysis and hence offers an integrated framework that encourages personal response while facilitating analytical accuracy. Collectively, these frameworks encourage active participation, rational thinking, and clear use of language in enabling students to comprehend literary texts and also appreciate their broader cultural and contextual relevance (Rosenblatt, 1994; Elley, 2001; Kramersch, 1993).

The role of literary texts in the language learning environment is multifaceted and significant, as they contribute a vital role in various aspects of language learning and development. Literary texts are indispensable in provoking students' intellectual and emotional involvement in purposeful English communication, enhancing communicative competence, raising cultural awareness, and developing motivation in learners (Khan & Alasmari, 2018). They provide genuine materials, facilitate the development of language skills, and extend linguistic knowledge (Khan & Alasmari, 2018; Sharma et al., 2022). As maintained by Brumfit & Carter (1986), "literature is an ally of language," presenting language in context and as a very valuable resource in the teaching of language. The use of literary genres in the teaching of English as a language offers abundant authentic materials, enhances personal involvement, and assists students in reaching greater cultural and linguistic literacy (Zubair, 2022). Generally, literature reflects social life and is regarded as a powerful and successful means of learning a language, enabling experimentation and communication of ideas, feelings, and experiences and providing knowledge of different cultures, past times, and the human condition (Sharma et al., 2022).

2.2 English language learning outcomes

English language learning outcomes are quantifiable abilities that are acquired by students in the process of acquiring a language. They consist of language skill ability, reading, writing, listening, and speaking; linguistic competence, or knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax; and communicative competence, or the ability to utilize the language efficiently in a very wide variety of social situations, including sociolinguistic and pragmatic (Canale & Swain, 1980). There are numerous factors which influence these results. Learner motivation is foremost among them, with intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors being major contributors to the attainment and persistence of language learning (Gardner, 1985). Strong levels of learner motivation will incline learners towards genuine practice and retention and, in turn, greater skill development. Learning strategies are also a robust determinant; learning strategies such as self-regulation, metacognitive planning, and effective use of technological tools have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of language acquisition (Oxford, 2017). Other individual differences such as prior linguistic knowledge and cognitive abilities have a robust impact on the acquisition process.

Socio-cultural setting significantly influences the learning process. A conducive learning environment, in which interactive pedagogical approaches and culturally relevant materials are implemented, supports the acquisition of communicative competence through the involvement of learners in real language use (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). Further, ongoing assessment and instantaneous feedback are essential as they enable learners to recognize their areas of deficiency and modify their learning strategies as appropriate (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Usually, the outcomes of the learning of English as a language are utilized as the standard against which the quality of instruction is judged and as the foundation for the development of personalized instructional approaches that address the cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of language learning.

2.3 Mechanisms linking literature pedagogy and learning outcomes

Literary pedagogy forms the foundation of language ability development through the exposure of students to genuine and plentiful textual input. Reading the literature of diverse genres exposes learners to vocabulary in use, such that new lexis and idiomatic phrases not usually found in conventional textbooks are stored for retrieval in the long term (Duff & Maley, 2007). Literary texts also open students to complex syntactic structures and grammatical constructions to allow implicit grammar

learning (Şahinkaya, 2024). This kind of reading also provokes students' extensive reading, and reading comprehension is extended. Literature-based activities such as creative writing, discussion, and dramatization also allow writing, speaking, and listening. Class discussion and group reading provide students with practice in pronunciation, intonation, and listening while writing tasks derived from literary texts encourage students to experiment with narrative modes and a variety of registers (Trofimovich et al., 2009). Such integration of skills not only builds up language ability but also creates communicative competence that enables students to utilize language functionally in social interaction. The multifaceted approach to teaching literature hence offers an integrative schema by which the vocabulary, the grammar, as well as the four language abilities, evolve collaboratively (Elley, 2001).

Literature pedagogy promotes the development of the mind through critical thinking and reflective thought. Reading literature requires students to read and interpret sophisticated narratives, and it refines their critical thinking (Rosenblatt, 1994). By examining characters' motivations and underlying themes, students can analyze sophisticated undertones and gain an elaborate understanding of language. Literary works are likely to abstract cultural backgrounds and historical outlooks, which develop a sense of awareness of cultures. Through reading texts from diverse backgrounds, students learn more about other societal norms and values, hence expanding their cognitive schemata. Secondly, literature enables creativity to be developed through exposure to new narrative devices and innovative storytelling. Having to interpret metaphors, symbols, and allegories promotes creative problem-solving as well as lateral thinking. This cognitive exercise, in addition to producing a better understanding of texts, becomes the foundation for improved language processing. The reflexivity of pedagogy in literature thus reinforces the students' critical and creative thinking skills endowing them with intellectual instruments for life and academic problem-solving (Kramsch, 1993).

The affective domain is significantly affected by pedagogy in literature because it brings about intrinsic motivation and long-term engagement. When students are emotionally invested in the characters and stories they are reading, then they are more likely to have positive attitudes toward learning the language. The emotional investment this brings can transform the classroom environment into an arena of interactive learning, where students feel free to express their opinions and share new ideas (Gardner, 1985). Literature is usually found to have common themes—such as love, conflict, and identity—that apply to students' real lives and help reinforce motivation to study the language in-

depth. Moreover, literature activities like group work and creative activities promote a sense of sociality and friendship and hence help promote engagement. The application of role-playing exercises and dramatic reading not only enhances the learning process but also bridges confidence in the application of the language in real-life situations. There are significant gains made in communicative competence, and therefore self-efficacy is increased, which results in a positive feedback cycle of higher effort and better performance. Finally, with the establishment of positive emotional reactions and internal drive, the pedagogy of literature leads to an enriched and meaningful language acquisition experience (Oxford, 2017).

Pedagogy of literature influences not just the learning of discrete skills it also teaches sociocultural abilities. The reading of texts that are multiform and vary across cultures makes it possible for students to gain knowledge of numerous worldviews and social practices. Intercultural competence is advanced by reading such a variety of texts since students become capable of respecting and critically reading cultural differences based on comparative literary themes and character study (Kramsch, 1993). Through collaborative projects and facilitated discussions, students are invited to express their knowledge and negotiate meanings with students from diverse backgrounds. Such a process improves language skills as well as respect and understanding. In addition, literature has often been a reflection of society's concerns and accomplishments and challenges students to explore power relations and issues of social justice. These critical literacy exercises empower students to contest dominant ideologies and argue over issues with critical consciousness. Placing literary works in their wider sociocultural contexts, literature pedagogy is a microcosm of world society within the classroom, where diversity is valued and multiple voices are heard. The subsequent intercultural consciousness prepares the students to be effective in a more globalized world, thus bridging the gap between language instruction and actual social situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

2.4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of the study is based on sociocultural theory, cognitive learning theory, and theories of motivation, providing a whole concept to study the impact of the pedagogy of literature on the success of learning the English language. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory puts forward the pivotal role of social interaction and culture in learning. In pedagogy, this model illuminates how peer work, group discussion, and teacher facilitation allow students to uptake rich literary meaning and cultural nuance. These interactions are not just

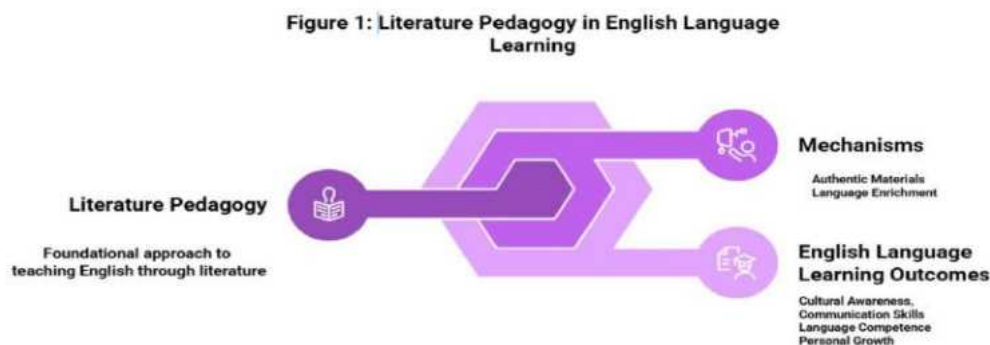
facilitative language acquisition but also intercultural competence as students negotiate and construct mutual meaning from literary texts (Kramsch, 1993). Cognitive theories of learning, constructivist theories notably, assume that learners actively construct knowledge by synthesizing new information into existing previous cognitive frameworks (Bruner, 1996). Reading literary works necessitates students to analyze, infer, and synthesize information, thereby cultivating critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Narrative complexity and symbolic language of literary works bring about higher-order cognitive processing, which aids in the acquisition of vocabulary, grammatical awareness, and coordination of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills (Rosenblatt, 1994). Theory of motivation, e.g. Gardner's socio-educational model (1985), also informs this study in stressing the predominance of integrative motivation in second language acquisition. Literature, being emotionally charged and culturally rich in content, is an internal stimulator that provokes students to seek personal relevance within the works. Such relevance not only increases their commitment to learning but also ensures longevity in interest, as students are drawn to explore and expound upon texts in a way that is meaningful to their own lives and futures. Together, the conceptual frameworks provide a firm foundation for understanding how literature pedagogy produces effects on English language acquisition performance through multifaceted processes and bring insight into application to teachers and school curriculum planners.

2.5 Conceptual framework

Literature pedagogy is a holistic mode of teaching that employs literary texts as a tool for English language teaching. It is a collection of strategies, techniques, and principles attempting to reach students with real literature pieces ultimately to achieve language learning (Wuntu et al., 2024). The instructors using the method should develop not only strong language skills but also critical judgment and cultural competencies (Kumagai & Lypson, 2009). Literary texts are authentic texts that provide actual and interesting samples of the English language in operation. They introduce students to diverse language structures, idiomatic and colloquial expressions, and different writing styles that reflect actual communication (Takahashi, 2015). Apart from that, reading literary works improves language learning through vocabulary expansion, grammatical support for understanding, and syntax awareness (Aniuranti et al., 2021). Moreover, the texts also involve worthwhile information on multicultural cultures, socio-cultural contexts, and belief systems, which improve the students' global perspective as well as language context knowledge (Tiawati et al., 2023). Consequently, incorporating

literature in language teaching yields enhanced communication skills with which students can meaningfully employ English for use in context (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). It also enhances language competence across the board—linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic levels—and facilitates individuals to develop as they stretch their critical

thinking, creativity, and emotional quotient (Ghafar et al., 2025). This complex role of pedagogy of literature is schematically represented in Figure 1 showing the relationship between its most important constituents, mechanisms, and products of English language acquisition.



2.6 Literature gaps

Recent studies in literature pedagogy in language learning have testified to the reality that the inclusion of literary texts in the curriculum can increase vocabulary acquisition, learning grammar, and language development in general (Duff & Maley, 2007; Elley, 2001). Nevertheless, there remain enormous gaps that need to be bridged through research. They include the lack of investigation of mediating processes of literature pedagogy's contribution to achieving proficiency in English language acquisition. Although there has been evidence in the studies of positive correlations between teaching literature and enhanced language performance, relatively few have explicitly described the cognitive, affective, and sociocultural processes involved in the gains. For example, although reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1994) provides a conceptual framework for how interpretation occurs individually, empirical research has not yet fully explored how such interpretation becomes realized in measurable language gains. One more critical gap is in the variety of educational institutions examined. Most of the existing research has been centered on homogeneous groups of students in the learning environments of universities, hence excluding differences in cultural backgrounds, proficiency levels, and learning environments. The focus is limited and reduces the generality of the findings and the potential differential effect that literature pedagogy might have on different groups of learners.

Second, the broader individual development benefits—enhanced critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, and emotional intelligence (Montuori & Fahim, 2004). For example, reading may have been given too little empirical attention. Methodologically, previous studies either use solely quantitative survey questionnaires or small-sample qualitative case studies. Such a piecemeal approach cannot

possibly do complete justice to the multilateral influence of pedagogy through the literature on language learning. Appropriately integrated, mixed-methods research design needs to be used to triangulate data from classroom observation, learner interviews, and performance tests (Riazi & Candlin, 2014). It is only then that researchers can gain a nuanced picture of both the process and product dimensions. This study aims to fill these lacunae through the use of an extensive mixed-methods design that not only investigates the linguistic attainment caused by literature pedagogy, but also the multifaceted cognitive, affective, and sociocultural processes that mediate the effect. With a multilingual sample of learners and more than one data source, the study hopes to produce strong, generalizable findings. Finally, the research aims to make a contribution both to theory and practice in language teaching in terms of providing evidence-based suggestions for teachers and curriculum designers to maximize literature-based teaching.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design

The research employed the mixed-methods methodology. In this case, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in researching the inter-relationship between best practices in literature teaching, motivation, and reading interests. Employment of the mixed methods enabled thorough investigation of research concerns through the provision of numerical information from the quantitative data and participants' experience and perceptions' subjective understanding from the qualitative data. Mixed-methods design was utilized due to its capacity to provide a holistic model for examining complex interplays between the teaching of literature and English language acquisition. Mixed-methods design naturally integrates quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and

thus, it is possible to fully interpret objective numerical data alongside subjective results that are obtained from personal experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitatively, questionnaires and descriptive statistics provide empirical evidence regarding the impact of various pedagogical factors in literature—i.e., genres' choice, teaching methodology, and learning environment—on specific language skills like vocabulary, grammar, spoken communication, and writing. This research design component is essential to address research questions trying to quantify the effectiveness and multi-dimensional impact of these factors.

Concurrently, qualitative approaches, such as semi-structured interviews, sufficiently represent intricate cognitive, emotional, and sociocultural processes involved in learners' learning experiences. By synthesizing the participants' views and experiences, this study clarifies how literature-based instruction fosters motivation and builds reading interests, aspects that quantitative data may not adequately reveal (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The mixed-methods design, therefore, offers both breadth and depth of insights, enabling a triangulated understanding that explicitly answers the research questions and corroborates the findings through various data sources.

3.2 Participants

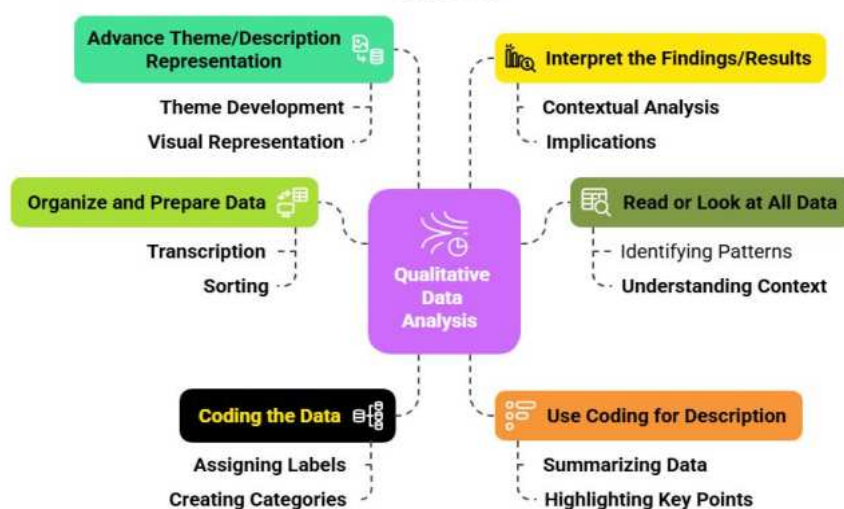
The study utilized 20 students, 10 males and 10 females, from Indian public university postgraduate English

literature. Students are highly heterogeneous in terms of their proficiency levels ranging from advanced to intermediate level proficiency. They all possess good theoretical foundations but not strong skills in practical applications and close readings or detailed literary criticisms. They possess very high motivation and high interest in English literature and in teaching as well. The respondents were purposively sampled. Such sampling allowed for incorporating different levels of proficiency and demographic status in an attempt to achieve maximum data collected in breadth and depth. Every participant provided informed consent before participating.

3.3 Data collection

Two main data collection instruments were used in the research. A structured questionnaire with 25 questions was used. The questionnaire aimed at identifying literature pedagogy components, English language learning outcomes, cognitive mechanisms, affective mechanisms and sociocultural mechanisms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect rich qualitative data on participants' experiences, perceptions, and suggestions regarding literature pedagogy. Five students were involved in the interview activity. The interview schedule, prepared against the research theme, comprised open-ended questions to gather participants' opinions, feelings, and suggestions. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim for analysis and interpretation.

**Figure 2: 6 Steps
Creswell & Creswell Data Analysis
Approach**



3.4 Data analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 was used to process the questionnaire data to establish quantitative findings and trends. Thematic analysis was employed in

analyzing the qualitative data which were gathered from the interviews. The six steps outlined by Creswell & Creswell (2018) guided the analysis (figure 2). The transcribed interviews were coded systematically to determine the

emerging patterns, themes, and categories concerning participants' narrative interest and literature pedagogy best practices. The students who participated in the semi-structured interviews were coded as 8-I2 to distinguish between them. Using comparative and iterative coding, themes were developed and synthesized into meaningful frameworks, facilitating detailed interpretation and reporting of qualitative findings.

3.5 Ethical considerations

During the study, ethical practices were adhered to. The participants gave an informed consent form before when they completed the questionnaire, and participants were also told that the responses provided to them would be confidential and anonymous. The data was handled to preserve participants' confidentiality and no personally identifying information was collected.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

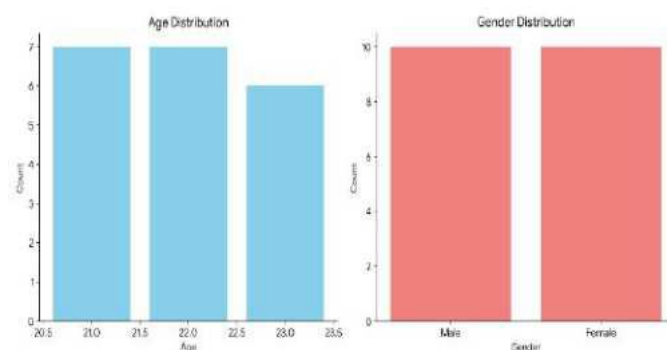


Fig.3: Participants' demographic information

The respondents consist of demographic information for twenty participants. The age of the participants is between 21 and 23 years. The gender breakdown is equal, with ten males and ten females. All the participants have the same academic background in studying English Literature. They are all in the second semester of study.

4.2.2 Descriptive statistics

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Question	Mean	SD
1. The literary texts used in class are engaging and relevant to my learning needs.	4.65	0.489
2. The selected literary genres enhance my understanding of English language nuances.	4.45	0.51
3. The teaching methods employed in literature classes effectively support language learning.	4.65	0.489
4. Classroom interactions during literature lessons improve my overall language proficiency.	4.4	0.503
5. Integrating literature into the curriculum provides a holistic approach to learning English.	4.8	0.41
6. Literature-based instruction has significantly improved my vocabulary acquisition.	4.5	0.513
7. Exposure to literary texts enhances my understanding of English grammar.	4.6	0.49
8. Engaging with literature improves my reading comprehension skills.	4.75	0.433
9. Writing assignments based on literature help refine my writing abilities.	4.45	0.51
10. Discussions on literary works have positively influenced my speaking skills.	4.75	0.433
11. Analyzing literary texts enhances my critical thinking skills.	4.45	0.51
12. Reading literature encourages me to infer deeper meanings from texts.	4.75	0.433
13. Engaging with complex narratives improves my analytical reasoning.	4.65	0.489
14. Literary activities help me synthesize and integrate new information.	4.85	0.366
15. Literature enriches my conceptual understanding of language structures.	4.45	0.51
16. I feel more motivated to learn English when engaging with literary texts.	4.9	0.308
17. Literature-based activities evoke positive emotional responses during learning.	4.45	0.51

18. Engaging with literature increases my interest in exploring cultural themes.	4.8	0.41
19. I enjoy participating in classroom discussions about literature.	4.45	0.51
20. Literature makes the process of learning English more enjoyable and fulfilling.	4.5	0.513
21. Literary texts provide valuable insights into diverse cultural perspectives.	4.95	0.224
22. Discussions on literature enhance my understanding of various social contexts.	4.45	0.51
23. Literature broadens my appreciation for cultural diversity in language use.	4.75	0.433
24. Engaging with literature improves my ability to interact with different cultural viewpoints.	4.45	0.51
25. Literature fosters empathy and helps develop my intercultural competence.	4.75	0.433

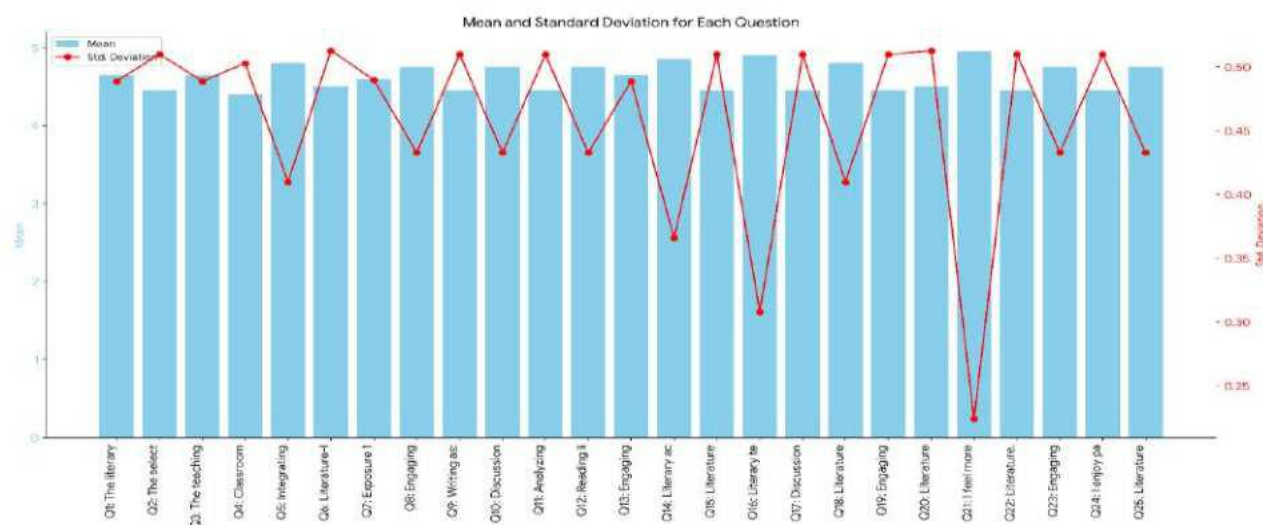


Fig.4: Mean and Standard Deviation for each question

Analysis of responses indicates overall positive sentiment from respondents but with variations in agreement strength and consistency of opinion. Issues concerning literary and pedagogical emphases are agreed upon emphatically, where mean scores are clearly above 4.6 or so, reflecting respondents' general preference for such elements. The item concerning bringing something in (Q5) was rated at a mean of 4.8, reflecting a very high acclaim. There are however subtleties; while overall positive in tone, most questions responded to mark similarly positive feelings, some, such as selection and classroom atmosphere, had a slightly lower mean, around 4.4, which was slightly more ambiguous in tone. The consistency of the answers was also not identical. Questions 16 and 21, regarding the literary device and personal impression, were a little varied with standard deviations of 0.308 and 0.224 respectively.

This homogeneity indicates that more or less similar views were shared by respondents about these issues. In contrast, questions 2, 6, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22 and 24 had greater standard deviations, each of 0.51. This greater variability is to the effect that there was a higher dispersion of perspectives and lesser agreement among respondents. Generally, there is a pattern of positive agreement, though differences in standard deviation reveal there aren't single-dimensional thoughts regarding each topic. Some topics like literature are considered with extensive, overwhelmingly positive regard, but others like selection mechanisms and classroom culture place the group before a myriad of conflicting thoughts.

4.2 3 Literature pedagogy components

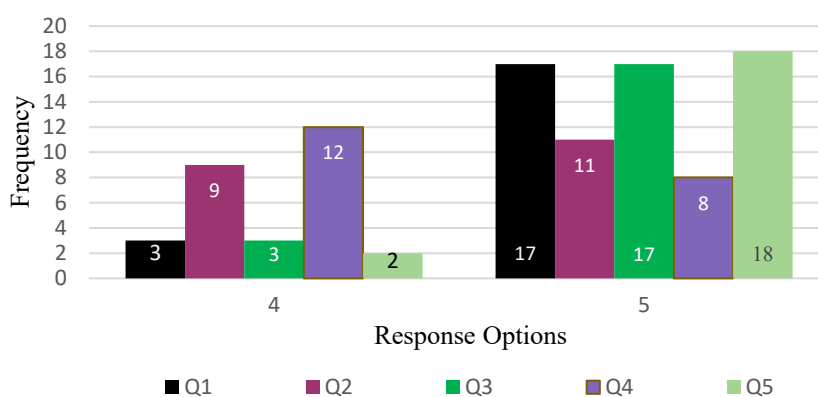


Fig.5: Literature Pedagogy Components (Q1-Q5)

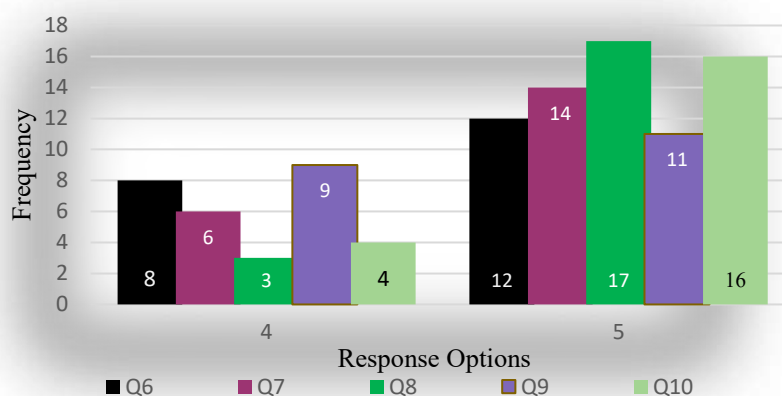


Fig.6: English Language Learning Outcomes (Q6-Q10)

The questionnaire results emphatically demonstrate students' very favorable attitude towards literature pedagogy. In Q1, a measure of interest and relevance of literary texts, a sweeping majority were in entire agreement—17 students marked item 5 and 3 marked it 4—that such texts are not only of interest to them but also pertinent to their learning needs. In the same manner, Q3, under the query of how instructional strategies provide an opportunity for language acquisition, revealed an identical trend of strong agreement with 17 choosing 5 and 3 choosing 4. By comparison, Q2, under how utilized chosen literary genres play a role in developing English language finesse skills, revealed a relatively wider spread with 11 choosing 5 and 9 choosing 4, indicating that although the

genres are helpful, there is some moderate degree of perceived impact. Question 4, which tested the function of classroom interaction within the acquisition of language competence, elicited a moderate response with 8 students rating it at 5 and 12 rating it at 4, areas of interactive methodology enhancement. Surprisingly, question 5, which gauges the overall strategy of integrating literature into the academic curriculum, attracted the most intense support, as evidenced by 18 students indicating strong agreement and only 2 students indicating moderate agreement. The finding underscores the overall success of literature teaching in contributing to English language acquisition.

4.2.4 English language learning outcomes

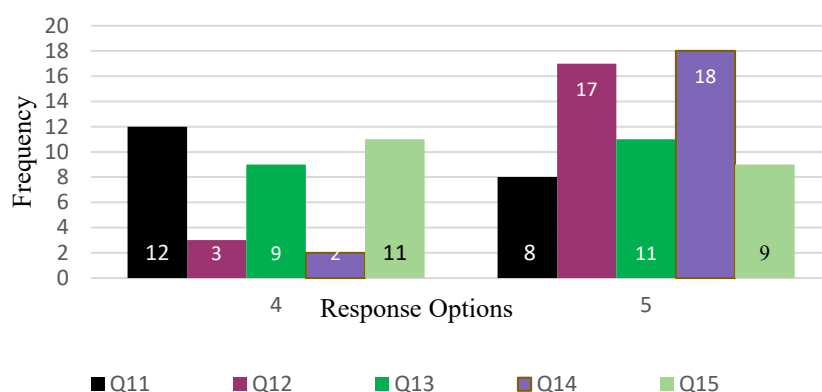


Fig.7: Cognitive Mechanisms (Q11-Q15)

The responses for Q6 to Q10 show a strong sentiment that literature-based instruction greatly enhances aspects of English language learning. For Q6, for learning vocabulary, 12 students checked the item as a 5 and 8 checked a 4, which means that the majority perceive a great enhancement in their vocabulary list through literature-based instruction. In the same manner, Question 7, which assesses the knowledge of English grammar, also received an even more emphatic approval, with 14 students strongly agreeing and 6 students moderately agreeing that literary texts clearly illustrate grammatical structures. Regarding reading comprehension, as questioned in Question 8, the vast majority of responses (17 out of 20 students who chose option 5) denote that the study of literature is felt to be required to advance one's skill to analyze and interpret texts.

Question 9, where writing ability is the area of concern, provides a positive and relatively spread-out response with 11 students strongly agreeing and 9 students moderately agreeing that literary-based writing assignments help improve their writing skills. Moreover, Question 10 illustrates the effect on speaking skills; 16 learners rated 5, and 4 learners rated 4, thereby highlighting a strong conviction in the necessity of class discussions of literary texts in oral communication improvement. In totality, these findings indicate that literature-based pedagogy is an integrated methodology that builds vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and speaking skills.

4.2.5 Cognitive mechanisms

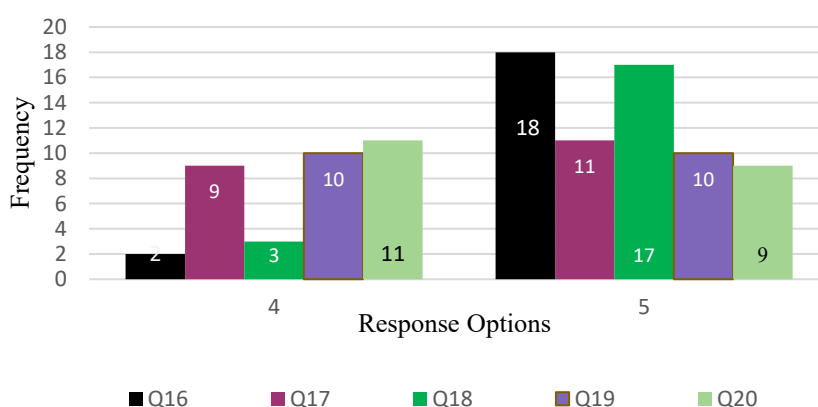


Fig.8: Affective Mechanisms (Q16-Q20)

The data for cognitive mechanisms shows an almost unanimous consensus for the enabling of better critical and analytical skills in the students through literature-based exercises. For Question 11, 12 respondents showed moderate agreement and 8 showed strong agreement that critical thinking is enhanced through literary analysis. The results project that, as much as the advantages are known, there is room for greater focus on critical thinking. Question 12 offers clear agreement, as evidenced by 17 students strongly agreeing and just 3 indicating moderate agreement, that reading literature enhances the ability to extract profound meanings from texts, thereby underlining the effectiveness of reading literature in fostering interpretative capability. In responding to Question 13, the answers show a fairly uniform distribution, with 9 students moderately agreeing and 11 strongly agreeing. This would indicate that engagement with

complex narratives improves analytical reasoning, thus highlighting the importance of narrative complexity in intellectual development. Q14 elicited the strongest consensus of the questions with 18 students strongly agreeing and just 2 moderately agreeing that literary activities synthesize and integrate new information, casting nearly a uniform perception of literature's integrative value. Finally, Q15 on enhancing conceptual knowledge of language structures met divided but positive answers with 11 students moderately agreeing and 9 strongly agreeing. The results on the whole indicate that pedagogy in literature not only attracts the interest of students but also plays a very positive role in their cognitive development by enhancing critical thinking, inference, analysis, synthesis, and conceptual clarity.

4.2.6 Affective mechanisms

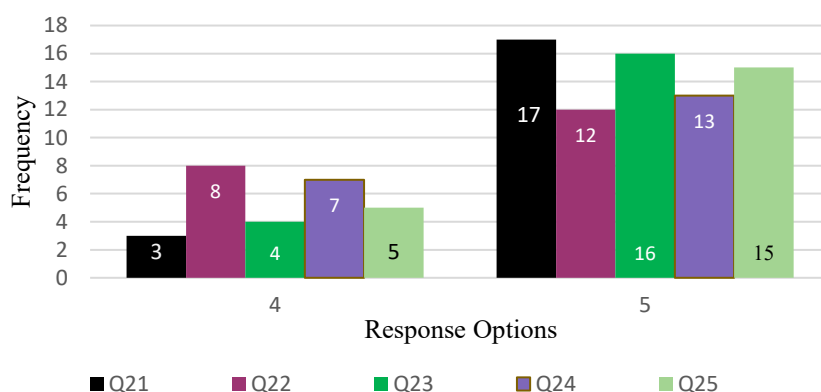


Fig.9: Sociocultural Mechanisms (Q21-Q25)

The affective mechanisms data indicate a highly positive emotional impact of literature-based instruction on the learning experience of the students. In Q16, a noteworthy 18 strongly agreed and 2 moderately agreed that reading literary texts makes them more motivated to learn English, which is a strong intrinsic motivation. Question 17 also indicates that literature-based activities are more likely to evoke positive feelings because 11 of the participants had a strong agreement and 9 had a moderate agreement, hence indicating that these activities promote a good learning environment. In Question 18, almost all the respondents (17 with strong agreement and 3 with moderate agreement) concurred that exposure to literature raises interest in pursuing cultural themes, indicating the impact of literature

in promoting cultural curiosity. Q19, which measured enjoyment of class discussions, had evenly balanced results; 10 students strongly agreed and another 10 moderately agreed that discussions are enjoyable, but perhaps there is some scope to further encourage these discussions. Similarly, in Q20, 9 students strongly agreed and 11 moderately agreed that literature makes learning English more enjoyable and rewarding. In total, the findings from these five items portray literature not as a mere academic instrument but as a significant effective resource facilitating motivation, pleasure, and cultural discovery in language learning.

4.2.7 Sociocultural mechanisms

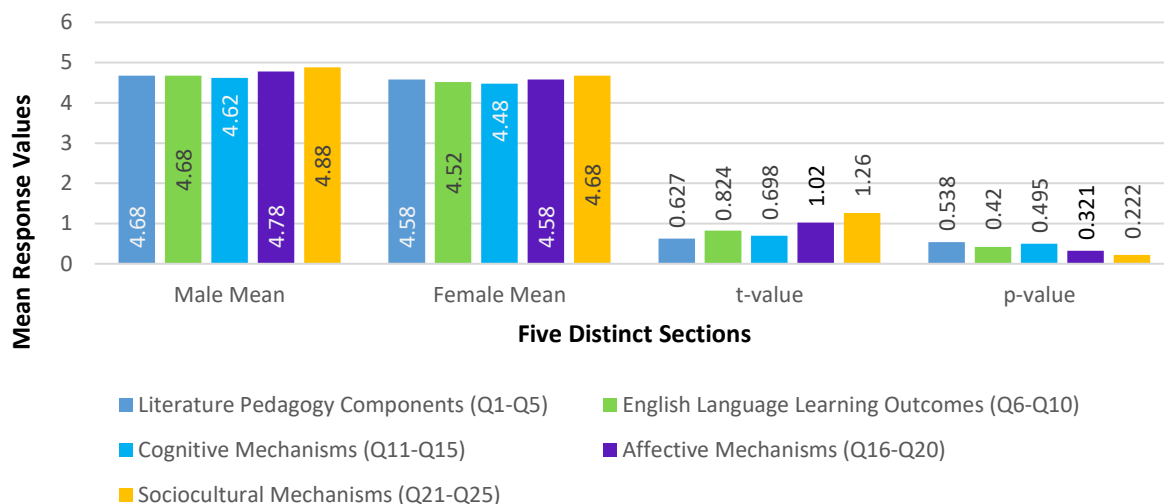


Fig.10: Gender Differences in Questionnaire Sections

The findings on mechanisms of a sociocultural nature reveal that literature plays a crucial role in raising awareness and sensitivity among students to various cultures. Particularly for Answer 21, virtually all the respondents (17 were in strong agreement and 3 in moderate agreement) concurred that literature offers significant views into various cultural outlooks, emphasizing the potential of such texts to open learners' eyes to different ways of life. In Q22, although 12 students strongly agreed and 8 moderately agreed that literature discussion enhances their knowledge of various social contexts, it shows that interactive discussion in the classroom is working but can be enhanced more. Also, Q23 shows that literature enhances students' appreciation of cultural diversity in language use significantly since 16 students strongly agreed and 4 moderately agreed. In the same way, Q24 reveals that learning literary texts enhances the ability to respond to diverse cultural viewpoints, as revealed by 13 students strongly agreeing and 7 moderately agreeing. Again, Q25 reveals that literature enhances empathy and assists in constructing intercultural competence, as revealed by 15 students strongly agreeing and 5 moderately agreeing. Taken together, these responses indicate a strong agreement that literature not only strengthens language proficiency but also serves as a means for understanding the intricate relation between cultural diversity and social interaction and thereby prepares students with requisite skills for communication in a globalized world.

4.3 Gender differences

The graph elucidates male and female respondents' mean responses in five sections of a survey, each having a generally high level of agreement. The blue segment, representing the Literature Pedagogy Components (Q1–Q5), indicates a male mean of 4.68 and a female mean of

4.58. The marginal difference is linked with the t-value of 0.627 and p-value of 0.538, confirming that the rating difference is insignificant. Looking at the green group regarding English language learning outcomes (Q6–Q10), the male mean stays at 4.68 while that of the female is 4.52. Although the observed difference seems to be somewhat more extreme, as reflected in a t-value of 0.824 and a p-value of 0.42, the findings remain below the level of statistical significance. Turkish blue cluster, linked with cognitive mechanisms (Q11–Q15), has a male mean value of 4.62 and a female mean value of 4.48. Herein, the given t-value of 0.698 along with a p-value of 0.495 indicates the gap between men and women as minimal. The purple cluster, affective mechanisms (Q16–Q20), reveals a bit larger difference: a male mean of 4.78 versus a female mean of 4.58. In this case, the t-value is 1.02 and the p-value is 0.321, indicating once more the absence of statistically significant difference, although both groups rate high positively. Lastly, the orange category is for sociocultural mechanisms (Q21–Q25) and shows the highest overall mean with a male mean of 4.88 and a female mean of 4.68. The t-value of 1.26 and a p-value of 0.222 once more reaffirms the trend of non-significant gender difference. In short, the graph clearly shows that the male participants provided higher ratings to each section than their female participants, yet the differences noted in all five sections are small and are not statistically significant. The use of different color coding for each section allows for quick comparisons between the constituents. In spite of the minimal gender variations, the increasingly higher mean scores indicate that both female and male respondents have equally good impressions regarding all the aspects of the questionnaire, thus depicting a very positive and optimistic assessment of the education aspects under investigation.

4.4 Qualitative analysis

Synthesizing quantitative results with qualitative data offers a holistic view of how literature-based instruction affects English language learning. While the quantitative study revealed consistently high ratings for most facets of literature instruction with minimal variations by gender, the qualitative study delves into students' individual experiences, attitudes, and suggestions. The research gap identified was related to the lack of understanding of the complex influence that literature pedagogy has on cognitive, affective, and sociocultural processes in language acquisition. Therefore, the research interviews address the research gap concerning the "why" and "how" behind high satisfaction ratings and respond to research questions about the influence of literature on cognitive engagement, affective responses, and sociocultural awareness in English language learning. By coding systematically, comparatively, and iteratively, five student participants' interviews (Student 8 to Student 12) were coded to reveal emergent themes capturing both pedagogical strengths and potential areas of improvement in teaching literature-based English.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Engaging experiences with literature pedagogy

A common strand came out of the interviews was the generally positive and interactive student experience with literature-based learning. Participants, again and again, commented that lessons using literature were an engaging counterpoint to traditional language learning, which rendered the process experimental and participatory. For instance, Respondent 8 said, *"My overall experience with literature-based instruction has been very engaging—I like how it makes language learning feel more like exploring new worlds rather than just memorizing rules."* Student 9 echoed this by saying that literature classes were *"a refreshing break from traditional grammar lessons; they invite exploration and discussion."* The persistent reference to the engaging quality of literary texts indicates that the use of literature in language teaching not only breaks the tedium of rule-based learning but also provokes curiosity and active engagement. The quantitative findings had already indicated reliably high mean scores for literature pedagogy aspects, and the qualitative findings again corroborate that students recognize the use of literary texts as effective pedagogy. The accounts demonstrate how the engaging aspect of literature enables overcoming the dichotomy between abstract theoretical acquisition of language and its applicability to real life, thus filling the research gap over the interconnectedness of engaging pedagogy and language learning skill acquisition.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Perceptions of teaching methods

A second overarching theme pertains to the perceptions of pedagogical practice being utilized in literature-based instruction. A group of instructional strategies, such as discussion forums, group debates, and role-playing strategies, were articulated by students that enhanced their comprehension and critical thinking. Student 10 described, *"I find that the teaching methods are well-balanced; the mix of lectures and interactive group work supports the learning of complex ideas."* Similarly, Student 11 noted that the use of interactive discussions and role-play made the learning experience *"more interesting"* and allowed for the *"clarification of difficult parts."* Qualitative data corroborates the quantitative findings, depicting uniformly positive reactions to aspects of literature pedagogy. Importantly, the narrative comments reveal how the application of diverse and innovative teaching strategies can effectively enhance understanding. The recursive coding process revealed that such strategies not only enhance academic rigor but also create a learning environment where students are encouraged to explain their meanings, thereby creating a more inclusive, student-centered classroom culture.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Cognitive engagement and critical thinking

Cognitive stimulation was a key facet of literature-based learning. The potential for literary texts to provoke critical thinking was extensively cited by the participants. Student 8 said, *"Analyzing Hamlet made me consider human motivations and emotions, making my critical thinking more robust."* Likewise, Student 9 characterized analysis of texts such as 1984 as *"especially transformative—it made me question social norms and think critically about power."* These accounts illustrate that employing rich narrative and thematic material not only enhances intellectual capacity but also leads students to engage with more sophisticated versions of understanding language form and literary devices. The findings of the research confirm that such cognitive activity is intrinsic to the learning process. By coding systematically, it was evident that the dilemmas of challenging texts push students to infer meaning more deeply, interpret character motives, and connect literary themes to social issues at large. This is geared towards corroborating the quantitative results, where high levels of cognitive mechanisms were noted, thereby substantiating the claim that literary involvement in teaching and learning enhances the analysis capacity imperative in effective language acquisition.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Affective responses and emotional engagement

Affective reactions were also at the heart of the qualitative results. Participants explained how literature provoked intense emotional reactions, making the texts

personal. Student 10 clarified, "*I develop a personal rapport with characters, so I am motivated to examine their decisions and feelings.*" Similarly, Student 11 clarified, "*I am more motivated if the texts are theme-wise pertinent and emotionally dense.*" Such affective reactions indicate that literature is not merely a source of cognitive growth, but also plays a significant role in cultivating students' motivation and interest by involving their personal lives and feelings. These results are significant as they provide insight into the affective aspect of learning that is difficult to capture through quantitative research. The student's personal life histories demonstrate that teaching based on literature can convert remote linguistic regulations into live experiences. This kind of emotional connection is certain to establish long-term interest and increased participation, which can ultimately generate enhanced language learning and a more significant learning process.

4.4.5 Theme 5: Sociocultural impact and global perspectives

The final prominent theme extracted from the interviews is the sociocultural impact of literature-based pedagogy. The respondents claimed that the study of a diversity of literary texts provided them with essential insights into a multiplicity of cultural orientations and social settings. Student 8 continued, "*The reading of historical and cultural tales has broadened my understanding of social issues as well as numerous cultural contexts,*" while Student 12 added that literature "*allows one to develop a view towards multiple cultural as well as historic contexts, enlarging my view of the world.*" These reactions highlight the role of literature in the development of intercultural competence, which is the main goal of modern language teaching. The research indicates that literary discussions promote language skills at the same time that they develop sensitivity to diversity and global issues awareness among students. Through reading texts from different cultural contexts, the students are capable of developing a broader scope of world awareness, which is in line with the general objectives of internationalized education. The socio-cultural aspect of learning deals with the issue of how literature plays a role in shaping students' knowledge of intercultural competence and global awareness to connect theoretical information with practical, everyday knowledge.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive responses, the interviews also suggest areas of improvement. Students suggest the inclusion of more contemporary texts, multimedia resources, and group projects. Such suggestions are that, although the pedagogy of literature in place is effective, there is space for developing teaching practices in greater alignment with students' varying interests and contemporary experiences. The intersection of both

quantitative and qualitative findings thus presents an argument hard to refute: literature-based instruction is not merely statistically proven to be effective but experientially enriching, providing a rich, multilayered experience of language learning. In summary, the qualitative findings present a dense, nuanced picture of literature-based instruction's strengths and weaknesses. By incorporating the perspective of students directly—Respondent 8's reference to emotional engagement, Participant 9's feeling of effective discussion, Pupil 10's meeting of creativity and challenge, Participant 11's focus on learning from individuals, and Student 12's interest in the humane quality of language—this study adds to quantitative analysis qualitative, impactful insight. The results highlight the importance of developing a multicultural, interactive, and context-responsive literature curriculum that bridges the gap between research and practice, successfully linking scholarly activity and informing future directions in English language education.

4.5 Discussion

The study sought to explore the multifaceted impact of teaching literature on English language learning performance. Quantitative findings documented excellent scores in all aspects of literary teaching activities, while qualitative interviews provided rich descriptions of learners' experiences. Together, these evidence sources account for three general research questions: the specific features of literature pedagogy influencing English language learning achievement; the different aspects of English language learning influencing literature pedagogy; and cognitive, affective, and sociocultural processes in English literature pedagogy language learning achievement interaction. By triangulating the questions, this conversation discusses the interrelation among pedagogic strategies, learning achievements, and the underlying psychological and social processes in an orderly way.

4.5.1 RQ1: Components of literature pedagogy: Genre, teaching methods, and interaction

The quantitative questionnaire further revealed that students across the board provided high marks for interest and relevance of literary texts and related teaching approaches to an average mark over 4.5 on a five-point Likert scale. This supports the argument that the pedagogy of literature is multimodal by nature, bringing together multiple literary styles, creative teaching strategies, and engaging learning in the classroom (Duff & Maley, 2007; Elley, 2001). Qualitative data to substantiate these. For example, Student 8 claimed that learning from literature "*has been very engaging—I like how it makes language learning feel more like exploring new worlds rather than just memorizing rules*" (Respondent 8). What is highlighted

in this statement is the value of genre variety and the live character of literary texts in creating interest and reorganizing the learning space. Further, Student 10's comment—"I find that the teaching methods are well-balanced; the mix of lectures and working in groups allows learning complex ideas"—demonstrates how blended delivery can improve learning by allowing a balance of traditional delivery and active, interactive modes. Likewise, Student 11's comment that interactive discussion "helps clarify tricky sections" maintains the transformative importance of interaction in literature pedagogy. These results corroborate Vygotsky's social constructivist theory that learning occurs through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). The findings indicate that the pedagogy of literature, through its inherent elements of genre exposure, multiple teaching strategies, and interactive involvement, provides a supportive learning environment in line with established educational theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

4.5.2 RQ2: Impact on English language learning outcomes: Vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and writing

The quantitative data of the study revealed that literature-based instruction has a positive impact on various facets of language acquisition. The high mean scores in vocabulary enrichment questions (4.5), comprehension of grammar rules (4.6), reading (4.75), writing (4.45), and speaking (4.75) all indicate a general positive impact. The qualitative findings add more depth to the quantitative findings. Student 9, for example, has said, "Literature lessons are a breath of fresh air from usual grammar lessons; they need discovery and discussion," meaning that reading works make students bring to mind as much vocabulary as grammatical fact in a livelier environment (Oxford, 2017). Additionally, Student 10's comment that "the group discussions and activities make abstract concepts more tangible" is evidence that literature-based teaching verifies not just language mechanics but the deployment of those skills in speech and writing as well. This is particularly significant in that it verifies the possibility of language acquisition being optimally facilitated through being situated within the frame of meaningful, culturally rich texts rather than decontextualized grammar practice. Prior research has intimated the strengths of contextualized learning, observing that genuine materials like literature inevitably relate theory and practice of language (Kramsch, 1993). The current findings therefore contribute to the literature in as much as they illustrate how teaching through literature supports target language attainment through an integrated approach to the acquisition of technical competence and communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980).

4.5.3 RQ3: Cognitive, affective, and sociocultural processes in literature pedagogy

The greatest strength of this research lies in how it investigates the cognitive, affective, and sociocultural processes triggered by the coming together of literature instruction and language acquisition. Not only are cognitive processes limited to learning about the rules of the language, but also critical thinking and analysis capabilities are triggered (Bruner, 1996; Rosenblatt, 1994). Student 8's understanding of Hamlet "made me think about human motives and emotions, allowing me to build stronger critical thinking" shows literary understanding is more likely to allow for higher inferential thinking and information integration. This is also true for quantitative test results, which tested high in analytical thinking and information synthesis-based elements. Emotive processes such as motivation and emotional involvement were common. Respondents indicated that reading literature makes learning relevant and interesting to them. Student 10 informed, "I have a personal connection to characters, which leads me to examine their decisions and feelings," indicating how literature provides linguistic information but also on an affective level (Gardner, 1985). This affective investment is worthwhile since it is convertible into persistence and better learning attitudes—the same effect as that of affective filter hypotheses of second language learning studies (Krashen, 1982). At the sociocultural level, reading is considered a means by which learners develop an appreciation of various dimensions of culture (Takahashi, 2015). Student 12's statement that literature "provides a window into other cultural and historical contexts, which broadens my worldview" demonstrates how multicultural text learning enhances intercultural competence and social sensitivity. The qualitative data thus show that literature-based pedagogy not only enhances individual cognitive and affective achievement but also fosters a greater understanding of global cultural processes (Kumagai & Lypson, 2009; Wuntu et al., 2024). This accords with more recent constructions of pedagogy of culture, which hold that education is enriched where it mobilizes a multicultural, international horizon (Byram, 1997).

4.6 Significance of the findings

The importance of these findings is that they were supported in two ways, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Statistically, high mean ratings on so many dimensions of learning show that literature-based instruction is very important to students. The uniform consistency of positive responses, with minimal standard deviation on some of the most significant items (motivation and intercultural competence, for example), suggests that the benefits of literature pedagogy are consistently

recognized across the sample. Findings of this nature are significant in as much as they would seem to suggest that the use of literature in language teaching does not merely improve academic performance, but also life skills such as empathy, cultural awareness, and critical thinking. At a practical level, the findings offer an empirical rationale for education policy and curriculum development. The findings suggest that educators find adding diverse literary genres and participatory pedagogies to be something that they are exploring to maximize student engagement. As an example, the emphasis placed on classical and contemporary texts in the curriculum indicates an even approach to meeting a variety of student interests, as well as matching the overall agenda of multicultural education (Respondent 12). In addition, the good attitude towards class discussions and interactions is an observation that collaborative learning settings can be an impetus for better understanding and use of language concepts. This is particularly crucial during an era where students will benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives and interactive classrooms.

4.7 Comparison with prior studies and theoretical implications

The results of this research are in agreement with earlier pedagogy by way of literature research that has been argued for decades to support language acquisition through its multifaceted effect. For instance, earlier research has established that exposure to diverse literary modes promotes not just language proficiency but also critical cultural consciousness (Appleman, 2022). The research presented here indicates such bases by demonstrating that pedagogies of genres and creative pedagogies create a balanced environment for classroom interaction that tightens vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and writing abilities. The establishment of thought, feeling, and sociocultural settings of such research confirm the theory of second language acquisition by substantiating the need for an overall, multidisciplinary approach. The findings are consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) prediction that the development of cognition cannot be separated from cultural context and social interaction but test the affective filter hypothesis of Krashen (1982) that emotion has a critical function in language learning. Through a blend of such theoretical frameworks, the study offers a more detailed explanation of how literature-based instruction makes language learning success possible, theorizing that gains are not limited to linguistic learning but also to general personal and cultural development.

4.8 Unexpected findings

One of the surprises of this study was the somewhat lower rating in areas like vocabulary development and grammar support compared to the very

high ratings for cognitive and affective results. Even though literary tradition has been acclaimed for improving language skills, the research shows that the students may have a differential impression of their language skills, in the sense that reading and speaking skills are more clearly improved compared to grammatical or vocabulary skills. This division could be attributed to the very nature of linguistic components; while literary texts naturally invite interpretive and analytical thinking, formal learning of vocabulary and grammar will more often require more overt and focused instruction. Such an outcome might be seen as a plea for a more integrated approach in literature-based instruction, one that consciously balances the implicit benefits of literary experience against overt language learning strategies. The second surprising outcome was the small yet consistent variation in gender differences in rating across the different sections of the questionnaire. Even though male respondents gave slightly higher mean ratings than females, the variations were not statistically significant. This is surprising considering some of the earlier research that has been reporting gender differences in motivation and performance in language learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Ushioda, 2011). The absence of significant gender differences in this study can be attributed to the samples' homogeneity (all the subjects being second-semester students of English Literature) and high general interest in literature-based pedagogy. However, this is an indication of the capacity of literature-based instruction to reduce gender differences by rendering learning experiences relevant and effective for all.

4.9 Implications

The findings of this study have strong implications across various fronts. Theoretical implications of the inclusion of literature-based instruction in the language acquisition process strengthen current sociocultural and constructivist models since dense content in emotion and culture strengthens cognition, affect, and sociocultural competence (Gee, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). This multifaceted effect addresses the referenced shortfall in usual models that usually concentrate on purely cognitive factors, hence broadening our grounds for theory for comprehensive language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). In practice, the study aims at the realization of varied literary content and interactive lesson realization within the class. Teachers' curriculum design should thus not just provide room for attention to linguistic correctness but also incorporate critical thinking, empathy, and intercultural competencies of learners. Positive sweeping scores and qualitative narratives attest that such pedagogic practice provides a more participatory and engaging learning experience and hence enhances overall control of language (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Ushioda, 2011).

Policy-wise, the findings recommend education reforms in the direction of placing literature-based learning at the forefront of language courses (Hossainm 2024). Policy-makers need to make it obligatory that literary forms of different scopes and texts of different cultural origins are included in curricula so that more diversified curricula can be introduced in line with the globalized nature of language studies. This will prepare learners to learn critical thinking more appropriate for the 21st century (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). At the social level, the heightened intercultural awareness and competence generated through literature-based education has long-term implications. By fostering an appreciation of more divergent cultural outlooks, such a pedagogy can be a component of developing more socially conscious and inclusive societies. Finally, follow-up studies need to investigate the differential impact of literature on a range of language abilities, ask questions about longer-term effects of instruction based on literature, and bring the research to different classroom environments. This will cast further insight into how literature redefines language acquisition and continues to discover effective teaching practices.

4.10 Limitations and recommendations

This study, though presenting reflective evidence on literature-based learning in learning the English language, is prone to various pitfalls that deserve scrutiny. Firstly, the sample population was fairly small with an aggregate number of only twenty subjects of similar demographic profiles (age 21–23, same level of education). The small sample size can limit the generalizability of findings to more varied and wider populations, especially with different educational levels or cultural settings (Vygotsky, 1978). A further limitation is the research design, which consisted of a mixed-methods approach involving quantitative ratings and qualitative interviews. Despite this triangulation enhancing internal validity, the employment of self-report data is vulnerable to social desirability bias and respondent subjectivity. These may impact the validity of the measures in terms of cognitive, affective, and sociocultural domains (Krashen, 1982). In addition, the cross-sectional design of the study captures participants' experiences in a snapshot that precludes learning about the long-term effects of instruction based on literature. In data collection, qualitative interviews were conducted with a very small sample of students and will not necessarily reflect the full spectrum of student experience and attitudes. Coding, even when undertaken in an iterative, rigorous fashion, remains open to the researchers' interpretive perspective and will influence the identification of themes and therefore overall analysis (Gee, 1996).

Regarding future research, it is recommended that larger and more representative samples be used to increase the external validity of findings. Longitudinal study designs can produce more informative data on the long-term effect of pedagogy from the literature on language acquisition. In addition, the application of over one source of data—i.e., teacher evaluations and classroom observation—can better triangulate outcomes and refute self-reported prejudice built into them. Other designs, such as experimental designs, would allow causal connections between literature-based instruction and some language acquisition to be established.

V. CONCLUSION

The current research has proven that literature-based teaching strongly assists different English language learning elements. Quantitatively, the participants agreed highly on the literacy of textual effectiveness and instruction methodologies, where all means were above 4.4 on a scale of 5. Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions indicated that literature not only involves students cognitively learning such abilities as critical thinking and analytical reasoning—but also develops affective and sociocultural abilities (Krashen, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978). Qualitative results complemented these by indicating students' individual experiences, demonstrating how reading various literary forms at the same time provides a better sense of language sensitivities and intercultural sensitivity. Students testified that teaching literature revalues learning from the mechanistic to the interactive, dynamic process intertwining theoretical and practice (Gee, 1996).

The quality of the research lies in the two-pronged approach using quantitative indicators and qualitative anecdotes so that a strong and all-inclusive image of the role of literature in teaching language is provided. This blended paradigm attempts to fulfill a central research need for an explanation of the impact that literature-based methodology has not just on linguistic ability, but on cognitive and affective development as well. The results of this research indicate that the blending of literature with the language course is at the center of establishing a more participative, culturally authentic, and emotionally stimulated learning process. Overall, the research highlights the power of literature-based instruction to redefine language acquisition in the present age. In demonstrating the efficacy of the approach through the findings and the authentication of the benefit by the learners, the research encourages even further inclusion of literature in the curriculum. The influence of this research reaches beyond the scope of academic achievement; it plays a role in shaping empathetic, culturally aware students in a globalized world. The results

provide strong evidence that literature, as instructed by innovative, interactive approaches, can be a powerful stimulus to general language learning.

AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORTING DATA

Supporting data for the research are available upon request. If you need any additional materials or information, please contact the author directly.

COMPETING INTERESTS

No competing interests are disclosed by the author. There are no monetary or other connections that could skew how the results are interpreted or presented because this study was carried out independently.

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Memory as Burden and Ethical Duty: Trauma and the Ethics of Remembering in Strindberg's *Facing Death*

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Abstract— This article explores the themes of trauma and memory in August Strindberg's one-act modern tragedy, *Facing Death*, applying the theoretical frameworks of Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory—particularly his concepts of acting-out and working-through—and Avishai Margalit's notion of the ethics of memory. It focuses on the characterization of the protagonist, Monsieur Durand, critically examining how his traumatic past and its unsettling memories converge and rupture his sense of self, ultimately leading to his suicide. Based on a hermeneutic methodology with subjective interpretation and argumentation, rather than objective, data-driven analysis, the article contends that Durand's suicide stems not merely from financial hardship or generosity toward his daughters, but from profound psychological wounds.



Keywords— August Strindberg, *Facing Death*, trauma, ethics of memory, Avishai Margalit, Dominick LaCapra, working-through, acting-out, naturalism

I. INTRODUCTION

August Strindberg, a modern Swedish playwright, poet, painter, and novelist, left an indelible mark on the literary landscape of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through his prolific and diversified writings. He belongs to a contingent of nineteenth-century playwrights who explored the effects of socio-economic conditions, environment, and heredity on human behavior. Deeply influenced by Émile Zola's naturalism, Strindberg strongly advocated for its use in dramatic works. The preface to his famous play *Miss Julie* has been labeled "a manifesto of Naturalism." By 1889, however, he had abandoned Naturalism. In his essay "On Modern Drama and the Modern Theatre," he declared it insignificant, and subsequently shifted toward Symbolism and Expressionism.

Strindberg wrote the one-act play, *Facing Death* in 1892 when he experienced the most troubled stage of his life, often referred to as the "Inferno Crisis"—a deep psychological breakdown triggered by his divorce from his second wife, Frida Uhl; estrangement from his children; and isolation from his friends and literary circle. The play was

originally written in Swedish as *Inför döden* and translated into English by Edith and Warner Oland. It is set in the city of Lake Lemán (Lake Geneva) in Switzerland, with its main focus on the final moments of a bankrupt father figure, Monsieur Durand, unraveling his past traumatic experiences and fractured identity, which culminate in suicide. This play also exemplifies a "chamber play," emphasizing mood over plot, intense emotional drama, and a claustrophobic dining room setting, while incorporating sparse elements of Naturalism as well.

While much has been written about Strindberg's naturalism, his engagement with trauma and memory remains rather under-explored. This study addresses that gap by applying Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory and Avishai Margalit's ethics of memory to *Facing Death*. It critically examines how trauma and memory function in the play, with particular attention to the protagonist's emotional distress and its impact on his sense of self. It will concentrate on the following research questions:

1. What contributes to the trauma of the protagonist, Monsieur Durand?
2. How does Durand navigate his trauma?

3. What role do memories play in the context of trauma?

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- Explore how psychological and socio-economic factors contribute to the protagonist's suffering.
- Examine Durand's efforts to cope with his trauma.
- Demonstrate how memory functions as an ethical force in Durand's traumatic life.

Significance of the Study

By critically examining August Strindberg's *Facing Death* through the dual lenses of Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory and Avishai Margalit's ethics of memory, this study enhances our understanding of individual trauma and ethical remembrance in a modern, materialistic society. It contributes to the growing field of trauma and memory studies by applying these interrelated theories to the aforementioned play in Strindberg's dramatic oeuvre.

Theoretical Framework

LaCapra's trauma theory and Margalit's notion of the ethics of memory constitute the theoretical framework for this study. Trauma, derived from the Greek word "τραῦμα," meaning bodily wound, refers to an abrupt and profound mental wound—not simple or easily healable like a physical one. Cathy Caruth defines trauma as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (11). She claims that trauma is not fully experienced when it occurs, but returns compulsively in the form of disruptive repetitions such as dreams or hallucinations—not as memory, but as unprocessed recurrence. In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, LaCapra acknowledges this disruptive nature through the concept of "acting-out," an unconscious, repetitive reliving of trauma, where the past intrudes into the present without conscious control. In contrast, his "working-through" model is a conscious effort to confront, narrate, and integrate traumatic experiences into one's life. It is "an open, self-questioning process that never attains closure and counteracts acting-out (or the repetition compulsion) without entirely transcending it, especially with respect to trauma and its aftermath" (LaCapra 23). LaCapra emphasizes the ethical necessity for individuals and historians to understand—and thereby come to terms with—trauma. In this context, memory plays a crucial role in the process of working-through:

In memory as an aspect of working through the past, one is both back there and here at the same time, and one is able to distinguish between (not dichotomize) the two. In other words, one remembers perhaps to some extent still compulsively reliving or being possessed by what happened then without losing a sense of existing and acting now. This duality (or double inscription) of being is essential for memory as a component of working over and through problems. At least in one operative dimension of the self, one can say to oneself or to others: "I remember what it was like back then, but I am here now, and there is a difference between the two. (LaCapra 90)

LaCapra, thus, acknowledges the space for memory in his trauma theory. This theoretical insight provides me with a platform to call upon Margalit's ethics of memory in textual analysis, especially in exploring the ethical dimension of the protagonist's recollection of his traumatic past.

Avishai Margalit emphasizes memory as an ethical duty. He states that "there is an ethics of memory but very little morality of memory" (7). To explain the difference between the ethics and morality of memory, he introduces two types of relations: thick and thin. Thick relations are those which we have with people close to us—family, friends, neighbours, or community. Thick relations are regulated by ethics, and are rooted in a common past, shared memories, and mutual caring. Margalit states that we can forgive the offenders for the sake of thick relations, but we cannot—and should not—forget past injustices. "Thick relations are grounded in attributes such as parent, friend, lover, fellow-countrymen. Thick relations are anchored in a shared past or moored in a shared memory. Thin relations, on the other hand, are backed by the attribute of being human... Thick relations are in general our relations to the near and dear. Thin relations are in general our relations to the stranger and the remote" (7). Morality regulates our behavior in thin relations, focusing on respect and basic obligations to all human beings. "Ethics guides our thick relations whereas morality ought to guide our behavior toward those to whom we are related just by virtue of their being fellow human beings, and by virtue of no other attributes" (37). The convergence of trauma theory specifically by LaCapra and Margalit's ethics of memory provides a robust theoretical ground in this article for analyzing how the protagonist's sense of self is shaped by his traumatic past and memories.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, aiming to understand the aforementioned issues through detailed analysis. It is based on the hermeneutic method, which involves interpretation and argumentation. The research consists of subjective insights rather than an objective analysis, treating the primary text as the main source of data and relevant scholarly articles as secondary sources.

Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on psychological and socio-economic factors that contribute to trauma in the life of an ordinary individual in a modern, materialistic society. The analysis is confined to August Strindberg's one-act play *Facing Death*.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Facing Death remains one of Strindberg's under-explored plays; however, it has received some scholarly attention for its psychological and naturalistic depth. Michael Meyer, in *Strindberg: A Biography*, reads the play as a bleak depiction of familial conflict and fatalism (510). Olof Lagercrantz highlights its autobiographical undertones and exploration of isolation and despair (243). Ishwari Prasad Bhusal examines the protagonist's existential anxiety through the lens of Sartrean freedom, Camusian absurdity, and Heideggerian being-toward-death. He interprets Durand's journey as an embodiment of "the tension between autonomy and resignation, as well as the struggle to impose meaning in a world marked by indifference and socioeconomic oppression" (104). Szalczar, in her article "Nature's Dream Play: Modes of Vision and August Strindberg's Re-Definition of the Theatre," also identifies autobiographical resonances in the play. She suggests that the play can be read as a reflection of Strindberg's troubled psyche and personal experiences.

Few scholars have examined *Facing Death* through the lens of psychological trauma and the ethical responsibility of remembering, leaving a significant gap in Strindberg's oeuvre. This article seeks to fill that gap by interpreting the play at the intersection of trauma theory and memory studies. It argues that *Facing Death* presents a compelling narrative of individual psychological trauma and remembering as a moral duty.

IV. ANALYSIS

"All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" (Tolstoy 12). Durand's family in August Strindberg's play, *Facing Death* is unhappy not

only because of penury but estrangement, disrespect and lack of empathy. It explores how humiliation, familial betrayal, and estrangement generate deep psychological trauma in Durand's life, which he processes through acts of remembering, forgiving, and ultimately self-sacrifice. Through Avishai Margalit's lens of ethical memory, Durand's actions reveal the tension between memory as a burden and a moral duty.

Durand's daughters resent and blame him for their troubled situation. His boarding house business brings him more humiliation than bread. He shares his predicament to Antonio that his business "doesn't bring bread—nothing but humiliations" (282). Humiliation is a powerful and recurring motif in the play. His late wife's legacy of humiliation continues through his daughters, who humiliate him in several different ways. They call him names like "pig" and "wretch," and indirectly refer to him as a lunatic. They snatch a glass of milk from his hand while he is drinking it, and take away his matchbox just as he is about to light his cigar.

Durand relives the past humiliation by painfully remembering his troubled married life. He remembers how his wife, for whom he sacrificed his homeland, not only betrayed him but also spread lies about him causing humiliation to him even after her demise. "It is hard to remember a past humiliation without reliving it. ... the memory of humiliation is the bleeding scar of reliving it. Humiliation becomes constitutive of one sense of who we are. We may try to shrug it off and avoid living it on a daily basis" (Margalit 130). Durand's strained relationship with his late wife and her legacy of lies and hostility in the family, the death of his son, and dislocation from his homeland France have all eroded his sense of stable and respectful self, leading to a profound psychological trauma.

A failed pension-proprietor and widower, Durand has been living with the burden of traumatic past and terrible present. He belongs to a past where duty to one's nation and family was of prime importance. He suffers from social stigma caused by his failure to perform civic duty to his homeland. When he was about to reach the age of conscription, he moved to Switzerland to marry the woman he had fallen in love with, without delay. The consequent loss of national identity and social fabric is even more agonizing to him as his wife ironically emerged not as a true partner, but as his principal source of humiliation. He painfully recalls how his wife would threaten him of doing prostitution when he tried to prohibit her from spending money on lottery tickets. She ruined not only the family's financial condition but also his identity and dignity by brainwashing their three daughters through lies against him. He feels traumatized when his most reproachful daughter Thérèse berates him—"Is it for you to talk about lying, you

who lie to us and the whole world by saying that you were born a Swiss although you are a Frenchman?" (284). Durand does not refute her. It's obvious that he does not want to reminisce that distressing aspect of his life. He fabricates a story about his birthplace as is revealed in the following conversation with Antonio:

ANTONIO. Monsieur Durand, I promise it if you will answer me one question; are you Swiss-born, or not?

DURAND. I am a Swiss citizen.

ANTONIO. Yes, I know that, but I ask if you were born in Switzerland.

DURAND. [Uncertainly] Yes. (282)

Durand feels ashamed to confess that he was born in France, since his wife has spread a "lie" that he fought against his own country in the war and deserted it as well. Durand makes confession revealing truths in his monologue to his eldest daughter, Adèle:

Well, then, I was born in France, but I didn't have to admit that to the first scamp that came along. Just before I reached the age of conscription I fell in love with the one who later became my wife. To be able to marry, we came here and were naturalized. When the last war broke out, and it looked as if I was going to carry a weapon against my own country, I went out as a sharpshooter against the Germans. I never deserted, as you have heard that I did your mother invented that story. (289)

It is, in fact, too late for him to reveal the truths. He has been suffering from stigma for long. He discloses to Adèle:

Then your mother lied on her death-bed, just as she had done all through her life. And that's the curse that has been following me like a spook. Think how you have innocently tortured me with these two lies for so many years! I didn't want to put disquiet into your young lives which would result in your doubting your mother's goodness. That's why I kept silent. I was the bearer of her cross throughout our married life; carried all her faults on my back, took all the consequences of her mistakes on myself until at last I believed that I was the guilty one. (289)

Durand's memory of his wife traumatizes him—her manipulation lives on like a curse, haunting both his psyche and his present relations, leading him to believe that he "was the guilty one" (289).

Guilt and self-sacrifice are symptoms of trauma obviously found in the protagonist's character. He has made

sacrifices for his family but has received no recognition for them. Adele accuses him of doing nothing but ruining the credit of their family throughout his life—"That would ruin the credit of the house entirely, but you have never done anything else" (280). His memories are burdened by helplessness, mistakes, his wife's manipulations, and the sacrifices he has silently endured. Expressing his desperateness and helplessness, Durand points to his wife's reckless spending on lottery tickets and the daughters' unaccountability in his conversation with Antonio: "The condition of the house has been so completely undermined for many years that I had rather the crash would come than live in a state of anxiety day and night, expecting what must come." (281). He feels overwhelmed by anxiety now. Later, when Adele expresses concern about their dark future, hinting at the prospect of doing prostitution, Durand says, "I have been sitting like a lone brakeman on an express train, seeing it go toward an abyss, but I haven't, been able to get to the engine valves to stop it." (286). These poignant reminiscences are not simply factual accounts but fully charged with the traumatic feelings of anxiety, shame, and isolation.

Avishai Margalit asserts that moral obligations arise from 'thick' relations—familial and communal bonds—that demand both remembrance and ethical responsibility. Forgiving and forgetting are two crucial aspects of the ethics of memory (Margalit 10). Strindberg's protagonist embodies Margalit's idea of ethical memory. He takes ethical responsibility for the past, demonstrating dedication to his "thick relations"—his wife and son. Though he holds his wife responsible for much of his misery, his words for her do not reflect bitterness. He has not forgotten her evil manipulation of their three daughters against him, but seems to have forgiven her. He acknowledges her good qualities at a point addressing Adele—"Your mother had her good qualities" (281). The protagonist's forgiveness for her becomes clearer towards the end of the play when he utters to Adele: "And one thing more, never a hard word against their mother. Her portrait is also in the chiffonier; none of you knew that, because I found it was enough that her spirit walked unseen in the home" (290). Durand's act of forgiving his wife but not forgetting her malicious manipulation demonstrates his ethics of memory.

Memory can be both a burden and a duty. The protagonist's recollection of his deceased son reflects this conflicting nature of memory. He loves to remember him though it is a "sorrow" to him. He does not have money to buy even coffee bread for the only guest of his boarding house, but purchases candles for his son's death anniversary. When Adele repudiates him for this act, he says: "Can't you grant me the only contentment I possess—

let me enjoy my sorrow one time each year? To be able to live in memory of the most beautiful thing life ever gave me?" (280). He gets solace in the memory of his deceased son. This is not merely his ethics of memory in terms of Margalit but also an effort to process his trauma. Durand's son René's demise has inflicted a serious psychological wound on him. He recalls his son as "the most beautiful thing" life has even given him. His innocent son's death is more agonizing to him as his grownup daughters, under the influence their mother, resent and blame him for their misfortunes. At one point, his eldest daughter remarks about him: "Did he throw away money, the wretch? He should have been put in lunatic asylum the time mother said he was ripe for it" (286). The lies perpetuated by his wife about him and his daughters' scorn combine with the persistent debt, starvation, and societal scorn to create a pervasive atmosphere of despair and hopelessness in his life that completely shatters his sense of respectful self and dignified identity.

Isolation and suicidal thoughts are symptoms of trauma found in the protagonist's character. A helpless victim of familial and societal scorn, he resorts to death in his desperate attempt to make his existence meaningful. In a hostile confrontation with him, the motif of death unfolds earlier than his suicidal act:

THÉRÈSE. Oh, it's you, then, who has begrudged milk for my cat!

DURAND. Yes, it's I.

ANNETTE: And perhaps it is he who has eaten the rats' bait, too.

DURAND. It is he.

ADÈLE: Such a pig!

THÉRÈSE. [Laughing] Think if it had been poisoned!

DURAND. Alas, if only it had been, you mean!

THÉRÈSE. Yes, you surely wouldn't have minded that, you who have so often talked about shooting yourself—but have never done it! (286)

Durand must have been contemplating over suicide for some time, but he resisted it earlier in order to protect his young daughters from misfortune. His deeply internalized trauma surfaces in his response to their reproach: "Do you know why I haven't done it? To keep you from going into the lake, my dear children" (287). He is split between his suicidal ideation and his moral duty as a father. If we love someone, we care about them. Durand loves and so cares about his children despite torture and insult from them. This is what Margalit calls the ethical duty towards thick relations. The tragic hero's traumatic condition together

with his familial and financial strains overwhelms him, pushing him towards the brink of self-annihilation. Durand discreetly procures poison and mixes with water. While conversing with his daughters, he begins to sip it. In a revealing monologue addressed to Adele towards the end of the play, he says: "If Monsieur Durand passes out of the world as an [Whispers] incendiary, it doesn't matter much, but his children shall know that he lived as a man of honor up to that time" (289). This desire to maintain a morally sound self-image, even in death, resonates with Avishai Margalit's views of ethical memory—the imperative to be remembered as a person of integrity. For Durand, death is not mere escape but, in his own words, "going to my peace" (287). His suicide is a tragic expression of unresolved trauma, where the past remains painfully present, and his actions are driven not by healing but by a desperate need to resolve suffering through annihilation.

V. CONCLUSION

The psychological wounds inflicted on Durand amount to a deep and unresolved trauma. He strives to cope with it, but ultimately fails and succumbs to death. The memory of his dislocation from his native country, France, and the social stigma associated with it gradually breaks him from within. The accusation by his wife—that he took up arms against his own country during the war, and deserted it midway—helps to erode his self-esteem and credibility, further deepening his psychological distress. The effect of this accusation becomes clearer when he falsely claims to have been born in Switzerland, suggesting an internalized sense of shame or a desperate attempt to escape the memory of betrayal and loss. This vulnerable dimension of the social and psychological aspect of Durand's life is further exacerbated by the ruin of his financial stability and the emotional estrangement from his daughters, orchestrated by the very wife for whom he had once forsaken his homeland. Despite her betrayal, Durand continues to uphold a sense of ethical memory towards her. He does not completely repudiate his wife, even though he identifies her as the cause of much of his suffering. He asserts to his eldest daughter Adèle that her mother possessed good qualities, and he has preserved her portrait in a chiffonier—a testament to his ethical remembering and his traumatized self as well. His ethical and enduring remembrance of his son René, though a source of "sorrow" to him, is also imbued with reverence. He commemorates his son's death anniversary with a mass, purchasing candles even when he lacks money to buy mere coffee bread for the only guest in his boarding house.

Durand attempts to process his trauma through memory as a moral responsibility. His fabrication of a new

origin, his dedication to the mourning rituals for his son, and his acknowledgment of complex familial bonds show his sincere effort to "work through" his trauma. These efforts ultimately fail and culminate in his suicide. His deep psychological wounds lead him to poison himself and remain in the house while it is burning. He sets his house on fire to force his daughters to become accountable in their life which was just a "a play" in his terms, and to ensure they would not begin prostitution—a threat his wife had given him when he had tried to stop her from wasting money on lottery tickets. His act of taking poison and remaining inside the burning house has nothing to do with his self-sacrifice. His daughters would have got five thousand Francs from fire insurance. For this, he did not need to kill himself. His self-poisoning and remaining inside the burning house amount to PTSD. In essence, *Facing Death* dramatizes a huge individual catastrophe triggered by the burden of memory and trauma.

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Sade's Gradual Growth in Beverly Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth*

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Abstract— Upon reading Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth* (2000), it is not difficult to see that Sade and her brother Femi survive their physical journey through lies. This indicates how the face of children's fiction has changed dramatically from one that is designed to instill morality to one that is more ambiguous, even contradictory in its moral teachings. Along her journey, Sade struggles with her parents' dictum to always do the right thing 'when doing the right thing can lead to awful consequences' (Giles, 2009, p. 349). This paper examines Sade's moral and emotional growth by examining first its main catalyst, which is fear. It also discusses the stages of Sade's moral growth by referring to the works of the American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg on moral development. Finally, it examines Sade's memory, which prepared the ground for her to grow rather than to decline. For each point of discussion and to sharpen the focus on Sade's growth, her actions will be compared with those of other characters she deals with in the novel.



Keywords— Sade, Moral Development, Children's Fiction, Fear, Memory

Fear is one of the unpleasant emotions Sade experiences in her growing up, and it plays a major role in determining her actions. As Lisa Fritscher (2018) argues, fear induces the physical response known as the 'fight or flight' response. To put it in psychological terms, the 'fight' response would be confronting the dangerous situation. Sade 'fights' from the start when she courageously accepts the fact that she and Femi must leave the country immediately. Her emotional response to fear contrasts with that of Femi as he keeps whining about not wanting to go to London, attempting even to run away when they are at the airport. Papa the adult who is usually 'brimming over with words' (p. 3) and argument becomes paralyzed and mute right after Mama's death. This paralyzing effect of fear thrusts into Sade as well after she 'steals a lighter from the store owned by the family of her friend' (Giles, 2009, p. 350). The effect is intense to the degree that her temperature increases above normal and she could not go to school the next day, as she fears that everyone knows about her stealing the lighter. Interestingly, it is fear again that restores her health and bravery to air her father's

story. Sade fears for him being deported back to Nigeria. The image of her father 'being bundled on to a plane by [the British Police]' (p. 239) keeps haunting her until she comes up with a plan to help him. So, in such a paradox, Sade's moral growth is developed, as fear both propels and hinders her from doing the right thing. However, every decision Sade makes seems to be the right one, starting from when she decides to print their mother's family name 'Adewale' instead of 'Solaja' as their surname when asked by the Social Worker although it is a lie, until she decides to take matters into her own hands to save Papa when the efforts of Mr. Nathan, the refugee lawyer, fail to release him.

Sade's decisions are governed mainly by the need to maintain the expectations of her family as a good daughter by being truthful. She understands this when she constantly evaluates her actions, causing her moral conflict every time she is forced to oppose their expectations. In Kohlberg's theory of moral development, Sade is at stages three and four, in which young people perceive themselves

as members of a conventional society with its values and expectations that they need to maintain (Kohlberg, 1971). Sade's conventional society is her family; yet, it is when she opposes their expectations that her moral growth is stimulated and she moves beyond conventional morality and enters morality based on reason, surpassing even the adults in doing the 'right' thing. As Kohlberg (1975) argues, the only way to encourage growth through the stages of moral development is by encountering views which challenge the children's thinking and stimulate them to formulate better arguments. Indeed, Sade's view of her parents' dictum is challenged since it has led to the death of her mother. As a result, Sade begins to formulate better arguments -or rather better solutions- to adjust and fend for Femi as well as for Papa. Her stealing of the lighter is an effort of adjustment, and although it marks her moral downfall, it is based on the reasoning that Femi will be hurt if she does not steal the lighter for the bullies, and that even if she reported their threat, Femi would get hurt even more likely. Reasoning is the underlying mode of behavior for individuals at stages five and six, in which the right actions are governed by the decision of conscience in accordance with self-chosen moral values that appeal to logical comprehensiveness (Kohlberg, 1971). The moral development of Sade is striking when comparing the action she takes with that of her father upon hearing the news that he might be deported back to Nigeria. Papa is so concerned with telling the truth it blinds him from being reasonable when he decides to go on a hunger strike causing his own health to decline. Sade, on the other hand, makes a clear plan to save Papa though publicizing his story. An action that would be unreasonable if they were in Nigeria.

At the heart of Sade's rational plan is the arbitrary nature of memory of the English lesson about the TV program called Making News, which she randomly tells her father about in her letter. It is right after she had dreamt of Mr. Seven O'Clock that an idea hazily began to enter her mind, and eventually turned into a plan. While this time memory aided her in the subconscious state of dreaming, consciously recalling memories of her life in Nigeria and Mama's sayings have always kept her hopeful and courageous. Sade's memory acts as a solid ground for her to stay intact and emotionally grow. This is significant when comparing her emotional growth with that of Femi. While less is said about Femi's state of mind in the novel, he too seems to be lost, and relies on Sade a lot. In other words, Femi is emotionally dependant on Sade as a sibling who shares him the emotional state of being a child. When Sade begins to mould a character of her own acting sometimes as a mother to him, Femi begins to shut her out. One striking scene in which Femi disapproves of Sade's emotional growth is during their execution of the plan to

save Papa. Sade insists that they wait for Mr. Seven O'Clock outside the television studio when it is freezing, thinking that 'when he sees that [they] waited in the cold, he'll listen to [them]' (p. 253). Femi, in a serious protest, thinks that his sister is mad and that she has crazy ideas 'like Papa' (p. 253). Not only her memory helps her grow, but it also keeps her connected to her home back in Nigeria, 'now that Papa [is] with them, [and that] England might become their new 'home' (p. 323).

Finally, It should not escape our notice that Naidoo treats her child protagonist not just as an equal to the adult, but as an example that even adults can learn from. In the globalized twenty-first century, the conception of the child has gone from that of a 'blank slate', as John Lock (1996) argues and cited by Montgomery (2009), who could not be expected to develop rational and reasoning mind on their own to one that can surpass the adults in their way of thinking and attitudes, making the best out of the worst experiences.

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The Path to Liberation: Realising the Truth and Living through Righteous Action in the Bhagwat Gita

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Abstract— *The quest for Absolute truth unfolds on the battlefield of Kurukshetra (dharma-kshetra), primarily focusing on Arjuna's psychological turmoil and Krishna's philosophical advice. Arjuna's role depicts the mere human psyche bounded by attachment to material life. This article explores the metaphysical and ethical aspects of the Bhagavad Gita, an encyclopaedia of life. Supreme lord's wisdom provides a framework based on Sankhya Yoga and Karma Yoga for resolving moral quandaries, whereas Arjuna's moral crisis reflects a universal moral quandary, perplexed between his emotions and his karma. The concept of duty (dharma), action (karma), and salvation (moksha) are highlighted in the study, which further critiques the delusion of illusion (maya) and ignorance (avidya) and the consequences of one's Akarma. These elements hinder the process of spiritual enlightenment or attaining transcendental consciousness. The pursuit of transcendental consciousness, also called Krishna's consciousness in Karma Yoga, discusses the cosmic ramifications of the human psyche and, role of divine agency. By applying the Hermeneutic approach, the theory of interpretation, this study portrays Gita as a dynamic interaction of psychological, theological elements and ethical elements that are highly relevant to discussions about responsibility, emancipation, and agency.*



Keywords— *Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna, Krishna, dharma, karma yoga, sankhya, moksha, maya, spiritual consciousness, Vedic ethics.*

I. THE TRUTH

The battle of Kurukshetra is where the quest for the ultimate truth starts. Sanjaya, the blind monarch Dhritarashtra's advisor, is asked to find the plan at the *dharma-kshetra* (the field of righteousness). Clouded by the terrifying influence of the sacred field where the Lord himself is present, he seeks reassurance for his heart. Sanjaya, who is endowed with divine vision (*divya drishti*), can see how the war is always evolving. In front of one another, arms seem fearless and unflinching, to their luck—or perhaps tragedy. The best bowmen, chariot fighters, and warriors are prepared to give their lives. Each chariot appears to be propelled by the desire to preserve their dharma (*righteousness*) or by the blazing flame of great strength. Unaware of the full weight of their karma and dharma, these warriors march in phalanxes, ready to sacrifice themselves. The fight begins with the blowing of

conch shells, each of which produces a noise so strong that it trembles the ground and the skies, including the centre of Dhritarashtra.

Knowing full well that Dvapara Yuga (the third age of the cosmic cycle according to Hindu cosmology), demise is imminent, the celestial beings (*devas*) tighten their hearts. The sound of trumpets, drums, and every other instrument sounded erratic. With tremendous anticipation, Arjuna requests that Krishna draw their chariot in the centre of the field so that it appears to be a massive test of strength. Arjuna's heart fell till his body (*deha*) began to tremble as the chariot's wheel rotated, each instant marking destinies. His bow, Gandiva, slipped from his hand to the ground as he grew impatient due to his burning heart. The heat travelled to his blood, to his veins, to his bones, and to his very skin. Miserable Arjuna could see his allies and foes standing in front of him, holding onto their weapons. He

found himself lost in a trance, his mind reeling, and the misfortune that this battle would curse them with.

Arjuna's inner turmoil is all due to a material conception of life (*maya*). He is aware that his allies and foes will not hesitate to indulge in sinful actions, but bound by the blindfold of materialistic relations, Arjuna is showing ignorance (*avidya*) of his real interest by Krishna's will. Every passing minute is an eternity because of the lord's will. This universe is a playground where each soul (*jivatmas*) must play. The goal is to surrender (*sharanagati*) oneself to the lord, and by following his instructions, one can achieve the path to salvation (*moksha*). Arjuna, the greatest warrior and the ally of Krishna, is standing still in despair. His throat is drying as he envisions that his victory in the battle would only be a cause of lamentation for him. He indicates that the lord should understand what satisfies Arjuna's senses. But Govinda is not meant for satisfying our senses. Lord satisfies as much as one deserves.

His incompetence to kill his relatives, he asks Krishna to kill them personally. But he does not know that Krishna already killed them before coming to the battlefield and that he was only to become an instrument (*nimitta-matra*) for Krishna. We drink the poison our minds pour for us and wonder why we feel so sick (Atticus). It suggests how self-sabotaging thoughts lead to the annihilation of one's mind. Arjuna's pessimistic thoughts hold him back from doing his Karma. It is the lord's will who must be killed and by whom. One cannot attain such power to go against his will; one who tries to do so falls into the deep sea of hell (*naraka*). The lord does not tolerate any mischief done to the devotee by the miscreants. The devotee must not retaliate against the wrongdoer. Krishna wanted Arjuna to kill the miscreants, the parasites that are rotting the entire dynasty, and must be eliminated from the soil. Although Arjuna wanted to excuse them.

The wheel of Karma is inevitable, inescapable, and eternal (*nitya*). The physical body (*deha*) (*deha*) is a shell bounded by karmas and gunas (*sattva*—goodness, *rajas*—passion, and *tamas*—ignorance). As the soul (*jivatama*) gets into the body (*deha*), it is burdened by the Karmas. One can escape the weight of his karmas and the influence of gunas by attaining and surrendering their consciousness (*chitta*) to the supreme (*Paramatma*).

Varnasrama dharma outlines the duties and responsibilities of individuals based on their social class (social class—Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra). *Varna* is a class, and *Ashrama* is a stage of life (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, and Sannyasa). There are multiple principles of religious traditions to help a family grow and attain spiritual values. But families that stop indulging in this process may develop irreligious habits

and lose their chance to attain salvation. This leads to the downfall of the dynasty as the women of the family become polluted (*stri-dushti*), indulging in adultery, leading to unwanted species and degradation of womanhood. On the failure of following varnasrama dharma, the ancestors (*pitrs*) of that dynasty fall from heaven because of a lack of offerings (*shraddha*)—food and water, and the curse spreads to the entire bloodline. Such families dwell in the pits of hell, trapped by their accumulated karmic debts.

II. REALISE THE TRUTH- SANKHYA YOGA

Arjuna, overwhelmed by grief, is prepared to be killed by his family even if it leads to the end. He felt his hands and limbs tied to the intense grip of attachment (*moha*) (*moha*). “Govinda, I shall not fight.” The words left his mouth like an arrow from a bow piercing through his Lord's order. Torn between those worthies of worship and his duty (*dharma*), Arjuna disparately asks for Krishna's guidance. Seeing his devotee and ally in despair, how could Krishna not help him? On the battlefield, Krishna imparted the words of wisdom. An encyclopaedia of life. A man fallen into the ocean of folly cannot be saved by rescuing his body (*deha*). Krishna instructs that the material body (*deha*) is just a shell that must die when it is polluted. The soul (*jivatama*) that lives within cannot be destroyed by fire, water, or any calamity. It is unborn, eternal (*nitya*), and primeval (*sanatana*). It transfers from shell to shell to fulfil its karma. One who laments for this outward is called Sudra, laments unnecessarily. When the body (*deha*) is slain, the soul (*jivatama*) is liberated. This realization can only be attained when one works without attachment (*moha*) to fruitive results and is situated in the fixed conception of the real self. Crying over the wrong is considered a mere weakness of the heart. Such false magnanimity/ non-violence is not approved by any authority. Arjuna is a Kshatriya; such acts of cowardice do not suit him, especially under the guidance of Krishna. He could see his wisdom; relations being tainted with the blood of his superiors. Is it still worthy?

Crushed under the pile of questions that are drying up his senses, Arjuna surrendered himself to the lord. Like a beam penetrating the thick layer of soil, Arjuna rose from the ground. His bow was under his tightening grip. His gaze was vivid, driven by his Karma. One who studies sunshine only is the preliminary, one who understands the sun's surface is advanced, and the one who can enter the heart of the sun is compared to those who realise the personal features of the lord. No one in the universe can possess opulence as fully as Krishna. He is rich in riches, power in powerful, beauty in beautiful, Gyan in legends, and detached from endearment. A forest fire that somehow

blazes without being set by anyone, just like several perplexities appear in one's life without notice. Life as a human is the greatest asset for a living entity, therefore, one who throws away their life by swinging on the threads of maya lives a life of miser. That living entity is not graced by a human body (*deha*) again; therefore, he takes the form of an animal. At the precise moment, Arjuna felt a sense of relief. The grip of attachment (*moha*) was slowly loosening from his body (*deha*). His body (*deha*) surrendered, his soul (*jivatama*) connected to the god, and he gained the ultimate truth as Krishna speaks: *You are mourning for that which does not merit sorrow.*

The statement explains that a living entity always mourns for the body (*deha*). The body (*deha*) is assigned as a haven for the soul (*jivatama*). When that body (*deha*) is polluted, the karma is done, and the soul (*jivatama*) must leave the shell. It is the body (*deha*) that dies, not the spirit. Thus, what are we grieving for? One who is aware of the body (*deha*) and the soul (*jivatama*) does not lament for any stage of the body (*deha*), neither in living nor in death. The world is born from him and collapses into his singularity. Never was there a time when god, living entities, nature, and kingdoms existed. The world mutates, collapses, and is reborn from him. Just like that, a living entity should not be bewildered or flattered by any changes, like happiness or distress. These are like seasons, forever changing, and one must adapt to these changes without being disturbed. The duties shall be executed despite calamity, it is a religious principle. The steady one is eligible for liberation (*moksha*). Liberation from the webs of attachment (*moha*), gunas, and maya. A living entity who is well knowledgeable about the nature of the soul (*jivatama*) causes anyone to kill or kill anyone?

For the administration of justice, violence is permitted. An operation is not meant to kill the living but to cure them. Therefore, Arjuna fighting against the evil under the guidance of Krishna, there is no possibility of a sinful reaction. A body (*deha*) is graced by god according to one's karmas and experiences of life. The cycle keeps paddling until one attains salvation. The living is manifested and unmanifested multiple times; one need not lament for any living being. Wars or problems are something to be grateful about; one being graced by the opportunity to fight against problems opens the door to more blessings and happiness. Face your karma, handle it under the guidance of god, and you will attain wisdom, happiness, and his friendship. However, neglecting your duties makes you sinful as it piles up your karma, making it impossible for one to attain salvation soon. Krishna's word of wisdom left ringing in Arjuna's mind. Would he be able to bear the taint of a coward by stepping back from the battle? One must fight for the sake of fighting, not considering the materialistic

gratification. When one acts without expecting the fruitive results, he liberates himself from the bounds of karma, as his goal becomes clear, that is to attain god. Devote yourself to his volition, close your eyes, let him guide you through the deserts of hardship, the coldness of depression, and, heavy winds of failure. Man tends to achieve great results, living a fruitful life without doing much work. For that, he indulges himself in various activities that promise him great results in a short span. Such persons have no faith in liberation from material bondage, and devotional service to the lord does not take place. In the Vedas, many sacrifices are recommended for elevation, especially the *Jyotistoma*. A small nursery cannot serve the community at once be served by a field. Similarly, the fruits of the Vedas can be served to one who knows the purpose behind them.

A living entity's goal is to perform the karma, not to wait for the result or fruit. God shall grace you with fruit based on your karma. Endearment to result leads to attachment (*moha*) that pulls you away from your purpose or duty (*dharma*). Arjuna should perform his duty (*dharma*) without considering the result. He is prescribed by the duty (*dharma*) to fight on the battlefield, the duty (*dharma*) his lord assigned him to do. By not doing so, he is performing inaction (*Akarma*). It certainly does not matter if Arjuna kills his rivals or not, because the battle already took place in the future. Everyone in the army is already dead. Soul (*jivatama*) is liberated from the body (*deha*), and like a seed, it will grow in another. One must perform his duties by abandoning all attachment (*moha*) to results. This equanimity is called Yoga. One must concentrate the mind upon the Supreme by controlling the senses, this action must not satisfy his senses but Krishna. Pray for his glory to be graced upon you, devote your karma and the results to him, and be pleased in his glory. The nature, galaxies is all his singularity. Born from his grace and collapses into his embrace. We are here to experience his glory, to attain detachment. Self-reflect on yourself, is crying for results worth it? Is crying over someone's death justified? *For one who has taken birth, death is certain; and for one who has died, birth is certain.* (2.27) Therefore, one should not lament for the physical form of the body. The souls of all those in the army have already transitioned, having been liberated from their earthly bodies, and like seeds, they will take new forms in the cycle of life. Is lamenting over the results of actions worth it? No. *You have a right to perform your duty, but not to the fruits thereof.* (*Karmanye Vadhikaraste, Ma Phaleshu Kadachana* - 2.47) One should perform Nishkarma without the hope of fruitive results. Luxuries are never worthy if they pull you away from god.

Arjuna must attain transcendental consciousness by engaging himself in Krishna's consciousness. If one's senses are uncontrollable, he falls into the web of

attachment (*moha*), lust, delusion, bewilderment, and anger. Stuck in this web, his mind is being engulfed by these sinful thoughts that slowly take over his consciousness. It is too late when he realizes his intelligence is tainted by the material pools. Any activity done in Krishna consciousness has a fruit, even if the activity does not get fulfilled. A mind whose consciousness is strong and unshakeable in its devotion never wavers in the material conception of life; the journey of such a person towards the Supreme becomes easy and certain under the divine protection of God. Desires are like an ocean with no bounds—those who dive too deep into them are unaware of the turmoil of their inner storms, only to be drowned before they reach the shore. Likewise, the senses have to be overcome by consciousness and not allow the senses to control one's mind. One has to overcome the influences of the *gunas* (qualities), the *karmas* (actions), and the attachment to the fruit, transcending these material considerations to achieve real spiritual consciousness.

III. LIVE THE TRUTH THROUGH ACTION-KARMA YOGA

In its nature, Karma Yoga is the realization of truth by self-disciplined action. It advocates the performance of one's ordained actions (*karma*) in non-attachment to their fruits, following the theory that selfless action, performed in a spirit of duty rather than personal interest, results in spiritual advancement and inner contentment. Krishna goes on to describe two principal ways available to man depending on temperament: the way of philosophical and empirical knowledge (*gyan yoga*) and the way of devotional service (*bhakti yoga*).

Renunciation of activities of fruitfulness (*karma-phala-tyaga*) and renunciation of materialistic thinking in the search for transcendental consciousness is called *sannyasa* (renunciation). Formal renunciation is, however, not *sannyasa*; the latter is heart purification (*citta-shuddhi*); without the latter, the former is not only ineffective but also superficial. Krishna states that formal renunciation is not necessary for spiritual realization, but by doing duties without attachment to the fruits thereof, one achieves the same end of liberation (*moksha*).

The primary goal must be the satisfaction of one's *karma* under the strict following (*bhakti*) of the Supreme Lord, irrespective of external interference or internal disturbances. Such regulated activity is a purifying test, through which the practitioner can overcome the web of *karma* and attain spiritual perception through Krishna consciousness (*Krishna-bhavana*). The physical body (*deha*) does not exist independently in the absence of the soul (*atman*), the vital energizing force. To make the body an effective tool of purposeful activity, one has to be in

control of the senses (*indriyas*), mastering them through regulated involvement in duties without attachment to worldly desires. Such mastery enables the individual to overcome material consciousness (*bhoutika chaitanya*) and gradually progress to transcendental consciousness (*brahma-bhuta*) and ultimately reach liberation (*moksha*).

But he who outwardly pretends religious observance or renunciation without inner real transformation, only to receive approbation or to fool followers, is perpetrating hypocrisy. He, even while seeming ascetic or religious, derives no spiritual benefit, for divine grace (*prasada*) cannot be achieved through pretence or outer religiosity.

Senses cannot be controlled if one continues to indulge in worldly luxuries or sensual enjoyment. For the true devotee (*bhakta*), proximity to the Supreme Lord is the greatest in satisfaction. The devotee performs all activities (*karma*) by the Lord's will (*Ishvara-iccha*) alone, consciously refraining from material indulgences and deeming such renunciation as a stepping stone for spiritual growth. Krishna wants his devotees to execute their *karma* and not dream and doubt themselves.

The physical body (*deha*) does not exist independently of the soul (*atman*), i.e., the energizing power. To render the body an effective instrument of purposeful activity, one has to master the sense organs (*indriyas*) and get the better of them through self-control in the discharge of duties without attachment to worldly things. This mastery allows the individual to go beyond material consciousness (*bhoutika chaitanya*) and gradually move towards transcendental consciousness (*brahma-bhuta*), leading to liberation (*moksha*).

But he who, outwardly, professes renunciation or religious devotion without inner transformation—merely to win approval or to beguile the faithful—is indulging in hypocrisy. Such a person, though he might be *ashrenacharya* or *mujaddid*, derives no spiritual benefit, for God's favor (*prasada*) is not to be gained through hypocrisy or outward religiosity.

Control over the senses is not possible when one is determined on material happiness or sensual satisfaction. For the true devotee (*bhakta*), proximity to the Lord is the utmost sense of pleasure. The devotee does everything (*karma*) merely out of the desire of the Lord (*Ishvara-iccha*), knowingly avoiding material enjoyment and accepting such renunciation as a condition of spiritual advancement.

yajnarthat karmamanyatra loka yam karma-bandhana

*tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya mukta-saṅgaḥ
samācara*

Actions (*karma*) done without dedication to the Supreme, defined in the Bhagavad Gita as Viṣṇu or as *yajña* (sacrificial offering), result in bondage (*karma-bandhanaḥ*), thus binding the soul to the cycle of birth and death (*saṁsāra*). Karma is not a practical requirement but a causal route to liberation (*mokṣa*) from the material world. Even the upkeep of the physical body necessitates action; one who abandons action in the form of renunciation annihilates spiritual and material duty. When done in the spirit of *yajña*—unselfish offering—karma becomes purifying, and such a one is led by Kṛṣṇa himself to freedom.

Conversely, the one who dines only for sensual pleasure (*indriya-tṛpti*) sins (*pāpa*) and is stated to live in vain. But food achieved through righteous effort—performed as an offering to the gods—is stated to be consecrated (*prasāda*), a gift from God. All crops of the earth and nourishment ultimately trace back to the *yajña* principle, validating the interconnectedness of nature, duty, and divine will.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, being the Supreme Being (*Paramēśvara*), is the paragon of dharma. Despite having no compulsion, he performs enjoined social and family duties (*svadharma*) to maintain cosmic order, i.e., those of a householder (*gṛhastha*). As part of his duty, he acts to eradicate *varna-saṅskara*—the perversion of social order through the intermixture of castes—because, left unrestricted, it will lead to the perversion of moral and cosmic equilibrium.

A wise individual can distinguish between the gross material body (*sthūla-śarīra*) and the subtle consciousness. The body, being a product of nature (*prakṛti*), has birth and ultimate return to and in it. Hence, undue attachment (*moha*) to the body and its pleasures is misplaced. Rather than keeping the body at one's command for the exclusive enjoyment of sense pleasures (*manda*), one should keep it at the command of righteousness (*dharma*) and the Supreme.

The body-obsessed only, with no understanding of the distinction between body and soul (*ātman*), are said to be ignorant (*ajñānī*). Such ignorance retards spiritual progress, as it fails to perceive the temporary worth of the body and the eternal character of the soul.

*dhūmenāvriyate vahnir yathādarśo malena ca
yatholbenāvṛto garbhas tathā tenedam āvṛtam*

(38)

As fire is hidden behind smoke, a mirror behind dust, and an embryo behind the womb, so too is the living being hidden behind varying amounts of this lust. In the

allegory, lust is a veil that weakens the reflective capacity of the intellect, preventing discernment and distracting the individual from their spiritual goal. The allegories of smoke, dust, and womb symbolically depict the three *guṇas* (modes of material nature): *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion), and *tamas* (ignorance). Each mode imposes a specific veil of obscurity over knowledge, confirming how the strength of one's lust dictates their distance from self-awareness. This lustful passion envelops the individual, but by spiritual strength, one can overcome this unquenchable foe named lust.

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Bhutan's Green Diplomacy: A Model of Ethical Ecology and Small-State Influence

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Abstract— *Bhutan's ascent as a moral leader in climate diplomacy complicates prevailing orthodoxies in international relations, particularly those concerning the strategic constraints faced by small states. Drawing upon a cosmology informed by Mahayana Buddhism, anchored in an environmentally prescient constitution, and governed through the paradigm of Gross National Happiness (GNH), Bhutan operationalizes an integrated model of environmental governance that exceeds symbolic engagement. This article delineates the historical, doctrinal, legal, and geopolitical foundations of Bhutan's green diplomacy, arguing that its principled posture constitutes a replicable and normatively resonant form of statecraft in an era defined by ecological precarity.*



Keywords— *Bhutan, Climate Diplomacy, Gross National Happiness, Environmental Governance, Small States*

I. INTRODUCTION

Situated between the hegemonic poles of India and China, Bhutan is an archetype of the geopolitically constrained small state. Yet, it exercises outsized influence in the normative terrain of environmental diplomacy. Unlike the traditional metrics of power or military expenditure, Bhutan's soft power is derived from its enduring commitment to ecological stewardship. It is globally recognized as the only carbon-negative nation (Youn, 2017), a status underwritten by its legally mandated forest cover, low-emission energy regime, and cultural valuation of non-extractive environmental relations.

What distinguishes Bhutan is the synthesis of Buddhist cosmology, constitutional environmentalism, and developmental pluralism. These intersecting frameworks yield a distinctive form of ecological governance in which nature is not merely instrumental but ontologically co-constitutive of national well-being. From the formalization of GNH (Alkire et al., 2012) to the constitutional injunction to maintain 60% forest cover in perpetuity, Bhutan offers a template for integrated environmental statecraft. This article interrogates the contours of Bhutan's green diplomacy as

both an internal articulation of political ecology and an external projection of normative influence.

II. FROM BUDDHIST ECOLOGY TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

The doctrinal underpinnings of Bhutanese environmentalism are rooted in its syncretic amalgam of Vajrayana Buddhism and indigenous animistic practices. Beginning in the 7th century, Buddhist emissaries such as Guru Rinpoche inscribed sacred geographies across the Bhutanese landscape, transforming rivers, mountains, and forests into loci of spiritual significance (Allison, 2024). This sacralization of the environment engendered a worldview wherein ecological ethics are embedded within soteriological concerns, thereby rendering environmental degradation a form of karmic dissonance.

This theological substrate finds institutional expression in Bhutan's 2008 Constitution, which codifies environmental protection as a national duty. Article 5 mandates the maintenance of at least 60% forest cover, while Articles 4 and 9 designate the citizenry as environmental custodians and enshrine GNH as a normative guidepost for public

policy (World Bank, 2024). These provisions are not rhetorical; they establish enforceable obligations that bind the state and its citizens to ecological fidelity. Such commitments are not merely declarative but are undergirded by institutional mechanisms, including the National Environment Commission and the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation. Legislative frameworks—such as the Environmental Assessment Act (2000) and the Biodiversity Act (2003)—further entrench these mandates. More than 50% of Bhutan's landmass is legally protected, encompassing ecological corridors, national parks, and wildlife sanctuaries (World Bank, 2024). The result is a jurisprudential ecology that marries spiritual reverence with legal compulsion.

III. GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS AND THE NEXUS OF DEVELOPMENT

GNH represents Bhutan's epistemological divergence from neoliberal growth-centric paradigms. Initially articulated by the Fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, GNH encompasses four pillars: sustainable and equitable socio-economic development, environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and good governance (Alkire et al., 2012). These are further operationalized through nine domains and over one hundred indicators, many of which directly concern ecological sustainability. Far from an abstract ethos, GNH guides national policy formation. The country's carbon-negative status is not accidental; it is a manifestation of policy decisions that align with GNH objectives, such as stringent conservation laws, restrictions on deforestation, and an energy economy dominated by hydropower (World Bank, 2024). Such policies reflect an infrastructural commitment to maintaining ecological integrity while enhancing social well-being.

Empirical evidence supports the linkage between ecological health and subjective wellbeing. Communities residing near preserved forest areas report elevated levels of social cohesion and psychological well being (Matsuzawa, 2019). Thus, GNH transforms environmental sustainability from a sectoral policy issue into an ontological foundation of national development. It renders Bhutan's environmental diplomacy intelligible as an extension of internal coherence rather than external branding.

IV. GREEN DIPLOMACY: NORMS, SOVEREIGNTY, AND REGIONAL STRATEGY

Bhutan's external environmental posture is a projection of its internal moral and legal architectures. It aligns with global South coalitions within climate negotiations,

emphasizing differentiated responsibilities, intergenerational equity, and ecological justice (Tshering & Craft, 2016). Its diplomatic interventions are legitimated by its empirical performance and legal codification, enhancing its credibility in for such as the UNFCCC.

In regional geopolitics, Bhutan's green diplomacy is a mode of asserting sovereign agency amid structural asymmetry. Its ecological zones, particularly in contested areas like Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, serve dual functions: preserving biodiversity and symbolically demarcating territory (Rao, 2016). Rather than militarization, Bhutan opts for ecological demarcation, transforming landscapes into registers of sovereignty. The Mindfulness City initiative in Gelephu exemplifies Bhutan's aspiration to integrate GNH principles into modern urbanism. Envisioned as a low-carbon, spiritually grounded urban settlement, the project signifies Bhutan's commitment to ecological futurity and national identity (Time, 2025). Partnerships with India on hydropower and infrastructure further entrench this approach, blending regional cooperation with developmental autonomy. Transnational collaborations with entities such as UNDP and WWF amplify Bhutan's influence, translating its ecological vision into globally resonant idioms.

V. RETHINKING POWER AND PRINCIPLED STATECRAFT

Bhutan's environmental diplomacy compels a re-examination of foundational assumptions in international relations. It contests the realist fixation on material capabilities, offering instead a model wherein ethical coherence and normative leadership constitute viable forms of geopolitical agency. Bhutan's commitment to ecological preservation is not merely performative but emerges from a deep integration of constitutional law, cosmological belief, and strategic rationality.

For similarly situated polities, Bhutan illustrates the potential of issue specialization—in this case, environmental custodianship—as a source of diplomatic capital. Its jurisprudential and spiritual architectures provide durable scaffolding for international engagement, allowing for principled alliances and differentiated partnerships. Through consistent ethical positioning, Bhutan carves out a role that exceeds its quantitative metrics. Moreover, Bhutan's model contributes to the theoretical pluralization of global governance. As ecological instability becomes a defining feature of the Anthropocene, Bhutan's synthesis of cultural, spiritual, and legal norms presents a civilizational alternative to technocratic sustainability. Ura (2023) characterizes this approach as one grounded in cosmological equilibrium and

historical continuity—an ontological reordering that privileges relationality over extraction.

VI. CONCLUSION

Bhutan's green diplomacy exemplifies how principled small states can exercise agency within global systems dominated by power asymmetries. By institutionalizing environmental ethics through constitutional law, spiritual cosmology, and developmental praxis, Bhutan transforms its ecological vision into a durable mode of international engagement. Its model serves as both critique and alternative to extractive, growth-oriented paradigms. As climate crises intensify, Bhutan offers more than symbolic resistance; it posits a coherent system in which moral clarity, cultural integrity, and institutional coherence are foundational to effective statecraft. In repositioning environmental diplomacy as a locus of ethical leadership, Bhutan challenges the epistemological core of international relations and expands the horizon of what small states can achieve.

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The Power of Stories: Understanding Human Experience Through Qualitative Research

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Abstract— Qualitative research examines individuals' social, cultural, and psychological life experiences by listening to their stories in their own words, and it accepts the existence of multiple realities shaped by lived experiences. This article explores the role of personal narratives within qualitative research, highlighting the function of these stories both as a method of data collection and as a form of knowledge production. It also explains how qualitative research, based on key theoretical approaches such as phenomenology, constructivism and hermeneutics, helps to illuminate the subjective dimensions of identity, emotion, and memory. Furthermore, the researcher is positioned as someone who participates in the process with positionality and simultaneously takes on the role of a reflexive agent. Utilising methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, thematic and narrative analysis, this paper demonstrates that qualitative research is beyond numerical generalisations and focuses on understanding human stories. Real-life stories are at the heart of qualitative research because they hold emotions, meanings, and perspectives that cannot be captured by numbers alone. These stories reveal how individuals make sense of their world, offering deep insight into their identities, struggles, and growth. For instance, the story of a Middle Eastern woman learning English in London is not just about learning a language; it is about her identity, fear, pride, and resilience in a new cultural environment. Many studies focus on what people say, but they often miss something deeper: the story itself. This paper fills that gap by showing that meaning is not just found in the content, but in the storytelling process, where both the participant and the researcher shape the understanding together.



Keywords— Qualitative Research, Personal Narratives, Identity, Reflexivity, Storytelling

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, we often hear a lot of numbers and statistics. But behind every number is a real person with a story to tell. Qualitative research focuses on these personal stories to understand people's emotions, identities, and lived experiences. Instead of using only numbers, it listens to how people describe their lives in their own words (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

This paper looks at the power of stories in qualitative research. It explains how listening to people's real-life experiences helps researchers understand what it means to live, struggle, learn, and grow in different social and cultural settings (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Stories are more than just memories: they are full of meaning,

shaped by personal feelings and unique situations (van Manen, 1990; Creswell and Poth, 2018).

The research shows that meaning comes not only from the words people use, but also from the way they tell their story and how the researcher listens and reacts. This interaction between the participant and the researcher helps build a shared understanding (Berger, 2015). By using approaches like narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and constructivism, this paper highlights how stories help us explore identity, emotion, and belonging in a way that numbers cannot (Charmaz, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

1.1. Types of Research: Strengths and Weaknesses

Researchers generally use three main types of research approaches: **qualitative**, **quantitative**, and **mixed methods**. Each approach has its own purpose, strengths, and limitations, depending on the study's goals.

Qualitative research is used to explore and understand people's lived experiences, beliefs, emotions, and social contexts. It involves collecting detailed, non-numerical data through methods such as interviews, observations, and focus groups (Creswell and Poth, 2018). One major strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide deep, rich, and meaningful insights into complex human behaviours and situations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). It is particularly valuable when studying sensitive topics or underrepresented groups. However, one weakness is that its findings are usually based on small, non-random samples, which makes it difficult to generalise results to a larger population (Patton, 2015). The analysis can also be subjective, depending heavily on the researcher's interpretation (Nowell et al., 2017).

Quantitative research focuses on measuring and analysing variables using numerical data. It often uses surveys, experiments, or statistical models to test hypotheses and examine relationships between variables (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). A key strength of quantitative research is that it can produce results that are generalisable to larger populations if the sample is large and randomly selected. It is also useful for comparing groups and identifying patterns or trends. However, a major limitation is that it may miss the deeper meanings behind people's actions or feelings, especially if the questions are too structured or closed-ended (Bryman, 2016). It may not be suitable for understanding complex emotions or individual perspectives.

Mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study. It aims to get a fuller picture by using the strengths of both methods (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). For example, a researcher might begin with interviews to explore a topic in depth, then follow up with a survey to measure how common the patterns are. The main strength of mixed methods is that it provides both depth and breadth in understanding a research problem (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). However, one weakness is that it can be time-consuming and complex to design, conduct, and analyse, especially when trying to integrate different types of data (Fetters, Curry and Creswell, 2013).

In summary, no research type is better than the others; the choice depends on the research question, context, and

goals. Good research often combines different methods to achieve a more complete and balanced understanding.

1.2. The Soul of Social Research: Reconnecting Academia with Human Experience

In recent decades, academic research, especially in the social sciences, has increasingly focused on objectivity, structure, and measurable outcomes. While these approaches have produced valuable knowledge, they often overlook something essential: the human side of research. Numbers can show how many people are unemployed or displaced, but they cannot express what it feels like to lose a job, migrate to a new country, or live in social isolation. This section argues that qualitative research, particularly when centred on personal stories, helps reconnect academic work with real human experience.

One reason for this disconnect is the strong influence of positivist thinking, which seeks control, predictability, and general laws. While helpful in many scientific fields, this way of thinking can fall short when dealing with emotional, personal, and cultural aspects of life. As Denzin and Lincoln (2018) explain, human actions cannot be fully understood without exploring the meanings people attach to them. In other words, it is not enough to observe behaviour; we must also understand experience.

This is where qualitative research becomes important. Through stories and interviews, researchers can learn how people make sense of their lives. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out that stories reveal not just what happened but also how people felt and changed over time. These details are often missing from numbers and graphs, but are vital for understanding and empathy.

A good example comes from refugee studies. A statistical report may say that a country received one hundred thousand refugees in a year. But qualitative research shares the voice of one refugee mother who crossed the sea, calmed her children in a crowded shelter, and learned a new language while building a new life. Her story reveals the strength, fear, and hope behind the numbers (Eastmond, 2007).

Reconnecting academic research with human experience also means rethinking the researcher's role. Rather than being a distant observer, the researcher becomes part of a shared process, listening deeply and helping to create meaning together with the participant (Berger, 2015). This kind of research values emotion, connection, and personal involvement.

In fact, recent scholarship supports the idea that emotion and empathy are not weaknesses in research, but strengths. Tracy (2010) introduces the idea of resonance, where strong qualitative research touches readers on an emotional

level and encourages them to reflect. Research that resonates is more likely to create change in thinking, teaching, and policy.

In conclusion, the true heart of social research lies not in distance and neutrality, but in connection and care. Through personal stories, careful listening, and respectful reflection, qualitative research brings us closer to the people behind the theories and statistics. It helps us remember that knowledge is not just about facts, but about lives.

1.3. Value and Importance of Ethical Considerations in Research

Ethical considerations are a vital part of every research study. They ensure that the research respects human rights, protects participants from harm, and maintains honesty and trust throughout the research process. Ethics in research is not only about following rules but also about acting with responsibility, fairness, and care for others (Resnik, 2020). Without strong ethical standards, research can cause emotional, psychological, or physical harm to individuals and can lead to distrust in academic and professional institutions.

Researchers must follow ethical guidelines throughout the planning, data collection, analysis, and publication stages. While some ethical principles apply to all research types, each research approach has specific ethical concerns based on its nature and methods.

In qualitative research, ethical issues are often more personal and sensitive because this type of research involves close interaction with people. Common methods include interviews, observations, and narrative inquiry, which often require participants to share personal experiences or emotions. Therefore, researchers must be especially careful to gain informed consent, protect confidentiality, and respect the emotional well-being of participants (Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden, 2001). Reflexivity is also important in qualitative research, meaning the researcher must be aware of their own role and power in the research process and avoid influencing or misrepresenting the participants (Berger, 2015). Trust and respect are central values in qualitative ethics because participants often share deep or painful stories.

In quantitative research, the ethical focus is more on data accuracy, objectivity, and the protection of large numbers of participants. This research often uses surveys, experiments, or numerical data and involves random sampling or control groups. Key ethical concerns include obtaining informed consent, avoiding deception, keeping data anonymous, and ensuring that statistical findings are reported honestly and without manipulation (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Unlike qualitative research, there is

usually less direct contact with participants, but ethical care is still needed to protect privacy and avoid misuse of results.

In mixed methods research, both qualitative and quantitative tools are used together. This means that researchers must combine the ethical responsibilities of both approaches. They need to protect personal stories in interviews while also maintaining accurate and fair use of numerical data. Integration of data must be done carefully and respectfully, especially when sensitive topics are involved (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). Ethical communication is also important in mixed methods because combining two types of data can lead to complex interpretations that may affect how findings are presented or understood.

In general, ethics in all research types plays a key role in protecting human dignity, avoiding harm, and maintaining public trust. The Belmont Report (1979) outlined three basic principles that apply across all research: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Respect means recognising people's right to make choices about participating. Beneficence means doing good and preventing harm. Justice means treating people fairly and ensuring equal access to the benefits of research.

When ethics are ignored or handled poorly, the consequences can be serious. Famous cases such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study in the United States, where researchers observed but did not treat participants with syphilis, remind us of the damage that unethical research can cause (Reverby, 2009). These past mistakes continue to shape current ethical standards and highlight the need for careful, respectful research practices.

In conclusion, ethics in research is not just a formal requirement but a foundation of responsible and meaningful inquiry. Each research approach has its own ethical responsibilities, and researchers must take them seriously to protect people, promote truth, and ensure that research serves the greater good.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Qualitative research has its roots in the early 20th century, mainly within the fields of sociology and anthropology. It first became widely used as a way to study human behaviour, culture, and social life by observing people in their natural environments. Researchers such as Franz Boas and Bronisław Malinowski are considered pioneers in using in-depth observation and interviews to understand different cultures and human practices (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

In the 1960s and 1970s, qualitative methods gained more attention in the social sciences, especially as researchers began to question the limits of purely numerical (quantitative) approaches. This shift was part of a broader movement that recognised the importance of understanding people's meanings, experiences, and emotions, things that numbers alone could not fully capture (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The development of qualitative research was also heavily influenced by philosophical traditions, such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, and constructivism. Phenomenology, led by scholars like Edmund Husserl and later van Manen (1990), focused on exploring how people experience the world through their senses, memories, and emotions. Hermeneutics, influenced by thinkers such as Gadamer (2004), emphasised that understanding happens through interpretation and dialogue. Constructivism added the idea that knowledge is not fixed but shaped by each person's background and social context (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

During the 1990s, qualitative research became more widely accepted in education, health, and psychology. Researchers like Clandinin and Connelly (2000) introduced narrative inquiry, which focused on the role of storytelling in research. Their work showed that personal stories are not only useful for collecting information but are also a way of understanding human life.

Today, qualitative research is used in many disciplines to explore personal and social issues. It includes a variety of methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies, and narrative or thematic analysis. According to Charmaz (2006), qualitative research helps us understand how people give meaning to their experiences, especially in complex or emotional situations.

In summary, qualitative research has evolved over the past century from early ethnographic studies to a wide range of modern approaches that focus on lived experience, meaning, and interpretation. It is especially valuable when the goal is to explore human stories in depth and to understand how people make sense of their lives in context.

2.1. Data Collection and Analysis in Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, data collection focuses on gathering rich, detailed information about people's thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The most common methods include in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and document analysis (Creswell and Poth, 2018). These tools allow researchers to explore participants' personal stories in their own words and in their natural settings.

In-depth interviews are often used to collect personal narratives. They give participants the freedom to speak openly about their experiences and emotions. Focus groups involve several participants discussing a topic together, which helps the researcher understand shared views and group dynamics (Patton, 2015). Participant observation lets the researcher watch, observe and sometimes take part in the daily activities of the people they work with. This helps the researcher learn things about the setting and behaviour that might not be mentioned in interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

Participant observation allows the researcher to be present in the participants' daily environment and, when appropriate, to take part in their everyday activities. These activities vary depending on the research setting and purpose. For example, in educational settings, the researcher might attend language classes, observe group work, or participate in informal discussions with learners (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

In community-based or cultural contexts, they may take part in local events, celebrations, or religious gatherings to better understand group values and social norms (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

In home or social settings, the researcher might share a meal, take part in casual conversations, or help with daily routines such as cooking or childcare, which can reveal cultural practices that participants may not express in interviews (Spradley, 1980).

In workplace or service environments, researchers may observe how participants interact with colleagues, customers, or support providers and participate in job-related or training tasks where suitable (Patton, 2015). These experiences help the researcher understand unspoken behaviours, power dynamics, and emotional responses that might otherwise be missed. By being physically present and engaged, the researcher gathers valuable contextual data that supports a deeper interpretation of the participant's lived reality (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011).

Once the data is collected, the next step is data analysis. In qualitative research, this involves searching for patterns, meanings, and themes in the words, actions, or documents collected. Two commonly used analysis methods are thematic analysis and narrative analysis.

Thematic analysis is a flexible method that involves identifying and organising key themes or ideas that appear repeatedly in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). These themes help the researcher understand how participants make sense of their world.

Conversely, narrative analysis examines how individuals construct and present their stories, focusing on the structure, sequence of events, and emotional tone used to convey their experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

During both data collection and analysis, the researcher plays an active and reflexive role. This means they are aware of their own background, beliefs, and emotions, and how these might influence the research process. Being reflexive helps increase the trustworthiness and depth of the study (Berger, 2015).

In summary, qualitative research uses flexible and human-centred tools to collect and analyse data. These methods aim to understand the deeper meanings behind people's experiences, rather than just counting or measuring them.

2.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

One of the main strengths of qualitative research is its ability to explore complex human experiences in depth. It allows researchers to understand people's thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and social interactions within real-life contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Through methods such as interviews, observations, and narrative analysis, qualitative research provides rich, detailed data that reveal the meanings people attach to their experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2018). It is especially useful for studying sensitive topics, marginalised groups, and social phenomena that cannot be easily measured with numbers (Patton, 2015).

Another strength is its flexibility. Qualitative research does not follow a fixed path; it allows researchers to adjust their focus as new insights emerge during the study. This makes it well-suited for exploratory research and for understanding issues that are still poorly defined (Silverman, 2021). Furthermore, it encourages reflexivity, meaning the researcher constantly reflects on how their own background, values, and role may influence the research process and outcomes (Berger, 2015).

However, qualitative research also has limitations. One of the main weaknesses is that its findings are not easily generalisable to larger populations, since it often involves small, non-random samples (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The goal is depth, not breadth, which means the results are context-specific and may not apply in other settings. Additionally, data analysis can be time-consuming and subjective, as it relies on the researcher's interpretation, which may be influenced by personal bias (Nowell et al., 2017).

Another limitation is that the quality of qualitative research depends heavily on the researcher's skill. Poorly conducted interviews or observations can lead to weak

data. Ensuring trustworthiness, credibility, and transparency requires careful planning and ongoing reflection throughout the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

In summary, qualitative research is a valuable approach for gaining deep, meaningful insights into human life, but it must be conducted with care to manage its limitations and ensure the research is rigorous and ethical.

2.3. Is Generalisability Always Good in Research?

Whether generalisability is important depends on the type and aim of the research. In quantitative research, generalisability is often seen as a key strength because it allows findings from a sample to be applied to a larger population. This is achieved through random sampling and statistical analysis, which aim to produce objective and replicable results (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Quantitative studies often seek to test hypotheses or predict outcomes, and therefore, generalisability is necessary to confirm that the findings are valid beyond the specific group studied.

In contrast, qualitative research prioritises depth over breadth. It focuses on understanding people's real-life experiences, emotions, and the meanings they attach to events, often within specific social or cultural contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

As a result, it does not aim to generalise findings to a wider population in a statistical sense. Instead, it values what Lincoln and Guba (1985) called transferability, the idea that findings may be meaningful to others in similar situations if the context is well-described. Researchers provide thick, detailed descriptions so that readers can decide whether the results are relevant to their own context.

Some scholars argue that generalisability is not always necessary or even desirable in qualitative work. Flyvbjerg (2006), for example, suggested that the power of qualitative research lies in its ability to explore unique cases that challenge general assumptions. He argued that deeply studying a single case can often reveal more about a phenomenon than a large-scale survey because it uncovers the complexities and contradictions of real life. Similarly, Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) emphasised that idiographic understanding, or the detailed study of individual cases, allows for insights that large studies might overlook.

Tracy (2010) added that qualitative research should be judged by criteria such as resonance and sincerity, rather than its ability to generalise. In her view, good qualitative research connects with readers emotionally and intellectually, allowing them to see the world differently.

This type of impact may not be measurable through generalisability but is nonetheless valuable in shaping understanding and practice.

In summary, generalisability is valuable in quantitative studies where broad application is the goal. However, in qualitative research, the aim is to understand the complexity and meaning of specific human experiences. While qualitative findings may not be statistically generalisable, they can still offer powerful insights that influence thinking, policy, and practice. The choice between generalisability and depth depends on the purpose of the research and the nature of the questions being asked.

2.4. Positionality and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, positionality means the researcher's awareness of their own background, beliefs, values, identity, and how these may influence the research process. It includes recognising things like gender, ethnicity, class, culture, or life experiences that might shape how the researcher views the topic or interprets participants' stories (Berger, 2015). For example, a female researcher interviewing women about gender discrimination may relate closely to the topic, which can influence the types of questions asked and how the answers are understood.

Reflexivity is closely related. It is the ongoing process where the researcher thinks carefully about their role in the research, including how their presence, assumptions, and personal experiences might affect the data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity helps improve the honesty, depth, and trustworthiness of the research by encouraging the researcher to be transparent about their influence on the study (Etherington, 2004).

In qualitative research, these concepts are especially important because the researcher is often closely involved with the participants and may act as both a listener and an interpreter. Unlike in quantitative research, where the goal is usually to remain objective and distant, qualitative research recognises that the researcher cannot be completely separate from the process. Instead of ignoring bias, qualitative researchers try to understand and manage it (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Although positionality and reflexivity are central to qualitative work, they are becoming more recognised in other types of research as well. In mixed-methods or action research, where the researcher might engage with communities or interpret results alongside statistical data, reflexivity helps explain why certain decisions were made and how interpretations were shaped (Mertens, 2015). Even in quantitative research, scholars are starting to

acknowledge that total objectivity is hard to achieve, and that researcher assumptions may still influence the design or interpretation of results (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Therefore, while positionality and reflexivity are most deeply embedded in qualitative research, they can also bring value to other research approaches. Being reflective improves transparency, ethical awareness, and the overall credibility of any study.

III. LISTENING BEYOND WORDS: STORIES AS LIVING KNOWLEDGE IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD

In today's fast-paced world, where everything is focused on data and quick communication, personal stories help us remember the real feelings and experiences that make us human.

They carry more than information; they carry emotion, memory, identity, and truth. Yet, in many research spaces, these lived experiences are often reduced to numbers, categories, or codes. This chapter argues that qualitative research, when grounded in storytelling, not only captures human reality but also helps repair the emotional and social fragmentation of our time.

Stories are not simply a way to collect data: they are a form of living knowledge (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). When a participant shares their story, they are not just recalling events; they are revealing how they have made sense of those events in light of who they are, what they feel, and where they come from. As van Manen (1990) notes, the story is a pathway into the soul of human experience—it shows not just what happened, but how it was lived.

In qualitative research, listening to stories is not passive. It is an ethical and relational act. The researcher is not a distant observer but a co-creator of meaning (Berger, 2015). The process of listening, asking, and reflecting becomes a shared journey: one that respects vulnerability and fosters deep understanding. As Gadamer (2004) emphasised, understanding emerges in the space between people, in the dialogue, in the silence, in the pause after someone says something that shakes your worldview.

Consider the story of an immigrant woman learning English in a new country. Her story is not simply about language learning; it is about dislocation, fear, survival, and identity. In her broken sentences are traces of strength, shame, and the slow rebuilding of selfhood. No statistic, no scale, no survey could fully express what it means for her to read a bus sign without asking for help. Her narrative is a living testimony of resilience—a kind of

truth that cannot be quantified but must be felt and understood (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

This chapter challenges the notion that validity in research is only found in generalisability or objectivity. Instead, it suggests that authentic understanding is found in what Tracy (2010) calls *resonance*, when a story reaches into the reader's own life and changes how they see the world. One story, honestly told and deeply heard, has the power to transform minds, challenge systems, and open space for justice and empathy.

Furthermore, storytelling in research offers a form of resistance. It resists silence, invisibility, and dehumanisation. When people are invited to speak in their own words and are truly heard, research becomes a tool for liberation. As bell hooks (1994) wrote, "The moment we choose to love, we begin to move against domination, against oppression." In this way, listening becomes a radical act.

Finally, this chapter invites researchers to listen beyond the words and pay attention to tone, gesture, silence, and emotion. What is unsaid is sometimes louder than what is spoken, and sometimes, the space between the lines is where the truest meaning lives.

In a world overwhelmed by information, we need not more data but more care. Stories remind us that behind every dataset is a heartbeat. Qualitative research, when guided by narrative, invites us to feel the knowledge, not just think it. And that is how we remember what it means to be fully human.

IV. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study is based on three key theoretical approaches, phenomenology, constructivism, and hermeneutics, that help explain how people share and understand their life experiences.

Phenomenology focuses on understanding how individuals experience the world through their own feelings, thoughts, and memories. It explores how people perceive the events in their lives by examining their stories closely.

According to van Manen (1990), phenomenology aims to reveal the deeper and hidden meaning behind daily life experiences by focusing on how those experiences are perceived.

Constructivism is based on the idea that there is no single truth. Instead, people build their own understanding of reality based on their background, culture, and social environment. This means that different people may see the same event in different ways. As Creswell and Poth (2018)

explained, constructivist researchers believe that personal and social experiences form knowledge.

Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation. It suggests that meaning is not fixed but is created through the process of interpreting language, symbols, and actions. Gadamer (2004) explained that understanding is created through a conversation between the speaker and the listener, where both share their own experiences to make sense of the story together.

These three theories are the key elements guiding the research, revealing how people share their stories and real-life experiences. They also help understand how the surrounding shapes their views and how talking and thinking create meaning.

V. THE ROLE OF STORIES IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In qualitative research, stories are a powerful tool to understand human experiences. They allow participants to express their thoughts, emotions, and personal views in a natural and meaningful way. Through storytelling, researchers can gain insight into how individuals understand their identity, relationships, and life challenges (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Stories are not just about what happened: they show how people feel about those events and what those events mean to them.

The storytelling process helps build a bond between the researcher and the participant. It creates a shared space where both listen to each other, think deeply, and make sense of the story together (Berger, 2015). As Berger (2015) explained, this interaction helps both the participant and the researcher shape the framework of the story. In this way, stories go beyond facts and become a form of knowledge that reflects the richness and complexity of real life.

VI. THE POWER OF PERSONAL STORIES

Personal stories offer a meaningful way to understand how people live, adapt, and find strength in their everyday lives. For example, the experience of a Middle Eastern woman learning English in a new country is not only about language; it is also about identity, fear, pride, and resilience (Creswell and Poth, 2018; van Manen, 1990). Her story reveals how individuals deal with change, build confidence, and find their place in unfamiliar environments.

Stories like these help researchers see the human side of social issues. One honest and emotional story can challenge common beliefs and open up new ways of

thinking (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Rather than looking only at statistics or general trends, personal narratives bring attention to the lived realities that often go unnoticed or ignored. They help understand individual struggles and strengths, making research more compassionate and connected to real life.

VII. CONCLUSION

Personal narratives in qualitative research serve as powerful tools for understanding how individuals experience the world and derive meaning from their lives. These stories give voice to individuals, especially those whose experiences are often overlooked or misunderstood in mainstream research (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Through storytelling, participants share their emotions, identities, and beliefs, allowing researchers to see the depth and complexity of human life. As Denzin and Lincoln (2018) pointed out, one personal story, when shared honestly and with emotion, can challenge dominant ideas and offer a new way of seeing the world.

By listening carefully and engaging in dialogue, researchers and participants co-create rich, meaningful, and deeply human knowledge (Berger, 2015). Personal narratives are not only a method of collecting information but also a way of changing perspectives and fostering empathy in both research and society.

This paper benefits academia by reaffirming the value of human experience as a valid and meaningful source of knowledge. In a time when academic research often prioritises measurable outcomes and statistical generalisability, this study highlights the importance of narrative and lived experience in understanding social reality. By focusing on qualitative research methods, particularly storytelling and personal narratives, the paper offers a deeper exploration of identity, emotion, memory, and meaning areas that are often underrepresented in mainstream research. It contributes to theoretical discussions on constructivism, phenomenology, and narrative inquiry, while also encouraging reflexive and ethical practices in research design. Additionally, the paper provides a practical framework for applying qualitative storytelling in education, migration studies, and mental health research, thereby enriching interdisciplinary dialogue and expanding methodological diversity within the academic community (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

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Solar powered Irrigation System in Tabuk City Kalinga and Quezon-mallig, Isabela:Economic Contribution, Challenges, and Sustainability, Philippines

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Abstract— This study assessed the impact, usability, and sustainability of the Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) among 33 farmers in Tabuk City, Kalinga, and Quezon-Mallig, Isabela. Using a quantitative descriptive design, the research found that SPIS significantly improved crop yield, quality, and farm income, while reducing irrigation and energy costs. Most respondents were male, aged 51–60, with modest incomes and limited formal education, highlighting the need for targeted training. Land ownership was high, and crop farming dominated, but many previously relied on costly diesel pumps or rainfed agriculture. While SPIS was rated highly for energy efficiency and integration with existing infrastructure, moderate ratings for ease of use, system reliability, and low scores for training and technical support revealed operational gaps. Institutional and community support was strong, with widespread willingness to recommend SPIS and confidence in government investment. The study concludes that SPIS offers substantial benefits for smallholder farmers but recommends enhanced technical training, local support hubs, improved financial access, infrastructure upgrades, stronger policy support, and greater community engagement to ensure long-term sustainability and equitable access.



Keywords— utilization of the SPIS, economic contribution of the SPIS, Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS), SPIS implementation sustainability plan

I. INTRODUCTION

Farming is a key source of income in the Philippines, especially in rural areas, and irrigation is vital for crop production. However, rising food demand, limited freshwater, high energy costs, and unreliable electricity make traditional irrigation challenging and environmentally harmful due to greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.

Solar-powered irrigation offers a promising alternative by using photovoltaic (PV) technology to convert sunlight into electricity for water pumps. Case studies worldwide including India, Jordan, the US, Pakistan, China, and the Philippines show that solar irrigation improves water access, reduces costs and emissions, and increases farmers' income¹. In the Philippines, solar-powered

irrigation has led to significant diesel savings and high returns on investment, while also supporting gender empowerment and water access in remote areas.

The Philippine government, through the Department of Agriculture and National Irrigation Administration (NIA), has promoted solar irrigation since 2018. By the end of 2023, 82 solar-powered pump projects were completed, benefiting over 1,000 farmers and irrigating 866 hectares nationwide. In the Cordillera region, 21 projects were completed in 2023, serving 253 hectares and 365 farmers.

Despite these advances, research on the sustainability and economic impact of solar-powered irrigation in Kalinga and Isabela remains limited. This study aims to fill that gap by assessing how these systems have affected farmers' income, costs, and crop yields in Tabuk City, Kalinga, and

Quezon-Mallig, Isabela from 2022 to 2024, to inform future agricultural development.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

The study aims to explore the perceived economic impact of the Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) within the coverage areas of Upper Chico River Irrigation System (UCRIS), particularly in Tabuk City, Kalinga, and Quezon-Mallig, Isabela for the years 2022 to 2024. The framework outlines how the adoption of SPIS, as a sustainable solution to water shortages in non-operational areas of UCRIS, can lead to improvements in agricultural productivity, income generation, and overall economic development of beneficiaries.

The framework below highlights the role of SPIS as an innovative and sustainable solution to help farmers in irrigation of their crops without relying on expensive and unreliable fuel-electricity powered systems. Through the improvement of access to irrigation water by renewable energy, SPIS is expected to contribute in increasing crop production, reduced operational costs and enhanced livelihoods for farmers. The conceptual framework also serves as a guide for analyzing how government-supported technological innovations in agriculture, like SPIS can address rural irrigation problems and provide contribution to sustainable economic growth in farming communities.

1.2 Statement of the Objectives

This study aimed to examine the Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) as implemented for beneficiaries within the coverage of the Upper Chico River Irrigation System in Tabuk City, Kalinga, and Quezon-Mallig, Isabela for the years 2022–2024. Specifically, this aimed to:

1. assess the perceived economic contribution of the SPIS towards beneficiaries;
2. identify challenges and issues in the utilization of the SPIS; and
3. propose a sustainability plan addressing the identified challenges in SPIS implementation.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the related literature and studies after the thorough and in-depth search by the researcher. This will also present the local and global studies on the Improvement of Water Use Efficiency of Irrigation System integrating modernization.

Solar-powered irrigation systems have been widely recognized for their potential to support sustainable agriculture. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA, 2016), these systems reduce greenhouse gas emissions by replacing diesel or electric

pumps with clean and renewable energy. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2018) also supports this view by highlighting how solar irrigation can address water scarcity and reduce operational costs for smallholder farmers.

The first solar pumps were installed in the late 1970s. Since then, Photovoltaic (PV) water pumping systems have shown significant advancements. The first-generation PV pumping systems used centrifugal pumps, usually driven by DC motors or variable frequency AC motors, with proven long-term reliability and hydraulic efficiency varying from 25 percent to 35 percent. The second-generation PV pumping systems introduced positive displacement pumps, progressive cavity pumps and diaphragm pumps for smaller water quantities, generally characterized by lower PV input power requirements, lower capital costs and higher hydraulic efficiencies (Chandel, 2015). This pioneering work was piloted in different countries around the world. Moreover, it was also stated that apart from the environmental advantages, the economic benefits of solar irrigation are long-term. Although initial costs are high, the reduction in fuel and electricity bills makes the investment worthwhile over time.

Vicente (2024), a solar energy expert from Sunhero, explains how solar panels can be a practical and sustainable solution for agricultural irrigation. According to him, using solar-powered systems allows farmers to pump water for their crops without relying on electricity from the grid or costly diesel fuel. This helps reduce farming expenses and protects farmers from rising fuel prices and power interruptions. The author also points out that solar irrigation systems are especially useful in areas with abundant sunlight, as they can run efficiently throughout the day. One of the main benefits is energy independence where farmers can irrigate their land without worrying about electric bills or fuel availability. Since these systems do not release harmful emissions, they are environmentally friendly which makes them a clean alternative to traditional pumps. Moreover, the author highlights that although the initial setup cost can be high, around €1,000 to €1,500 per kilowatt, the long-term savings make it a smart investment. In addition, solar-powered systems can be customized to match the size of the farm, the type of crops, and the amount of water needed. They can also be combined with existing irrigation systems, making the switch to solar easier and more flexible. Overall, solar panels offer farmers a reliable and cost-effective way to irrigate their fields while promoting sustainable agriculture.

In 2019, World Bank reported how solar-powered irrigation systems can greatly help farmers, especially in

places where electricity is limited. In some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, using solar pumps helped farmers grow more crops, sometimes up to more than 50%. This means farmers could earn more money and have a better quality of life. Solar irrigation works well in rural areas because it uses the sun's energy to power water pumps, removing the need for diesel or electricity from the grid. However, many small farmers cannot afford to buy these systems because they cost too much at the start. The World Bank suggested that governments and private companies should work together to give support, like loans or discounts, to help farmers get these systems. If more farmers can use solar pumps, it would not only improve farming but also make it more eco-friendly and help feed more people.

Furthermore, the International Water Management Institute (2020) shared that combining solar power with smart irrigation tools like soil moisture sensors can make farming even more efficient. These tools help farmers know exactly when their crops need water and how much, so they don't use more water than necessary. This prevents overwatering, which not only saves water but also protects the soil and crops. By using solar energy to run these smart systems, farmers can save both water and electricity. This approach is very useful in places where water is limited or where farmers rely on expensive fuel or electricity. The IWMI highlighted that this kind of system can make farming more sustainable in the long run, because it helps manage water better, lowers costs, and supports environmentally friendly practices.

A study by Fawzi et al., (2022) developed a fully automated, solar-powered irrigation system designed to help farmers in remote areas manage water use efficiently. The main objective of the study was to create a sustainable irrigation setup that will reduce water waste, using solar energy as a power source, and provides remote monitoring through GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication) alerts. The system included a DC water pump powered by solar panels, soil moisture sensors to control water flow automatically, and an ultrasonic sensor to check the water level in the reservoir. It also had a GSM module that sent text alerts about the battery level and water status. The irrigation system was programmed to stop working if the battery charge dropped to 10% or if the water level in the reservoir went below 10 cm, ensuring safe and efficient operation. Based on tests, the system worked well in areas without access to electricity, showing that it can support water-saving farming practices in places with limited resources and frequent droughts.

The study by Akter and Mitu (2024) investigates the economic viability and social acceptability of solar-powered irrigation systems (SPIS) in Bogra, Bangladesh. Recognizing agriculture's pivotal role in the nation's

economy, the researchers aimed to explore sustainable irrigation methods that could alleviate water scarcity and reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources. Their methodology encompassed field surveys, interviews with local farmers, and analysis of existing SPIS implementations to assess both economic outcomes and community perceptions. Findings revealed that cultivating high-value crops, such as summer tomatoes and hybrid vegetables, significantly enhanced the profitability of SPIS. However, the initial costs of installation posed challenges for widespread adoption. To address this, the study recommends strategies like government subsidies, localized manufacturing to reduce equipment costs, and collaborative models where small-scale farmers share resources. Moreover, enhancing awareness through training programs and showcasing successful case studies were identified as crucial for improving social acceptance. The research underscores that with appropriate economic incentives and community engagement, SPIS can be a sustainable solution for Bangladesh's agricultural sector.

Research introduced a practical and affordable idea for a solar-powered smart irrigation system designed for small- and medium-sized farms. His goal was to help farmers use water more efficiently while also saving on energy costs. The system is controlled by a mobile phone and runs on solar power, making it especially useful for areas without easy access to electricity. Sahin detailed the basic parts of the system, how they are connected, and their estimated costs. He then compared this smart setup with traditional irrigation methods like drip, sprinkler, and pivot systems. The results showed that while the smart system might cost more at the start, it saves a lot of water and energy in the long run. It also offers better environmental benefits and can help increase crop production. Overall, the study suggests that switching to modern irrigation systems like this one could make a big difference not just for individual farmers, but also for the country's economy by promoting more sustainable farming practices (Sahin, 2024).

Similarly, Wanyama et al. (2023) developed an innovative solar-powered smart irrigation system, known as the Smart Irri-Kit, designed to help smallholder farmers in developing countries optimize irrigation practices. With the challenges posed by climate change and the labor-intensive nature of traditional irrigation, many farmers struggle to maintain efficient watering schedules. The Smart Irri-Kit addresses these issues by automating the irrigation process based on real-time feedback from soil moisture sensors. The system is powered by solar energy, which makes it suitable for areas with unreliable electricity. It includes a water tank level control system that triggers the irrigation pump when needed, ensuring water is delivered only when the soil moisture drops to

predetermine levels. The system was tested at Makerere University Agricultural Research Station and showed reliable performance, with the soil moisture sensors' readings aligning closely with traditional gravimetric methods. This system not only conserves water but also reduces operational costs by using renewable energy. The researchers suggest that the Smart Irri-Kit could significantly improve agricultural productivity and sustainability by automating water delivery and making irrigation more efficient. Future developments could integrate weather data and remote monitoring features to further enhance its functionality.

Schnetzer and Pluschke (2017) conducted a study to explore the benefits of Solar-Powered Irrigation Systems (SPIS) in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting energy independence, particularly in remote areas. Their objective was to assess how SPIS could replace traditional fossil fuel-powered pumps with solar energy to reduce emissions and provide reliable energy for irrigation, especially in areas without electricity grids. The methodology included a life cycle assessment (LCA) to evaluate the emissions of SPIS compared to diesel and grid-powered systems. The findings revealed that SPIS could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 97-98% compared to diesel pumps and 95-97% compared to grid-powered pumps. Additionally, SPIS can provide energy independence in off-grid areas and help mitigate water stress during dry seasons. This shift also frees up time for farmers, allowing them to engage in other productive activities, thus improving overall farm productivity.

Researchers demonstrate that Solar-Powered Irrigation Systems (SPIS) can significantly improve agricultural productivity by increasing access to water, allowing farmers to grow more diverse crops, including vegetables during dry seasons. This enhanced production can lead to increased income from selling surplus produce and improve food security, particularly for small-scale farmers. However, the adoption of SPIS faces challenges, primarily due to the high initial investment cost and the lack of suitable funding schemes. Despite its proven technical viability and attractive return on investment, solar pumps are often used only for a limited time each year, typically during a single crop harvest. The study suggests that using the energy generated during off-seasons could enhance the economic performance of SPIS. To address funding challenges, various financial models, such as community-based investment, Energy Service Companies (ESCO), micro-leasing, and shared liability models, can help farmers access the capital needed for installation. Group-based systems are particularly effective in reducing individual costs and risks, promoting shared benefits, and encouraging knowledge exchange, which can lead to more

widespread adoption of SPIS among poor farmers (Ould-Amroche et al. 2010, Burney et al. 2009).

Economic viability and attractiveness to farmers is often compromised by subsidies for liquid fuels or grid electricity (Ould-Amroche 2010). In such cases a reform of subsidy policies could create the needed incentives for the adoption of SPIS. Reducing subsidies, however, bears the risk to affect the poorest farm households most, hence political will and risk-taking for such reforms is generally low. Further challenges lie in the lack of skilled personnel for the design, installation and maintenance of SPIS and the lack of codes and standards. Promotion of SPIS should therefore comprise support to the development capacities and business opportunities in the supply chains and a sound legal framework.

The study by Ramli R. M. and Jabbar W. A. (2022) focused on designing and implementing a solar-powered irrigation system with IoT capabilities, specifically for the simultaneous operation of multiple irrigation areas using standalone solar pumps. The system utilizes a model based on linear programming to optimize water distribution, taking into account the required water volume and solar power generated by photovoltaic (PV) panels. The results demonstrated that operating multiple PV-based pumps simultaneously improved efficiency and saved energy compared to individual pump operation. In a similar vein, another study on an "IoT-solar energy powered smart farm irrigation system" aimed to develop an IoT-based solar water pumping system that operates based on soil moisture, temperature, and humidity. This system incorporates a fuzzy-based algorithm for automatic control of the pump and supports both manual and remote operation. The use of IoT technology allows for more precise irrigation control, ensuring optimal water usage while also enhancing the system's adaptability to varying environmental conditions. Both studies highlight the potential of solar-powered, IoT-enabled irrigation systems to increase efficiency, reduce energy consumption, and improve agricultural productivity.

Reghukumar A. (2019) highlighted the design and implementation of a water pumping system based on the health of plants. The system model supports the automatic start/stop of the electric motor based on water threshold values. The study analyzed the sensor data to decide on irrigation time according to plant health status with the plant's threshold value. An emergency notification about plant health will be sent to the farmer via email over the IoT platform when needed. The farmer also can access information regarding to soil and environment parameters including soil pH value and moisture, temperature and flame values through Graphical User Interface (GUI) to decide whether the plants need to be irrigated.

Farmers in Bihar, India, were able to switch from deficit to full irrigation after introduction of SPIS, resulting in improved plant health, increased crop yields and extra income from marketing the excess produce (GIZ 2013). In Maharashtra, India, the replacement of diesel pumps by SPIS helped to improve the on-farm economic benefits. These were in part attributed to micro irrigation practices integrated with SPIS, allowing to reduce input costs, increase productivity, and generate greater income from higher yields (Honrao 2015). In the Sudano-Sahel area of Northern Benin, SPIS (with low-pressure drip irrigation) were installed in vegetable gardens formerly watered with cans and hauled water. This allowed the women farmers to become net producers of vegetables, generate income from market sales, and substantially increase their household nutrition intake and food security (Burney et al. 2009). The development of sound business models ensures that improvements in agricultural productivity will translate into greater income and financial sustainability (see Powering Agriculture Programme1). In Jordan, for instance, ECO Consult is supporting commercial farms to retrofit multi-span greenhouses with hydroponic technologies and photovoltaic panels to generate enough power to operate the lighting, pumping, and air moderation systems. This allows them to achieve resource use efficiency goals and to make the technology commercially attractive.

It is important to note that SPIS bears the risk of fostering over-exploitation of water resources, if not adequately regulated. Once SPIS is installed, there is no cost per unit of power and, thus, no financial incentive for farmers to save on fuel/electricity for water pumping. Rather, there often is a financial incentive to intensify or expand production in order to pay off loans that were needed for the purchase of the SPI system. Thus, as SPIS might encourage improved production and increased food security, this would inadvertently lead to an increase in water consumption. Overall, this can lead to wasteful water use, over-abstraction of groundwater, and low field application efficiency (Shah and Kishore 2012, FAO 2017

Closas and Rap (2017) found that feasibility studies for SPIS commonly focus on technical and economic aspects but lack an assessment of the availability of and impact on water resources. An unforeseen drop of groundwater levels, however, may also have negative impacts on the profitability of a SPIS and its overall economic sustainability. Targeted subsidies could be linked to obligatory adoption of drip irrigation which, if properly operated, can increase the water use efficiency in the irrigated system. However, this does not necessarily reduce water abstraction or may even increase it as the “saved” water resources may be used to expand the

irrigated area, add a cropping season, support a change in crops with different water requirements, or they may be sold to other farmers or water users (Ahmad et al., 2007; Benouniche et al., 2014).

The study by Raymund A. and Abhishek J. (2018) used an economic model to evaluate the financial outcomes for farmers, entrepreneurs, and the government under different irrigation pump scenarios, focusing on solar, electric, and diesel-powered pumps. Using a 15-year net present value (NPV) analysis, they compared capital and operating costs with revenues from water or electricity sales, assuming a 4% annual price increase due to inflation. Revenues from crop production were excluded, as they were assumed constant across options. The study found that electric pumps remained the cheapest option for farmers unless grid electricity subsidies were reduced, while government support for solar pumps became more favorable if solar system costs dropped by at least 20%. This would allow for higher government contributions toward solar pump costs while still saving public funds. Overall, the study emphasized that decreasing solar technology costs could make solar-powered pumps a more feasible and cost-effective alternative for both farmers and government programs.

In the Philippine context, solar irrigation is being promoted by the Department of Agriculture as part of its effort to modernize the farming sector. DA reports (2021) mention that solar-powered irrigation helps Filipino farmers reduce fuel dependency and cope with irregular rainfall patterns. The adoption of solar-powered irrigation systems (SPIS) in the country has been steadily increasing, driven by government initiatives aimed at modernizing agriculture and enhancing food security. As of early 2024, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has constructed over 200 SPIS units across the country, with plans to build between 500 and 1,000 additional units annually. Each unit is designed to irrigate between 8 to 30 hectares, depending on its size and capacity.

Additionally, National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has also intensified its efforts, completing 17 solar-powered irrigation projects by September 2023. These projects collectively provide irrigation to 830 hectares of agricultural land, benefiting 801 farmers and their families. For 2024, NIA has earmarked PHP 1.72 billion for 183 SPIS projects, aiming to irrigate an additional 2,168 hectares. Furthermore, a proposal for 791 more sites is under consideration, which could extend irrigation to 39,694 hectares nationwide. In a significant development, the Philippines inaugurated its largest solar-powered irrigation system in Isabela province in June 2024. This facility, equipped with over 1,000 solar panels that can irrigate 350 hectares and benefits approximately 237

farmers. Notably, this project is the first in the country to be constructed over an irrigation canal, preserving valuable farmland.

According to Sevilla (2022), solar-powered irrigation is particularly useful in areas without stable access to electricity, such as upland farms. It helps improve crop survival during dry months and enhances farmers' productivity. However, while solar irrigation systems are available in some provinces, their adoption is slow due to limited financial support. They emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships to promote wider use. (Garcia & Tolentino, 2021)

A report by the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (2020) shared that pilot solar irrigation projects in Northern Luzon have shown positive results, especially in rice and corn farming. These systems increased cropping intensity and reduced water loss. Moreover, Villanueva (2019) explained that aside from food production benefits, solar irrigation systems also contribute to rural development by generating job opportunities related to system installation and maintenance.

Furthermore, the study of Guno C.S. and Agaton C.B. (2022) analyzed solar irrigation systems in the Philippines using economic, environmental, and social methods to assess their feasibility for small-scale farmers. While solar systems have higher upfront costs compared to diesel pumps, they offer lower operational and maintenance expenses, leading to savings over time and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The study found solar irrigation to be a good investment, with an average net present value of USD 4,517/ha, a 315% return on investment, and a payback period of 2.88 years, though actual results varied widely due to differences in land size and diesel use. About 69% of marginal farmers were interested in solar irrigation, but awareness of its environmental benefits remained low. To support adoption, the authors recommend more information campaigns, subsidies, and funding for research and development, as well as financial support for small-scale farmers and cooperatives. The study also noted that solar systems can store extra energy using batteries and water tanks, which enhances system reliability and allows surplus electricity to be used for other needs, especially in remote areas lacking consistent power supply.

On the other hand, Panganiban (2021), focused on understanding how useful and practical solar-powered irrigation systems are for farmers, especially those who don't have access to irrigation provided by the government. Many farmlands in the Ilocos Region, particularly in remote or less developed areas, struggle with low crop production because they lack proper irrigation. To help

solve this, the government introduced the SPIS as a more environment-friendly and cost-saving option compared to traditional pumps powered by diesel or gasoline. The researcher looked into three actual SPIS sites located in San Nicolas and Piddig in Ilocos Norte, and San Jacinto in Pangasinan. To collect information, she visited these areas and interviewed farmers using a prepared questionnaire to know their experiences and opinions. She also measured how efficiently the water pumps were working. The results showed that the system worked quite well, with pump efficiency ranging from 49% to 69%, which means the pumps were able to deliver water effectively to the fields in most cases. The findings further revealed that solar-powered irrigation is a good solution for rice farms in the Ilocos Region. It helps farmers water their crops without relying on expensive fuel. However, the research also pointed out that there are areas in the system and in how the program is managed that could still be improved. These improvements would help make the system more reliable and beneficial for more farmers in the future.

Similarly, Escoto and Abundo (2024), investigates how practical and sustainable solar-powered irrigation systems (SPIS) are for rice farming in Sorsogon, Philippines. The main goals of their research were to find the best areas in the province where SPIS could be installed, to identify the most efficient system setups for rice irrigation, and to understand how these systems can help meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They analyzed the province's land and found that about 17% of it is suitable for solar irrigation. Their study calculated that one hectare of rice land needs around 3.3 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy daily and would need a water pump with a peak power of 1.1 kilowatts. The most cost-effective energy setup combined solar power (producing 8,547 kWh annually) and a backup diesel generator (contributing 119 kWh annually). This combination had the lowest overall system cost of around ₱1,079,642 and the lowest cost of electricity at ₱17.79 per kWh. The research also explored how SPIS could help with broader development goals and found 27 positive impacts and 3 possible tradeoffs. In simple terms, the study showed that solar irrigation can be an affordable and environmentally friendly option for rice farming in Sorsogon, especially if local communities and farmers are involved in planning and adopting the system. The research offers useful information for those looking to implement solar irrigation systems in similar agricultural areas.

Moreover, Jenny Bartolome et al., (2023) from the University of Saint Louis in Tuguegarao City aimed to identify the best locations for installing solar-powered irrigation systems (SPIS) in Barangay San Esteban, Alcala, Cagayan. This was done in response to the ongoing

challenge of irrigating agricultural lands in the Philippines, where many farms still rely on deep well pumps or rain due to the lack of formal irrigation systems. To help solve this issue, the researchers used advanced tools like Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing, along with a method called the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). These techniques helped them analyze multiple factors—such as land suitability, topography, and water availability—to determine the best places for SPIS. The results of their analysis showed that out of the 743 hectares of land in San Esteban, 286 hectares (about 38%) were not suitable for SPIS, 404 hectares (around 54%) were moderately suitable, and only 53 hectares (roughly 7%) were highly suitable for solar-powered irrigation. This kind of mapping is important because it helps decision-makers and farmers know where to prioritize investments in sustainable and renewable irrigation systems like SPIS.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive research design to assess the economic viability and implementation challenges of the Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) among farmers in Tabuk City, Kalinga, and Quezon-Mallig, Isabela. The approach was chosen to systematically describe the current status, perceptions, and experiences of SPIS beneficiaries without manipulating variables. Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire distributed to selected farmer-beneficiaries, focusing on demographic profiles, farming practices, income, SPIS usage patterns, perceived benefits, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. This method enabled the study to present an accurate depiction of SPIS effects on agricultural productivity, economic outcomes, and sustainability in the target communities, while also identifying gaps and issues for further improvement (Calderon & Gonzales, 2012).

The research was conducted in Kalinga and Isabela, specifically in areas covered by the Upper Chico River Irrigation System (UCRIS), chosen for their active SPIS implementation under the National Irrigation Administration (NIA). Tabuk City served as the focal point in Kalinga, while Mallig and Quezon were the focus in Isabela, both known for extensive rice and corn farming. These sites were selected due to their agricultural significance and recent SPIS integration to address water shortages and modernize irrigation. The study population included farmers, irrigation workers, and local SPIS beneficiaries, primarily members of Irrigators Associations (IAs) recognized by NIA. Purposive sampling ensured participants had at least one full cropping season of SPIS

experience, with barangay officials and NIA field officers assisting in identifying qualified respondents.

Socio-demographic data showed that most respondents were older (75% aged 41 or above), predominantly male (91%), and primarily farmers (91%). Education levels varied, with 42% having primary education, 30% secondary, and 27% college degrees. Most households were medium-sized (4–6 members, 85%), and 88% of respondents owned their land, which is significant for technology adoption. Many farmers previously relied on diesel pumps (27%), with 39% spending Php 20,000–50,000 annually on fuel, indicating strong potential for economic benefits from SPIS. Additionally, 52% practiced rainfed agriculture, highlighting the need for reliable irrigation, and 55% reported areas still needing irrigation support. Most respondents (61%) had moderate annual incomes, suggesting that government-led SPIS initiatives could help demonstrate long-term economic benefits and make initial investments more manageable. These findings align with previous studies emphasizing the importance of socio-economic parameters in technology adoption (Pandey et al., 2018)1.

The main data-gathering instrument was a survey questionnaire adapted from previous SPIS research. It covered socio-demographic profiles, perceived economic viability, economic contributions, and implementation challenges, using both structured and open-ended questions. This allowed for quantitative analysis and deeper qualitative insights. The instrument's validity and reliability were ensured through focus group discussions with beneficiaries and adaptation from validated studies (Guno et al., 2022; Mitu, 2024)1.

Data collection followed a structured, ethical process, including formal permissions from authorities, coordination with community leaders, and face-to-face interviews with guidance for participants with literacy limitations. Informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality maintained. Secondary data from NIA-Kalinga supplemented the survey, with data collection lasting about four weeks. Afterward, responses were encoded and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means), Likert scale interpretation, and thematic analysis for open-ended responses. Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, ranking, and weighted mean were used to interpret the data and assess economic viability and challenges associated with SPIS implementation.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Economic Contribution of the SPIS

The adoption of solar-powered irrigation systems (SPIS) has shown a significant positive impact on various aspects

of smallholder farming operations. The findings of this study indicate that SPIS adoption contributes substantially to both agricultural productivity and farmer livelihoods.

Table 1. Perceived Economic Contribution of the SPIS towards Beneficiaries

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description
Since installing the solar-powered irrigation system, my crop yield has increased	4.09	High
The quality of my crops has improved since using the solar-powered irrigation system.	4.03	High
I have experienced a reduction in irrigation costs due to the solar-powered system.	3.7	High
The solar-powered irrigation system has reduced my overall energy and water expenses.	3.85	High
My farm income has increased as a result of using the solar-powered irrigation system.	4	High
I have been able to expand the area of land I cultivate due to the solar-powered irrigation system.	3.36	Moderate
The solar-powered irrigation system has reduced the losses of my crops.	3.88	High
SPIS has reduced my reliance on traditional fuel-based irrigation systems.	3.64	High
My financial stability has improved since adopting the solar-powered irrigation system.	3.88	High
The solar-powered irrigation system has reduced my financial risk.	3.94	High
I spend less on irrigation costs since switching to SPIS.	3.7	High
I believe the community as a whole has benefited from the	3.03	Moderate

implementation of SPIS?		
The adoption of SPIS has had negative social effects on our household or community	2	Low
Average Total	3.62	High

Farmers reported marked improvements in crop yield ($M = 4.09$) and crop quality ($M = 4.03$), as well as a notable reduction in crop losses ($M = 3.88$). These high ratings suggest that SPIS provides a reliable and efficient source of irrigation, enabling more consistent water supply and reducing dependency on erratic rainfall or unreliable fuel-powered systems. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2018) also supports this view by highlighting how solar irrigation can address water scarcity and reduce operational costs for smallholder farmers.

From an economic perspective, the data reflect high perceived benefits related to income generation and financial stability. Farmers reported increased income ($M = 4.00$), reduced financial risk ($M = 3.94$), and improved financial stability ($M = 3.88$), underscoring the broader economic advantages of SPIS. These outcomes are supported by high scores in reduced irrigation costs ($M = 3.70$), decreased energy and water expenses ($M = 3.85$), and reduced reliance on fuel-based irrigation ($M = 3.64$). These findings are consistent with existing literature, which emphasized that SIF adoption in Pakistan has significantly contributed to reducing operational costs, increased farmers' income, reduced 17,622 tons of CO₂ emissions per year, and saved 41% of water usage (Raza et al., 2022).

Despite these successes, the findings also highlight areas of moderate impact, particularly in land use and communal benefit. The ability to expand cultivated land was rated moderately ($M = 3.36$), which may be attributed to systemic constraints such as limited access to land, labor shortages, or the need for additional inputs beyond irrigation infrastructure. The perception of community-wide benefits also scored moderately ($M = 3.03$), indicating that while individual-level impacts are strong, broader communal benefits may not yet be fully realized.

Importantly, the data reflect minimal perceived negative social impacts from SPIS adoption ($M = 2.00$), suggesting high levels of social acceptability and limited disruption to household or community dynamics. This low incidence of negative perceptions reinforces the suitability of SPIS for integration into rural farming systems. Overall, the mean score across all indicators ($M = 3.62$) places the perceived impact of SPIS within the "high" category, indicating a generally positive reception and outcome among users.

In conclusion, SPIS offers a compelling solution for improving both the productivity and economic viability of smallholder farming. The system not only enhances yields and reduces operational costs but also contributes to increased financial resilience. However, to maximize its potential, policymakers and development practitioners must address barriers to land expansion and promote inclusive access, particularly among marginalized groups. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of SPIS, the role of institutional support in technology diffusion, and its potential for scalability in diverse agro-ecological contexts.

Table 2. Challenges and Issues in the Implementation of Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description
Downtime or failures of the SPIS are frequent	2.04	Low
Regular maintenance of the system is frequently required	1.92	Low
The SPIS is highly efficient in energy conversion and water delivery	4.12	High
The SPIS is easy to operate and maintain	2.72	Moderate
I have experience major system breakdown	2.64	Moderate
I have access to technicians/service providers for SPIS maintenance	2.16	Low
The ongoing operational cost meets my expectation	3.2	Moderate
I have sufficient knowledge and trainings to operate and maintain the system	2	Low
The training provided was sufficient for me to effectively operate and maintain the System	2.16	Low
I have retained the SPIS operational and maintenance knowledge/skills from training	2.16	Low
The current installation site is suitable for the operation of SPIS	3.92	High
Usage of SPIS has negative environmental effects use (e.g	2.08	Low

water depletion)		
local weather conditions significantly impact the performance of SPIS	4	High
The SPIS has integrated with existing Irrigation infrastructure	4.2	High
The operation of SPIS requires additional infrastructure	3.72	High
Local stakeholders (community, LGU's, IAs) are generally supportive of the SPIS	4.08	High
Accessibility of SPIS provider for purchase and installation is viable	3.8	High
I would recommend SPIS to other farmers based on its benefits	4.16	High
I believe that the government's investment in SPIS is economically worthwhile for the farmers.	4.0	High
The solar panels and motor of the SPIS are cleaned and maintained on a regular schedule.	2.24	Low
The electrical components, including wiring and batteries, are routinely monitored for performance and safety.	2.4	Low
The operation of the SPIS adheres to current local and national regulatory frameworks.	3.6	High
the system complies with local and national regulations	3.76	High
Maintenance subsidies are being provided	2.4	Low
Average Total	3.34	Moderate

The assessment of the technical and operational aspects of the Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) reveals a generally favorable performance, with some critical areas in need of improvement, particularly in system maintenance, training, and technical support. The system was rated highly in terms of technical efficiency, with respondents indicating strong agreement that the SPIS is efficient in energy conversion and water delivery (M =

4.12) and that it has effectively integrated with existing irrigation infrastructure ($M = 4.20$). Additionally, the current installation sites were deemed suitable ($M = 3.92$), and local weather conditions were recognized as a significant influence on SPIS performance ($M = 4.00$). These ratings suggest that SPIS is generally well-adapted to the local agro-environmental context and that, when properly installed, it performs reliably under prevailing weather conditions. Farmers also largely affirmed that SPIS adoption does not produce harmful environmental effects, such as water depletion ($M = 2.08$, low), reinforcing its perceived sustainability.

Despite strong technical performance, maintenance and support-related indicators reveal operational challenges. Respondents reported low frequencies of system failures ($M = 2.04$) and minimal need for regular maintenance ($M = 1.92$), suggesting that SPIS is relatively durable. However, issues arise in terms of user preparedness and access to maintenance services. Access to technicians or service providers was rated low ($M = 2.16$), and respondents consistently rated their knowledge and training for operation and maintenance as insufficient ($M = 2.00$). Furthermore, the training provided was also seen as inadequate ($M = 2.16$), and retention of knowledge and skills post-training was similarly low ($M = 2.16$). These results highlight a gap between the system's technical potential and the capacity of end-users to manage it independently, pointing to the need for more robust, continuous, and practical training programs.

The ease of use and perceived manageability of SPIS received a moderate rating ($M = 2.72$), while the occurrence of major system breakdowns also fell into the moderate category ($M = 2.64$). These findings suggest that while the system is not overly complex, certain technical issues still arise, and the lack of adequate technical support and training may exacerbate these difficulties. Routine cleaning and maintenance practices were also rated poorly, with low means for cleaning of solar panels and motors ($M = 2.24$) and monitoring of electrical components such as wiring and batteries ($M = 2.40$). These “low” means reflect a critical challenge in the human and institutional capacity to support SPIS maintenance. Farmers reported inadequate training and technical support, which may hinder long-term sustainability of the SPIS. The findings align with literature emphasizing the role of capacity-building in the successful adoption of clean energy technologies in agriculture. Moreover, the study of Aditya and Dagmar, (2024) “Understanding Farmers' Policy Preferences for Solar Powered Irrigation Systems in Karnataka, India: A Choice Experiment Approach” finds out that the government can solve this issue by creating local service provision through training. On a broader scale, several

indicators suggest positive institutional and regulatory support for SPIS. Respondents generally agreed that the system complies with local and national regulations ($M = 3.76$) and that its operation adheres to current regulatory frameworks ($M = 3.60$). There was also a strong perception of support from local stakeholders, including the community, local government units (LGUs), and irrigation associations (IAs), with a high mean score of 4.08. Accessibility of SPIS providers for purchase and installation was also considered viable ($M = 3.80$), suggesting a reasonably supportive market and policy environment.

Importantly, user satisfaction and advocacy for the technology were very strong. Farmers expressed a high willingness to recommend SPIS to others ($M = 4.16$), and a significant number believed that government investment in the system is economically justified for farmers ($M = 4.00$). These sentiments reflect a favorable overall reception and the perceived long-term value of SPIS despite existing operational challenges.

In summary, while the SPIS is recognized for its technical efficiency, environmental sustainability, and institutional support, its sustained performance is at risk due to insufficient user training, lack of routine maintenance, and limited access to technical services. Addressing these gaps through structured training, ongoing technical support, and community-based maintenance models will be essential for maximizing the long-term benefits and reliability of solar-powered irrigation technologies.

Table 3. Duration of System Repair

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less Than a Week	9	27%
A Week	2	6%
More Than 2 Weeks	19	58%
Remain Unrepaired	3	9%
Total	33	100%

Based on the data, the repair process shows inefficiencies, with 58% of cases taking over two weeks and 9% remaining unresolved. These delays suggest systemic issues likely tied to workflow bottlenecks, limited resources, or supply constraints. To improve performance, it is recommended to streamline operations, enhance staff capacity, and implement tracking systems for unresolved cases.

Table 4. Additional Infrastructure to the System

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Major (Batteries & Solar Panel, Canal Lining)	29	88%
Minor (Control Panel Housing & Pipe)	4	12%
None	1	3%

Based on the data, there is a clear indication that infrastructure support is critically needed, with 88% of respondents identifying major infrastructure needs, specifically batteries, solar panels, and canal lining. A smaller portion (12%) cited minor needs such as control panel housing and piping, while only 3% reported no infrastructure requirements at all.

Proposed Sustainability Plan for SPIS Implementation

To ensure the long-term functionality, efficiency, and economic benefits of the Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS), a sustainability plan is essential. This plan is developed to address the pressing challenges identified in the field, such as lack of technical knowledge, limited access to repairs, infrastructural gaps, and financial constraints as presented in table 4. The proposed plan in Figure 3 provides a structured framework to enhance the system's adoption, optimize its benefits, and ensure equitable access for all farmer-beneficiaries. The following components of the plan offer practical and policy-driven solutions for strengthening the resilience and sustainability of SPIS implementation in Kalinga and Isabela. Since Sustainable Intensification of Farming (SIFs) has good effects, the government and stakeholders should prioritize the development of better ways through continual trial and iteration. Regular monitoring of solar panel efficiency and regulatory support for updating low-efficiency solar panels are needed to sustain the solar energy sector. Field demonstration projects and campaigns are essential for SIF uptake and communication of their benefits and environmental impacts (Sunny et al., 2022).

Our findings also pointed to the significance of creative management strategies emphasizing field demonstration programs and campaigns to raise environmental consciousness and benefit recipients rather than just adoption. To better understand farmers' risk management practices, we also call for more research on how people of different ages perceive SPIS and their knowledge of environmental severity and further investigation on the economic impact of Solar/Powered Irrigation system here in our country.

Table 5. Components of the Sustainability Plan for SPIS Implementation

Identified Challenges	Proposed Sustainability Plan
1. Regular monitoring and maintenance of the System score very Low (M=1.92)	Creation of Monitoring and evaluation technical performance of the SPIS
2. Lack of training and knowledge handling SPIS score Low (M=2)	Capacity Building and Technical Training Program
3. Access to Technicians and service provider	Establishment of Technical Support providers
4. provision of maintenance subsidies scores Low (M=2.4)	Policy Programs and Institutional Strengthening
5. the need of additional accessories and Infrastructure score High (M=3.72)	Additional service Infrastructure

Monitoring and evaluation of technical performance of the system. Sustainability also depends on monitoring the performance of SPIS and involving the community in its management. This component involves the regular collection of feedback from users, impact assessments, and maintenance tracking. Community engagement ensures accountability, shared ownership, and a culture of cooperation, which are essential for long-term success.

Capacity Building and Technical Training. This component focuses on equipping farmers with the necessary skills and knowledge to operate and maintain SPIS. Based on the data, it was found out that many users reported difficulty in handling the system due to a lack of training. Regular capacity-building initiatives, including community workshops, field demonstrations, and printed manuals in local dialects, should be organized. Technical training should also include troubleshooting and preventive maintenance to empower users and reduce downtime. This is supported by the study of Aditya and Dagmar, (2024) "Understanding Farmers' Policy Preferences for Solar Powered Irrigation Systems in Karnataka, India: A Choice Experiment Approach" finds out that the government can solve this issue by creating local service provision through Capacity Building Training.

Establishment of Local Technical Support Hubs. Due to the limited availability of technicians, creating localized

SPIS support hubs is crucial. These hubs would serve as resource centers where farmers can get assistance, request repairs, and purchase spare parts. They can be operated by trained local personnel or in partnership with TESDA and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), providing a rapid-response mechanism for system breakdowns and maintenance concerns. It was found out on the data access to technical providers in the region rated low ($M = 2.16$). Technical knowledge and service infrastructure is needed to ensure that the systems run effectively Hartung et. Al, (2018).

Policy and Institutional Strengthening. Effective policies can institutionalize SPIS support at the local and national levels. This component advocates for stronger collaboration between LGUs, NIA, and DA in crafting SPIS guidelines, training mandates, and budget allocations. Including SPIS in barangay and municipal development plans ensures ongoing political and financial support. Financial limitations hinder farmers from maintaining the system. This component proposes the introduction of microloans, flexible payment plans, and government subsidies to make SPIS more accessible. This is supported on the study of Durga et. Al., (2024) identifying systemic barriers to the adoption and growth of solar-powered irrigation. We identify uncovered risks, lack of incentives, and lack of capacity as the key factors limiting the adoption of solar-powered irrigation.

Infrastructure Development. A significant number (88%) of respondents indicated the need for additional infrastructure such as solar panels, canal linings, batteries, and high-powered pumps. This component supports continued investment in infrastructure to improve SPIS efficiency and coverage. It emphasizes prioritizing critical upgrades and ensuring equitable distribution of infrastructure support to under-served areas.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study evaluated the impact, usability, and sustainability of the Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) among 33 farmers in Tabuk City, Kalinga, and Quezon-Mallig, Isabela. Most respondents were male (91%), aged 51–60 (42%), with farming as their main occupation (91%). Educational attainment was generally low, with 42% having only primary education, and most households were medium-sized (4–6 members, 85%), indicating an experienced but aging farming population that may need further training for new technologies.

Land ownership was high (88%), and the majority reported annual incomes between ₱50,000 and ₱100,000 (61%), reflecting modest economic conditions. Crop farming dominated (82%), with limited engagement in livestock or mixed farming. Many previously relied on diesel pumps, incurring high fuel costs, and over half practiced rainfed agriculture, underscoring the need for reliable irrigation.

SPIS was reported to deliver high benefits, notably improving crop yield ($M = 4.09$), crop quality ($M = 4.03$), and farm income ($M = 4.00$), while reducing irrigation and energy costs. The average weighted mean across all impact indicators was 3.62 (high), though expansion of cultivated land ($M = 3.36$) and community-level benefits ($M = 3.03$) were moderate, and social disruption was minimal ($M = 2.00$).

Technically, SPIS was rated highly for energy efficiency ($M = 4.12$) and integration with existing infrastructure ($M = 4.20$), but only moderate for ease of use ($M = 2.72$) and breakdown incidence ($M = 2.64$). Training adequacy ($M = 2.16$), user knowledge ($M = 2.00$), and technician access ($M = 2.16$) were low, highlighting operational support gaps and the need for better maintenance practices.

Institutional support was strong, with high confidence in regulatory compliance ($M = 3.76$), community backing ($M = 4.08$), and provider accessibility ($M = 3.80$). Respondents were highly willing to recommend SPIS ($M = 4.16$) and saw government investment as worthwhile ($M = 4.00$).

Conclusions

The Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) demonstrated substantial benefits for farmers in Tabuk City, Kalinga, and Quezon-Mallig, Isabela. SPIS significantly improved crop yield, crop quality, and farm income, while reducing irrigation and energy costs. These positive impacts were especially valuable for an aging, predominantly male farming population with modest incomes and limited formal education, who previously relied on costly diesel pumps or rainfed agriculture.

Despite these gains, the study identified notable challenges. Farmers reported moderate ease of use and system reliability, with low ratings for training, user knowledge, and access to technical support. These gaps highlight the need for enhanced capacity-building, regular maintenance, and improved technical assistance to ensure long-term sustainability and maximize system benefits.

Institutional and community support for SPIS was strong, with high confidence in regulatory compliance and widespread willingness to recommend the system. Most respondents viewed government investment in SPIS as economically worthwhile, indicating that continued public

support and targeted interventions could further drive technology adoption and rural development.

Overall, while SPIS has proven effective in increasing agricultural productivity and reducing costs, addressing operational and knowledge barriers is essential for sustaining its benefits and expanding its reach among smallholder farmers¹.

Recommendations

To maximize the benefits and sustainability of the Solar-Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) in Kalinga and Isabela, the following actions are recommended:

1. Regular, localized training and hands-on workshops should be provided to improve farmers' skills in operating and maintaining SPIS. Instructional materials in local dialects and ongoing technical support are crucial to address the significant knowledge gap identified among users.
2. Set up technical support centers in key areas, managed by trained personnel or in partnership with agencies like TESDA and NIA, to offer timely repairs, spare parts, and technical assistance, ensuring quick response to operational issues.
3. Introduce microloans, flexible payment schemes, and government subsidies to help farmers afford SPIS upgrades and repairs. Partnerships with rural banks and cooperatives can make these options accessible, especially for low-income farmers.
4. Continue upgrading SPIS components—solar panels, batteries, and pumps—especially in underserved areas. Regular maintenance and monitoring should be prioritized to ensure optimal system performance.
5. Integrate SPIS into local and national agricultural plans, with clear policies on funding, training, and sustainability. Formalize collaboration among LGUs, the Department of Agriculture, NIA, and other stakeholders for continuous support.
6. Ensure that SPIS benefits are equitably distributed by involving communities in decision-making and establishing feedback mechanisms, so all farmer-beneficiaries' needs are addressed.

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Tabuk City Internal Audit Mandate Among City Government Employees

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Abstract— This study aimed to determine the level of awareness and understanding among the employees of the City Government of Tabuk regarding the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO). It also determined the employees' level of awareness on the differences between the functions of the CIASO, the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions Section (IAFS) of the City Accounting Office (CAO), and the Commission on Audit (COA). Additionally, it identified challenges faced by the employees and offices audited by the CIASO. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, with data collected through interview and a structured survey questionnaire analyzed via descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings reveal that employees of the City Government of Tabuk possess adequate awareness of the CIASO's mandate and its distinct functions from the IAFS of the CAO and the COA. Factors such as office affiliation, audit training participation, and job position is significantly associated with awareness levels. Employees in offices with frequent interactions with the CIASO, senior level to chief level employees, as well as those who participated in audit-related training, demonstrated higher levels of awareness. They were more likely to understand its functions, as their work often necessitates collaboration with the internal audit office. Despite improvements in the increased level of awareness, challenges were identified in three key areas: resistance to information disclosure, inability to provide documents, and lack of resources. The study concludes that significant progress has been made in fostering awareness of the CIASO's role and functions, reflecting the success of its initiatives since its establishment in 2020. However, to further enhance effectiveness, the study recommends expanding inclusivity in external and internal audit activities, tailoring engagement initiatives for less-involved offices, and promoting capacity-building programs. Future researchers are encouraged to explore additional factors influencing awareness, such as organizational culture and technological advancements, and conduct comparative analyses with other local government units. This research underscores the critical role of internal audit in promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in local governance.



Keywords— Internal Audit, Government Employees, Tabuk City

I. INTRODUCTION

Internal audit in the Philippines has evolved significantly over the years through a series of laws and executive orders aimed at strengthening internal audit functions within the government. The foundation for internal audit was established as early as 1962 with the enactment of Republic Act 3456, also known as the Internal Auditing Act of 1962. This act serves as a key reference, outlining the policies and

legal frameworks governing government internal audit practices. It mandated the establishment, organization, and operation of internal audit services as an independent staff unit within all national government departments, bureaus, and offices. The scope of internal auditing was further expanded with the amendment of R.A. 3456 by Republic Act 4177 on March 26, 1965, to include local government units and government-owned and controlled corporations.

Recognizing the importance of internal auditing, the City Government of Tabuk established the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO) during its 2020 reorganization. The growing public demand for enhanced service delivery necessitates continuous improvement in the systems and processes of Local Government Units (LGUs). Therefore, LGUs must focus on advancing their processes and systems. Although the Internal Audit Unit (IAU) does not directly engage in process or system improvements for or assist the operating and support service units within LGUs, it plays a crucial role by conducting root cause analyses (RCA) in cases where controls are weak. The IAU then recommends corrective or preventive actions for the local chief executive (LCE) to implement. This function of the IAU is particularly beneficial to both the LGU and the LCE. LGUs with a well-established and effectively functioning IAU can significantly enhance their internal control system. The primary goal of internal audit is to assist the LCE in evaluating the effectiveness of the ICS, ensuring that controls are well-designed and properly operated. This enables LGUs to better safeguard their assets and ensure operations that are effective, efficient, ethical, and economical. Additionally, these LGUs will have the necessary mechanisms to verify the accuracy and reliability of their accounting data and ensure compliance with laws, rules, regulations, and managerial policies (Internal Audit Manual for LGUs, 2023 edition).

The City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO) envisions itself as a regionally recognized internal audit service provider and advocate of Quality Management System by 2030. Its mission is to effectively monitor and strengthen the internal control systems of the City Government to achieve the highest quality standards of government service. CIASO's mandate includes performing functions related to the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control and performance quality. This involves advising the City Mayor and the Sangguniang Panlungsod (SP) on management control and operations audit, conducting audits of the City Government's functions, programs, and outputs, and reviewing systems, procedures, and asset management practices. CIASO analyzes management deficiencies, recommends actions, ensures the reliability of financial and operational information, assists in safeguarding assets, and promotes effective controls. Additionally, CIASO evaluates performance quality, recommends corrective actions, and performs duties as prescribed by law or ordinance. (Organizational Structure of the City Government of Tabuk, 2020).

The positions within the CIASO were filled starting in August 2021, and the researcher joined the office in January 2022. This employment allowed the researcher to

gain firsthand insight into the expectations and perceptions by other city government offices regarding the CIASO's mandate. The methodology of the CIASO is risk-based, which involves conducting risk assessments among the 32 offices of the city government. During these assessments with the heads of offices and some of the division and section chiefs, expectations regarding the CIASO's role and functions were gathered. Most offices anticipated that the CIASO would conduct pre-audit of vouchers and handle Audit Observation Memorandums, Notices of Disallowances, and other communications with the Commission on Audit (COA). This revealed a common misconception that the CIASO was an extension of the COA and that the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions under the City Accounting Office was not recognized. Many employees viewed the CIASO as fault-finders and were apprehensive about inquiries, interviews, or audits conducted by the office. This misperception overlooked the CIASO's role as a partner in championing good governance in the city. Although initial efforts were made to correct these misunderstandings through direct communication and during entrance conferences, some employees continued to harbor incorrect expectations about the CIASO.

This gap can be attributed to several factors, including lack of awareness, resistance to change, and pre-existing misconceptions about the functions of internal audit units. For instance, the expectation that the CIASO would function similarly to the COA's external audit functions likely stems from a lack of clear communication and awareness regarding the distinct roles and responsibilities of these entities. In addition, the apprehension and defensive attitudes of some offices towards the CIASO's activities can be seen as a natural reaction to the introduction of a new oversight mechanism. This reaction underscores the importance of change management strategies that involve not only informing but also engaging stakeholders in the process of establishing new internal audit functions. Building a collaborative relationship between the CIASO and other city offices is essential for the office to fulfill its mandate effectively. Negative perceptions and misconceptions about internal audit are not unique to Tabuk but are prevalent in many organizations. These negative perceptions are often caused by several factors such as fear of loss of jobs, lack of knowledge about the functions of audit, and fear of the unknown. Employees may fear that the audit process will uncover errors or inefficiencies that could lead to job losses or other negative consequences (Chambers & Odar, 2015). Moreover, some negative perceptions are driven by individuals who are after personal gain from company resources. They fear that audits will uncover their misconduct and, therefore, attempt to discredit the audit function to protect their interests

(Gramling et al., 2013). Such negative perceptions have a significant impact on the performance of the internal audit function. When employees view auditors with suspicion or fear, it creates an improper environment that can hinder the audit process. It may lead to non-cooperation, concealment of information, or even deliberate attempts to mislead auditors. This undermines the effectiveness of the internal audit function and limits its ability to provide valuable insights and recommendations for improvement.

The misperceptions regarding the CIASO's mandate and functions are also attributed to the confusion of functions between the CIASO, COA, and CAO. A seminal work by the Department of Budget and Management (2003) outlines the fundamental principles and guidelines for internal audit operations in local government units. This manual emphasizes the importance of an internal audit function to safeguard assets, ensure the accuracy of financial records, and promote efficiency, economy, and effectiveness in government operations. The manual also details the establishment of Internal Audit Units and their responsibilities, which include evaluating internal control systems, conducting risk assessments, and recommending corrective actions. External audits in the Philippines are conducted by the Commission on Audit (COA), which is a constitutionally mandated body responsible for auditing all accounts and expenditures of the government. The COA's primary role is to ensure that public funds are used properly and in accordance with laws and regulations. The Government Auditing Code of the Philippines (PD No. 1445) defines the COA's mandate to examine, audit, and settle all accounts pertaining to the revenue and expenditures of government agencies. The COA conducts financial, compliance, and performance audits. Financial audits focus on the accuracy and fairness of the financial statements, compliance audits ensure adherence to laws and regulations, and performance audits evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of government operations (Commission on Audit, 2020). Unlike internal auditors, COA auditors operate independently of the entities they audit and report their findings to the legislature and the public. In addition to the internal audit by CIASO and the external audit by COA, there is the City Accounting Office (CAO) which significantly contributes to strengthening financial control and accountability within the City Government of Tabuk. The CAO, specifically its Internal Audit on Financial Transactions Division performs the pre-auditing function. The pre-audit process typically involves several steps, including the review of supporting documents, verification of transaction accuracy, and compliance checks. The City Accounting Office staff examine vouchers, receipts, and other financial documents to ensure they are complete and properly authorized. They

also verify that the transactions are in line with budgetary provisions and that there are no discrepancies between the recorded amounts and the actual expenditures (De Leon, 2016). Within the City Government of Tabuk, the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO), the Commission on Audit (COA), and the City Accounting Office's Internal Audit on Financial Transactions Division each play essential, but distinct roles in maintaining financial integrity and governance. The CIASO is tasked with evaluating and enhancing internal control systems within city departments, focusing on improving operational efficiency and mitigating risks. In contrast, the COA conducts external, post-audits to review completed financial transactions and ensure compliance with legal and regulatory standards, thus holding city agencies accountable for lawful fund usage. Meanwhile, the City Accounting Office's Internal Audit on Financial Transactions Division performs pre-audit functions by scrutinizing financial transactions before they are processed, ensuring that they adhere to established policies and prevent errors. Despite their separate functions—internal auditing, external auditing, and pre-auditing—there is often confusion among the public about their distinct roles.

Internal audit assists management by assessing exposure to risk and recommending, where appropriate, practical improvements to the control environment as well as ensuring that management has understood and assumed the risk of not taking action (Zwaan et al 2009). This also includes reviewing timeliness and effectiveness of the implementation and its recommendations. However, it is management's responsibility to ensure that proper consideration is given to Internal Audit reports (Aikins, 2012). Despite this responsibility, some audit recommendations remain unimplemented by auditees. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the challenges employees face concerning internal audit issues and problems. The study will benefit not only the researcher but also the CIASO, the City Government of Tabuk, its employees, future researcher and other institutions with newly created internal audit units or those planning to create one.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is structured around three key components: dependent, independent, and moderator variables, each playing a crucial role in understanding how the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO) mandate is perceived and practiced among the employees of the City Government of Tabuk. The dependent variable, which is the Tabuk City Internal Audit Mandate among City Government Employees, serves as the primary focus of the study. This variable represents the level of awareness to CIASO's mandate among city

government employees and their agreement to the practice of functions by the three different offices. The independent variables in this study include the awareness of employees regarding CIASO's mandate and functions, the practice of functions as outlined by the CIASO, the Commission on Audit (COA), and the City Accounting Office (CAO), and the challenges encountered by employees in relation to internal audit problems and issues. Awareness is critical, as it determines how well employees understand and align their work with the internal audit standards. The practice of these functions assesses the understanding with which employees perceive the differences between the CIASO, COA and CAO. The challenges encountered highlight the obstacles that may hinder effective internal audit practices. These independent variables directly influence the dependent variable, shaping how the CIASO's mandate is perceived and understood by city employees.

In addition to these, the study incorporates three moderator variables: Office, Position, and Audit Training Attended. These factors may modify the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. These variables provide critical context for analyzing the data and may influence or alter the responses. Training is a crucial variable, as audit-related training significantly enhances employees' knowledge and comprehension of auditing processes. Notably, various training programs are conducted by the Commission on Audit, some of which are attended by city government employees. For instance, the City Government of Tabuk has requested COA to conduct specialized training sessions for its employees. These training sessions are essential for improving employees' grasp of audit functions and responsibilities. The position of respondents is also an important variable. Positions determine the level of involvement in meetings and trainings related to audits, as typically, heads and supervisory-level staff are more likely to participate. For example, CIASO usually calls upon section chiefs, division chiefs, assistant heads, and department heads for entrance conferences, while COA similarly invites representatives from relevant offices. During an executive meeting where CIASO's role was explained, only heads or assistant heads were present, underscoring the importance of considering position due to differences in communication and engagement levels. Furthermore, the office to which respondents belong is a significant variable. The level of awareness about CIASO, COA and CAO functions varies depending on the nature of each office's work. Some offices are more familiar with the roles of the offices because of their direct involvement with audit activities, while others may have less exposure. The differentiation among offices is crucial because it reflects varying degrees of understanding and awareness regarding audit functions,

influenced by whether they have been audited previously or are yet to be audited.

Fig.1. Paradigm of the Study

1.2 Statement of the Objectives and Null Hypothesis

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To determine the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office.
 - 1.1 There is a significant association between the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office and the office, position and audit training attended.
 - 1.2 There is no significant association between the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office and the office, position and audit training attended.
2. To determine the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the differences between the City Internal Audit Services Office, Commission on Audit and the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office
 - 2.1 There is a significant association between the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the differences between the City Internal Audit Services Office, Commission on Audit and the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office and the employees' office, position and audit training attended.
 - 2.2 There is no significant association between the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the differences between the City Internal Audit Services Office, Commission on Audit and the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office and the employees' office, position and audit training attended.
3. To identify the challenges encountered by city government employees related to internal audit problems and issues.

The **headings** and **subheadings**, starting with "1. Introduction", appear in upper and lower case letters and should be **set in bold and aligned flush left**. All headings from the Introduction to Acknowledgements are numbered sequentially using 1, 2, 3, etc. Subheadings are numbered 1.1, 1.2, etc. If a subsection must be further divided, the numbers 1.1.1, 1.1.2, etc.

The font size for **heading is 11 points bold face** and **subsections with 10 points and not bold**. Do not underline any of the headings, or add dashes, colons, etc.

1.3 Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in accordance with their contextual use in the study, with the goals of enhancing a better understanding of the study and clarifying its findings.

CAO – City Accounting Office. An office of the City Government of Tabuk which takes charge of both the accounting and internal financial audit services of the City Government and share fiscal responsibility and authority over the financial affairs, transactions, and operations of the City Government (Organizational Structure of the City Government of Tabuk, 2020)

CIASO – City Internal Audit Services Office. An office of the City Government of Tabuk which performs functions with primary responsibilities encompassing the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control and quality of performance (Organizational Structure of the City Government of Tabuk, 2020).

COA - Commission on Audit. an independent constitutional commission established by the Constitution of the Philippines. It has the primary function to examine, audit and settle all accounts and expenditures of the funds and properties of the Philippine government (Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, 1987).

Descriptive statistics - statistics that summarize or describe features of a data set, such as its central tendency or dispersion (Investopedia, n.d.).

Internal audit – the evaluation of management controls and operations performance, and the determination of the degree of compliance of internal control with laws, regulations, managerial policies, accountability measures, ethical standards, and contractual obligations (Department of Budget and Management, 2023).

Internal control – the plan of an organization or agency and all the coordinated methods and measures adopted within an organization to safeguard its assets, check the accuracy and reliability of its accounting data, and encourage adherence to prescribed managerial policies (Department of Budget and Management, 2023).

Risk assessment – the overall process of risk identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation.

Root cause analysis – a systematic process that is used to address a deficiency to determine the “root cause” of a particular event of interest or focus event. It is used to correct or eliminate the cause and prevent the problem from recurring

1.4 Importance of the Study

This study holds significant value for various stakeholders. The insights it provides can benefit the following individuals or institutions:

City Internal Audit Services Office. The study will determine how well the CIASO's roles and functions are understood across various city government offices. This understanding is essential for fostering effective collaboration and support from these offices. Additionally, the study will gather valuable feedback from various stakeholders, aiding the CIASO in developing strategies to enhance the dissemination of information about its actual roles and functions. Clarifying the CIASO's mandate is vital for supporting its mission of promoting good governance. When city government offices clearly understand the CIASO's role, they are more likely to collaborate effectively, resulting in better governance practices and more efficient use of public resources. By understanding the expectations and perceptions of various offices, the CIASO can address any lingering misconceptions and reinforce its role as a partner in championing good governance.

Local Government Units. Since few local government units in the Philippines have internal audit offices, the findings of this study, can serve as a valuable basis for other local government units wishing to establish internal audit offices. The insights gained can guide these units in implementing effective actions to disseminate information about the role and functions of their newly created internal audit offices as a preventive mechanism for the different offices to avoid misperceptions and better understand its mandate.

Employees of the City Government of Tabuk. The study is of great significance to the 32 different offices of the city government, as it aims to develop an action plan for effectively disseminating information to enhance employees' awareness and understanding of the CIASO's mandate and functions. By identifying gaps in knowledge and addressing misconceptions, the study will ensure that employees across these offices are well-informed about the CIASO's roles and how they contribute to promoting good governance. This heightened awareness will lead to improved cooperation and collaboration with the CIASO during audits, fostering a more transparent and efficient audit process. Ultimately, the action plan derived from the

study will empower the offices to better comply with internal controls and standards, enhancing their operational effectiveness and supporting the broader goal of accountability and transparency within the city government.

Other institutions. The study holds significant value for institutions with newly created internal audit units or those planning to create one, serving as a critical resource for understanding how to effectively integrate and communicate the functions of these units within their organizational structures. By examining the experiences and strategies of the CIASO in enhancing awareness and understanding of its mandate and functions, the study provides a blueprint for other institutions to follow. This can help newly established internal audit units overcome common challenges related to role clarification and stakeholder engagement.

Researcher. This study benefited the researcher as an employee of the CIASO by providing a deeper understanding of how various city government offices perceived and engaged with the functions of internal audit. This enhanced knowledge enabled the researcher to contribute more effectively to the CIASO's mission of promoting good governance, improving internal processes, and fostering stronger collaboration across the city government. Additionally, the experience from conducting the study enhanced the researcher's skills in data analysis.

Future Researchers. The findings of this study will serve as a foundation for future researchers interested in the field of internal audit, public administration, or governance. Future researchers can build on this study by exploring related areas such as the effectiveness of internal audit offices in other local government units, the impact of audit training on employees' performance, or comparative studies between local government units with and without internal audit offices. This study will contribute valuable data and insights to the growing body of literature on internal audit practices in the public sector, helping future researchers to expand and refine their investigations into this critical area of governance.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and studies, carefully selected after an extensive and in-depth exploration by the researcher. The materials included in this chapter offer valuable insights and knowledge that directly contribute to a deeper understanding of the present study. By examining these sources, the researcher ensures that the topic at hand is informed by existing study, highlighting the significance of previous research and its relevance to this study.

Myths can offer significant insight into how people perceive the world around them. While some myths may contain elements of truth, they often lead to misconceptions. The persistence of certain myths, even if largely untrue, suggests that auditors should pay close attention to how they are perceived within their organizations. Some of the myths are that internal auditors are accountants by training, auditors are nit pickers and fault finders, it is best not to tell auditors anything unless they specifically ask and internal audit is the corporate policeman (Chambers, 2012). The researcher concurs with Chambers (2012), who observes that these myths are deeply ingrained in the minds of auditees, yet many of them are not accurate representations of auditors. In some cases, these myths can be so influential that a company might even consider changing its auditor simply because it received a qualified audit opinion.

Several studies have identified key factors influencing these myths or perceptions on the internal audit function. Management support is a significant determinant of internal audit effectiveness (Badara and Saidin, 2014). Their findings suggest that positive perceptions of internal auditing correlate with strong management backing and engagement. Conversely, negative perceptions often arise from a lack of communication and understanding of the internal audit's role, particularly in risk management contexts. Many negative perceptions arise from a lack of understanding of the internal audit function. Employees and management may not fully grasp the purpose and benefits of internal audits, leading to misconceptions that audits are merely fault-finding missions (Ahmad & Taylor, 2009). The fear of the unknown also contributes to negative perceptions. Employees who are unfamiliar with the audit process may feel anxious about what to expect and the possible outcomes (Arena & Jeppesen, 2010).

Additionally, organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of the internal audit function. Studies suggest that a culture valuing transparency and accountability enhances the perceived effectiveness of internal auditing. In contrast, organizations with a more secretive or siloed approach may foster skepticism regarding the contributions of internal audits (Yeboah, 2020). The literature reveals a complex interplay between perceptions of internal audit functions and their effectiveness. Key factors such as management support, communication, and organizational culture significantly influence these perceptions. As internal auditing continues to evolve, understanding these dynamics will be essential for enhancing the function's role in governance and risk management.

Historically, internal auditing focused mainly on financial controls. However, recent literature emphasizes a

broader role within organizations. Internal auditors are now viewed as essential to corporate governance, acting as vital resources for management to ensure operational activities are effectively controlled and assessed (Al-Twaijry, Brierley, and Gwilliam, 2003). This evolution necessitates a reevaluation of how the effectiveness of internal audits is perceived and measured. However, in the case of CIASO, most of its auditees still expected the office as primarily conducting audits that focus on financial controls. This is based on the conducted risk assessment of the 32 different offices, where their expectations were gathered. This perception lacks awareness of the function of both CIASO and the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions division under the City Accounting Office. Some equate accounting with internal auditing. Accounting and internal auditing, while closely related, serve distinct roles within an organization. Understanding these differences is crucial for effective governance and organizational performance. The scope of accounting is primarily limited to financial data and compliance with regulatory requirements (Whittington & Pany, 2019). Accountants focus on preparing financial statements, managing budgets, and ensuring compliance with tax laws and accounting standards. Internal auditing, on the other hand, has a broader scope that includes operational, financial, compliance, and information system audits (Sawyer, 2016). Internal auditors not only review financial data but also examine the efficiency and effectiveness of operations, the reliability of reporting, and the safeguarding of assets. This broader scope helps organizations identify areas of improvement and enhance overall performance.

Accounting is not the only function often confused with internal auditing; external auditing, performed by the Commission on Audit, is also commonly misunderstood as serving a similar role. The research conducted by Pramukti emphasizes the distinct yet interconnected functions of internal and external audits within the framework of organizational governance and risk management. Internal audit is characterized as a proactive function that offers independent and objective assurance to management (Pramukti, 2024). Its scope is extensive, focusing on the evaluation and enhancement of risk management, control, and governance processes. In contrast, external audit acts as a protective measure for external stakeholders, ensuring that financial statements are fair and reliable, in compliance with established auditing standards and regulations. Together, internal and external audits play vital roles in governance and risk management, each contributing uniquely to the integrity and reliability of financial reporting and operational processes. Internal audit, as a proactive entity, fulfills a multifaceted role by providing independent and objective assurance to management.

Internal audit is a crucial element of corporate governance, acting as a trusted advisor to management in identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks (Janvrin et al., 2019). The broad scope of internal audit includes various activities aimed at evaluating and enhancing the effectiveness of risk management and governance processes. One viewpoint on internal audit highlights its role as a strategic partner to management, aiding in the achievement of organizational goals and improving operational efficiency. This aligns with the notion that internal audit contributes to value creation by offering insights and recommendations for process enhancements and risk mitigation strategies (Zhang et al., 2023). Conversely, external audit serves as a safeguard for external stakeholders by providing assurance regarding the fairness and reliability of financial statements, adhering to auditing standards and regulations. As an independent and objective assurance mechanism, external audit enhances public confidence and promotes transparency in financial reporting. Research supports the idea that external audit plays a crucial role in mitigating information asymmetry between management and external stakeholders, thereby facilitating the efficient allocation of capital and contributing to market stability and growth (Lennox, 2019).

Building on the studies related to awareness of the internal audit function, and the practices of accounting, internal auditing, and external auditing, this study also seeks to identify the challenges faced by city government employees concerning internal audit issues and problems. This study reviewed literature available and relevant to the challenges faced by auditees regarding the implementation of audit recommendations. It was found that audit recommendations are not implemented as a result of financial constraints, staffing issues, complex issues, non-feasible recommendations made by auditors as well as management's ignorance as to how their organizations can be affected as result of non-implementation of audit recommendations (Wadesango et al., 2017).

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter clearly defines the research methods used to conduct the study. The researcher explains how the necessary data and information were collected, presented, and analyzed to address the research objectives and questions. The reasons and justifications for the research design, research instruments, data sources, data collection techniques, data presentation techniques, and analytical techniques used are also provided

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed methods research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative

methodologies. Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. Thus, it is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The quantitative aspect of the study was conducted using a survey methodology. A structured questionnaire was administered to a representative sample of employees across various offices of the City Government of Tabuk. The survey consisted of closed-ended questions designed to meet the first and second objectives of the study, which are: to determine the level of awareness among employees of the City Government of Tabuk regarding the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office, and to determine the practice of functions by the City Internal Audit Services Office, the City Accounting Office, and the Commission on Audit among the employees of the City Government of Tabuk. The quantitative approach is crucial in providing measurable and generalizable data about the study's objectives. The data gathered was analyzed using statistical software, ensuring reliability and validity in findings.

To meet the third objective which is to identify the challenges encountered by city government employees related to internal audit problems and issues, the qualitative method was used through semi-structured interviews. This qualitative approach provides richer,

contextual insights into the attitudes and beliefs of the employees that cannot be captured by quantitative data alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The qualitative data will be analyzed thematically to identify common themes and patterns that emerge from the interviews.

3.2 Research Locale and Population

The study was conducted at the City Government of Tabuk, specifically located in Dagupan Centro, Tabuk City, Kalinga. The city government complex houses a total of 33 offices, each serving distinct functions within the local administration. This locale provides a centralized and accessible setting for gathering data.

The population of the study comprises 905 regular employees within the City Government of Tabuk as of June 2024. To determine the appropriate sample size, Slovin's formula was used:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (905)

e = margin of error (set at 0.05 for this study)

Applying Slovin's formula with a margin of error of 0.05:

$$n = \frac{905}{1 + 905(0.05)^2} = \frac{905}{1 + 2.2625} = \frac{905}{3.2625} = 278$$

Thus, a total of approximately 278 employees was surveyed, which represents approximately 30% of the total population.

Office	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1. City Accounting Office	7	2.52%
2. City Administrator's Office	6	2.09%
3. City Assessor's Office	7	2.53%
4. City Barangay Affairs and Community Relations Office	4	1.54%
5. City Budget Office	5	1.65%
6. City Buildings and Architecture Office	6	1.98%
7. City Business Permits and Licensing Office	4	1.32%
8. City Civil Registry Office	4	1.43%
9. City Cooperative and Enterprise Development Office	5	1.65%
10. City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office	7	2.42%
11. City Engineering Office	11	3.96%
12. City Environment and Natural Resources Office	24	8.70%
13. City General Services Office	10	3.74%

14. City Health Services Office	32	11.34%
15. City Human Resource Management Office	4	1.54%
16. City Information and Communications Technology Office	3	1.21%
17. City Internal Audit Services Office	4	1.54%
18. City Legal Services Office	4	1.43%
19. City Mayor's Office	8	2.86%
20. City Motor and Equipment Pool Office	10	3.74%
21. City Planning and Development Office	6	2.20%
22. City Population Development Office	5	1.76%
23. City Public Employment Services Office	3	1.21%
24. City Public Information Office	5	1.76%
25. City Public Order and Safety Office	19	6.71%
26. City Social Welfare and Development Office	10	3.52%
27. City Special Concerns and Coordinating Office	6	2.20%
28. City Treasury Office	14	5.17%
29. City Veterinary Services Office	5	1.76%
30. Office For City Agricultural Services	14	5.17%
31. Office of the City Tourism and Cultural Affairs	3	0.99%
32. Sangguniang Panlungsod Office	20	7.26%
33. Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod Office	3	1.10%
Total	278	100%

Table.1: Profile of respondents per office

The table presents the number of respondents per office. The selection of participants was proportionate to the number of regular employees in each office, ensuring representation across the 33 offices within the city government. This approach aimed to gather insights from a diverse sample that reflects the distribution of employees across various offices

Training	Number of Respondents
With Audit Training	27
Without Audit Training	251
Total	278

Table .2: Profile of respondents per audit training

Table presents the profile of respondents based on their audit training background. Out of the 278 total respondents, only 27 individuals (9.71%) have attended audit training, while the majority, 251 respondents (90.29%), have not received any formal audit training.

Class	Number of Respondents
Chief Level (Level V)	16
Supervising Level (Level IV)	24
Senior Level (Level III)	49
Journeyman (Level II)	36
Entrance Level (Level I)	153
Total	278

Table .3: Profile of respondents per position

The table presents the distribution of respondents according to their job classification levels. Among the 278 total respondents, the majority, 153 individuals (55.04%), belong to the Entrance Level (Level I), indicating that most employees are in the early stages of their careers. The Journeyman Level (Level II) comprises 36 respondents (12.95%), while the Senior Level (Level III) includes 49 respondents (17.63%), representing employees with more

experience and responsibilities. The Supervising Level (Level IV) consists of 24 respondents (8.63%), reflecting mid-level managerial roles, and the Chief Level (Level V) has the fewest respondents, with only 16 individuals (5.76%). This distribution shows that the workforce is predominantly composed of entry-level employees, with fewer individuals holding supervisory and leadership positions.

3.3 Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on understanding the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO) among the 33 offices of the City Government of Tabuk which are part of its current organizational structure.

The delimitation of this study includes its concentration on the City Government of Tabuk, specifically excluding other local government units in the Philippines. The study will not cover the detailed operational processes of the CIASO or its specific audit findings as it considers the confidentiality of information. Additionally, the study will be limited to the data gathered. External factors influencing governance practices outside the direct interaction with the CIASO will not be considered in this study.

3.4 Data Gathering Instrument

A structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were utilized to gather data from 278 respondents. The structured questionnaire allowed for a quantitative analysis of awareness levels. The semi-structured interviews provided qualitative insights from previously audited offices, revealing practical challenges and issues related to internal audit.

3.5 Data Gathering Instrument

A structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were utilized to gather data from 278 respondents. The structured questionnaire allowed for a quantitative analysis of awareness levels. The semi-structured interviews provided qualitative insights from previously audited offices, revealing practical challenges and issues related to internal audit.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

As included in the questionnaire, the functions of the CIASO and the City Accounting Office were based on the Organizational Structure 2020 Second Edition and the principal duties of the Commission on Audit were based on Article IX-D of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. This ensures that the research instrument is

reliable, as the questions directly align with the actual mandates and responsibilities of the offices involved. By grounding the questionnaire and in these well-established sources, the study minimizes bias and enhances the accuracy of the data collected. The reliability of the instrument is further reinforced by the fact that it reflects the standardized duties and functions outlined in official documents, ensuring consistency in measuring respondents' awareness and perceptions of audit functions within the City Government of Tabuk. Data Gathering Tool

The data for this study was gathered using two primary methods: a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. These instruments were employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives.

3.7 Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process for this study began with the submission of a formal letter of request to the city mayor, seeking approval for the administration of the survey. Upon receiving the mayor's approval, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the designated offices. Coordination and planning were undertaken to schedule the distribution in a manner that minimized disruption to the offices' busy schedules, activities, programs, and fieldwork days. This careful timing helped ensure that respondents could complete the questionnaire accurately and without feeling rushed. After each distribution in every office, the researcher reviewed the collected questionnaires for completeness and consistency. Any incomplete or inconsistent responses were promptly addressed to maintain the integrity of the data. The researcher prepared a checklist detailing the target number of questionnaires to be distributed in each office to ensure the correct quantity of questionnaires was received. This methodical approach facilitated thorough and accurate data collection.

3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Treatment of Data

To determine the respondents' level of awareness of the functions of the different offices, a 5-point Likert scale was employed. Respondents were asked to rate their awareness on a scale ranging from "1" to "5," with each point corresponding to a specific qualitative description, as indicated in the table below.

Scale	Interval	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Description
5	4.21 – 5.00	Very Much Aware	Possesses proficiency and knowledge on the mandate of CIASO

4	3.41 – 4.20	Much Aware	Can adequately understand the mandate of CIASO
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Aware	Can understand some aspects of the mandate of CIASO
2	1.81 – 2.60	Less Aware	Can understand the mandate of CIASO only with the guidance of the experts
1	1.00 – 1.80	Not Aware	Can hardly understand the mandate of CIASO even with guidance from experts

Table 4. 5 Point Likert Scale

To evaluate the awareness on the differences between the City Internal Audit Services Office, Commission on Audit and Internal Audit on Financial Transactions Division of the City Accounting Office and among the respondents, another 5-point Likert scale was

also utilized. This scale was similarly structured to capture the extent to which the respondents agree. The qualitative descriptions corresponding to each point on the scale are presented in the table below:

Scale	Interval	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Description
5	4.21 – 5.00	Very Much Aware	Possesses proficiency and knowledge on the differences between the functions of CIASO, CAO and COA
4	3.41 – 4.20	Much Aware	Can adequately understand the differences between the functions of CIASO, CAO and COA
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Aware	Can understand some aspects of the differences between the functions of CIASO, CAO and COA
2	1.81 – 2.60	Less Aware	Can understand the differences between the functions of CIASO, CAO and COA only with the guidance of the experts
1	1.00 – 1.80	Not Aware	Can hardly understand the differences between the functions of CIASO, CAO and COA even with guidance from experts

Table 5. Likert Scale on the Level of Awareness on the Functions of CIASO, CAO (IAFS) and COA

For the qualitative portion, the data gathered from interviews was systematically organized and analyzed to explore challenges encountered in audit-related problems and issues. The responses were reviewed, and similar answers was combined to identify recurring insights.

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses was integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The integration of these approaches aims to offer a balanced perspective on the level of awareness and the challenges encountered in implementing them.

3.8.2 Statistical Tools Used

Chi-square Test. The chi-square test is used to examine the relationships between the categorical variables of interest. The chi-square test allowed the study to determine whether there were significant relationships between the variables, providing insight into how the employees' roles and experiences impacted their response. The chi-square value

is computed using the formula,

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (O - E)^2}{E} + \dots$$

Where: χ^2 = calculated chi-square value

O = observed values

E = expected values

2. **Percentage.** Percentage distributions were used to show the proportion of respondents across different levels of the Likert scale, providing a clear picture of how the employees rated their awareness and practice.

$$\% = \left(\frac{f \times 100}{n} \right)$$

Where: % = computed percentage

f = frequency of the response

n = number of responses

3. Rank. This is used to identify which areas of awareness were highest and lowest among the employees.

4. Weighted Mean. The weighted mean was calculated to assess the average level of awareness and practice of functions, giving weight to the varying importance of each response.

$$\bar{x} = \sum x / n$$

where: $\bar{x}$ = mean

$\sum x$ = sum of values

n = number of values

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data gathered and the statistical treatment applied to them. The presentation is geared to the research questions and the research hypotheses. Data is presented according to the sequence of the statement of the problem. Descriptive data is presented first before inferential data.

4.1 Awareness on CIASO's Functions

CIASO Mandate and Functions	Total Respondents (%)	Mean
1. The CIASO's mandate is to perform functions with primary responsibilities encompassing the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control and quality of performance.	278 (100.0)	3.67
2. The CIASO conducts management and operations audit of the City Government's functions, programs, projects, activities, and outputs and determine the degree of compliance with their mandate, policies, government regulations, established objectives, systems and procedures/processes and contractual obligations.	278 (100.0)	3.68
3. The CIASO reviews and appraises systems and procedures, organizational structures, asset management practices, financial and management records, reports, and performance standards of the City Government.	278 (100.0)	3.72
4. The CIASO analyzes and evaluates management deficiencies and assist top management by recommending realistic courses of action.	278 (100.0)	3.56
5. The CIASO ascertains the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information and means used to identify measures, classify, and report such information.	278 (100.0)	3.51
6. The CIASO assists the management in ensuring that City Government's assets and other resources are accounted for and used consistent with laws, regulations and policies and are safeguarded against loss, wastage, and misuse.	278 (100.0)	3.62
7. The CIASO reviews and evaluates the soundness, adequacy and application of accounting, financial and other operating controls and promoting the most effective control at reasonable cost.	278 (100.0)	3.57
8. The CIASO reviews operations or programs to ascertain whether results are consistent with established objectives and goals and if such programs are being carried out as planned.	278 (100.0)	3.65
9. The CIASO evaluates the quality of performance of offices and employees in carrying out their assigned		

responsibilities.	278 (100.0)	3.57
10. The CIASO recommends corrective actions on operational deficiencies observed.	278 (100.0)	3.64
Mean		3.62

Table 6. Level of Awareness on CIASO Functions

Figure 6 presents the number of respondents among the different level of awareness for every function of the City Internal Audit Services Office. It indicates that most employees of the City Government of Tabuk are aware of the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO) functions, with the majority falling under "Much Aware" and "Very Much Aware" categories. A mean score of 3.62 indicates that the employees of the City Government of Tabuk have an adequate understanding of CIASO's mandate. As compared to the stakeholder expectations gathered by the office in 2022, this demonstrates a notable improvement in their level of awareness, underscoring the effectiveness of CIASO's strategies to enhance employee understanding.

Among the functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO), employees of the City Government of Tabuk are least aware that the CIASO

ascertains the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information, as well as the means used to identify, measure, classify, and report such information, with a mean rating of 3.51. This indicates a lower level of recognition of CIASO's role in ensuring the accuracy and dependability of financial and operational data. On the other hand, employees are most aware that the CIASO reviews and appraises systems and procedures, organizational structures, asset management practices, financial and management records, reports, and performance standards of the City Government, as evidenced by the highest mean rating of 3.72. This suggests that employees have a better understanding of CIASO's evaluative and oversight functions compared to its role in financial and operational information integrity.

Association	Chi-Square Computed Value (χ^2)	Tabulated Value (Critical Value)	Decision Rule
1. Association Between Office and the Employees' Level of Awareness on CIASO's Mandate and Functions	208.08	113.14	Reject
2. Association Between Attendance to Audit Trainings and Employees' Level of Awareness on CIASO's Mandate and Functions	44.25	9.48	Reject Ho
3. Association Between Position and the Employees' Level of Awareness on CIASO's Mandate and Functions	89.54	26.29	Reject Ho

Table 7. Association of Office, Audit Training and Position to Employees' Level of Awareness

The table above illustrates the results of the chi-square analysis, shedding light on the relationship between an employee's office, audit training, and position with their level of awareness regarding the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office.

A closer look at the association between an employee's office and their awareness of CIASO's functions reveals a significant association. With a computed

chi-square value of 208.08 surpassing the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding suggests that the office where an employee is assigned plays a crucial role in shaping their understanding of CIASO's responsibilities within the City Government of Tabuk.

Similarly, audit training emerges as a key factor in awareness levels. At a 0.05 significance level and 4 degrees of freedom, the computed chi-square value of 44.25 far

exceeds the tabular value of 9.488, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms that employees who have undergone audit training exhibit a higher level of awareness regarding CIASO's mandate and functions compared to those who have not.

The analysis further highlights the influence of an employee's position in determining their familiarity with CIASO's role. With a computed chi-square value of 89.54 exceeding the tabular value of 26.29 at 16 degrees of

freedom, the null hypothesis is again rejected. This suggests that employees in higher or specialized positions tend to have a greater awareness of CIASO's functions within the city government framework.

These findings underscore the interconnectedness of organizational roles, professional training, and hierarchical position in shaping employees' awareness of internal audit functions.

CAO (IAFS) Functions	Total Respondents (%)	Mean
1. The City Accounting Office take charge of both the accounting and internal financial audit services of the City Government and share fiscal responsibility and authority over the financial affairs, transactions, and operations of the City Government.	278 (100.0)	3.89
2. The City Accounting Office installs and maintains an effective internal audit system on financial transactions in the City Government.	278	3.80
3. The Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office receives and records vouchers and other documents relative to financial transactions.	278 (100.0)	4.03
4. The Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office pre-audits supporting documents to determine completeness of all disbursements.	278 (100.0)	3.89
5. The Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office inspects and verifies goods, supplies and infrastructure projects.	278 (100.0)	3.87
Mean		3.90
COA Principal Duties	Total Respondents (%)	Mean
6. The Commission on Audit examines, audit and settle all accounts pertaining to the revenue and receipts of, and expenditures or uses of funds and property owned or held in trust by, or pertaining to, the government.	278 (100.0)	3.91
7. The Commission on Audit promulgates accounting and auditing rules and regulations including those for the prevention and disallowance of irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant or unconscionable expenditures, or uses of government funds and properties.	278 (100.0)	3.85
8. The Commission on Audit recommends measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations.	278 (100.0)	3.82
9. The Commission on Audit submits annual reports to the President and the Congress on the financial condition and operation of the government.	278 (100.0)	3.63
10. The Commission on Audit keep the general accounts of government and preserve the vouchers and supporting papers pertaining thereto.	278 (100.0)	3.78

Mean		3.80

Table 8. Level of Awareness on the Differences Between the Three Offices

Figure 8 shows the level of awareness among employees regarding the differences in the functions of the CAO and COA. The mean awareness score for CIASO is 3.62, for CAO (IAFS) 3.90, and for COA 3.80. Among the three offices, employees are most aware of the functions of the City Accounting Office and least aware of the functions of CIASO. Overall, the level of awareness across the three offices is 3.73. This result suggests that employees possess an adequate understanding of the differences in the functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO), City Accounting Office (CAO), and Commission on Audit (COA). A mean value of 3.73, which falls above the midpoint of the Likert scale, indicates that most respondents demonstrate a satisfactory level of awareness. This finding implies that employees are generally capable of distinguishing between the roles and responsibilities of these offices. Such awareness is crucial in minimizing role confusion, enhancing collaboration, and ensuring the efficient implementation of their respective mandates within the City Government of Tabuk.

Among all the functions of the three offices, employees of the City Government of Tabuk are most aware that the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office is responsible for receiving and recording vouchers and other documents related to financial transactions, as reflected by the highest mean rating of 4.03. This suggests that employees have a clear understanding of the City Accounting Office's role in processing financial documents. Conversely, employees are least aware that the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO) ascertains the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information, as well as the methods used to identify, measure, classify, and report such information, with the lowest mean rating of 3.51. This indicates a gap in awareness regarding CIASO's function in ensuring the accuracy and dependability of financial and operational data compared to the more widely recognized responsibilities of the City Accounting Office.

	Chi-Square Computed Value (χ^2)	Tabulated Value (Critical Value)	Decision Rule
Association Between Office and the Employees' Level of Awareness on CIASO's Mandate and Functions	223.88	113.14	Reject
Association Between Attendance to Audit Trainings and Employees' Level of Awareness on CIASO's Mandate and Functions	44.25	9.48	Reject Ho
Association Between Position and the Employees' Level of Awareness on CIASO's Mandate and Functions	89.54	26.29	Reject Ho

Table 9. Association of Office and Level of Awareness on the Different Offices

To address Objective 2, the chi-square test was employed to examine the association between the moderator variables and the level of awareness regarding the distinctions among the three offices. The test resulted to a chi-square value of 223.88. Furthermore, at a 0.05 significance level with degrees of freedom of 128, the critical Chi-Square value is 113.14. Since the calculated Chi-Square value of 223.58 exceeds the tabular value of 113.14, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant association between the office and the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the differences between the City

Internal Audit Services Office, Commission on Audit and the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office.

The same method was utilized to evaluate the relationship between audit training and employees' level of awareness on the distinctions of the different offices. As a preliminary step, the degrees of freedom was calculated to determine the corresponding chi-square critical value. At a significance level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom of 4, the critical Chi-Square value is 9.48. Since the computed chi-square value of 39.20 is greater than the tabular value of 9.48, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a

significant association between audit training and the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the differences between the City Internal Audit Services Office, Commission on Audit and the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office. At a significance level of 0.05 and 16 degrees of freedom, the critical chi-Square value is 26.29. Since the computed chi-square value of 71.92 is greater than the tabular value of 26.29, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant association between position and the level of awareness among employees of the City Government Office of Tabuk regarding the differences between the City Internal Audit Services Office, Commission on Audit and the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office.

Overall, the results indicate that employees' awareness of the differences among the City Internal Audit Services Office, the Commission on Audit, and the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions of the City Accounting Office is significantly influenced by their office affiliation, audit training, and job position.

4.2 Challenges encountered related to Internal Audit Problems and Issues

Offices previously audited were interviewed to provide feedback on the challenges they encountered related to internal audit issues. Specifically, 3 offices were audited in 2022, 5 in 2023, and 2 in 2024, prior to the conduct of this study. In total, 10 offices were included within the study's interview scope. A series of questions were posed, and the researcher observed that the feedback from auditees was consistent across offices. The issues and challenges identified can be summarized into three key areas:

1. Resistance on the disclosure of information verbally or through the issuance of documents

Employees tend to describe ideal conditions rather than the actual current state of the office. Additionally, another office explained that they resisted disclosing information, citing that the information involved client data and, therefore, invoked the Data Privacy Act to avoid providing documents to the auditors.

Others viewed the internal auditors as "police dogs" leading to challenges in the disclosure of information

2. Inability to provide documents

Some offices lacked adequate controls over records management, which resulted in their inability to provide the required documents. Additionally, some documents had been damaged due to natural calamities, transitions in management, lack of awareness about the importance of maintaining records, and the failure to properly file office documents.

3. Lack of resources

The previous auditees expressed willingness to implement the audit recommendations provided. However, they faced significant challenges in fully executing these recommendations. One major obstacle was the need for additional manpower, which many offices lacked due to staffing limitations. Furthermore, budget constraints posed another significant hurdle, as the financial resources allocated to their offices were insufficient.

V. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions drawn and recommendations based on the objectives of the study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

A mean of 3.62 reveals that the employees of the City Government of Tabuk have an adequate understanding of the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO). Employees' office, audit training, and position are significantly associated with their level of awareness of CIASO's functions.

They are also sufficiently aware of the distinctions between the functions of CIASO, the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions Section (IAFS) of the City Accounting Office (CAO), and the Commission on Audit (COA), as indicated by a mean of 3.73. Employees' office, audit training, and position are significantly associated with their level of awareness regarding the differences between CIASO, IAFS of CAO, and COA.

Furthermore, based on the interviews conducted, employees encountered three main challenges related to internal audit: resistance to disclosing information, whether verbally or in writing; inability to provide documents; and lack of resources. Among these challenges, the provision of documents was identified as the most difficult by the different offices.

5.2 Conclusion

The following conclusions are drawn based on the summary of findings:

1. The study effectively determined the level of awareness among the employees of the City Government of Tabuk regarding the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO). Two years after the CIASO began its operations, a notable improvement in employee awareness was observed, indicating that the office's initiatives to promote its role and responsibilities within the local government have been successful.

Employees now have a clearer understanding of the CIASO's purpose, which includes its role in enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency across various departments.

Furthermore, the study highlighted that several factors influence employees' awareness levels. These factors include the specific office or department to which they belong, their participation in audit-related training, and their job positions within the local government. Employees who attended audit training programs were found to exhibit a higher level of awareness, demonstrating the positive impact of capacity-building initiatives on understanding the CIASO's mandate. Similarly, employees holding supervisory, senior and chief roles showed greater awareness compared to employees in lower levels, suggesting that job responsibilities play a significant role in shaping familiarity with audit functions.

2. The analysis of the information gathered revealed a significant improvement in the employees' understanding of the distinct functions performed by three key offices within the City Government of Tabuk: the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO), the Internal Audit on Financial Transactions Division of the City Accounting Office (CAO), and the Commission on Audit (COA). Unlike the initial stages of the CIASO's operations, where confusion was prevalent and employees often expected the CIASO to perform the duties of the CAO or COA, the study showed that employees now have an adequate grasp of the unique roles and responsibilities of each office. The findings further emphasize that the office to which employees belong plays a crucial role in shaping their level of awareness. Employees in departments with frequent interactions with the CIASO were more likely to understand its functions, as their work often necessitates collaboration with the internal audit office. Additionally, attendance at audit-related training emerged as a critical factor influencing awareness. Employees who participated in such training programs demonstrated a deeper understanding of the CIASO's mandate and its distinctions from the CAO and COA. The study also identified a correlation between job positions and awareness levels. Employees in supervisory to chief level roles exhibited a higher level of understanding. This is due to the nature of their responsibilities, which often involve a broader view of organizational processes and greater interaction with audit functions.
3. The findings of the study highlight issues and challenges encountered by offices audited by the CIASO in recent years. The study identified three key challenges faced

by offices audited by the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO) from 2022 to 2024: resistance to information disclosure, inability to provide documents, and lack of resources. Misconceptions about internal auditors led to reluctance in sharing information. Poor records management, document loss, and limited awareness of proper filing practices further hindered the audit process. Additionally, staffing shortages and budget constraints made it difficult for offices to implement audit recommendations despite their willingness.

Overall, the study underscored the progress made in fostering awareness and understanding of the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office (CIASO) among employees of the City Government of Tabuk. It also highlights the critical factors influencing awareness levels, such as office affiliation, audit-related training, and job positions. However, challenges persist, including resistance to information disclosure, poor records management, and resource constraints, which hinder the effective implementation of audit recommendations. By addressing these challenges and continuing to invest in education, training, and resource allocation, the CIASO can further solidify its role as a cornerstone of transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the local government.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the summary of findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following are recommended:

1. The City Internal Audit Services Office should continue implementing information dissemination activities to increase the level of awareness of employees regarding its mandate especially on its role in ascertaining the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information and means used to identify measures, classify, and report such information. To address the study's findings—where employees in lower-ranking positions exhibited less awareness of CIASO's mandate—it is recommended that all employees, regardless of rank or position, be actively involved in key audit-related activities. One such opportunity lies in the entrance conferences conducted at the start of audits for each office. Typically attended by senior-level staff to department heads, these conferences can be expanded to include personnel across all levels. This inclusive approach allows lower-ranking employees to gain direct exposure to the objectives, processes, and importance of CIASO's functions.
2. Employees of the City Government of Tabuk who are assigned or responsible for engaging in activities related to the City Internal Audit Services Office, the

City Accounting Office, and the Commission on Audit should consistently and actively participate in these activities. Their regular involvement ensures that they remain well-informed about the distinct mandates, functions, and processes of each office, thereby enhancing their ability to collaborate effectively.

3. To address the most challenging concern relevant to internal audit, the City Government of Tabuk should provide training on records retention policies and best practices to ensure that all offices maintain necessary documentation for audit purposes and develop a contingency plan, including digital backup solutions, to safeguard important financial and operational records from potential damage.
4. Future researchers are encouraged to expand on this study by exploring additional variables that may influence employees' awareness and understanding of the mandate and functions of the City Internal Audit Services Office, the City Accounting Office, and the Commission on Audit. Factors such as organizational culture, frequency of audits, or the impact of technological advancements on audit practices could provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of internal audit functions. Additionally, future studies could adopt a broader scope by including comparative analyses with other local government units to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

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The City and its Subjects: A Reading of *Little Dorrit* and *In the Year of Jubilee*

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Abstract— In both Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1857) and George Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee* (1894) the spatial logic of the city and its topography play a constitutive role in the formation and development of character. Architectural forms and the labyrinthine nature of nineteenth-century London determine the kinds of action and movement that define and limit characters. In *Little Dorrit* we see a bleak example of the above in the carceral model represented by the Marshalsea prison for London's debtors. The novel illustrates how exterior spaces impinge on inner experiences and shape character in tangible ways. Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee* shows us the ideological forms that shape the experience of living in suburban London. While Gissing's novel describes a higher social class and its aspirations, the novel gives us a fascinating insight into the gendered nature of urban space as experienced by its central character Nancy Lord. Both novels show, in similar yet different ways, how the urban environment directly impacts the spatial grammar of the novel and as a consequence shapes the very form of these novels



Keywords— Charles Dickens, George Gissing, City spaces, Carceral, *Little Dorrit*, *In the Year of Jubilee*

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine representations of the city in the Victorian novel. It will focus on two novels—Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1857) and George Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee* (1894)—novels separated not just by about forty years of history but also, as this essay will demonstrate, by a marked difference in the way representations of the city inform the structural and thematic organization of the novels. My focus will be on the problematic of city spaces and the kinds of mobility that such a mapping presumes for its subjects. The very spatial organization of the city along specific grids of class and gender constitutes certain modes of subjectivity as well as provides the logic for these subjectivities to challenge and transgress the different modalities of space. The city in both novels seems to impose certain kinds of restrictions on movement, a point that in Dickens's novel is literally embodied in the Marshalsea prison. However, despite such similarities in the protocols of representing the city and the manner in which it informs the action in these novels, both

Little Dorrit and *In the Year of Jubilee* deal in different ways with the idea of mobility and space in the city.

II. LITTLE DORRIT AND THE CARCERAL CITY

Dickens' *Little Dorrit*, first published in 1857, represents a London that existed about thirty years prior to its date of publication. The city is not just the background for the events in the novel but is explicitly shown to inform and influence the kinds of mentalities and structures of feeling that are possible in the city. The city is integral to the conceptualization of the novel and structurally informs the action of the novel. As Raymond Williams points out:

Dickens's ultimate vision of London is then not to be illustrated by topography or local instance, It lies in the form of his novels: in their kind of narrative, in their method of characterization, in their genius for typification. It does not matter which way we put it: the experience of the city is the fictional method; or the fictional method is the experience of the city (Williams 158).

One way in which this finds direct expression in the novel is through the representation of character as a product of the very spatial and architectural organization of the city—“Metaphoric relations between houses and their occupants” are particularly reiterated in *Little Dorrit* (Deffenbacher 123). This takes a number of forms in the novel: it appears both in the degree to which city spaces and architectural forms determine character and produce certain kinds of attitudes and dispositions, and also gets reflected in the vocabulary and syntax that is used to describe the material circuitry of the city and forms of spatial organization. A central motif that pervades the novel is the fluid boundaries between the inner spaces of the mind and the exterior spaces of the city. The material and spiritual poverty of the city bleeds into the bodies and souls of its inhabitants. In fact, the permeable skin between the city and its subjects seem to allow a curious osmosis that often permits the city to take on human attributes. This two-way traffic between the material realities of the city and the individual characters that are shaped and in turn shape the structures of the city account for many of the moments of instability in the novel.

The traffic between interior and exterior spaces is made manifest in the very first paragraph of *Little Dorrit* that describes London's “melancholy streets” that are shown to have “steeped the souls of the people who were condemned to look at them out of windows, in dire despondency” (Little Dorrit 67). The city's architecture and layout seem to produce its inhabitant's “brooding mind” through spatially replicating the dull monotony of their lives: “Nothing to see but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to breathe but streets, streets, streets” (Little Dorrit 67-68). The imposition of material structures on the mind is made to rhetorically loop back so as to give the very buildings a foreboding human countenance: “Ten thousand responsible houses surrounded him [Arthur Clennam], frowning as heavily on the streets they composed, as if they...bemoaned their miseries every night” (Little Dorrit 68). Later, when Little Dorrit and Maggy are locked out of their respective homes and spend a night on the streets, the view from the London bridge reveals, “little spots of lighted water where the bridge lamps were reflected, shining like demon eyes, with a terrible fascination in them for guilt and misery” (Little Dorrit 217).

The idea of one's house as representing, what Gaston Bachelard calls “the intimate topography of our intimate being” is often on display in *Little Dorrit*: “The house even more than the landscape, is a ‘psychic state’” (Bachelard xxxvi, 72). Mrs. Clennam's house is perhaps the one structure that draws together most dramatically the mutually constitutive relation between houses and individuals. Having long concealed within its bowels the secrets that hold the key to the denouement of the plot, it needs to literally self-destruct in order for these secrets to be

disembowelled. Mrs. Clennam in particular appears to symbolize the inscrutability of its structure, which is buried in its labyrinthine interiors: “The shadow still darkening as he [Arthur] drew near the house...its close air was secret. At the heart of it his mother presided, inflexible of face, indomitable of will, firmly holding all the secrets of her own and his father's life...” (Little Dorrit 597).

In addition to the city's spatial dynamics the human sensorium is also conditioned and organized by the rhythms of the city and its sounds. For example, the auditory signals of the city (in addition to the visual signals) seem literally to impair Affery's sense of hearing by imposing on her a telegraphically punctuated set of sounds: “As to street noises, the rumbling of wheels in the lane merely rushed in at the gateway in going past, and rushed out again: making the listening Mistress Affery feel as if she were deaf, and recovered the sense of hearing by instantaneous flashes” (Little Dorrit 220).

The interpenetration of descriptive language used for detailing buildings and houses with that used to describe individual characters further fortifies, what Raymond Williams describes as the “relations between persons and things...The city is shown as at once a social fact and a human landscape. What is dramatized in it is a very complex structure of feeling” (Williams 158). A good example of such a discursive blending is the description of the Meagles residence:

It was made out of an old brick house, of which a part had been altogether pulled down, and another part had been changed into the present cottage; so, there was a hale elderly portion to represent Mr. and Mrs. Meagles, and a young picturesque, very pretty portion to represent Pet. There was even the later addition of a conservatory sheltering itself against it uncertain of hue in its deep-stained glass...which might have stood for Tattycoram. (Little Dorrit 235).

The language here is not merely trying to drive home the architectural conception of character through its attempt to forge an interchangeability between individual character and material structures. In fact, the novel here appears to be uncertain of the stability of its own metaphorizing. The analogies between the different parts of the Meagles residence and its inhabitants suggest a set of equivalences between character and space that are far from settled and stable. The differences between the old and new portions of the house also denote the provisional and temporary nature of the relationship. Pet is not going to be contained any more by the parental structures that try and dissuade her from marrying Henry Gowan. Similarly, Tattycoram's subsequent desertion from the house underlines the fragility of the ties that bind the Meagles household together. The

relations between people and houses are not therefore of a nature that produce stable hierarchies or ordered systems of meaning, but rather even as they articulate such states of semantic equilibrium, they create the possibilities for their disordering.

Interestingly, *Little Dorrit* opens not in London but in Marseilles, a city described as suffering from over exposure to the sun. The harsh glare of the August sun blankets the city in an inescapable visibility that seems to run counter to visibility itself: "The universal stare made the eyes ache" (*Little Dorrit* 39). Amidst this hostile visual environment lies the prison that houses Rigaud and Cavalletto which is described as being deprived of light. The rhetorical weight of the passages that describe the prison is one that defines the very quintessence of incarceration in terms of the lack of light and visibility: "a villainous prison...so repulsive a place that even the obtrusive stare blinked at it, and left it to such refuse of reflected light as it could find for itself... Like a well, like a vault, like a tomb, the prison had no knowledge of the brightness outside" (*Little Dorrit* 40-1). The visual deprivation is compounded by the staleness of the atmosphere: "The imprisoned air...would have kept its polluted atmosphere intact in one of the spice islands of the Indian ocean" (*Little Dorrit* 41). J. Hillis Miller in his reading of the carceral theme in the novel describes how the "symbol of imprisonment expresses Dickens' sense of human life as enclosed and limited, whether by physical or spiritual walls, and...the image of life as a labyrinth expresses his sense that human beings are all lost inextricably in a maze without beginning, end, or pattern..." (Miller 235)

It is significant that a chapter later the first few words used to describe London are "gloomy, close, and stale" (*Little Dorrit* 67). The city as a prison with no exit possible is an idea that is frequently deployed in the novel. Like the prison at Marseilles, the city shuts out most forms of sensory relief. It works on the principle of denial and deprivation: "Everything was bolted and barred that could by possibility furnish relief to an overworked people. No pictures, no unfamiliar animals, no rare plants or flowers, no natural or artificial wonders of the ancient world... Nothing for the spent toiler to do but to compare the monotony of his seventh day with the monotony of his six days" (*Little Dorrit* 67). Places such as the Bleeding Heart Yard ("inhabited by poor people who set up their rest among its faded glories... that you got into down a flight of steps which formed no the original approach, and got out of by a low gateway into a maze of shabby streets") (*Little Dorrit* 176) and the Circumlocution Office (representing the stranglehold of the bureaucracy on the common man), reveals different kinds of control and confinement that the city exercises on the imagination.

The debtors' prison at Marshalsea represents an interesting fictive doubling of the idea of incarceration and the city. If London imprisons its subjects in an unwholesome atmosphere from "which they had no escape between the cradle and the grave" (*Little Dorrit* 67), the prison within the prison that the Marshalsea represents is strangely able to offer a perverse form of freedom from the inexorable logic of the city. As Dr. Haggage the Marshalsea doctor puts it, "Nobody comes here [the Marshalsea prison] to ask if a mans at home, and to say that he'll stand on the doormat till he is. Nobody writes threatening letters about money to this place. It's freedom sir, it's freedom...we have got to the bottom, we can't fall, and what have we found? Peace" (*Little Dorrit* 103).

A less sanguine version of the effects of imprisonment on character is one that describes Mr. Dorrit as one who has "the jail-rot...upon him, and the impurity of his prison worn into the grain of his soul..." (*Little Dorrit* 273). This idea of the prison atmosphere infiltrating the very interiors of the mind is clearly manifest in the novel's description of Little Dorrit's brother Tip: "Wherever he went this foredoomed Tip, appeared to take the prison walls with him...until the real immovable Marshalsea walls asserted their fascination over him, and brought him back" (*Little Dorrit* 116).

The Marshalsea prison therefore offers an oblique commentary on the city itself. Representing in some ways an allegory of the city, it uses similar tropes of enclosed, confining space that seems to morally stunt and atrophy its subjects. The principle of incarceration and its effects get staged within Marshalsea in a manner that both underscores its continuities with the city in general but also throws into confusion the hierarchies that order the values of the city. The punitive system that the debtors prison represents while working on the principle of confinement and a withdrawal of privileges of mobility, fails to maintain its spatial and conceptual distinction from the rest of the city. The boundaries that distinguish the inside from the outside seem beleaguered and are considerably weakened by the discourse of the city as itself a space of incarceration. Both at the level of thematics and syntax, the novel demonstrates the impossibility of demarcating the city from the deprivations of the prison and vice versa. As Elaine Showalter points out, *Little Dorrit* is the "darkest of Dickens's novels, with its pensive imagery of labyrinths and prisons, we see the underside of Victorian authority, the shadows behind the sunny promise of bourgeois self-help, parliamentary democracy, and private charity" (Showalter 21). Furthermore, the values of the world outside the prison appear to lack coherence, while the prison manages in its own way to generate a partial coherence. The almost ritualistic giving of testimonials to Mr. Dorrit by fellow debtors props up his hollow self-image and therefore

sustains him for over two decades—a sustenance that as he later realizes is sadly not on offer in the real world where social pretensions have a short shelf life. Little Dorrit, herself the “child of the Marshalsea,” is able to detect in the values of the city an insubstantiality and shallowness that is in stark contrast to the reality of the prison which by restricting movement is able to stabilize the unpredictability and temporariness of the city. This is most in evidence when the Dorrit family tours the continent in Book the Second after Mr. Dorrit's grand release from the debtor's prison. For Little Dorrit the picturesque sights that she encounters seem to collide disturbingly with the memories of Marshalsea, which itself now begins to seem almost unreal in comparison to the grandeur of her current existence: “...all she saw appeared unreal; the more surprising the scenes the more they resembled the unreality of her own inner life as she went through its vacant places all day long... With a remembrance of her father's old life in prison hanging about her like the burden of a sorrowful tune, Little Dorrit would wake from a dream of her birth-place into a whole day's dream” (Little Dorrit 517). The visual splendour that confronts her in Europe almost has the effect of a sublime experience on her that disorients her and literally seems beyond the scope of her imagination. In short, such experiences are perceived as lacking the solidity and unfailing certitude that Marshalsea seems to represent. For example, in a palace on the Grand Canal in Venice, Little Dorrit is described thus:

She would think of that old gate, and of herself sitting at it in the dead of the night, pillowing Maggy's head... And then she would lean upon her balcony, and look over at the water, as though they all lay underneath it. When she got to that, she would musingly watch its running, as if, in the general vision, it might run dry, and show her the prison again, and herself, and the old room, and the inmates, and the old visitors: all lasting realities that had never changed. (Little Dorrit 520)

The city thrives on appearances and as the remarkable career of Christopher Casby demonstrates, invests value in superficial images: “in the great social Exhibition, accessories are often accepted in lieu of the internal character” (Little Dorrit 191). However, the city “cloaked in a penitential garb of soot” is also represented as being visually impoverished in terms of its gloomy streets and its “blackened forest of chimneys” (Little Dorrit 67, 206). For Arthur, the dismal prospect from his lodging brings to mind the equally impoverished past that when visualized looks like a “gloomy vista by which he had come to that stage in his existence. So long, so bare, so blank...” (Little Dorrit 206). In the Clennam residence, visual signs take on a non-realist character: “During many hours of the short winter days, however, when it was dusk there early in the

afternoon, changing distortions of herself in her wheeled chair, of Mr. Flintwinch with his wry neck, of Mistress Affery coming and going, would be thrown upon the house wall that was over the gateway, and hover there like shadows from a great magic lantern” (Little Dorrit 221). The city's visual landscape images take on a fictive quality and images assume the flickering quality of shadows projected through optical gadgets like the magic lantern.

The experience of seeing the world from the confines of the Marshalsea prison also appears to alter the very visual apprehension of the world. Little Dorrit encounters this when “looking at the sky through the barred window”: she realizes after a while that “when she turned her eyes away, bars of light would arise between her and her friend [the turnkey], and she would see him through a grating too” (Little Dorrit 109).

Little Dorrit herself though appears strangely positioned in relation to visibility. Inconspicuous and almost invisible as an employee in Mrs. Clennam's house she is accustomed to “come and go as secretly as she could, between the free city and the iron gates” (Little Dorrit 118). But this shrinking from visibility gives her a visual centrality that Arthur Clennam comes to realize is the organizing principle that threads his world into a meaningful pattern:

Looking back upon his own poor story, she was its vanishing-point. Everything in its perspective led to her innocent figure. He had travelled thousands of miles towards it; previous unquiet hopes and doubts had worked themselves out before it; it was the centre of the interest of his life; it was the termination of everything that was good and pleasant in it; beyond, there was nothing but mere waste and darkened sky (Little Dorrit 801).

As in a perspective painting, all the diagonals converge on the vanishing point that is the invisible centrepiece organizing the visual space into coherence. It is the invisible point that makes visibility possible. It is this position that Little Dorrit occupies in Arthur's life and in a larger sense in the novel as a whole. Paradoxically, her constant shrinking from any form of visibility seems to give her an unusual mobility within the novel that is most often utilized for the service of her family. Little Dorrit's mobility in the novel is also a function of her ability to invisibilize her identity as a grown woman: “her light step and her little figure” (Little Dorrit 118) conceal her age as well as her uncanny knowledge of the geography of the city. Premised on the need to hide the fact that she lives in Marshalsea prison, her movements in the city demonstrate her ability to traverse the labyrinthine streets of the city with great facility and subvert the rules and logic of movement within the city. To avoid having her routes to and from Marshalsea tracked

by an observer, she engages in acts of pedestrian subterfuge: “turning at the end of London Bridge, recrossing it, going back again, passing on to St. George's Church, turning back suddenly once more, and flitting in at the open outer gate and little courtyard of the Marshalsea” (*Little Dorrit* 118).

Perhaps never does *Little Dorrit* expose herself more dangerously to the dangers of the city as when she and Maggy are forced to spend the night on the streets of London. Her non-sexualized child-like form prevents her from having to deal with any real threat of sexual aggression, though Dickens reminds us through the figure of the prostitute they encounter that the city has no other real language to describe women who wander through the streets at night. The episode is a remarkable one as it also reveals a fascinating glimpse of life in the city after dark experienced by a woman who is able to register the sights of the city from a clearly gendered perspective that tinged with fear and marked by vulnerability produces a rather unusual nocturnal tour of London.

III. GENDERED SPACES AND IN THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee* published in 1894 was the last of his novels to appear in the three-decker format, a form that was subsequently abandoned by publishers that same year. This formal shift represents the many changes outside the publishing world as well, that had occurred since the publication of *Little Dorrit*. However, as I will try to demonstrate, Gissing's novel is both continuous with and at the same time radically departs from the representations of the city in *Little Dorrit*.

In some ways the motif of the city as marked by squalor and defilement persists in Gissing's novel. *In the Year of Jubilee* does not fail to depict the degenerate aspects of the city. London, the “devourer of rural limits” is seen as subjecting traditional space to the unnatural processes of capitalist consumption: “The very earth had lost its wholesome odor; trampled into mire, fouled with builders' refuse and the noisome drift from adjacent streets, it sent forth, under the sooty rain, a smell of corruption, of all the town's uncleanness” (*Jubilee* 218).

But even amidst the novel's expressions of disgust at the desecrations committed by the city, there are alternate perspectives as well from which the city is viewed. Gissing's London in *In the Year of Jubilee* is a city that has not just expanded dramatically but also one that is filtered through the experience of a higher social class. Its central characters reside in suburban London and for the most part embody class aspirations of a very different order as compared to that of the Dorrits and Clennams. The novel is very precise in its detailing of the nuances that separate the

various houses located in and around the fashionable suburb of Camberwell. The differences between De Crespigny Park (the home of Arthur Peachey) and Grove Lane (where Nancy Lord, the central protagonist, lives with her father Stephen Lord) on the one hand, and Champion Hill (where Nancy meets Tarrant for the first time) on the other, are sufficiently registered in order to prepare the reader for Nancy's infatuation with Tarrant. In fact, later on in the novel, Tarrant teases Nancy's provincial morality, which he sneeringly describes as “Camberwellism” (*Jubilee* 182). Evidently it is the desire to work her way out of the limitations of the suburb that lead her to question the stifling morality of her class: “Nancy hated it. She would have preferred to live even in a poor and grimy street which neighboured the main track of business and pleasure” (*Jubilee* 14).

Nancy leads a sheltered life under the severe and watchful eye of her father Stephen Lord and perceives the city as a space that denotes excitement and a certain degree of freedom. The novel describes her experience of the city during the Jubilee celebrations in terms that articulate an unmistakable celebration of the exhilarating rush of energy that the city and its crowds generate. For Nancy, the press of bodies around her offer at one level, an escape from the gendered regulations that tie her down in the Lord household. But as the passage is at pains to demonstrate, the pleasures of losing oneself in the crowd appear to appeal to not just her identity as a woman:

No one observed her solitary state; she was one of millions walking about the streets because it was Jubilee Day, and every moment packed her more tightly among the tramping populace.... there was little noise; only a thud, thud of footfalls numberless, and the low, unvarying sound that suggested some huge beast purring to itself in stupid contentment. Nancy forgot her identity, lost sight of herself as an individual. Her blood was heated by close air and physical contact...[c]ould she have seen her face, its look of vulgar abandonment would have horrified her. (*Jubilee* 68-69)

Here Nancy seems to enjoy precisely that which enables her to forget her gender and indeed her sense of self. The depersonalized pleasure of being indistinguishable from the mass of bodies fills her with the sense of freedom that such a moment represents.

This freedom is also a product of the anonymity that the city seems to offer: “All she had to do was to press onward with the people around her; save by chance, she could not possibly be discovered” (68). This conception of the city, as being a space that ensures the possibility of action that goes unobserved in the impersonal and anonymous atmosphere of the city, impinges on the very form of the novel. If

subjects in the city are able to elude the grids of imposed intelligibility and can act without fear of exposure then there needs to be a compensatory logic to legitimize a narrative control that registers the actions of individual agents in a moral scheme. Gissing's novel enacts this moral and epistemological crisis and thereby produces a text that appears deeply divided against itself. These divisions are apparent at a number of levels. For instance, in a scene that appears to run directly counter to the sentiments expressed by Nancy during the Jubilee celebrations the novel describes her ascent to the top of the Monument that Crewe takes her where she feels a dramatically different sort of exhilaration—this time not of losing oneself in the multitude of bodies but of feeling a moment of total transcendence and egoistic self-importance: “As soon as she recovered from the first impression, this spectacle of a world's wonder served only to exhilarate her; she was not awed by what she looked upon. In her conceit of self-importance, she stood there, above the battling millions of men, proof against mystery and dread, untouched by the voices of the past...her senses seemed to make literal the assumption by which her mind had always been directed: that she—Nancy Lord—was the mid point of the universe” (Jubilee 104).

Both attitudes—that of desire for immersion in the many, and egoistic delusions of grandeur—are perceived to be problematic in the novel. The narrative attempts to resolve this by engineering her re-appropriation into the confines of bourgeois domesticity. Nancy, alone and unemployed in the city, comes to “an understanding of her insignificance”. She realizes that “in the battle of life every girl who could work a sewing-machine or make a match-box was of more account than she” (Jubilee 297). The knowledge that “[she] is a coward; she dreaded the world” and the acknowledgement of “the blessedness of having money and a secure home” completely re-orient her with regard to the allures of the city (Jubilee 297): “A man she said to herself, may go forth and find his work, his pleasure, in the highways; but is not a woman's place under the sheltering roof” (Jubilee 297).

This volte-face from the early sections of the novel where she dreams of the city as zone of freedom and opportunity prepares the way for her unresisting co-optation into the experimental marital arrangements that Tarrant believes in. She is left with little choice but to accept the relationship on his terms in return for the security of a home for herself and her child.

Another register that marks the novel's deep ideological divisions is that pertaining to the novel's attitudes to the visual surfaces of the city. Gissing's London offers a dense forest of symbols and signs which themselves constitute an “information system” that characters need to access and

decode in order to communicate meaning. The visual exuberance of the city produces a sort of imbalance that always leaves city spaces open to change and transgression. In many ways, symbolic value in the city belongs to those who/are able to deploy and decode signs and appearances to their own advantage. However, this alone does not succeed in explaining the visual logic of the city, which by its sheer exuberance fails to be accounted for by any one interpretative grid.

The subjects of the city have to negotiate the sheer profusion of visual signs instanced in the novel's representation of advertising that clearly stands in for the new visual regimes that threaten a genuine crisis in the visual landscape: “High and low, on every available yard of wall, advertisements clamored to the eye: theatres, journals soaps, medicines, concerts, furniture, wines, prayer-meetings—all the produce and refuse of civilization announced in staring letters, in daubed effigies, base, paltry, grotesque” (Jubilee 309). The epistemological crisis that results from this flattening of value that advertising produces is most starkly expressed during Nancy's trip to the city in the company of Samuel Barmby. Sitting in the tram-car she observes “the rows of advertising...somebody's ‘Soap’; somebody's ‘High-class Jams’; and behold, inserted between the Soap and the Jam—‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoso believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life’” (Jubilee 60). The narrator at this point steps in to point out the de-sensitization that urban subjects like Nancy appear to have suffered which prevent them from registering the collapsed hierarchies of value: “Nancy perused the passage without perception of incongruity, without emotion of any kind. Her religion had long since fallen to pieces, and universal defilement of Scriptural phrase by the association of the market place had in this respect blunted her sensibilities” (Jubilee 61).

However, the novel is far more ambivalent about characters like Luckworth Crewe who represent the new entrepreneurial class. Crewe makes a career in advertising and believes that “till advertising sprang up, the world was barbarous” (Jubilee 74). For Crewe “the streets of London were so many chapters of romance always of today, for he neither knew nor cared about historic associations” (Jubilee 106). Guiding Nancy through “the great thoroughfares, and by hidden streets of which Nancy had never heard of” (106) Crewe reveals an identity that has little but ambition and business acumen to distinguish him from the crowds that swirl around them. His sexual energy is one that derives from precisely his “coarse but strong features vivid with festive energy” (Jubilee 63). Nancy is however conflicted about the attractions of men like Crewe. Later in the novel after she encounters Tarrant, the novel spells out the distinct

divisions in her attitudes to male sexuality: “Comparing him [Tarrant] with Luckworth Crewe, she felt only a contemptuous distaste for the coarse vitality and vigor, whereto she had half surrendered herself, when hopeless of the more ambitious desire” (Jubilee 113).

In the Year of Jubilee thus struggles to articulate a theory of desire that can negotiate the complex dynamics of the city and in attempting to do it, interestingly pits two models against each other that represent radically different notions of intimacy. As opposed to the heady and “vulgar abandonment” (Jubilee 71) that comes from giving in to the seductive energy of the city, the novel opposes Tarrant's more aesthetically distanced sexuality that bases itself on a theory of desire which is constructed around avoiding the threatening disgust that the body is seen as capable of generating:

The common practice of man and wife occupying the same room is monstrous, gross; it's astounding that women of any sensitiveness endure it. In fact, their sensitiveness is destroyed. Even an ordinary honeymoon generally ends in a quarrel as it certainly ought to... People get to think of themselves as victims of incompatibility, when they are merely suffering from a foolish custom-the habit of being perpetually together. (Jubilee 178)

Although the novel attempts to compensate for its contradictions by overstating Nancy's

total capitulation to the decidedly male chauvinist philosophy of Tarrant, it fails to provide any sense of closure to the conflicts that the novel stages. It is such divided philosophies of intimacy, generated as they are out of the contradictions of class and gender ideologies, which account for the rich open-ended provisionality of novels like *In the Year of Jubilee*.

IV. CONCLUSION

In both *Little Dorrit* and *In the Year of Jubilee* it is the city that structurally informs and generates the multiple and often contradictory ideologies that compete at the level of form. Although both *Little Dorrit* and *Nancy Lord* are in different ways products of their urban environments, their attempts to fashion their identities suggest the different degrees to which the city and its spatial grammar determine to a large extent the kinds of mobility and resistance possible. On the one hand, there is a discourse that quite clearly sees the city as structuring experience through the stranglehold of rules and prohibitions that the city imposes on its subjects. The monstrous and soulless logic of the consumerist city seems too impersonal and totalizing a system to admit of any escape or resistance. On the other hand, the whole plot is premised on the possibility of finding

a language to articulate hope for those who resist and refuse to buy into the ideology of urban existence. As I have attempted to demonstrate through a reading of the novels, descriptions of the city often encode a disordered and contradictory set of semantic values that disrupt the very syntax of its representational protocols.

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A Comparative Study of Awareness and Engagement in Local Community Activities among Private Senior High School Students in Tabuk City, Kalinga

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Abstract— This study examines the awareness and engagement of private senior high school students in Tabuk City, Kalinga, regarding local community activities. Findings reveal that students are highly aware (TAWM = 3.881) and engaged (TAWM = 4.011), particularly in culturally significant events such as Barangay Fiestas and environmental campaigns. Awareness and engagement are consistently high across sex, school affiliation, and academic strand, with only minor variations linked to program orientation and resource availability. Female students demonstrate slightly higher levels of participation, though differences are not statistically significant. Key factors moderately affecting engagement include limited access to resources, balancing academic and community commitments, and insufficient invitations to participate—challenges that are systemic rather than group-specific. Peer influence, institutional support, and motivation are crucial in fostering participation, while logistical and cultural barriers persist for some students. The study highlights the importance of strong cultural traditions, effective communication, and supportive school environments in promoting youth involvement, and calls for targeted interventions to address persistent barriers, ensuring equitable and meaningful participation for all students in community initiatives.



Keywords— awareness, private senior high school students, local community activities, level of engagement, factors

I. INTRODUCTION

Active civic engagement is fundamental to building just and equitable communities and strengthening democratic societies. Early involvement in civic activities fosters habits that can last a lifetime, making youth civic engagement a critical focus for sustainable democratic development. When young people from diverse backgrounds are provided with opportunities to develop civic skills and knowledge, they are empowered to effect change, leading to more representative decision-making and stronger communities (Levine, 2007).

Youth engagement in community activities is essential for nurturing civic responsibility, leadership, and social

awareness. Schools play a pivotal role in encouraging students to participate in community initiatives, contributing not only to personal growth but also to the betterment of society (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). The Philippine Constitution recognizes the vital role of youth in nation-building, mandating the promotion and protection of their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being, and encouraging their involvement in public and civic affairs (1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Art. II, Sec. 13). Education is thus crucial in promoting civic engagement by equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to participate actively in their communities and democracies.

Encouraging youth participation in decision-making processes related to community development, education, and local policies such as volunteer work, community service, and cultural events not only benefits individuals but also contributes to a more vibrant and cohesive society (Zaff et al., 2010). In Tabuk City, Kalinga, both public and private schools play significant roles in shaping the level and quality of youth engagement.

This study aims to explore the extent of youth involvement in community activities, examining the differences and similarities between students in public and private educational institutions in Tabuk City. According to the Department of Education (DepEd) Memorandum No. 055, s. 2021, the Bureau of Learner Support-Services Youth Formation Division recommends programs and activities to support the efficient implementation of the Basic Education Curriculum-Learning Continuity Plan, including the Supreme Pupil Government (SPG) and Supreme Student Government (SSG) in elementary and secondary schools (Department of Education, 2021).

Local initiatives, such as the Interschool Lantern Parade and the Creative Industry Summit, aim to enhance student participation and foster creativity in collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and local government units. The DTI also encourages youth participation in competitions like YC2, which recognizes talents in songwriting, screenwriting, animation, and game development, thus providing platforms for youth to showcase their skills (Baguio Herald Express, 2024). Additionally, the annual Kalinga Day Festival highlights local culture and heritage, promoting community engagement and cultural preservation among the youth.

Programs like the Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS) further support youth development by covering topics such as self-awareness, leadership, citizenship values, and disaster management, helping students understand themselves and their roles in society (Lee, 2019).

Given these initiatives, this study seeks to determine the level of student engagement in local community activities in Tabuk City and to identify barriers that may hinder their participation.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is anchored in the recognition of youth as vital contributors to nation-building, as articulated in the Philippine 1987 Constitution. Article II, Section 13, states: "The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs" (1987 Constitution of the

Republic of the Philippines, Art. II, Sec. 13). This constitutional mandate underscores the importance of youth public engagement as a means to develop their competencies, self-confidence, decision-making, and critical thinking skills.

The study focuses on student engagement in local community activities within private schools in Tabuk City, Kalinga. The independent variables include the extent of awareness of local community activities, the level of engagement, and the factors affecting engagement among senior high school students. Moderator variables such as age, sex, and school affiliation are used for comparative analysis. The Youth in National Construction Act of 1994, which established the National Youth Commission, further institutionalizes strategies for youth engagement, responsibility, and communication in the Philippines, where youth represent 28% of the population (UNFPA, n.d.).

School curricula, such as that of St. Theresita's School of Tabuk, Inc., emphasize community involvement through participation in meaningful activities beyond the campus, supporting the philosophy and objectives of the Apostolic Vicariate of Tabuk (AVT). These activities help build Basic Ecclesial Communities and foster social responsibility among students.

Youth engagement is reflected in participation in cultural events such as the Kalinga Festival, Matagoan Festival, Ulalim Festival, Barangay fiestas, and creative competitions like the YC2, which encourage the development and recognition of youth talents (Department of Trade and Industry, as cited in Baguio Herald Express). These cultural celebrations, including the Ullalim and Bodong Festivals, highlight unity, resilience, and cultural identity, and provide opportunities for youth to be actively involved in preserving and promoting local heritage.

Promoting community events through school announcements and social media is identified as an effective strategy to maximize awareness and participation. Effective communication increases event visibility, fosters a sense of community, and enhances school reputation (Stribbell, 2014). Collaboration and participation in community activities are shown to contribute to personal development, leadership, and social networks, opening new opportunities for youth (Mathew, 2022; Komar, 2016).

However, several barriers hinder youth engagement in Tabuk City. These include lack of awareness, economic challenges, insufficient infrastructure, academic workload, transportation issues, and cultural or religious constraints (Alvarez, 2020; Dela Cruz, 2019; Lopez, 2017; Garcia, 2018; Cruz, 2022; Dela Rosa, 2021; Fernandez, 2019;

Castro, 2020; Agustin, 2022; Reyes, 2021; Santos, 2020; Torres, 2019; Valdez, 2018). Financial constraints, such as participation fees and the cost of materials, further limit access to extracurricular activities for students from low-income families¹. Additionally, religious obligations and cultural norms may restrict youth especially girls from participating in certain activities, while the influence of religious leaders can prioritize religious over secular engagement.

Effective communication between schools, parents, and students is essential to address these barriers and promote greater community involvement. Schools are encouraged to improve information dissemination and foster supportive environments to enhance youth participation in local activities.

1.2 Statement of the Objectives and Null Hypothesis

The challenge at hand of this study is to understand the level of private schools among senior high school students' performances in engaging in the local community activities in Tabuk, City, Kalinga. Specifically, it sought to answer the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of awareness of private senior high school students on the local community activities in Tabuk, City, Kalinga.
 - 1.1 To find if there are significant differences on the level of awareness of private senior high school students in the local community activities in Tabuk City, Kalinga, along the moderator variables of sex, school affiliation and strands.
 - 1.2. There are no significant differences on the level of awareness of private senior high school students in the local community activities.
2. To determine the level of engagement of private senior high school students in the local community activities in Tabuk City Kalinga.
 - 2.1 To find if there are significant differences on the level of engagement of private senior high school students in the local community activities along the moderator variables.
 - 2.2. There are no significant differences on the level of engagement of private senior high school students in the local community activities along the moderator variables.
3. To determine the extent of factors affecting the level of engagement of private schools among senior high school students' in the local community activities.
 - 3.1 To find if there are significant differences on the extent of factors affecting the level of engagement

of private senior high school students' in the local community activities.

- 3.2 There are no significant differences on the extent of factors affecting the level of engagement of private senior high school students' in the local community activities.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Youth engagement in community activities is crucial for fostering civic responsibility, leadership, and social cohesion among young people. In the Philippines, the 1987 Constitution emphasizes the youth's vital role in nation-building and encourages their participation in public and civic affairs (1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Art. II, Sec. 13). Schools play a central role in promoting youth involvement by providing opportunities for participation in cultural events, competitions, and community service, which help students build skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging (Karagianni & Montgomery, 2018; Department of Trade and Industry, as cited in Baguio Herald Express, 2024).

Active participation in community activities enhances leadership, critical thinking, and social networks, contributing to both personal and community development (Martinez et al., 2017; Śmiechowski, 2019). However, several barriers can limit youth engagement, including lack of awareness, economic constraints, academic workload, limited transportation, and cultural or religious factors (Alvarez, 2020; Reyes, 2021). Students from low-income families may struggle with participation fees and the costs of materials, while others face time constraints due to academic or family responsibilities (Dela Cruz, 2019; Cruz, 2022). Additionally, some cultural and religious norms may discourage or restrict involvement, particularly for girls or members of specific religious communities (Santos, 2020; Torres, 2019).

Motivation and support from adults, schools, and the community are essential for overcoming these challenges. Effective communication, mentorship, and inclusive program design can help increase awareness and participation (Tyson et al., 2021; Stribbell, 2014). Collaboration between schools, local government, and community organizations such as through youth councils, extracurricular clubs, and community-based projects can further empower young people to take active roles in local development (National Youth Commission, 2017; UNFPA, n.d.).

In summary, while youth engagement in community activities offers significant benefits for both individuals and society, addressing barriers through targeted

interventions and supportive environments is key to maximizing participation and impact in places like Tabuk City, Kalinga.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive research design to determine the performance and level of engagement of private senior high school students in local community activities in Tabuk City, Kalinga. The descriptive method, as recommended by Sevilla et al. (2006), is appropriate for assessing the status and characteristics of a group, making it suitable for examining the respondents' profiles, their awareness of community activities, their extent of engagement, and the factors influencing their participation. Data were collected primarily through a structured questionnaire, which was distributed to senior high school students across five private schools: St. William's Academy of Bulanao, Inc., St. Tonis College, Inc., Tabuk Institute, Inc. (TI), International School of Asia and the Pacific (ISAP), and Kalinga Colleges of Science and Technology (KCST).

The questionnaire was divided into sections to gather comprehensive information. The first section collected demographic data such as sex, school affiliation, and academic strand. The subsequent sections assessed the students' level of awareness of local community activities, their degree of engagement, and the factors affecting their participation. The instrument's content was based on indicators from the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) and the Youth in National Construction Act of 1994, ensuring its validity and reliability (National Youth Commission, 2017; UNFPA, n.d.). Additionally, some items were derived from students' actual experiences in their communities and schools. To further validate the data, brief interviews were conducted with selected respondents.

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained written permission from the participating schools and coordinated with school heads for the administration and retrieval of questionnaires. All responses were treated with strict confidentiality. The collected data were analyzed using a five-point Likert scale to quantify the students' levels of awareness and engagement in community activities.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results and findings of the study. It also discusses the interpretation of the findings on the awareness on engagement of private senior high school students in the local community activities.

Table 1. Level of Awareness on Engagement of Private Senior High School Students on the Local Community Activities in Tabuk City, Kalinga

Local Community Activities	Mean
1. Ullalim Festival/Bodong festival	3.88
2. Matagoan festival	3.85
3. Civic Parade	3.90
4. Local food festivals (like Inandila festival)	3.84
5. 5.Sportscompetition (Taekwondo, Badminton, Table Tennis, Ballgames)/LIGA	4.05
6. Brgy. Fiesta	4.10
7. Battle of the Band	3.94
8. Music Concerts	3.99
9. Youth-led initiatives or projects in the community.	4.03
10. Workshops or seminars related to community development.	2.67
11. Lantern Making Contest	3.87
12. Tree-planting drives or clean-up campaigns organized by local schools/outreach programs organized by schools.	4.10
13. Health awareness workshops or vaccination drives conducted in the community.	4.09
14. Pageantry Contest (Search for Mr. & Ms. /Fashion Show etc.)	3.92
15. Drum & Lyre competition sponsored by the LGU of Tabuk City, Kalinga	3.99
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.88

The data reveal that the total average weighted mean for student awareness of local community activities in Tabuk City, Kalinga is 3.88, indicating that respondents are generally "much aware" of these activities. Notably, Barangay Fiestas and tree-planting drives or clean-up campaigns both received a mean score of 4.10, suggesting that the majority of students are highly aware of these events. This heightened awareness can be attributed to the cultural significance and regular occurrence of Barangay Fiestas, which foster a strong sense of community and collective identity among Filipinos (Cloe, 2024). These festivals not only celebrate local traditions but also stimulate tourism and economic activity in the region (Lewis, 2016).

The City Government of Tabuk, through its Public Information Office, actively promotes such community events, emphasizing their role in cultural preservation and public engagement. Their mission includes providing timely and relevant information to strengthen communication between citizens and the local government.

However, the findings also indicate lower awareness for activities such as workshops or seminars related to community development, which had a mean score of 2.67. Similarly, local food festivals (mean = 3.84) and lantern-making contests (mean = 3.87) showed comparatively lower levels of awareness. This suggests that students may perceive these activities as less relevant or interesting, or that there is insufficient promotion of these events. Alvarez (2020) notes that a lack of information is a primary barrier to youth engagement in community activities, leading to reduced participation.

Students from St. Theresita's School (STS) Tabuk reported high awareness of sports activities, supported by initiatives such as the Department of Education's Regional Special Program in Sports and Special Program in the Arts (DepEd CAR, 2020). In contrast, lower participation in craft-related events like lantern-making contests may be due to scheduling conflicts with academic responsibilities or limited student interest, as well as inadequate promotion (Wilson, 2009; Setiahati & Lisnani, 2019).

Overall, while students demonstrate high awareness of culturally significant and regularly occurring activities, there is a need to improve the visibility and perceived relevance of other community events to encourage broader engagement.

Table 2. Level of Awareness on the Local Community Activities as to Sex

Sex	Mean	Rank
Male	3.87	2
Female	3.89	1
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.88	

The table shows that the overall average weighted mean for awareness of local community activities among students is 3.88, indicating that both male and female respondents are "much aware" of these activities. Female students reported a slightly higher mean awareness (3.89) compared to their male counterparts (3.87), suggesting that females are more attuned to community events. This higher awareness among female students may be attributed to greater participation in social, health, and cultural activities, as well as more effective communication strategies targeting this group. Research indicates that women are often socialized to be more community-oriented and engaged in social activities from a young age (Germany, 2019).

Germany (2019) also highlights that promoting women's full and effective participation in community activities is a key target under Sustainable Development Goal 5, as women's involvement in local volunteering and decision-making can drive transformative changes in gender relations. In contrast, male students, while still "much aware," may have interests that align more with sports or technical projects, which are less frequently emphasized in community programs (Figuerola Vélez et al., 2021).

Overall, while both groups demonstrate high awareness, female students tend to be more engaged in community-oriented activities, reflecting broader trends in gender roles and interests.

Table 3. Summary of ANOVA as to Level of Awareness on the Local Community Activities along Sex

Sex	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Group	0.00568879	2	0.002844	0.987117	3.354131
Within Groups	5.91973647	27	0.2192249		
Total	5.9254226	29			

$F(0.05) = 3.354131$ Decision: No Significant/ H_0 Accepted

The computed F-ratio of 0.987 is less than the critical F-value of 3.354 at a 0.05 significance level. This indicates no statistically significant difference in the level of awareness of local community activities between male and female students. Consequently, the null hypothesis which posits no significant differences in awareness levels along sex is not rejected.

These findings align with Balanon's (2015) study, which examined awareness disparities in community engagement topics among senior high school students. While Balanon's work focused on sex education, it similarly highlighted that gender-based differences in awareness are not always statistically significant in community-related contexts.

Table 4. Level of Awareness on the Local Community Activities along School Affiliation

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 3.88 indicates that private senior high school students in Tabuk City are generally "much aware" of local community activities. Among the schools, Tabuk Institute Inc. ranks

Table 5. Summary of ANOVA on the Level of Awareness of Private Senior High School Students on the Local Community Activities in Tabuk City Kalinga as to School Affiliation

School Affiliation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	0.045121	6	0.00752	0.029193	2.23521
Within Groups	17.51673	68	0.257599		
Total	17.56185	74			

$F(0.05) = 2.23521$ Decision: No Significant Ho/accepted

The table shows that computed F-Ratio is 0.029193 is lesser than the F critical value of 2.23521 at 0.05 level of

Strands	Mean	Rank
Humanities in the Social Sciences (HUMSS)	3.87	3
Science and Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	3.86	4
Accountancy in Business and Management (ABM)	3.85	5
Industrial Arts (IA)	3.88	2
Technical Vocational Livelihood (TVL)	3.90	1
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.88	

significance. This implies that there no significant differences in the awareness of private students in the local community activities in Tabuk City as to school affiliation.

Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there are no significant differences on the awareness of private students

highest in awareness with a mean of 3.90, followed by KCST at 3.88. This suggests that both institutions have effective initiatives, communication strategies, and a culture that actively promotes community involvement. Their efforts such as mandatory service hours, partnerships with local organizations, and faculty support contribute to higher student awareness and participation.

STCI and SWA follow closely with means of 3.87 and 3.86, respectively, while ISAP ranks lowest at 3.83. Although all schools fall within the "much aware" category, the slightly lower awareness in SWA and ISAP may be attributed to limited resources and funding, which can hinder their ability to organize and promote community activities effectively. Faculty and staff from these schools have noted that insufficient funding support can directly impact student involvement and awareness of local community initiatives.

in the local community activities in Tabuk City as to school affiliation is accepted.

Table 6. Level of Awareness of Private Senior High School Students on the Local Community Activities as to Strand

School Affiliation	Mean	Rank
Saint Williams Academy	3.86	4
Saint Tonis College Inc.	3.87	3
International Schools of Asia and the Pacific	3.83	5
Kalinga College of Science and Technology	3.88	2
Tabuk Institute	3.90	1
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.88	

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 3.88 reflects that students across all academic strands are generally "much aware" of local community activities. This high level of awareness is primarily driven by students in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strand, who rank highest with a mean of 3.90, followed by

Industrial Arts (IA) students at 3.88. Both groups demonstrate strong engagement, likely due to the practical, community-oriented nature of their programs.

This study is anchored in Bandura's Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) model, which posits that acquiring knowledge leads to the development of positive attitudes and, ultimately, to proactive behaviors (Boone et al., 2007). Applying this model, students with greater awareness and positive attitudes toward community activities are more motivated to participate, reinforcing the importance of targeted outreach and skill-building in educational settings.

The Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand follows with a mean of 3.87, also indicating high awareness. In contrast, students in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strands report slightly lower means of 3.86 and 3.85, respectively.

While these scores still indicate that students are "much aware," interviews and survey responses suggest that STEM and ABM students may prioritize academic and technical pursuits over community involvement, contributing to their relatively lower awareness.

These findings are supported by Blotnick et al. (2018), who found that students with strong self-efficacy in STEM fields are more likely to focus on related careers, sometimes at the expense of broader community engagement. Similarly, Finegold, Stagg, and Hutchinson (2011) note that teachers who integrate career preparation into their teaching foster greater participation in STEM activities, but this may not always extend to community-based initiatives.

Overall, while awareness is high across all strands, differences in priorities and program orientation influence the extent of student engagement in local community activities.

Table 7. Level of Awareness of Private Senior High School Students on the Local Community Activities in Tabuk City Kalinga as to Strands

Strands	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	0.036849962	4	0.009212	0.061325	2.502656
Within Groups	10.51570343	70	0.150224		
Total	10.55255339	74			

$F(0.05) = 2.502656$ Decision: Significant H_0 /Rejected

The computed F-ratio of 0.061 is less than the critical F-value of 2.503 at a 0.05 significance level. This indicates no statistically significant differences in awareness of local community activities among students across academic strands. Consequently, the null hypothesis which posits significant differences in awareness levels by strand is not rejected.

These findings align with Capulso's (2015) study, which used ANOVA to evaluate awareness levels of Supreme Student Government programs across different strands in senior high schools. While Capulso's work identified variations in engagement, it similarly found that awareness levels often do not differ significantly by academic track.

Extent of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in Local Community Activities

Table 8. Extent of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in Local Community Activities

Indicators	Mean
1. I joined Face-to-face meetings in the local community activities.	4.03
2. I am informed on the activities through newsletters, posters in public places, letters	4.03

and flyers.	
3. I can gather information regarding community and extension activities via press releases for local radio and television	4.01
4. Advertisements, notifications or articles in local newspaper	4.02
5. I am fully updated on the content of online activities posted through Website.	4.06
6. I joined in the Focus group discussions regarding activities	3.95
7. Workshops and action planning regarding activities	4.04
8. I distribute campaign materials.	4.04
9. I attend health workshops where students learn about nutrition, hygiene, and mental health.	4.04
10. I help organize an annual art exhibition showcasing creativity.	3.95
11. I display my artwork during	3.98
12. Open-house events.	
13. I attend occasional gatherings	4.02

14. I am a volunteer to organize community events or workshops	4.06
Total Average Weighted Mean	4.01

Table 12 shows that the total average weighted mean (TAWM) for student engagement in local community activities is 4.01, indicating that private senior high school students are "much engaged." This high level of engagement suggests strong community involvement, which fosters a sense of responsibility and active participation among students. Reyes (2018) supports these findings, emphasizing the positive impact of community engagement on students' personal and social development.

Notably, students reported the highest engagement in staying updated with online activities posted on school websites (mean = 4.05) and volunteering to organize community events or workshops (mean = 4.05). These results highlight the effectiveness of schools' online communication strategies and the strong culture of student leadership. Regular updates on school websites and social media platforms keep students informed and facilitate their participation (Chittum et al., 2022; Stribbell, 2014). When students are involved in organizing events that align with their interests and values, their engagement is further enhanced.

High engagement was also observed in attending health workshops on nutrition, hygiene, and mental health (mean = 4.04), reflecting the relevance of these activities to students' well-being. Effective promotion and communication not only increase participation but also strengthen the school's image and foster a vibrant educational environment.

The lowest engagement scores were found in distributing campaign materials (mean = 3.89), joining focus group discussions (mean = 3.95), and helping organize annual art exhibitions (mean = 3.95). While students remain "much engaged" in these activities, the slightly lower means suggest areas for potential improvement in participation.

Hope (2022) notes that today's youth often seek involvement outside traditional organizations, and levels of engagement can vary widely (Sebastian, 2013). Tson et al. (2021) further argue that adult support and guidance are crucial for maximizing youth engagement and helping young people realize their full potential.

Table 9. Extent Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities along Sex

Sex	Mean	Rank
Male	3.99	2
Female	4.01	1
Total Average Weighted Mean	4.01	

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 4.01 indicates a high level of engagement in local community activities among private senior high school students across sex groups, showing that students are generally "much engaged." Female students ranked first with a mean of 4.01, suggesting they are more actively involved in community activities compared to their male counterparts, who scored a mean of 3.99. This higher engagement among females may be attributed to effective communication, strong social connections, and participation in specific programs.

These findings are supported by Rubel et al. (2024), who established a link between the empowerment of female students and their participation in voluntary activities. Similarly, Kope and Arellano (2016) found that confident and motivated female students in Bangladesh enjoy greater freedom in decision-making within volunteer organizations, fostering their active involvement. Buisson, Clement, and Leder (2022) further emphasize that active participation in organizing events and decision-making helps female students develop leadership skills, self-identity, and a stronger voice.

A related study involving thirteen community extension program volunteers from Batangas State University Rosario, Philippines, including seven females and six males, revealed that participants developed social skills, built relationships with community stakeholders, and enhanced their leadership abilities through university-community engagement. This engagement fosters confidence and the capacity to effect positive change in both personal and community contexts.

Male students, while also "much engaged," tend to perceive community activities as less relevant to their personal interests and academic goals. They often prioritize activities that align more directly with their future careers or personal development. Asio et al. (2023) note that students' involvement in community service is influenced by their personal interests and the perceived relevance of activities to their career aspirations.

Table 10. Summary of ANOVA on the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities as to Sex

Sex	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	0.00270171	2	0.016093	0.016093	3.422132
Within Groups	1.93063468	23	0.08394064		
Total	1.93333639	25			

$F(0.05)=3.422132$ Decision: No Significant Ho/Accepted

The computed F-ratio of 0.016 is less than the critical F-value of 3.422 at a 0.05 significance level. This indicates no statistically significant difference in the level of engagement in local community activities between male and female students. Consequently, the null hypothesis which posits no significant differences in engagement levels by sex is not rejected.

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 4.00 confirms that students across both groups are "much engaged" in local community activities. These findings align with guidelines for interpreting ANOVA results, where a lower F-ratio relative to the critical value signifies no meaningful group differences (Statology, 2021).

Table 11. Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities as to School Affiliation

School Affiliation	Mean	Rank
Saint Williams Academy	3.98	4
Saint Tonis College Inc.	3.99	3
International School of Asia and the Pacific	3.96	5
Kalinga College of Science and Technology	4.01	2
Tabuk Institute	4.03	1
Total Average Weighted Mean	4.01	

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 4.01 indicates a moderate level of engagement in local community activities across all school affiliations. Students from Tabuk Institute Inc. exhibit the highest engagement with a mean of 4.03, likely due to strong institutional support, active student organizations, and a culture that encourages community participation. KCST

follows closely with a mean of 4.01, while STCI, SWA, and ISAP have means of 3.99, 3.98, and 3.96, respectively. The relatively lower engagement at SWA and ISAP may be attributed to fewer active student organizations, which can hinder student involvement.

These findings align with Govender (2024), who highlights the positive impact of institutional support and student organizations on engagement in community activities. Cannata (2016) further emphasizes the complexity of student behavioral engagement, noting that engagement varies by context and is influenced more by interactions with teachers and peers than by peer interaction alone.

Table 12. Summary of ANOVA on the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities as to School Affiliation

School Affiliation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	0.42308	4	0.10577	0.041127	2.52521510
Within Groups	15.43044	60	0.257174		
Total	15.47275	64			

$F(0.05)= 2.52521510$ Decision: No Significant Ho/Accepted

The computed F-ratio of 0.041 is less than the critical F-value of 2.525 at a 0.05 significance level, indicating no statistically significant differences in engagement levels across private school affiliations. This means the null hypothesis which posits no differences in engagement between schools is not rejected.

The minimal between-group variance (differences *between* schools) compared to within-group variance (differences *within* schools) suggests that engagement levels are relatively consistent across institutions. While slight variations exist (e.g., Tabuk Institute Inc. at 4.03 vs. ISAP at 3.96), these differences are not statistically meaningful.

This aligns with Statology's explanation of ANOVA, where a low F-ratio signals that group differences are negligible relative to individual variability within groups (Statology, 2021).

Table 13. Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities as to Strand

Strands	Mean	Rank
Humanities in the Social Sciences (HUMSS)	4.00	3

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	4.01	2
Accounting and Business Management (ABM)	3.98	5
Industrial Arts (IA)	3.99	4
Technology and Vocational Livelihood (TVL)	4.03	1
Total Average Weighted Mean	4.01	

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 4.00 indicates that students across all academic strands are "much engaged" in local community activities. Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students rank highest in engagement (mean = 4.03), likely due to the practical, community-oriented nature of their curriculum, which

Table 14. Summary of ANOVA on the Extent of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities as to Strand

Strands	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	0.021827577	4	0.00546	0.0216	2.525215
Within Groups	15.16013529	60	0.025267		
Total	15.18196287	64			

F (0.05) = 2.525215 Decision: No Significant Ho/Accepted

The computed F-ratio of 0.0216 is less than the critical F-value of 2.525 at a 0.05 significance level, indicating no statistically significant differences in engagement levels across academic strands. This means the null hypothesis which posits no differences in engagement between strands is not rejected.

The minimal between-group variance (differences between strands) compared to within-group variance (differences within strands) suggests that engagement levels in local community activities are consistent across all academic tracks. While slight variations exist (e.g., TVL at 4.03 vs. ABM at 3.98), these differences are not statistically meaningful.

These findings align with Pagano's (2018) principles of statistical analysis, which emphasize that an F-ratio smaller than the critical value reflects insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Factors Affecting the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in Local Community Activities

allows them to apply workforce-ready skills in real-world settings. STEM students follow closely (mean = 4.01), benefiting from strong community partnerships that provide opportunities for meaningful project-based engagement (Diezmann, 2016).

Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) and Industrial Arts (IA) students also show high engagement (means = 4.00 and 3.99, respectively). In contrast, Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) students rank lowest (mean = 3.98), though still "much engaged." This slightly lower engagement may stem from the demanding academic workload of ABM programs, which can limit time for extracurricular involvement (Unciano, 2019).

These findings highlight how curriculum design, community partnerships, and academic priorities shape students' engagement levels in local activities.

Table 15. Extent of Factors Affecting the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities in Tabuk City, Kalinga

Factors	Mean
1. I can't join the activities due to natural disaster (e.g., typhoon, flood, or earthquake).	3.34
2. I don't have access to necessary resources (e.g., internet, transportation) for participating in community events.	3.44
3. My Parents don't allow me to participate due to financial problem.	3.32
4. I am not able to attend because of the academic demands (homework, exams) that hinder my participation in community projects.	3.39
5. I cannot manage my time between academics and community service.	3.44
6. My parents or guardians are not supportive	3.38
7. Religious restricts my participation in community activities.	2.95
8. I am not interested of participating in community activities.	3.39
9. I do not receive invitations in participating in the community activities.	3.40
10. I have no self-confidence to participate in community activities.	3.23
11. I have inconvenient schedules (e.g., weekends, evening).	3.32
12. My friends influence my decision to participate in community activities	3.35
13. I cannot join because of the location of the community activities	3.19
14. I have unhealthy conditions	3.06
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.30

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 3.30 indicates that factors affecting the engagement of private senior high school students in Tabuk City's local community activities are "moderately affecting" participation. Key barriers include lack of access to resources (e.g., internet, transportation; mean = 3.44), difficulty balancing academics and community service (mean = 3.44), and not receiving invitations to participate (mean = 3.44). These factors reveal a "much affected" impact on engagement, highlighting systemic challenges

such as inadequate infrastructure and time constraints (Navarro, 2019; Fredericks & Eccles, 2006).

Lower-impact factors include unhealthy conditions (mean = 3.36) and inconvenient activity locations (mean = 3.19). Transportation barriers, as observed at St. Theresita's School (STS), further limit participation due to the unavailability of affordable or reliable options (Lopez, 2017; Agustin, 2022). Financial constraints associated with commuting also disproportionately affect low-income students (Garcia, 2018).

Religious restrictions (mean = 2.95) and cultural norms particularly for girls emerge as moderate barriers. Conservative views on appropriate youth roles and competing religious obligations often prioritize faith-based activities over secular community engagement (Reyes, 2021; Santos, 2020; Valdez, 2022).

These findings align with Nguyen et al. (2016), who emphasize the role of resource access and peer interactions in shaping engagement, and Karunakaran (2019), who underscores the importance of activity accessibility. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, such as improving transportation, streamlining academic-community balance, and fostering inclusive program design.

Table 16. Factors Affecting the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities in Tabuk City, Kalinga as to Sex

Sex	Mean	Rank
Male	3.33	1
Female	3.31	2
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.30	

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 3.30 indicates that factors affecting engagement in local community activities "moderately impact" both male and female students. Male students report a slightly higher mean of 3.33, while females follow closely with 3.30, suggesting that gender differences in perceived barriers are minimal. Both groups face comparable challenges, though societal expectations and cultural norms may subtly shape their experiences. For instance, males are often encouraged to participate in community activities due to traditional gender roles, which can increase their exposure to engagement barriers (Cannata & Miller, 2016).

Peer influence also plays a critical role, particularly for male students, who may receive stronger social encouragement to engage in community initiatives (Ryan, 2001). However, the narrow gap between male and female means underscores that factors such as resource access,

time constraints, and institutional support similarly affect all students, regardless of gender.

Table 17. Summary of ANOVA on the Factors Affecting the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local Community Activities along Sex

Sex	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of Squares	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	0.0986894	2	0.0493447	0.983698	3.38519
Within Groups	7.50068085	25	0.30002723		
Total	7.51054978	27			

F(0.05)= 3.38519

Decision: Significant/Rejected

The table shows the computed F-ratio of 0.983698 is higher than the F-crit value of 3.38519 at the typical 0.05 level of significance.

This means that there are significant differences on the extent of factors affecting the level of engagement of private senior high school students in the local community activities when group as to sex. The null hypothesis which states that there are significant differences on the extent of factors affecting the level of engagement of private senior high school students in the local community activities is rejected.

Table 18. Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School in the Local Community Activities in Tabuk City as to School Affiliation

School Affiliation	Mean	Rank
Saint Williams Academy	3.27	5
Saint Tonis College Inc.	3.30	3
International School of Asia and the Pacific	3.28	4
Kalinga Colleges of Science and Technology	3.31	2
Tabuk Institute	3.33	1
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.30	

The Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 3.30 indicates that factors affecting student engagement in local community activities moderately impact private senior high school students in Tabuk City. Among schools, Tabuk Institute (TI) ranks highest (mean = 3.33), reflecting the most pronounced challenges, followed by Kalinga Colleges of Science and Technology (KCST) (mean = 3.31). These findings align with Li and Xue's (2023) emphasis on the critical role of teacher-student relationships, positive teacher behavior, and environmental support in fostering engagement. Similarly, Delfino (2019) underscores institutional and interpersonal dynamics as key factors influencing engagement levels.

St. Tonis College, Inc. (STCI) (mean = 3.30), International School of Asia and the Pacific (ISAP) (mean = 3.28), and St. William's Academy (SWA) (mean = 3.27) exhibit relatively lower barriers to engagement. While still moderately affected, these schools face fewer systemic challenges compared to TI and KCST. Belete (2024) reinforces the interconnectedness of academic and community engagement, highlighting the importance of teacher-student rapport, peer interactions, and institutional support in sustaining participation.

Addressing these factors particularly through enhanced resource allocation, mentorship programs, and inclusive activity design could mitigate barriers and improve student engagement across all institutions.

Table 19. Summary of ANOVA on the Factors Affecting the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Activities in the Local Community Activities

School Affiliation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	0.033021	4	0.008255	0.981895	2.5130
Within Groups	5.336857	65	0.082105		
Total	5.369879	69			

F(0.05)= 2.5130 Decision: Not Significant/Ho Accepted

The computed F-ratio of 0.982 is less than the critical F-value of 2.513 at a 0.05 significance level, indicating no statistically significant differences in how factors affect

engagement levels across private schools in Tabuk City. Consequently, the null hypothesis which posits no

differences in perceived barriers by school affiliation is not rejected.

This suggests that challenges such as resource access, time constraints, and institutional support similarly impact students across all schools, regardless of affiliation. These findings align with Bamber et al. (2010), who emphasize that community development programs often achieve sustainability when designed with active participation, fostering consistent engagement practices across institutions.

Ceptureanu et al. (2018) further note that unsustainable programs risk unmet expectations, undermining community development. To mitigate this, Wasilwa (2015) advocates for open, participatory frameworks that empower communities to shape and sustain initiatives. Such inclusivity builds local capacity, enabling effective program monitoring and evaluation—a principle echoed by Onono (2017) and the UNDP (2013), who stress that meaningful participation in decision-making is critical for human development.

In Tabuk City, the uniformity in perceived barriers across schools may reflect broader systemic challenges (e.g., transportation, funding) that transcend institutional boundaries, necessitating community-wide solutions rather than school-specific interventions.

Table 20. Factors affecting the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in the Local

Strand	Mean	Rank
1. Humanities in the Social Sciences	3.30	4
2. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	3.33	1
3. Accountancy, Business and Management	3.28	5
4. Industrial Arts	3.30	3
5. Technical and Vocational Livelihood	3.31	2
Total Average Weighted Mean	3.30	

Community Activities in the Private Schools as to Strand

The table reveals a Total Average Weighted Mean (TAWM) of 3.30, indicating that factors moderately affect the engagement levels of private senior high school students in local community activities across academic strands in Tabuk City. STEM students rank highest with a mean of 3.32, suggesting they effectively navigate barriers to engagement, followed closely by Industrial Arts (IA) at

3.30, Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) at 3.30, and Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) at 3.28.

STEM and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strands, which rank highest in factors affecting engagement, may benefit from better resources, facilities, and support systems that foster student involvement. Darantinao (2023) emphasizes the importance of a supportive learning environment, including teacher competency, monitoring, coaching, and school-based support, in enhancing student engagement and academic performance. Peer influence also plays a significant role; Legaspino (2020) found that peers impact students' academic behaviors and outcomes, with positive peer groups encouraging engagement.

Conversely, HUMSS and ABM strands rank lower in factors affecting engagement. Bernardino et al. (2020) highlight motivation as a key driver of academic success, creativity, and persistence. Lower motivation and engagement in these strands may negatively affect students' academic performance and personal development.

Table 21. Summary of the ANOVA on the Factors Affecting the Level of Engagement of Private Senior High School Students in Tabuk City as to Strand

Strand	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	0.020380021	4	0.0051	0.009	2.513040
Within Groups	33.75704215	65	0.519434		
Total	33.77742218	69			

F(0.05)= 2.513040 Decision: No Significant/Ho Accepted

The calculated F-ratio of 0.009 is less than the critical F-value of 2.513 at the 0.05 significance level, indicating no statistically significant differences in the factors affecting engagement levels across educational strands. Therefore, the null hypothesis which posits no significant differences in these factors by academic strand is not rejected.

This finding suggests that challenges such as resource availability, time constraints, and institutional support similarly impact students across all strands. These systemic barriers align with Kisango's (2016) research, which identified inadequate funding as a critical factor limiting student participation in co-curricular activities. Similarly, Jeruto and Kiprop (2011) observed that

superficial student involvement in school policies often fails to translate into meaningful engagement, reflecting broader institutional gaps in fostering participatory environments.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that private senior high school students in Tabuk City, Kalinga are generally “much aware” of local community activities, with a total average weighted mean (TAWM) of 3.881. Students demonstrated the highest awareness of culturally significant and regularly occurring events such as Barangay Fiestas and tree-planting drives, reflecting the strong influence of local traditions and community identity. Female students showed slightly higher awareness than males, likely due to greater participation in social and cultural activities, although statistical analysis indicated no significant difference in awareness by sex. Across different schools and academic strands, awareness levels remained consistently high, with only minor variations attributed to factors such as school resources and program orientation. Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) and Industrial Arts (IA) students exhibited the highest awareness, possibly due to the practical and community-oriented nature of their curricula.

In terms of engagement, students were found to be “much engaged” in local community activities, as indicated by a TAWM of 4.011. Engagement was particularly strong in activities promoted through effective online communication and those that fostered student leadership, such as organizing events and participating in health workshops. Female students again ranked slightly higher in engagement, supported by research linking empowerment and social support to greater participation. However, statistical tests showed no significant differences in engagement levels by sex, school affiliation, or academic strand, suggesting that engagement is broadly consistent across groups. Slightly lower engagement was observed in activities such as distributing campaign materials and joining focus group discussions, highlighting potential areas for improvement.

Despite high awareness and engagement, several factors moderately affect student participation, with a TAWM of 3.30 for factors impacting engagement¹. Key barriers include lack of access to resources (such as internet and transportation), difficulty balancing academics and community service, and not receiving invitations to participate. These challenges are consistent across sex, school affiliation, and academic strand, indicating systemic

issues rather than group-specific barriers. Peer influence, institutional support, and motivation were also identified as important factors shaping engagement, with supportive environments and positive peer groups fostering greater participation. Conversely, religious and cultural norms, as well as logistical issues like transportation and scheduling, were found to limit involvement for some students.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of cultural traditions, effective communication, and supportive school environments in promoting youth engagement in community activities. At the same time, it highlights the need for targeted interventions to address persistent barriers and ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to participate in and benefit from local community initiatives.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that private senior high school students in Tabuk City, Kalinga demonstrate a high level of awareness and engagement in local community activities, particularly in culturally significant events such as Barangay Fiestas and environmental campaigns. This widespread awareness and participation are consistent across sex, school affiliation, and academic strand, with only minor variations attributed to specific program orientations and resource availability. Female students tend to show slightly higher awareness and engagement, though these differences are not statistically significant.

Engagement is particularly strong in activities that are effectively communicated and aligned with student interests, such as those promoted through online platforms and those fostering student leadership. However, participation is somewhat lower in less-publicized or logistically challenging activities, indicating areas where schools and community organizers could improve outreach and support.

Despite these positive findings, several systemic barriers moderately affect student engagement. Key challenges include limited access to resources (such as transportation and internet), balancing academic responsibilities with community involvement, and a lack of invitations or information about available activities. These barriers are consistent across demographic groups, highlighting the need for more inclusive and supportive strategies to ensure equitable participation. Peer influence, institutional support, and motivation play important roles in shaping engagement, while cultural and religious norms, as well as logistical constraints, continue to limit involvement for some students.

Overall, the study underscores the value of strong cultural traditions, effective communication, and supportive school

environments in promoting youth participation in community activities. At the same time, it emphasizes the necessity of targeted interventions to address persistent barriers, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to engage meaningfully in and benefit from local community initiatives.

Recommendations

By implementing these recommendations, schools and community leaders in Tabuk City, Kalinga can further boost student awareness, motivation, and engagement in local community activities, ensuring inclusive and meaningful participation for all. It is recommended that:

1. Schools and community organizers use multiple channels including social media, newsletters, emails, and bulletin boards—to actively promote a wider range of community activities, especially those with lower awareness such as workshops and creative contests. Encourage students to share digital content to expand reach across all academic strands.
2. Link participation in community activities and distribution of information materials to academic projects or community service requirements. This integration will help make activities more relevant, particularly for students who prioritize academics.
3. Involve students directly in planning and organizing community events to foster ownership and responsibility. Establish student ambassador programs to connect organizers and the student body.
4. Provide training in communication, event organization, and campaign promotion, along with mentorship and peer support, especially for groups with lower engagement.
5. Develop schedules that balance academic, community, and personal activities, and ensure access to Wi-Fi and information resources to support participation outside school hours.
6. Strengthen institutional support and student organizations to sustain engagement, and ensure equal opportunities for all students by addressing barriers and providing targeted support.
7. Regularly document and share successful projects and strategies to inspire broader participation and continuous improvement.
8. Use these recommendations as a reference for future research and program development to sustain and expand student engagement in community activities.

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A Portrayal of Soldiers at War in *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *The Red Badge of Courage* through Two Contradictory Concepts of Escapism and Heroism

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Abstract— The research focuses on depicting the life of two pivotal soldiers struggling to cope with the stress and horrors of war in terms of escapism and heroism which ensues from a comparative approach between Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Stephen Crane *The Red Badge of Courage*. The paper attempts to show how the main character, Billy Pilgrim, in *Slaughterhouse-Five* grapples while experiencing war incompetently and unpreparedly to ultimately discover his comfort zone through mental diversion from unpleasant aspects of his daily life instead of performing his duty to triumph over the enemy. Whereas in *The Red Badge of Courage*, the protagonist, Henry Fleming who is enlisted in the military service with his determination and heroic ambition tackles and escapes while seeking courage to fight in the battlefield in order to maintain a good reputation as a duty-bound, fearless and confident soldier. Furthermore, through the close-reading of key scenes and by relying on a thorough analysis of war experiences of the two protagonists in the addressed books, the characters' aspirational endeavors, and the authors' non-identical views of the war come to surface as they portray a soldier-like personality, one with idealized notions of glory and heroism whereas the other one representing the senselessness of war. The contrasting reactions of the two central characters towards the war offer stimulating areas for discussion and arouse controversial opinions about the behavior of the presuming war heroes and escapist and how they are attained. As a result of the characters' dissimilar preferences in shaping their outer and inner personality in public and private life, the research demonstrates how they endeavour desperately to achieve this aim by feeding their brains with different ingredients. Billy, on the one hand, chooses to fight the pointless battle with his own imagination to ease his mind from the harsh reality, and on the other hand, Fleming tortures his mind with his heroic thoughts to win the battle while suffering from an internal conflict.



Keywords— Escape, Escapism, Heroism, Hero, Soldiers, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, Wars

I. INTRODUCTION

In literary studies, writers have studied the damaging effects of war and how it shapes post-conflict lives for centuries. The hardship, violence, and psychological stress that come with war are considered both a backdrop and a driving force in literature, leaving a great impact on the plots, character growth, and theme exploration of numerous works. Not only is a political or historical matter investigated in war literature, but also a profoundly human experience that

affects individual lives, communities, and even the entire society. War in literature is represented as a tool that sheds light on human condition, highlighting the emotional, social, and moral consequences of battle.

Literary representations of the battlefield frequently challenge conventional notions of bravery, dignity, and sacrifice. Many works challenge the idea that waging a war is a noble or heroic effort by exposing the psychological damage resulting from the violence and moral concessions

of war. Characters could struggle with their concept of heroism or moral conundrums that challenge the validity of the cause they are defending. Broadly speaking, heroism is the quality of becoming a hero that is, of deeds of bravery, self-sacrifice, moral purity, and courage against hardship, danger, or challenge.

Correspondingly, one of the most important pieces of American literature that explores the idea of heroism in the setting of war is Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895). The protagonist of the book is Henry Fleming, a young soldier in the American Civil War who at first idealizes bravery and honor before undergoing a dramatic metamorphosis in the face of the harsh reality of combat. Heroism is portrayed in this story as something filled with uncertainty, terror, and self-discovery, rather than a simple, idealized ideal. Crane questions traditional concepts of heroism, demonstrating that true courage frequently arises in the midst of weakness, fear, and personal conflict. Hence, the story depicts Henry's internal conflict as he struggles with his desire for greatness and his dread of cowardice.

At first glance, heroism and war may appear to be mutually exclusive concepts, particularly in classic depictions in which soldiers are hailed as heroes for their bravery, sacrifice, and dedication to the common good as reflected in the character of Henry Fleming. However, when investigated logically, battle frequently exposes the ridiculousness of these noble ideals. Instead of validating lofty and virtuous principles, war frequently destroys them, exposing the arbitrary nature of death, the futility of conflict, and the moral compromises that come with violence. The idea that war is pointless and ridiculous is a common theme in a lot of war literature, with writers emphasizing the illogical, irrational, and ineffective character of combat such as the character of Billy Pilgrim in which Vonnegut draws his traits with careful details to defend this point. Authors frequently use these works to highlight the psychological, moral, and emotional upheaval that troops and civilizations face as a result of war. War is shown as a fundamentally nonsensical phenomena because it is based on concepts that violate human logic and reason, heroes are frequently exposed as victims, and the noble ideals that drive conflict are revealed to be false or even destructive.

Slaughterhouse-Five (1969) serves as an example of the absurdity and futility of wars. Kurt Vonnegut, who is regarded as one of the most renowned and popular writers of the post-modern era in the American literature, particularly during World War II, through his main character, Billy Pilgrim, criticizes the exaltation of war and how it warps human ideals and reality. The novel is a classic piece of war fiction, capturing the irrationality of war in

both structure and subject. It is a nonlinear, fragmentary story that combines wartime reality with science fiction elements to create a bizarre and absurdist depiction of Dresden's bombing during World War II. In his novel, the protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, is intentionally given features of anti-heroism; he is an unanticipated hero, a man who is not particularly brave, powerful, or moral in the traditional definition of a hero. He is a fragile, passive figure who appears to be at the whim of events beyond his control, such as time travel, extraterrestrial abduction, and the horrors of war itself. As he practices escapism to embark on an illusionary journey in order to escape his duty as a soldier, the writer sheds more light on the irrationality of war and the inherent meaninglessness and chaos of battle.

Both novels, Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, revolve around warfare issues and a soldier's struggle while experiencing the war. The characters' developmental journey begin as they get involved in the seriousness of the situation they are in. Tuchman (1992) in *The Guns of August* states that "in the midst of war and crisis nothing is as clear or as certain as it appears in hindsight" (p. 485). Despite the fact that both novels differ widely in the narration style as *Slaughterhouse-Five* is a postmodern novel and thus narrated in a fragmented and non-chronological style, whereas *The Red Badge of Courage* is a realistic novel which uses a linear, straightforward and realistic storytelling technique, both share themes of war, trauma, and the dehumanizing effects of conflict. Schaefer (2006) in his *Heroes Had No Shame in Their Lives* states that "when we read *The Red Badge of Courage* in the light of this story and vice versa Crane confronts us with not one but at least four mysteries of heroism" (p. 111). In different circumstances, Josh Simpson (2015) points out that "war psychologically wounds Billy Pilgrim . . . the ideas contained in Kilgore Trout's science fiction novels are, ultimately, responsible for his complete divorce from reality" (267). He agrees that Tralfamadorians are created by Billy as an escape mechanism using science fiction novels as his influence.

By portraying soldiers fighting in the setting of war, writers essentially draw their thematic notions that make their work exceptional and unique compared to other literary works covering the same overall issue. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Billy Pilgrim faces some severe internal conflicts due to compulsory fights and deaths in pointless and insensible wars. As a result, he utilizes his fertile imagination to escape from the battlefields and the pressures of the war to an illusionary place called Tralfamadore's Planet. This adventurous attempt places Billy in a comfortable, yet illusionary, spot away from the bitterness of wars. On the contrary, Crane uses his main

character to struggle in fear while approaching courage and dignity to fight powerfully and proudly in the war with the other soldiers. Henry's evolutionary stages from a fearful and unskilled soldier to a brave and lionhearted soldier place him into the shape of a perfect and heroic warfighter.

This study deals with the contradictory reactions of these soldiers towards the war and the authors' physical and mental description of these soldiers as they fight the battle with different ambitions. Vonnegut and Crane force their characters to practice different techniques in order to maintain their goals. These contrasting techniques put the characters into a state of mind that pushes them towards practicing escapism and heroism as a mechanism to live and defend themselves; this also serves as the main aim of this study. General aspects of the soldiers' lives are excluded in the analysis of some relevant scenes that support the field of study. The data collection process relies on direct quotations and indirect analysis of the primary text of the two novels, as well as the secondary sources that directly support this view. The significance of this work arises as the description of war and depiction of soldiers delve into higher and diverse directions pertaining to the realm of escapist and heroes as presented by different authors of different times and circumstances.

War literature reflects soldiers' varied, often contradicting experiences. It reveals the terrible realities of war, including pain, absurdity, and moral ambiguity, while also delving into themes of heroism, sacrifice, and fraternity. Through these experiences, literature attempts to convey an awareness of the psychological and emotional toll that war has on individuals, demonstrating the devastating effects that warfare inflicts on soldiers' bodies, minds, and spirits.

II. PRACTICABILITY OF ESCAPISM IN SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE: A SOLDIER AS AN ESCAPIST

Escapism is a phenomenon that is recognized by sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers, as well as by artists, due to its prevalence in the visual arts, literature, and the film industry. It pertains to an emotional response that people employ to deal with stressful, challenging, or overwhelming events. It can be generally seen as an activity that helps the utilizer to avoid and escape the unpleasant effects and the bitterness of life through engaging in either fertile imagination or entertainment. (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). While escapism might provide the utilizer an immediate refuge, it is frequently used to escape from actual-world issues or emotions rather than confront and solve them directly. Brenner (1971) in his study examines escapism from a psychoanalytic standpoint, specifically how people employ escapist practices to shield themselves

from painful emotional experiences and conflict. He portrays escapism as a helpful technique for defending oneself against anxiety and trauma. Whereas Woolf (2014) in a study titled *Escapism in Psychological Health: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Literature* looks into the psychological processes that underlie escapism, how it helps people deal with stress, and how it can have both beneficial and detrimental psychological effects.

The practicality of escapism in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* is a significant component of the protagonist Billy Pilgrim's experience with war and trauma. Escapism, in the form of time travel and mental detachment, is important in Billy's ability to cope with the horrors of war and the moral absurdities that accompany them as time travel in the story "is not just a narrative device; it symbolizes the disorientation and senselessness of war, where the human body, like Billy's, becomes fragmented, disconnected, and subject to forces outside of its control" (Smith, 2008, p. 94). In the setting of the story, escapism serves as both a coping technique and a profound remark on the futility of warfare. This idea broadens as Vonnegut shapes Billy's physical appearance in a "preposterous" way which contrasts sharply with traditional war imagery of soldiers. He is given the shape of Coca-Cola bottle with "a chest and shoulders like a box of kitchen matches" who had "no helmet, no overcoat, no weapon and no boots." (Vonnegut, 1972, p. 18). Vonnegut usually blends elements of humor with absurdity to criticize the horrors of war, creating a soldier who is unable to undergo a quarrel serves as "a tool to highlight the absurdity of violence and war" and the necessity of escapism. (Miller, 2005, p. 67). Billy was forced against his will to become a soldier in the Second World War after graduating from Ilium High School and is often described by the narrator to be a weak, hilarious, passive, and unconventional character for war. He indicates that Billy "didn't look like a soldier at all. He looked like a filthy flamingo . . . He was powerless to harm the enemy or to help his friends". (p. 18). These traits describe Billy's position and determination in the story.

Billy is initially taken as a soldier to fight the enemy with the American army, but soon after he becomes a German prisoner during the famous Battle of the Bulge with the other American POWs where he suffers a lot before his discharge from the army. His father also passes away in a hunting accident while the war is still on-going. During the war, he doesn't challenge any situation but instead adapts himself into them. He does not have the wish of performing the role of the soldier who wills to surpass the others so as to become a war hero. The challenges of the war do not take any part in Billy's life no matter how challenging it grows; the signs of a warrior fail to be

presented in him as he is always “empty-handed, bleakly ready for death” (p. 18).

Under these circumstances, Billy Pilgrim, is engaged in visionary activities to escape the bitterness of the war rather than confronting it as he is enlisted against his will to participate in war issues in the first place. The only way to escape his awful and mandatory reality is by using his fertile imagination. Once he realizes that he is impotent to stop or change the mystifying wars which is basically causing much destruction to the world and its inhabitants, he decides to use his creative and illusionary ways to escape the terrible and pointless yet realistic life that he is in. Billy suddenly finds himself unstuck in time during the war when he is still serving as an American soldier, this allows him to mentally escape his awful events. Literary scholars have also regarded Billy's time travel as a coping mechanism that permits him to flee the horror of the bombing of Dresden and the meaninglessness of war. (Lennon, 2012). His time travel makes it possible for him to return to periods of relative safety and serenity, such as his time as an optometrist or even his alien abduction by the Tralfamadorians, in which time is considered as unchangeable and fixed. Later on, he pays random visits to Tralfamadore's planet and finds his convenience there away from the earthlings. (Yazdizadeh, 2017)

Thereafter, Billy encounters the planet's inhabitants and discovers a contingent pacifism on it when he runs from the terrifying, unpleasant views and cruelty of the war. As soon as he familiarizes himself with the Tralfamadorians' wise commitments and perceives the horrifying and outrageous actions of human beings, he begins seeking pacifism through means of escapism in preparation for living in peace. He confesses his feelings of disappointment in earthly beings to the Tralfamadorians soon after he realizes how devastating wars can be as he recalls the moment he saw “the boiled bodies in Dresden” and says:

I have lit my way in a prison at night with candles from the fat of human beings who were butchered by the brothers and fathers of those school girls who were boiled. Earthlings must be the terrors of the Universe! If other planets aren't now in danger from Earth, they soon will be. So, tell me the secret so I can take it back to Earth and save us all: How can a planet live at peace? (P. 55)

This is where Billy comes to realization that the planet earth with its disastrous and chaotic wars is the main reason behind losing the planet's essential peace; hence, he moves to a more peaceful and surreal world without considering the consequences of deserting the battlefield since the

withdrawal is achieved by means of creative and inventive imagination. Wars are degraded in Vonnegut's novel which displays the concept of Heroism as a non-crucial behaviour that does not arouse Billy's aspiration towards achieving the goal of being a hero character. (Tang, 2011). For him to live peacefully without taking into account any pressures that exist in the world is to “ignore the awful times”, the undesirable and unendurable events in his life and alternatively to “concentrate on the good ones.” (P. 55). Ignorance is the key factor for Billy to live in peace which is part of Tralfamadorians' philosophy of life that Billy must follow.

Instead of fighting in the war against the intended enemy and struggling with the outside world for nonsense reasons, he chooses to abandon the area that causes him discomfort and seek peace by engaging himself consistently in the practices of escapism. This idea is illustrated when Billy, the portrait of anti-war and anti-hero soldier, confronts one of the Tralfamadorians with ideas of a planet living at peace and requests to have a similar ideology on earth; however, the Tralfamadorians “don't want to change anything. They are content with how things are, seeing everything as inevitable. And so it goes.” (P. 29). Finally Billy comes to the unsettling revelation that war, bloodshed and death are not only unavoidable, but also necessary components of their worldview. The Tralfamadorians, who have a radically different perspective of time and existence, reject the notion of peace in the ordinary sense that Billy may want for. They describe death “as another moment of the past that can be viewed eternally” (P. 27).

The phrase "So it goes" appears frequently in the novel making it one of the book's most recognizable phrases. It reflects the absurdity and unpredictability of life and war and is used to express a sort of resigned acceptance of tragedy and death. Whenever a death is stated, whether it be the death of a character, a soldier, or a civilian, the term is used. During Billy's stay on Tralfamadore's planet, he learns new ideologies and embraces them broadly especially when he admits to the fact that “the idea of preventing war on Earth is stupid” (P. 55) to expose his relinquishment to reality and acceptance of the inevitable death. He accepts the fatal wars and realizes that combats and deaths are inevitable, that's to say there will always be antagonism and hostility no matter how peaceful a world is, however; being acquainted with Tralfamadorian's philosophy of life and death is what is being valued in the story. Billy thinks it is important to describe and share with other people the incredibility of what he has seen and experienced on the other planet which does not exist among earthlings who are busy with war and war matters; thus, he decides to write letters for news. In his second letters, he writes that:

The most important thing I learned on Tralfamadore was that when a person dies, he only appears to die. He is still very much alive in the past . . . All moments, past, present and future, always have existed, always will exist . . . It is just an illusion we have here on Earth that one moment follows another one, like beads on a string, and that once a moment is gone it is gone forever. (P. 16)

Billy successfully applies their theoretical philosophy and methodology to his life which defines his further attitude towards the war and the natural notion of death to the extent that he is persistent to pass the positive effects in which he has received from the other planet to earthlings. He is informed that the concept of free will which has an essential impact on planet earth does not take any role in the lives of human beings for its nonexistence in reality.

In fact, Vonnegut's attitude concerning a heroic portrait of his soldier character, specifically, and wars, generally, is further made clear when he tells Mary O'Hare, to whom the book is dedicated, that the book will not concentrate on heroes of the war and promises her that "there won't be a part for Frank Sinatra or John Wayne. 'I [Vonnegut] tell you what,' I said, 'I'll call it *The Children's Crusade*.'" (P. 11). Rather than glorifying wars and addressing heroes, he prefers to draw a character who flees from the war in order to emphasize a child-like innocence of soldiers.

III. PRACTICABILITY OF HEROISM IN *THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE*: A SOLDIER AS A HERO

Heroism is a multifaceted notion that has been investigated and defined in several ways throughout history and across cultures. In general, heroism is defined as the act of demonstrating extraordinary courage, heroic conduct, or selflessness in the face of danger or misfortune. It refers to people who go above and beyond to display strength, sacrifice, or moral superiority for the benefit of others or a greater cause. Heroism can be personal or collective, and it usually involves deeds that challenge or transcend the status quo. (Wehmeier, 2005). Heroism in literature has evolved dramatically throughout time, from the epic hero of ancient writings to the anti-heroes of postmodern literature. Heroism in literary depictions frequently reflects the beliefs and aspirations of the time in which the work was created, evolving in response to changing cultural, moral, and philosophical perspectives. With the passage of time, literature saw more complicated protagonists, who were frequently flawed and morally ambiguous. These heroes are usually defined by internal conflicts, existential challenges,

and psychological complexity. Fisher (2011) in his work on the tragic hero demonstrates that heroism is frequently characterized by a complicated interplay of fate, choice, and ethical struggle. He contends that a hero must be ethically competent while being susceptible to defects and human limitations, which will inevitably lead to his or her downfall

The Red Badge of Courage examines heroism through the protagonist, Henry Fleming, whose internal conflicts and personal maturation call into question traditional assumptions of what it means to be a hero in the setting of war. Rather than focusing on a physical or external exhibition of heroism, Crane stresses Henry's psychological and moral battles, finally reframing heroism as an individual's interior encounter with fear, humiliation, and self-doubt in the midst of war. Crane neglects all the aspects of Escapism in the *The Red Badge of Courage* so as to maintain a character suitable for accomplishing and achieving the concept of Heroism. He intentionally comprises the temporal escape in the character of Fleming to build the initial heroic stage and self-discovery. It is practiced for a specific period of time when he faces the reality of battle, he escapes from his duty in fear of showing cowardice and disappointment to his mother and his country in general. Later this initial desire for heroism quickly turns to fear, confusion, and journey. Fleming's self-discovery is, in Hart's conception, a state of leadership, of heroism. He points out that in this particular myth, the hero must experience three stages: separation, initiation and return in which Fleming successfully completes the cycle as he undergoes these steps in the war. (1953).

Fleming struggles as he overthinks for days ahead before he gets into a serious combat. He meets war veterans and passes by questionable moments which leave him with thoughts of courage, shame, and his abilities of facing the war fearlessly. In his solitude, Fleming "was confronted with a thing of moment. It had suddenly appeared to him that perhaps in a battle he might run. He was forced to admit that as far as war was concerned he knew nothing of himself" (Crane, 2018, P. 8). He considers the gap between his expectations of heroism and the realities of battle, he even questions himself about whether or not he is capable of holding to his position and never running from the combat again. Susan S. Karp opposes that "Henry's fear is not merely a personal failing, but a universal experience for soldiers, especially in war, where heroism is often out of reach and replaced by survival instincts" (Karp, 2000). These internal conflicts are the major reasons which incessantly drive Henry to commit the first act of escape. At first, "he ran like a rabbit" (P. 40), not because he finds wars meaningless or terrible, but it is because of his overreaction towards his ambitious thoughts of heroism that lead to his withdrawal from the glorifying war in which he observes. It

is highlighted in the story that “a little panic-fear grew in his mind. As his imagination went forward to a fight, he saw hideous possibilities . . . He recalled his visions of broken-bladed glory” (P. 8), which affects his internal psychology as he continues to get trapped in his abstract thoughts.

Fleming’s withdrawal from the war does not last till the end of the story, but rather he comes back on track stronger after overcoming his prolonged internal conflicts which evoke from his heroic ambitions more than that of the consequences of deserting a battlefield. McConnell contends that Henry’s return to the combat zone denotes “his moral regeneration, as he has moved beyond the shame of his earlier flight and faced the harsh realities of war head-on” (1999). He also asserts that Heroism is portrayed as a personal and internal conflict rather than an external one, in which true courage stems not from mindless valor but from the ability to act in the face of fear and accept moral responsibility.

Crane’s realistic portrayal of his main character Henry Fleming is highly influenced by multiple psychological and social factors that lead to a journey of becoming a war hero as people of Crane’s time admired heroism and wished to be part of the war for the sake of earning the glory reserved for great warriors. In a part Crane describes his character and his passion towards becoming a soldier serving in the army, he asserts that Fleming “had burned several times to enlist. Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be distinctly Homeric, but there seemed to be much glory in them” (P. 2). For the sake of identical reasons Fleming decides to enlist in the Civil War in the Union Army for self-centered reasons of glory and heroism.

Moreover, additional discussions are evoked while considering Fleming’s return to the battlefield after running away in terror and fear of getting killed. Before fleeing the combat, Fleming recognizes his flaw as a beginner warrior and grapples while thinking about his failure before his foe. Afterwards, his mental thoughts slowly begin to take an action in the real world as he tries to be a man that he has longed desired for. To his surprise, he discovers that he was no longer “afraid”, he struggled with terror “but it had been replaced by a sort of calm, as though he had finally admitted to himself that there was no escape from the battle, no way to avoid what was happening.” (P. 139). The failure that Henry encounters in the first battle leaves him in other more serious issues for he endures various physical and mental agonies as a result of his negative thoughts that start to increase and develop as he walks back to the regiment. The biggest fear of Fleming is not only confronting the enemy anymore, but it is “the burning desire to not be seen as a coward.” (P. 72), it is the revelation and confrontation of his

cowardice embedded in the list of his fears which block his way to become a hero. (Schaefer 2006).

Henry’s transformation and his return to the battlefield might indicate either his eagerness to prove himself as a warrior so as to defeat his doubts and foes altogether for they are meant to be the motives for his escape from the war and by this he “had revenged [himself] upon [his] misgivings and upon the foe” (P. 120), or the coming back might stand for considering the consequences and punishment of deserting a battlefield. McConnell (1999) states that Henry’s performance of heroism is about resilience and personal growth as he returns to the battlefield at the end of his transformation, his deeds exhibit a more subdued kind of heroism even though they are not characterized by conventional acts of courage. Henry acts out of duty and tries to support his regiment’s communal effort rather than pursuing fame or personal recognition. His bravery is now motivated by the understanding that survival and accountability are necessary for heroism rather than by romanticized notions of honor.

As the character of Fleming matures through his involvement in phases of psychological and social struggles, his portrait of a young soldier undergoes many changes and developments. Starting with his “self-pride” which “was now entirely restored. In the shade of its flourishing growth he [stands] with braced and self-confident legs” (P. 91). Acting with honor in war and becoming a war hero were dreams commonly held by him to the extent that he seemed to be evidently ready to put himself at risk at any cost, there were times when Fleming “regarded the wounded soldiers in an envious way. He conceived persons with torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he, too, had a wound, a red badge of courage” (P. 56), but the internal conflicts accompanied him played as an initial obstacle that stood in his way to fulfill his war dream which firstly led to an escape and ultimately to a war-hero figure, after his evolutionary stages were acquired, he was finally able to defeat his fear and cowardice in the face of the horrifying war. Fleming is regarded as a war hero for defeating both; his fears and enemies simultaneously. (Green, 2020).

IV. CONCLUSION

The psychological and emotional costs of war remain at the forefront of analysis in Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage*. Notwithstanding the fact that they share a common thematic territory of horrors of a battlefield, yet they are significantly sub-divided in tone and narrative structure, and philosophies of escapism, heroism and the meaning of war.

In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Vonnegut critiques the traditional notion of heroism, drawing a protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, who is basically inactive and disconnected from the real events of war. Billy's escapism whether through his time travels or through his constant encounters with the Tralfamadorians mirrors his endeavor to emotionally detach himself from the unpleasantness and horror of war. The novel deals with escapism as a coping mechanism, a means to endure the futility and meaninglessness of war, yet it eventually highlights the pointless efforts of trying to escape the psychological trauma that war actually leaves behind. Billy's personal journey on the inventive imaginary world, which he creates, is a quest of detachment where he becomes a viewer of his own life, unable to modify or influence his destiny in the real world. In this sense, Vonnegut proposes that heroism as a traditional notion is an illusion in the face of an indifferent, intolerable and uncontrollable universe.

In contrast, *The Red Badge of Courage* takes a more humanistic approach to heroism, focusing on the internal transformation of Henry Fleming. Unlike Billy Pilgrim's passive survival, Henry's heroism emerges from his personal growth and confrontation with his own fear and shame. In this novel, heroism is not about grand gestures or external validation; instead, it is about endurance and moral reconciliation in the face of war's traumatic realities. The novel's treatment of escapism is much more psychological and internal. Henry attempts to escape the terror of battle, but ultimately, his heroism arises from confronting his inner demons and accepting the complexity of human emotions in the midst of war.

Thus, while both novels engage with the psychological toll of war, their treatments of heroism and escapism reflect distinct worldviews. *Slaughterhouse-Five* presents a nihilistic view, where heroism is irrelevant, and escapism serves as a means to cope with the absurdity of war. *The Red Badge of Courage*, on the other hand, suggests that heroism is possible through personal growth and reconciliation with fear, even in a brutal and traumatic environment. The contrast between the two novels emphasizes how different literary perspectives on war can lead to fundamentally different understandings of heroism, survival, and the psychological mechanisms of escapism.

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The Portrayal of Distress, Destitution, and Loss of Identity During the Partition of India: A Study of Bhisham Sahni's Tamas and Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice Candy Man

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Abstract— The trauma of partition and the agony experienced by it still continues to haunt millions of direct and indirect victims of the event in both India and Pakistan. This agony was expressed in partition literature written by writers from both countries. Muslims in India went to Pakistan, and Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan migrated to India, leaving behind everything, including their ancestral houses, traditions, and culture, and became refugees with nothing. Women became the most vulnerable victims, being assaulted, tormented, sexually molested, and abducted by men from different communities in the guise of religion. This sorrow of partition spawned a new literary genre known as "Partition Literature" in almost all Indian subcontinent languages. The opinions and experiences of refugees, victims of community violence, and political leaders are all represented in these stories. Sadaat Hasan Manto, Khuswant Singh, Amrita Pritam, W.H. Auden, Jyotirmoyee Devi, Chaman Nahal, Bhisham Sahni, Bapsi Sidhwa, and many attempted to address a variety of socio-political, cultural, and religious issues, causes, and their legacies in their writings. These writers have documented the horror of Partition in numerous amazing ways, based on their depth of experience, observation, and understanding of the tragic event. The present research offers a critical analysis of Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* in order to investigate the socio-political ramifications, pain, and trauma endured by the people during India's partition. The paper will make an additional effort to comprehend the political, social, and cultural transformations that both the countries experienced as a result of the division.



Keywords— Agony, terrifying, narratives, harmony, victims

On August 15, 1947, the long-awaited dawn of freedom was marked by the partition of the Indian Subcontinent. The political elites of England and India, including the British Crown, the Muslim League, the Akalis, and the Indian National Congress, came to this decision collectively. The "Divide and Rule" strategy allowed the British Raj to continue in India. The British Raj split the country in two before they left in order to accommodate their diplomatic aspirations. Terrifying images of a country come to mind when we hear the word "Partition." It also conveys a story of failing relationships, disorder and unrest in the community. Families were split apart,

and blood relationships were seriously strained. It turned neighbors into foes. Muslims and Hindus continue to hold each other responsible for it. It was an unpleasant gift that divided the nation into India and Pakistan. On both sides of the border, a significant portion of population was forcibly displaced during the event which resulted in an unprecedented wave of violence. A preview of the situation can be seen in Nisid Hajari's book "Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacies of India's Partition".

Gangs of killers set whole villages aflame, hacking to death men and children and the

aged while carrying off young women to be raped. British soldiers and journalists who had witnessed the Nazi death camps claimed Partition's brutalities were worse : pregnant women had their breasts cut off and babies hacked out of their bellies; infants were found literally roasted on spits . . . Special refugee trains, filled to bursting when they set out, suffered repeated ambushes along the way. All too often they crossed the border in funeral silence, blood seeping from under their carriage doors. (Hajari xvii)

The partition of the Indian Subcontinent went beyond a mere geographic division. Through widespread migration, death, murder, and loot, it vividly stained the years of shared cultures, brotherly bonds, emotions, love, and obligations. People from both the countries were physically and psychologically affected because of the religious fanaticism that uprooted them from their previous place and caused them to lose their feeling of security and belongingness. Even with the establishment of the Radcliffe line, Partition was unable to stop the violence between communities on either side of the borders. While Pakistan viewed the partition as an essential milestone in the development of a country with a majority of Muslims, India frequently remembers it as a painful event marked by violence and suffering. Both nations have shaped their national identities and political agendas by drawing on the memories of the division. In actuality, Partition caused irreversible harm to the lives of both India and Pakistan, and even now, over seventy five years later, the memory of it still lingers in the public mind. The country's eventual division cannot be attributed to a single cause because a variety of political, religious, social, and economic issues were involved.

As an action-packed event it continues to haunt not only millions of direct and indirect victims of the event but also it has a significant impact on the understanding of historians, researchers, scholars and writers from time to time till date. The stories and narratives of India's partition in 1947 led to the creation of the sovereign nations of India and Pakistan are known as partition novels. These narratives lively portray the emotional impact of the incident and the perspectives of people who were directly impacted by this unfortunate incident. It further illustrates the persistent hostilities that exist between India and

Pakistan. In general, the stories surrounding the partition serve as a reminder of the human predicament associated with political choices and the significance of comprehending the historical setting in which they were made. These writers through their novels addressed a wide range of topics, including social, political, philosophical, and psychological impact of partition on the people of both the countries who lived in harmony but all of a sudden they turned to be enemies under this disconsolate circumstance. These authors attempted to identify this communal disharmony from a humanitarian perspective in addition to capturing the haunting atmosphere of those gloomy times through their works. The storyline and characters found in these narratives projected the nature of violence, which is largely "socio-political," "cultural," and "communal" in origin. In addition to being a political movement, partition is also a literary repository of the emotional turmoil that the Indian subcontinent underwent during its resurgence. This paper examines two partition novels; *Tamas* by Bhishma Sahni and *Ice-Candy-Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa in order to fully understand the intricate consequences of partition on the social, political, cultural, religious, and emotional traits of the adversely affected people. Since these writers came from various regions of pre-partition India, it makes sense to look at their works from this perspective.

Bhisham Sahni's Tamas

Bhisham Sahni's work *Tamas* vividly depicts the horrific tragedy of India's pre-partition communal violence. The novel aims to expose the ignorance and depravity that fuel communal violence on the eve of Partition. The book emphasizes the ways in which the radical socialists manipulated innocent people into carrying out their orders in order to promote their own agendas at the expense of communal harmony and the ways in which fundamentalist forces encouraged violence within communities. The stories in the book serve to remember and depict significant events as they were experienced and perceived by the victims, as well as to help bring human suffering and the voices of the voiceless back to life. The killing of a pig and a cow sparked the inter-communal conflict that led to the loss of several human lives. People from both India and Pakistan had to lose both their homes and the near and dear ones they had lived with throughout their lives during this sad incident. Little children were left defenseless and women were sexually assaulted. Even the elderly were ruthlessly murdered without mercy. A great number of women had killed themselves and their daughters in an attempt to safeguard them from being raped. Even people who are quite aware of the turmoil that could follow the division of both the countries were not spared being victimized as everything happened so quickly, they hardly

got time to find ways to tackle the situation. People were forced to leave their homes in order to save their lives within no time. Romesh Chopra writes the following regarding the events that occurred during the partition:

Riots had spread like wild fire, especially in Punjab, U.P., Bihar and Bengal. When Mountbatten took over, law and order had already broken down in many states, but got awful momentum during the Muslim Leagues campaign, in August, 1946 in the city of Calcutta...Anybody could murder anyone. No FIRs, no court cases, no police investigation took place, and of course it had the religious sanction (Chopra 913)

Tamas challenged the common misconception that religious organizations were behind riots by revealing the true politics behind them. The problem starts with Murad Ali, who hires a poor butcher Nathu to kill a pig and place the carcass on the entrance of a mosque, that erupts a communal riot as the Islam considers pigs to be impure and forbids its consumption. Although Mahatma Gandhi tried to pacify the event by instructing congressmen to clean up the mess, Mahhmood Saheb objected to it with a belief that congress party is solely for Hindus and Muslim Leagues is for safeguarding the interest of the Muslims. Even the British government did not take adequate measures to maintain law and order to avoid this unforeseen incident and it is quite evident in the reply given by the Deputy Commissioner Richard :

The administration does not enjoy a hood reputation with you gentlemen. I am a British officer, and you have little faith in the British government. You won't very much care to listen to what I have to say. (Sahni, 94)

This conflict showcased the discord and mistrust between both the communities as well as their preference of racial affiliation over national identity. Jarnail Singh, a Sikh Congress activist in his attempt to rebuild the communal harmony was ruthlessly murdered:

"You, son of a..." shouted someone standing behind him, and with one swing of his lathi, hit the Jarnail on his head and broke his skull into two. Jarnail fell down in a heap, with his cane, his green 'military' uniform, his torn turban and his torn chappals, before he could finish his sentence. (Sahni, 190-1)

Sardar Harnam Singh and his wife Banto are the only Sikh family in Dhok Ilahi Baksh, running a tea-shop. As the situation worsens, they consider leaving to Khanpur, where their relatives live. Harnam Singh refuses to leave, showing faith in his fellow villagers, the muslim community. Very soon he has to change his decision when Karim Khan cautioned him "Your welfare lies in leaving the place" (Sahni 216). As soon the elderly couple leaves their house, rioters robbed their shop and set it on fire before their eyes. Being homeless, they walked all night long till they arrived in Muridpur early in the morning in the hopes of finding shelter in the village.. The pathetic turmoil inside the Sardar gets expression when he said to her wife:

'Don't you know anyone in Muridpur?'

Harnam Singh smiled. 'No one gave us shelter where I knew everyone, our shop was looted and our house set on fire. Many of the villagers had been my childhood playmates, we had grown up together.' (Sahni 226)

Rajo, Ehsan Ali's wife and Ramzan's mother, provides shelter for the Sikh couple. Ehsan Ali, who looted the Sikh couple's shop becomes angry discovering both of them taking shelter in his own house. This further aggravated the situation and Rajo had to let Harnam Singh and his wife Banto out of the house to continue their journey of finding shelter. The bitter fight between the Sikhs and the Muslims at Sayyedpur gurudwara continued for two days and the Sikhs succumb to defeat leading to the mass massacre many women committed suicide learning it will be futile to escape the carnal desires of the rioters.

Tamas explores the theme of partition in Indian literature, presenting an emotional and realistic study of the time. It vividly portrays Hindu-Muslim communal harmony and disharmony through various characters. During riots in West Punjab, Hindu and Sikh shops were targeted for burning and looting, while Muslim properties were targeted in East Punjab. Thousands of people experienced extreme upheaval and psychological distress due to dislocation, leading to feelings of insecurity. Humans, like plants, adapt to their surroundings to gain security and belonging. Relocating due to caste, religion, or lifestyle challenges can result in insecurity and disorder. Bhisham Sahni highlights the Hindu-Muslim relationship, where distrust exists between Hindus and Muslims, despite living side by side for generations. It depicts horrifying scenes, such as Sikh women jumping into a well to save themselves from rioters and an old man killed by a 15-year-old boy, reflecting the current state of violence and the potential for political gain.

The book explores human life, highlighting the struggle for freedom and identity, as well as the challenges of

maintaining peace and respecting different beliefs within communities. The conclusion of *Tamas* is crucial since it emphasizes how common people suffer the most during riots. Politicians, elites, and the rich don't actually care about it. Surprisingly, Murad Ali, the person responsible for the intensification of violence between communities, is leading this peace initiative. The symbolic conclusion of the novel thus functions as a warning as well as an attempt to inform the public about the dangers of bringing religion into politics and to make them aware of the ways in which they are always being used as props and tools in the plans of the ruling class.

Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-Candy-Man

Bapsi Sidhwa, a prominent Pakistani literary figure, explores her Parsi roots, past, and community in her major novel, *Ice-Candy-Man*. The story revolves around the Parsi community's dilemma over support and loyalty amid the impending Partition of India. It depicts the tragic history of India's partition into India and Pakistan, highlighting the aftermath of colonialism. The story follows the lives of friends like Lenny, Imam Dinn, and Aaya Ice Candy Man, and employs a child narrator to provide impartial and non-prejudiced accounts of the partition, highlighting the harsh realities of colonialism. History clearly shows that Hindu nationalism was the main source of power for British rulers, who consistently employed the divide and rule strategy. There are well-known tales of brotherhood and close ties between the Muslim and Hindu communities in Indian history. However, the British rulers' cunning methods contributed to a partial breakdown of this strong solidarity between Muslims and Hindus. The relationship between the Ice Candy Man, Masseur, and Aaya allows us to examine this horrific circumstance in the *Ice-Candy Man*. Ice Candy Man is a Muslim, but Aaya and the masseuse are Hindu. "I lose my senses when I think of the mutilated bodies on that train," admits Ice Candy Man in the book. I tell you, I went crazy that night! I threw grenades through Sikh and Hindu windows... I want to murder someone for every breast that Muslim women are deprived of-the penises! (Sidhwa 156).

The novel depicts a reversed relationship between Hindus and Muslims, with the former becoming violent and the latter becoming enmity. The British rulers' policy of divide and rule creates an uncertain atmosphere, leading to thousands of innocent people being mercilessly killed by both groups, without identifying the true cause. This violence highlights the underlying issues between the two groups. Throughout history, women have been the victims of violence, whether it stems from riots motivated by religion or caste. As a result, they are not affected negatively by postcolonialism. The story illustrates how

rioters victimize women and how this is how revenge is carried out. During the partition, women are raped and slaughtered in broad daylight:

Setting fires, looting, parading the Muslim women naked through the streets - raping and mutilating them in the centre of village and in mosques. The Bias, flooded by melting snow, and the monsoon, is carrying hundreds of corpses. There is an intolerable stench where the bodies, caught in the bends, have piled up (Sidhwa, 172).

Occasionally, she finds herself unable to identify the source of the women's cries "The mystery of the women in the courtyard deepens. At night we hear them wailing, their cries verging on the inhuman. Sometime I can't tell where the cries are coming from. From the women or from the house next door infiltrated by our invisible neighbours" (Sidhwa 212). Not only are Aaya and the sisters of *Ice-Candy Man* fictional characters, but they also stand in for the innocent people who lose their lives as a result of the partition of India, which was engineered by British colonisers. The novel exposes the British government's covert interest in India's economic growth and how they purposefully introduced laws that served their own interests. The characters in the narrative lack a defined development, yet they are all from low-income families without steady employment and no intention to create jobs for the general public. The British Government ships all resources into England.

The novel critiques stereotypical images of women and advocates for their empowerment. It highlights the gynocentric view of reality and feminist concerns about women's victimization and suppression within patriarchal societies. Lenny, a young Parsee girl suffering from polio, reflects on the societal expectations placed on women, particularly in the realm of writing. She observes men's degrading attention towards women and their sexual desires. Lenny learns that marriage is crucial in society, and she is often told that being beautiful is desirable. Her doctor, Col. Bharucha, suggests that women should focus on marriage, raising children, and being efficient in household duties. This patriarchal society views women as physically weak and confined to the domestic sphere, limiting their opportunities for growth and development.

Lenny's Hindu idol, Ayah Shanta, symbolizes femininity and freedom. She attracts admirers like the *Ice-Candy-Man*, the Government House gardener, and the Masseur. Ayah's natural beauty and sensuality attract men, creating power. Lenny observes her admirers' gaze reveals a desire for ownership, highlighting the objectification of women's

bodies. In Lahore, communal riots occur as Sikhs and Hindus migrate to Amritsar, while Muslims are asked to leave. Women and children suffer the most during this time. A train from Gurdaspur arrives, carrying dead bodies and butchered women's breasts. This event questions the hypocrisy of glorifying Indian women as goddesses during upheaval. The bag of severed breasts becomes a public form of communication, verifying nationalist power. Dilnawaz, the Ice Candy Man, becomes blood thirsty and takes Ayah, a Hindu girl, into the hands of the Muslim mob. Ayah is raped, beaten, and thrown away among brothels. She is forced to marry Dilnawaz, renaming her Mumtaz, highlighting the lack of a woman's right over her identity.

In the episode of Ice-Candy-Man and Ayah, Lenny is shocked by the violence and rape committed against women during the riots. This violence destroys Lenny's conceptions of love and male honor, as women have no rights on their own bodies. The community of Ranna in Lahore plans to protect women from public shaming by allowing them to start a fire. The story highlights the importance of women's purity and the loss of feminine power. Sidhwa uses the figures of Lenny's caretakers to explore the fates of women who survived these acts of violence. The loss of feminine power in the story could be seen as a traditional Partition novel, with men as victors and women as victims. Sidhwa's novel, *Partition*, emphasizes the importance of women utilizing their potential beyond domestic life and asserting their individuality. The novel features two strong examples of feminine power: Lenny's mother, who moves beyond her traditional role as a housewife to rescue and house women during Partition, and her Godmother, Rodabai. Lenny's mother and aunts provide shelter and support for women who have been raped or forced into prostitution. Rodabai's authority and self-confidence are evident in her handling of extreme situations, such as the Ice-Candy-Man's disgrace of the Ayah. She rescues Ayah and sends her back to her people, showcasing the power of women in bringing order to a chaotic world.

Sidhwa exposes the perpetuation of violence against women by patriarchal culture and norms, highlighting the role of women in causing the suffering and exploitation of others. In her novel *Ice-Candy-Man*, a slave-sister is harassed by her sister Godmother, leading to her suppression and bonded to her. Sidhwa emphasizes that women can also be instrumental in perpetuating violence against others, as seen in the relationship between Pappo and her mother Muccho. Muccho's manipulation and drugging of Papoo's spirit suggest that women are unconsciously bound by their conditioning, treating marriage as a cure for all ills. Sidhwa explores the

emancipation of women and ends with Ayah returning home. Lenny, a courageous and bold girl, navigates life despite obstacles. Ayah's suffering represents thousands of women's suffering in patriarchal society. Lenny, her Ayah, and her family demonstrate the ability to assume new roles. Lenny's relationship with her cousin upholds equality, as she refuses to be dominated by the male and expresses her preferences.

Sidhwa, set in the context of communal violence, explores postcolonial history from the perspective of marginalized women. *Cracking India* critiques stereotypical images of women, advocating for a social transformation that acknowledges their desires, feelings, ambitions, and potentials. The novel explores the desire for power and influence, which fuels religious intolerance, leading to violence and division among different religious and ethnic groups. It also highlights the subjugation of women, such as Ayah, who is taken prisoner by a man and subjected to extreme sexual violence, including rape and sex slavery. Lenny's intense sexual desire for her Cousin, similar to the Ice-candy-man stalking Ayah, shapes her understanding of lust and desire as powerful motivators.

Betrayal is a central theme in the novel, as India betrays its people by enforcing a hasty plan to move millions of refugees. The loss of life, lands, and kinship is a reminder of this betrayal. Sidhwa uses betrayal to reveal hidden character traits, loyalties, and truth through characters like Lenny, who learns the lesson that even loved ones may not always come to aid. Lenny betrays her beloved Ayah, using her relationship with the Icecandy-man to kidnap her. She is devastated and her family is shocked. Ayah is forced into prostitution, and Lenny blames herself. However, her family, including Godmother and mother, rescues Ayah from her terrible life. The novel depicts the oppression and sexual victimization of women, including Papoo's child marriage, Partition violence, and Hamida, Ayah, and Ranna's stories. The only hope comes from Lenny's mother and her gang, who rescue women and return them to their families, despite their brokenness. As Lenny's ayah manages to flee, religious and social bigotry beats the ice candy vendor. Fighting and Partition have cost the Parsees everything, and everyone involved must move on. With a small girl's perspective, the story is painful and funny at the same time. As Lenny matures, the ugliest aspects of humanity and bloodshed taint her perceptions. She had to persevere in order to save her ayah, demonstrating her growing care for the welfare of others.

Conclusion

The genre of Partition Literature is dominated by representations of violence against religious minorities in

communities. Bapsi Sidhwa tells the story of Partition with a critical eye towards religion, just like Bhisham Sahni. She complains to God in the start of the book *Ice Candy Man*. She learns the truth from Lenny via observation: "One man's religion is another man's poison" (Sidhwa 117). The young narrator, Lenny, felt that her universe had been constricted by the Partition and expressed her regret to God, saying, "I'm sorry to say it so boldly." Are you any less erratic than we are?(Sidhwa 1). Beverly Milton Edward quotes Salman Rushdie as saying, "Where religion intervenes, mere innocence is no excuse" (Edward 22) in reference to the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002. The author demonstrates how naive Lenny was tricked by the popsicle man and unintentionally exposed Ayah's hiding place by taking part in the fighting. She was unable to flee and her innocent infantile behavior was not justified. But *Ice Candy Man* also realistically portrays the horrible story of Partition. The partition of the Indian subcontinent into two nations based on religion was seen as a necessary sacrifice for freedom from British colonial powers. Partition literature depicts the suffering of common people, including violence, trauma, and brutality. Despite the division, language and literature were not partitioned, as the Two-Nation Theory claimed Hindi was Hindu and Urdu Muslim, preserving both languages in both countries.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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AI-Integrated Writing Approach and Senior High School Students' Writing Competencies in English

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Abstract— Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in education offers significant potential to enhance writing competencies. This quantitative study investigated the effect of an AI-integrated instructional approach on the writing performance of Senior High School students at Liberty National High School, Tampakan, South Cotabato. The study measured improvements in students' writing competencies in English, which focused on vocabulary, grammar, content development, and organization. A quasi-experimental single-group design was employed to assess the effects of an AI-integrated approach in writing. Statistical analyses indicated significant positive gains across all measured domains following the implementation of AI support. The results demonstrated that AI integration facilitated immediate grammar correction, expanded vocabulary use, and improved overall coherence and structural organization in students' written outputs. These findings provide empirical support for using AI technologies to enhance students' writing competencies in English. The study underscores the importance of strategically incorporating AI as a supplementary tool in writing approach to optimize learning outcomes while maintaining academic rigor.



Keywords— Artificial Intelligence (AI), Academic Writing, Writing Competencies, Senior High School Students, AI-Assisted Instruction, Quantitative Research.

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly becoming a part of daily life, especially in education. Researchers recognize AI's importance in supporting academic writing by providing students with the information they need for scholarly work. AI helps gather ideas, supplement research, and develop writing structure. It refers to computer systems capable of simulating human intelligence processes such as machine learning, speech recognition, and natural language processing.

Despite AI's growth, many Senior High School (SHS) students at Liberty National High School (LNHS), Tampakan, South Cotabato, Philippines, struggle with academic writing, particularly those outside the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand. Instructors observed that students from technical, vocational, and STEM-related fields often find it difficult

to organize and express their ideas in academic English. This challenge prompted the researcher to explore how AI-based tools might enhance students' writing skills, especially in crafting research introductions, which emphasized AI's role in assisting struggling writers (Sahli & Essalmi, 2021).

AI writing tools, such as grammar checkers and essay generators, are increasingly common in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom (Chang et al., 2021; Gayed et al., 2022; Jeanjaroonsri, 2023; Zhao, 2022). These tools save time and effort, offering students quick feedback on their drafts. However, the use of AI also raises concerns. Students risk accidental plagiarism, over-reliance on grammar correction apps, and a tendency to prioritize speed over the quality and depth of their writing.

Most existing research has focused on how AI tools improve grammar and syntax. Yet, grammar is only one

part of effective writing. Content and structure are equally crucial to ensure readers' understanding and engagement (Lee & Yuan, 2021; Ningrum, 2013). There is limited research about how AI impacts the organization of ideas and development of arguments, particularly in academic writing at the high school level.

Thus, this study aimed not only to check surface-level improvements (such as fewer grammar errors) but also deeper improvements in how students organize their thoughts and present their arguments logically. By comparing the results of the pretest and posttest, this research sought to determine whether using selected AI tools can significantly improve SHS students' writing performance.

This study tested an AI-integrated writing approach (AI-IWA) through a scheduled COT session. The findings could provide insights into the responsible use of AI in improving the research writing skills of senior high school students, especially in writing effective research introductions.

Research Questions

This study identified the effect of an AI-integrated writing approach (AI-IWA) on SHS students' writing competencies in English. It answered the following questions.

1. What is the level of SHS students' writing competence before and after using the AI-IWA in terms of vocabulary, grammar, content, and organization?
2. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the SHS students' writing competencies?

II. METHODS

Research Design

In the quantitative phase, a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was utilized to assess the impact of the AI-IWA. Initially, a pretest was administered to evaluate the students' baseline writing competencies across four key areas: vocabulary, grammar, content, and organization. Following this, the AI-IWA was employed, where students engaged with standardized writing prompts and utilized AI tools to enhance their writing performance. A posttest was then administered to measure any improvements in writing competencies. This design was selected as it allowed for a direct comparison of students' writing skills before and after the intervention, thereby providing a clear measure of change within the same group of participants.

Participants of the Study

This study's participants comprised thirty (30) SHS students from LNHS. Stringent inclusion criteria were established to ensure the selection of a suitable sample. Participants were required to be enrolled in Grade 12 at LNHS, possess prior exposure to AI writing tools such as QuillBot, Grammarly, or ChatGPT, and demonstrate a foundational proficiency in English writing.

Research Instrument

The study utilized comprehensive research instruments aligned with each problem statement to ensure systematic data collection and analysis.

A pretest writing assessment was administered for SOP 1, which assessed students' baseline competencies in writing research introductions, particularly in vocabulary, grammar, content, and organization. Students were tasked with composing an introduction based on a standardized research prompt. The outputs were evaluated using a Likert scale rubric with four categories: poor, fair, good, and excellent.

The Department of Education's COT was also used to assess further and validate the writing competencies in English, ensuring alignment with national educational standards. This evaluation process enhanced the reliability and validity of the assessment results. It also focused on implementing the AI-IWA. All participants used the same AI writing tools and were provided with uniform prompts to ensure consistency across the sample. Students were guided through revising and improving their research introductions using the AI tools, following specific protocols to guarantee equal exposure and minimize biases.

A posttest writing assessment was administered after the AI intervention for SOP 2, which examined improvements in writing competencies. Students were again tasked to write a research introduction using the same assessment rubric and evaluation criteria as in the pretest. The comparison of pretest and posttest scores allowed for the quantitative measurement of changes in writing competencies, specifically in vocabulary, grammar, content, and organization.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering procedure on AI-IWA involved a structured, multi-step approach to ensure comprehensive and reliable results. Thirty (30) participants were selected. Selection criteria included students' regular use of AI writing tools, enthusiasm for improving their writing skills, and ability to incorporate AI-generated content creatively and originally.

A performance-based task was used instead of a structured questionnaire. During the pretest, students were instructed to create an introduction for their research paper without using AI tools. After the AI-IWA, the same students were asked to revise or recreate their research introductions. Their outputs were assessed based on vocabulary, grammar, content, and organization to measure any improvements in their writing competencies.

Based on established writing criteria, the pretest and posttest writing outputs were evaluated using the COT rubric and rated using a Likert scale with poor, fair, good, and excellent categories. Surveys were administered either in person or electronically, depending on student preferences. Data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to determine significant improvements in writing performance.

Data Analysis Method

The data collected were analyzed through various statistical methods. First, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for students' vocabulary, grammar, content, and organization scores before and after the intervention. The mean scores provided an average measure of students' performance, while standard deviations indicated the variability of scores around the mean (Lund & Lund, 2020).

Subsequently, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether the observed differences between pretest and posttest scores were statistically significant. This test was particularly appropriate because it compares two related samples: the same participants' performance before and after the intervention. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant, meaning improvements could be attributed to the AI-IWA rather than random chance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The writing competencies of the SHS students was evaluated across four domains: vocabulary, grammar, context, and organization. The pretest result shows that students' writing skills were largely within the Fair level across all areas.

The pretest results reveal that SHS students' writing competence before using the AI-IWA is within the fair category across vocabulary, grammar, context, and organization. These findings highlight areas requiring significant improvement to enhance students' writing and overall communication abilities.

Table 1. Level of Students' Writing Competence Before Using AI-IWA

Score Category	Vocabulary (N, %)	Grammar (N, %)	Context (N, %)	Organization (N, %)
Poor (1)	2 (5.41%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Fair (2)	23 (62.16%)	22 (59.46%)	14 (37.84%)	19 (51.35%)
Good (3)	12 (32.43%)	15 (40.54%)	23 (62.16%)	18 (48.65%)
Excellent (4)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Mean Score	2.32 (Fair)	2.38 (Fair)	2.62 (Fair)	2.49 (Fair)

The vocabulary aspect received the lowest average score of 2.32, indicating that students have a restricted word range in their writing. The data reveal that 62.16% of students achieved a Fair level, suggesting they tend to use basic words and face challenges with lexical diversity. Utilizing AI-assisted tools to expand vocabulary could enhance word selection and the overall richness of their texts. Nation (2020) highlighted that vocabulary is essential for improving writing fluency and expression, pointing out that a limited vocabulary restricts fluency and coherence, making written outputs repetitive and less engaging. Without intervention, students may face difficulties in academic and professional writing tasks.

The grammar scores of 2.38 indicated that the students performed slightly better, demonstrating some knowledge of sentence structure but still encountering issues with grammatical accuracy. Ferris (2018) pointed out that L2 learners often struggle with verb tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, and overall sentence coherence. While only 40.54% of the students scored Good, most remained in the Fair category, indicating the need for reinforcement in grammar rules.

Context registered the highest average score of 2.62, indicating that learners have a stronger capability to relate content and ideas appropriately. Hyland (2019) emphasized that comprehending the context at a deeper

level is a key component of academic writing. The survey indicated that 62.16% of the students reached the Good level in context, showing their ability to construct relevant and meaningful content.

Organization, with a mean score of 2.49, reflected students' moderate skill in logically arranging ideas. Flower and Hayes (2021) emphasized coherence and transition between paragraphs as major indicators of well-structured writing. Although 48.65% of the students scored Good, a significant number remained at the Fair level, indicating challenges in the logical flow of their essays.

These findings suggest that integrating AI-IWA can provide real-time, personalized feedback, allowing students to refine their vocabulary, grammar, and structural coherence. This approach could be a valuable supplement to traditional writing teaching, fostering long-term writing proficiency.

After the AI-IWA, a notable improvement in students' writing competence was observed across all assessed domains.

Table 2. Level of SHS Students in Writing Competencies After Using AI-IWA

Score Category	Vocabulary (N, %)	Grammar (N, %)	Context (N, %)	Organization (N, %)
Poor (1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Fair (2)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Good (3)	17 (56.67%)	17 (56.67%)	17 (56.67%)	17 (56.67%)
Excellent (4)	13 (43.33%)	13 (43.33%)	13 (43.33%)	13 (43.33%)
Total Students	30	30	30	30
Mean Score	3.57 (Good)	3.57 (Good)	3.57 (Good)	3.57 (Good)

In vocabulary, 43.33% of students achieved an Excellent level, while the remaining 56.67% were classified as Good. The results imply that AI support significantly helped students enhance their lexical choices, enabling more nuanced and varied expressions. Schmitt (2020) supported the view that acquiring new words leads to improved fluency and expression in writing.

Grammar similarly improved, with no students scoring Poor or Fair. Students gained better control over sentence structures, verb usage, and punctuation accuracy. Ferris (2018) emphasized that grammatical precision is critical for written clarity, and AI-driven grammar checkers greatly contributed to this enhancement.

In terms of context, students demonstrated stronger comprehension of topic relevance, supporting details, and argument development. This improvement was likely

aided by the structured feedback provided by the AI platform, aligning with Hyland's (2019) assertion that a deeper understanding of the context strengthens written output quality.

The organization improved notably, as students achieved better coherence, logical flow, and effective essay transitions. Flower and Hayes (2021) noted that clear organization strengthens a text's intelligibility and persuasive power, which the AI-supported tools helped students to achieve.

Overall, the uniform prompts and the use of the same AI tool for all participants ensured that differences in outcomes were attributable primarily to individual student engagement, not inconsistencies in instructional materials. This highlights the strength of using AI as a supportive tool in enhancing students' writing proficiency.

Table 3: Test of Difference Between Means on the Level of Students' Writing Competence During Pre-test and Post-tests

Indicators	Mean Difference	SE	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Pre-test					
Post-test	-2.93	0.291	-10.1	<.001*	Significant

*5% level of Significance

The data presented reveal a significant difference in students' writing competence between the pretest and posttest assessments. Specifically, the mean difference of -2.93, accompanied by a standard error of 0.291, yielded a t-value of -10.10, which is statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < .001$). This indicates that students' writing skills improved substantially after the AI intervention.

The highly significant result validates the effectiveness of the AI-IWA. It suggests that the AI-IWA can effectively address students' writing weaknesses, promote skill development, and yield measurable learning gains within a relatively short period. Teachers may consider incorporating AI-driven platforms into their instruction to improve student vocabulary, grammar, content organization, engagement, and overall English writing proficiency.

Prior studies support these findings. Boscolo et al. (2007) found that synthesis writing interventions improved writing abilities at the undergraduate level. Kitila et al. (2023) indicated that integrated skills interventions positively affected writing proficiency among high school students, particularly in vocabulary and grammar. Furthermore, Archer (2008) highlighted that writing centers significantly improved assessed writing within tertiary education contexts.

IV. CONCLUSION

AI-IWA for SHS students has significant potential, particularly in enhancing vocabulary, grammar, content, and organizational writing competencies. AI applications such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot provided real-time feedback and scaffolding, promoting self-regulation, metacognitive awareness, and active engagement in the writing process. Notable improvements were observed in students' vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, content development, and organizational skills.

While an AI-IWA presents a promising avenue for improving student competencies, its effectiveness depends on strategic implementation, continuous teacher guidance, and independent and collaborative learning opportunities. This study contributes to the growing body of research affirming AI's transformative educational potential when thoughtfully applied alongside traditional methods.

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A Marxist Analysis of Bapsi Sidhwa's Novel *The Pakistani Bride*

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Abstract— The paper is an endeavor for examining and understanding of multivariate Marxist notions, elucidating multi dimensionally the horror produce by the class conflicts and other capitalist practices with in the light of various texts. Additionally, the paper practically deals with the analysis of *The Pakistani Bride*. This research studies the selected novel from the lens of Marxism. The study illustrate the class conflict and exploitation of powerless. Moreover, the *Unmasking the Hidden Agenda: How Capitalist Interests Exploit Religion to Control the Masses*. However, research on '*The Pakistani Bride*', Bapsudhi Sidhwa poignantly portrays how human relationships are reduced to mere monetary transactions. The novel touches on Marxist themes, such as class divisions and the insidious influence of ideology, but only scratches the surface. The present study collects particular information from the text Bapsi Sidhwa's Novel, *The Pakistani Bride*, the focus of the current research is dealing with Marxist ideas. With a keen eye for detail, the researcher carefully gathers insights and pinpoint areas within the text where the findings can have the most impact. With a deep dive into the data, the researcher meticulously breaks down the collected information, using intuitive and creative techniques to uncover hidden patterns and bring the findings to life. The novel delineates story of various social groups suffering class conflicts, and the pursuit of their aims inspired by economic and financial advancement. It noticeably portrays the assorted social classes and everlasting antagonism in social and economic framework. The novel furthermore, illustrated religious practices, discovering it as an active and conservative force, utilized by the ruling to justify the class antagonism and unnatural with natural. This study can be used to look at literature through different theoretical frameworks.



Keywords— Marxist, class antagonism, financial advancement, *The Pakistani Bride*

Introduction

Marxism offers a powerful lens through which we can examine the intricate web of social, economic, and political forces that shape our world and impact our lives. At its core, Marxism envisions a world where everyone is equal and has a stake in the community's prosperity. Imagine a society where the resources and systems that sustain us are owned and controlled collectively, rather than by a privileged few. In this world, everyone has a voice and a role in shaping their own destiny. Individuals have different social status in the form of social stratification and socioeconomic conflict. One group has a surplus of goods, but limited appetite, while the other

group has a greater appetite, but scarce resources. Marxism look at extremely challenging and unfair financial conditions and consider classless society with no economic disparities. Marxism, developed this ideology, the issue where the average person has to take part, In the realm of economic across multiple economic groups. Marx related this issue through the ages and assert, throughout the entirety of human history of open clash between two opposing classes. Karl Marx also shed light on a heartbreaking consequence of capitalist systems, the erosion of emotional connections. He believed that when people are forced to fight for survival due to unequal distribution of resources, they start to prioritize financial

stability over family bonds. As a result, relationships become transactional, reducing love and connection to mere economic exchanges. In essence, the capitalist machine strips away the warmth and intimacy that makes us human, leaving only a hollow pursuit of profit (Marx, 1887). The matter of doctrine is important to the ideology of Marxism. Marxism works to constantly make us aware of all the ways in which daily wage earners are the result of material and historical conditions of the capitalist doctrine. Karl Marx pulled back the curtain on the subtle yet powerful ideologies that keep the working class in chains. He revealed how these ideologies, disguised as truth, distort reality to maintain the status quo and justify the dominance of the elite. Religion, education, and patriotism, Marx argued, are often co-opted as tools to serve the self-interest of the powerful, perpetuating a system that keeps the proletariat oppressed and exploited. In the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx boldly identified these ideologies as instruments of control, designed to manipulate and maintain the power imbalance (Marx, 1848).

Bapsi Sidhwa, a renowned Pakistani writer from the Parsi community, has been identified as a feminist, postcolonial, and South Asian author. In the novel "*The Pakistani bride*" she intricately weaves Marxist themes. The Marxist notions are a slapdash arrangements and form the narrative thread, the most apparent perspective is class conflict, social stratification, extremist ideology, ideological functions, hopeless and the deplorable state of women stems from economic dependence. The story explores the theme of Hindu-Muslim hostility. The two classes are locked in an inevitable struggle for dominance. Russell commented that the creation of this divide was a purposeful endeavor, leading to the proletariat being disproportionately impacted and suffering the most severe economic consequences. Similarly, Zaitoon, the main character, was caught up in the turmoil surrounding independence, resulting in the loss of her parents.. This story shines a light on the heartbreaking reality of women trapped in economic dependence. Forced to rely on their husbands for survival, they're left vulnerable to every whim and cruelty. These women, desperate for security, often surrender to loveless marriages, sacrificing their dreams and desires for a life of quiet desperation. They're reduced to mere commodities, their emotions and sentiments traded for financial stability. The harsh truth is that, for many women, marriage is not a union of love and mutual respect, but a means of survival. This poignant portrayal highlights the cruel consequences of a system that reduces human connection to a mere economic transaction. Marx was of the view that capitalism bring down social relations to monetary transactions a theme

more evident in the Novel, *The Pakistani Bride*, evidently, as shown in the novel, Qasim is unsympathetic to Zaitoon's troubled state., he disregards Zaitoon's well-being, and thus sold her for 500 rupees, exemplifying how economic interests overshadow human sentiment.

Karl Marx shed light on the devastating consequences of the capitalist economic system, revealing its inequality and suffering among the most vulnerable members of society. He argued that economic crises, fueled by the capitalist machine, unleash unimaginable hardship on those already struggling to make ends meet. Marx's astute observations highlighted the stark contrast between two warring social classes, the affluent bourgeoisie, who enjoy unparalleled access to life's necessities and luxuries, and the impoverished working class, who are systematically denied even the most basic human needs. This glaring disparity, Marx contended, is the powder keg that fuels class antagonism and social unrest. Marx poignantly highlighted that, the bourgeoisie's ideology creates a toxic dynamic that erodes the emotional bonds between working-class individuals. By reducing relationships to mere economic transactions, the bourgeoisie strip the proletariat of their humanity, leaving only a hollow dependence on money to sustain their connections. This dehumanizing effect is a direct result of the grossly unequal distribution of resources, which perpetuates a system of exploitation. Marx also lamented the loss of individuality among the proletariat, who are forced to surrender their autonomy and creativity to the whims of their capitalist overlords. Like soldiers in a war, they are reduced to mere cogs in a machine, toiling under the relentless pressure of their corporate commanders. This soul-crushing system denies them the dignity of self-expression and the freedom to forge their own paths.

Bertrand Russell, in his essay "A Case for Socialism," critically examines the far-reaching consequences of the capitalist economic system on individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. He argues that capitalism creates significant barriers in various aspects of life, including education, family, and art. Russell highlights the plight of a gifted child from a wage-earning family, who, despite possessing exceptional intelligence in mathematics, music, or science, is unable to nurture their talent due to limited access to resources. Russell also sheds light on the exploitative nature of capitalism, particularly in relation to women's economic inequality. He emphasizes how economic disparities perpetuate the oppression of women, exacerbating their vulnerable position in society. He pointed out that women are often forced to rely on men for financial support, which can be even more suffocating than the dependence of an employee on their employer. While an employee can quit their job, many women are trapped

in unpaid labor with no escape. Russell's words highlight the cruel injustice of a system that denies women economic freedom and autonomy.

In his iconic novel "Metamorphosis," Franz Kafka lays bare the harsh realities of social class. The wealthy elite hold power, while the working class is crushed under their oppressive rules. We see this vividly in the character of Gregor Samsa, who begs his manager not to fire him, knowing it would devastate his family. But the manager, blinded by his own privilege, responds with heartless disdain. His words, "Sit at your desk and talk down to your employees," reveal a chilling lack of empathy, highlighting the dehumanizing effects of class inequality.

Karl Marx said that the wealthy elite reduce human relationships to mere financial transactions, ignoring emotional connections. Franz Kafka's works bring this idea to life. He shows that money can poison relationships, making it the measure of intimacy and emotional attachment. In his story, Gregor Samsa's family brutally rejects him after he loses his job. No longer able to support them financially, he's cast out of his own home. This heartbreaking scene reveals the dark truth that, in a world driven by money, love and loyalty can be cruelly discarded.

They sat patiently in their chairs, waiting for the pearls to arrive. As soon as they did, chaos erupted: they haggled, fought, and shouted, determined to drive the price down to the lowest point the fisherman was willing to accept. George Orwell's powerful writings exposed the harsh realities of capitalism, where the vulnerable are exploited and left to struggle. In his iconic novel, *Animal Farm* (1945), Orwell painted a stark picture of a society where the powerful prey on the weak, creating a world of stagnation, oppression, and economic chaos. But Orwell didn't just critique capitalism - he also championed communism as a fairer, more compassionate alternative. He believed that communism could create a more equal society, where everyone had a chance to thrive. Through his writing, Orwell urged us to imagine a better world, one where the exploitation and injustice of capitalism are replaced by the kindness, equality, and freedom of communism. The ultimate goal of communism is human brotherhood, a notion deeply felt by many, though often left unspoken. It is not the promise of a luxurious, high-tech utopia that drives individuals to dedicate their lives to the cause, or to make the ultimate sacrifice in the midst of civil war, or to endure the brutal torture of regimes like the Gestapo. Rather, it is the pursuit of a world united in solidarity and compassion but, George Orwell's heartfelt dream was for a world where people loved and cared for each other, rather than exploiting and harming one another. He passionately believed that the root of all suffering was

the unfair class system, which perpetuated inequality and oppression. Orwell's words were a cry for justice, a plea for a world where the working class wasn't forced to endure endless hardship and struggle. He longed for a society where everyone had the chance to thrive, free from the shackles of exploitation and greed. In *Animal Farm*, George Orwell vividly portrays the stark contrast between the oppressors and the oppressed. The wealthy and powerful pigs, symbolizing the "haves," ruthlessly exploit the vulnerable and marginalized animals, representing the "have-nots." Through the pigs' cunning manipulation of ideologies, Orwell exposes, the bourgeoisie cleverly exploited the proletariat's desire for revolution, using it to serve their own selfish interests. The animals' rebellion against the farm's owner was, in reality, a mere pawn in the pigs' game of power and control. The pigs cleverly deceived the other animals with slogans like "All men are enemies, all animals are comrades," convincing them to work tirelessly for the benefit of their pig masters. But as the pigs' exploitation grew more ruthless, they needed to justify their actions. So, they tweaked their original mantra of "All animals are equal" to a more sinister version, "Some animals are equal, but others are more equal." This subtle yet devastating change revealed the pigs' true intentions to maintain their grip on power and privilege, while keeping the other animals in a state of subjugation.

In his novel "A Case of Exploding Mangoes," Muhammad Hanif sheds light on the stark struggle between the privileged elite and the marginalized underclass. He exposes the cruel irony of those in power, the bourgeoisie, exploit and betray the vulnerable lower class. Hanif argues that the ruling class uses deceptive ideologies and manipulates religion to maintain their grip on power and justify their lavish lifestyles. By distorting religious teachings, they claim a divine right to their privileged position, while denying the lower class access to even the most basic necessities. This scathing critique reveals the deep-seated injustices that perpetuate inequality and suffering. Muhammad Hanif's scathing portrayal exposes General Zia-ul-Haq's cynical manipulation of religion to control and deceive the masses. Hanif reveals how Zia, once hailed as a champion of Islam, used faith as a tool to serve his own sinister agenda. With searing clarity, Hanif strips away Zia's pretenses, revealing a ruthless leader who exploited people's deepest beliefs for his own gain. The image of a "wolf in sheep's clothing" hauntingly captures the essence of Zia's duplicity, leaving readers with a profound sense of betrayal and outrage. Muhammad Hanif describes Zia as a shallow, self-serving leader who exploited religion for personal gain. Hanif writes: "The generals who had called Zia a 'Mullah' behind his back felt ashamed at having underestimated him: not only was he a

Mullah who merely parroted what he'd heard from others, but a Mullah in a four-star general's uniform, with the instincts of a corrupt tax inspector." These biting words underscore Zia's cynical misuse of religion to maintain his grip on power. Furthermore, through the exploitative use of religion, the dictator (Zia) aimed to solidify his social standing, rendering it unassailable and impenetrable. In her novel 'Ice Candy Man', Bapsi Sidhwa exposes the stark contrast between the privileged elite, who remain insulated from financial hardship, and those who bear the brunt of economic catastrophe. This deplorable state of affairs is the reality for Lenny's family struggle, particularly his father, who has become emotionally distant due to the crushing weight of financial stress. His dire circumstances have forced him to prioritize earning a living over nurturing his family relationships, leaving emotional scars in its wake. Lenny's father is emotionally drained, and his frustration boils over as he lashes out at his wife, saying, 'She's determined to destroy us, and money is her only motivation. I'm sick of hearing about it from morning to night. This desperate outburst reveals the suffocating grip of financial stress on their relationship. But it also hints at a deeper issue: the wife's economic dependence on her husband has left her vulnerable to his control and exploitation, stripping her of her autonomy and dignity.

In "Ice Candy Man," Bapsi Sidhwa vividly portrays, the uneven distribution of resources creates a stark social divide. One class basks in luxury, with every need met, while the other struggles to survive, lacking access to basic necessities. Sidhwa poignantly illustrates this contrast, writing, 'Rich men's wives and children escape to the cool hills of Shimla or Kashmir in summer. We, too, flee, but to the lesser hills of Murree, at the foot of the Himalayas.' This poignant comparison highlights the vastly different worlds of the haves and have-nots. This research is a personal interpretation of Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, "The Pakistani Bride". The researcher focused on specific parts of the book that relate to Marxist ideas. They gathered relevant information and analyzed it using a subjective and descriptive approach. In other words, the researcher carefully selected and examined certain aspects of the novel to better understand its themes and messages through a Marxist lens. To deepen the analysis, the researcher carefully examines the gathered ideas and aligns them with the research objectives. To achieve this, the researcher: Analyzes the content of "The Pakistani Bride" to gather essential information. Supplements this analysis with additional insights from relevant books and research papers written by other critics, ensuring they align with the research topic. This comprehensive approach enables the researcher to build a richer understanding of the subject matter. This study delves into the world of

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, "The Pakistani Bride", through the lens of Marxist theory. With a keen eye, we examine how the principles of the bourgeoisie shape the plot and characters of the story. Our goal is to uncover the subtle yet powerful ways in which capitalist ideologies influence the lives of the characters, particularly those from the working class. By doing so, we hope to shed light on the struggles and injustices faced by the marginalized, and to spark a deeper understanding of the social and economic forces that govern our lives. This study employing subjective techniques for exploration and investigation of information throughout the text in support of present tendencies. The researcher, primarily, brings up information suitable to Marxism. The researcher hold attention to class hostility and showing them how the masses creates perturbation in the name of religion with due emphasis on that, how they are driven by a upper class with religion to fulfill their goals.

The Pakistani Bride is profusely abounded in Marxist theme. The most obvious and prominent are the class antagonism, religious extremism (as the opiate of the masses), exploitation of the impoverished class, and economic dependencies of women causing some unbearable catastrophe upon them. These formulate the plot of the novel and covers almost of the events. The aforementioned themes are analyzed through the text with the example of the dialogues and quotes of the characters. The analysis is conducted within the light of different stalwart figures of Marxism.

Class Antagonism

The novel, *The Pakistani brides* demonstrates the hostility between various economic classes. The distention is made in the form of the oppressed and the oppressor, The haves and the have not, economically dependent male and the subdued and dependent social statics of women. Pertaining the class antagonism Marx had argued that, the entire history of all the existing societies is the tension between classes. There are the proletarian and Bourgeoisie, oppressor and the oppressed one, class possesses the availability of all the fundamental as well as the lavish requirement whereas the other is bitterly deprived of the basics. This very portrayal is given by Bapsi Sidhwa in the novel *The Pakistani bride*, for instance the struggle for the achievement of autonomous and separate countries feuded the class hostility. The different nation driven by the premise of differences never neglected an opportunity of inflecting wounds upon each other. The novel witness's portrayal of this description "a train is leaving at four o'clock from Ludhiana we must take it". (Sidhwa's 19). The aforementioned statement is an obvious indicator of ethnic

cleaning, the enmity between, and distinct social classes.

The tension between Hindus and Muslim is so, terrible heightened that even killing each other was not considered a crime. The conflict was fundamentally triggered by material and economic pursuit which was the attainment of separate country. This pursuit indoctrinated such an ideology that harming one another looting, murdering, and vandalizing each other properties were not tested by the general codes of ethics and consideration of morality. For instance, Qasim, killed a baboo notwithstanding. The concept of religious distinction, the people (Character) novel (Muslim community) from the same community appeared bearing grudges to each other. They had conflict with each other for economic motives. These financial drives aggravated the tension between them and they neglected no opportunity to oppress the less powerful in the race of their achievements. For instance Nikkah would always wick the less powerful street venders, if they ever dewed to sell around is camps while rebuking the weak merchants Nikkah, says "you incestuous lover of your Mother, lover of your sister, son of a whore, imbecile owl, dog, how dare you peddle this staff here" (Sidhwa). Thus, it is an obvious clue of one class taking advantages of other class, one has freedom and individuality while the other totally rely on the will of the dominant.

Communism keeps no individual deprived from the power to appropriate the products of society. All that it has to do is to deprive a person of the power to subjugate the labor of other by means of such of appropriation. (Marx, 1887). In the novel, Nikkah being powerful, representing the bourgeoisie's class which exploits the other and never let them attain equal economic opportunity. He ransacked other's property, subjugate them, dishonor them but, they are unable to react and depend themselves. For them God is the last resort, for example the miserable merchants after beaten by Nikkah Everyone beseechingly request him to let them go.

"Ha, Maf Kar – forgive me brother for God's sake" (Sidhwa, 19).

The upper strata people utilized prejudicially the poor for their self-reserved objectives. The proletariat were "organized like solders", as pirates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants, not only they are captivated by bourgeoisie's class but bourgeoisie's state" (Marx, 1887). In this regard Nikkah and Qasim were paid to help the dominated class of the social rank for the fulfillment. They were both illicitly enticed and coaxed to assassinate sardar, Ghulam Ali Hussain. Being coaxed with a sizeable portion of money Nikkah and Qasim clubbed him to death. Therefore, Marx claimed that the proletariat are like

soldiers managed by the ruling and very cleverly exploited for their personal and prejudiced aims.

Women and Social Inequality

Bapsi Sidhwa has represented women as weaker and economically dependent. They are totally controlled by their male counterparts and their actions are measured as per the patriarchal standards. The women don't have the same economic and social freedom, which is entertained by their dominant male counterparts for instance, Zaitoon was not meant to learn or write. She had to uphold the traditional pattern, get married, beget babies and do a nice cooking job. "Now that she's learned to read the Holy Quran, what will she do with more reading and writing – boil and drink? She's not going to become an officer! Nor is Allah willing. She'll get married and have children". This candidly illustrated the weak, dependent and miserable condition of the women class.

The proletariat's relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeoisie's family relatives (Marx, 1887). The character of women in the novel carry some sinks. They are to husbands and fathers as proletariat to bourgeoisies. As bourgeoisies make uses of proletariat for their personal means. Similarly, the women in the novel bears the same common thing to their male. Taking this into account Qasim, had no sentiments for the miserable life of Zaitoon. He didn't deem, how badly she should dwell in the mountains being a city grain up girls, but he sold her just for 500 hundred rupees and some other possession. Qasim asked a greedy merchant and treated Zaitoon as his personal property, which he sold to meet his personal benefits. Mariam resented Qasim's act and said "is it because the Pathan give you five hundred rupees, some measly maize and a few goats? Is that you put up her for sale like a money grubbing Merchant? The economic dependencies cause miseries upon the vulnerable women class. The great majority of them are economically dependent upon their dominant male counterparts. This dependence is inadequate than that of a wage worker upon his master. An employee can get rid of his job, but for a wife that is difficult (Russell 1935). The female class, portrayed in the novel is encountered with the same unbearable issues, For instance Zaitoon had no personal opinion and liberty to take decision about her marriage. It is exclusively arranged by the will of her father, thus her personal interest is sacrificed. She negated Monam proposal of getting her married to a decent Punjabi by saying "I cannot cross my father". So, in the light of the above statement it can be claimed that the women class of the novel is suffering from goal inequalities. They have no self-esteem and self-standard, rather they have to sap their

self-interest for their dominant men. The women from Pakistani society are not flourished like the American women coral, representing American women is having freewill independent in choice of her life particularly taking the grim and major decision such as of marriage while, on the other hand Zaitoon representing Pakistani society and an absolute symbol of Pakistani women is captivated and hindered by the patriarchal norms and values. The American Lady Coral describes her pathetic condition by saying "the girl had no more control over her destiny than a caged animal" this describe the women class and their feelings are not of serious concern but, they are altogether exploited for the prejudicial interest of the ruling men.

Violation of Relation by Money

The existence of class conflict between the upper and the lower, the haves and the have not, flourishes one, the deprived and the other from equal and last possession. The haves (bourgeoisie), curtail economic opportunities for the proletariat to prosperity, consequently the financial miserability compel the have not to exceed every limit in the struggle. They lose their social and moral consideration, cut and adrift their family ties. "The bourgeoisie has conflicted its emotional links and abridge the family relation to mere money relation" (Marx, 1887). The feelings for close knitted individual is diminished. As a result, impoverished proletariat resignedly give preferences to capital over the cast of avoidable interconnectedness of the family members. The novel squarely witnessed similar things. The major character Qasim who always remained in need of money was enticed by the same drive. He sold the Zaitoon in tribal area, are without taking any consideration for her feelings, her choice, her like and dislikes. Money shrinking Qasim and Nikkah sentiments. It morally corrupted them. They lost the relation to society and care for any particular family, but the only thing they desired over the cast of social norm and ethical consideration was money. When the bother was given the illicit offer to club Sardar Ghulam Hussain to death they entirely ignored ethical standards and assassinated him. In the beginning Nikkah was hesitant to kill Sardar Ghulam Hussain but, the Qasim coaxed him with the compensation they had to receive. Nikkah said "Why should I kill a man who has done me no harm". Qasim replied: "because you will receive thousands of rupees. Therefore, it is concluded that money curtails relations and avoids sentiments between the individuals.

Honor and Female Oppression

In *The Pakistani Bride*, Bapsi Sidhwa presents a scathing

critique of the patriarchal and tribal societies that perpetuate the oppression of women. Through the narrative of Zaitoon, a young woman forced into a marriage that shatters her dreams, Sidhwa exposes the ways in which the concept of honor is used to control and exploit women.

From a Marxist perspective, the concept of honor in *The Pakistani Bride* can be seen as a tool of ideological control, used to maintain the dominance of the ruling class over the working class. In this context, the patriarchal and tribal societies depicted in the novel can be seen as a manifestation of the ruling class, using the concept of honor to justify their exploitation and oppression of women.

The notion of honor is deeply intertwined with the concept of female chastity, which is used to control woman's bodies and reproductive labor. This reduction of women to their reproductive bodies is a classic example of the fetishistic woman's labor under capitalism, where woman's bodies are treated as marketable goods, subject to exploitation and commodification. The concept of honor is used to justify the exploitation of women's labor. Zaitoon's marriage is arranged by her adoptive father, Qasim, who sees her as a commodity to be exchanged for economic gain. This transactional view of woman's bodies and labor is a stark reminder of the ways in which capitalism reduces human relationships to economic transactions. Sidhwa's portrayal of the patriarchal and tribal societies in *The Pakistani Bride* is a critique of the ideological state apparatuses that perpetuate the oppression of women. It highlights the ways in which the state, the family, and the community work together to control and exploit women's bodies and labor.

The Pakistani Bride also suggests that resistance and subversion are possible, even in the face of overwhelming oppression. Zaitoon's act of defiance, as she attempts to flee her marriage, is a powerful testament to the ways in which women can challenge and resist the ideological control of the ruling class.

Identity and Cultural Conflict

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, *The Pakistani Bride*, shows how people's identities and cultural backgrounds are shaped by their economic situations. The story highlights the struggles of characters like Zaitoon and Qasim, who are torn between the modern city life and the traditional rural way of living. Zaitoon's forced marriage is a heartbreaking example of how women are treated like commodities, stripped of their autonomy and freedom under patriarchal and feudal systems.

Imagine being forced to marry someone you don't love,

just to satisfy your family's honor or financial needs. This is Zaitoon's reality, and it's a stark reminder of women's bodies and lives are controlled by men in positions of power. The conflict between modern urban life and traditional tribal customs is more than just a cultural clash - it's a reflection of a deeper class struggle. Those with economic privilege, like Carol, have the freedom to make choices and resist oppression, while those without it, like Zaitoon, are trapped in a cycle of poverty and subjugation. Zaitoon's failed attempt to escape her marriage is a powerful symbol of the futility of individual resistance against systemic oppression. It reinforces the Marxist idea that true liberation can only be achieved through collective action and structural change. This novel critiques the ways in which feudal remnants in postcolonial Pakistan continue to stifle personal identity and cultural evolution, making it nearly impossible for those without economic power to resist oppression.

CONCLUSION

As we conclude our exploration of Bapsi Sidhwa's powerful novel, *The Pakistani Bride*, through the lens of Marxist theory, we're reminded that the rigid structures of class and oppression have a profound impact on human lives. Literature has the unique ability to transcend academic analysis and speak directly to our emotions, prompting us to reflect on the human condition. Through the struggles and triumphs of Sidhwa's characters, we see that Marxist principles aren't just abstract theories - they're lived experiences that shape the destinies of individuals and communities.

At the heart of the novel lies a stark reality: those born into lower classes, particularly women, are often at the mercy of a system that denies them agency, opportunity, and basic dignity. *The Pakistani Bride* doesn't just depict class struggle as an economic issue, it exposes the existential burden that forces individuals into predetermined roles. The protagonist, Zaitoon, embodies the struggles of the proletariat, her life dictated by forces beyond her control - honor, tribal customs, and a patriarchal society that reduces women to mere commodities.

The character of Qasim is a poignant example of how even those within the lower classes can become complicit in perpetuating systemic injustices. As a father, he's bound by tribal codes that turn his own daughter into a bargaining tool. His moral compass is skewed by economic necessity, illustrating how capitalism reduces human relations to economic transactions. Qasim's tragic story challenges the simplistic view of oppressor versus oppressed, highlighting the nuances of systemic

oppression. Beyond individual characters, *The Pakistani Bride* presents a scathing critique of how ideological state apparatuses - particularly religion and patriarchy - function as tools of control. The novel illustrates how religion is weaponized to subjugate women, justify class distinctions, and create a sense of divine order that discourages rebellion. The character of Carol, an American woman, serves as a stark contrast to Zaitoon, highlighting the disparities between women of different socioeconomic backgrounds.

While the novel exposes the brutality of class oppression, it also offers a glimmer of hope. Zaitoon's attempted escape - her defiance against a system designed to break her - symbolizes the resilience of the human spirit. Her story represents the revolutionary consciousness that emerges when oppression reaches its breaking point. However, the ambiguity of her fate forces us to confront a difficult question: is resistance enough, or is the system too deeply entrenched to allow true liberation?

In analyzing *The Pakistani Bride* through a Marxist lens, we're reminded that class struggle is not just an intellectual debate - it's a lived reality that defines the trajectories of countless individuals. The novel urges us to see the human faces behind economic theories, to understand that class oppression is not just about wealth, but about dignity, agency, and emotional well-being. Sidhwa's work is not merely a condemnation of systemic inequalities, it's a call to recognize the human cost of those inequalities and to imagine a world where economic justice is a tangible reality.

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Impact of Technology on Teaching Intonation to Indian Learners Through Digital Learning

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Abstract— Intonation is an important aspect of English Phonetics that helps learners to enhance the Pronunciation skills in English Language. Basically, it changes the pitch of the voice while articulating any words. Generally, the learners of the professional courses in the universities as well as colleges in India cannot make proper intonation in their communication for which the accuracy of pronunciation is not developed among the learners. The present study highlights the impact of technology on teaching Intonation to Indian learners who are learning communicative English, particularly the student of Engineering and Management stream. Specifically, the researcher has adopted the Praat Software in this context. In order to prove whether this technology is effective in teaching Intonation or not, the researcher has collected data from one of the colleges where students are randomly selected from BBA and BCA courses. The samples of the study were based on experimental group (use of Praat software) and control group (following the traditional method). The data were collected through the method of pre-test and post-test for both groups. The findings of the study were really very practical and positive for the students. It means teaching intonation through Praat software is highly effective for the students.



Keywords— intonation, pronunciation, technology, professional, communication, teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology plays an essential role in education, simplifying and streamlining the learning process. In the area of language learning, technology proves to be especially beneficial, particularly for those studying English. Currently, numerous computer applications exist to cater to all levels of language education. Nowadays, the integration of technology, computer applications, and software is crucial in teaching languages effectively. Utilizing technology as an educational tool enhances classroom engagement and encourages students to develop their language skills using computers. The primary aim of incorporating technology and computer applications in education is to facilitate advancements in language learning and instruction. Computer applications and software provide both teachers and learners with access to genuine target language materials across various domains. English teachers and learners tend to focus significantly on pronunciation due to its essential role in speech recognition

and perception. Beyond language skills, intonation has also been stressed in the curriculum. Traditionally, English language instructors teach intonation through a method known as the lecture method, which often results in students struggling to achieve proper pronunciation with appropriate falling and rising intonation. Consequently, the most effective approach to enhance intonation among students in professional courses is through digital learning that incorporates various computer software, especially the Praat software. Researchers have indicated that employing technology in teaching pronunciation and intonation has consistently had a positive effect on students.

1.1. Statement of the problems:

It is observed that using technology to learn a language is often engaging and accessible for students. Generally, engineering and management colleges heavily emphasize technology in teaching the English language. Despite utilizing various technologies and programs, students still struggle with word pronunciation accuracy. When it comes

to English pronunciation, several aspects come into play, such as intonation, stress, and proper speech sound articulation. In this context, the researcher has concentrated on the intonation challenges faced by students in engineering colleges. Therefore, this study aims to assess the influence of Praat software on enhancing intonation teaching among students in professional courses. However, it has been noted that these students experience significant challenges with intonation. They tend to spend an extensive amount of time on learning and practicing intonation. Thus, incorporating Praat software technology in this area is expected to be both engaging and motivating.

1.2. Objectives:

- To investigate the effect of the Praat Software method on teaching intonation to students in professional courses.
- To understand students' responses to using Praat software to enhance their voice pitch.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching intonation using either experimental or traditional methods.

1.3. Research Questions:

- Is there a distinction between the Experimental group and the Control group in their study of intonation among engineering students?
- Does the Praat software technology positively affect students?
- What are students' reactions to using Praat Software for teaching intonation?

1.4. Hypothesis:

Students will respond positively to using Praat technology. Based on the defined objectives and research questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- According to prior research conducted by various scholars, it can be inferred that the Experimental group, which utilized Praat software, is significantly more effective than the Control group, which employed traditional methods.
- Clearly, when the teaching-learning process incorporates technology, it consistently benefits the learner. Similarly, using Praat software in intonation instruction has shown a substantial positive effect.

1.5. Significance of the Study:

This study aims to benefit teachers, students, and the researcher by sharing knowledge and experiences. The primary goal is to assess whether teaching intonation through Praat software is engaging for students. Essentially, the study focuses on engineering students in the state of Odisha. Based on the status of the research, the sample was gathered from a technical institution, specifically Udayanath (Auto) College of Science and Technology, located in Adaspur, Cuttack.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Theoretical Background (Praat Software)

Praat software emphasizes acoustic phonetic analysis instead of supplying learners with pre-recorded native speaker examples for emulation. It can aid learners in refining their pronunciation by enabling them to examine the visual representations of their speech and identify discrepancies compared to the target pronunciation. Simultaneously, teachers can utilize the software to assess their students' speech patterns for evaluation or diagnostic reasons. Furthermore, Praat can analyze the speech of anyone equipped with a computer and a microphone. It achieves this by graphically displaying the acoustic characteristics of speech sounds through visual formats. The primary aim of Praat Software is to foster independent learning among students in English language education by offering feedback without relying on native speakers' assessments (Wilson, 2008). These assessments by native speakers often demand that teachers verbally clarify to students whether their pronunciation aligns with the desired target. Such explanations can be limited, particularly when lacking visual or additional cues. It assists learners in comparing their voices to the pre-recorded models provided by native speakers. However, there are some constraints in how teachers can utilize Praat software. For example, Setter and Jenkins (2005), in their comprehensive review of pronunciation instruction, noted that accurately interpreting formant plots on a Praat diagram, which depict the resonance of an individual's voice, necessitates "a sophisticated level of understanding" from both the teacher and the learner (as cited in Wilson, 2008). Nevertheless, Praat can be employed in ways that do not require phonetic training. For instance, with minimal guidance from the teacher, students can easily interpret intonation using the pitch display from Praat. The representation of the pitch display is straightforward: Praat creates an intonation contour that corresponds to the pitch variations within the given speech sample. In play-back mode, students can hear the sounds while observing the cursor navigate along the pitch contour. They can also visualize the duration of speech sounds and pinpoint which words are emphasized or exhibit higher pitches and intensity, while additionally measuring the overall intonation curve of a spoken utterance.

2.2 Intonation

Intonation involves the musical tones that aid in the pronunciation of speech syllables and is closely linked with sentence stress. Generally, the stressed syllable in a sentence is pronounced at a higher pitch than the unstressed syllable, making intonation a component of stress. By representing sentences in a manner similar to musical notation, we can observe their intonation. Intonation refers to the rise and fall

in voice on specific words within a sentence. Voice tones can be categorized into four types: normal, high, extra-high, and low. These tones can be illustrated by drawing lines at four distinct levels above or below a sentence. A line drawn at the baseline of a word indicates it is spoken in a normal tone, while a line positioned above the word signifies an extra-high tone, which is rarely used unless conveying strong emotions like fear or surprise. The general pattern of pitch variations in a spoken phrase is commonly known as speech melody, consisting of an ongoing sequence of pitch changes. The pitch, or fundamental frequency (F0), is the most significant prosodic feature related to intonation. From a physiological standpoint, pitch is produced by the vibrations of vocal cords during voiced speech segments. It mainly derives from muscle tension and air pressure within and surrounding the glottis, depending on the rate of vocal fold vibrations. This vibration rate is captured in acoustic measurements of fundamental frequency, reflected in Hertz (Hz)—the unit of frequency that counts how many times the glottis opens and closes in one second. Various factors affect how quickly the vocal folds vibrate, including purely physiological aspects such as the elasticity, length, and mass of the vocal cords. Pitch variations predominantly result from changes in the length and tension of these cords, regulated by the intrinsic laryngeal muscles. Consequently, gender differences in pitch occur due to body size variations. For example, the F0 range for males generally lies between approximately 80 and 200 Hz, while for females, it spans about 180 to 400 Hz. In young children, this frequency range may be even higher. Another physiological consideration, the air pressure below the larynx, is often regarded as a secondary factor impacting the vibration rate. By managing muscle tension and subglottal air pressure, speakers can significantly affect their fundamental frequency (F0) (refer to Borden & Harris 1984: 74ff.). For instance, they can create pitch variations and modulate their speech between high and low tones. On the other hand, certain physiological aspects remain beyond the speaker's conscious control, including specific supralaryngeal articulatory movements, which may result from unintentional vocalization effects. For instance, high vowels like /u/ and /i/ typically possess a higher intrinsic pitch than low vowels like /a/ (see Lehiste & Peterson, 1961; Ladd & Silverman, 1984). Moreover, the speech melody of a preceding voiceless obstruent leads to an increased F0 at the beginning of a vowel (refer to Kingston, 1991; Gussenhoven 2004). These unintentional factors in speech create slight variations in the F0-pattern melody. However, while these variations complicate the identification of the "original" speech melody, they do not impact listeners' perception of the intonation contour (see Silverman 1987) and are termed 'microprosody.'

The general pattern of pitch variation is described as the melodic contour of spoken language, while a particular pitch variation associated with stressed syllables within that contour is usually called accent. Overall, both concepts demonstrate the relative weight that can be assigned to specific syllables within a word or to particular words within a phrase or sentence. Historically, the terms 'stress' and 'accent' have been used in overlapping ways and in various contexts that can lead to confusion. Sometimes, they have been used to refer to prominence at the level of the word, while in other instances, they have been applied to prominence at the utterance level. What both concepts have in common is that the features related to stress and accent are grounded in the physiological and physical attributes of the speech organs. The table below (largely adapted from Baumann, 2006:12 & Uhmann 1991: 109) presents the phonetic parameters that characterize prominence in 'stress accent languages' like German and English, along with their correlates at the relevant levels of description.

Table 1: phonetic parameters that generate accents and their correlates at different levels of description:

Perception	Production	Acoustics
Pitch (High-Low)	quasi-periodic vibrations of the vocal folds	fundamental frequency (F0) in Hertz (Hz)
Loudness (loud-soft)	articulatory effort (e.g., air pressure)	Intensity in decibel (db)
Length (long-short)	articulation process	Duration in milliseconds (ms)
Vowel quality (full-reduced)	vocal tract configuration	spectral characteristics

Syllables that are relatively more emphasized than others, making them stand out, are known as stressed and accented. The particular syllable that receives emphasis within a word is determined by specific regulations for word stress, which vary by language. In languages like English and German, the location of emphasis is often difficult to predict. This unpredictability highlights the difference between stressed and unstressed syllables in these languages; for example, in German, changing the stress placement can change a word's meaning ('UMfahren' - to knock down vs. 'umFAHren' - to drive around). The same phenomenon is evident in English, exemplified by 'IMport' (noun) and 'imPORT' (verb). Therefore, the prominence achieved through 'stress' is a crucial aspect of the phonological structure of a word.

At the utterance level, certain types of words typically appear less prominent, such as auxiliary verbs, pronouns, and shorter prepositions or conjunctions. In contrast, nouns and main verbs are more frequently articulated with prominence. According to Cruttenden (1986), there are four distinct levels of prominence in English, based on the effort involved in their articulation. 'Unstressed syllables' have no prominence at all. 'Tertiary stress' is marked by prominence primarily through length and/or loudness. 'Secondary stress' includes additional pitch prominence as a secondary characteristic. 'Primary stress' designates the most prominent syllable by providing the main pitch prominence. In Cruttenden's framework, stress and accent are viewed as related to varying levels of exertion. This exertion is evident in the air pressure generated in the lungs (which supports vocal-fold vibrations) for producing a tertiary stressed syllable, and in the articulatory movements of the vocal tract for the primary stressed or accented syllable, as shown in Table 1. The effects of stress on production produce several audible differences: a stressed syllable that displays pitch prominence sets itself apart from unstressed syllables. A heavily stressed syllable will appear even higher in pitch when adjacent to unstressed or lower-pitched syllables (known as 'emphasis for contrast', see Thorsen, 1979a). Another effect of prominence is that stressed syllables generally have a longer duration and greater loudness than unstressed syllables; however, research (e.g., Fry 1955, 1958; Isačenko & Schädlich, 1966) shows that loudness differences alone often go unnoticed by most listeners. Consequently, Kohler (1977) and Beckman (1986) asserted that in both German and English, the acoustic characteristics of accentuation involve not only intensified stress but also a complex mixture of F0 variation, prolonged syllable and word durations, along with increased intensity due to heightened subglottal pressure. Sluijter (1995) highlights a clearer distinction between stress and accent. He argues that stress is a structural linguistic feature of a word that determines its strongest syllable. In contrast, accent serves a focus-driven function, influenced by the speaker's communicative objectives. Thus, while stress complies with phonological word rules, accent is conveyed through the informational structure intended by the speaker. In summary, prosody facilitates the emphasis of individual words, known as meaning stress or lexical stress, as well as entire utterances, referred to as accentuation. Unlike an unstressed syllable, a stressed syllable is typically louder, longer, and articulated with more clarity. A stressed syllable that incorporates further pitch movement should be understood as pitch accent or, when it occurs as the final pitch accent in an Intonation Phrase, as the nuclear pitch accent. In this thesis, I will define "stress" specifically in terms of lexical stress and "accentuation" (which

encompasses accent and pitch accent as synonymous terms) to refer to prominence at the level of utterance.

Table 2: Description of the phonetic correlates of stress and accent used in this study, adopted from Baumann (2006:11):

No stress/accent	
Stress	syllable is louder, longer and more strongly articulated than an unaccented syllable.
Pitch accent	additional tonal movement on or in the direct vicinity of a stressed syllable
Nuclear pitch accent	last pitch accent in an intonation unit

2.3 Experimental background

Here the researcher has presented the previous experimental background on the role of technology in teaching and learning Intonation.

According to Simoes (1996) the impact of technology is highly beneficial for the learners in learning intonation. The findings of the study he had conducted was really very helpful for both the teachers and students.

Besides Verdugo (2006) conducted research on ASR software for teaching Intonation. He had to carry out this research with two groups such as: experimental group and control group. But as per the findings the learners did well those who were under experimental group whereas the learners of control group did not have good performance in Intonation.

Hinks and Edlund (2009) investigated how ASR-based visual feedback affects pitch improvement. Their findings indicated that the experimental group utilizing ASR technology demonstrated greater pitch enhancement compared to the control group that did not use it. Gorgian, Hayati, and Pourkhoni (2013) researched the influence of computer software on acquiring prosodic features of pronunciation. The study involved two groups: one that received traditional teaching methods as the control group, and the other that benefited from a CALL approach as the experimental group. The results revealed that the group practicing stress and intonation through CALL outperformed those taught through conventional methods. Wilson (2005) conducted a study using Praat software to enhance the instruction of segmental and suprasegmental features such as vowels and consonants. According to the research, teachers were initially trained to utilize Praat software for teaching English sounds, after which students recorded and analyzed their own pronunciation. The

experiment involved 14 participants, who recorded a sentence and then measured the duration of vowels and prosodic characteristics, comparing their results with a sample from a native English speaker. This study aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness and potential feedback that this program offers in teaching pronunciation aspects like stress, intonation, pause, and comprehensibility. Based on the above reviews regarding the use technology in teaching English from various aspects is highly effective in general. But the present study highlights the impact of Praat software on both teachers and students in the technical colleges particularly in learning intonation.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subjects

In order to conduct this study, the researcher has collected data from two different sources such as the primary source and the secondary source. The primary data includes the

Table 1: Summary of participants' background.

participants	Age	Gender	Course name	Duration of the course	Proficiency level
Participant 1	20	Female	BBA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 2	19	Female	BBA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 3	19	Female	BBA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 4	20	Male	BBA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 5	19	Male	BBA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 6	19	Male	BCA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 7	19	Female	BCA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 8	20	Female	BCA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 9	19	Female	BCA	Three years	Low intermediate
Participant 10	19	Male	BCA	Three years	Low intermediate

It is strictly observed that almost all of them are much below in proper pronunciation in English language. Though they do not have so

much problems in reading and writing. They only face a lot of problems in English Pronunciation and Intonation. As it is clearly understood that the intonation of their mother is different in comparison to English language.

3.2 Instrument

The study was conducted with a set of tests which was prepared for the students by the researcher. To assess the improvement in intonation after utilizing Praat software, both a pre-test and a post-test were conducted. The pre-test consisted of intonation patterns derived from selected words and sentences found in the listening materials of the requested textbook, "Phonetics and Phonology: A Practical

Course" (Roach, 1983). In contrast, the post-test comprised words and sentences that the two groups (the control group and the experimental group) listened to while following two distinct teaching methods (the traditional approach versus the use of Praat software).

The following table gives information about the background of ten participants:

students of two professional courses such as BBA and BCA from one of the technical colleges of Odisha i.e. U.N (Auto) college of Science and Technology, Adaspur, Cuttack. The total number of participants is 10 in which 5 from BBA and 5 from BCA those who are taught communicative English in their course. All of them belong to Odia background. Though they are very poor in speaking skill in English language. Still, some of them speak very normal English. This particular course is Communicative English that contains seven different sections such as: Listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills and writing skills, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar

3.3 Research Design and Analysis

This is an experimental method of research for BBA and BCA students who are studying communicative English in the U.N (Auto) college of science and technology in the academic year of 2024-2025. The study is followed by independent variable with two levels such as: the first one is teaching intonation with the help of Praat software whereas the second one is the use of traditional method in teaching intonation. The study also included a dependent variable in which it shows students' achievement in both

recognition and production of intonation. The study also conducted t-tests to know the quality of the two groups as well as to evaluate the gain scores of both groups on the post test.

3.4 Procedure

According to the research procedure, the researcher conducted the experiment over a period of two weeks. Two assessments were administered: a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test took place before the experiment to assess the students' prior knowledge. Participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group practiced the pronunciation and intonation of specific words and sentences using the Praat program on computers. In contrast, the control group received instruction on the same words and sentences through traditional teaching methods, where the teacher served as a model. At the end of the two-week period, all students underwent testing again, and the averages of the post-test scores were calculated.

IV. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study explores the use of Praat software as a significant tool for improving intonation in the communication among the students of professional courses basically, BBA and BCA students. It also aims to evaluate the rate of accuracy in the pitch of the voice as English language is concerned. This research demonstrates that students instructed with Praat software achieve higher levels of recognition and production compared to those who received traditional instruction. Data were gathered using a pre-test and post-test framework for comparable groups. The analysis of the

Groups	Total	Means	SD	T	Df	sig
Control	10	6.10	2.846	-		
Experimental	10	7.00	3.127	-2.586	9	029

Based on the data of table No-2, it can be assumed that there is no such statistically difference at $\alpha=0.05$ between the two groups on the pre-test in terms of achievement. Therefore, the performance of students in the two group is almost equal level over the matter of pre-test. Whereas it can be observed

Table 3: Results of the t-test of the means of achievement of the two groups on the post- test:

Groups	Total	Means	SD	T	df	Sig.
Control	10	7.00	3.127	-		
Experimental	10	13.20	3.584	-7.154	9	000

study was conducted using a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$. Consequently, table (1) displays the descriptive statistics for both the experimental and control groups.

Table No-(1) Means and standard deviation of the achievement of the control group on the pre-test and post-test. In order to make statistics analysis, the researcher has followed the SPSS software. As per the table:

Control group: Means and standard deviation on two tests

Mean	7.00	13.20
Standard deviation	3.127	3.584
Subject	Pre-test	Post-test
Total	10	10

Table No: 1: Experimental group: Means and standard deviation on two tests.

Subject	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	6.10	7.00
Standard deviation	2.846	3.127
Total	10	10

In order to find out the statistical difference between the two groups on the tests, the researcher has adopted the t-test analysis method.

As per the table No-2, it gives information about the results of the t-test of the means of achievement of the two groups on the pre-test.

whether there is any statistically difference between the achievement of two groups on the post-test. That's why another t-test was conducted by the researcher in this respect.

As per the table No-3, it can be assumed that the performance of the students in the two groups seems to have developed because on the basis of means value there is some significant difference statistically between two groups. Students who were taken for experiment in teaching intonation through the Praat software were able to score well that means their performance level has been increased by the use of technology. Hence the hypothesis matched which was made in this research. It can be recommended that Experimental group in which the study was conducted through Praat software is highly effective and better than the Control group in which the study was conducted through traditional method. However, the technology Praat software has always positive impact on the learner.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion it can be stated that Praat software is the most powerful tool which can help the students positively in developing the intonation in the speech. As per the research questions: is there any difference between Experimental group and control group on the study of Intonation for the students of Engineering course? Does Praat software technology has positive impact on students? How do students respond to the technology of Praat Software in the context of teaching Intonation? Definitely Praat software is the only way to create motivation among the students of professional courses in learning intonation. They can also find out their drawback and decide about the use of various types of intonation whether it is falling or rising intonation. This study had some limitations. The primary limitation was its very small sample size, as only six intermediate English language learners were examined. Additional research should be carried out with a larger cohort of students at various proficiency levels to gain a clearer understanding of how Praat software impacts students' pronunciation. Moreover, further investigation is required regarding language learners' perceptions of Praat to determine whether students find the software appealing or if it encourages them to focus on pronunciation more effectively than other tools. Educators could also look into how students' pronunciation of questions differs when practiced in isolation compared to within structured or authentic conversations.

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Appendix – 1(Pre-test)

Reading questions for pointing out position of Intonation in the speech

Number	Sentence	Rising or falling?
01	What's your name?	
02	Where did you grow up?	
03	Where are you living now?	
04	What's your job?	
05	What do you do each day?	
06	Why do you like your job?	
07	What do you not like about your job?	
08	Why is your job important to you?	
09	What do you like to do in your free time?	
10	Do you have any pets?	
11	Do you have a car?	
12	Are you a morning person?	

13	Do you eat meat?	
14	Are you a vegan?	
15	What does that mean?	
16	Why are you vegan?	
17	Do you have any pets?	
18	Do you have any brothers or sisters?	
19	Do you have a car?	
20	Are you a morning person?	

Waiter: Yes, sir. When will you need it?

Customer 1: After the meal, please.

Waiter: Yes, sir. I'll be right back.

Customer 1: Hi Jack, how are you doing?

Customer 2: Good! How are you?

Customer 1: I'm enjoying myself! Hey, did you call James?

Customer 2: Yes, I did. Will Sally be here, too?

Appendix – 2 (post-test)

Task 1: You will record your answers. Please read the questions below aloud, and try to pronounce them clearly and naturally.

Session A

Did you call James?

Do you have a table for four?

Is that okay?

Session B

1. Where would you like to sit?

2. What would you like to drink?

3. When will you need it?

Task 2: You will record your answers. With your partner, please read the dialogue below aloud, and

try to pronounce the words clearly and naturally. One of you will be the Waiter and Customer 2. The

other student will be Customer 1.

(One customer comes to a cafe. He is talking to a waiter while waiting for his friends ...)

Waiter: Good evening!

Customer 1: Good evening!

Customer 1: Do you have a table for four?

Waiter: Yes, sir. Where would you like to sit?

Customer 1: Inside please?

Waiter: We have a table inside by the window. Is that okay?

Customer 1: That's great. Thank you.

Waiter: What would you like to drink?

Customer 1: Just water with lemon, please.

Waiter: OK.

Customer 1: Today is my friend's birthday. Do you have a birthday cake?



Voices of Power, Beauty, and Ideology in Pakistani TV Advertisements: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract— This study explores the persuasive strategies employed in Pakistani beauty product marketing, paying special attention to the ways in which these commercials impact Pakistani culture. In addition to being business tools, advertisements are cultural artefacts that represent and influence societal norms, values, and ideas. The study intends to identify the subtle ways in which five print media advertisements for beauty products employ persuasive techniques to sway consumer behaviour. The advertisements are examined using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology to show how language and discourse are used to both promote items and reinforce cultural views and ideologies. This study examines how language, advertising, and consumers' perceptions of beauty interact, emphasising how ads influence societal norms and establish new cultural standards. The study also looks into how advertisers use rhetoric and emotional appeal to connect with consumers by crafting unique language terms to appeal to specific audience segments. In the end, this study offers a thorough grasp of how advertising for beauty products function in Pakistani culture as both commercial instruments and cultural representations, shedding light on the influence of the media on societal values and consumer attitudes.



Keywords— Magnificence Items, Enticing techniques, Belief system, Print Media, Pakistani Culture, Talk Investigation

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the contemporary media landscape, television advertising remains a powerful tool for promoting a wide range of consumer goods, particularly those associated with high prestige and quality. In Pakistan, the media industry has seen a rapid transformation with television promotions playing a central role in shaping consumer behaviours and brand perceptions. Brands in Pakistan, both local and international, have leveraged television advertising to communicate messages of excellence, luxury, and prestige, often targeting consumers who are attracted to high-status products. Such promotions are particularly significant for items that are perceived as symbols of social status, success, or superior quality. As a result, the language, imagery, and

overall discourse of these advertisements play a crucial role in the brand positioning process (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, as proposed by scholars like Fairclough (1995), offers an effective lens through which to explore how power dynamics, ideologies, and societal values are embedded in advertising discourse. CDA examines how language and other semiotic resources (such as visuals and sounds) construct and reproduce social meanings, and it focuses on how these meanings serve the interests of dominant groups or ideologies. In the case of Pakistani TV advertisements, the use of discourse can reflect the tension between modernity and traditional values, as advertisements often attempt to blend global marketing strategies with local

cultural references. This intersection of local culture and global media strategies makes television advertising in Pakistan an interesting field of study, particularly when examining the promotion of excellence items (Chouliarakis & Fairclough, 1999).

The concept of excellence items in advertising refers to high-end products that are marketed as symbols of superior quality, luxury, or status. These products are often associated with cultural values of success, achievement, and social distinction (Hodgkinson, 2009). The promotional discourse surrounding these items aims to establish an emotional connection with the consumer, positioning the product as not just a commodity but as a means to achieve personal prestige and societal recognition (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In Pakistan, the advertising of such items is influenced by societal hierarchies and aspirational desires, with TV ads utilizing strategies that appeal to both traditional and modern sensibilities. Celebrity endorsements, for example, play a significant role in the promotion of excellence items, as celebrities are often seen as models of success and aspiration (Shukla & Singh, 2010).

This study aims to compare the methodologies employed in TV advertisements promoting excellence items from various brands within the Pakistani market. By applying CDA, the research will explore how brands use different linguistic, visual, and semiotic strategies to construct and reinforce the ideologies of prestige and superiority. Key aspects such as language choices, narrative structures, visual representations, and symbolic associations will be examined to understand how advertisements communicate these ideologies and their potential influence on the target audience (Brake, 2012).

In the modern world, the media has become one of the most influential sources of communication, creating a vast, interconnected global village. Through various platforms such as electronic media, social media, and print media, communication is disseminated to vast audiences across the world, making media discourse a central part of contemporary life and mass behaviour. Media shapes the way individuals perceive the world, influences social trends, and responds to various cultural and societal issues. At the heart of media's influence lies its ability to manipulate, persuade, and sometimes even control public opinion. As Fairclough (1995) highlights, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a tool for understanding how media discourse can impact the belief systems, ideologies, and decision-making processes of individuals within a society. Through the examination of media language, one can uncover how specific values and viewpoints are conveyed, often to influence consumer choices, political opinions, or cultural norms.

Mass media is a powerful vehicle for shaping public opinion, and its ability to sway attitudes towards consumer products, societal values, and even political ideologies is well-documented (Fowler, 1991). Media, especially television, play a central role in disseminating information, promoting brands, and guiding public perceptions. Media advertising, in particular, has grown in sophistication and power, with companies leveraging different media platforms to promote their goods and services. Advertisements are public announcements or messages placed in media outlets to inform the audience about a particular product, service, or brand. These messages are often designed to persuade, influence, and create demand, thereby contributing to the economy and altering consumer behaviour. Advertisements not only promote products but also shape the ideologies and cultural norms of the society in which they are created (Hall, 1997).

In the 21st century, the marketing industry has increasingly relied on media as a strategic platform for brand promotion. With the advancement of technology, companies now use mass media to advertise on a larger scale than ever before, reaching consumers across the globe. In Pakistan, television advertisements are among the most common forms of media promotion, with brands utilizing TV to create narratives that resonate with local cultures and values. As advertisements are directed at large segments of the population, they must be carefully crafted to reflect the target audience's social and cultural background. This necessitates a deep understanding of how media talk operates within a specific cultural context (Janks, 1997). In the context of Pakistan, media advertisements often play on nationalism, aspirational values, and social identity, appealing to the country's cultural fabric while also adhering to global branding trends.

Television advertisements in Pakistan play an influential role not only in promoting products but also in shaping public consciousness. The cultural impact of advertisements is profound as they often reflect societal norms and expectations, influence consumer desires, and reinforce societal hierarchies. As Ingham (1995) notes, the time spent viewing advertisements constitutes a significant portion of an individual's daily media consumption. The sheer volume of exposure to advertisements means they have a lasting effect on individuals, influencing everything from personal choices to societal values.

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of Pakistani television advertisements by utilizing Fairclough's 3D Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the linguistic, visual, and social structures that shape these advertisements. The focus of this research is to investigate how advertisements in Pakistan

target citizens, particularly how they appeal to the cultural and societal values embedded in Pakistani society. Additionally, this research will explore the impact these advertisements have on the audience, considering how they affect public opinion, social identity, and consumer behaviour. Through this analysis, the study will provide insights into how television advertisements serve as a cultural tool, creating meaning and reinforcing specific ideologies, and how this process can influence the broader societal context of Pakistan.

1.2 Problem Statement

The media is the most powerful factor shaping modern society. It shapes individuals' minds and inculcates differing belief systems and suppositions in their minds. Companies deliver different talks in notices to capture and pull in the greatest clients and offer their products. In this manner, this inquiry about ponder is an investigation of the influential techniques within the Pakistani promotions of different brands of magnificence items, which have not been considered some time recently by other analysts. Additionally, this inquiry will highlight the components and highlights utilized in notices which speak to Pakistani culture and society.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main research objectives of the study are;

- To illustrate the enticing techniques of different magnificence brands while making advertisements?
- To investigate the semiotic and etymological expressions utilize in these advertisements.
- To analyze the impacts of promotions on individuals' discernment emphatically towards their product

1.4 Significance of the study

The ongoing study is noteworthy because it enlightens distinctive strategies which diverse excellence brands utilize in their advertisements to draw in their shoppers. This thinks about inspected and gives both commonsense and hypothetical commitment to basic talk through Fair Clough's 3D demonstrate applications on notice staking into thought the strategies the sponsors utilized for the stream of their items. This investigation will include information in the field of phonetics, more particularly within the field of Critical Talk Investigation. It'll offer assistance to readers to decipher the promotion of micro levels and their underlying plans. Besides, it'll also exclusively clarify the socio-cultural collision of such substance.

Umezina (2017) has propounded that everyday dialect can be altogether explored and analyzed through the use of basic discourse analysis. Phonetics examination depends upon the structure and properties of dialect, while talk investigators center on the work and utilize of dialect. In this manner, several strategies are utilized to analyze and translate the talk in any shape. Talk is any dialect utilized in a social setting, and a belief system is the set of convictions of a group of individuals. They do it through the talk they deliver. The relationship between belief system and talk is an interlinked one, one forming the other. However, Basic talk investigation to uncover philosophies concealed within the words spoken by the media specialists in news features is visit, and generally focuses on printed news sources. Features are an "emotion-inducing arrangement within the hands of the editor utilized to kick off, keep up talk and frame the view of the readers on national issues. Features are of fastidious intrigued since they "reveal the social, social and national representations circulating in a society at any given time.

According to Ruane (2011), discourse examination includes a modern drift where the comparison of two talks is made. The investigation isn't built on all the show parts, but mostly on the relevant portions of the work. The pertinence of the content examination is judged on the chosen speculations that tell of how the selected context is assumed to be analyzed. Thus, the chosen works that are considered turn out to be a portion of talk examination in it put of standing as a disengaged frame.

Kim (2016) conducted a study on talk examination where he says that CDA is designed to formulate obvious affiliation among talk, communal standards and social structure, which for several individuals is questionable. It is, subsequently, exceptionally difficult each so frequently to understand discourse and make its connection with social apply and structures. CDA assist individuals in arranging to appreciate the talk as the most amazing. As Fairclough (1992) has characterised that it could be a field that finds relations between rambling writings, honors and occasions and social and scholarly structures, relations, and method.

Clough (1995) portrays three stages for Basic Talk Investigation the characteristics are depiction, translation, clarification which are inbox in one another, as portrayal as it were has its concern with content counting highlights such as lexis(choices of word, designs in lexicon, allegories etc.) language structure(utilize of passives, modular verbs, nominalization) and cohesion(use of conjunction, utilize of equivalent words, etc.) and content structure(e-g problem-solution, cause-effect, turn taking in a conversation). Interpretation, which is rambling hone alludes to content and its interaction in society, which suggests how

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

heterogeneous components combine and carry a strong message (Setiawan, 2016).

According to Akbar *et al.* (2019), the three-dimensional demonstrate of Fairclough can work best as a hypothetical system for investigating the content or talk and its connection and utilize within society. This model likely covers all pertinent ranges for investigation because it covers content, verbose investigation and socio-cultural home.

Salam *et al.* (2019) have analyzed the representation of ladies in the Lux Notice on Pakistani. They have moreover examined the impact of talk utilized in notice on Pakistani Ladies. They think about appeared that women in such adverts are different to the ladies' convictions and scholarly standards within the convention of Pakistan. Besides, they have also attempted to open out the out-of-place implications moulded in our social view by implies of semiotic pondering of chosen TV advertisements utilizing Saussurian semiotic demonstration of understanding signs. Their upshot illustrated that pictures arranged by these promoters are not broad but centred on social standards deep-seated in matured conventions is browbeaten by the badgering of a new social. All through these commercials, they advance modern social slants career situated energising ladies marginalising regular, out-of-the-box keep on at domestic spouses.

Shahwar (2018) explores for to portray the views and reactions of the viewers against the delineation of ladies within the advertisements of Pakistani Electronic Media. As often as possible, the sponsors make utilize of females as the discernible substance to detain the attention of the onlookers. The fight comes about that the representations of ladies in exposure are modifying the perception of compliments among the ladies among the minds of the group of onlookers and in expansion indicate that a woman's mortal magnificence is likely to be an instrument for bringing to mind requests for goods.

Khoiriyah (2016) conducted work on the magnificence concept in toothpaste promotions by utilising the Reasonable Clough 3d show. Laila (2019) conducted an inquiry about the on talk consider of work of philosophy in the TV money-making of cold drinks in Pakistani media by Reasonable Clough 3d show. Zuhailokan (2017) inquired about a Basic Talk Examination of Promoting: Suggestions for dialect educator instruction while utilising a reasonable Clough 3d model. Additionally, analyst works on promotions talk but from a diverse viewpoint such as examination of methods which promoters make utilize of for clients fascination by utilizing Reasonable clough 3d demonstrate, and is exceptionally inventive work on which there appears insignificant small work prior and the ongoing

think about is anticipated to supply a hypothetical and viable both commitment to the zone of basic talk investigation in etymological (Akram et al., 2022).

Regardless of past work having its quality and shortcomings, the analyst chose this starting mode to mean "making is dialect. Nowadays, other than dialect, wherever we move, our faculties are offered by parcels of signs, images and visual communication, from a signboard, TV, web, to cinema, etc. Headway advance constrained a dialect to have a back situate and let pictorial representation make commotion (Mahwal, Unused Shirt: Elbaum partners, 2007, PP, V, 403). To the meaning "making wonder of a dialect, pictures are contributing. The as it were reason for utilising various ways in a single discourse is for conveying the covered up implications in arrange to urge the required results (Abid, 2018).

At its core, media discourse serves as a persuasive tool, aiming to influence the audience's behaviour, attitudes, and purchasing decisions (Fowler, 1991). Television advertisements, as one of the most prevalent forms of media discourse, use a blend of language, imagery, music, and narrative structure to create a desired impact on the consumer. Scholars argue that advertising's primary goal is not merely to inform the audience but to create emotional connections that stimulate consumption (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). This process involves ideological manipulation, where advertisements subtly convey ideas about success, prestige, and social belonging. In the case of excellence items, this manipulation is often linked to concepts of luxury, status, and quality, with advertisements portraying products as symbols of upward mobility and personal success.

According to Janks (1997), advertisements function as both cultural products and agents of socialization, disseminating values, norms, and ideologies to a mass audience. They often serve to reinforce the dominant ideologies within society, such as materialism and consumerism, promoting the notion that acquiring certain products can lead to improved social status and personal fulfilment. This dynamic is especially evident in Pakistani advertisements, where television ads often tie the product to national pride, family values, or aspirational class mobility. These advertisements create an illusion that the consumption of excellent items is not just about acquiring a product, but about embracing a particular lifestyle or identity.

A central theme in the literature on media discourse is the relationship between language and ideology. Advertising discourse is not neutral; it is imbued with power relations and ideological messages that serve the interests of dominant groups (van Dijk, 2008). Advertisements for excellence items are often constructed using semantic fields

that convey notions of success, wealth, and status. For instance, high-end products like automobiles, electronics, and luxury goods are often associated with positive qualities such as prestige, sophistication, and modernity.

Visual rhetoric also plays a critical role in reinforcing these ideologies. Studies by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) demonstrate how visual elements—such as the use of colours, camera angles, and the positioning of the product—are designed to elicit emotional responses and create a strong association between the product and a desired lifestyle. For example, advertisements for high-end products may feature affluent, stylish individuals in upscale settings, reinforcing the message that the product is a gateway to an elite social status.

In Pakistan, where issues of social class and identity are particularly pronounced, advertisements are designed to appeal to a wide spectrum of social groups, using language and visuals that speak to both traditional values and modern aspirations. Celebrity endorsements are also a key feature in Pakistani television advertisements, leveraging the star power of celebrities to associate the product with success and admiration. Research by Toncer (2012) suggests that celebrity endorsements work by tapping into the audience's aspirations, as individuals often view celebrities as role models and idealize their lifestyles.

2.1 Television Advertising and Socialization in the Pakistani Context

The role of media in shaping social identity and reinforcing cultural values is particularly significant in the context of Pakistan, where television advertisements often blend global marketing strategies with local cultural nuances. In a society where family values, religion, and nationalism are central to social identity, advertisements serve as a reflection of societal beliefs while also pushing consumerist ideals. This duality is apparent in how advertisements for excellence items frame the product as not just an object of desire, but as a means of fulfilling social roles and achieving cultural aspirations (Shukla & Singh, 2010).

Moreover, television advertising in Pakistan often intersects with national identity. Many advertisements seek to evoke patriotism by associating brands with national pride, subtly suggesting that purchasing a particular product is part of supporting Pakistan's progress and global standing. This is especially prevalent in advertisements for locally-produced excellence items, where brands may emphasize their role in economic development and job creation.

2.2 Impact on Society and Consumer Behaviour

The influence of television advertisements in Pakistan extends beyond individual consumer behaviour to encompass larger social structures and cultural practices.

Advertisements for excellence items reinforce class distinctions and contribute to the formation of consumer identities, often linking social status with material wealth. As Ingham (1995) points out, the time spent watching advertisements is not just a passive activity but a form of social conditioning that shapes individuals' aspirations and consumption patterns. The aspirational culture promoted in advertisements encourages individuals to align their identity with the products they consume, further blurring the lines between individual desires and societal expectations.

CDA stands for Basic Talk Investigation, could be a Latin word which suggests "running to and fro", directly, in phonetics the talk is alluding to discussion that's why Brown and Maghfiroh (2020) states that a dialect that's past the sentence is talk, which implies that talk investigation utilized different procedures for the examination of a content in a setting and its social impacts. CDA analyzes all talks which has communicative control, including composed, spoken, signals, signs and images, blurbs, electronic and printed promotions, etc. Moreover, CDA is taking an interest in how dialect and diverse etymological highlights shape society (brown, 2006).

Furthermore, different approaches have been done in the field of etymology to analyze the inconspicuous structures beside the implanted message in a talk, and Fair Clough's 3d demonstration is one among those which contributed to the field. This hypothesis endeavours to create an organized strategy for investigating the relationship between content and its social setting (KHOIRIYAH, 2016). Though the measurement clarification is concerned with social hone, which is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social examination and its impacts on society. The analyst utilized the over-talked-about demonstration of phonetics proposed by Reasonable Clough for her inquire about conduction on different strategies which notice carries for the fascination of clients. Media talk talks almost intuitively through the broadcast stage, which can be composed, talked or pictorial, in which the talk introduction is between non-present audiences (brown, 2006).

In media talk, promotions play a key part, which alludes to honing the art of educating the people around items, services and inducing them to buy or profiting from the benefit. Additionally, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001:4) characterizes promotions as the cruel or compelling consideration of something. Showcasing competitiveness compels promoters to form utilize of such highlights methodologies and procedures, including issue construction for which, as it were a possible solution, may be the utilize of their product. The as it were reason for doing so is to create promotions in such a design that seems to draw in the largest number of shoppers. Not as it were that, but the

visuals alongside dialect take over one's judicious self, and as a result, one chooses in their favour. For drawing consideration to something promoting companies employments diverse strategies which can be the center of the continuous investigation (KHOIRIYAH, 2016).

For the influence of gathering of people, Aristotle states three ways: ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos alludes to morals, what is called as value of the speaker, as diverse brands decide on popular celebrities for promotions, as well-known people's suggestions have higher esteem in society. Pathos concern is with feelings in a group of onlookers, as in most promotions, we will see a sincere reaction from a group of onlookers. At last, logos put rationales into promotions by utilising confirmations and realities, like for beauty items depiction of sometime recently and after comes about magnificence items (brown, 2006).

The overwriting surveys appear that the Media is the foremost impactful calculate in a cutting-edge society. It shapes individuals' minds and inculcates different philosophies and suppositions in their minds. Companies create different ads in notices to capture and draw in the most extreme clients and offer their products. It moreover appears that no investigation is available on comparative ponder of the notices of different brands through talk analysis. In this manner, this inquiry about thinking is an investigation of the enticing techniques within the Pakistani advertisements of different brands of beauty items, which have not been considered some time recently by other researchers.

According to Emodi (2011), language can be used as a device to advertise and promote the business and capture the attention of the audience. The producers of the commercials take much care regarding the language of the commercials. The language of the commercials should be appropriate and relevant to the culture and needs of the audience. Commercials are directly concerned with the ethics, behaviour, morality, concepts and building of a culture. These are not just for commercial purposes (Sinclair, 1987). The commercials should be enchanting and attractive enough to grasp the attention of the audience. The style, production, presentation, and language of the advertisement vary from culture to culture and community to community. In the advertisement, it is kept in mind that the commercial which is being produced or presented should not be unethical or immoral. There are many ways of advertising products like TV channels, newspapers, Magazines, Radio, Social media, Billboards, posters, wall paintings, etc. TV channels, Newspapers, Magazines, Radio, Social media, Billboards, posters, wall paintings, etc. The companies set a huge budget for the advertisement of their products. Through these advertisements, they penetrate their product features

and ideology into the minds of the audience.

According to Fairclough (2013) the critical discourse analysis is a sort of community exercise in which the power and ideology affect one another. We live in a society in which we have daily interaction with one another. We discuss many topics. In these topics, we have some power and ideology which we want to deliver to the person or persons to whom we are having a conversation. So it is a routine and daily exercise that comprises power and ideology.

Van Dijk (1997) defines critical discourse analysis as also called the analytical discourse. The main areas of it are society, the exercise of power, discrimination, and supremacy. The basic purpose of critical discourse analysis is to evaluate and analyze, so it is called the analytical discourse as well. In the critical discourse analysis of commercials, these are evaluated and analyzed from every aspect in terms of ideology and power. The major aspects of commercials that are to be focused on and analyzed are product, its features, audience, setting, ideology, etc. The commercials which are made on beauty products persuade people and make them believe that whatever is shown to them is based on reality.

Haq (2013) describes that the commercials perform many functions to influence people to understand, recall, and shift their emotions and opinions. It can also be said that the advertisements are a social practice which not only gives information to the people but also changes their intentions and ideology. Unilever is a multinational company, and its business is spread all over the world. Major Brands of Unilever are cleansing agents, personal care, and foods. The salient products of Unilever are Lux and Lifebuoy soaps, Sun Silk and Clear Shampoos, Surf Excel, Lipton, and Brook bond Supreme tea, Ice cream, Close Up toothpaste, etc. Unilever owns over 400 brands in the world. Unilever claims in its products the ideology of home and personal care. They impart unique style, language, models, participants, and ideology in their commercials. In their beauty brands, they hire the top models for their advertisements and attract people. For this purpose, they even hire the top models, who are called the brand ambassadors. They select exact wording in their commercials because they know very well that the wording has a direct impact on the audience. Sometimes this wording comprises the shape of slogans, as in the commercials of 'Surf Excel,' they have a slogan in Urdu as 'daagh to achay hote hain.' The English translation of this slogan is 'stains are good.' We judge from the slogan that no one accepts stains, but they claim that Surf Excel can eliminate every type of stain. The context of this slogan is that 'if you are doing something good and in doing so you receive some

stains, then in this condition, the stains are good.' Now we see that, beautifully, they choose the words and present them in front of the audience. The primary purpose of the commercials is to advertise the products and convince people to buy the products.

According to Wills (2011), commercials cannot be isolated from society; rather, they are interconnected with objects as people, communication, power, ideology, and concepts. These are also called a social practice. Unilever Pakistan Limited claims that it makes products that are required by everyone from birth to death. There is nothing left which are not made by them. They cover the entire needs and demands of society. They try their level best to fulfil the social needs of society. The most eye-catching thing in the advertisements is beauty, especially the beauty of women. The exposure of the body parts of women in the commercials.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This paper will look at 5 distinctive notices of items from the perspective of Basic Talk Investigation using Fairclough's three-dimensional demonstrate (1995). Fairclough gave three angles to analyze any text:

3.2 Text analysis

According to Fairclough (1995), within the printed examination, we for the most part center on the way they clarify the assets and what kind of phrasing they utilize when they promote their product. We will begin by looking at the choice of words through their determination of lexicon. At this time, we moreover go for disparate semiotic highlights.

3.3 Discourse analysis

This arrange bargains with the point of content development, allotment, and utilization that gives a see at how specialist relations are recognized all through content. This footstep deals with the examination of inter-textual affiliations among writings, talk, and settings. That's, the talk must not as it was be considered since the etymological depiction, but too an assortment of verbose practice.

3.4 Social analysis

According to Fairclough (1995), this point bargains with ideological gatherings, it gives points of interest on the existing circumstances, development, and environmental data. This stride is on edge with the affiliation between dealings and social circumstance, with the common determinants of the strategy of generation and understanding, and their social property.

3.5 Tools and Process of Data Compilation

This consideration is carried out through both sorts of information, essential and auxiliary. The essential source for analysis is the chosen advertisements and the chosen hypothesis. The auxiliary information is composed of different online establishments in both delicate from as well as strong copies.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will look at five diverse notices of different items from the viewpoint of Basic Talk Investigation by applying Fair Clough's three-dimensional demonstrate.

4.1. Advertisement No1



Text Analysis:

The first dimension deals with the textual, verbal, and semiotic features of discourse. Here, semiotic features are used for attraction, showing an appealing lady who is a user of the product. The model has beautiful, healthy hair to show the results of the product usage. The bright colour schemes and the fonts are like icing on the cake, grabbing the audience's attention to the fullest. The text contains adjectives such as 'repair' and 'expert' (capitalized) to create an image of the desired product that anyone asks for with hair.

Discourse Analysis:

The translation of the composition of words and the development of sentences are managed within in 2nd measurement. 'REPAIR HAIR DAMAGE', the explanation is brief and composed in a striking showing it as an imperative point of the promotion. The state draws in customers with hair problems. The strategy of devouring the item for way better comes about is expressed right underneath the primary explanation within the same brief way. The explanation is the one that can make buyers go for three products rather than a single hair item due to the solid claim of the makers. Presently, the third articulation is presented with oddity and white foundation to create it stand out within the picture for the gathering of people to choose it up as soon as they see the picture, centering on the repairing quality of the item. Within the conclusion, another

agreed and revelatory claim is drawn by the makers, alluding to their items as “the harm expert’s to guarantee the gathering of people to donate it.

Socio-Cultural Analysis:

Hair harm has been a common issue in the present day world, other than the ubiquity of excellence items and the self-grooming state of mind of the first-class individuals of the world. Showcasing companies are attempting their level best to outdo their rivals and to pick up more clients. They are utilising strategies to help their clients realize how much they require the item and how the item can play an imperative part in developing a perspective of their personality.

Advertisement No. 2



Text Analysis:

An adjective like *proven*, *stronger* are used which takes the attention of consumers. They use 96% to take the trust of the consumer. It is understood to viewers that 100% outcome is not possible so they claim 96% outcome to make it realistic to their audience. 7 oils in one that makes the consumers to decide rather buying seven different oils it's better to use one solution that is their oil.

Discourse Analysis:

They have given the picture of a performing artist with sound, long and dark hair which appears like her hair is solid since of the brand. Code-switching is additionally there which increments the number of groups of onlookers. 96% and 20X are the universal numbers. People of all dialects can understand it.

Socio-cultural Analysis:

As numerous individuals need a life like on-screen characters and performers. To awe customers, they have given a picture of the performing artist. Hair loss may be an exceptionally common issue in the present day era, which is why they have said less hair loss. On the off chance that we look at the on-screen character, she is grinning. The advanced world is full of uneasiness and discouragement.

They have related this sadness with hair loss, like on the off chance that you have solid hair, you may be free from discouragement and will grin as long hair includes on to beauty.

Advertisement No. 3



Text analysis:

Semantically and textually, the advert is in balance, the girl's perfect, shiny hair and a smirk with dark skin gives that element of the shampoo being useful to everyone, not just white dominant society, as is in most adverts. The writing in white on top of the hair makes the words even more visible, and the word usage as the girl's hair flows and the word is used to fall. The message is of a scented dandruff-curing shampoo. The word of the brand resonates with the girl's hair as they are both swaying.

Discourse Analysis:

The translation of the composition of words and the development of sentences is through the moment measurement. Her skin color makes it appear conceivable for any ethnicity, the pictures of coconuts make the product see sound and advantageous and the brand title within the same influence movement either the girls' hair mesmerizes the viewer.

Socio-cultural Analysis:

Dandruff could be an exceptionally common issue, and on the off chance that it comes with a regimen that also doesn't have a terrible odour, at that point the watcher will see it as a bonus.

Advertisement No. 4



Text Analysis:

Strong adjectives such as “*lovely, unbeatable fairness*” are used. The mentioned adjectives are used to stimulate the emotion in consumers that they have to buy the product. Women think that all such adjectives must be used with their names as it is a universal truth that women think there must be a huge social circle of her always praising her beauty and this is how the company increases their marketplace value by advertising the ideology that a beautiful women must have fair and lovely skin texture and tends the outlook of women according to their income scheme.

Discourse Analysis:

The target audience members of magnificence advertisements are ladies, so the maker is deliberately utilized within the talk technique to capture the attention of ladies. They present an on-screen character and imply that her excellence is fair because of the usage of this brand. Consequently, these advertisements capture the minds of their onlookers to utilize their products.

Socio-cultural Analysis:

A famous female Bollywood on-screen character appears. Picture of the eye-catching show and entirety prepare that turns from anguish to reasonableness makes ladies enthusiastic approximately creating the feeling of being an idealized one like her as well. Their color combination in promotions, that's white and pink, appears the results that one will to get to be white and pink after utilizing that item regularly.

Advertisement No. 5



Text Examination:

First deals with the textual, verbal and semiotic features of discourse. The semiotic features in this advert are the clear-skinned girl, the palettes, the subtle colour of the background, the bold and different font of the “No”, and the word ‘makeup’ being slightly light and invisible, almost implying in a cosmetic advert that cosmetics are not important, ironically. The phrase written in black ‘face perfecting pallet’ though not bold, yet prominent, catches the viewer’s attention.

Discourse Analysis:

The elucidation of the composition of words and the development of sentences is through the moment measurement. The exceptional thing to begin with, look is of the clear, clean young lady having a faultless skin, appearing that expending this item will deliver you that gleam and natural impact. The unpretentious colour subject also includes the expectation and no cosmetics symbol, as its all light and normal. The no is made in a diverse textual style to nearly make you accept you don’t require cosmetics, even though it may be a cosmetics include, and the words confront idealizing reverberate with any and every shopper of cosmetics who needs to have that immaculate skin.

Socio-cultural Analysis:

Clear skin and immaculate excellence are each girl's dream, and they endeavor so difficult to achieve that, and in this you see that arrangement with the picture of an immaculate girl.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the five advertisements through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Fairclough’s Three-

Dimensional Model has provided valuable insights into the linguistic, discursive, and socio-cultural dimensions of television promotions in Pakistan. Each advertisement strategically employs semiotic elements, such as vivid colours, powerful adjectives, celebrity endorsements, and imagery, to shape consumer perceptions and influence purchasing behaviour. Textually, the advertisements use appealing language and visual cues to create emotional connections with the audience, invoking ideals of beauty, success, and self-improvement. Discursively, they rely on persuasive techniques, including product claims (e.g., "96% effectiveness") and the use of numbers and percentages to enhance credibility and appeal to rational consumers. Sociocultural, the advertisements tap into the deeply ingrained cultural notions of beauty, social status, and aspiration, aligning the products with desirable identities, often portraying them as tools for achieving personal and societal ideals. Through these techniques, the advertisements not only promote products but also reinforce gender norms, class structures, and consumer ideologies, shaping public attitudes and behaviours. The study underscores the critical role of media discourse in the construction of consumer identities and the reinforcement of socio-cultural values in the context of contemporary Pakistani society.

Recommendation

The main recommendation is;

Select a wider range of advertisements from different companies and brands within the Pakistani market for a broader analysis.

- Analyze advertisements from different cultural contexts or societies to explore how language and power dynamics vary globally.
- Apply other linguistic theories or CDA models (e.g., van Dijk's or Kress and van Leeuwen's models) for a deeper understanding of discourse in advertisements.
- Extend the analysis to digital or multimedia advertisements (e.g., social media, TV) to examine how discourse differs across media.
- Explore how linguistic choices vary based on demographic factors such as age, gender, and socio-economic status in Pakistani advertisements.
- Investigate the use of local dialects or regional languages in advertisements to cater to specific audiences within Pakistan.

Limitation:

There are different companies and brands in Pakistan which offer excellence items and grant promotions on media. It

was incomprehensible for the analyst to conduct analyst on all notices. Subsequently this consider limits its self to five promotions distinctive excellence brands. It is advance constrained to the examination of five notices by different brands is done by applying the Fair Clough 3d show.

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Unraveling the Layers of Intimacy: A Kaleidoscopic study of Exit West, through the Lens of Social Penetration Theory

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Abstract— This study examines Mohsin Hamid's novel *Exit West* (2017), from the perspective of social penetration theory. The prime focus is Saeed and Nadia's relationship, they grow closer in the beginning of their relationship by sharing personal thoughts, experiences, comfort, and security, but once they start migrating through the magical doors, their relationship disrupts and weakens, which underline their emotional transition with physical movements, as they confront external upheavals and internal vulnerabilities, ultimately lead to the social depenetration. Using the lens of Social Penetration Theory given by Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in 1973, which is based on the notion that every relationship develops through the gradual process of reciprocal self-disclosure and moves into a deeper level of intimacy by covering the different stages to reach intimacy. Moreover, the study examines how the novel offers a unique application of the given theory by shedding light on the challenging environment for maintaining intimacy in a fragmented world. The study follows a qualitative method with a descriptive and interpretive approach with thematic encoding. The findings of this study will help future researchers to expand the scope of this theory in a broader context.



Keywords— Intimacy, Relational Development, Social Penetration and Depenetration, Migration.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Human relationships are dynamic and can be influenced by personal, social, and environmental factors. Social penetration theory, a literary framework proposed and developed by Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in 1973, provides a background and approach to understanding the development of intimacy in relationships. Social penetration theory claims that interpersonal relationships and closeness are achieved through a gradual process of self-disclosure, the process Social penetration is specifically accomplished through self-disclosure, the purposeful process of revealing information about oneself (Derlega, et.al., 1993). where individuals share their personal information about themselves, so this process exactly resembles peeling the layers of an onion, starting with sharing general information as the outermost layer

and then going deep down progressively for more intimate layers. (Altman & Taylor, 1987). During the process, every individual shares their personal information according to the need of the time, and gradually they build trust, as trust and mutual willingness to share are the fundamental elements of this progression. However, Altman, Vinsel, and Brown (1981) argue that external circumstances, such as events, cultural norms, and environmental factors, can accelerate, hinder, or even disrupt the penetration process of building relationships. Specifically, the theory describes how relationships advance through stages of penetration and de-penetration. Social penetration is not a guide for how relationships should progress, but, rather, is a description of how they tend to progress (Carpenter & Greene, 2016) The theory also identifies stages for the development of relationships, which include orientation, the exploratory effective stage, the effective stage, and finally the stable stage. Yet the

relationships are not always uninterrupted and linear towards succession but can be disrupted when faced with social, psychological, or environmental barriers. Miller Henningsen (2015), suggests that this theory is better for understanding romantic relationships. Thus, social penetration theory offers a framework to examine how relationships develop, dissolve, or adapt under varying conditions.

The novel *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid provides the best gap to explore the principle of social penetration theory, as the mentioned novel is set against the political instability in the country, the backdrop of war in the country, and people facing forced migration the text provides the detail of the evolving relationship between Saeed and Nadia, whose relationship is shaped by the personal choices as well as the external factors which have an impact on their relationship. The story begins when Saeed and Nadia meet for the first time in a war-torn city, they both are young and start a romantic relationship amid this crisis marked by affection and challenges. However, their world is engulfed in war, and the circumstances of war and forced migration impact the pathway of their intimate relationship.

The central themes in *Exit West* are the violence, forced displacement, dislocation, and external pressure on personal relationships, through the journey of Saeed and Nadia across continents which are through the magical doors that transport people from one place to another, Saeed and Nadia experience shifts in their relationship as they move through the magical doors, new landscapes of culture and emotional struggles, through each door they face a transition of not only physical migration but as well as emotional and psychological transition which requires them to recalibrate their relationship in the new challenges, these transitions serve as a metaphor for the stages of intimate relationship in the light of social penetration theory. Their relationship is quite challenging at every stage of life, which depicts the resilience and fragility of human nature. The narrative shows two opposing forces as they seek connection and intimacy even though they want to escape the impact of obstacles which creates distance between them.

The novel *Exit West* when situated within the framework of social penetration theory, aims to provide a clear understanding of the development and evolution of Saeed and Nadia's relationship and how the layers of intimacy are built and dismantled under the external pressure of war, migration, and dislocation. The narrative portrays a universal perspective on how conflict and social turbulence affect romantic bonds like between Saeed and Nadia. The narrative also challenges the traditional view of love and intimacy, demonstrating how the relationships can be simultaneously a source of crisis and strength.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem.

The experiences of human connections are deeply affected by internal emotions and external circumstances such as war, forceful evictions, displacement, and other cultural changes. In this case, Social Penetration Theory offers a conceptual framework through which intimacy and emotional closeness are developed, regulated, and eroded amid different circumstances. Thus, the novel *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid recreates the glamorous and ordinary aspects of characters Saeed and Nadia's love story during war and migration, making them the optimal subjects to analyze different layers of intimacy during war circumstances.

While there is extensive literature available on the psychological and emotional impact of war and migration, limited scholarly attention has been given to how these external factors affect relationship dynamics of self-disclosure and intimacy. Also, little is known about how this theory can be applied to relationships in the context of unstable and changing environments, such as those that refugees might experience. An exploration of Saeed and Nadia's relationship, and how they maintain connection and deal with emotional barriers in the wake of forced migration and trauma.

Thus, this research seeks to fill the above-mentioned gap by employing Social Penetration Theory to follow the relational journey of Saeed and Nadia in the war-torn and post-migration context and how their modes of self-disclosure and intimacy culminate into their detachment. Thus, the present work does not only deepen the knowledge of interpersonal relationships in crisis but also becomes a contribution to the discussions about the possibility of people's connections worldwide in the context of global instability.

1.3 Research objectives

- 1) To analyze the stages of relational development in the light of social penetration theory in Saeed and Nadia's relationship in the novel *Exit West*.
- 2) To understand the interpersonal relationships during the crisis and the factors which causes disruption, by applying social penetration theory.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) How does the social penetration theory explain the relationship development and evolution of it in the novel *Exit West*?
- 2) How do the experiences of migration and displacement influence the intimacy of Saeed and Nadia's relationship and what factors causes disruption?

1.5 Rationale of the Study.

This research study is motivated by the need to understand the human relationships and how they evolve in the circumstances of war and dislocation as depicted in the novel Exit West. By applying social penetration theory to Saeed and Nadia's relationship, the study provides a profound understanding of the intimate relationship and the external challenges of war and migration. The research not only bridges a gap between the existing literature but also contributes to a broader discussion on intimacy, resilience, and the impact of crisis on personal relationships, which has real relevance for individuals affected by war and migration. Academically, the study contributes to expanding the scope of social penetration theory, showing its applicability in the new challenging context of war and migration.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social penetration theory introduced by Altman and Taylor (1973) offers a fundamental framework for understanding the development of relationships, they categorize the development of relationships into four stages, the orientation stage where the exchange of socially acceptable and surface level information occurs, the exploratory affective stage which involves the sharing of opinions and beliefs and self-disclosure occurs, the affective stage marked by personal and emotional information sharing occurs and the stable stage where individuals show complete openness and have trust, whereas they also note that external factors such as cultural norms, crises and societal pressures often alters and interrupt the process of development making it non-linear and dynamic. The theory states that as people uncover more about themselves, relationships advance from the surface down to the depths. Social penetration theory has been widely used in interpersonal communication, because of its relevance in explaining trust, vulnerability, and emotional bonding (Derlega et al., 1993).

Migration and displacement have been extensively studied as to its effect on how personal relationships evolve within the discipline of sociology, psychology, and literature. In this way, migration normally breaks social networks forcing individuals to walk into new cultural, economic and emotional landscapes (Castles et al., 2014). Displacement strains relationships as stress of adaptation, loss of familiar environment and the rebuilding of identity. (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). However, some studies also noted that shared experiences of adversity can build up bonds, strengthen resilience and build emotional connections (Pittaway et al., 2010). Mohsin Hamid tackles

these dualities in Exit West from the point of view of Saeed and Nadia whose relationship is stressed by the burdens of migration but also strengthened by their common experience of migration. This is in line with the existing literature which has looked at how crisis both distorts and strengthens the intimacy.

While Cozby (1973) consider depth or intimacy as a dimension of self-disclosure. Pearce and Sharp (1973) argued that conscious, deliberate intent to disclose or willingness to disclose as well as honesty are basic dimensions of self-disclosure. Interpersonal attraction and relationship development become understandable when the fundamental elements are considered of self-disclosure which include intimacy and valence dimensions. These two fundamental dimensions gained significance when Gilbert and Horenstein (1975) expanded upon the foundation created in Blau's 1964 study. The dimension of intimacy defines a person's information disclosure level from superficial to deep personal revelations while valence indicates whether disclosed content is optimistic or pessimistic. People tend to show their best traits in beginning relationship development because they want to display attraction to one another. Research by Blau (1964), reveals that revealing unfavorable aspects during relationship impedes attraction development because such information threatens initial relationship expressions of connection and cohesion.

Papadopoulos (2002) argued that displacement often leads to relational and emotional upheavals in the relationship because every individual struggles to adopt to unfamiliar environments and to cope with trauma of loss and separation which can cause further increase in the stress and misunderstanding in the relational development. Additionally, the emotional toll because of displacement can cause further disruption in development of emotional intimacy. While Moghissi (2006), asserts that migration require individuals to discuss and make it clarify not only their identities but the dynamics of their relationships. This process of negotiation is considered important because migrants are often forced to reconcile with past memories. Open talk between participants becomes crucial and play a great role in maintaining the expectations in the changing cultural landscapes.

Through Exit West the crucial themes of citizenship loss and migration enable deep examination of stateless and displaced populations. Edward Said (1984) introduced the notion that refugees emerged as a creation of modern twentieth century state but Giorgio Agamben (1995) made an extended case showing how people lose all rights after losing ties of the state. According to Agamben the condition imposed by political refugees activates an inherent contradiction between their existence and state

nationality. This concept finds clear echoes in the novel through Saeed's and Nadia's fate. The absence of state citizenship denies them their supposed rights and protection that come beneath the given framework.

The literary analysis in combination with psychological theory offers a suitable framework for studying relational dynamics. Holland (1989) argued that narratives reflect human behavior, allowing readers to engage with characters as psychological subjects. Literary works highlights how universal patterns of human nature and interaction often portrayed in narrative according to Forster (1997) so Social Penetration Theory offers helpful tools to analyze and study human relationships. Throughout Exit West Saeed and Nadia show these relational patterns that social penetration theory identifies. The metaphorical doors of migration symbolize different levels of intimacy because they mirror the symbolism depicts migration boundaries that show both physical development and emotional growth. Their connection spans from attraction to deep emotional intimacy and end up with separation reflecting Social Penetration and depenetration, yet this evolution occurs under the consequences of war and forced migration.

The concept of Relational barriers is given by Duck (1982), which refers that societal norms, personal biases, and miscommunication lead to difficulties in building intimacy. this concept is similar with Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) theory of relational dialectics wherein the tension between individuality and connection is argued. These are ideas which provide bases for the account of Saeed and Nadia's relationship in Exit West. These relational dynamics act as mirror of their journey through different stages of self-disclosure, where involved both internal emotions and external sociopolitical forces. It's important to say that he obstacles they face, from cultural expectations to the psychological impact of displacement reflect their struggles of getting intimacy in times of crisis. Their relationship, like relational dialectics indicates, is defined is marked by confusion of closeness versus independence, and leading them to grow apart.

Despite the various number of research works are present on migration, displacement, and intimacy but there is a notable gap in the application of Social Penetration Theory used in treating literary works with these themes. While most studies on the subject meticulously focus on either the psychological outcomes of migration or the depiction of the relationships in literature, they hardly bridge the two areas from Theoretical perspective like Social Penetration Theory. Moreover, much has been written about the novel's themes of migration and identity, but limited attention has been given to the novel using the lens of relationship development theories. The subsequent aim for

this study is to fill the gap by applying Social Penetration Theory to look at important moments of Saeed and Nadia's relationship together including the evolution of intimacy and displacement.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Nature the of Research

This study follows a qualitative research approach while relying on descriptive and interpretive analysis methods. Through qualitative research methods one can gain comprehensive insights into complex real-world phenomena, along with their hidden meanings and unmeasurable impacts (Soratto et al., 2019). The open ended nature of the Research questions posed in this research fit within the qualitative research paradigm because it is effective in explaining human behavior pattern and its processes (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

The selected analysis method produces optimal results when applied to follow Saeed and Nadia's relationship through Exit West. The exploration of human behaviors such as beliefs, behaviors emotions and relationships can be best studied through qualitative research approaches as described by Tscholl et al. (2019).

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

This study employs a critical reading of the novel's text to showcase the essential dialogues, key interactions between Saeed and Nadia, and the important themes, such as self-disclosure, emotional depth, migration, and the impact of external factors. The researcher has used, the Social Penetration Theory proposed by Altman and Taylor (1973) to understand the layers of intimacy and the progression of Saeed and Nadia's relationship. The framework examines the depth of their relationship and its progression as well as external factors such as displacement, and cultural change and its impacts on character disclosure.

The study has used both primary and secondary sources for data collection, the primary data has been collected from the novel, Exit West, in the form of direct quotes. The secondary sources include scholarly research articles, journals, scholarly views on relationships, and other relevant literature to incorporate contextual elements. These secondary sources are important and serve as validation for the study.

The researcher conducted a thematic analysis of the arranged data which included intimacy stages with recurring transition metaphors using doors as examples.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This researcher has used the Social Penetration Theory as a theoretical framework for analysis of the novel, Exit

West. The theory has been presented by Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor (1973), which describes relationship evolution through progressive self-revelation. According to Social penetration theory, the development of a relationship resembles the peeling of onion layers, where participants reveal information and develop their intimacy in their relationship through the four key stages. The theory identifies four key stages of relational development, the Orientation Stage, Exploratory Affective Stage, Affective Stage, and Stable Stage. Social Penetration Theory provides the theoretical foundation through which the development of Saeed and Nadia's relationship in Exit West can be understood. This research extends the mentioned theory to the unstable context of war and migration where external elements such as migration, nostalgia, trauma, and cultural differences are faced, creating a sophisticated framework to examine intimate relationships in a setting of disruption. Using theoretical concepts of Social

Penetration theory, this study provides its research value with a clear understanding by providing substantial insights into enduring human relationships.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview.

The study follows the story of Saeed and Nadia's relationship, from the lens of Social Penetration Theory and kaleidoscopic approach which highlights the layers of intimacy and the dynamic nature of their relationship, their relationship evolves from superficial to deep, through the gradual process of relational development and by covering the stages for achieving intimacy, the following are the stages as according to the framework of social penetration theory.

4.2 Orientation Stage

Saeed and Nadia's relationship is marked by guardedness and superficial interaction in the beginning which confirms the orientation stage of their relationship according to the Social penetration theory, the orientation stage is the initial interaction between strangers which involves minimal personal sharing (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008, p. 367) Saeed and Nadia's initial steps were cautious as according to the novel, "A young man met a young woman in a classroom and didn't speak" (Hamid, 2017, pg.1), this silence depicts the cautious and protective layers which both the characters maintain and avoids the emotional vulnerability in their first encounter. Nadia's choice of wearing a black robe further exemplifies her guarded nature when Saeed asks her about her conservative and concealing black robe, and she admits that she wears it to

shield herself not because of any religious devotion.

Similarly, Saeed feels hesitant when he finally initiates the conversation with Nadia by saying "would you like to have a coffee" (Hamid, 2017, pg.1), this deliberate tentative approach of Saeed shows his respectful and cautious approach toward Nadia, as he feels hesitant yet to express deeper emotions. This phase reflects the social and cultural constraints shaping their initial interactions and their guardedness and hesitant nature highlight the gradual process required to build intimacy between them.

4.3 Exploratory Affective Stage.

This a stage where discussion of topics largely remains at the periphery, occasional, and intermediate levels. A transition occurs from superficial interaction to an effective exchange of conversation between Saeed and Nadia as they start sharing personal thoughts, information, and feelings and they feel more comfortable, which confirms their exploratory affective stage. It is also important to note that personal information only accounts for about 21% of talk between relational partners (VanLear, 1987). They begin to explore their mutual attraction and individual values as they spend more time together and frequently meet and find it easy to talk to one another, as the text confirms, "Despite initial instances of awkwardness, or rather of disguised shyness, they find it mostly easy to talk to one another" (Hamid, 2017, pg.18). although the self-disclosure remains limited and cautious the backdrop of war in their country accelerates the closeness between them at this stage as their environment forces them to rely on one another for emotional support. They start meeting in Nadia's home frequently marking their transition from hesitancy to regular contact representing the gradual movement from superficial to exploratory affective stage, where they navigate the boundaries of their relationship with care.

4.4 Affective Exchange, Deepening Intimacy.

Saeed and Nadia's relationship marks a significant stage where they begin to share emotions and form a stronger bond and constant contact without physical presence as they start thinking about one another "He became present without presence, and she did much the same to him" (Hamid, 2017, pg. 27). Their relationship reaches a stage where they would pass a few waking hours without contact between them. Soon a rhythm was established they fell into a pattern and during the early days of their relationship, they feel an intense longing for one another "Soon a rhythm was established...they had begun, each of them, to be penetrated, but they had not yet kissed" (Hamid, 2017, pg. 27) these quotes highlights the emotional yearning for one another depicting how their bond evolves despite living in the war-torn environment.

The shifting of Nadia into Saeed's home on the day when Saeed's mother was shot and died, she came to their apartment and never went back to her, she remained in Saeed's home to offer her comfort and help Saeed, this decision to live with Saeed and then the decision to leave the country together solidify this stage because the act of migration requires immense trust and mutual reliance as what they face together. Another key moment in the narrative reflects Saeed's father, placing his trust in Nadia to protect and support his son, as he tells her. " I am entrusting you with my son's life, and you whom he called daughter, must like a daughter and not fail him...and he hoped she would one day marry his son". (Hamid, 2017, pg 58). The key interaction between Nadia and Saeed's father depicts the trust that he places in Nadia, indicating and confirming the stronger bond between Saeed and Nadia.

4.5 Stable Exchange.

In the stable exchange stage, the relationships achieve a level of mutual trust, understanding, and openness, at the stable exchange stage, the communication is open at all levels, (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008, p. 367). But in the case of Saeed and Nadia, this stage doesn't lead to permanence instead, their relationship reaches a plateau where they have mutual respect they share kisses, they migrate from place to place, they experience ups and downs but their relationship couldn't last long because of various psychological and external factors act as barriers emerged which caused friction in their relationship.

Nadia's psychological instinct, her vagueness in feelings towards Saeed was uncertain, as according to the text, " Saeed was certain he was in love. Nadia was not certain what exactly she was feeling". (Hamid, 2017) This passage highlights the emotional confusion of Nadia which becomes a psychological barrier and plays a great role in the eventual divergence between them. This emotional unawares also reflects her response to dislocation, the nostalgia and trauma of uprooting from her familiar surroundings affect her ability to maintain clarity about her feelings and emotions. This highlights the non-linear nature of relationships according to the Social penetration theory which emphasizes how these barriers disrupt the stable relational stage.

Saeed and Nadia experienced migration and displacement which profoundly influenced their relationship both the intimacy and emotional distances, and these experiences created external pressure and eventually led to their divergence as they tried to adapt to the individual transformations in the changing environment.

4.6 Friction and Emotional Distance.

The relationship concept of Altman and Taylor (1973) which is about reward and cost, aligns with Saeed and Nadia's relationship in Exit West. In the beginning, their relationship is rewarding and offers comfort and security during the war, but their migration journey leads to rising emotional expenses and eventually results in social depenetration (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). The transformation of relationships occurs through human differences as personal rewards decline in value. Rawlins (2008), identifies that not all bonds are transactional, as Saeed and Nadia retain intrinsic values which remain robust despite their growing separation since displacement began.

Migration creates instability in their lives by forcing them to adapt to new places, People, and surroundings and also to cope with the uncertainty of their future, this instability causes emotional friction in their relationship for instance, when Nadia talks to him in a different harsh tone and Saeed was shocked by her tone. " He wondered if this new way of speaking to one another, this unkindness that was now creeping into their words from time to time, was a sign of where they were headed" (Hamid, 2017, pg. 78) This moment indicates the stress caused by displacement which erodes the tenderness and replaces it with harshness and miscommunication, both were trying to reconcile the issues and maintain their bond but they both find it difficult to talk openly about the issues, for instance, " Nadia wanted to say more than that, but just then her throat felt raw, almost painful, and what else she would have liked to say was unable to find a way through to her tongue and her lips" (Hamid, 2017, pg. 105)

Similarly, in the case of Saeed, he feels the need for conversation to resolve the issue but remains silent, illustrating how both characters are psychologically paralyzed by their emotional exhaustion.

Saeed shows nostalgic behavior is evident in the novel, because of the deep conflict that exists between inherited identity and chosen community described by Edward Said. Said (1983, 1991) explains that filiative attachments are rooted in birth, nationality, and inherited identity whereas affiliative bonds develop through voluntary effort and shared experiences shaped by historical and social circumstances. Through his strong affinity for his homeland and cultural roots, Saeed shows his filiative orientation but his migration experience requires him to establish affiliative bonds that transform his sense of identity. Saeed shows his strongest desire to return home in the moment when he loses his father and this nostalgic mindset blocks his total involvement in present-day life, this shows the differences between filiative and affiliative

bonds during their relationship development. The strong bond Saeed shares with his ancestral roots prevents his successful transition into new kinds of community affiliations which eventually damages his relationship with Nadia.

In Saeed's experiences of longing for the past Exit West depicts the conflict between what identity he received from birth against his need to change because of his displaced status. The migration process separates him from filiative connections as he fights to build new affiliative bonds which he proves unable to accept and therefore intensifies his feelings of detachment.

4.7 Diverging Paths.

As they migrate from place to place, this intensifies the divergence between Saeed and Nadia and their values. The intimacy and romance they shared began to fade and were replaced by a growing discomfort and emotional distance, the source of comfort and strength has become strained under the weight of external pressures and evolving identities, and they both sense that their closeness has become a source of tension between them with their differing desires pulling them in opposite directions, it is also important to consider that relationships are not bad if they do not progress through all stages (Mongeau and Miller, 2015). their emotional distances are symbolized in the following passage, "Mention of their love had made Saeed and Nadia a bit uncomfortable, for they had not very romantic of late, each still perceiving the grating of their presence on the other" (Hamid, 2017, pg. 82) this highlights the discomfort and how their intimate relationship had been shifted from romantic to a sense of obligation, a critical stage in their relationship where the migration and other experiences accentuated the gaps between them. Moreover, the growing discomfort between them, made Nadia think about the promise she had made to Saeed's father, as he told her to stay by Saeed's side until he was safe, she thinks and worries that would make to be proven untrue to the promise she has made, this highlights the conflict between them, which is growing and eroding their feelings which they had for one another.

4.8 The Decision to Part.

The pressure of migration, displacement, and psychological distances led them that they both realize that parting ways at this stage of their relationship is now inevitable as according to the text,

"A spoilage had begun to manifest itself in their relationship, and each recognized it would be better to part now, ere worse came"(Hamid, 2017, pg. 122)

Finally, they parted ways which were marked by unspoken words and hidden emotions that reflected their

mutual understanding, they realized that their bond could no longer endure the strain and that it was better to part ways,

"They stood facing each other at the threshold of the shanty that had been theirs, and they did not shake hands either, they looked at each other and any gestures seeming inadequate"(Hamid, 2017, pg. 123) The moment highlights the tension caused by the experiences they faced which transformed their relationship and forced them to acknowledge that their relationship can no longer endure, and their paths must be diverged. They part their ways ultimately and accept their differences and recognize the inevitability of doing that, parting their ways in this way reflects their mutual respect, without bitterness and a mature understanding of the circumstances, and embracing one another and the circumstances allows them to move forward as individuals.

V. CONCLUSION

Throughout the novel Exit West, the characters Saeed and Nadia go through a process of relational development, which has been analyzed in this paper through the lens of Social Penetration theory. The novel presents Saeed and Nadia's journey of relationship as a psychological and emotional journey. Their relationship evolvement aligns with the stages given by Social penetration theory, where their interactions foster selective revelation about their personalities, as they progress on their journey they share deeper details reveal their personal identity, and build a stronger bond, they start living together which is a token of a deep relationship and then migrated from place to place together covering the stages of intimacy, but their relationship couldn't make permanence in the stable stage where they faced different issues of internal as well external factors emerged as barriers which caused friction in their relationship and lead to emotional distances. Migration creates instability by forcing them to adapt to the new places, cultures, and surroundings which erodes the tenderness and replaces it with harshness for one another they felt and decided to part ways because they tried to reconcile the issues between them but they both find it difficult to talk about the issues as they used to talk in the past, this moment highlights the psychological paralysis in their relationship. They were at a stage where they both knew that parting ways was inevitable and it would be better to part ways finally, they parted their ways, which was marked by unspoken words and hidden emotions that reflected their mutual understanding and respect for one another and the decision they made, they accept their differences without bitterness for one another

and embraced the circumstances and move forward as individuals.

5.1 Suggestion and Recommendation

The findings of this study, which explore relationship development in Exit West, and analyze how migration impacts intimacy, offer valuable insights for future researchers and application of social penetration theory. Future studies can expand the scope in a broadened way to address other literary works or to take into account real-life couples facing the issues of displacement to engage interdisciplinary approaches such as the Attachment Theory or Trauma Theory to seek further insight into the dynamics of a relationship under stress. Also, the potential contribution could come from investigating gender roles, long-term migration effects, as well as digital communication through the application of Social Penetration Theory. Practitioners and policymakers can work to create support systems for migrants, foster cultural sensitivity, and utilize literature such as Exit West to further strengthen programs create awareness and economically empower migrant communities.

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Rising feminine sensibility in Indian women writings – A Kaleidoscopic view

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Abstract— *In the middle of the 19th century the fiction of women novelists in English obtained a separate identity and many renowned women novelists like Jane Austen, George Eliot, Bronte Sisters, and Virginia Woolf proved greater than men qualitatively. They established their own great tradition. Through their novels they described their powers, their inspirations, their weaknesses and their self-realization. Indian women writers writing in English have raised their voice against gender bias and male chauvinism in the patriarchal Indian society. In fiction there is a plentiful expression of feminine sensibility. Indian women novelists have obtained a remarkable place in English literature. Through their novels they introduced the culture of India to the world. Even though in India women are considered as inferior they have proved themselves that they are not less intellectual than their male counterparts. Through their novels the women novelists have vividly portrayed their feminine sensibility.*



Keywords— *Women writers, gender bias, self-realization, patriarchal, feminine sensibility*

I. INTRODUCTION

In India Torn Dutt, the well-known writer wrote a novel in English and since then many women writers like Krupabai Sathianathan, Shevanthi Bai Nikambe, Raj Lakshmi Debi, Cornelia Sorabji, Swama Kumari Ghosal, and Iqbalunnisa Hussain too have made their mark in Indian fiction in English. After the Second World War there has been a galaxy of accomplished women novelists whose works are now an integral part of literature. Novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Attia Hossain and many others articulate the content of their novels with remarkable excellence. The key of the success of women novelists lies in the fact that women are born storytellers and they are endowed with the gift of delving into the human mind and heart with sympathy, sensitivity and understanding.

II. DISCUSSION

Kamala Markandaya is a well-known novelist in Indian English Literature. She is an expatriate and her fiction offers a greater variety of setting and character. Markandaya concentrates on contemporary Indian social, economic, political and cultural problems. Her first novel *Nectar In A Sieve* (1954) deals with a realistic picture of the Indian villagers, their customs, cultures and traditions. The theme of the novel is the identity crisis resulting from a clash between western value systems and Indian value systems. Her second novel *Some Inner Fury* (1955) focuses on the major thematic concern of East West encounter. Her third novel *A Silence of Desire* (1960) deals with the layers of spiritual reality and mystic vision of India. *Possession* (1963), Markandaya's fourth novel is in a sense, a sequel of *A Silence of Desire*. Her fifth novel *A Handful of rice* (1966) deals with the theme of urban economics. *The Coffer Dams* (1969) presents Clinton, the British engineer who sets out to build a dam across a South Indian River. Her next novel *The Nowhere Man* (1972) relates to the same theme of East-West encounter.

In *Two Virgins* (1973), the theme of the adolescent's loss of innocence is developed. It is a story of the contrast between the two sisters, Lalitha and Saroja. *The Golden Honeycomb* (1977), her most ambitious novel is considered as a historical fiction. This is a series of three generations of the princely family of Devapur, covering a period of about a century from 1850 to Independence. Markandaya's last novel *Pleasure City* (1982) emphasizes the cultural confrontation. A multinational corporation comes to a fishing village to build a holiday resort, Shalimar, the pleasure city, and the villagers struggling at subsistence level.

After Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala obtained a renowned place in Indian English literature. She wrote twelve novels. Her first novel *To Whom She Will* (1955) relates to the young man and woman, Hari and Amrita enjoy the illusion of romantic love before accepting a separate arranged marriage. Her Second novel *The Nature of Passion* (1956) is a story of a successful attached to his daughter, Nimmi that he is reluctant though the match will further his own business interests. Jhabvala's another novel *Esmond In India* (1958) presents the character of Esmond, a colonial minded English expatriate who comes from England to India to teach Indians about their own country.

In *The Householder* (1960), she describes the newly married couple, Prem and Indu and the pains of becoming a householder. In *Get Ready for Battle* (1962), Jhabvala presents the picture of a rich businessman Gulzarilal. Gulzarilal is living in a sin with a widow, living with her brother and trying to find solace through social work. In her *A Backward Place* (1965), she develops the theme of emptiness in marriage relationship. In *A New Dominion* (1973), Jhabvala portrays a set of three European girls caught in the toils of a fake Swami. *Heat and Dust* (1975) describes her strong emotional involvement in the character of Olivia, a young English girl. Her novel *In Search of Love and Beauty* (1983), focuses on a group of German and Austrian refugees in New York.

Jhabvala's next novel *Three Continents* (1987) presents the world of Harriet, a young American girl who inherits a fortune and goes to London. There, at London she meets an Indian holy man and later marries his son Crishi. She is too much obedient to Crishi and her degradation is complete when she allows Crishi to murder her twin, Michael for his wealth. *Poet and Dancer* (1993) is her only novel which is set in New York. The setting of *Shards of Memory* (1995) is America, England and Europe. In this complicated story of avarice and love, the only lovable character who is spanning four generations is

Baby, born of a Jewish American mother and a Parsi father. The most distinctive characteristic of Jhabvala's novels is the preciseness and skillfulness with which she unravels the threads of intricate human relationships.

Nayantara Sahgal is also one of the well-known Indian women novelists. In most of her novels she discusses political issues. Her fiction also relates to modern Indian woman's search for self-identity. Her first novel, *A Time To Be Happy* (1958) deals with two north-Indian families. The protagonist, Sanad, the son of a Zamindar is considered as 'Brown Englishman' to the social and political realities of newly Independent India. *This Time of Morning* (1968) claims to be one of the best political novels by an Indian Writer. *Storm In Chandigarh* (1969) reflects the political of the division of Punjab.

Her next novel *The Day In Shadow* (1971) is a domestic novel dealing with the theme of failure of marriage. *A Situation In New Delhi* (1977) deals with the aftermath of Nehru's death, the Naxalite movement and student unrest. *Rich Like Us* (1985) is considered as her best political novel. In this novel she presents a picture of India in 1975-1976 in which Indira Gandhi declares the state of National Emergency. The novel also reflects the theme of exploitation of women. In her novel *Plans for Departure* (1985) she describes the Indo-British relationship. Her last novel *Mistaken Identity* (1988) is related to the life of Bhushan Singh who is the only son of the Raja of Vijaygarh.

Anita Desai is one of the great Indian women novelists. Her novels offer a satirical view of social change. In her first novel *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) she describes the character of Maya and her relationship with her husband, Gautama. Maya is obsessed with the prediction about her marriage that her marriage is going to end in its fourth year with the death of either wife or husband. In that frustration she murders her husband. Her second novel *Voices In the City* (1965) develops the theme of alienation. The story emphasizes the life of Nirode and his two sisters, Monisha and Amla. These two sisters rebel against the conventions of society. At the end Monisha commits suicide. Amla is frustrated because of her failure in love. Her next novel *Bye-bye Blackbird* (1971) depicts the lives of Indian immigrants in England. The novel also develops the theme of East West encounter. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975), the protagonist, Sita is a woman of aggressive nature. She is married to Raman. She does not like the family members who dominate her. So her ill-behaviour and smoking alienates her from the society. Her novel *Fire on The Mountain* (1977) again deals with the theme of alienation.

Clear Light of Day (1980) is a story of two sisters Vimla and Tara, living with their neurotic younger brother in a mood of nostalgia. *In Custody* (1984) is her next novel that presents the life of a lecturer, Deven Sharma who is the teacher of Hindi but loves Urdu. Her eighth novel *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988) describes the world of a German Jew. In *Journey To Ithaca* (1995), Anita Desai emphasizes the picture of the life of Matteo and his bride Sophie who come to India from Italy. But Sophie is overcome by the heat and dust and she goes back to Italy. She comes again to reclaim Matteo, who is living in ashram. Matteo wants the definition of this world and his own self. *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) develops the theme of East-West encounter. Fasting reflects Eastern conditions and feasting reflects Western conditions. She reframes the subject-matter of foreigners and displacement in *The Zigzag Way* (2004). In this novel she portrays the character sketch of Betty Jennings. The novelist records the saga of Betty's adjustment to her new life in a strange land. The novel also describes the character of Eric, the protagonist and his adventures in Mexico.

Shashi Deshpande is a leading woman novelist in the horizon of Indian English Literature with eight novels to her credit. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel, *That Long Silence* in 1990. Her works have been translated into a number of languages. She writes about simple, day-to-day life of the Indian middle class. Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) emphasizes the world of the successful doctor, Sarita. The Hindu tradition destroys the life of Sarita. Manu, Sarita's husband feels embarrassed with the rising status of his wife. At the end Sarita compromises with her husband. *If I Die Today* (1982) and *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983) are Shashi Deshpande's detective novels, set in a Medical college and girl's school, the stories develop with many mysterious deaths and suspense.

Deshpande's another novel *Roots and Shadows* (1983) depicts the agony experienced by woman in a male-dominated and tradition-bound society. In *That Long Silence* (1988) she portrays the character of Jaya, as a subservient wife. The Indian tradition reflected in the story is that the husband is like a 'Sheltering Tree' which must be kept alive at any cost and without it the family becomes shelterless and insecure. *The Binding Wine* (1993) deals with the tragedy of women as the victims of man's lust and woman's helplessness. *The Matter of Time* (1996) depicts an extended family over three generations. Her novel *Small Remedies* (2000) narrates the tragic tale of Savitribai Indorekar, doyenne of the Gwalior Gharana. Savitribai and Madhu both of them are victims of the double standards of society. Deshpande's most recent novel *Moving on* (2004) is about Jiji Ahuja who is visualized as a complex

character juggling frantically between the conflicting demands and roles of her life.

Bharati Mukherji is an expatriate writer. Her first novel *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972) deals with a rich industrialist's daughter Tara, who returns Calcutta after seven years in the U.S.A. only to experience that she is as much alien in Calcutta as abroad. *Wife* (1975) is Bharati Mukherji's another novel which depicts the pre and post-marital experiences of protagonist Dimple Das Gupta, an ordinary-looking, middle-class girl. *Jasmine* (1989) is a tragic story of an uneducated but courageous Punjabi peasant girl Jasmine and her journey from Punjab to U.S.A. In *The Holder of The World* (1993) she describes the story of Beigh Master's visits to various museums for a wonderful diamond called the 'Emperor's Tear'. In her search, she becomes fascinated by Hannah Easton. In this novel Bharati Mukherji attempts to integrate contemporary travelogue and ancient history.

Her fifth novel *Leave It To Me* (1997) is totally American. The story relates to the world of the protagonist, Debby Dimartino. In *Desirable Daughters* (2003) she describes the tradition of Hindu family and the restrictions under which the daughters are pressed. In the story, the three sisters, Padma, Parvati and Tara are bent upon breaking traditions and to live their own lives. Mukherji's latest novel *The Tree Bride* (2004) explores the life of Tara Lata Gangooly who according to a legend marries a tree at the age of five after the tragic death of her bridegroom. Tara develops tree like characteristics.

Githa Hariharan is also a well-known novelist in Indian English Literature. Her first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) presents the picture of the life of three women of different generations and the dullness in their lives. It deals with the world of the protagonist Devi, her mother Sita and the old maidservant Mayamma. *The Ghost of Vasu Master* (1994) portrays the character of a retired school teacher, Vasu. He has with him only the memories of his dead wife, his two sons who live in another town, his father, his dead grandmother and Veera Naidu, the principal of the school. Mani is a mentally handicapped character lives with him. Her third novel *When Dreams Travel* (1999) is a thought provoking novel which describes the story of two sisters, Shahrazad and Dunyazad, and their husbands.

Santha Rama Rau's first novel *Remember The House* (1956) portrays the character, Indira Goray, known as Baba and who is very much like the novelist. The novel deals with a quest for the self and the East-West conflict. Rau's next novel *The Adventuress* (1970) deals with the story of a woman's search for fulfilment. Nergis Dalai's experience of journalism has influenced her fiction. Her

novel *Minari* (1967) is an account of high class life at a hill station. Her second novel *Two sisters* (1973) deals with twins at opposite poles both physically and mentally. *The Inner Door* (1976) presents the guide motif of enforced sainthood. *The Girls from Overseas* (1979) deals with the theme of East-West encounter. Venu Chitale's *In Transit* (1950) is an evocative picture of three generations of a Poona Brahmin joint family. Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1951) deals with the city Hyderabad in the Gandhian age. Attia Hossain's famous novel *Sunlight on A Broken Column* (1961) deals with the theme of the partition of India.

Kamala Das, the renowned poetess, has written two novels: *The Alphabet of Lust* (1980) and *A Doll for the child Prostitute* (1985). *The Alphabet of Lust* is about Manasi, the protagonist, whose life is a long and persevering quest for identity. The urge for identity and liberation overtakes her and she discards all barriers, inhibitions, moral and social codes. She finally succeeds in becoming the Home Minister. By asserting her individuality she thus succeeds in attaining the highest pinnacle of success, power and glory. Her second novel, *A Doll for The Child Prostitute* also deals with the theme of liberation of women and quest for identity.

Some minor novelists write historical fiction. Vimala Raina in her novel *Ambapali* (1962) describes the India of Buddha's time. Manorama Modak in her novel *Single In The Wheel* (1978) deals with the fall of the last Peshwa in the early nineteenth century. In psychological fiction Shakuntala Shrinagesh's one novel *The Little Black Box* (1955) depicts the thought processes of Sarala. Perin Bharucha's *The Fire Worshipers* (1968) deals with Parsi Life.

Nina Sibal in her novel *Yatra* (1987) depicts the Sikh history especially the political unrest of the 1920s in Punjab. Dina Mehta's *And Some Take a Lover* (1992) deals with a young Parsi girl who loves Sudhir who is a dedicated follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Anjana Appachana's novel *Listening Now* (1998) deals with the themes such as the discrimination against the daughter, the silence of women and the lack of communication between the sexes. Mrinal Pande's *Daughter's Daughter* (1993) emphasizes on gender bias. The novel is a series of episodes presented through the eyes of Tinu, a little girl. Pande's second novel *My Own Witness* (2000) is bound with the experience of Pande in the field of journalism and television. Indu K. Mallah's novel *Shadows In Dream-Time* (1990) depicts the life of an Indian Widow. She is cut off from all social and cultural customs.

Belinder Dhanoa's *Waiting for Winter* (1991) portrays a character of Pratibha who belongs to a rich

family in Chandigarh. She is well educated and married to an Indian settled in the U.S.A. At the end of the novel she finds that her husband is already married to an American. Zai Whitaker in her novel *Up The Ghat* (1992) describes the heroine, Azra who has studied abroad. She marries Hussain who is a dedicated officer in the Indian Administrative Service, whose idealism gets him into trouble. Zai Whitaker wants to show the comic side of the frustrations of the Indian woman. Shama Futehally, Zai's sister wrote an impressive novel *Tara Lane* (1993) based on the character of Tahera. Another novelist K. R. Usha wrote *Sojourn* (1998) in which she portrays the picture of small town life and cosmopolitan urban life from the protagonist, Neeja's point of view.

Suniti Namjoshi is also a prominent woman novelist. Her first novel *The Conversations of Cow* (1985) deals with the protagonist, Suniti, who is a lecturer of Indian origin. Her Guru appears in the form of a cow. In her second novel *The Mothers of Maya Diip* (1989), Jyanvi and the Blue Donkey are invited to the Indian Kingdom of Maya Diip. Maya Diip escapes many of the evils of male dominated society, but the other evils arise from common human failings like jealousy and love of power. The novel is based on matriarchy. *St. Suniti and The Dragon* (1994) is a novel about love and sainthood. The narration of the novel is based on songs, dialogues, dramatic monologues, postcards, prayers and diary entries. Anuradha Marwah - Roy's first novel *The Higher Education of Geetika Mehendiratta* (1993) sets in the provincial town of Desertvadr. The novel deals with the narrator, Geetika's experiences in Jana University. Her second novel *Idol Love* (1999) presents a chilling picture of an Indian dystopia in the twenty-first century.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) depicts the heroine, Tilottama who is the mistress of spices. Her second novel *Sister of my Heart* (1999) describes the complicated relationships in a family in Bengal. Prema Nandkumar's *Atom and The Serpent* (1982) portrays the picture of Indian University. Ranga Rao's *The Drunk Tantra* (1994) states that promotion depends on contacts and not on merit. Rita Joshi's *The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme* (1992) deals with the experiences of a lecturer in Delhi. Meena Alexander's *Nampally House* (1991) based on a real life incident of police repression in the town of Hyderabad. Her second novel *Manhattan Music* (1997) deals with the lives and problems of Indian immigrants living in America, Rani Dharker's *The Virgin Syndrome* (1997) contains satire on college life and the seminar circuit.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) received the Booker prize in 1997. Her novel depicts the

world of the protagonist, Ammu. It gives an open access to the agony of Ammu, Margaret, Baby Kochamma, Rahel, Estha and Velutha. The novel is set in a small place Ayemenem near Kottayam in Kerala. It is a story of a Syrian orthodox Christian family. The action of the novel moves as a flashback of Rahel's memory. Ammu is attracted to Velutha, a young Paravan. The character of Velutha is considered as 'A God of small Things' in the novel.

Anita Nair's *The Better Man* (1999) reflects the East-West encounter theme. Another novelist Kaveri Bhatt-Nambisan's first novel *The Truth About Bharat* (1991) deals with the young medical student, Bharat. The novel describes the picaresque adventures of the narrator, Bharat. Her second novel *The Scent of Pepper* (1996) is the most substantial of her three novels. In the novel she describes the life in Kodagu, the changing relationship with the British, the life in Post-independence India. In *Mango coloured Fish* (1998) the central character is a young urban girl, Shari. In the novel she portrays a remarkable picture of India. Manorama Mathai's *Mulligatawny Soup* (1993) deals with Elsie-Nora, a Eurasian, who belongs neither to India nor to England when the Raj ends. Sohaila Abdulali's *The Madwoman of Jogare* (1998) form the setting of Maharashtra. The focus is on ecology. The novel deals with the protagonist, twenty-five year old Ifrat, who is privileged to lead a free life.

Manju Kapur won the 'Commonwealth Award' for her first novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998) in 1999. The novel deals with the life in the Punjab in the decades before partition. It portrays three generations of the protagonist's family. The third generation daughter, Ida is shown going on a journey to understand her mother Virmati and her grandmother. *A Married Woman* (2002), her second novel is considered as a sequel to her first novel. The novel focuses its attention on the relationship between Astha, the protagonist and her husband Hemant. It also focuses the physical attraction between members of the same sex. It is the story of love set against the background of the aftermath of demolition of Babri Masjid. Her recently published novel, *Home* (2006) deals with the actions and counteractions of the family members of merchant class during the days of the partition of the Indian subcontinent.

Indira Mahindra's *The Club* (1984) moves around the character of Lucy and her step-sister, Mabel who have stayed on in India even after the other English people left. Her second novel *The End Play* (1994) deals with a young woman narrator revealing the power struggle in an Indian joint family.

Namita Gokhale's first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984) deals with the crust of contemporary Indian society in metropolitan towns and the characters change their sexual partners like clothes. Her second novel, *Gods, Graves and Grandmothers* (1994) is notable for its social realism. *A Himalayan Love Story* (1996) deals with the lives of two star-crossed lovers who grew up in Nainital. Gokhale's fourth novel *The Book of Shadows* (1999) deals with the life of the protagonist, Rachita, who is a supercilious teacher of English at a Delhi college. Achala Moulik wrote historical novels. In *The Conquerors* (1996) she chronicles three generations of Ruthvens, from 1857 to 1867, describing the expansion of British rule in India. Her second novel, *Earth is But A Star* (1997) deals with the Spanish empire.

Suma Josson's *Circumferences* (1994) portrays Sarala, a painter. Sarla's parents arrange her marriage at nineteen, and do not approve of her artistic inclinations. Kamalini Sengupta's *A Seasoned Couple* (1994) is an account from marriage to death, of the life of Aditi and her husband Ashok Prasad, a civil servant. Nirmala Arvind's *A Video, a Fridge and a Bride* (1995) presents a clear picture of the middle-class life in Kerala. It relates to Elizabeth Cherian and her parent's efforts to find a husband for her, but they do not succeed because they cannot pay the high dowry. Neelum Sharan Gour's novel *Speaking of 62* (1995) recounts the fantasies of children whose outlook was changed by the Indo Chinese war of 1962. Deepa Shah's first novel *The solitude of Surabhi* (1997) focuses on Surabhi, a young girl exploited by all with whom she comes into contact. Bulbul Sharma's *Banana Flower Dreams* (1999) concentrates on the victimization of woman. Shakuntala Bharvani's *Lost directions* (1996) uses a variety of narrative techniques including letters, folk tales and short stories to present the difficult situations of her narrator.

Esther David in her *The Walled City* (1997) presents the usual pressures and anxieties of the protagonist, a young girl's growing up in India are compounded by her Jewishness. Nirmala Moorthy's *Maya* (1997) deals with the life of a South Indian Brahmin family. It focuses on traditional concepts of marriage. Her second novel, *The Coiled Serpent* (2000) investigates the psyche of the protagonist. Radhika Jha's *Smell* (1999) is an account of a young girl who is uprooted from her comfortable life in Kenya. Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises* (2000) deals with a young mother trying to cope with a mentally handicapped baby. Her second novel *Rani* (2007) is a historical novel that deals with the Rani of Jhansi and her adventures in 1857 Freedom Struggle. Lakshmi Kannan's *Going Home* (1999) is concerned with

the tradition which denies women a fair share of ancestral property.

Sagarika Ghose's *The Gin Drinkers* (2000) portrays the heroine, Uma Chatterjee who is just back from Oxford. Ghose presents a vivid picture of life in contemporary Delhi. Sunny Singh's novel Nani's *Book of Suicides* (2000) deals with Mini, the protagonist and her Nani who has the magical power of entering other people's minds and reading their dreams. Shona Ramaya's novel *Flute* (1989) deals with the psyche of the hero, Julian. Indira Ganesan's novel *The Journey* (1990) sets in an amalgam of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. Her second novel *Inheritance* (1997) deals with the young protagonist who is the youngest of three sisters, and all with different fathers.

Another novelist, Sunetra Gupta wrote four novels. Her first novel, *Memories of Rain* (1992) won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1996. It deals with the theme of East-West encounter. Her second novel, *The Glassblower's Breath* (1993) is set in the cities of London, New York and Calcutta. The protagonist is a young Indian woman in search of ideal love and companionship. Her third novel *Moonlight into Marzipan* (1995) deals with the protagonist Promothesh's scientific discovery in Calcutta. Her fourth novel *A Sin of Colour* (1999) describes the character of the hero, Debendranath Roy who falls in love with the wife of his elder brother.

Atima Srivastava's first novel, *Transmission* (1992) relates to the protagonist Ungellie, who is a television researcher working about an HIV positive couple. The theme is continued in her second novel *Looking for Maya* (1999). In this novel a young, brilliant student is shown falling in love with an older man, an Indian Professor. Meera Syal's first novel *Anita and Me* (1996) is a clear picture of nine year old Meena's interaction with her British neighbours. Her second novel *Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee* (1999) deals with the youth and middle age of three school friends. Kirin Narayan's *Love, Stars and All that* (1994) describes the protagonist Gita Das who believes an astrologer in India.

Anita Rau Badami's *Tamarind Mem* (1996) presents the life of Saroja who is referred to as Tamarind Mem by her servants because of her sharp tongue. Ameena Meer's *Bombay Talkie* (1995) describes the Indian Sojourn heroine born in the U.S.A.

Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) is a superficial treatment of a common theme of Indian fiction: the holy man and the gullibility of the public. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) is the winner of Booker Prize. In this novel Kiran Desai talks about the problem of migrant people. The novel also

focuses on India's current political problems such as War of Gurkha land. Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What The Body Remembers* (1999) sets in the village in the Punjab. It is the story of sixteen year old Roop, the beautiful daughter of a poor man, whom the forty-plus Sardaiji marries so that she can give him a son.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* is the first full length novel released in 2003. The protagonist is Nikhil 'Gogol' Ganguli, a young man about the same age as the author, born like her to immigrant parents from West Bengal. The novel locates the issue of identity-crisis in a host culture.

Shobha De is known as one of the prominent feminist writers. Like other women novelists, she also concentrates on women's problems. Her first novel *Socialite Evenings* (1989) is about the journey of a prominent Bombay socialite Karuna, from an ordinary middle class girl to a socialite. Her novel *Starry Nights* (1991) deals with Asha Rani, a film star who leaves no stone unturned to achieve her goal. Her third novel *Sisters* (1992) deals with the fast emerging urban culture and its evils. It is a story of suspense and conspiracy, crime and punishment. The novel portrays the world of Mikki Hira Lai and her step sister Alisha. *Strange Obsession* (1992), another novel of hers depicts lesbian relationship. *Sultry Days* (1994) deals with the protagonist Nisha who has love affair with Deb, known as God. Her next novel *Second Thoughts* (1996) deals with a young middle class Bengali boy Ranjan and his wife Maya. It also describes her disillusionment. The novel offers a slice of urban life and it is an explosive tale of love and betrayal that exposes the hollowness of Indian marriage system. Her novel *Speed Post* (1999) is an account of pains and pleasures of parenting. She writes letters to all her six children expressing her love for them and giving them advice. *Snapshot* (1995) tells about the explosive reunion of a group of school friends, now forced to confront the dark secrets they thought they had buried deep in the past. *Spouse: The Truth About Marriage* (2005) deals with her views about marriage, 'marriage is all about trust, companionship, affection and sharing'. Marriage also means the art of balancing between parents, children, friends and a career.

III. CONCLUSION

After taking a brief review of the works of all these Indian women novelists we can say that the Indian women novelists occupy a unique place in Indian Writing in English. Whatever may be the situation or condition due to gender differentiation within Indian family, one thing is clear that issues regarding gender, needs to be

given utmost importance. Industrialisation, liberalization and urbanisation have brought about some obvious changes in stereotyped concepts of masculinity and femininity, affecting household composition, residence patterns, sleeping arrangements, specific kinship relationships, male and female attitudes and behaviour.

The present trend in gender research is to question the negative ramifications of rigid sex typing in restricting personal fulfilment for both males and females by limiting the options open to them (Huter, 1983). The concept of 'androgyny' is particularly relevant in the Indian cultural context where the proper amalgamation of the so-called "masculine" and "feminine" personality traits into the concept of '*Ardha Nariswar*' (half-male-half-female) is the stated ideal (Chowdhury, 2007).

It is further interesting to note that present day Indian political, social and economic scenario is changing drastically to accommodate the 'women on top'. The mindset is changing, even though the progress is slow, it needs to be taken up at family level to make it faster and provide the real status of women in the family and society in general for a better future.

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Examining the Non-Language Students' Awareness, Use, and Challenges in EMI Courses in a Tertiary School

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Abstract— English as a medium of instruction (EMI) enables learners across the world while navigating the unique challenges in the online learning environment. The study was conducted at Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU)-College of Teacher Education to shed light on the place and role of EMI through descriptive-correlational research design. The 122 BSED students served as respondents and were selected through the probability sampling method. A validated survey questionnaire was used to identify the level of students' awareness on Executive Order No. 210 Series of 2003 section 2, the extent of use of the English language as a teacher's medium of instruction, and the challenges that students faced in using the EMI in online teaching in referenced to grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and motivation. Results showed that students were aware of Executive Order No. 210 s. 2003 and often used the EMI in online teaching and learning. English Grammar, pronunciation, motivation, and vocabulary sometimes posed challenges in online learning. It concluded that there was a significant positive relationship between the students' awareness of the EO and their use of EMI. Hence, the study recommends strengthening the use of EMI among students across programs in the institution.



Keywords— EO No. 210 s 2003 Section 2, Online Teaching and Learning, Challenges, EMI

I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease that originated in Wuhan, China, and subsequently spread globally. It is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), mainly spread among individuals during close contact, resulting in millions of deaths. COVID-19 is considered a pandemic due to its severity, causing a global health and economic crisis. The widespread outbreak of COVID-19 started in December 2019.

Lockdown activity at international, national, and local borders remains under control and is being closely

observed. This pandemic is one of the most significant dilemmas people have faced since World War II (UNDP Global, 2020). The unprecedented event in human history affected almost all aspects of life, including the pursuit of quality education, yet left the educational system largely at the mercy of technology.

Cornain (2020) stresses that a new normal represents a shift in our way of living due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new normal also aligns with the teaching and learning process in the 21st century, integrating technology and modern teaching pedagogy to provide students with all the educational resources that inspire creativity, critical

thinking, communication, and collaboration (Knowingtech, 2015). Education in the new normal involves schools offering blended or purely online courses using technological products and applications, such as Google Meet, Zoom, Edmodo, Skype, Webex, AnyMeeting, Vimeo, and YouTube streaming, among others, as learning and teaching platforms available to both students and teachers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has become one of the challenges that students and teachers face in meeting educational needs. It includes the instructional method the teachers used to deliver information, interact with students, and assess learning in a virtual environment, employing appropriate language as a medium for instruction in students' online learning.

Cabigon (2015) states that the Philippines is internationally recognized as one of the largest English-speaking countries, with at least some degree of fluency in the language for most of its population. English has long been one of the Philippines' official languages, and over 14 million Filipinos speak it. It is the language of trade and law and the primary means of educational training. English can be used for communication by stressing its importance to its students. Students in education concentrate on learner-centered instruction and are instructed to ask learners to use English to perform meaningful tasks.

Section 2 of Executive Order No. 210 series of 2003 (EO 210) on institutions of higher education, establishing the policy to strengthen the use of EMI in the educational system to ensure quality education and economic growth, specifically stated that: Higher education institutions, including State Colleges and Universities (SUCs), are now encouraged to adopt EMI at the tertiary level. The CHED shall adopt measures to promote and encourage EMI at the tertiary or higher education level.

The order encourages higher education institutions to establish an English-speaking university, regardless of the significance of non-language classes. However, problems arise from the use of the English language among students at SKSU. Inevitably, English is not employed in teaching and learning. As experienced by many students, Filipino and vernacular languages have been extensively used as media of instruction in the classroom.

Additionally, the scenario can likely lead to poor English language proficiency, a valuable and significant attribute for future teachers. The situation was aggravated as teachers and students employed online teaching through synchronous and asynchronous approaches. Hence, the problematic situation created a gap between language policies on the use of English in higher institutions and the existing communicative and instructional practices. In this

situation, the researchers believed that an empirical investigation was necessary to shed light on the role and place of EMI at SKSU.

This study addressed the following statement of the problem: (1) What is the level of awareness of non-language students of the EO 210? (2) What is the extent of using the EMI among non-language students in online teaching? (3) Is there a significant relationship between the students' level of awareness in EO 210 and the use of the EMI? (4) What is the level of challenges encountered by non-language students in using EMI in terms of grammar, pronunciation, motivation, and vocabulary?

II. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. A survey gathered data from 61 non-language major students. One hundred twenty-two students served as respondents, coming from the Bachelor of Secondary Education.

The survey questionnaire consisted of a five-point Likert rating scale and four parts. Part 1 of the survey instrument was formulated to gather data on the level of awareness of non-language major students of the EO 210. Part 2 focused on determining the extent to which the EMI was used among non-language students in online teaching and learning.

Furthermore, part 3 of the instrument focused on the correlational analysis between the students' level of awareness in EO 210 and the use of EMI. Consequently, part 4 of the survey questionnaire contained the indicators to gather the students' responses on the level of challenges encountered by non-language major students in using the EMI in terms of grammar, pronunciation, motivation, and vocabulary. Moreover, the data were analyzed statistically. The mean was used to analyze the descriptive data, while the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and standard deviation were used for the inferential data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data, which are presented in a tabular form, along with their interpretations and analyses.

Level of Awareness of Non-language Major Students on EO 210

As indicated, the results show that the students are aware of EO 210 ($M=3.61$, $SD=0.96$). The result is supported by the fact that the education system in the Philippines has been using EMI from elementary to university level for decades (as cited in Manalastas et al.,

2018). It is also reinforced by the notion that English is accessible and available. Additionally, it is stated that the greater one's ability to understand and use English, the better the chances of career advancement.

The respondents are fully aware of using the English language in writing all of their outputs, except when it is in a Filipino subject. The data show 4.36 as the mean of the respondents' answers, which is the highest mean rating out of the 15 questions presented.

Table 1. Level of Awareness of Non-Language Major Students on the EO 210

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1.I am aware of EO 210	3.08	Neither Aware/ Not Aware
2. I believe I have enough knowledge about EO 210	2.93	Neither Aware/ Not Aware
3. I practice following the policy of using EMI during class discussion.	3.48	Aware
4. I am concerned about the implementation of EO 210 in the University.	3.31	Neither Aware/ Not Aware
5. I participate in strengthening the implementation of the said policy.	3.36	Neither Aware/ Not Aware
6. I observed that the university encourages all students to use the English language in any office transaction.	3.67	Aware
7. Professors in the university help strengthen the implementation of English language to improve student's communicative skills.	3.93	Aware
8. I am happy using and following the EO No. 210 in the university.	3.36	Neither Aware/Not Aware
9. I am aware that EO No. 210 helps me in honing and strengthening my communication skills using the English language.	3.69	Aware
10.Sometimes I practice using the English language whenever I share my own opinion or ideas during	3.97	Aware

recitation.

11. Most of the professors in the university encourages me to speak in English during recitation to exercise the EO 210	3.87	Aware
12. All our written outputs must be in English language except the outputs from Filipino subjects.	4.36	Fully Aware
13. Professors always encourage us to use the English language during debates.	3.97	Aware
14. In order to follow EO 210, I usually speak in the English language during online reporting.	3.62	Aware
15. I am well aware of all the benefits I could get from following the EO 210.	3.59	Aware
Mean		3.61
		Aware

Extent of Use of EMI among Non-language Major Students in Online Teaching and Learning

The result shows that the English language is often used as a medium of instruction in online teaching and learning with a ($M=3.91$, $SD=0.98$). It can be seen in the illustration, that even if English is encouraged to be utilized in the Philippine universities due to its effectiveness in tertiary education, many learners find English language learning to be a tough challenge even though the language is the most effective way of communication and expressing thought and opinions (Chen & Chang, 2004; Grigorenko, 2002 as cited in Manalastas et al, 2018). Learners had an anxious feeling when using the language, as they could be ridiculed for making a mistake (MacIntyre et al., 2002).

Researchers found that among the 15 questions presented to the respondents, Question 14 has the highest mean rating. The data shows that 4.31 is the mean of respondents who answered that *English is used in the test/quizzes*.

Table 2. Extent of Use of EMI among Non-language Major Students in Online Teaching and Learning

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. English is employed as a medium of instruction in online classes.	3.57	Often
2. English with Filipino (Taglish or Fil-English) language is employed as a medium of instruction in online classes.	4.08	Often
3. English with Filipino and vernacular is employed as a medium of instruction in online classes.	3.38	Sometimes
4. English is used in greetings.	4.23	Always
5. English is used in checking the attendance.	4.20	Always
6. English is used in reviewing the previous lesson.	4.00	Often
7. English is used in teacher's lecture.	3.93	Often
8. English is used in online reporting.	3.93	Often
9. English is used in giving explanations.	3.80	Often
10. English is used in providing arguments.	3.89	Often
11. English is used in recitation.	3.82	Often
12. English is used in asking for clarifications/questions.	3.64	Often
13. English is used in giving assignments.	4.02	Often
14. English is used in the tests/quizzes.	4.31	Always
15. English is used in online teaching and learning.	3.89	Often
Mean	3.91	Often

Correlational Analysis between the Students' Level of Awareness in EO 210 and the Use of the EMI

Table 3. Correlational Analysis between the Students' Level of Awareness in EO 210 and the Use of the EMI

Variables	Pearson r	df.	Crit. value of r	Int. t
Students' level of awareness in EO 210 and the use of EMI	0.640	59	0.250	Significant

As shown, the computed Pearson r of the two variables is 0.640. It is statistically significant, as evidenced by the fact that it exceeds the critical value of 0.250 at the 0.05 level. Hence, it implies a *significant relationship* between the students' level of awareness in section 2 of EO NO. 210 and the use of EMI. Thus, if the students are aware of EO No. 210, then they are encouraged to follow the policy, which leads them to use the English language as the medium of instruction and communication in online teaching as often as possible.

Challenges of Students in English Language Learning

Table 4. Challenges of Non-Language Students in EMI in terms of Grammar

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I'm afraid to speak inside the class using the English language because I feel conscious with my grammar.	3.48	Moderately challenged
2. I am hesitant to attend any student's forum on campus because I do not know how to put my ideas into words.	3.25	Slightly challenged
3. I usually used vernacular language whenever I enter some offices in the campus because I would feel my statement is ungrammatical.	3.28	Slightly challenged
4. I don't feel comfortable using the English language, both oral and written inside the class because I don't know the rules of grammar.	3.00	Slightly challenged

5. I am hesitant to suggest and ask queries concerning the lesson to my professors because I am afraid if my statement is incorrectly structured.	3.11	Slightly challenged

Mean	3.22	Slightly challenged

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the question on G1 has the highest mean rating among all indicators. The data show that 3.48 is the mean of the respondents who are afraid to speak inside the class using the English language because of grammatical concerns, with a verbal description that is *moderately challenging*. Hence, the data shows that grammar is a challenge for non-language major students.

Table 5. Challenges of Non-Language Students in EMI in terms of Pronunciation

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I feel anxious when speaking in English because I might mispronounce some of the words.	3.10	Slightly challenged
2. I prefer to use vernacular language because it is easier to pronounce than English words.	3.13	Slightly challenged
3. I prefer to keep silent rather than participating in some forums inside the campus because I am insecure the way other students enunciate their words	3.05	Slightly challenged
4. I feel hesitant to volunteer to read the presentation during the discussion because of the unfamiliar words that I might mispronounce.	2.56	Rarely challenged
5. I prefer to use simple English words in our recitation because I am afraid I might mispronounce those difficult ones.	3.15	Slightly challenged
Mean	3.00	Slightly challenged

The data in Table 5 illustrate the challenges students face in learning the English language, particularly in terms of pronunciation.

Based on the data presented, the question on P5, which states that students prefer to use simple English words in their recitation because they are afraid of mispronouncing the difficult ones, has the highest mean rating, with a numerical value of 3.15 and a verbal description that is *slightly challenging*. Hence, the data indicate that pronunciation is a challenge for students in the non-language major class.

Table 6. Challenges of Non-Language Students in EMI in terms of Motivation

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I cannot thoroughly express and share my ideas using the English language.	3.03	Slightly challenged
2. I am afraid to be called in class to speak up my opinion using the English language.	2.95	Slightly challenged
3. I used to be contented on the information from my classmates and professors, even if I have mine too, because I am afraid I would just deliver and share my learning/s inappropriately and inaccurately using the English language	2.93	Slightly challenged
4. I am not comfortable using the English language due to the chance of being ridiculed by my classmates.	2.84	Slightly challenged
5. I do not engage in changing ideas in class using English because I often feel that my ability might be downgraded by my classmates who are fluent in speaking the language.	3.00	Slightly challenged
Mean	2.95	Slightly challenged

Table 6 presents the data collected on the motivation of students in ELL. Based on the data, all indicators have verbal descriptions that are *slightly challenged*. It means that the matter of motivation is a challenge for a non-language major student's utilization of the English language in their class. Specifically, Table 7 indicates that the M1 indicator, which suggests that students struggle to express and share their ideas

effectively in the English language, has the highest mean rating of all, with a numerical value of 3.03.

Table 7. Challenges of Non-Language Students in EMI in terms of Vocabulary

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I feel hesitant to use English language during recitation because of my limited vocabulary.	2.87	Slightly challenged
2. Sometimes I couldn't understand some English words used by my teachers.	2.70	Slightly challenged
3. I refuse to participate in the in-class debate activity because I am afraid I cannot finish my statement due to my limited vocabulary.	2.89	Slightly challenged
4. I often do not comprehend a paragraph presentation of my professor due to some inclusion of difficult words.	2.75	Slightly challenged
5. I often mistakenly translate some English words into my native language because I thought those were the correct terms to use in the statement.	2.84	Slightly challenged
	Mean 2.81	Slightly challenged

The table is similar to Table 7, which focuses on a student's challenge in ELL in terms of motivation. Based on the data, all indicators have verbal descriptions indicating a *slight challenge*. This indicates that vocabulary is *slightly challenging* for non-language major students to utilize in their English class, as observed in the total mean of the data, with a value of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 0.93.

Table 8. Summary of the Challenges Non-Language Students in EMI

Components	Mean	Rank
Grammar	3.22	1
Pronunciation	3.00	2
Motivation	2.95	3
Vocabulary	2.81	4

The data indicate that *grammar* is ranked as the first challenge for non-language primary class students' utilization of the English language in their learning, with a mean of 3.22. It is followed by the *pronunciation* ($m = 3.00$), which ranks second among the data. Then, it is followed by *motivation*, which has a mean value of 2.95. It is considered the third rank among all indicators and followed by vocabulary, the fourth rank with a mean value of 2.81.

IV. CONCLUSION

Generally, this study aimed to examine the role of EMI in online teaching at Sultan Kudarat State University, College of Teacher Education, and is limited to non-language major third-year students. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were formulated:

The non-language students of the College of Teacher Education are aware of EO 210; The English language is often used as a medium of instruction, as well as Filipino and vernacular languages, in online teaching and learning at Sultan Kudarat State University; there is a significant relationship between EO 210. The use of EMI in online education has become prevalent, and students are generally more conscious of their grammar when using EMI within the university.

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Magic Realism: Representations in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Shame*

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Abstract— Magic Realism is a literary genre which comprises magical or supernatural elements with the narrative representing the events as something mundane and realistic without inviting the question of improbability and allowing the readers to question reality itself. Ambiguous in its articulation and innovative in its style, magic realism has been employed by several writers across different regions and is considered to be one of the most experimental and popular literary genres. This study explores two texts namely Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Salman Rushdie's *Shame* and aims to analyze the use of magical realism in these texts. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, magic realism is explored through events within the magical sphere of Macondo. Magic realist elements are explored through the lens of modernization and imperialism with an exploration of the gypsies and the presence of the banana company in the story. In *Shame* the issue of politics and identity is dealt with regards to the use of magic realism. Events circulating around characters such as Sufiya Zinobia, Raza Hyder, Iskandar Harappa etc. help in emphasizing the issues explored. It further attempts to build a connection between the two texts through a close examination of certain resemblances between the texts and also how it differs from one another in terms of the authors' experimentation of magical realism.



Keywords— identity, imperialism, magic realism, modernization, politics

I. INTRODUCTION

With its roots in the domain of art, the term magic realism was first used by Franz Roh, the German art critic who used it to delineate an art form or style of post expressionism. In the domain of literature, magic realism emerged as a characteristic of modernist fiction designated by an Italian novelist Massimo Bontempelli in 1927. Following the “boom period” (Camayd-Freixas, 2014) of magic realism in the 1960s, several authors from different nations, distinctive socio political backgrounds produced literary works bearing their own implementation of the style of magic realism, also leading to varied articulations of the term. Bontempelli's literary journal titled *900* accumulated authors like “James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Rilke, Max Jacob and Blaise Cendrars” (Camayd- Freixas, 2014), and the journal circulated in Italy and France. Oblivious to Roh's contribution, Bontempelli proposed an avant-garde formula of his own which normalized a supernatural setting

by presenting it with acute realistic detail, which is a core necessity of magic realist style. Then came into the frame the Venezuelan essayist Arturo Usler- Pietri, the Guatemalan Miguel Angel Asturias, and the Cuban Alejo Carpentier. They were engaged in the journal *Ensayo* by Asturias and *Iman* by Carpentier. Asturias was the first to regard his work as magic realist amongst the writers of Latin America and Carpentier proposed the concept of “*lo real maravilloso americano*” (Zamora and Faris, 2005) (the American marvelous real.) Following this, magic realism “remained primarily a counter cultural and counter hegemonic literary style.” (Camayd- Freixas, 2014)

The next development phase witnessed the attempts of a more distinct articulation of the term magic realism and introduced the figures of Angel Flores and Luis Leal. According to the formalist approach they took, the term is defined as a mixture of the real and the fantastical accompanied with a “tight and logical plot, the

transformation of everyday life into the awesome and unreal, the intemporal fluidity of the narrative, the rejection of sentimentality and lyrical effusions, and the predilection for the new and the surprising.” (Camayd- Freixas, 2014) However, the characteristics mentioned fell under that defining modernist literature and thus lacked the very idea of a precise delineation of the term. With regards to Latin American literature, Flores considers Borges as the one introducing magic realism followed by several others eventually leading to what they defined as “fantastic literature.” (Camayd- Freixas, 2014)

The next development encompassed not only the Latin American but literature of the world around the year 1970 with the publication of *The Fantastic* by Todorov, who defined fantastic as “the tension between the possibility of a rational explanation and the disquieting acceptance of the supernatural- the unsettling prospect that the laws of nature have been violated, thereby compromising the reader’s sense of certainty and understanding of the world.” (Camayd – Freixas, 2014) The 1990s witnessed a fallback of it in Latin American literature and attained global recognition. Todorov’s fantastic conception developed into what Brian McHale calls postmodern fantastic. However, the two distinctive terms of fantastic and magic realism blended with a single literary work and triggered the need for formulations regarding the two which led to the next developmental stage.

Wendy Faris (2005) in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* lists five characteristics of magic realism. These are the presence of an “irreducible element” of magic that cannot be articulated through laws of the universe, the description details bearing a strong presence of the phenomenal world, doubt arising out of a hesitation towards conceiving two distinctive instances, close vicinity of the two realms and the questioning of the ideas of space, time and identity. (Faris, 2005) Considering all aspects of the development it is observed how the more precise the definition of the term, fewer are the texts recognized. A common ground of articulating the term is the basic idea of magic realism as a style or genre transforming the extraordinary into mundane and vice versa.

Magic Realism as a genre of literature became popularized in several other regions of the world with variations taking place in every corner. Isabel Allende, Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison, Mikhail Bulgakov, Haruki Murakami, etc. are some of the well known authors of magic realism.

II. MAGIC REALISM IN *ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE*

With the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the genre of magic realism reached a new height which placed the Latin American fiction emphasizing upon the magic realist texts under spotlight which spread globally. Gabriel Garcia Marquez in his *One Hundred Years of Solitude* attempts to compile centuries of Latin American history into a single text, creating the constrained world of Macondo and the stories encircling generations of the Buendia family. The novel interweaves reality and fiction through the implementation of magic realism which transports the readers to an inescapable world revolving around the characters or members of the Buendia family and everything which befalls them in this constrained space. The use of magic realism layered with the effect of the tone of the narrator (seemingly reliable) of the novel leaves the readers in a position not to question the events and Macondo therefore is conceived as a “state of mind” rather than a “geographical place.” (Geetha, 2010) From the very first chapter itself, the arrival of the gypsies introduces the theme of progress or modernization.

‘Every year during the month of March a family of ragged gypsies would set up their tents near the village, and with a great uproar of pipes and kettledrums they would display new inventions. First they bought the magnet. A heavy gypsy with an untamed beard and sparrow hands, who named himself as Melquiades, put on a bold public demonstration of what he himself called the eighth wonder of the learned alchemists of Macedonia. He went from house to house dragging two metal ingots and everybody was amazed to see pots, pans, tongs, and braziers tumble down from their places and beams creak from the desperation of nails and screws trying to emerge, and even objects that had been lost for a long time appeared from where they had been searched for most and went dragging along in turbulent confusion behind Melquiades’ magical irons.’ (Marquez, 1996)

With new discoveries at their hands, which are represented as bearing magical capabilities mystifies the residents of Macondo, they bring in the concept of the outside world as the source of progress. For instance, the magnet which attracts pots, pans, tongs, braziers and even lost items is depicted as the eighth wonder of the learned alchemists of Macedonia and also referred to as “Melquiades’ magical irons.” (Marquez, 1996) Every invention or discovery which is introduced by these peculiar group of people are presented as modern, encapsulating, something which enables the citizens to question their own traditional lifestyle and view theirs as progressive and essential to uplift their standard of living. This binds modernity and magic realism as the items brought are

presented as fantastical as well as representative of modernization or advancement. Moreover, it is important to note how these inventions are in reality, not new but are conceived as such by the people of Macondo and thus, the place itself is perceived as alienated or backward from the rest of the world or reality. There's a chronological lag which is presented in the relationship between Macondo and the innovations. Jose Arcadio Buendia's curiosity and gradual obsession over the startling discoveries through Melquiades compelling nature is yet another depiction of the functioning of imperialism. During the particular scene in the novel, with the discovery of the fifteenth century rusted armor and the calcified skeleton invites a vision of progress and also in way, foreshadows the political turmoil associated with violence which later envelopes Macondo. Gabriel Garcia Marquez ties modernity with a connection with the exterior. Firstly, with the coming of gypsies and then through Jose Arcadio Buendia's obsession over finding a route which connects Macondo with the outside regions, an attempt which seems to be fulfilled by Ursula while pursuing an altogether different quest, that is to find her missing son Jose Arcadio who flees with the gypsies. With Ursula's arrival, several traces of modernity are brought in as well. The dealing of the concept of otherness here is in an ironical sense as the new settlers and the old residents are represented as alike which marks a breakaway from cultural solitude.

The scientific discoveries brought up in the novel serves the purpose of mystifying the citizens of Macondo on one hand and leading them towards their exploitation on the other and the first line of the book already suggests the tight link between the two. `

"Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice." (Marquez, 1996)

Violence and magic realism seems to form a connection in the novel through several instances. One of the significant incidents is that of the mysterious death of Jose Arcadio with the sound of the pistol shot which echoed through the house.

"A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went down steps and climbed over curbs, passed along the Street of the Turks, turned a corner to the right and another to the left, made a right angle at the Buendia house, went in under the closed door, crossed through the parlor, hugging the walls so as not to stain the rugs, went on to the other living room, made a wide curve to avoid the dining-room table, went along the porch with the begonias, and passed without being seen under Amaranta's chair as she gave an arithmetic lesson to

Aureliano Jose, and went through the pantry and came out of the kitchen, where Ursula was getting ready to crack thirty-six eggs to make bread." (Marquez, 1996)

The story of Colonel Aureliano Buendia is one particular angle of perceiving Colombia's political history emphasizing violence. This is depicted through his conflict with the Conservative who facilitates the rise of foreign imperialist to power through the set up of the banana plantation; another event mingling reality and fiction. This is indeed the most direct indication to the theme of imperialism in the novel. Mr. Herbert's examination of the bunch of banana during his stay at the Buendia's, and the extensive description of the particular scene by Marquez transforms the fruit into an object bearing the capability for a potential exchange value. His utilitarian perception accelerates the formation of the banana company in Macondo. The manipulative working of the banana company extracting their needs of the people and bringing the valuation of them as mere objects is a representation of the darker side of modernity. The comparison made by the author of the people with the bananas during the massacre episode is another instance which also highlights this darker side, something being rejected once its value is lost. The massacre also explores the idea of the fabrication and questioning the authenticity of written history; an idea associated with imperialism. One of the magic realist elements attached to this particular theme happens to be the episode of the almost five year rain. Once Macondo fails to appear as a source of economic benefit for them, it is rejected and pushed towards a state of degradation and solitude.

The end of the novel is suggestive of the inevitability of the obsession first portrayed in the character of Jose Arcadio Buendia, a similar trait found in Aureliano towards the end. The key to attaining the knowledge of the present resides in the ancient manuscripts of Melquiades written in Sanskrit. Here, the fate of the Buendia family as predetermined brings forth the fantastical attribute connected to magic realism.

The theme of imperialism is in parallel to the idea of time as cyclical, an idea which Jose Arcadio Buendia seems to neglect in the novel. The negligence towards the suit of armor discovered by him indicates towards the imperialism of the past and which in a way foreshadows the upcoming imperialism. The space of the inside (Macondo) and the outside world justifies the working of imperialism as a way of forming the mindset or perception of the outside as more advanced, a magical world for them. The significant event of the massacre of thousands of civilians in order to subdue a strike and the memory of the particular incident held by only Jose Arcadio Segundo projects the idea of the play with knowledge. Their notion of what is deemed significant to

remember is showed, accompanied with the questioning of the accuracy and reliability of history as known to citizens. Through the events projected, an apocalypse seems like the only possible outcome of imperialism accompanied by scientific progression. The end was already predetermined the very first time the gypsies took their first steps in Macondo along with their discoveries in hand.

III. MAGIC REALISM IN *SHAME*

The story revolves around three families, with circumstances forming a tie between them. Through characters namely Omar Khayyam Shakil, Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder, and the significant element of shame in the novel explores the political and social conditions of Pakistan, minus the depiction of the name of the country itself. And with characters such as Sufiya Zinobia, daughter of Raza Hyder and Bilquis Hyder and the three mothers of Omar, Rushdie employs magic realism. The very beginning of the novel indeed seems like a fairytale exploring the magic realism technique from the very start.

The issue of language and identity are important aspects in studying post colonialism, which is also depicted in this novel. The very title 'shame' itself is emphasized by providing an explanation of the words "shame" and "sharam." (Rushdie, 1995) The identity of Pakistan is focused upon as well. Larissa states that the characters of Harappa and Hyder bear resemblances to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia ul Haq. (Gadelha, 2012)

Magic Realism in this novel is experimented through the metamorphosis of Sufiya into a beast, slaughtering people. The use of this technique allows the reader to uncover the reality not exposed apparently in the novel. With the incorporation of beastly qualities in her through great emphasis laid upon the detailed description of her eyes, the character of Sufiya Zinobia becomes the highlight of the novel in relation to its use of magic realism. Neeti Agarwal (2017) explores the relationship between Omar Khayyam and Sufiya to reflect upon the "conflict between Oriental and Occidental culture" and also pointing out the idea of the "imaginative and the supernatural East" taking over the rational West. (Agarwal, 2017) Omar's attempts to control Sufiya leads to a failure on his part and the measures taken to constrain her boundaries and freedom as a way of curing her could be conceived in this light.

The use of hyperbole is another aspect in this experimentation. This is seen in the pregnancy of Omar's mothers, as well as the birth of Naveed's twenty seven children. In this instance, magic realism is used as a tool for social critique in the representation of everyday situation in an extraordinary sense. The reality presented in the novel

through the use of magic realism by Salman Rushdie is done so in a way of fragmentation and this allows the readers to engage in putting together these fragments or pieces of reality offered.

Brought together with the political history of Pakistan, Rushdie uses magic realism to convey a much wider form of the truth he intends to depict. He uses magic realism to project the reality of contemporary Pakistan then as to expose the harsh conditions the citizens succumb to under the tyrannical rule, and most significantly presents the very idea of shame; but does so through his creative experimentation of satire and irony. In the novel, General Raza Hyder who exemplifies President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq takes over the position of power previously occupied by Iskander Harappa. He ultimately finds himself in a labyrinth, a state which seems to be driven by his own political misfortunes, stern decisions, and responses in dealing with the circumstances which the members of his family faces, turmoil of his wife and his daughter Sufiya with the beast within her.

Sufiya Zinobia's birth emphasizes the world of nightmare which is the world or reality that Rushdie paints in his novel, the girl who is referred to as the "wrong miracle" (Rushdie, 1995) in the story and the introduction of the significance that the theme of shame holds in the story. The supernatural elements are presented through her by Rushdie. As stated by Afzal (2015), the story of Omar and Sufiya could also be interpreted as reimagining the tale of Beauty and the Beast where Sufiya's beauty which is "substituted by shame disfigures into hatred and violence" (Sankar, 2012) and Omar is described as "Dizzy, peripheral, inverted, infatuated, insomniac, stargazing, fat: what manner of hero is this?" (Rushdie, 1995) Salman Rushdie seems to incorporate elements of fairytales into this story through the portrayal or depiction of a fantastical setting and characters who seemed to fall under the category of the damsel in distress, however in this novel, the damsel is Sufiya with a lurking beast within her and whose mental maturity is that of a young girl incapable of comprehending the complexities of the world she is a part of in the novel. She seemed to be lost in a dreamlike state; innocence echoing from her presence while the world she embodies is that of torture, violence and evil. This world that Rushdie presents accepts this kind of hero but fails to accept Sufiya as the heroine. Through her character, readers' see how humiliation, isolation, subjected to incessant hatred leads evokes violence which transforms to "self generating energy." (Sankar, 2012) And it is through this, Rushdie emphasizes upon the complexities within the theme of identity explored in the novel.

Shame and shamelessness are the core aspects of the novel, which conveys the "greed, the shamelessness and

violence of the political leaders in Pakistan.” (Sankar, 2012) The idea of violence igniting more violence is depicted in the novel through several instances such as the birth of Sufiya Zinobia’s on the part of her mother Bilquis, Rani Harappa’s shame which she imprints on the eighteen shawls sewn herself over years and years, and also that of Raza Hyder’s, of the political affairs he engages in, the murders, riots, ploys, bribes of the politics of Pakistan and the misuse of religion as to employ a rule of dictatorship and control through inhuman measures taken upon people. Sufiya Zinobia is the epitome of shame and the birth of the beast within her through overpower of the feeling of shame inside her ultimately leads her to decapitate Omar, her husband. It is the abstract notion of shame which is personified that the novel is centered upon and not upon the character of Sufiya, evident through her few appearances, but what she is representative of indeed. Rushdie’s implementation highlights this point. Even though her character resembles that of folktales and supernatural beings, she is to be perceived as an “embodiment of evil committed by the leadership of nation as well as by her father.” (Sankar, 2012) A reality which is not acknowledged in reality is what Salman Rushdie seeks to present and thus, he adopts this style or genre of magic realism to “present the story of the conflict between the forces of shamelessness and shame.” (Sankar, 2012)

A blend of fact and fiction is done in the novel *Shame*, and Rushdie’s capability and creativity in blending the historical with the fantastical is praiseworthy. Rushdie’s deliberate attempts of interference in the narrative intentionally pointing out the idea of the story not being a realistic one seems to be a crucial factor of examining the reliability of the narrator. Magic realism itself is the blend of magic and realism with equal emphasis on both the parts. The story also clearly presents a seemingly apparent picture of the socio political turmoil of Pakistan parallel to the narrator’s insistence on the idea put forward that,

“The country in this story is not Pakistan, or nor quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same place. My story, my fictional country exists, like myself, at a slight angle to reality.” (Rushdie, 1995)

Rushdie then in the novel also contradicts his own statement with the interference of the narrator hinting on to the very conception of the novel bearing historical references from the political background of the country of Pakistan.

“As to Afghanistan: after returning to London, I met a senior British diplomat at a dinner, a career specialist in ‘my’ part of the world. He said it was quite proper, ‘post-Afghanistan’, for the West to support the dictatorship of President Zia ul-Haq.” (Rushdie, 1995)

This very mixture of historical facts and the fantastical world of “Peccavistan” (Rushdie, 1995) that the narrator emphasizes on the novel present Rushdie’s style of employing magic realism and his attempt at balancing both – the real and the imaginary. This also leads the readers to question the intent of the novel which the author projects in somewhat subtle and somewhat apparent form.

The grotesque depictions of the novel incorporating elements of magic realism seem to build a connection with that of the reality of the contemporary scenario of Pakistan. The climax of the novel is Rushdie’s imagination of the destiny which awaits Raza Hyder and Omar Khayyam and brings the fantastical setting delineated at the very beginning, the abode of the three wives where the two meet their destiny.

IV. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE* AND *SHAME*

Much resemblance is prevalent in the two novels *Shame* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in many aspects enveloping the way magic realism is emphasized. Both the novels carry a tone similar to myths. From the setting that the novels are set to the hyperbolic description of characters like the three wives or Jose Arcadio, there are similarities. Through the analysis of magic realism in the two texts, a comparison between the magic realism in Latin American literature and South Asian or Indian literature could also be brought to examination. *Shame* critiques on the political dictatorship or authoritative governance projected hinting a close link to that of the politics prevailing during the period Rushdie wrote the text. Unlike *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Salman Rushdie’s *Shame* seems to be more transparent in its critique upon political affairs as majority of the novel circles around Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa and the conflict between them within the political domain. The implementation of myth and history in experimenting with the style of magic realism is a resembling feature which exists in both the novels. A slight distinction comes to the forefront on the basis of the reliability of the narrator both the novels, with Rushdie’s representation of a seemingly unreliable one and Marquez’s employment of a possibly reliable one.

The climax of both the novels presents a tragic end. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* paints a devastating picture of an apocalypse erasing the last trace of the Buendia family as well as any remains of the fictional town of Macondo. *Shame*’s ending is more grotesque and in this novel, the abode of the three wives and the space Omar grew up is destroyed along with the gruesome last image of his being decapitated by Sufiya’s ultimate form of the beast; that of

the legendary white panther which is depicted in a metaphorical sense.

Few differences could be observed in the language of both the authors. Forgetting one's history is a significant element experimented through magic realism by Garcia Marquez. The insomnia plague described at the very beginning of the novel and the banana company massacre is reflective of this. Repetition of history is linked to the members of the Buendia family, particularly of the characters bearing the same names. And in *Shame*, the history is imagined and represented with the merging of fact and fiction while also commenting upon the leaders with a fictional fate embracing the two representatives of political leaders of Pakistan. While Rushdie seems to be implementing the techniques of magic realism in order to portray the Third World's consciousness, Garcia Marquez projects a mirror to the Latin American history on a much wider scale. Characters and fantastical scenarios seem to overwhelm the plot of the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Rushdie's *Shame* shows slightly less subsequent depictions of such magic realist elements of the fantasy and imagination and provides a space in the narrative for the thematic inclusions. Thus, the "carnavalesque spirit" (Faris, 2005) characteristic of both the novels shows two different representations. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* presents a more apparent and heightened form of the spirit and *Shame* presents it on a much more balanced note. Extravagant language is evident in the narrative of both the novels by Garcia Marquez and Salman Rushdie.

Several similarities are to be found in the novels between Rushdie and Garcia Marquez, most probably due to Rushdie's own statement of Garcia Marquez being a heavy influence on him with regards to magic realism. But while the similarities reflect upon the influence, the dissimilarities emphasize upon the authenticity and originality in his works. Fantasy as a literary device is employed in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* with much significance attributed to the space in the novel. In both the novels, the two realms of real and the unreal are merged and a co-existence prevails.

V. CONCLUSION

The text *One Hundred Years of Solitude* allows the readers to peep into the politics of Latin America through the events occurring in Macondo which are fantastical yet presented as seemingly real. Thus, the way Marquez captures the blend of the contradictory elements stated above while pushing the readers to question reality makes it a well constructed work of magic realism. In *Shame*, Rushdie also blends history and myth to present this critique so as to devise a world encompassing the magical and the

real. Sufiya's transformation into a beast and the subsequent killings could be also seen as symbolic of the violence within the political administration of Pakistan during that period. Here, she is the victim of the same patriarchal structure that the country represents. As witnessed in the two texts, magic realism helps to lay out commentaries on issues and portray events of the socio-political scenario of a region which is difficult to express directly and is also difficult to present in a direct manner to highlight the impact and the significance that such events carry. Characters indeed are portrayed as extraordinary beings with their depictions bearing an exaggeration while also reflecting that of the oral tradition and folklore. Both the novels' use of magic realism offers a critique in association with their respective contexts. The genre is seen as a reaction to the contextual affairs and the technique and style as a response to the style of realism. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* allows the readers to question the history of theirs through the stories circling each member, proceeding throughout the generations of the Buendia family. From highlighting the impact of colonialism and the utilitarian schemes under the veil of progression or modernity, the aesthetics of the supernatural imbibed in characters such as Babilonia attracting yellow butterflies towards himself, Remedios the Beauty gifted with an extraordinary beauty and who levitates towards heaven in her last moments, Jose Arcadio Buendia who enlarges himself at will and Jose Arcadio's extraordinary physique to incomprehensible calamities enveloping the town of Macondo such as the insomnia plague, the rainfall continuing till almost five years and ultimately the hurricane which sweeps the entire town along with the last trace of the Buendia family line; readers experience the two realms which is brought to close vicinity in Garcia Marquez's technique of magic realism. And, the significant aspects of space and time come up in discussion. Salman Rushdie's brilliance in his experimentation with the technique of historiographic metafiction, dealing with the aspects of space and time offers a work of art echoing attributes defining it as a postmodern novel. With a satiric tone, a thrilling fairy tale like atmosphere, an unreliable narrator, Rushdie employs a mocking commentary upon the issues revolving around a post colonial world. Violence recurs in the novel in the presentation of the theme of identity; of an individual as well as the entire region he paints with his magic realist strokes.

Therefore, through a detailed analysis of the key elements of the two texts *Shame* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the perception of magic realism as an offshoot of post colonialism and bearing characteristics of postmodernism is also established. Moreover, this style or technique of magic realism is seen as a significant tool for

social commentary in a way which blurs the division between two worlds, the real and the fantastical; and it is this way or technique which allows us to perceive the world and the truth underlying it through a different critical angle.

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Critical Examination of Vandana Shiva's Work and Thought: Ecological Activism, Feminism, and the Politics of Knowledge

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Abstract— *Vandana Shiva is a globally recognized environmentalist, author, and activist, whose work encompasses the realms of ecological sustainability, anti-globalization, feminism, and the philosophy of science. A former physicist turned radical activist, Shiva has been instrumental in critiquing the global industrial system, particularly the Green Revolution, the biotechnology industry, and Western science. Her arguments are particularly notable for the way they intertwine ecological activism with a deep feminist perspective, calling for both social and environmental justice. This paper attempts a critical examination of the central themes in Shiva's work, particularly her opposition to Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), her advocacy for food sovereignty and women's rights, and her critiques of Western scientific practices. While Shiva's contributions to global ecological and social justice are significant – earning for herself a title of "Gandhi of Grain" – this paper also explores critiques of her ideas, particularly regarding her stance on GMOs and the romanticization of indigenous knowledge. Through a balanced analysis, this paper seeks to understand both the strengths and limitations of Shiva's intellectual and activist contributions.*



Keywords— *ecological sustainability, anti-globalization, Genetically Modified Organisms, industrial agriculture.*

Vandana Shiva is a globally recognized environmentalist, author, and activist, whose work encompasses the realms of ecological sustainability, anti-globalization, feminism, and the philosophy of science. A former physicist turned radical activist, Shiva has been instrumental in critiquing the global industrial system, particularly the Green Revolution, the biotechnology industry, and Western science. Her arguments are particularly notable for the way they intertwine ecological activism with a deep feminist perspective, calling for both social and environmental justice.

This paper critically examines the central themes in Shiva's work, particularly her opposition to Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), her advocacy for food sovereignty and women's rights, and her critiques of Western scientific practices. While Shiva's contributions to global ecological and social justice are significant, this paper also explores critiques of her ideas, particularly

regarding her stance on GMOs and the romanticization of indigenous knowledge. Through a balanced analysis, this paper seeks to understand both the strengths and limitations of Shiva's intellectual and activist contributions.

Born in 1952 in India, Vandana Shiva began her academic career in physics before turning to the philosophy of science. Her early education at the University of Delhi and later the University of Western Ontario gave her a rigorous grounding in scientific methods, but it was her later exposure to environmental and feminist activism that shaped her current worldview. Shiva's move from academia to activism occurred after she became involved with the Chipko movement in the 1970s, where rural women in India engaged in direct action to protect their forests from commercial logging. This experience catalysed her understanding of the link between environmental conservation and social justice.

Shiva's transition from a scientist to an environmentalist and feminist is often framed within her critique of the Western understanding of knowledge. She was not merely concerned with issues of ecology but also with the deeper philosophical question of how knowledge itself is constructed. As a result, her intellectual framework combines environmentalism with an acute awareness of the politics of knowledge, which she critiques as being dominated by Western capitalist interests. In her own words,

"I am not opposed to science, but I am opposed to the monopolization of science by the global corporate agenda." — *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (1989).

This statement encapsulates Shiva's primary concern: the way science, particularly Western science, has been harnessed to serve the interests of multinational corporations rather than global communities, especially in the Global South.

One of Shiva's most significant contributions to the environmental discourse is her critique of industrial agriculture, particularly the Green Revolution. The Green Revolution, which was introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, aimed to increase food production in developing countries through the use of high-yield varieties, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides. While it was hailed as a success in terms of increasing crop yields, Shiva and other critics argue that it led to environmental degradation, the loss of biodiversity, and the undermining of local farming practices.

Shiva has been particularly critical of the biotechnology industry's role in promoting genetically modified crops. She argues that GMOs are a form of biopiracy, where corporations patent and commodify the genetic material of indigenous plants and seeds. This, she contends, reduces farmers' independence and increases their dependence on multinational corporations. One of her shocking revelations is:

"The Green Revolution did not increase food security, it reduced it. It increased dependence and reduced resilience." — *The Seed Sovereignty Movement* (2001).

Shiva argues that the Green Revolution's focus on high-yield, monoculture crops not only eroded local biodiversity but also disrupted traditional agricultural practices. For instance, by replacing traditional seeds with genetically modified varieties, small-scale farmers lost control over their food systems, a theme that Shiva continuously emphasizes in her advocacy for seed sovereignty. To her,

"Seeds are not mere objects; they are the embodiment of life. When we control seeds, we control life." — *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1991).

Shiva's call for seed sovereignty is central to her environmental activism. By advocating for the right of farmers to save, exchange, and develop their own seeds, she challenges the corporate control of agriculture. She believes that protecting the diversity of seeds is crucial for both ecological sustainability and the preservation of cultural heritage.

A unique fact to notice, Shiva's feminist views are deeply interwoven with her environmental activism. One of the most compelling aspects of her work is the link she makes between the exploitation of women and the degradation of the environment. In her writings, Shiva consistently highlights the fact that women, particularly in rural India, are the primary custodians of agriculture and food production. However, despite their central role in maintaining ecological balance, women remain marginalized in both economic and political spheres.

In *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (1989), Shiva examines the relationship between women's economic roles and their environmental concerns. She posits that women, in many traditional societies, have a profound connection to nature because of their responsibility for domestic tasks, food production, and community care. This knowledge, however, is often excluded from dominant discourses on development. As she observes,

"The role of women in agriculture and in food production has been critical for the survival of communities, yet they are invisible in the dominant paradigms of development." — *Staying Alive* (1989). Shiva's feminist ecological vision calls for the recognition of this knowledge and for empowering women to take leadership roles in both ecological conservation and the creation of sustainable food systems. By linking women's empowerment to ecological justice, Shiva challenges the gendered dimensions of both patriarchy and industrial capitalism.

Vandana Shiva's critique of industrial agriculture is also a critique of the global political and economic structures that promote it. Shiva argues that the rise of globalized capitalism and neoliberal economic policies have led to the commodification of not only nature but also knowledge itself. This "monoculture of the mind," as she describes it, imposes a singular, Western-centric approach to knowledge, which often marginalizes local, indigenous, and ecological knowledge systems. In *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (1997), Shiva argues that the intellectual property rights imposed by Western corporations constitute a form of "biopiracy," in which local communities are stripped of their traditional knowledge and resources. This process, she claims, is a manifestation of the broader neoliberal project of globalization, which seeks to

integrate local economies into a global capitalist system that serves the interests of multinational corporations. "The most fundamental aspect of human life is the relationship between knowledge, life, and community", she asserts (ibid).

It may be argued that Shiva's work stresses the need for a more inclusive understanding of knowledge that respects and integrates local and indigenous knowledge systems. She calls for an alternative to globalization, one that is rooted in local communities, ecological sustainability, and democracy. She bluntly remarks, "Globalization is a strategy for making the world's poor and indigenous populations invisible and dispossessing them of their land and knowledge." — *Earth Democracy* (2005). In her critique of globalization, Shiva positions herself as an advocate for what she terms "Earth Democracy," a model of governance and economy that is decentralized, environmentally sustainable, and rooted in the rights of local communities.

While Vandana Shiva's work has had a profound impact on the environmental and anti-globalization movements, her ideas have also been the subject of criticism. One of the most prominent criticisms of Shiva's activism is her strong stance against genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Critics argue that Shiva's opposition to GMOs is not sufficiently grounded in scientific evidence. While there are legitimate concerns about the monopolization of seeds by multinational corporations, some argue that her categorical rejection of GMOs overlooks their potential benefits in improving food security, particularly in developing countries.

Shiva's rejection of all forms of genetically modified crops has been critiqued as overly simplistic and potentially harmful to efforts to address food insecurity in the Global South. Critics argue that rather than dismissing biotechnology altogether, a more nuanced approach could incorporate the benefits of biotechnology alongside sustainable farming practices.

Another criticism of Shiva's work is her romanticization of indigenous knowledge. While Shiva rightly highlights the importance of local knowledge systems in maintaining ecological balance, some scholars argue that her emphasis on these systems can obscure the real challenges that rural communities face. These challenges include limited access to resources, climate change, and economic pressures that sometimes force communities to adopt industrial agricultural methods in order to survive.

In summation, Vandana Shiva's contributions to environmentalism, feminism, and the politics of knowledge have had a significant impact on global debates around

sustainability, development, and justice. Her critiques of industrial agriculture, GMOs, and globalization have sparked important conversations about the future of food security, the rights of farmers, and the relationship between science and society. Shiva's emphasis on seed sovereignty, the empowerment of women, and the protection of indigenous knowledge has provided a radical and necessary counter-narrative to the dominant paradigms of development. Overall, this "Gandhi of Grain" remains a vital figure in the global conversation about ecological and social justice, and her work continues to inspire movements for a more just and sustainable world.

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Alienation, Superstructure and Class Struggle: Explicating Francesca Simon's *Horrid Henry* Series within the Ambit of Marxism through the Lens of Comedy

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Abstract—This paper undertakes a Marxist literary analysis of Francesca Simon's *Horrid Henry* series, with a specific focus on the short stories *Horrid Henry Robs the Bank* (2003), *Horrid Henry's Christmas* (1994) and *Horrid Henry and the Scary Sitter* (1997). It studies the construction of class struggle, alienation and superstructure through the lens of comedy. This is done by positioning Henry as the subaltern figure, whose humorous behavioural transgressions expose and are simultaneously contained by prevailing parental, i.e. capitalist state, ideologies. The study is structured around three comic modalities: farce, lexico-semantics and satirical characterisation. The farcical narrative foregrounds the grotesque inequalities embedded in the superstructure; lexical humour is deployed to represent resistance to conformity to bourgeois norms linguistically; authority figures, like parents, teachers, and even babysitters, are portrayed satirically to expose the arbitrariness of 'disciplinary' mechanisms (which mirror marginalisation and propaganda to maintain false consciousness) at the heart of the capitalist state's apparatus. The *Horrid Henry* series operates as a discursive site wherein the ideological tensions of capitalism are encoded, negotiated, and pedagogically transmitted through the comic form. Stories from three distinct quinquenniums have been selected for this study to explore the consistency in Simon's political messages across time. Ultimately, by situating Simon's series within broader debates on the political function of children's literature, this research underscores the genre's consequential role in constructing youth perspectives on class, power and justice.



Keywords—Marxist literary theory, children's literature, class struggle, alienation, superstructure, capitalism, ideology, subversion, comedy, satire, *Horrid Henry* series

I. INTRODUCTION

Children's literature has long been a site of ideological contestation, wherein narratives, ostensibly crafted for amusement, often serve as vehicles for transmitting prevalent cultural norms and political and economic ideologies. Seminal works such as *The Case of Peter Pan* (Rose, 1984) critique the ideological construction of childhood within literature, arguing that the adult authorial voice encodes political and cultural assumptions under the guise of innocence. Meanwhile, studies like *The Rhetoric of Character in Children's Literature*

(Nikolajeva, 2002) emphasise narrative structure and genre in shaping young readers' ideological orientation. So, children's literature narratives, while aimed at a juvenile audience, subtly encode political dynamics and ideological constructs.

The *Horrid Henry* series, first published in 1994, has sold over 21 million copies worldwide and has been translated into more than 25 languages, reflecting its significant global reach (Hachette UK). The animated television adaptation has enjoyed extensive international distribution, airing on prominent children's networks such as Nick Jr. in

the UK, ABC in Australia, and channels in India and South Africa, among others (Kidscreen, 2015). Additionally, the franchise expanded into film with *Horrid Henry: The Movie* (2011), which grossed approximately \$10.1 million worldwide, demonstrating its commercial success beyond print media (Box Office Mojo). This widespread popularity and sustained presence across multiple media platforms reinforce *Horrid Henry's* status as a major cross-border cultural fixture in children's entertainment, thereby underscoring the importance of critically analysing the ideological content embedded within the series. The public appeal of this series necessitates the study of its pedagogically political functions. The protagonist, Henry, embodies the Jungian archetype of the Rebel or the Outlaw (Jung, 1968), frequently engaging in acts of defiance against authority figures such as parents, teachers, and societal expectations. It operates under the literary framework of 'the carnivalesque', where dramatic subversion of social hierarchies is characterised by celebration and a sense of collective joy and chaos. Simon's linear narratives are most often seen to culminate in the restoration of order and the reaffirmation of societal norms, as Henry's parents and teachers crack down on the initiated rebellion.

Marxist literary theory views literature not as a passive reflection of social reality, but as an active agent in the production and reinforcement of ideological structures (Eagleton, 1976). Rooted in the writings of Karl Marx, this critical framework considers literature as part of the cultural superstructure that works to maintain the dominance of the ruling class by naturalising its worldview. Marxist criticism, therefore, interrogates how texts participate in the reproduction of hegemonic ideologies while also examining the potential for resistance, contradiction, and subversion within narrative forms. This mode of reading seeks to foreground the material conditions of textual production and reception, emphasising class struggle, alienation, and the commodification of human relations as central concerns. The application of Marxist literary theory to texts offers new insights into the intersection of literature and ideology. A Marxist analysis of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* was conducted, exploring how the novel reflects class distinctions and the ideological mechanisms that sustain social hierarchies (Khan, 2024). Similarly, a study with a broader scope examined the role of form in contemporary literary criticism, arguing that the study of formal structures in literature can reveal the ways in which capitalist ideologies shape and are reflected in literary forms (Nilges, 2024). Additionally, Raymond Williams's body of work was revisited with respect to Marxist literary criticism, highlighting the evolution of Marxist approaches

to literature and their continued relevance in understanding the interplay between culture and class dynamics (Medovoi, 2024).

Humour, as an authorial choice, plays a pivotal role in the process of a Marxist deconstruction in the *Horrid Henry* series. Humour is a multifaceted phenomenon in literature that encompasses various forms of amusement and comic effect, serving as a social and psychological mechanism to both entertain and critique cultural norms, thereby revealing contradictions within societal structures (Critchley, 2002). In literature, humour is often understood through the lens of incongruity theory, which posits that humour arises from the perception of something incongruous, leading to a pleasurable cognitive shift (Morreall, 1987). So, humour crucially possesses a subversive potential, capable of challenging established norms and hierarchies (Bakhtin, 1984). However, it must be noted that humour can also serve to normalise and legitimise the status quo when co-opted by dominant ideologies. Humour manifests in diverse forms, such as irony, which entails saying the opposite of what one means to highlight absurdity or critique (Booth, 1974); farce, a comedic style characterised by exaggerated situations and physical humour often used to expose irrationality (Dentith, 2000); wordplay, which relies on the manipulation of language, especially lexico-semantic ambiguities, to produce comic effect (Chiaro, 1992); satire, which ridicules vice, folly, or power structures through wit and exaggeration (Hutcheon, 1994); and parody, a mimetic form that imitates a particular genre, author, or text to critique its assumptions or conventions (Hutcheon, 1985). In Francesca Simon's *Horrid Henry* series, while multiple comedic modes are present, farce, lexico-semantic wordplay, and satirical characterisation emerge as the most predominant forms, offering rich terrain for a Marxist reading.

A recent study shows how humour in children's fiction can both reinforce and challenge hegemonic masculinities, highlighting the complex interplay between humour and gender norms (Potter, 2024). Additionally, a systematic literature review on social media humour related to the COVID-19 pandemic, analyses themes, coping mechanisms, and linguistic devices, thereby shedding light on how humour functions in digital narratives (Alkaraki et al., 2024). Furthermore, another study investigates the impact of humorous conversational agents on learning experiences, offering insights into the pedagogical applications of humour in educational contexts (Ceha et al., 2021).

A few academic engagements with *Horrid Henry* have begun to unpack its cultural, psychological, and ideological significance within children's literature. A

quantitative study has revealed how fear and violence, often dismissed in juvenile fiction, manifest recurrently across the series in both physical and emotional forms, positioning these narratives as reflections of children's lived anxieties rather than mere comic exaggeration (Sakar, 2019). Most notably, a detailed linguistic study in the *Russian Linguistic Bulletin* foregrounds the pedagogical and psychological functions of food references (troponyms) within the series. This research argues that Francesca Simon's strategic use of gastronomic discourse not only reflects British food culture but also operates as an educational tool that conveys social norms, behavioural lessons, and cultural knowledge to young readers, simultaneously enriching their linguistic and cultural understanding through comic effect (*Russian Linguistic Bulletin*, 2020). A translation-focused analysis has highlighted the socio-political significance of the series, demonstrating how culture-specific references in the Turkish renditions necessitate strategic domestication or foreignisation, thereby exposing the ideological choices inherent in translating childhood itself (Tercan, 2022).

This study unfolds through a tripartite framework. The first section scrutinizes the farce at the base of the contradictory situations and interactions with secondary/minor characters that Henry finds himself in, exposing the exploitation of a capitalist and hegemonic order. The second section examines the intricacy of Simon's unassumingly labyrinthine lexico-semantics that subtly subvert predominant ideological narratives of alienation. The third section focuses on the construction of authority figures as objects of satire, revealing the paradoxical portrayal of power that oscillates between critique and complicity. Together, these interlinked dimensions of humour offer a comprehensive lens for unpacking the ideological ambivalence and class dynamics embedded in the *Horrid Henry* series.

In examining the *Horrid Henry* children's literature series through a Marxist lens, this paper aims to elucidate the ways in which humour functions as an instrument of class commentary. By analysing the nexus of humour and class dynamics in these texts, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of children's literature in the construction and negotiation of power, politics and justice. Through this analysis, the paper endeavours to illuminate the complex and often contradictory ways in which humour operates within the ideological backdrop of children's literature, acting as a crucial cultural influence on young, impressionable minds.

II. FARCE AS CLASS COMMENTARY

In the landscape of children's literature, farce, meaning deliberate exaggeration and ludicrous absurdity, functions as a potent narrative device to lay bare social norms, power relations, and ideological constructs (Palmer, 1994). Francesca Simon's *Horrid Henry* series, crucially comprising of *Horrid Henry Robs the Bank* (2003), *Horrid Henry's Christmas* (1994) and *Horrid Henry and the Scary Sitter* (1997), deploys farce not simply for comedic relief but as a mechanism for interrogating the tenuousness of adult authority and disciplinary practices, revealing the contradictions inherent in hegemonic family and societal systems and orders.

In *Horrid Henry Robs the Bank* (2003), Simon pushes the farcical envelope by framing a child's bank robbery as an absurd critique of economic authority. Henry's "master plan" to "steal all the money from Dad's piggy bank" (Simon, 2003) parodies mature narratives of criminality as a response to the capitalist order of accumulation of resources as 'private property' (Locke, 1689). The absurdity here is underscored by the fact that in a family, wealth is shared as a 'common property resource', meaning that he clearly has a right over his father's savings. This exaggerates a familiar domestic and jejune object, the 'piggy bank', into not only an instrument of but also a site of claiming transgressive agency. The farce is heightened when Henry's disguises, such as pointlessly donning "a fake moustache and dark glasses" (Simon, 2003), fail spectacularly, drawing attention to the performative aspects of the roles of different classes in a hierarchical society. This suggests the rigidity of the system that Henry, and the working class, find themselves in, but fail to break free from. The farce employs structural repetition and thematic failure to underscore the limits of subversion (Neale, 1993), ultimately reinstating hegemonic control even as it appears to contest it. Furthermore, the reactions of secondary characters, here Henry's exasperated parents, who "catch him red-handed but can't help laughing" (Simon, 2003), illustrate cryptic nuance in state and bourgeois responses to protest, blending condemnation with a conceited form of amusement. For young readers, this oscillation produces a space where rebellion is both exciting and contained, encouraging reflection on the boundaries between protest and social order. Henry's ludicrous heist plan, including "waving a toy gun and shouting 'Give me all the sweets and money!'" (Simon, 2003), enacts Guy Debord's concept of the 'society of the spectacle' (Debord, 1967). The farcical performance parodies capitalist spectacle by trivialising the drama of robbery into child's play, exposing the deceitful, illusory and thus contemptible nature of capitalist power. The reader's likely laughter here

also functions as a subtle recognition of the infantilisation of workers inherent in consumer culture and the often eventual commodification of rebellion. Henry's antics, such as "dressing up in a silly mask and issuing ridiculous demands" (Simon, 2003), invoke Eric Havelock's interpretation of the Trickster archetype as a figure who challenges social order through ludic playfulness (Havelock, 1971). Henry's role-playing creates a liminal space where legal and moral boundaries are temporarily suspended, producing comic relief and allowing readers to vicariously experience transgression without real-world consequences. This dynamic simultaneously entertains and reinscribes social norms by ensuring that 'chaos' is controlled and ultimately resolved.

In *Horrid Henry's Christmas* (1994), Simon constructs a farcical sequence grounded in the chaotic disintegration of the quintessential middle-class family Christmas celebration. Henry's relentless pranks disrupt the "hallowed" domestic rituals that embody bourgeois stability, such as when he "sneaked downstairs and tipped the glass of orange juice over Mum's laptop" (Simon, 1994). This act of disproportionate destruction, seemingly trivial yet symbolically loaded, foregrounds Henry's rejection of adult-imposed order. This underscores how the industrialised state (represented here by 'Mum's laptop') has the blood of the workers (red as the colour closest to that of 'orange juice') tainting its hands. Moreover, Henry's escalation from mere sabotage to full-scale "snowball wars" inside the house, resulting in a "mountain of smashed ornaments and soggy wrapping paper" (Simon, 1994), employs farce's signature hyperbole to expose the fragility of domestic control. These absurd scenarios evoke a carnival of disorder where normative Christmas conventions are inverted. The conception of literary farce, here, is as a theatre of excess and chaotic eruption that dismantles social stability. For the child reader, the exaggerated mayhem engenders not only amusement but also a rare, vicarious sense of empowerment, subtly destabilising adult authority through laughter while simultaneously highlighting the performativity of order. Another important dimension here is the religious significance of Christmas traditions, the disruption of which indicates the underpinnings of the ideas of religion as the 'opium' (Marx, 1848) of the oppressed masses. Henry's farcical disruption of Christmas traditions vividly manifests when he deliberately sabotages the Christmas tree by "shaking it until all the baubles fell off" (Simon, 1994). His hyperbolic activity invokes the notion of farce as mimicry (Bhabha, 1984): Henry mimics adult festive behaviours only to distort them comically, highlighting the ambivalence of rebellion that both mocks (through criticism) and remodels (through a show of and claim on

power) the authority it contests. The effect on the reader is double-edged: laughter arises from the absurdity, but it also prompts reflection on the rigidity of cultural rituals and the superficial and consumerist performativity of holiday cheer, an element of the superstructure. Henry's antics, such as "hiding the Christmas pudding in the dog's bed" (Simon, 1994), illustrate the deployment of farce to conjure rippling familial tensions. The home here is a microcosm of society. However, drawing on the theory of 'sublimation', Henry's exaggerated pranks serve as a socially permissible outlet for aggressive impulses within the family's structure (Freud, 1914). This grotesque humour both contains and redirects potential conflict, producing a cathartic effect on the reader who navigates between amusement and awareness of deeper power struggles.

Horrid Henry and the Scary Sitter (1997) similarly leverages farce through the depiction of the sitter's escalating ineptitude. The sitter's attempts to enforce discipline unravel into comic disaster, illustrated by moments such as her "slipping on the spilled juice and crashing into the Christmas tree" (Simon, 1997), a physical farce that externalizes the sitter's loss of control; this is an especially prominent theme, since having been installed by the parental or the state authority, the babysitter herself is a pawn of the capitalist system. Henry's resistance represents the liminality of the transition from the 'capitalism' to the 'socialism' stages in the theory of dialectic materialism (Marx, 1848). The sitter's disproportionate reactions, ranging from desperate yelling to overblown threats, contrast sharply with Henry's also impassive defiance, reflecting a clash between autonomy and surveillance. This dynamic also aligns with the analysis of farce as a mode that exposes state power's inherently corrupt nature, theatricality by highlighting the absurd gap between authority's intentions and its actual efficacy, signalling the anti-productive system of capitalism. Additionally, Henry's penchant for hyper rebellion is exemplified when he dubs the sitter "Scary Sitter" despite her meekness, amplifying the farce by juxtaposing the sitter's ineffectuality with Henry's grandiose perception of her, further undermining her authority in the eyes of the child reader (Simon, 1997). The cumulative effect for readers is a complex negotiation of empathy and amusement, wherein the sitter's failures elicit humour but also foreground the instability of capitalist power structures when faced with resistance rooted in the idea of justice. Henry's creation of absurd traps like "glueing marbles on the stairs to make the sitter slip" (Simon, 1997) enacts the theory of the abject (Kristeva, 1982). The grotesque physicality of these antics positions Henry's childish resistance as a bodily revolt

against bourgeois state control and capitalist oppression, evoking disgust and humour simultaneously. This embodied farce unsettles any assumed capitalist complicity by literally destabilising the sitter's physical presence, inviting readers to viscerally engage with the limits and possibilities of agency under authoritative and unfair regimes. Henry's hyperbolic misrepresentations of the sitter's 'scariness', for example, calling her a "monster with three heads" (Simon, 1997), function as a deconstruction of narratives (Derrida, 1967): the farcical exaggeration subverts adult or privileged-class dominated discourses by exposing their constructedness and instability. The allusion to the Cerberus in Greek mythology also evokes the themes of power and control being presented in a contradictory-to-the-ideal setting of misuse or abuse of the same. This invites readers to critically question the legitimacy of adult-imposed meanings and fear, highlighting humour's potential as a tool for ideological resistance and reinterpretation.

III. LEXICO-SEMANTICS AS SUBVERSION

In the discursive terrain of children's literature, textual humour and lexical play operate not merely as stylistic embellishments but as ideological tools that shape readers' perception, narrative alignment, and symbolic power (Nikolajeva, 2005). Within the *Horrid Henry* series, language becomes a subversive force: a space where authorial choices work in concert to both destabilise and reproduce dominant cultural codes. Francesca Simon's prose has utterances and rhetorics that encode dichotomic tensions between authority and resistance, politeness and insubordination, normativity and deviance. Across *Horrid Henry Robs the Bank* (2003), *Horrid Henry's Christmas* (1994) and *Horrid Henry and the Scary Sitter* (1997), lexical strategies not only amplify comic effect but also dramatise the ideological contradictions within domestic and capitalist regimes. Simon's strategic deployment of inventive neologisms, paradoxes or ironic epithets, and playful invective enacts a rupture in hierarchies, foregrounding the multiplicity of voices and resisting monologic, elitist construction of meaning; this brings forth the classic theme of 'language as power' (Whorf, 1956).

Simon's lexical subversion in *Horrid Henry Robs the Bank* (2003) operates as a destabilising force against dominant linguistic and ideological norms. One of the many prominent neologisms, "sneak attacker" (Simon, 2003), combines two typically separate concepts, rupturing conventional syntax and semantics. This linguistic fusion exemplifies the notion of 'différance' (Derrida, 1976), revealing language's instability and the impossibility of

fixed meaning: here, Henry's playful invention unsettles political discourse by blending 'sneaking' (childish stealth) with 'attacker' (criminal violence), thus blurring moral categories. This underscores the assassination of the common worker's character by associating him with guilt when any opposition to the capitalist system of structural violence in terms of material distribution is shown. The portmanteau "snatchery" (Simon, 2003) merges childish phonetics with the criminal 'snatch', parodying capitalist and legal institutions by trivialising the notion of theft, which aligns with the conception of political discourse as a site for contesting power through language (Foucault, 1972). This reverts the blame assigned to the oppressed back to the oppressor classes, creating a sense of subtle satisfaction. By infantilising criminal acts, Henry's language mocks adults or the ruling state, undermining the gravity associated with capitalist law enforcement: subversion of authority at its peak. The playful insult "trouble duos" (Simon, 2003) reclaims systematically imposed negativity, as hierarchical power relations invert through grotesque humour (Bakhtin, 1984). Henry's light-hearted embrace of 'trouble' transforms condemnation into a badge of identity, which destabilises the legitimacy and perception of fairness of the capitalist state, which has withheld wealth through the institution of the (piggy) bank. The nonsense term "fartlek" (Simon, 2003), originally an athletic term, is appropriated here as a linguistic joke, creating a cross-field semantic space that defies fixed interpretation; this is view of cultural hegemony being a dynamic site of negotiation where subordinate groups can resist through creative language use (Gramsci, 1971). Henry's self-referential tricolonial alliteration "bank bandit brat" (Simon, 2003) conjoins the criminal 'bandit' with the diminutive 'brat,' complicating moral binaries by conflating delinquency with childhood identity. This linguistic juxtaposition highlights deviance is socially constructed and embedded within language as defiance of the political and economic establishment, echoing the analyses of the socio-economic production of 'criminal' identities through discourse (Hall et al., 1978). Lastly, the mock-legal/jargon-referencing phrase "charge sheet challenge" (Simon, 2003) mimics judicial formalism, ironically exposing how language naturalises authority, consistent with the critique of ideological (in this context, capitalist) language games that legitimise elite power by cloaking it in bureaucratic rhetoric (Eagleton, 1991). This is also a commentary on the alienation of the masses by the system, since the diminishing accessibility of language is an indication of the system deviating from the principles of 'agency theory' (Spence, et al., 1976).

In *Horrid Henry's Christmas* (1994), Simon's lexical play performs a dual function: it both participates in and

critiques consumerism-based cultural rituals through witty use of language. Henry's blunt exclamation, "Bah, humbug to your Christmas cheer!" (Simon, 1994), is an irreverent childish voice: mimicry, which simultaneously repeats and unsettles dominant cultural narratives (Bhabha, 1994). This phrase mocks the sanctity of festive cheer, highlighting the performative nature of cultural rituals and suggesting the fragility of religion under critical scrutiny, especially from the perspective of the historically alienated classes. The alliterative phrase "Tinsel Trouble" (Simon, 1994) uses playful sound repetition to disrupt the sanitised domestic order of Christmas. The semantic subversion inherent in the contrasting coupling of 'tinsel' (symbolising festivity) with 'trouble' foregrounds the excess and disorder beneath bourgeois stability, suggesting the power and weightage of language as a disruptive eruption that exposes social tensions. While the repetition of the 't-sound', similar to that of 'bells' ringing, could be a parody of Christmas conventions, it also serves as an alarm to those in political power and with the accumulated wealth of society to start counting their days. Henry's label "Rudolph's Reject" (Simon, 1994) displaces the heroic cultural iconography of Rudolph, alluding to and turning a symbol of festive rejoicement and conformity into one of marginalisation. This is a crucial moment whereby Henry is interrogating how cultural symbols reinforce the social ideological superstructure. Additionally, the fact that Rudolph and Santa are only mental constructs to keep children in discipline not only underscores the conservative role of religion in society but also shows how mass psychology is weaponised to be used against the masses themselves. Similarly, the phraseology of "Grinchy Grumble" (Simon, 1994) appropriates the familiar anti-Christmas figure to articulate resistance against adult or state-imposed conformity, illustrating that lexical diminishment can serve as an act of rebellion within the language of rituals. Henry's ironic "Jolly Jumper" (Simon, 1994) inverts traditional festive warmth, exposing the artificiality of enforced cheer and showing ideological interpellation through language, whereby subjects are 'hailed' into conformity through a reductionist nominalism (Althusser, 1971). Finally, the iconic phrase "Silent Night Silliness" (Simon, 1994) undermines the solemnity of Christmas rituals by drawing attention to their performative and fragile nature, echoing (Butler, 1990) theories on performativity and social construction of norms. By alluding to the classic Christmas Carol 'Silent Night', Henry associates tradition with complicity and festivity with obedience. The phonetic recurrence of the 's'-sound in this phrase connotes, in turn, a serpentine, and thus a sly, evil-intentioned persona that Henry is characterised with.

Simon's strategic use of epithets in *Horrid Henry and the Scary Sitter* (1997) exemplifies linguistic defiance against entities wielding unfair political and economic power. Also mentioned in the previous sub-section, the iconic and titular "Scary Sitter" (Simon, 1997) ironically acknowledges the sitter's disciplinary function while simultaneously mocking it: this illustrates heteroglossia, where conflicting voices destabilise official discourse and reveal power's performativity (Bakhtin, 1981). The grotesque nickname "Moo-Moo Monster" (Simon, 1997) infantilises the sitter, rendering her simultaneously ridiculous and menacing, another manifestation of the 'abject' (Kristeva, 1982), where comic disgust serves as a site of resistance against dominant authority. This title also dehumanises the babysitter, implying that by deviating from the standard of justice by complying with the oppressive state (Henry's parents), she has lost the humanity that was inherent in her otherwise. The diminutive "Fussy Fuss" (Simon, 1997) trivialises the sitter's efforts at control, reflecting a similar ambivalence in interpellation (Althusser, 1971). However, this also brings forth the interpretation of the sitter as 'fussy', commenting on the rigidity of the alienating superstructure, minimally prone to any alterations. The derisive "Wobbly Wimp" (Simon, 1997) further diminishes adult authority by associating it with weakness, while the oxymoron "Silent Screamer" (Simon, 1997) destabilises disciplinary discourse through paradox: deconstruction of binary oppositions (Derrida, 1967).

IV. SATIRICAL CHARACTERISATION OF AUTHORITY

The satirical characterisation of authority figures operates as a fundamental ideological critique that undermines adult hegemony through caricature and comedic deflation in Simon's *Horrid Henry* series. These portrayals expose the performativity and inherent contradictions of adult and elitist, accumulation-based power structures, delegitimizing them in the process. Through hyperbolic visual depictions and linguistically exaggerated dialogue, authority figures such as parents, teachers, and babysitters become sites of ridicule that reflect broader class anxieties and the instability of disciplinary regimes (Foucault, 1977). This section critically analyses five such textual and visual instances from each of Simon's short stories, *Horrid Henry Robs the Bank* (2003), *Horrid Henry's Christmas* (1994), and *Horrid Henry and the Scary Sitter* (1997), elucidating how Simon's satire enacts a subversive commentary on authority within the socio-cultural matrix of children's literature.

In Francesca Simon's *Horrid Henry Robs the Bank* (2003), the depiction of adult authority figures is rendered satirical through an interplay of visuals and linguistic dialogue, exposing the contradictions and fragilities of hegemonic power. For instance, the portrayal of Henry's father, with his disproportionately large nose and heavily furrowed brow (Simon, 2003), suggests visually grotesque paternal authority, inviting a carnivalesque inversion reminiscent of Bakhtin's theory, where the body becomes a site for social critique. This disciplinarian characterisation mirrors legal structural rigidity of the modern state, where the interests of the privileged keep prevailing in a continuous, vicious cycle of 'power and profit', implicitly alluding to cultural conventions of a large nose representing egoism. The father's admonition, "Don't take the money, Henry!" (Simon, 2003), delivered in simple, almost already ineffectual language, underscores the erosion of adult command within the child's realm of resistance. This dynamic aligns with the reading of authority as inherently performative and vulnerable to parody (Žižek, 2008). Similarly, the teacher figure "Miss Perfect" is satirized both textually and visually; her obsessive "nagging about right and wrong" is portrayed by an illustration emphasizing her oversized spectacles and pointed finger (Simon, 2003), which functions as a visual metonym for institutional control and surveillance (Foucault, 1977). These gestures are classic or historically consistent, emphasising the traditional nature of liberal capitalism as the official economic ideology of the state. Further, this comical exaggeration serves to undermine even the pedagogical authority of the school (part of the superstructure) by emphasising its rigidity and detachment from the child's lived experience (recipe for alienation). The mother's characterisation in the same text further reinforces the satirical dismantling of domestic power. The textual depiction of her "worried face turning red" is paired with a frenetic illustration featuring spiralling eyes and frazzled hair (Simon, 2003), which transforms maternal anxiety into a spectacle of excess that both parodies and critiques bourgeois family norms (Bourdieu, 1984). By rendering maternal concern visually chaotic and emotionally overwrought, Simon destabilises the idealised maternal figure, inviting readers to question normative domestic authority. Additionally, institutional power is mocked through the figure of "PC Plod," whose bumbling incompetence is illustrated with exaggeratedly large boots and a drooping hat (Simon, 2003). The textual remark that "He couldn't even catch a cold, let alone a thief" punctuates the satirical tone, positioning state authority as symbolically impotent. Finally, the bank manager's bombastic speech, "We run a tight ship here!" is visually contradicted by a puffed-chested, monocle-wearing

caricature (Simon, 2003), satirizing capitalist disciplinary rhetoric by emphasizing its theatricality and inflated self-importance (Harvey, 2005); the role of propaganda in public indoctrination and the cunning mechanisms of capitalist institutions are parodied through synecdochic characterisation here.

Horrid Henry's Christmas (1994) employs satire to dismantle adult figures through the interplay of text and image, foregrounding its subversion of authority in the commentary on the nature of festive authority. The father's repeated failures at festive tasks, such as struggling with tangled Christmas lights depicted in a chaotic illustration with smoking wires and a bewildered expression (Simon, 1994), subvert the patriarchal ideal of competence. This visual, of his struggle in particular, echoes the conceptualisation of farce as a mode that exposes social disarray through comedic excess. The symbolism of tangled lights represents unfiltered historical narratives and intricate hegemonic structures that 'entangle' the common man in a web of obligations with no rights. The mother's domineering presence is likewise caricatured through the textual refrain of "endless reminders about manners" and an image of her wagging finger with exaggeratedly sharp eyes (Simon, 1994). The perpetually infinite potential, as conveyed here, not only shows the alienating curse of the superstructure on lower classes of society, but also the omnipotent nature of the state, which holds sovereign rights it employs in its defence of elites who 'own' the means of production. Importantly, this hyperbolic depiction functions as a critique of bourgeois maternal authoritarianism and its function within disciplinary regimes like Henry's middle-class home or in the broader society itself (Foucault, 1977). The figure of Santa Claus is inverted into a parodic authority through a gruff voice and scowling face depicted visually with crossed arms (Simon, 1994), satirizing the commercialization and ideological manufacture of festive mythologies (Eco, 1986). Santa Claus is exposed as an icon of the capitalist imaginative apparatus, which seeks to internalise the profit-based moral compass in the minds of the masses. The schoolteacher, dubbed "Miss Grumble," is similarly rendered a strict disciplinarian with pursed lips and stern eyes (Simon, 1994), a visual and textual representation that critiques educational authority by foregrounding the critique's rigidity and humour. The fact that an educational institution has transformed into a propaganda and indoctrination instrument is a testimony to the pro-worker critique of the modern capitalist state.

In *Horrid Henry and the Scary Sitter* (1997), Simon continues to satirise authority by exposing its contradictions and superficial performativity through vivid textual descriptions and striking illustrations. The

babysitter's exaggerated overreactions, "screaming and yelling at the slightest mischief", are visually captured in an illustration of bulging eyes and flailing arms (Simon, 1997), parodying state attempts at controlling protest and countering subversive acts, as hysterical and ultimately ineffective. This underscores the inevitability of an eventual socialist state or 'stage' (Marx, 1848); this depiction also exposes performative failure within authority discourses (Butler, 1997). The father's diminished presence is marked textually by "Dad's voice barely heard over the chaos" and visually by a small, distant figure overshadowed by Henry's antics (Simon, 1997). By portraying Henry in a size larger than that of his father, the author is signaling a satirical inversion of paternal or political authority and reflecting anxieties over shifting family or structural power dynamics (Connell, 2005); the script has been flipped and now the earlier ruling authority has been rendered the status of an insignificant actor. Maternal nagging is caricatured both textually ("Mum's endless worrying") and visually through exaggerated frown lines and speech bubbles filled with repetitive warnings (Simon, 1997), satirizing maternal surveillance as simultaneously oppressive and comic (Althusser, 1971): referring to the concept of 'division of labour' (Smith, 1776) under capitalism, a maternal authority is parodied to imply that her 'rightful sphere' is not power and control, but of servitude itself. However, a softer portrayal of Henry's mother here as 'worried' evokes an almost sympathetic reaction within the readership; this emotive effect can be interpreted as a form of false consciousness propaganda, prompting sympathy for the ruling class. Lastly, the 'nosy neighbour' trope is ridiculed via a textual description of "busybody neighbour always spying" paired with an illustration of the supposed but unidentified 'neighbour' peeking through curtains with binoculars (Simon, 1997). This caricature reflects the constant surveillance culture (Foucault, 1977), emphasising the absurdity of communal authoritarianism through the satirical characterisation of the neighbour as a state ministry in a synecdochic sense. The success of this authority's surveillance lies in its stealth and unassuming nature, which is immediately subverted the moment Henry's narrative in the book simply recognises the neighbour's presence. Thus, the mere portrayal of authority-representative characters in a narrative that centralises *Horrid Henry* is itself an implicit reclamation of every oppressed classes' rights.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that beneath the laughter and pranks in the *Horrid Henry* series lies a deeper terrain where ideological contestation unfolds. The interplay of farce,

lexical rebellion, and satirical authority does more than momentarily undermine adult control: it reveals children's literature as a stealthy battleground of power, hegemony, and identity formation.

The farce unfolds in a cycle of exaggerated absurdity, from the sitter's clumsy failures in *Horrid Henry* and *The Scary Sitter*, to Henry's chaotic Christmas, or the failed bank robbery in *Horrid Henry Robs the Bank*. This pattern reflects farce's typical suspension and eventual restoration of social order (Critchley, 2002), highlighting the farcical mode of questioning and containing power. Simon's inventive language further unsettles dominant narratives by transforming words into tools of resistance, echoing the idea of cultural hegemony as a contested field where power and agency clash (Gramsci, 1971). Finally, through ironic text and exaggerated illustrations, Simon's satire exposes adults as fallible and often ridiculous figures, creating space for readers to question authority with humour and insight.

In an age increasingly shaped by surveillance, performative obedience, and shrinking spaces for genuine dissent, even among the youngest, literature aimed at children must be reappraised not simply as pedagogical or entertaining but as ideologically charged terrain. The humorous subversions in Simon's work offer a powerful pedagogical model: one that doesn't dictate rebellion, but makes resistance legible, even desirable, through joy and satire. This opens a crucial avenue for educators, writers, and policymakers to engage young minds in critical thinking about justice, class, and authority, not through moralistic instruction, but through the seductive, disarming logic of comedy.

Future applications of this research lie in both theory and praxis: in reassessing reading curricula through a Marxist lens, in crafting new children's literature that embraces political ambivalence, or in empowering children to recognise the encoded politics of stories they consume normally. It also invites scholars to re-evaluate what constitutes "resistance" in literature, especially when disguised as play, nonsense, or laughter. If laughter can expose the grotesque scaffolding of the superstructure, then perhaps it is time we stop treating humour in children's literature as apolitical sugar-coating. It is, instead, a radical tool: a masked language of critique that children understand before they even know the word ideology. In this light, *Horrid Henry* is not merely horrid; he is revolutionary. And that revolution begins with a joke.

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The Quiet Strength: Exploring Femininity in Lahiri's Unaccustomed Earth

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Abstract— *Jhumpa Lahiri's Unaccustomed Earth intricately explores themes of femininity, identity, and resilience within the diasporic experience. This paper examines how Lahiri's female characters navigate the tensions between cultural expectations and personal aspirations, shedding light on their quiet but powerful strength. Through a feminist lens, the study analyses how these women negotiate spaces of autonomy within the constraints of patriarchal traditions and immigrant struggles. Lahiri's portrayal of femininity moves beyond conventional narratives of defiance and instead emphasizes subtle acts of resistance, emotional endurance, and self-assertion. This paper also considers how Lahiri's narratives reflect the complexities of immigrant womanhood, particularly in how cultural dislocation shapes their experiences. The intersection of gender and diaspora reveals the multifaceted challenges of assimilation, familial obligations, and personal fulfilment. By focusing on Lahiri's nuanced female characters, this study highlights the resilience embedded in their everyday struggles, illustrating that strength is not always loud or visible but often found in the ability to endure, adapt, and reclaim agency within restrictive frameworks. Ultimately, this feminist analysis of Unaccustomed Earth underscores how Lahiri reimagines femininity within immigrant narratives, portraying women who, despite being bound by tradition, find ways to assert their identities and reshape their destinies. Through this exploration, the paper contributes to broader discussions on gender, diaspora, and the evolving nature of female strength in literature.*



Keywords— *Jhumpa Lahiri, Unaccustomed Earth, femininity, diaspora, identity, feminism, cultural expectations, resilience, immigrant women, autonomy, tradition vs. modernity.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) offers a compelling exploration of the multifaceted emotional landscapes navigated by immigrant women and their descendants. Through a collection of interlinked short stories, Lahiri illuminates how female characters balance the invisible labor of cultural preservation with personal desires for autonomy and belonging. Authors such as Rama Islam (2017) identify Lahiri's protagonists as "complex, intelligent, and questioning women who are not happy with the status quo and turn rebels against the established order". These women endure dual subjugation—subject to patriarchal structures within

traditional Bengali norms and the demands of assimilation into American life.

Critical scholarship highlights that *Unaccustomed Earth* foregrounds the tension between first-generation immigrant mothers and their American-born daughters. Yogesh Kumar and Gunjan Sushil (2023) describe this dynamic as a negotiation between "identity, alienation, assimilation, and cultural displacement". Meanwhile, studies based on postcolonial theories, such as Khalil and Abbas (2024), emphasize the hybridity and emotional dislocation experienced by Lahiri's characters, who "integrate their cultural values with foreign cultural norms while maintaining their own ethnicity".

Core themes recurrently addressed in this study—such as silence, emotional sacrifice, resilience through restraint, intergenerational identity conflict, imperfect intimacy, subtle rebellion, and narrative subjectivity—are interwoven within Lahiri's emotionally nuanced depictions. By analyzing these dimensions, this paper examines how Lahiri's women manifest strength not through overt acts of defiance, but through quiet endurance, self-definition, and selective agency. In doing so, Lahiri contributes to feminist and diasporic literary conversations by centering women's interiority, exposing how cultural and emotional labor are performed in silence, and how personal autonomy is contested in diasporic contexts.

This paper proceeds by first exploring silent sacrifices and inherited silence, examining how domestic and emotional labor are transmitted and internalized. Next, it delves into emotional endurance and quiet rebellion, where restraint, forgiveness, and subtle acts of defiance become sites of empowerment. Subsequently, the analysis addresses dual cultural identities and the tension between belonging and alienation. The study also investigates intimacy affected by loss, highlighting emotional distance and unspoken yearning. Finally, it discusses Lahiri's narrative approach, third-person limited narration, which provides access to female subjectivity and the vulnerability-strength spectrum.

By centering these themes within Lahiri's corpus, this research bridges close literary analysis with critical dialogues in feminist, diasporic, and postcolonial studies. In doing so, it underscores Lahiri's contribution to depicting immigrant womanhood as a lived territory of everyday resilience—where silence, choice, and inner fortitude carry transformative subversive power.

1. Silent Plight: The Unspoken Labor of Women in Immigrant Households

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *"Unaccustomed Earth,"* the silent sacrifices of immigrant women are poignantly portrayed through the lives of Ruma and her mother, illustrating the emotional and cultural burdens they bear within immigrant households. Ruma's mother, a first-generation immigrant, embodies the traditional role of a Bengali wife and mother. She relinquishes her career to focus on domestic responsibilities, striving to preserve her cultural heritage by speaking Bengali at home and preparing traditional meals. Her life is marked by a quiet endurance, as she navigates the challenges of assimilation while maintaining her cultural identity.

Ruma, representing the second generation, initially aspires to forge a different path. She pursues a legal career, marries an American man, and attempts to

balance her professional ambitions with her personal life. However, following her mother's sudden death and the birth of her son, Akash, Ruma finds herself retreating from her career to assume the role of a stay-at-home mother. This decision mirrors her mother's sacrifices, despite Ruma's earlier intentions to diverge from that path. The narrative captures Ruma's internal conflict as she grapples with the expectations of her cultural heritage and her personal desires.

The story further delves into the generational shifts in familial roles and expectations. Ruma's father, after his wife's death, embarks on travels and forms a new romantic relationship, embracing a sense of freedom previously unavailable to him. His actions contrast with the traditional expectations placed upon Ruma, highlighting the evolving dynamics within immigrant families.

Through the lens of Ruma and her mother's experiences, Lahiri explores the nuanced realities of immigrant women's lives—their silent sacrifices, the weight of cultural preservation, and the complexities of identity across generations. The narrative underscores the enduring impact of these sacrifices, prompting reflection on the often-unacknowledged labor that sustains immigrant households.

2. Generational Femininity: Mothers, Daughters, and Inherited Silence

In *Unaccustomed Earth*, Jhumpa Lahiri vividly articulates a silent inheritance passed from mother to daughter—a heritage of subtle emotional restraint, unspoken understanding, and pragmatic expressions of love. This is powerfully encapsulated when Ruma recalls, "Her mother had never pressured her, never offered opinions, only presented facts as she saw them." This simple, factual interaction is anything but benign; it represents the emotional architecture of their relationship and of the broader cultural framework in which immigrant women often exist. For Ruma's mother—a first-generation immigrant—survival in America meant mastering adaptation without complaint or emotional upheaval, creating an environment where love is communicated not through affection or affirmation, but through dutiful acts and unsentimental gestures. In raising Ruma this way, she instilled a stoic resilience: affection was baked into the food she cooked, the laundry she washed, the routines she maintained. Though it lacks sentimentality, this approach was suffused with care—the kind that underpins respect and responsibility, rather than emotional flourish.

As Ruma grows up under this quiet tutelage, she internalizes these lessons, even as she yearns to break from them. Her mother's silence is not emptiness—it's

purposeful. In refusing to burden her with emotional advisements or overt expectations, she equips Ruma with autonomy, albeit a reserved one. Yet this autonomy is also a silent contract: to conform to unspoken norms of behavior that prize mere presence over vocal support, observant duty over expressive intimacy. Ruma recognizes this dynamic—hers is a childhood without overt critiques or encouragement, only implicit lessons learned through actions. Though her mother says nothing, the message is clear: love is shown through reliability and absence of drama. In pursuing a law career, Ruma attempts to assert a more visible agency, to embrace a life less constrained by silent codes. But the legacy remains.

The second-generation immigrant experience deepens this tension. Ruma, balancing professional ambition with domestic responsibility, confronts the same silent expectations in her own life. When her father visits post her mother's death, Ruma must interpret and channel these behavioral codes—she offers him a place in her home though culturally she questions her ability to sustain the kind of caretaking her mother did. She recalls the quiet, factual way her mother had managed the household—the cooking, the cultural continuity, the emotional labor—and measures her own inadequacy against that absence of displayed emotion. She sees how deeply embedded this pragmatism is, how it shaped not only her mother's actions but her very identity as a woman in the immigrant household.

This generational emotional legacy is not just familial—it is cultural. Lahiri subtly reveals that expression of affection through direct speech is not natural to these women; to them, language is functional, not emotional. Ruma reflects on her childhood: no prompts to pursue happiness, no gentle exhortations; only data. That silence, that absence of overt love, is a survival mechanism, one shaped by immigration's pressures. In a new land, where survival depends on discipline and assimilation, emotion becomes an inconvenient complication. The women of the family learn quickly: do what needs to be done, say little, preserve dignity. In this, Lahiri exposes how silence can be both preservation and suppression—an inheritance that supports while also constricting.

As Ruma becomes a mother herself, she finds the weight of that silence doubling. She now faces the delicate task of deciding what legacies to pass on to her son and her unborn child. Will she mimic her mother's emotional restraint, hoping that practical demonstrations of love suffice? Or will she deliberately break this pattern and speak emotionally, acknowledging the feelings she learned to suppress? This internal conflict illustrates how generational femininity is less a matter of genes than of language—or its absence. Lahiri shows us that restraint is

inherited as surely as traits like eye color; it is learned as much in the quiet of a kitchen as in the lively pulse of social gatherings. Ruma's struggle to define love—whether learned or unlearned—becomes the emotional core of her narrative.

Ultimately, Lahiri suggests that inherited silence is not irrevocable. Though Ruma's mother passed on a legacy steeped in quiet endurance, Ruma is positioned to choose—or refuse—that inheritance. The juxtaposition of generations—women who suppress voice versus women confronted by a need for emotional articulation—reveals the shifting landscape of femininity in immigrant families. In questioning whether she must repeat her mother's sacrifices and emotional economy, Ruma stands at a crossroads. Her inherited silence is both a burden and a resource: a template for resilience but a cage for emotional expression. Lahiri's nuanced portrayal of generational femininity thus highlights the invisible labor of cultural adaptation, revealing how silence can both sustain and stifle, and how the bonds between mothers and daughters are woven not just in shared words, but in shared quiet.

3. Resistance in Restraint: The Subtle Power of Emotional Endurance

In Jhumpa Lahiri's "Only Goodness," Sudha's quiet endurance in the face of familial trauma reveals a profound, understated resilience. When confronted with her brother Rahul's betrayal and uncontrolled alcoholism, Sudha doesn't react with tears or overt confrontation—"She did not cry, not then. She knew there was no use." This moment, though emotionally charged, is marked by its stillness: unspoken pain, deliberate silence, and the conscious choice to create emotional distance. Rather than succumbing to melodrama, she opts for self-preservation. Raised to prioritize responsibility and emotional composure, Sudha has absorbed the immigrant-woman ethos of silent strength. Her refusal to forgive Rahul for endangering her own child becomes a potent act of quiet rebellion.

The crisis peaks when Rahul, freshly sober, visits Sudha in London after years of estrangement, seeming to have rebuilt himself. All seems hopeful—until the day he drunkenly falls asleep while babysitting Sudha's infant son, forgetting the baby in a bathtub. This unthinkable lapse shatters any illusions she'd held about his recovery. Rather than confront him with anger, Sudha processes the incident inwardly, and that evening silently resolves to sever ties. It is not a televised argument or emotional scene, but an intimate moment of realization: that protecting her family requires emotional detachment. This decision crystallizes her autonomy—she "cuts him out of her

life permanently,” forming a new boundary born in quiet strength rather than rage.

This restraint is itself a form of resistance. While Rahul spirals into chaos, Sudha organizes her life around stability—her husband, Roger, and their son, Neel. Though guilt over her perceived role in Rahul's addiction haunts her, she refuses to let it dictate her present, or jeopardize her new family's well-being. The absence of overt forgiveness doesn't indicate hardness, but emotional survival. Her silent decision not to forgive becomes a shield: a refusal to reopen wounds, a refusal to enable further damage. There is power in that refusal—a refusal to perform ritualistic forgiveness, instead acknowledging that love cannot override the need for safety.

Lahiri's portrayal of Sudha highlights a broader theme: emotional endurance as a radical act of self-care. In immigrant households, where external displays of emotion can be suppressed in favor of social facades, internal resilience becomes essential. Sudha's silence isn't apathy—it's protection. It's the choice to endure quietly, to let painful decisions stand unspoken, and to assert strength through stillness. In a society that often equates strength with confrontation, Lahiri offers an alternative: that resistance can reside in the refusal to endure further harm, even without fanfare.

In this way, Sudha's emotional restraint becomes its own form of liberation. By deciding not to cry, not to explain, and not to forgive, she retains agency. She protects her family, her psyche, and her future. And in that silence, she finds a hard-won peace—a testament to the subtle power of enduring quietly, and the resilience that grows where words and tears fall short.

4. Navigating Dual Identities: Cultural Expectations and the Female Self

In *"Hell-Heaven,"* Jhumpa Lahiri portrays her female characters grappling with the competing demands of Indian cultural heritage and Western individualism, leading to a profound internal dissonance. Usha's mother, Aparna, embodies this struggle. Married to Usha's father in an arranged union, she relocates to the United States and finds herself bound by traditional marital roles, mourning the autonomy she never had. Lahiri's narrative subtly highlights her intellectual and emotional depth—education, political interests, poetry—yet it is largely expressed within the confines of her domestic existence. Aparna's life becomes a study in duality: her outward persona as dutiful wife and mother contrasts sharply with her inner world, rich with longing and unspoken dissatisfaction.

The arrival of Pranab Chakraborty acts as a catalyst for this tension. To Aparna, Pranab is more than a friend from

Calcutta; he represents the life she might have lived—intellectually stimulating, culturally resonant, and emotionally validating. His presence brings fleeting brightness to her American existence, symbolizing both escape and possibility. Yet when he embraces Western norms by marrying Deborah—an American woman—Aparna's stability fractures. She perceives his assimilation as cultural betrayal, a shift she labels starkly as “hell-heaven,” underscoring her sense of loss.

Aparna's response to Pranab's marriage and Usha's growing Americanization oscillates between protective maternal concern and self-destructive despair. She attempts to shield Usha, dissuading her from dances and dating, fearing Usha will experience the same heartbreak she did. This resistance to change peaks when she nearly sets herself on fire—an act symbolic of her despair as she feels she has lost both Pranab and her cultural anchor. Yet she survives, returning to the domestic sphere and maintaining appearances—she boils rice, carries on—demonstrating that, even in profound crisis, she remains tethered to traditional roles.

Meanwhile, Usha's perspective reflects the generational shift. As she matures within American society, she grows both attracted to and at odds with her mother's values. She embraces American freedoms—dating, self-expression—even as she senses her mother's confusion and pain. Usha's blossoming independence contrasts with Aparna's internal conflict, but with time, her mother begins to accept Usha's identity as “a child of America”—even recognizing that Usha can honor both Bengali heritage and American culture.

Lahiri's skillful narration situates both women at a cultural crossroads. Aparna's emotional self-expression is nearly invisible, hidden beneath the surface of her domestic life and unspoken grief, while Usha's Americanisation offers both hope and heartbreak. The duality is embodied in the story's title: “Hell-Heaven”—a metaphor for cultural rift and emotional divide. Aparna's silent sacrifice and simmering internal struggle contrast with Usha's outward assimilation and eventual empathy; only through years does Usha come to understand the depth of her mother's pain.

By centering both perspectives, Lahiri does not suggest any easy reconciliation—but rather illuminates the invisible ties that bind them. Aparna's cultural entrapment and Usha's bicultural fluidity reflect the complexities immigrant families face: when cultural preservation becomes both sanctuary and confinement, and Western independence offers liberation but at an emotional cost. In capturing this, Lahiri gives voice to the subtle yet powerful

emotional realities of female identity shaped by dual cultures, showing that navigating such a life requires balance not just between two worlds, but between silence and speech, tradition and autonomy.

5. Love, Loss, and Loneliness: The Feminine Experience of Intimacy

In "A Choice of Accommodations," Lahiri captures the nuanced ache of imperfect intimacy and the quiet loneliness that often accompanies love. Megan, married to Amit, confronts a profound moment of emotional isolation when "*she realized then that he had never told her that he loved her, not in so many words.*" This admission reveals not just a missing phrase, but an emotional distance—his steady presence falls short of verbal affirmation, leaving Megan grappling with a hunger neither reproach nor betrayal can fill. Their marriage, comfortable yet strained, highlights how love can exist alongside silent disappointment and how emotional connection can falter without overt expression.

Lahiri repeatedly portrays women who accept love in its imperfect form yet safeguard their dignity when intimacy fails to deliver the fulfillment they crave. Megan's strength is visible not in public confrontation but in an inner reckoning: she acknowledges the lack without dramatizing it, choosing instead to understand the gap between need and reality. This restraint mirrors broader thematic currents in Lahiri's work, where female characters—like Hema and Ruma—often find themselves navigating the spaces where affection and disappointment overlap. They adapt, they endure, and sometimes, they walk away—not out of weakness, but out of a commitment to self-respect.

This emotional terrain—where love arrives hand in hand with absence—is intrinsic to Lahiri's fictional world. Intimate relationships are often steeped in quiet misunderstandings or unspoken expectations, and for women, the path to resilience is paved through silent acceptance rather than dramatic outbursts. They learn to live with "less," to temper hope with pragmatism, and to find dignity in graceful withdrawal when intimacy becomes too demanding or too distant. Megan's realization—that love might not be freely spoken—serves as a poignant example of how emotional survival requires both honesty and self-containment.

Moreover, Lahiri's portrayal of female emotional resilience extends beyond one relationship, reflecting a universal pattern in her stories. Characters like Hema in "Going Ashore" or Sudha in "Only Goodness" also face intimacy entwined with loss—whether through unspoken love, betrayal, or grief—yet they endure with composed determination. The measure of their strength is not in dramatic gestures but in the quiet assertion of boundaries,

choosing where to invest emotional labor and where to withdraw before being diminished.

Ultimately, the feminine experience of intimacy in Lahiri's stories is not defined by passion but by presence: the decision to stay despite unfulfilled emotional needs, or to leave with quiet dignity when love proves insufficient. Through Megan's understated epiphany, Lahiri illuminates a larger truth: that love, loss, and loneliness intertwine in ways that often defy neat resolutions. This form of resilience—rooted in acknowledgment, self-protection, and silent courage—embodies Lahiri's vision of the feminine heart navigating the delicate geography of intimacy.

6. Quiet Defiance: Small Acts of Rebellion Against Patriarchy

While Lahiri's women may appear passive, their inner lives reveal acts of resistance—leaving relationships, choosing solitude, or simply refusing expectations.

"She had decided not to tell her parents. There was no need to worry them."
(*Going Ashore*)

In "Going Ashore," Jhumpa Lahiri masterfully presents Hema's subtle defiance, illustrating how acts of autonomy—no matter how quiet—can represent significant resistance against patriarchal and cultural expectations. Hema's decision to conceal her affair from her parents is itself an act of quiet rebellion: "She had decided not to tell her parents. There was no need to worry them." By withholding disclosure, Hema asserts control over her narrative, choosing self-determination over submission to cultural norms that prioritize obedience and conformity. What may appear as concealment is, in fact, an assertion of personal sovereignty—an intentional refusal to let tradition dictate her romantic life.

This defiance gains further weight in Hema's ultimate choice to end the relationship with Kaushik—not after dramatic confrontation, but through serene resolve. Despite the deep emotional connection she feels in Rome, she decides to stay committed to her arranged marriage to Navin and return to India. She acknowledges the gravity of what she relinquishes: "She had denied herself the pleasure of openly sharing life with the person she loved"—yet her decision is unwavering. Here, Lahiri captures the paradox of resistance: Hema's departure is bound by cultural expectation, yet fundamentally driven by her own sense of autonomy and the desire for stability on her own terms.

Hema's rebellion is not loud or defiant but contained within decisions made silently, with dignity. By choosing not to uproot her life for Kaushik—even when he ardently invites her to join him, a proposal that might ignite envy in

others—she exhibits strength through restraint. Despite the heat of passion, she resists being swept into spontaneity or upheaval. Her inner dialogue resists the romantic ideal in favor of sober self-preservation: a decision born not of weakness, but of clarity and emotional intelligence.

Ultimately, her quiet defiance speaks more powerfully than visible confrontation ever could. Hema rejects passivity not by asserting overt power, but by privileging her own agenda. In choosing silence over explanation—by protecting her emotional life from familial intrusion—she charts a map of selfhood beyond patriarchal dictates. Lahiri emphasizes that rebellion need not cast shadows or break taboos; sometimes, it is the refusal to capitulate to expected narratives—choosing solitude, stability, or self-prioritization instead.

Thus, in Hema's choices we see a form of radical self-possession: she neither shouts her intentions nor stages dramatic gestures. Rather, she quietly defines her path—keeping love private, ending relationships on her own terms, and ultimately, choosing a life shaped by her own convictions. In these unspoken decisions, Lahiri affirms that the subtlest acts of defiance—choosing not to tell, choosing to walk away—carry immense potency. Hema's quiet rebellion is a testament to the nuanced strength of women who resist not by loud protest, but by inner resolve and deliberate choice.

7. Narrative Voice and Female Subjectivity

Jhumpa Lahiri's use of third-person limited narration in *Unaccustomed Earth* subtly yet powerfully immerses readers in the interior worlds of her female protagonists, allowing an intimate glimpse into their hopes, regrets, and longing. Take, for instance, Ruma's moment of tentative anticipation: "In spite of everything, she had expected him to call. Even now, her heart stirred at the sound of the phone." This line, nestled within the narrative's close attention to her internal reactions, builds a layer of emotional resonance that might have been lost under third-person omniscience. It places us squarely inside Ruma's vulnerable psyche—her lingering hope, tempered by realism, pulses through the simple act of listening for a phone's ring. Through this narrative intimacy, Lahiri reveals that Ruma's resilience is intertwined with persistent emotional fragility.

The choice to maintain this perspective throughout the story reinforces the complexity of Ruma's character. We understand her through her internal dialogue rather than external action alone—her silence, her hesitation, her guilt. This narrative stance presents Ruma not as a figure seen from the outside, but as a self-analyzing individual grappling with dual burdens of cultural expectation and personal desire. We witness her internal bargaining: part of

her hankers for independence, but another part clings to tradition and relational obligations—the heart-stirring moment capturing that tension perfectly.

Moreover, this technique allows Lahiri to explore how Ruma's internal life is shaped by memory and inherited silence. We sense her mother's presence in her unresolved emotional landscape, always just beneath the surface of her current choices about career, family, and identity. The narrative lens gives the subtle weight of Ruma's grief and the tender ache for maternal guidance—muted by the brevity of third-person narration, yet deeply felt.

By limiting the narration to Ruma's perspective, Lahiri also intensifies the reader's empathy. We do not merely perceive Ruma's choices; we feel the emotional gravity behind them. The narration captures fleeting sensations—the stirrings of the heart, the echo of the phone—that evoke universal experiences of longing. In doing so, Lahiri crafts a portrait of modern womanhood marked not by dramatic gestures, but by quiet emotional currents.

In sum, Lahiri's third-person limited voice grants readers access to the interior self of her female characters—layered, reflective, and emotionally nuanced. It is a narrative strategy that celebrates the strength found in vulnerability, making the invisible landscapes of the feminine heart visible in just a few resonant lines.

II. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has examined how Jhumpa Lahiri's storytelling in *Unaccustomed Earth*, *Only Goodness*, *Hell-Heaven*, and other works illuminates the nuanced emotional labor, inherited silence, and resilient defiance of immigrant women. By closely analyzing themes such as silent sacrifices, intergenerational femininity, emotional endurance, dual cultural identity, intimacy under loss, quiet rebellion, and subjective narrative intimacy, we have traced how Lahiri constructs a literary space wherein familial heritage and personal agency coexist in quiet tension.

This research has demonstrated that Lahiri's female characters express strength not through overt confrontation but through internal acts—choosing when to speak or remain silent, when to stay and when to walk away. Their decisions—becoming stay-at-home mothers, withholding forgiveness, or concealing relationships—are subtle yet powerful assertions of agency. Through third-person limited narration, Lahiri grants readers intimate access to these inner landscapes of love, grief, belonging, and self-definition.

The significance of these findings lies in how they expand our understanding of immigrant womanhood in

literature: resistance is reframed not as loud defiance, but as composed speechlessness, self-possession, and emotional labor. This reframing enriches critical dialogues in feminist and postcolonial scholarship by foregrounding the internal mechanisms of empowerment that challenge traditional patriarchal dynamics.

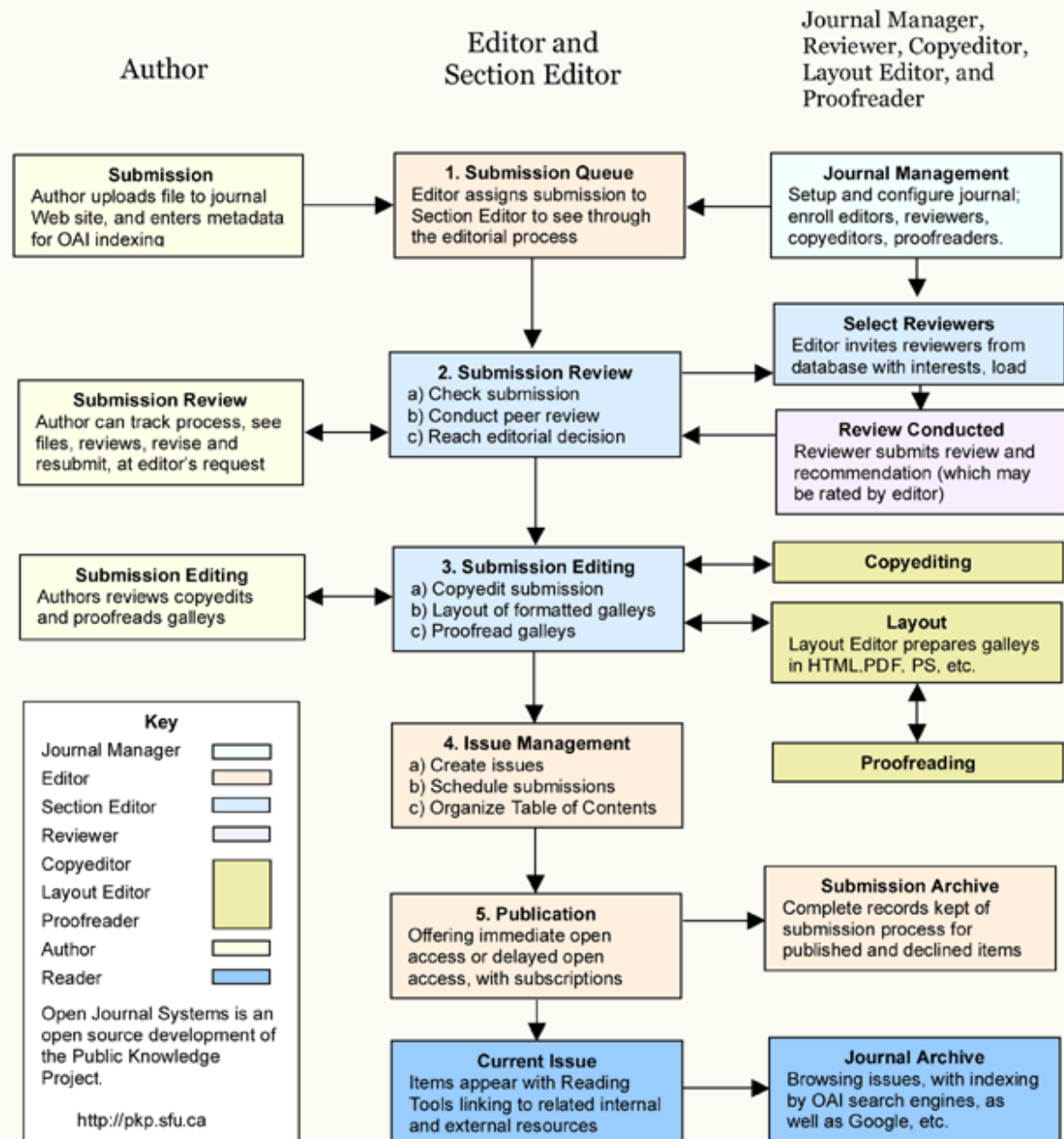
Despite the depth of this analysis, avenues remain for further exploration. Future research might investigate how Lahiri's narrative strategies compare with other transnational writers, or how these themes evolve across her later works. Quantitative reader-response studies could also illuminate how diverse audiences interpret the interplay of silence and agency in her portrayal of women. Additionally, an interdisciplinary approach engaging psychological insights into emotional restraint could deepen our comprehension of these characters' resilience.

Ultimately, this paper underscores that Lahiri's contribution goes beyond storytelling—it offers a profound inquiry into how immigrant women navigate cultural inheritance and shape their own identities through quiet endurance. As we continue to explore the complexities of gender, culture, and narrative voice, Lahiri's work stands as a rich source of insight into the delicate power of silence, choice, and emotional survival.

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